

## The Uses of Electricity in Dentistry.

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The subject with which this paper deals, that of the uses to which electricity may be applied in dentistry, is rapidly becoming a very important and much discussed question.

Electricity, as a contributor to human needs, has rapidly passed beyond the stage of uncertainty and mystery, subject to the pseudo-scientific arts of magician and charlatan, into the brighter position of an exact science wherein both its possibilities and limitations are intelligently recognized and studied by scientific men. There is always a time in the evolution of knowledge regarding a newly discovered, or at least recently investigated force, during which are ascribed to it innumerable properties that it does not and cannot possess. Especially has this been true of electricity, from the promulgation of the false axiom of the electro-medical appliance vendor—"Electricity is Life," to the dentist that claims the attainment of painless extraction by means of the electric vibrator.

Yet there are legitimate uses for this force in our surgeries and laboratories, uses that are served far less efficiently by any other means, uses that cannot fail to recommend it as an invaluable friend and helper. A few words on the nature of this force will perhaps be in place, as the curriculum of our college includes necessarily what is very elementary on this subject, and as after graduation, amid the perplexities of office practice, time for study is limited, the dentist cannot be blamed for a somewhat restricted knowledge of the subject.

Electricity is considered to be a mode or state of matter co-relative with, but not similar, to heat, light, chemistry, etc. All substances are supposed to be pervaded with this force, but under ordinary circumstances do not exhibit it.

All forces in nature tend toward the establishment of an equilibrium. Suppose, for instance, two basins of water, connected by a pipe; now if one of the basins be filled, and the other be left empty,