Federation of Catholic Physicists' Guilds

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MEDICINE ENTERS 1948

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I.

MEDICINE enters 1948 bewildered and dazed. In every respect, in research, in education, it has reached climaxes. Medicine does not know whether these peaks in their upward trends are simply intermediate peaks, or whether they are true terminal maxima presaging a downward trend. Its self-development through its research has forced medicine to accept larger responsibilities, has introduced complexities into practice and revolutionary modifications into the schedules of our schools of medicine. With these changes, the schools have been forced into undergraduate programs of larger comprehensions and into graduate programs requiring the most minute specialization. The faculties of the schools have been forced into more and more comprehensive activities and the practitioners of medicine, into an examination of their own professional conscience, into formulation of their attitude toward new medical procedures, toward the new auxiliaries of medicine, but most of all toward a new discriminatory evaluation of the doctor.

At no time in the history of medicine has there been a period of greater upheaval of attitudes than the period through which we are passing. If economists, sociologists, historians, psychologists are speaking of the evolutions of the Atomic Age, then surely medicine too, as it studies itself must join in the volcanic eruptions of self-evaluation, of self-criticism and planning. The scientific discoveries of the last decade will make it impossible for medicine ever to see itself again as it was in 1940. The content of the medical curriculum has embraced huge areas of social, economic and historical thinking, which areas a decade ago were for medicine objects of observation and quiet study, but by no means factors in influencing dynamic upheavals. The areas of medical