

## DENTISTS AS MEN OF BUSINESS.—No. 1.

BY AN OLD DENTIST.

In the early career of almost all respectable Dentists, they are considered legitimate victims for patronage, by that class of patients to be found in every community, who run the gauntlet of all other Dentists in the locality, and whose motto may appropriately be said to be, "Base is the soul that pays." I say all "respectable" Dentists, because the "dead-head" patient will not descend to submit his masticators to a cheap practitioner, or one of questionable fame. You see the work of the leading practitioners only in his mouth; you see large and difficult cavities filled with gold; and without *then* knowing the circumstances, your opinion of one who apparently did not consider previous cost in the care of his teeth, is very much exalted. But when you are numbered with the victims of his patronage, you can then understand the depth of his virtues, and the refreshing impudence which at presentation of your account, grins at you from the grinders you took so much trouble to attend. The bare idea of ever paying for your services, never once entered his head; and you need not be surprised if you learn that your gratuitous patient actually considers he has been of some service to you in your early career, in showing you in your tender years and when you have little to lose, the necessity of having more practical astuteness and more thorough ideas of general business. The race of such patients is sympathetic and they recommend you, one to the other: they scent you out, as the hound finds the fox; and well for you, if your patience and your capital are not exhausted before you discover the systematic cheat. With such patronage most of us have had to contend; and we would certainly be of great assistance to one another, if we could open a Black Book in each locality and for mutual protection, there record the names of these black sheep: and possibly, finding no engagements open in their tour from office to office, the cash might be forthcoming, and they made honest in spite of their teeth.

Professional men, excepting lawyers, of course whom Burton calls "gowned vultures," lose very considerable year after year, through a deficient knowledge of the general details of business, and loose systems of managing their accounts. There is nothing, of course, in the educational curriculum of the College or private tuition, to instruct the dental student in rules of business which he cannot have learned at school; and