quantitative measurements with the microscope of the optical properties of crystals even as small as 0.01 millimeters on a side.

Dr. Wright is also internationally known for his systematic studies of the surface of the moon, especially by measuring the percentage of polarization of light reflected from various regions of the moon's surface. These studies were undertaken at Mount Wilson Observatory, where he spent several summers as a guest worker. His investigations supplied definite information concerning the nature of the materials on the moon. By the use of various methods, including a special polarization eyepiece for determining the amount of plane polarization at different points on the moon's surface and a photoelectric cell for the measurement of the amount of plane polarization and of the relative spectral intensities of the rays, he showed that the lunar surface materials are predominantly light-colored rocks. Furthermore, from thermal measurements in addition to the optical measurements, he showed that the surface materials are of the nature of volcanic ash and pumice with a high silica content.

He had an active and productive life, occupying many posts of high responsibility and accepting many important scientific assignments. During World War I he took an active part in the development of methods for the production of optical glass for which there was then a critical need for use in military devices, such as range finders, gun sights, and periscopes. His activities in this connection were carried out while he was serving as an officer in the Ordnance Department of the Army. In World War II he served as civilian adviser to the Joint Optics Committee of the Army and Navy Munitions Board. He was president of the Optical Society of America (1917–19), of the Mineralogical Society of America (1941), and of the Geological Society of Washington (1924); vice president of the Geological Society of America (1941) and of the National Academy of Sciences (1927–31); and for 20 years was the Academy's Home Secretary.

In addition to the afore-mentioned memberships in societies, Dr. Wright was a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a Foreign Fellow of the Geological Society of London. He was also a member of the American Philosophical Society, the Astronomical Society of America, the American Physical Society, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Physical Society of London, the Washington Academy of Sciences, the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, the Army Ordnance Association, the American Geophysical Union, and the Philosophical Society of Washington. He was a member of the Cosmos Club for nearly 50 years.

His efforts and accomplishments won him many honors. Among these were the granting of an honorary science degree by the University of Michigan in 1940, the award by the U.S. Army in 1945 of the Gold Medal for Exceptional Civilian Service, and the award by the Mineralogical Society of America in 1952 of the Roebling Medal.

LEASON H. ADAMS
Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D.C.

James Somerville McLester: 1877–1954

JAMES S. McLESTER, of Birmingham, Alabama, died 8 February, 1954, aged 78 years. He will long be remembered by his many patients, his students, and his colleagues for unusual integrity and kindness. The warm affection of former residents of the Hillman Hospital recently was expressed by their joining together in having his portrait painted for the University of Alabama. Those residing in Birmingham organized a "McLester's Residents Club" and members of this club were the pallbearers at his funeral. The esteem of colleagues appears from his membership in many of the leading national societies as well as by his election in 1934 to the presidency of the American Medical Association.

McLester was one of several physicians who, having studied in the laboratories and clinics of Germany, in the days of their preeminence, before World War I, pioneered in introducing scientific procedure into the practice of medicine in America. This was lagging in those times, especially in the cities of the South and West. Some of these physicians, like McLester, were the giants of their localities—big in public spirit and character as well as in scientific background, such men as Frank Billings of Chicago and Arthur Dunn of Omaha.

McLester's German training was in Göttingen and Freiburg in 1901–02 and in Berlin and Munich in 1907–08. He wrote few strictly scientific papers, but this German training was responsible for his subsequent insistence on rigid evaluation of clinical observations as well as for the early emphasis he placed on laboratory aids in diagnosis. He had been taught the Wassermann reaction by Wassermann himself, and a serologic test for syphilis had later been performed, he used to say, on every patient he had seen. The x-ray machine in his office was the second to be installed in Birmingham, and his electrocardiograph and apparatus for determining the basal metabolic rate were perhaps the first of these in use in Alabama. His Oxford monograph, *The Diagnosis and Treatment of Disorders of Metabolism,* appeared in 1935.

