

NUTRITION IN GENERAL PRACTICE

WELCOME

D. Scott Napier, M.B., CH.B., (Norwich), Provost, East Anglia Faculty.

I welcome you on behalf of the East Anglia Faculty College of General Practitioners to this symposium on "Nutrition in General Practice". The title was chosen after some deliberation as being novel and concerning a subject of increasing importance, not only to practitioners and dieticians but also to the general public, who are becoming increasingly aware of the advantages of some knowledge of nutrition. The subject teems with possibilities, and you will learn of the approach to some of the problems. Hardly a day goes by without some mention in the press of matters concerned with nutrition (for example, the recent fluoridation figures) and as for the glossy magazines and the countless women's journals, the number of recipes for exciting dishes and meals increases daily, usually accompanied by information and advice on which particular wine to choose for your guests. This makes it all rather surprising to find how relatively few references there are in medical literature under the specific heading of "Nutrition". Many symposia have three or four speakers, but a glance at our bill of fare, or programme, indicates that we are offering you a veritable feast, not a *table d'hôte*, but rather *à la carte*, in as much as we have fifteen different speakers, indicative of our desire to present you with as many facets of this huge subject. We are indebted, not only to our sponsors, Geigy Pharmaceutical Company Ltd, but also to the University of Cambridge and the Medical School, which you will find harbours a veritable nest of experts on nutritional problems. We have a most experienced panel, many of whom have carried out noted individual and team research, and we are particularly fortunate in having the chairman of the Faculty Board, Dr St. Michael Rees, to act as chairman for this symposium. He is trebly qualified for this task in as much as he is qualified

not only in medicine but also in science and law. He is a barrister, a leading practitioner, and a well-known personality in East Anglia. I have a feeling that he will handle the gavel as expertly as he turns out his delightful articles for the press.

THE ENQUIRING GENERAL PRACTITIONER

G. L. McCulloch, M.B., CH.B. (*March*)

"Brother Toby," quoth my father, "I do believe thee to be as honest a man and with as good and as upright a heart as ever God created;—nor is it thy fault, if all the children which have been, may, can, shall, will, or ought to be begotten, come with their heads foremost into the world:—but believe me, dear Toby, the accidents which unavoidably way-lay them, not only in the article of our begetting 'em—though these, in my opinion, are well worth considering,—but the dangers and difficulties our children are beset with, after they are got forth into the world, are enow . . ." "Are these dangers," quoth my uncle Toby, laying his hand upon my father's knee, and looking up seriously in his face for an answer, "—are these dangers greater now o' days, brother, than in times past?" "Brother Toby," answered my father, "if a child was but fairly begot, and born alive, and healthy, and the mother did well after it,—our forefathers never looked farther." My uncle Toby instantly withdrew his hand from off my father's knee, reclined his body gently back in his chair, raised his head till he could just see the cornice of the room, and then directing the buccinatory muscles along his cheeks, and the orbicular muscles around his lips to do their duty—he whistled Lillabullero.

Mr. Chairman, fellow general practitioners, is that our present attitude to the subject of human nutrition? Have we until now just been sitting around whistling Lillabullero?

We all have a far greater and more accurate knowledge of pharmacology than we have of nutrition. We can be reasonably certain of the results of subjecting living human cells to, for instance, digoxin or barbitone or insulin in measured quantities and over varying periods, and we apply or withhold these and innumerable other substances to produce anticipated effects upon the whole human organism. Their name is legion, they are enumerated and controlled with care. They are enjoyed by few.

Nutrition, on the other hand, the biochemistry of our living cells, is one of the great universal sources of pleasure in this life, from the breast onwards (for those who are lucky enough to start on the breast). Its constituents are legion, are subjected to little in the