

DALHOUSIE Gazette

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Medical Students

The hardest-working students on any college campus are those who are taking medicine.

For four long years they toil incessantly over their books and in laboratories, and the fifth year they spend interning in hospitals, learning the more practical side of their profession.

All they have to look forward to when they graduate is a life of hard work, often without remuneration, and sometimes in the most fearful places.

In his first year a Medical student takes the elementary subjects, the foundation of his later studies. If he succeeds in mastering these he passes on to the second year, where more formidable subjects confront him. In his third and fourth years he delves more deeply into the subject of the human body; and all the sickness to which it is prone.

If the Med student's health and energy survives these four years of constant drudgery and seemingly endless study, he becomes in his fifth year an interne in one of the hospitals, and for a tiny salary he serves a year, learning from first hand the intricacies of his chosen profession.

No person could undertake to study medicine unless he had that inspiration akin to what is termed in other circles a "call". More than normal energy and drive is required to help a would-be doctor acquire all the knowledge needed for actual practice.

Five years is a long slice out of any person's life, and great credit is due any person who would devote this much time to materially unproductive endeavours, with a promise of ceaseless service on behalf of an ailing humanity when he is through.

The studies at Medical school are not only hard, but often quite unpleasant. There is no easy way to learn what makes human bodies work and what sicknesses attack them and how to cure them. A Medical student must live his intended profession all through the years of his studies in order to equip himself adequately to deal with any situation he may be called upon to meet in the course of his later practice.

It is little wonder that the members of no other profession inspire in the public such respect as do doctors. This respect may be sometimes mingled with superstitious awe and admiration for the secrets of life and death possessed by the doctor, but it is mostly for the personality of the physician himself, a man who devotes his life to saving others, and allows his rest to be disturbed that others may have peace.

There is no tribute high enough to be paid to those who are members of our medical profession. Our very lives depend upon them. We entrust our health and our very lives to them, and in very few cases is our trust misplaced.

The Stethoscope

The stethoscope needs no introduction. This little instrument, that fits very easily into the hip pocket, or, if you're in second year medicine, the coat pocket, is symbolic of the medical profession.

The word stethoscope comes from the Greek meaning; to inspect the chest. It was born into the family of medical diagnostic aids through the ingenuity of one, Laennec, a physician of the time of Napoleon. He found that the sounds within the chest were made more audible by listening to them through a roll of parchment. It has come a long way since then and today one sees many varieties of this unique hearing aid, but their basic working principle is the same. Everyone knows what this instrument looks like. There are many amusing conceptions, amongst those who are not acquainted with its construction, as to what it contains . . . some are declined to think that there are complex electrical gadgets within and, in this era of atomics, there are probably the jet-minded few who picture neutrons and electrons chasing one another up and down the long, black tubes. But, to disappoint these imaginative one, the stethoscope contains nothing but air . . .

The multitudes trespassing the portals of the doctor's office have given the stethoscope many names. It blushes when called "that hearing machine" and laughs when children refer to it as the "telephone".

To the medical student the stethoscope is his unofficial symbol of advancement. In his first year he looks upon those in the second year, who are "entitled" to incorporate it as part of their being, with awe, awaiting the day he can have one . . .

In his second year he spends a great deal of time in serious deliberation as to what type to purchase. He shines and cares for it like a new toy . . . he practices carrying it in the side pocket of his suit coat so that all can see. He compares its merits and demerits with those of his fellow students. He shows great authority when asked to use it.

In his third year, the stethoscope finds its final resting place, the hip pocket, on the right side . . . there it is to remain throughout the life of the owner, quietly awaiting the time its services are required. It now shows signs of wear and tear, any considerations of the year previous are forgotten.

In the fourth year, this pride and joy of Laennec loses its individuality and is incorporated with the other technical aids now needed by the student.

Thus, this little bit of metal and rubber, which has brought forth the emotions of the heart and sigh of the chest, is like an old friend to the profession . . . long lasting, faithful, never altering the facts, but passing on only what it hears.



Med's Sweetheart — Attractive Barbara Doull, above, has been chosen as the Med's Sweetheart for 1950-51. Barb will represent the Medical School in the annual Munroe Day Campus Queen competition. The busy Med students took time off from their cadavers to do some living subject work, and had no trouble deciding on lovely Barb as their choice.

Threatened Tax Affects Tabby Trade

The future of one of Canada's foremost medical college is in jeopardy, authorities affirmed recently, as a result of the announced intention of the Massachusetts government to place a luxury tax on cats. How far-reaching the effects of this head tax on felines may be has not yet been determined.

The most obvious result is that the cost of laboratory specimens will skyrocket far beyond the means of either the biology department or of the medical school. The rise in the value of aristocratic Bostonian alley leopards is bound to affect the price and available supply of the Chicago specimen house which ships cats to all parts of North America. If these cats are not available it will be impossible to produce pre-medical students of a calibre suitable for medical school admission.

The only alternative appears to be resorting to local sources of supply. City police are already on the lookout for catnappers.

An increase in the prevalence of gastric ulcers is noticeable among merchants as that ancient and venerable institution, the store-window cat, faces extinction. Sentimental citizens are expected to rise in arms against threats to "Toms" who have warmed cabbages in local store windows for upwards of ten years. The economic consequences of extinction of these hirsute protectors will also be great because of the fact that the cat-dissecting season occurs during the coldest months of the year. This means that goods will be on display in store windows without feline warmth, which has hitherto protected perishable products from near-zero temperatures.

Encouraging news for cat-lovers in the vicinity may be forthcoming in the possibility that lack of true Boston blue-blooded animals may so reduce the quality of pre-medical education that students examining local animals will not be accepted by the medical admission board. High standards in

cats must be maintained in order to maintain the high standards of students.

One of Dalhousie's eminent pathologists has suggested importation of animals from one of the "larger ceeties of the wurld" (Glasgow, of course) where cats of a suitable calibre might be obtained. This suggestion was rejected as being impractical since the enhanced purchasing power of the Canadian dollar is overshadowed by the increased cost of transportation. Medical men also fear socialistic tendencies of British-born cats.

Students are assured that everything possible is being done to relieve the situation and a crisis may yet be avoided. Bostonians in the Dalhousie Medical School have been appointed to lead a committee which will present a petition to the Massachusetts legislature. The petition for reconsideration of the law is being circulated through all universities using American cats.

The medical school is strongly backed in this action by the biology department, which will markedly feel the strain. Without cats one of the largest classes in the department will have to be discontinued. Demonstrators will find themselves jobless, a blow not only to their pocketbooks, but also to their ego. There is no better tonic for the ego than instructorship in an "elementary class".

The university feels confident that its attempts at a settlement of the crisis will be met with cooperation and that the tax will be applied to some other commodity of less vital importance. It nothing else avails, it is expected that the federal government will intervene.

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