Teaching was a lively interest. He was instrumental in establishing at Birmingham a 4-year medical cur-

riculum, effected there in 1945. Much earlier, however, he had come to the conclusion that, while research was of extreme importance, a major service to be expected of medical schools in general was "to carry the newer things of medicine to the men upon whose minds must rest the burden of caring for the health of the people—the men in general practice." The school had two chief teaching functions, as he saw it: the first to give the facts; the second, to mold character and method of thought. Compensation for failure of the first might come in later life, not so with failure of the second. He wanted more emphasis on English composition, without which much good work is lost in confused reporting. He also was insistent on general culture, which, in his opinion, ought to be expected in physicians. This comes in large part, so he wrote, from contact with the broadly cultured teacher. These and many other searching comments are contained in addresses given at meetings of the Council on Medical Education and Hospitals.

His clinical interests were broad. Psychosomatic medicine, so greatly emphasized in recent years, was no novelty to him. He was writing locally in 1906 on the mental attitude of the physician with patients who had tuberculosis, and he emphasized repeatedly thereafter, both to surgeons and physicians, that their first responsibility was the patient, not disease.

McLester's burning interest in nutrition seems to have begun in the early 1920's with his concern for sufferers from mild neuroses, "neurasthenics," as they then were called. Many of his patients improved greatly under rest and better diets, and he was led to place great emphasis on the contribution of diet. He was among the first to recognize that nutritional failure can be injurious long before a frank deficiency disease develops. "It is a principle of the school system in which I work," he wrote—he was medical director of the schools of Birmingham—"that in childhood even the development of character proceeds more surely in the presence of health and that good nutrition is prerequisite to health." This thinking led him to demand training in nutrition of pupil, teacher, and parent. So nutrition teaching was begun in the Birmingham schools and a school luncheon program started early there.

McLester served for nearly 20 years as chairman of the Council on Foods and Nutrition of the American Medical Association. In World War II he was a member of the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council and chairman of its Subcommittee on Medical Nutrition. Physicians generally have been slow to grasp the importance of good diets for the maintenance of health and in the effective treatment of disease. McLester was untiring in his efforts to correct such apathy. His monograph, *Nutrition and Diet in Health and Disease,* ran through six editions. The first appeared in 1927, the sixth in 1952. He spoke repeatedly on this subject, most effectively perhaps, in his presidential address to the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association. Thus, he most emphatically deserved a special honor, received before he died from the Board of Trustees of that association: the Joseph Goldberger award, bestowed on him for outstanding contributions in the field of clinical nutrition.

RUSSELL M. WILDER
Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota

News and Notes

Leprosy

The 6th International Congress of Leprosy, sponsored by the Spanish Government with the collaboration of the International Leprosy Association, was held in Madrid, 3–11 Oct. 1953. The *International Journal of Leprosy* [**21** (Oct–Dec. 1953)] carried an editorial entitled "Report on the Madrid Congress," as well as a list of registrants and the minutes of the meetings of the Congress council, of the plenary sessions of the Congress, and of the general meeting of the International Leprosy Association. In addition, there were complete reports of the various technical committees of the Congress and the authors' abstracts of most of the scientific papers presented.

The importance of leprosy in the world today is reflected in the number of international registrants at this Congress and in the titles of the numerous scientific papers presented.

The official registration list comprised 337 names. Compared with previous congresses, this represented a steady growth in registration—at the Cairo Congress in 1938, the registration was 167, and at the Havana Congress in 1948, it was 226. The international atmosphere of the meeting was emphasized by the fact that 226 registrants were from countries other than Spain; 51 countries or important political subdivisions were represented. In addition to the official membership in attendance, there were a number of "adherent" registrants who accompanied regular members. The total attendance at the Congress was estimated to be 500.

Abstracts of 134 of the 166 titles listed in the program were published. About 25 percent of these abstracts were in English; the remainder were in Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and French.

An interesting archeological-osteological study of skeletons excavated from a medieval churchyard in Denmark was reported. Patients from a leprosy hospital had been buried there between the years 1250 and 1550. From this study came the new observation that the anterior nasal spine of the maxillary bone was atrophic or absent in some cases of leprosy. This