

on a young operator, and would not have been so swift to withdraw her patronage as she did.

On a line with this lady's action, is that where a patient expects no charge will be made for failing to extract a root, perhaps even with the process which, it may be, an M.D. has decapitated ten minutes since, or, a frail shelled molar in a mouth which has known no other dental instrument than steel forceps. Notwithstanding the fact that the operator may work just as conscientiously on such work as upon any other, and may spend half an hour, as does happen occasionally, I presume, with some others of the profession as well as myself, there seems to be an understanding more or less widespread among the laity, that dentists charge only for extracting when they succeed in removing the offending organ.

Another patient, whose following is legion, agreed to have me remove an aching pulp and afterwards fill it and the cavity. After due medicament I began the work, and did all I could at first sitting, according to my usual practice in such cases, and dismissed the patient with instructions to call again in three days. Though a faithful promise was made, the next call was indefinitely postponed, and when the account was presented he said the tooth had not pained any since; and as I had not extracted or filled it, he thought I should have no compensation. Sometimes we are asked to examine a mouth, and make an estimate of charges for doing what we think should be done, and if we comply, we very often find afterwards that on our first examination there was an exposed pulp we did not notice; also, may be a distal cavity in a molar we could not see and did not probe sufficiently well to find. In these cases, though we may make only an approximate estimate of charges, we are bound by some inward feeling not to exceed it, and consequently in nine out of ten such cases we lose money by losing time.

These and many other cases in practice have caused me to wonder, if *time spent on work* should not be considered the chief basis in making charges. I cannot see my way to believe, that no other considerations should be reckoned with, as all operators do not work equally rapid, nor does the same operator work as rapidly in his first as in his fifth year of practice. Besides this, material is not of uniform price.

I do not deny that charging *by the piece* is with the majority a satisfactory system, but it does seem to me that no one should set up as his ideal of perfection to be able to insert so many sheets of foil in a day or so many amalgam fillings, or to perform any other *measure of quantity* of work; but rather to be able to say at night, "I have worked conscientiously, and have done my best with the work I have had in hand to-day."

The tendency of the fixed system of charges, seems to point to the former ideal rather than to the latter, and it seems to me that