THE COLLEGE APPEAL

The Lord Mayor of London's Reception

The portents could scarcely have been worse. June had regressed to winter: the cold, slanting rain came down like knitting needles; and a sodden newspaper placard told of another nose-dive by the pound sterling.

Once inside the Mansion House, the venue for the launching of an appeal for the College's new home, the gloom began to lift. The dignity and opulence of the official residence of our host, the Lord Mayor of the City of London, was a guaranteed mood-elevator. The feeling of euphoria increased as we proceeded through the succession of superb state rooms, one surpassing the other in crystal-chandeliered splendour, leading finally to the Egyptian Hall, undoubtedly one of the largest and finest reception rooms in Europe, where the party was being held.

En route guests were announced by a uniformed majordomo and received by the Lord Mayor, Sir Murray Fox, wearing his badge of office; our President, Sir Martin Roth, similarly bedecked, and Lord Goodman wearing a warm, welcoming urbane grin.

The guests at the reception included the Lord Chancellor and Lady Elwyn-Jones, the Belgian Ambassador and Mme de Beaumarchais, the Swedish Ambassador and Mrs. Jödahl, the Duke of Devonshire, the Dowager Duchess of Hamilton, Lord and Lady Richard Percy, the Earl and Countess of Selkirk, the Countess of Loudon, Viscount and Viscountess Cowdray, the Dowager Viscountess Monckton of Brenchley, Lord Auckland, Lord and Lady Grenfell, Lord and Lady Gainford, Lord and Lady Greenhill, Lord and Lady Gibson, Lady Melchett, Lord and Lady Platt, Lord and Lady Scarman, Lord and Lady St. Just, Mr. Jeremy Thorpe, M.P. and Mrs. Thorpe, Sir Roger and Lady Ormrod, the Hon. Mark and Mrs. Bonham Carter, the Hon. Vere and Mrs. Harmsworth, Sir Robert Hobart, Sir John and Lady Riddell, Sir John and Lady Woolf, Sir Jules and Lady Thorn, Lady Stevens, Sir Edwin and Lady McAlpine, Sir John and Lady Burgess, Sir Billy Butlin, Sir Richard and Lady Doll, Sir Joseph Lockwood, Sir Emile and Lady Littler, the Sheriffs and their ladies, Mr. and Mrs. Denis Hamilton, Mr. and Mrs. James Coltart, Mr. and Mrs. W. O. Campbell Adamson, Mr. Norman Fowler, M.P., Mr. and Mrs. D. C. Buchanan, Mr. and Mrs. J. Edward Sieff and Mr. and Mrs. David Astor.

A platoon of waitresses moved efficiently amongst the distinguished company armed with huge silver platters of food and drink. There was a pleasing hum of conversation: the party was going well.

Silence was called for. From a dais the company was addressed by, in turn, the Lord Mayor, the President and Lord Goodman.

The Lord Mayor in a speech of welcome explained why we were gathered together. Sir Martin Roth, replying, was in excellent form. He crammed on to a thumb-nail a lucid history of psychiatry and a history of the College. He went on to emphasize what its aims and objects were and its deep concern with teaching and research. He outlined our special predicament as the youngest of the Royal Colleges, particularly its lack of endowments. There was an urgent need to pay off the debt incurred in the purchase of our splendid newly-acquired home at 17 Belgrave Square, S.W.1, which had come our way after a very prolonged search and which was ideal for our purposes. He was, as always, able to amuse: for example, the company roared their approval of his definition of a drug as 'a substance which when injected into a cat produces a paper'. Lord Goodman, speaking off-the-cuff—a skill he demonstrated so admirably at the last annual College dinner—was entertaining, informative and appealing, in all senses of the word. He too contrived to introduce a note of levity. To cheers he adroitly stood the usual gloomy statistic on its head, and reassured us that five out of six women and nine out of ten men will *not* require admission to a mental hospital during their lifetime.

As a social event and as a public relations exercise the reception was undoubtedly an enormous success. How successful it was as a fund-raising device remains to be seen. But as we emerged into the late evening, the rain had stopped, a sickle moon shone bright and June had caught up with summer. The portents had improved no end.

HENRY R. ROLLIN.

https://doi.org/10.1192/S0007125075306387 Published online by Cambridge University Press