

say "Law is beneficence acting by rule." The aim of law should be to interfere with liberty of the individual only when the safety, peace, prosperity and welfare of the people demand such interference with freedom of action.

Too much has been made of the argument about the Liberty of the Individual. Our liberties are curtailed on almost every side. It is the law that maketh us free. Members of the medical, legal and theological professions have their actions limited and guided by rules that are the evolution of much experience. The citizen in his daily dealings is surrounded by a multitude of restraints. We all enjoy the greatest measure of freedom in the pursuit of our calling, in the earning of a livelihood, in the up-building of the country, and in the advancement of the public weal, so long as we perform our acts so as not to wrong others. When the boundary line of the rights of others are approached, we find the strictest limitations set for our own actions. This is the essence and *sine qua non* of all civilized and Christian life.

Taking the great Roman aphorism, *salus populi suprema lex est*, as our guide, it becomes self evident that the first and weightiest of all obligations resting upon legislators is to frame all our laws with this end in view. The *salus populi* must be supreme. It is for this reason that we have laws dealing with the adulteration of food, governing the sale of dangerous drugs, preventing the performance of certain operations, regulating the commitment of the insane, the inspection of ocean bound vessels, and so on. In no walk of modern life is the truth of *salus populi* more in evidence than in the demand for a high standard, both of education and ethics, in the medical profession.

Any law that would permit one to undertake the grave responsibilities of diagnosing disease, prescribing for human ailments, or treating diverse injuries, without first compelling such person to become as efficient as modern methods can make him, would be a crime committed by such legislation upon the people. Such a law would be the very antithesis of *salus populi suprema lex*. It would be the very opposite of the view enunciated by Coke that "Reason is the life of the law." If one considers the evolution of such laws as govern the control of the insane and their property rights, the care of patients in our hospitals, the licensing of persons to practise medicine, it will at once become apparent that the guiding principle has been the safety and protection of the people.

All history has proven that people have to be protected from themselves. In many affairs of life they are not capable of judging what is for their own good. The practice of medicine is one of these. It is one of the most complicated of modern studies, involving as it does a know-