

chair before they could properly construct, from start to finish, an ordinary set of vulcanite. It is much the same as if the medical student began his first year with obstetrics and pathology, without having learned the first principles of anatomy and physiology. It is not uncommon to find students, in their first six months, dabbled in operative work, when they do not know how to make an articulation, or to polish an ordinary set of teeth. They have no pride in the property in the laboratory; their tools are dirty and kept in disorder; the lathes are covered with the debris of a week's polishing material, and yet they are happy. We have watched the career of some of these boys. If they have turned out clean, and careful for themselves, it simply proved that they were dirty and dishonest as students; but as a rule the habits they displayed in the laboratory when learning, followed them through life. Vulcanite has been in many ways a curse to the profession, and we may add to the list this fact, that it has been the means of developing a generation of careless and dirty students, who are a reproach and an obstruction to the higher ideal of dental practice. In the olden time of gold and continuous gum work, the laboratory was at least as clean as a jeweller's bench. There are model laboratories to-day where vulcanite predominates, but they are few and far between in comparison with the period when vulcanite was unknown. How do we explain this fact? Chiefly because students start out with a low standard of opinion as to the skill required to construct vulcanite, and they are as impatient to run as they are indisposed to creep. The result is that when these boys become practitioners they find themselves handicapped; they meet difficulties they cannot overcome, and they have to begin to learn! It is in every way wiser and more fitting to get, in the beginning of student life, the ground-work of mechanism in all its branches, theoretical and practical; a knowledge of the use and care of tools and apparatus, and to have a clinical experience of prosthetic dentistry before a thought is given to the work of dental operating and pathology. It would not only be better for the student, but certainly for the dentist in whose office the student may be getting his early tuition.

Even if a dentist intends to delegate the mechanical department to an associate or an assistant, he cannot afford to be indifferent, much less ignorant. We cannot put our patients where we put our models and our dies. The patient who consults a dentist expects his personal advice, and in most cases his personal attention. One may go to a barber and take his choice of half a dozen workmen, but as a rule, the dentist of many chairs and many operative assistants is a quack, or has a quack's instincts, and is keener to make his practice purely mercantile than professional. If dentistry is to descend to that sort of practice, it will degenerate