

This attitude on the part of the dentist may be construed by some as being altogether too stilted and hyperethical. Let me say to you, to-night, gentlemen, that the present ethical standard of dentistry has been attained largely as the result of the opinions and examples of men who, in their time, have been charged with exaggerated ideas of ethics. The simple fact is that you cannot be too ethical because, after all, ethics is only another name for honesty.

There is a further phase of professional obligation to which I wish briefly to allude, and it is one which stirs me more vigorously in its contemplation than any other one feature of our relationship with our patients. I refer to the practice of using deception as to the exact character of service which is being rendered the patient by the dentist. I have before stated that the patient is not expected to be familiar with matters of this character, and it seems to be the easiest possible kind of imposture for some dentists to work deception upon their victims. Let me cite a case in point to illustrate my meaning. A few days ago I saw the wreck of a piece of bridge-work, which the dentist had palmed off on an unsuspecting patient under the high-flown name of a "platinum bridge." There were three porcelain facings on the bridge, and it had been fastened to the natural teeth by bands. The bridge had been constructed by tacking a couple of wires from one band to the other and then filling in the entire space between the bands, the facings and wires with amalgam. I need not announce to the most unsophisticated freshman what the result of mastication would be upon such a bridge as that, and yet the patient had accepted this work with the utmost assurance that the dentist was doing for him the best possible service. I do not know who the dentist was that did this piece of work, because I purposely declined to be informed upon that point. I like to hold a good opinion of my professional friends, and I should much prefer believing that such work had been done by some man that I had never heard of than to make the possible discovery that it had been done by some one I was in the habit of calling a friend.

Now, what shall we say of a dentist who will practise this kind of deception? In a general way I have little admiration for the man who goes out upon the street at night with a sand-bag and a mask, and holds up the passers-by to take their money, but I really believe that I could place this man on a pedestal and worship him with better grace than I could tolerate, for one moment, that conglomerate mass of hypocrite, imposter, sycophant, professional parasite and villain, known as the dentist who preys on his victims through the medium of their ignorance. In all the professional relations this is the lowest of all.

What has just been said must not in the slightest degree be construed into a criticism of failures made through an error of