C.-E. A. Winslow, Leader in Public Health

With the death, on 8 January 1957, of Charles-Edward Amory Winslow, there came to a close a life that had been uniquely dedicated to the service of mankind. Winslow was regarded, nationally and internationally, as the elder statesman of the public health movement, a distinction he had earned through some 50 years of spirited and unremitting labor in the field of public health, including bacteriology, epidemiology, sanitary engineering, health education, industrial, mental, and social hygiene, public health nursing, housing, and the economic aspects of medical care. The record of his research and experience in these fields was set down in more than 600 books and papers, 63 of which have been published since his retirement (1945). He exerted a wide influence, also, through his editorship of the *Journal of Bacteriology* and the *American Journal of Public Health.*

For nearly 50 years Winslow's advice in matters pertaining to global public health was sought by individuals and governments, both foreign and our own. He had responsible assignments with the U.S. Public Health Service, the League of Nations, the American Red Cross, and, most recently, the World Health Organization, whose work took him on several occasions to Geneva.

Winslow was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on 4 February 1877. He held bachelor and master of science degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, an honorary master of arts degree from Yale University (1915), and a doctor of public health degree (1918) from New York University. During the 10 years from 1900 to 1910, he served on the faculty of M.I.T., teaching sanitary biology and serving as biologist-in-charge of the Sanitary Laboratory. It was in these early years that he was called on more than once to act as an expert witness in cases involving proper sewage disposal and pure water. Thus, he gave expert testimony in Chicago when that city had many long-drawn-out lawsuits concerned with the harmful effects of unpure sewage which found its way into the drainage canal, eventually to pollute the water supply in St. Louis.

Winslow subsequently taught for one term at the University of Chicago and for 4 years at the City College of New York. In 1914–15 he was director of the division of public health education, New York State Department of Health. He served concurrently, from 1910 to 1922, as curator of public health at the American Museum of Natural History, New York City. In 1915 Winslow was appointed the Anna M. R. Lauder professor of public health at the Yale University School of Medicine and, for the next 30 years, brought increasing distinction to Yale as he developed his department, one of the first in the United States, into an outstanding "laboratory" for the training of students, who flocked to him from many countries. During these years he also played a leading role in founding the Yale School of Nursing (1923) and in the creation of the New Haven Housing Authority, which he served as chairman from 1938 until his death.

To give a picture of Winslow, the man and teacher, I should like to borrow from his good friend, James Mackintosh of London, who has written: "Winslow was a commanding figure, yet he never seemed remote, in spite of his noble and somewhat aristocratic appearance. In many ways one thinks of him as the ideal teacher—eloquent, scholarly, and humane. He taught men and women of all ages and degrees of experience, at all levels, from the World Health Assembly to the smallest classroom, without ever laying down the law. . . . He pursued his subject—the health of the people—with a devotion that was passionate in its intensity. Yet he never lost touch with reality, and most of his public health ideals were severely practical. . . ." [*Lancet* **272**, 166 (19 Jan. 1957)].

It is impossible to contemplate Dr. Winslow's enormous influence in developing and shaping the field of public health without thinking also of Mrs. Winslow, the former Anne Fuller Rogers of Boston, one of his pupils, whom he married in 1907. In a tribute to William Thomson Sedgwick [*J. Bacteriol.* **6**, 225 (1921)] Winslow acknowledged his great debt to his former teacher and wrote with discernment of Mrs. Sedgwick: "Mrs. Sedgwick not only gave her husband a rare personal devotion which made his health and comfort and the success of his career a constantly controlled motive, but her artistic taste and rich temperament kept a warmth and color in his life which made it impossible for Sedgwick ever to feel those limitations which sometimes accompany a life of intellectual concentration, limitations which Charles Darwin, for example, felt so pathetically in his later years." Anyone who knew them will be struck by the aptness of this quotation to the Winslows themselves, for Mrs. Winslow was, from the first, completely absorbed in her husband's work and shared with him its problems and satisfactions to a remarkable degree.

Among the many honors that came to Winslow were the Sedgwick memorial medal of the American Public Health Association (1942), the W. Paul Anderson medal of the American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers (1949), the Lemuel Shattuck medal of the Massachusetts Public Health Association (1951), the Léon Bernard medal of the World Health Organization (1952), and the Mary Lasker award (1952). In 1947 a special number of the *Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine* was dedicated to him, its pages filled with contributions by his students and colleagues. And in 1952 the first Charles-Edward Amory Winslow lecture was given, under a lectureship established at Yale University through the gifts of his former students.

In the official faculty minute prepared at the time of Winslow's retirement from Yale, in 1945, there appears this sentence: "Obstacles are only stimulation for Winslow. He can use today's structure for tomorrow's scaffolding . . . ignoring minor obstacles as he climbs to the ideal others may only later understand." One might enumerate here all the areas of public health to which Winslow contributed, but I would rather repeat his own definition of "public health," since it outlines the broad aspects of the field which he tilled so widely: "Public health is the science and the art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting physical and mental health and efficiency through organized community efforts for the sanitation of the environment, the control of community infections, the education of the individual in principles of personal hygiene, the organization of medical and nursing service for the early diagnosis and preventive treatment of disease, and the development of the social machinery which will ensure to every individual in the community a standard of living adequate for the maintenance of health." This represents the "ideal others may only later understand" and which they may be even longer in achieving. Toward establishing these liberal concepts—the sturdy scaffolding for tomorrow's structure—Charles Winslow gave the devoted and vigorous service of a lifetime.

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