

**Question:** Do you agree with Ogden Nash that it is good to have something of the incompatible in marriage, so long as he has the income and she is patible?

**Mr Wallis:** I think this is quite true, but it would be equally true the other way round.

**Question:** Just as medicine is moving from the curative towards the preventive, is it not possible for marriage guidance to do more to prevent unsuitable marriages, rather than to save them when they are breaking down?

**Judge David Pennant:** I think we do not know how to prevent marital difficulty, and I wonder really whether it is even a question that ought to be asked in an odd sort of sense. I may put it this way. Who are we, the Marriage Guidance Council, to think that we can process people! We cannot and should not try to process people. All that we can do is to supply a diminutive therapeutic community; that is to say a group, in which it is safe and indeed welcome for young people to say precisely what they want to say. I think this is a valuable and helpful task, and it is something which is self-educative in the best sense. It respects the autonomy of the individual; it does not assume that they are dependent on the wisdom of the old. I would like to question the whole concept that the Marriage Guidance Council or anybody else knows better than the young. I think that we have a contribution to make to them, but it is essentially a two-way process.

## CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

**Dr L. G. Norman:** I feel that the Wessex Faculty must be congratulated in providing a fine symposium and in bringing together a panel of speakers with such remarkable talents. The symposium opened magnificently with Dr Annis Gillie's perceptive observations on the vital years during which parents can exert their best influence on their offspring.

Special knowledge and experience of young people were clearly demonstrated in Dr Herford's helpful and erudite thoughts about the way we can help children in the transitional period between leaving school and starting work and in the difficult years when young people are settling down to work.

Judge David Pennant, who has a human and sympathetic approach to the problem of divorce, outlined the law of divorce in this country and discussed some of the factors responsible for marriage breakdown. He suggested that many of these factors constitute medical

problems which could be dealt with by doctors who could prevent many cases from reaching the stage where divorce proceedings are necessary.

The problem of dealing with personal relationship difficulties which result in marriage breakdown was fully developed by Mr Wallis, who pointed out that the therapeutic task was not to try to eliminate differences between partners, but to face them in an atmosphere of acceptance, to help to free them from the tyranny of the normal, from guilt and from shame, and to give them direction which would help them to become more fully and more freely themselves.

In his address the Lord Bishop of Guildford gave us an entertaining and thought-provoking discourse on the value of enlightened religious thinking and education—coupled with the parents' responsibility towards the development of full maturity in the young man or woman. He advised us to teach young people the difference between the world that can be measured and the world than cannot, and he emphasized this with his analogy of Venus the planet and Venus the hellenic world's epitome of grace.

It was interesting to hear Professor Stengel's contribution on various aspects of mental health which affect people in the 20–40 age group, and his remarks on the high incidence of suicide attempts in this age group added weight to the dramatic statement he made when he described the age of discretion 20–40, as the age of neurosis. Professor Stengel reminded us that although physical and biological maturity are normally reached by the age of 18, mental, social, and matrimonial maturity may not be fully developed at that stage.

On your behalf, I would like to thank our six speakers for their magnificent contributions, both in their papers and in the discussion periods, and I am sure you will agree that we have never before listened to such a splendid symposium.

## VOTE OF THANKS

**Dr George Swift, T.D., M.A., B.M., B.CH. (*Faculty Provost*)**

Mr Chairman, we are most grateful to you for coming along to preside over this meeting in such a superb fashion. This has been an excellent symposium, and due credit for this must go to you.

I would like to thank his Worship the Mayor of Bournemouth