

There are two things in connection with dentistry which tend to encourage the quack and make his way easy and profitable, while they have the opposite effect on the conscientious practitioner. They are the facts that slipshod and superficial work inflicts a minimum of pain on the patient, and that our work is slow to find us out. It takes years for patients to realize that the fillings made by a certain man are masterpieces ; and it also takes months or years for it to dawn upon them that they have been in the hands of an incompetent. I believe that this state of affairs does not prevail to a similar extent in any other calling.

So much for the causes. Now let us look at the condition itself, and the remedies for it. There is a widespread demand at the present time for low-priced dentistry, and this must be met by some one. It is all very well for us to talk here in our meetings about the highest professional service in our power, money being no object in determining an operation, etc. ; but in our work-a-day life the question of how little we can perform a given operation for is frequently one not lightly disposed of. Indeed, from the humanitarian standpoint of the greatest good to the greatest number, the solving of this question of low-priced dentistry is one that demands our most earnest attention. The most lamentable feature is that low-priced dentistry is synonymous with cheap and shoddy work. There is no denying the fact that even with people of intelligence and refinement it often becomes necessary to have work done for little money or not at all. Therefore when a patient whose pocket nerve is very sensitive and nearly exposed comes to our office, let us serve him with well-made amalgam, cement or gutta-percha fillings, if necessary, rather than force him to a parlor where he will get showy but poor operations. There are always some people in a community who wish only the best, and who are willing to pay for it ; but in striving to secure their patronage let us not neglect the less ambitious operations which we ought, in justice, to perform for those who cannot afford to pay large fees.—
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