‘A psychogeriatrician – the crème de la crème’

Lord McColl of Dulwich, a retired surgeon, told the following story about our colleagues, Dr Colin Godber and Professor Simon Lovestone, in the House of Lords debate on ‘Mental and physical health: parity of esteem’ on 10th October 2013 http://www.theyworkforyou.com/lords/?id=2013-10-10a.182.0&s=speaker%3A13564#g185.0

My wife had Alzheimer’s for the last five years of her life. I pay tribute to the Maudsley Hospital, which was superb in all its help, especially Professor Simon Lovestone, who is a brilliant psychiatrist and a most kindly man. I got to know him quite well, and I told him the story of how I wanted to be a psychiatrist but was put off by the psychiatrists themselves. He said, “My experience is exactly the reverse”. He had wanted to be a surgeon but he met a psychiatrist called Colin Godber, who was a psychogeriatrician—the crème de la crème of the psychiatric world. Colin Godber asked him if he would like to come and visit a patient at home. They went there, the patient prepared a nice cream tea and then played the piano for half an hour, and then they went home. He said to Colin, “He didn’t seem to be much of a patient”. “Oh no, he wasn’t the patient,” said Godber, “It was his wife. I looked after her, and this week is the anniversary of her death. She died two years ago, and on the anniversary I always go and have tea with him”. Simon Lovestone was so amazed by this that he said, “That’s what I want to be; I shall be a psychiatrist”.

The full debate can be found at http://www.theyworkforyou.com/lords/?id=2013-10-10a.182.0&s=speaker%3A13482#g192.0