

OF THE DUTIES OF THE PROFESSION TO THE PUBLIC, AND OF THE  
OBLIGATIONS OF THE PUBLIC TO THE PROFESSION.

ART. I.—*Duties of the profession to the public.*

1. As good citizens, it is the duty of physicians to be ever vigilant for the welfare of the community, and to bear their part in sustaining its institutions and burdens; they should also be ever ready to give counsel to the public in relation to matters especially appertaining to their profession, as on subjects of medical police, public hygiene, and legal medicine. It is their province to enlighten the public in regard to quarantine regulations—the location, arrangement, and dietaries of hospitals, asylums, schools, prisons, and similar institutions—in relation to the medical police of towns, as drainage, ventilation, &c.—and in regard to measures for the prevention of epidemic and contagious diseases; and when pestilence prevails, it is their duty to face the danger, and to continue their labors for the alleviation of the suffering, even at the jeopardy of their own lives.

2. Medical men should also be always ready, when called on by the legally constituted authorities, to enlighten coroners' inquests and courts of justice, on subjects strictly medical—such as involve questions relating to sanity, legitimacy, murder by poisons or other violent means, and in regard to the various other subjects embraced in the science of Medical Jurisprudence. But in these cases, and especially where they are required to make a *post-mortem* examination, it is just, in consequence of the time, labor, and skill required, and the responsibility and risk they incur, that the public should award them a proper honorarium.

3. There is no profession by the members of which eleemosynary services are more liberally dispensed than the medical, but justice requires that some limits should be placed to the performance of such good offices. Poverty, professional brotherhood, and certain of the public duties referred to in the first section of this article, should always be recognized as presenting valid claims for gratuitous services; but neither institutions endowed by the public or by rich individuals, societies for mutual benefit, for the insurance of lives or for analogous purposes, nor any profession or occupation, can be admitted to possess such privilege. Nor can it be justly expected of physicians to furnish certificates of inability to serve on juries, to perform militia duty, or to testify to the state of health of persons wishing to ensure their lives, obtain pensions, or the like, without a pecuniary acknowledgment. But to individuals in indigent circumstances; such professional services should always be cheerfully and freely accorded.