

ETHICS AND DEPARTMENT OF THE PHYSICIAN AS A CITIZEN.

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EVOLUTION OF THE MEDICAL CITIZEN.

What man's physical condition may have been, in those ages long since submerged in the oblivion of a bygone eternity, we cannot tell, but we know, that during many millenniums he has been very vulnerable to both disease and injury. He has paid a heavy toll for the privilege of existence. War, pestilence, famine, immorality and intemperance have prematurely filled countless myriads of graves. These malevolent sleuthhounds have persistently and mercilessly menaced his march through all the centuries that have passed away, and in some parts of the world, they are still in full pursuit of their victim with all their virulence.

Common enemies and mutual needs bring men together, in order that they may be the better able to protect themselves. The suffering and disability of sick and injured have always made a sympathetic appeal to the strong and healthy. The accumulation of medical knowledge, and of experience, evolved the necessity for the setting apart of a certain class to use this knowledge and experience in the relief of the sick and disabled; hence the evolution of the physician's calling. As civilization advanced, two needs became manifest: (1st) Educated physicians; (2nd) protection from ignorant impostors. The state enacted laws governing the practice of medicine, and bestowing upon physicians certain privileges. The fact that the state has bestowed these, places the medical citizen under certain obligations to society; hence his ethics and department.

These may be briefly considered under the following heads:

I. Ethical obligations as a citizen to remove the causes of disease.

II. Ethical obligations as a citizen to improve social conditions.

III. Department.

ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS AS A CITIZEN TO REMOVE THE CAUSES OF DISEASE.

The relationship of the individual physician to the individual patient, as medical attendant, does not come within the purview of this article, and therefore may be passed over unnoticed.