

but we frequently see a person in which part, and a large part, of the cells are dead, still the person is said to be alive. For instance, a person may have one leg dead so thoroughly that it has become mortified, and still live; but there are certain parts of the body, which if we know them to be dead, we say the person is dead—for instance, the heart or the cerebrum, or if the lungs have ceased to act—whether we are sure the heart has ceased to act or not. Personally, I think we say persons are dead in a great many cases before they really are dead in fact, and my belief was strengthened the other day by reading in an old magazine about a graveyard which was being transferred to another place, in which, when the coffins were opened, six corpses had turned after being buried; and I have heard of several men who were supposed to be dead, and who were restored to consciousness before being buried. Why, when they were advocating a law in France to compel people to keep a corpse for a certain length of time, one of the strongest supporters of that law was a man who had been on the way to the burying-ground to be buried. And in his case, as well as in several other cases of which I have heard, a competent medical doctor pronounced the patient dead. Now all this, and much more that I could mention, goes to show that we are too hasty in pronouncing death.

Of course a dentist has not the responsibility of pronouncing death in cases of fever, etc. However, he may sometimes be called upon to refuse to believe a person is dead.

Supposing a man has been under the influence of chloroform, and does not recover as soon as you think he ought, you have no right to come to the conclusion that he is dead. You can take for example dormice. In the winter time they fall into a sort of stupor, which we might call latent life; you cannot without great care and patience discover any sign of circulation or respiration. They may not breathe more than a few times in an hour; however they are not dead, and if by any means you can increase the oxygen taken into the lungs you will very soon see the return of life. It is the same with many forms of animals. Their stupor seems to be sort of anæsthetic stupor caused by the great amount of carbonic acid gas contained in the system, normal with them, of course. On the other hand, with man it is not normal to have a great amount of carbonic acid gas in the blood. The blood is the great supporter of life. It is on which depends all our variations in health. Keep your circulation perfect, and you will be physically perfect. But diminish the supply, or pollute the supply in any part, and immediately have you bad results, vitality being directly reduced in the part or in the whole body, as the case may be. How soon an arm or a finger will become diseased and die! And how very quickly you lose consciousness when the