

If you are sorely afflicted by what I say, blame not me but the instigator of the deed. Jokes aside, gentlemen, I have been reading some and have gleaned a little from off the field of knowledge *re* the question, and with the hope that I may be able to present you with some food for thought, or, at least, afford a basis for discussion, I undertake this task. He who deals with life should know the laws that govern it. But what are laws and what is life? may be asked.

Laws are relations between cause and effect. The same cause will always produce the same effect, if that on which you operate is the same. If this were not so, science would be impossible. Laws are eternal and fixed principles, to be in harmony with which is life, the opposite is death. It remains for man, then, to discover the laws of life and obey them.

Life is a phenomenon which as yet has not been satisfactorily defined. I asked the professor of biology in Queen's University, What is life? After several days he replied, "I can't answer your question." Life has been expressed by Savory as "A state of dynamical equilibrium." Life, however, does not stand alone; it is but a special manifestation of transformed force. Anæsthesia has been variously defined. A definite understanding of what is meant by it is a matter of no small importance to those whose mission it is to relieve pain and save life.

Webster says, "An anæsthetic is that which produces insensibility." Our own Dr. Teskey says, "Anæsthesia is deprivation of the sense of feeling from any cause." Surely such definitions cannot be scientific, for if they are then a club, a rope or a cannon ball would be an anæsthetic, and death, itself, anæsthesia. Dr. Thomas, of Philadelphia, says, "Anæsthesia is an unconscious condition produced by the inhalation of various drugs, the forces of life being maintained in the meantime." This is a more comprehensive definition, but still we are not satisfied. Dr. Hayes, in the *Dental and Surgical Microcosm*, from which I take the liberty to quote freely, says, "Æsthesia is a condition of sensibility, but in order to realize sensation the force and functions of life must be continued."

Anæsthesia is the opposite of æsthesia, and is a condition of insensibility, and consequently in this condition there must also be in continuance the force and functions of life. Therefore the correct definition, according to Dr. Hayes, is, "Anæsthesia is a physical condition in which the force and functions of life are in continuance under modifications whereby absensation is produced." This, it seems to me, comes nearer to a scientific definition than any other I have seen. The force of life is free oxygen, or rather, according to recent discoveries in science, electricity is the great force of life, and that oxygen is the carrier of this electricity.