



Retrospect and Prospect

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The Editorial Board

When the first publication of the “Caduceus” appeared, it was feared that the Medical Society might have undertaken a task which it might not be able to justify. Looking back now at the Journal’s brief life of two years, we cannot help breathing a sigh of relief. How far we can claim to be a scientific journal and to what extent we have helped to propagate medical knowledge it is not for us to say. One is never a competent judge of one’s own reputation. We have been trying to live up to those lofty ideals set forth in the first issue and that is all.

We have now reached a period when the future of the “Caduceus” seems to be a perplexing problem. The two medical journals in China have said many kind and encouraging words about “Caduceus.” When others are praising us, it is time to look round and know ourselves, lest a too “brilliant” beginning may lead us to a tragic end. It is with this spirit in mind that these lines are written.

First of all let us think whether it is possible for a society composed largely of student members to produce a first class scientific journal. In the case of “Caduceus,” we may say that the undertaking is possible because we have the services of the University staff and a large number of local practitioners. Let us look from another angle and consider whether a journal like the “Caduceus,” which aims at a high scientific standard ought not to be produced by a purely scientific body, e.g., the University Medical Faculty or the Hongkong Branch of the British Medical Association, so that its contents may carry more weight in the scientific world. One always expects to find a comical element in a student journal. A sarcastic remark or two about one’s beloved lecturers, caricatures of one’s unfortunate fellow students, the numerous satires of an irresponsible writer, these are what make a student magazine worth reading. But this spirit of undergraduate joviality is quite incompatible with scientific earnestness. Faithful to our objects, we have all along kept aloof from that spirit — glimpses of which may sometimes be found under “News and Comments.” This now brings us to another question. It is fair to enlist the support of the junior students for a journal which is largely clinical and perhaps unintelligible to them?

Here we would like to utter a word of advice. If the “Caduceus” is recognised as a valuable contribution to scientific knowledge and we have no reason to doubt it otherwise, then it would do more to raise the prestige of this University than any dozen “rag” magazines you may like to produce.

The future of the “Caduceus” is not as simple as one would like it to be. A time will soon come when we may be asked to hand our cherished work to some other organisations — what then?