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Editorially

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What is the veterinary profession? We, as students of veterinary medicine especially should know the answer to that question. It is we who will make the veterinary profession of tomorrow.

The difficulty in explaining what is meant by the veterinary profession lies in the word profession. Just what is a profession? Is a profession simply an occupation to which one devotes himself, and which requires a certain amount of knowledge? In the broader sense of the word, a profession is any occupation or calling to which one devotes himself and which is not commercial, mechanical, agricultural or the like. Thus the electrical engineer has his profession, the journalist has his, and the forester has his. In much the same way the veterinarian has his profession. However, the professionalism of the veterinarian should have a broader and deeper meaning than the others.

Strictly speaking, there are only three professions, the so-called learned professions of theology, medicine, and law. Ever since man first began life, these three professions have existed in some form. Throughout history will be found the priest, the physician, and the lawyer. At times, history will reveal the professional man to be a charlatan like the medicine man of the primitive tribe who combined the three professions into one. But regardless of the form, there is always involved the skills of serving man's basic needs. Whether it is the priest serving man's spiritual well-being, or the physician serving man's physical well-being, or the lawyer serving man's relationships between himself and his fellow-man the elements of the service are the same. All of these involve service which is close to life itself.

But, is a veterinarian a member of these three professions, and more especially the medical profession? Probably he is. At least society has awarded him the title of doctor just as it has the physician. And the technical aspects of the two fields are so nearly alike as to be almost the same. However, is the veterinary profession included in the larger and grander meaning of profession as well as the purely technical phases of the term?

Again, probably it is. Man is so intimately related to the animals around him that they are a vital part of his life. As long as the veterinarian serves a vital part of man, then he can be included, if not on the same plane, with the physicians who are concerned with life itself. Serving thus, the veterinarian has earned not only the superficial title of doctor, but also has gained the right to be included in the three learned professions.

To us as veterinary students this fact means that we should be more than skillful technicians, important as that is. It means that we must be equal to the responsibilities that come with being charged with matters close to life itself. We can be equal to these responsibilities only if we know what they are. It is our duty as students to discover what these responsibilities are. To do this? There is no formula we can learn nor class-room courses which can instruct us. We must learn for ourselves. It is only by a deeper and more sincere devotion for our chosen profession, and with a continually increasing base of knowledge that we will be able to succeed. We have so much to learn.

The Veterinary Student