

every one of these men whose failure may be traced to conditions aside from the individual himself, I can point out ninety and nine who fail through personal limitations, which are as plain to the student of human nature as are the proverbial hands on the face of a clock. Most of the failures we see are due to misfits. Men enter the dental profession, as in fact they do in all professions, without a sufficiently careful study as to their probable fitness for it. If misfits are more noticeable in our profession than in others, it is merely because it requires a more varied order of ability to be a successful dentist than to be a success in almost any other field of effort. Though this may seem a broad statement, it needs only a careful investigation to prove the truth of every word of it.

"But," I think I hear someone say, "this does not also alter the fact that in towns of a certain population there are, to-day, two dentists for every one who practised there a few years ago." And someone else hastens to clinch the argument by saying that dental fees were never so low as they are at present, and that competition was never so acute. To all of which, I suppose, I must agree. But let us examine this question a little further. Is it not a fact that in these towns spoken of there is twice the volume of dental service being rendered to-day than there was a few years ago? Ask our friends, the dental supply men—who are multiplying amazingly—as to the extent of trade compared with twenty years back. This question of overcrowding is not a recent one—it began away back in the infancy of our profession. The first man who ever located in any town, no matter how large it was, felt overcrowded when a second man came in to practise.

I very well remember my own experience when, as a recent graduate, situated as are you, young men, to-night, I sought out a town where there was already a dentist and opened practice. I shall never forget my reception when, in accordance with the ethical requirements of the case, I made a professional call upon him. Said he, "I suppose you have the legal right to come here and practise, but I want to tell you it is like cutting a loaf squarely in two in the middle." I have never yet learned whether that loaf was divided precisely in the middle or not; but I do know that neither of us starved, and that one of us, at least, had an occasional piece of pie. I should greatly enjoy meeting my good friend to-day to take him by the hand and talk over old experiences.

There are other phases of this question which might profitably be discussed if time permitted; but, suffice it to say that even if we do grant, for argument, that the dental profession is becoming overcrowded, the question arises, are we any worse off than other callings? We hear the same hue and cry in every other pursuit in life, with the possible exception of aeronauts, and I even heard one of them the other day complaining of too much competition. According to statistics there are too many mechanics, too