

THE ART AND THE SCIENCE OF GENERAL PRACTICE

WELCOME

Dr Annis Gillie, *O.B.E.*, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.P. (*president, The College of General Practitioners*) took the chair and declared the symposium open and introduced Dr Denis Wheeler, Managing Director of the Wellcome Foundation, our host.

Dr Denis E. Wheeler, B.Sc., Ph.D. (*managing director, The Wellcome Foundation Ltd.*). The Foundation has taken a very great interest indeed in the work of your College and it has been our privilege to have acted as hosts to these annual symposia for the past eight years now. In this sense, therefore, I feel we have helped you a little in your promotion of postgraduate education.

It seems to me most appropriate that your chairman this morning should be your new president, Dr Gillie, whose Report is now universally known as the Gillie Report and has been so well received that today it is generally regarded as the starting off point for so much that is new and exciting in the current studies of that supremely important field of medicine that we call general practice. The time has undoubtedly come when medical science must direct its attention more than it has in the past to the care of patients outside the hospital, but, in seeking to promote more efficient and effective technical competence, we must, I think, all of us, be supremely careful not to lose the personal and the human touch. Perhaps on a Sunday morning it is not altogether unreasonable to draw a comparison between general practice and the Church; and to suggest that not entirely dissimilar qualities are needed for each if the well-being of the community is to be adequately served.

There must, I feel, inevitably be many changes in general practice in the future. Today's incurable disorders will be

controlled; we shall have a better understanding of the neuroses and the psychoses. Progress is always painful; it is certainly never easy; and we must in any progressive field be forever on the threshold of changing patterns. It must be tempting sometimes for those of you in general practice to accuse the promotional literature, for example, of the pharmaceutical companies and the disturbers of your prescribing practices and habits, and possibly thereby to forget that it is progress in medical science itself that is really responsible. There is a need, I feel, to apply the more rigid scientific disciplines to general medical practice, and the establishment of research units for this purpose, as for example that now under the direction of Dr Robert Smith at Guy's, and your own plans for an Institute—these, I think, are clear evidence of your acceptance of this need.

This, I believe, madam chairman, is the first time your College has organized an international symposium to discuss the problems of general practice. The Wellcome Foundation is proud to be associated with this meeting, and we extend a most cordial welcome to Dr Stampar from Yugoslavia, Dr Huygen from the Netherlands, and Dr Medalie from Israel. As your hosts, we also welcome all the general practitioners and medical school teachers and medical officers of health and so many others of you who have come to listen or to take part in these discussions.

Recently, I was at a dinner in Ireland and a speaker told us of the effort being made there by an Irish priest, a Scottish presbyterian minister and an English clergyman to understand each other's theology. To this end they decided to spend an afternoon fishing together on the lake. It was hot and they became tired and thirsty and well into the afternoon the Irish priest climbed up out of the boat, stepped over the side, walked across the lake to the shore and walked back again with six bottles of Guinness. This lasted for a little while. Then the Scottish presbyterian minister, feeling something was required from him, also got up, stepped over the side of the boat and walked across to the shore, and walked back again with half a dozen bottles of ginger beer. Finally, the English clergyman, feeling late in the afternoon that there was really no way in which he could avoid this exercise, stood up in the boat, climbed over the side and sank like a stone to the bottom; whereupon the Scottish presbyterian minister turned to the Irish priest and said: "You know, I think we should have told him about

the stepping stones! ” In extending my good wishes to you all for an interesting and fruitful conference, I hope and I believe and I am sure that you will not only tell each other about the stepping stones, but share them with everybody else.

Chairman: This is the eighth annual symposium held in this auditorium, but our first international symposium. It is a privilege for me to be involved in it and I am sure that we shall all enjoy it immensely.

We welcome Dr Stampar from Yugoslavia, Dr Huygen from the Netherlands, with, I believe, a colleague in the audience, and Dr Medalie from Israel. We look forward to hearing their papers, and between the papers there will be a brief interval, not for discussion, but for questions. We also welcome some colleagues from the United States.

There are many who deserve our thanks for making this symposium possible—first, our hosts; and it is so good to have had Dr Denis Wheeler to welcome us. He and his colleagues have been our hosts in every sense of the word, with meals, in the past, and on this occasion they have given generously to help defray the expenses of organizing this international symposium.

We are grateful to the British Council, and in particular, to Dr Margaret Suttill, Dr Crawford Jones and Mr MacNaghten, of the Visitors' Department, who have made the whole of the arrangements for the past week for our visitors easy and smooth. Our visitors are finishing a very, very busy week, and it is marvellous to think they have any energy left to come and speak to us today. They have been welcomed by the Ministry and much has been shown to them. They attended a general-practitioner discussion/seminar at The Tavistock Clinic on emotional disorders in general practice.

We have to thank Sir George Godber, Dr Gallagher, Dr Talbot Rogers and Dr MacGregor, who discussed the working and administration of the National Health Service; also Dr A. B. Stewart, chief medical officer of the London County Council, who took our visitors to Woodberry Down Health Centre and discussed various aspects of care from a health centre point of view; also Dr I. Ash, the medical officer of health of Harlow New Town, who gave up a morning to introduce them to some general practitioners at the various health centres and to discussing the closer working of general practitioners and public health doctors and their