The Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania

North College Avenue and Twenty-First Street

Philadelphia

The Choice of a Vocation
THE CHOICE OF A VOCATION.

By ELLEN C. POTTER, M. D.

The choice of a vocation presents itself to every thoughtful student, and it is desirable that the choice should be made early in one's academic career, in order that one's course of study may be planned intelligently.

Two factors usually determine one's choice, necessity and inclination, but it is well that one other factor should enter into the calculation, namely, the demand of the public for service, inasmuch as demand and supply govern the financial return one may expect from one's labors.

The college woman's thought very naturally turns to one of the professions, especially to that of teaching, and unless she has been well advised she frequently reaches the end of her academic career, having completed the classical course, ready to teach ancient and modern languages, English, etc., only to find the market overcrowded with young women equally well prepared and anxious to teach along the same lines.

The demand today is for teachers of science; biology, chemistry, physiology; for research workers in pure science; for practical workers in laboratories connected with industrial plants. In addition there is an unsatisfied demand for women trained in the practice of medicine in general and special lines and in hygiene in all its branches; for women to fill responsible positions in girls' schools and colleges as physicians and teachers; for women to contribute to the development of the work in institutions for feeble-minded and incorrigible girls; for women to hold hospital positions, municipal and state offices in connection with work dealing especially with women and children and preventive medicine.

The fields of dietetics and nutrition present an ever-increasing demand for trained women. The mission field calls for women qualified in medicine and the demand is far greater than the supply.

The course of study which will prepare one to meet these demands at the greatest number of points is undoubtedly to be found in the scientific courses leading to the degree of Doctor of Medicine.

Requirements Preliminary to the Study of Medicine.

The minimum requirement for entrance upon the study of medicine in any medical college in "Class A" of the American Medical Association's classified list of medical colleges includes at least one year of academic work giving credits in chemistry, biology, physics and a modern language. The maximum requirement is an academic degree, which must include the required number of credits in the subjects named above.

The medical course covers a period of four years, and if license to practice is desired an additional year in residence in hospital is required in Pennsylvania before one is eligible for examination.

It appears, then, that the maximum time which may be devoted to the attainment of the degree and license to practice is nine years. The minimum is six years, one academic, covering the necessary science, four years of undergraduate medical study and one year of hospital residence if license to practice is desired.
THE CHOICE OF A MEDICAL SCHOOL.

The woman who contemplates the study of medicine faces the problem of the choice of the school which will give to her, as a woman, the best preparation for her medical career.

There are several co-educational schools open to her, either connected with State universities or in universities independent of State control; or she may secure her medical training in a school exclusively for women, but with a faculty, both major and minor, composed of both men and women.

There are certain very definite advantages to be considered in a medical school exclusively for women: The classes are smaller than in the co-educational institution (the number of women studying medicine being only 3.8 per cent. of all medical students) and the small class insures individual instruction.

The course of study in the co-educational institution is planned to meet the needs of the majority of the students—that is, of the men—and the needs of the women students, who form an inconspicuous minority, can not be given special consideration.

To the woman who intends to enter upon the practice of medicine the fields of obstetrics, pediatrics and diseases of women very naturally belong, and in a school exclusively for women the clinical material in obstetrics and gynecology is much more abundant and can be used to greater practical advantage than in mixed classes.

It is important that medical training should develop in the woman student self-reliance, initiative and sustained independence of action. This is to a greater degree possible in an institution for women exclusively, since that psychologic element (very real though intangible) is absent, which relegates the woman to a dependent position in the presence of the "stronger sex."

The only medical school for women, exclusively, in the United States, listed in "Class A" by the American Medical Association, is The Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania.

THE WOMAN'S MEDICAL COLLEGE OF PENNSYLVANIA.

The Woman's Medical College was established in 1850 by members of the Society of Friends in response to the awakened desire of women for the higher education and because of the economic necessity which compelled women to carve out for themselves more extensive professional opportunities.

The impulse which impelled the women of those early days to the study of medicine is voiced by Emily Blackwell, the pioneer woman physician: "Then we realized the infinite narrowness and pettiness of the avenues open to women and the crowds of competitors who kept each other down in the struggle. We determined that we would endeavor to open a new door and tread a fresh path rather than push for a footing in one already filled to overflowing."

The early history of the college reads like a romance, as it chronicles persecution, self-denial and sacrifice.

The college is situated in Philadelphia, about twenty minutes by electric car from the centre of the city, and the broad campus of Girard College, which it faces, affords an abundance of sunshine and fresh air.

Philadelphia has for more than a century held a place second to none in the United States as a medical centre. The undergraduate is therefore afforded unusual opportunity in clinics, lectures, libraries, et cetera, outside of the individual college environment. It also presents other advantages in musical, artistic, literary and educational lines which are to be considered in selecting the city and school in which four years of concentrated study are to be undertaken.
The college equipment consists of the main college building, in which are located the executive offices, lecture-rooms, museums and the laboratories of anatomy and chemistry. A modern building houses other laboratory departments as well as a gymnasium; adjoining this is the laboratory of bacteriology.

