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EDITORIAL SECTION

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EDITORIAL SECTION

CHOOSING A VOCATION

ACCORDING to our American system of social responsibility, it is a well accepted rule of ethics that every citizen having sufficient health and mental capacity should engage in some employment or service that is useful to society. In choosing a vocation, be it a trade, a business, or a profession, the question of *usefulness to Society*, as well as remuneration and *suitableness to individual taste and capacity* must be duly considered. This duty of choosing and following a useful calling rests upon all alike regardless of sex or class, the only possible exception being physical disability and mental incapacity.

While it may be advisable to allow all possible freedom to a youth in choosing his life's work, it is surely highly desirable that he make this choice consistently early so as to reduce to a minimum the loss of time and motion. It is very often a difficult task for a youth to choose a calling in keeping with the three requirements above. This is especially true during times of general national economic depressions such as we have experienced for several years. It is with due regard for the foregoing considerations that the suggestions below are addressed to our young people who have just passed on from their high school work to a more specialized training for life's endeavor. *Our objective in this letter is to present to the youth of the race the possibilities in Dentistry for service to a community and its desirability from the standpoint of individual taste and inclination.*

The man power of a nation is directly proportional to the health of its people, and any calling whose mission is to promote the health of the people is indeed worthwhile, and surely deserves more than passing consideration. The close causative relation between mouth conditions and general systemic infections, sometimes fatal, has in recent years been demonstrated scientifically, and dentistry, as developed and practiced today, is recognized as an absolute necessity in the promotion of the general health of a community.

The possibilities in dentistry for scientific research are sufficient to satisfy the inclination of the most deeply curious mind, while the opportunity for development of creative genius is unlimited. In other words, in dentistry we find science and art combined and developed to such a degree as to claim the attention of those with either scientific or artistic leanings, or both.

A careful study of statistics shows conclusively that, among our

people, the supply of dentists is quite inadequate to furnish the services needed. There are less than two thousand Negro dentists in the United States, and at the rate of growth of the Negro population, the number of dentists being trained is far insufficient to replenish the dental ranks as thinned out by natural causes. Dental service is now classed among the necessities of life, and all other things being equal, to engage in furnishing such service is reasonably desirable from the standpoint of remuneration. It should be interesting and encouraging to the youth to observe that those engaged in dental practice seem to enjoy a standard of living above the average. Though the depression has modified the demand for dental service, it is to be expected that with a return to normal, the dentist will resume his rightful place in the community.

In this general connection it is to be noted that a number of dental colleges are now offering a course in Dental Hygiene. This course is open to young women who are high school graduates and above, and who are desirous of preparing for service in public schools or in the offices of private dental practitioners.

It is to be hoped that the observations presented herein will open the eyes of our youth, and direct their serious attention to the possibilities and desirabilities in dentistry as a vocation. It is also urged that upon entering college, great care be exercised in selecting scientific courses to the end that one's preliminary training will meet fully the entrance requirements for professional endeavor.

J.L.D.

All Together Men. Let's Go. The National Dental Association Meeting is August 10, 11, 12, 13, at Washington, D. C.