

ings that men give themselves to, for devotion to humanity, for high courage in face of danger, for self-sacrifice for the relief of others, for public spirit, liberality of views, and general culture which the duties, the studies and the influences of the profession tend to develop, and which its members as a class display. A physician does not consider himself a member of a guild or corporation, the rules of which he must comply with in order to retain his membership therein, and enjoy its benefits. Medicine is a liberal profession, the rules of which are the unwritten laws of humanity. In spite, however, of this *lex non scripta* there is great need for a written code, as is testified by the numerous applications which continually appear in the columns of medical journals for ethical information on points in dispute. These inquiries are much more numerous in the English periodicals than in American, a fact which I consider due to greater confidence in the editorial management on the other side of the water. A code of ethics when adopted by the profession represents the views of the majority, and is, therefore, binding on all. It will contribute to the purity and dignity of the profession, by indicating the proper course to those whose moral perceptions may be defective, proving a safeguard against the bias of personal interests and being indispensable for reference when differences of opinion exist. The rules of conduct adapted to medicine constitute medical ethics. Medical etiquette, on the other hand, has to do with the forms to be observed in professional intercourse. The latter are conventional, and while they have not the same force as ethical rules, they yet claim observance. The profession is frequently held up to ridicule for observing its rules of etiquette, but these rules are a protection against embarrassment, misapprehension and dissension which are more injurious to the patient than to the physician.

With the indulgence of the editor of the MEDICAL QUARTERLY it is proposed to discuss, in a series of short articles, the code of ethics and etiquette, and this is done in the belief that the subject is of interest to the profession.

A comparison of all the codes of ethics in existence shows that all are based on that prepared by Dr. Thomas Percival, an English physician, and published in 1807. The phrases of the