

Overcrowding and Fees.

One of the inevitable results of an overcrowded profession is witnessed in the resort to trade methods of advertising, and depreciation of fees. In spite of ethical preaching and the high-toned advice of maturity, our newspapers daily present the public with various catch-penny advertisements, setting forth inducements in the shape of "painless" dentistry, as well as cheap dentistry, which bear upon their face the masks of fraud as well as falsehood. Occasionally we find one who, by the boldness of his pretensions, and the ingenuity of his deception, succeeds in swindling his patients out of fees far beyond the value of the services rendered. But it is a well-known fact that within the last few years, while the cost of being a dentist, as well as a citizen, has nearly doubled, the average fees have fallen off nearly one-third, and the depreciation among some practitioners has continued until it has in many instances reached the very lowest level above actual cost. This is due to no other cause that we can surmise, than the overcrowding of our ranks—and yet the production is apparently on the increase! What is to be done about it? When the public observe that licentiates have dropped the fee, for instance, for a vulcanite set from twenty-five dollars to twenty, then from twenty to fifteen, then from fifteen to ten, until there are men in Toronto, Montreal and elsewhere advertising to make them for five, the public must surely conclude that in the past they have been badly robbed; or that the depreciation in the matter of fees means, as it does mean, that the advertiser is willing to throw out such a bait in hopes to catch half a dozen fish on the one hook, some of whom can be robbed at leisure and at profit. At the meeting in Toronto, several gentlemen gave it as the result of their experience, that this sort of thing is not only futile in the long run, but that it clings to one's skirts like sin, of which one may repent, but for which he must always carry a certain sense of shame.

It is regrettable that some men who have enjoyed a good education are not free from the charge of open violation of the code of ethics. In the earlier history of the Associations these subjects were more discussed, and some unity of action agreed upon, and it might not be amiss to reserve a portion of one day at the next meeting to ventilate them again, and to obtain practical suggestions, as well as to listen to some of the customary preaching. At any rate, it must occur to most of us, that it is quite time in every way to increase the term of studentship, and to raise the standard of matriculation. A profession so easily entered is easily abused.

THE British Dental Association will meet in Edinburgh, on the 28th. We shall have a special report of its proceedings.