

LET US NOT FORGET LIFE

Man's progression through life, academically, culturally, spiritually, and morally, presents us with queries, many of which stem from confusing issues. Issues of present concern often evoke such questions as: What in fact is the purpose of life? Why are we here? What have we to offer? Can we give of ourselves to society? Why should we concern ourselves with the mores and dictations of society? I shall not attempt to answer these questions that have puzzled man for eons of time, but merely present a few ideas which may stimulate thought and reflection.

In Medical School, time is scheduled - classes, study, eat, sleep. One realizes that in five short fleeting years, our lives change; a new personality is created, a vast volume of midnight oil has been burnt, and one emerges from Medical School with the umbilical cord partially severed, enthusiastic about moulding a future.

However, what really has transpired during those fleeting years? While we have gained medical knowledge and an insight into various types of mental and physical illnesses, have we truly accomplished the art of compassion - that feeling in our hearts which enable us to be more understanding with our patients? Have we really gained this compassion or have we just scratched the surface of our patients feelings? Of course this question is open for discussion, but what of this so-called "feeling"? What can assist us to acquire it? Can we not reach this through art, literature, and philosophy as well as through the intricacies of a physiology text. We must realize that a part of our medical skill is acquired through exposing ourselves to these other aspects of man's experience. While in Medical School have we attempted to seek out these experiences? Each must answer these questions for himself. I pose only some of the problems.

Can we approach some of these problems by increasing our awareness of the world around us? Maybe we can. But, on the other hand, some assistance from the arts may well enhance the appreciation of the beauty in our own work. Shall we give time to organizations, or should we selectively attempt to exist in a world of theory and fact alone. Let us not be selfish. In this present state of mind we are individually losing something, for there is more to life than these multiple theories and facts. This is from the personal aspect. Indeed it is personal, for experience shows us how we can enrich the lives of others with a sympathy for culture, and simultaneously enables us to share our

experience with others.

Let me be more specific. There are various organizations on the Medical Campus; The Medical Society, The Medical Journal, as well as innumerable societies on the Studley Campus, all through which we may participate in the religion, philosophy and culture of our own day. To what extent do we take advantage of these opportunities?

Let me illustrate, from my own experience in the Medical Society and with the Medical Journal. This has provided me with ample opportunity to extend myself on a useful and aesthetic level. I know that there are many such opportunities for the Medical Student, who wishes to participate in these campus organizations. The Dalhousie Medical Journal is a source for students to have published their research projects, not to mention articles of interest to the Medical Profession.

But - and I must emphasize this - the problem of encouraging students to write articles is overwhelming. In other student Medical Publications, we have found that this problem also exists. The usual reply to a request to write for a journal is; "Well, I just haven't the time. - What shall I write on? - Oh, I'm not talented enough. "Well now, who is to discriminate just who is capable of writing?"

If one spends a few hours of reflection and in research on a topic - any topic, I am quite sure that most of us have something to say that others would enjoy reading. In fact two or three students could compose a symposium on a topic of medical interest. Medical Symposia are stimulating, and, in a mutually beneficial way, provide the means for bringing interesting advances to our attention.

Let us not forget that a publication of this kind is supposed to represent our views. As I said earlier, we can exercise our creative endeavour on both the technical and aesthetic plane, both of which can illuminate the road to fulfilment. The opportunities for this fulfilment exists. One merely has to exercise his choice, always bearing in mind his major responsibility.

Whose fault is this - this decline, this lack of appreciation of the many facets of education? Is it our professors? our environment? our own? Time? I will leave this thought with you. Time is a relative theme. There is time for everything if you so desire; time for socialising, time for study, time to appreciate life's gifts. Life is too short to cast aside a few years without seeking and contributing to its many pleasures.

L.L.