The main hospital building is situated in the same block, and its wards and dispensaries afford abundant material for the clinical work of the two upper classes. The ward and dispensary service covers general medicine and surgery, and gynaecology as well as the various specialties. The obstetrical wards and a large out-patient service are situated in the southern and poorer part of the city. The total number of house patients for the year ending June 1st, 1913, was 1042, the number of out-patients 5945, with the number of visits 28,726; the number of births was 462.

Each senior student serves as clinical clerk on the wards and in the hospital dispensaries for a period of ten weeks, and as externe in the obstetrical service for five weeks. Lectures, quizzes, laboratory work and special dispensary services fill the remaining months of the term.

The student registration averages one hundred, the college drawing its students from all parts of the United States as well as from foreign lands. The details of the college course are outlined in the annual announcement, and to that you are referred.

The number of hospital positions open to recent graduates of this school are far more numerous than the available supply of candidates. These hospitals are scattered over the United States from Maine to California, and the work embraced covers that of the general hospital, special hospital in eye, ear, nose and throat, and obstetrics as well as that of the hospital for children, for the insane and institutions for the feeble-minded. These internships usually carry with them no financial compensation for the service rendered, but in some cases a small salary is offered.

**Student Organizations.**

The *Students' Association* is the organized body of the student democracy through which official communication is held with the Faculty.

It also concerns itself with all matters of general student interest.

The *Medical Club*. The members of the three upper classes who attain a specified high average in their student work are eligible to membership in the club. The object of this organization is to develop in its members the ability to prepare scientific papers and to present them intelligently before an audience.

The *Young Women's Christian Association* is a branch of the College Department of the National Young Women's Christian Association. The Association is incorporated and owns the building which it occupies. A limited number of rooms are available as lodgings for students.

The *Student Volunteer Band* is an active organization composed of those who have pledged themselves to service upon the foreign mission field. The missionary tradition of the Woman's Medical College dates from 1869, when Dr. Clara Swain sailed for India as the first woman medical missionary. Since that time more than ninety graduates have given themselves to this service, and the character of the work done by them is of the first order. Of the women physicians in foreign service today more than 25 per cent. are graduates of this school.

The student publication, *The Iatrian*, is issued monthly during the college year and its editorial staff is elected from the student body.

There are also two fraternal organizations among the undergraduates, local chapters of national societies.
CLINICAL AMPHITHEATRE
THE COST OF A MEDICAL EDUCATION.

In regard to the cost of the pre-medical years we do not presume to give information.

The tuition fees in medical schools of the first class vary from $50 in certain State universities to $240 per year in other institutions. The maximum fee does not, however, approximate the cost of the instruction given.

The tuition fee at the Woman's Medical College is $175.

The table below gives figures upon which may be based calculations as to one's expenses during one college year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition and incidentals</td>
<td>$183.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board and lodging (32 weeks)</td>
<td>144.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car fare, etc</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundry</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation, etc</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$458.00</strong></td>
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The college has no dormitory system, which is true of most medical schools, but within a very few blocks satisfactory lodgings are obtainable, with or without board.

A limited number of scholarships are available to "students who present satisfactory certificates as to age, health, character, education and want of means." A reduction of 20 per cent. of the tuition fee is made to a few students presenting certificates from recognized missionary societies, stating definitely the intention of the applicant to engage in medical mission work. Further details as to scholarships and reduction in fees are to be found in the college announcement.

THE POSSIBILITY OF SELF-SUPPORT DURING THE COLLEGE COURSE.

The schedule of a medical course is extremely crowded. In Pennsylvania the minimum number of scheduled hours per week is thirty-five. It is therefore evident that physical limitations make it almost impossible for a student to consider any regular employment during the months of the college session, and the prospective student is advised not to undertake the course without reasonable financial backing. It is possible, however, to earn considerable sums during the summer holiday.

The management of the College Bookroom is awarded to two students and the income derived therefrom is considerable.

Candidates for the mission field receive in many instances substantial assistance from the Boards they represent.

THE RESULTS.

The opportunities opened to women through the professional training obtained in a medical college are extremely varied, as has been indicated.

The financial returns vary with the line of work chosen and the duration of service, the return being very slow in private practice, as compared with teaching or institutional positions or laboratory appointments.

The extremes in private practice may be noted as from $400 to $10,000 per annum; in teaching and laboratory work from $1000 to $4000.

While the work in any field of medicine is exacting, lack of monotony, either in practice, teaching or laboratory, lends a charm and inspiration which means joy to the worker and without which the real zest of living must be lost.