

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON ETHICS,  
AT THE RECENT MEETING OF  
THE DOMINION MEDICAL  
ASSOCIATION.

DR. J. A. MULLEN, HAMILTON, CHAIRMAN.

The attention of this Committee has been directed to certain letters to the press by a member of this Association, who at the last meeting took occasion to deliver an address to the Medical Section, referring to the relations of medical men to one another and to the public. That gentleman prepared his address avowedly ignorant that the Association had adopted for the guidance of its members the code of the American Medical Association. It was very much regretted that the time of the members should have been consumed in listening to that address expressing views, to a great extent, at variance with the code which had been adopted by this Association and other medical associations in Canada and the United States, and it is still more to be regretted that, after having been informed of the existence of our code of ethics, that gentleman should have written a series of letters to the *Kingston Daily News* giving a synopsis of his remarks; in some parts reflecting unjustly upon the profession and in others advocating courses of action opposed to the rules which have been laid down for our guidance. It would be well for any member of our profession, before departing from rules that are recognized as equitable by this Association and all thoughtful members of the profession, to make himself well acquainted with those rules, and to consider how far his own judgment is to be depended upon, if in opposition to the united voice of the profession. If any member of this Association finds that his views of professional conduct do not agree with the code adopted by this Association, it is advisable for him to withdraw from our membership; for it is understood that a member of this Association is bound to conform in his professional conduct with its code.

It is not expected that the adoption of a code will secure completely the results to be desired; the fallibility of human nature may lead to a departure at times from the spirit of equity and justice which makes the code, but the viola-

tions of law do not form an argument against its existence, but they rather point to the wisdom of having a system to which we may refer as to an authority when occasion requires. While the members of our profession may be animated by a worthy spirit of rivalry in their daily life, it is very much to be deplored if it should be found that into our profession is brought the spirit of self-promotion which shows itself in other callings, often to a most unjustifiable extent. Self-laudation is the worst form of praise, and while a merchant may be allowed to display the excellent qualities of the goods he sells, it is for the members of the medical profession to be convinced that if any one has superior gifts, a discerning public will not be slow in finding it out. We have, therefore, to express regret and disapprobation at the notices which too often appear in the public prints, calling attention to important surgical operations that have been performed, and by whom, and to cases of severe illness in which the patient is making or failing to make progress under the care of some local light.

It has been thought advisable to call attention to this matter that the members of this Association may exert themselves to correct it; not that it is held that any who here assemble require to have their conduct corrected, although a recent notice in the *Canada Lancet* shows that members of our profession in high places are not free from blame. This notice in the *Lancet* refers more particularly to our confreres "down by the sea," but the editor need not have departed from the province of Ontario to find too many examples of the same. In these days of telephonic communication the reporter need not be ubiquitous—a gentle ring will in a moment place him in the virtual presence of the surgeon who is rising or has risen into fame, and in less than a minute the material for a local notice of an accident, not forgetting the name of the able professional, is transferred to the receptive mind of the reporter. It is known that a town surgeon has been roused after midnight from the early moments of his first slumber to answer an enquiry respecting an accident that occurred in the day, and in his indignation he uttered a strong expression (which one of our judges says is not profane,)