

In, large communities, we find all sorts and conditions of humanity, the rich, the poor, the educated and the ignorant, those from rural districts and the city bred, these call for different classes of the professions to deal with them. They differ in tastes and inclinations. One has the idea that false teeth are the perfection of life. Another has a longing for lots of gold to show. Many let their teeth decay because it's cheaper to have the new ones, and so on all through. There is a difficulty here in discriminating conscientiously, and yet there ought not to be.

In rural districts, perhaps to a greater extent than in cities, a dentist may reflect his ideas more upon his patrons, for if he is the only representative he may be decisive and firm, argumentative and convincing in just the degree that his inclination leads him. If he is an artist in rubber, false teeth is the result, and I am afraid that frequently this result is from indifference or inability, sometimes perhaps from the financial standpoint of the patient, and not from a correct measure of the state of the teeth. I apprehend that there is a tendency in all country places for improvement on the old method of sacrificing natural teeth on account of the effect of the superior education at present obtainable at our college and the good taste and ability to indulge it by the prosperous farmers and artisans making up these districts, and aside from individual cases, which prove very little, there is no doubt a change for the better in the way of saving natural teeth. It does not come within the province of such a paper as this to discuss ways and means of saving teeth, of the ability of doing so, of the various arguments as to the wisdom of doing so under varying circumstances. These points are left to the intelligent operator to decide in each individual instance for himself and to act according to his conscience. What the writer expects to do is to introduce the subject from a personal standpoint and invite discussion and criticism, and thus lead up to a consideration of the many points involved. The subject is so wide, so big, so important, that a whole week could be spent, and the whole range of the curriculum gone over from genesis to revelation.

Let me ask you a question right here, and let each one of you be prepared to give me an answer of some sort. I know each one of you will have an answer, and each one, perhaps, a different one, according to his practice, subject to local or personal qualification. The question is, When am I justified in using the forceps?

Is it in infantile age, and with the temporary teeth? No, decidedly not. Not under any circumstances until the age of the child indicates that the time for action has arrived, which to my mind is when the new tooth is ready to take its place. More harm may be done at this age by premature removal than by delaying too long. Judicious treatment, and filling, if possible, is