

light of others' experience with a law almost identical, we can truly "look into the seeds of time and say, which grain will grow, and which will not."

The disadvantages that arise from having duties so various and dissimilar as those relating to sanitary matters and those concerning the regulation of medical practice committed to the same official hands have very forcibly arrested the attention of the present members of the State Board of Health, and they may have been made to feel that the public health affairs of the State would be better cared for by the legislative power, and the interests of the medical profession placed on a more fit and surer footing if these duties and functions were absolutely divorced and their administration separately provided for.

A principal element of weakness in State Boards of Health, to whom is confided this double duty is to be found in the manner of their creation and perpetuation, they have their springs in political sources howsoever hidden these may be, being always to a greater or less degree the outcome and expression of political feeling and action manifested through the legislative and executive departments of the State governments; and in the course of their existence complications seem inevitably to arise which cripple their usefulness that may be traced to their root in the false principle of their inception and foundation.

Not restriction, not supervision or regulation by the State, but a wider liberty should be demanded by physicians, the right to regulate themselves, to administer the affairs of their own profession in their own way, through and by representatives chosen by themselves.

A criticism that may readily and with justice be made concerning a body created and constituted as is the State Board of Health, not only in this but in other States, is that the appointing power, although acting in the best attainable light and with the very best intentions, may yet fail to make selections for such positions that are truly representative and acceptable to the body of the profession; hence, luke-warmness on their part in the support accorded to such an official body, or even positive hostility may follow.

This objection may be raised against any method devised for the appointment and confirmation of any body having official relations to the medical profession, into which any political considerations may enter, the common consequence may be that any given action taken or result reached will not be a true reflex of the will of the profession concerned.

If this much be conceded with regard to existing conditions and a change demanded the next step in order is to find a practicable remedy one that will keep and save all the good that has been gained under the present law and will at the same time always avoid the great danger of

discomfiture or catastrophe in the operation and outcome of that law, as shown by experience elsewhere.

As a suggestion to this end the Annual Report of the State Board of Health for last year is as follows:

"As a means of avoiding this objection and relieving the Board of all duties save those of a purely sanitary nature, and as a measure of justice to physicians, it is suggested that the entire matter of regulating medical practice and education in this State be placed exclusively in the hands of the medical profession.

"This may be done by the enactment of a law authorizing the incorporation of the medical profession including every legally qualified member in the State, with the right and duty to elect, under suitable regulations a governing body out of their own membership, securing to all shades of medical opinion the right of proportional representation, and to which body would be referred for consideration and decision all questions relating to the regulation of practice, the requirements and standard of medical education, standing of schools, discipline of offenders, etc., etc.

"This course would lodge responsibility for the honor, advancement and attainments of the profession in the hands of physicians themselves; and howsoever high or low these respective standards might rise or fall they would correctly portray the condition, and truly represent the will of the profession, and all the consequent merit or discredit would attach solely to medical men."

This is the deliberately expressed view of the Board on this subject after some years experience and observation of the practical workings of the law, and it appears to me that many strong considerations impel to a further step in the way pointed out; it would be a move for self-government, a right dear to all free men,—it makes for medical autonomy, for the emancipation of the profession from conditions that are too closely linked to party politics and policies. While as a governmental procedure it is of the profession, for the profession, by the profession, it yet works no wrong to the public, but on the contrary would promote the general safety and welfare by making deliberately chosen representative medical opinion the judge of the moral fitness and professional qualifications of those seeking to offer their services to the people; and, if faithfully carried out, would guarantee a higher order of intelligence, a higher standard of attainment, and generally superior endowments on the part of physicians to come.

Although the relations and contact of physicians with the public may be closer in some respects than are those of other learned professions, and while the State has the undoubted right to demand and exact of them the performance of certain duties and services as tending to