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Editorial

WITH the publication of Vol. I, No. II, the experimental issue of the *Dalhousie Medical Journal* is completed. As was hoped for at the start, the *Journal* has justified its existence, and has shown the feasibility of its continuance as a definite activity of the Medical Student Body. The interest shown by all the students and many of the Alumni has been keen and the support they afforded the staff has made possible any little success which our periodical may have achieved.

Our position as staff in charge of Dalhousie's first medical publication has been fraught with many difficulties, and we sincerely trust that we have done our work efficiently. Regardless of all else, the editors have performed as capably as they knew how and have enjoyed in helping to make Dalhousie's youngest member in the literary field an important asset to student activities at our College by the Sea.

MEDICAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN A TROUBLED WORLD

REGARDLESS of all that one may hear to the contrary the medical profession has for many centuries past and still is, composed of men and women who have chosen it as their life's work because of the finer qualities which it must of necessity cultivate in them. Nor has the student of today an attitude that is in any way changed. In him there awakens that same desire to seek, to find, to learn, so that when his

time comes to minister to a sick world he may efficiently carry on the noble work of his medical predecessors. With his present perfected technical equipment and the knowledge that has been amassed in the past quarter-century he is in a much better position to render aid to the needy when he begins the practice of his art.

Just one of the advances during this period has been the rise and rapid growth of the science of immunology. The achievements in this field of medicine particularly, have been brilliant, indeed remarkable. With the knowledge that it has given the physician he is able effectively to cope with such death dealing agents as diphtheria, small pox and many of the other infective fevers and to reduce to a negligible degree the mortality caused thereby. So great and so rapid has been medical advance, that in the past twenty years the average expected duration of life has been extended, at least a decade.

A noted sage has written: "the voyage of discovery has not ended so long as the horizon rises". The truth of that statement is undeniable and borne out by the continual progress which medical science is forever achieving. One might therefore look for still greater things to come.

But, it may be asked, of what value is man's conquest of nature's ills, if he cannot adjust himself to his environment? Of what importance is the rescue of a thousand lives from the diphtheria scourge if the signature of one crazed dictator can send a million of the strongest and finest men to almost certain death? For in the shadow of the phenomenal developments in our science of disease control the ugly head of modern destructive armaments nods in jeering laughter and, with a tumultuous roar, makes itself known.

At the moment Spain's civil war is the focus for world wide attention. And rightfully it should elicit disgust and indignation to every thoughtful citizen. It is the worst type of war, where Spaniard kills Spaniard in all the brutal savagery which primitive man might have possessed; and such is our present economic set up that the affairs of two minority sections of Spanish thought seriously endangers the life and stability of every man, woman and child on the face of the earth. It is then quite obvious that the past centuries have taught us little of what is most important—how we might live in harmony with our fellow man.

It has, however, taught much to the medical profession. It is not their privilege to question where or why. It is but to minister and relieve those in suffering. That the ethics of the cult has been maintained and that the physician's service to mankind goes on unabated is clearly shown in such critical times, and the extent of international volunteering from the ranks of medicine during the present emergency is still the only bright spot on a cloudy horizon.

Descartes in 1661 wrote: "If there is any possible means of increasing the common wisdom and ability of mankind, it must be sought in medicine". Probably the same train of thoughts prompted Walter Lipman to ask the question: "Would the ideal statesman of the modern society be a physician?"