

## *Editorials*

### THE COLLEGE COAT OF ARMS

#### An Achievement

The College *Journal* has now a new face: On its cover is the Arms recently granted by the College of Heralds. Many will miss the old, familiar beige which though plain was somehow different—perhaps by virtue of its very plainness—from other journals. Time, we hope, will bring a liking for the new look.

The notes which follow summarize the heraldic symbolism upon which the armorial design has been constructed. The pleasing result, however, did not come readily or rapidly and those to whom the work was entrusted were only unanimous when expressing their disapprobation of the many projected sketches that were placed before them. The purpose of all heraldic devices is to provide a badge which may be deciphered by all, whether or not they be literate. If nowhere else, the pun has its place here, and the more blatant it is the better. Thus the black and white shield, a mirror image of the Arms of St Bartholomew's Hospital, suggests that the family doctor is on duty night and day, and that he shares and is in sympathy with whatever of grief or joy he may find in the home, whose symbol is the chevron, the house-roof. Against this background are set an opium poppy and a gentian, examples of the simple remedies used for centuries, and still used in daily practice. The lighted lamp is taken direct from the crest of the Royal College of Nursing, and will serve as a perpetual reminder of how much is owed to the sister profession.

The supporters are a unicorn and a lynx, as originally proposed by DR COOPER HARRISON. The unicorn comes from the Arms of The Worshipful Society of Apothecaries. He is not, of course, the Royal Unicorn, but is exactly as granted to the apothecaries in 1671. "The horn of the unicorn had been always credited with miraculous powers. When used as a drinking cup it protects against 'poison, convulsions and epilepsy'". The lynx first appears as an augmentation granted in 1569 to the Barber Surgeons Company of London, his coloured spots being the eyes all over him, which give him his all-seeing character—and what could be

more appropriate for a general practitioner than that?

The crest is the owl, for wisdom, holding the chairman's gavel which on DR G. I. WATSON's initiative, was presented to the College by the Greek Ambassador at the first Annual General Meeting in November 1953. The motto, "Cum Scientia Caritas" might be translated, "with skill, tender loving care".

These Arms, then, indicate our humble origin and our ancient lineage, stress our close co-operation with nurses and with hospitals, and stimulate us to explore the bright prospect of the future.

#### REFERENCE

Dickenson, T. Vincent, *Proc. roy. Soc. Med.*, 1930, 23, 11. History of Medicine Section.

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### AN EXAMINATION IN GENERAL PRACTICE

The College is an academic body. It will be remembered that when at its foundation a sufficient number of keenly interested members were required to launch it the criteria were set wide and easy to apply; thus in the beginning members were recruited from those registered doctors who had been twenty years in general practice, or its equivalent as general medical officers in a school or a factory or a similar institution or in H.M. Forces, and from those who had been in general practice for five years and undertook to accept postgraduate instruction for three days of each year, and from those who with five years experience of general practice also held a higher degree. These recommendations of the Steering Committee set the academic tone of the College.

The annual general meeting in 1954 reduced the length of time in general practice to five years, instituted the system of sponsorship, and made an interview obligatory if required by the censors. All candidates were required to give an undertaking that they would continue approved postgraduate study while they remained in active general practice. These criteria are materially those which appertain today. The annual meeting of 1954 also gave approval to the formation of an *ad hoc* committee "to give full and detailed study to examination as a possible method of entry to membership of the College of General Practitioners and to report to the Council of the College in 1955". The report of this committee contained a complete syllabus and made recommendations on the form which the examination should take. It even went so far as to submit samples of papers which could be set. This report will now be