

Public Perversity.

There are people whose philanthropy is never excited but by the crime of some hardened scoundrel. They have never a sympathetic affection aroused for a fellow-being struggling manfully against temptation to do wrong ; but let the same man murder his mother, and they turn up the whites of their eyes in morbid pity, and become tutelary saints to the brute who has been sentenced to hang. They not only decorate his cell with the white flowers symbolical of purity, but their sickening sentimentality runs to such excess that, had they the power the day before the execution, they would incarcerate the jury and let the criminal go free.

It is no surprise, then, that dental quacks should find friends to deny or extenuate their quackery. In every community there are men who instinctively ally themselves with whatever is morally and legally wrong. They fly to it as the steel to the magnet. They are not only communistic but iconoclastic, and are never so happy as when they throw mud at organized society. It is a wonder to many how these frauds sometimes manage to woo the sympathy of respectable people. There is no mystery about it. We know how it is with the practice of medicine. We know that the Canadian cities are frequently infested with a perambulating syndicate of inferior medical men, headed by an ostentatious humbug, and that even in such University centres as Toronto and Montreal, they repeatedly gull and defraud the public, and leave with a rich harvest. Even the pulpit is not free. Smooth hypocrisy and sleek intrigue sometimes impose for a long time upon a godly people. The dental quack draws sympathy—First, by lying about himself and his “superior abilities ;” second, by lying about the conduct of his confreres. He pretends to mistake their contempt for malice, and would be in the seventh heaven of satisfaction if some confrere would notice him—or kick him. The class who expend their pity upon a condemned criminal, are instinctively led to sympathize with the dental outlaw. The people who swallow the falsehoods and prescriptions of the medical humbug, are as likely to believe the dental liar who declares he can perform miracles upon dead bones. The public must suffer because respectable practitioners dislike to show any appearance of opposition, which gullible people think to be jealousy. A quack has no “reputation” to lose, but everything to gain in a conflict with respectable men. It is by lying that he “prosperes,” and no respectable dentist would enter into a competition in that line. However, in spite of the flowers of a mistaken sympathy, the murderer hangs. He may die in the odor of roses, but not of sanctity. A quack’s “reputation,” too, is remembered by his contemporaries, and passed on to posterity.