

## *Abstracts*

### THE PERPETUAL STUDENT

If a glimpse of general practice benefits a student, it also gives the doctor a healthy contact with the younger mind. If you have a young man or woman at your elbow for a week it is quite surprising how it makes you realize your shortcomings. Laziness of thought, "what do I really mean when I say this to the patient? Why don't I take a swab—send a sample—have the blood done—or an x-ray? Have I mislabelled this case many years ago and never re-assessed my diagnosis and so missed an obvious development? And above all does this young man know a lot more about the modern work on this case than I do? Then is my technique really thorough? Is this syringe or suture really sterile? Is she noticing that I have not taken my coat off, rolled up my sleeves and scrubbed-up properly?"

A student in his final year probably is near the top of his curve of academic knowledge, and if the trainer is willing to accept it he can have a week of first-class postgraduate instruction from his pupil. At the very best he can get some satisfactory assurance that he is not all that out of date.

**General Practice** by G. O. BARBER.  
*St Mary's Hospital Gazette* 1964.  
70. 92.

The most valuable lesson I learned during the week and possibly one of the most important of my brief medical career was from one of the partners. It was delightful to see him entering a room and in a few seconds changing a gloomy atmosphere into one of cheerfulness and smiling faces. An anaemic, listless old woman who had given up hope, discovered that life did not have to be miserable and intolerable. An anxious young mother laughed at herself for making so much fuss about her little boy's cough and sickness. An almost blind man with hypertensive disease felt that it would be worthwhile to go out for a walk again.

The ability to give such reassurance to patients and the art of bestowing it may be natural to some, but many have to be trained for it. After all is it not often what the patient has come seeking? The knowledge to give the right treatment is essential, but the drug itself may be unpalatable to the recipient, not to mention the side effects of many in current use.

**A View of General Practice** by  
a final year student. KAMBIZ  
DOWLATSHAI. *St Mary's Hospital*  
*Gazette*. 1964. 70. 93.