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Poetry.

THE SECOND WIFE.

They told me he had won before
 Another heart than mine,
 And laid his first and deepest love
 Upon an earlier shrine.

They said my spirit oft must grieve
 If I my lot would cast
 With one who held so sacred still,
 Remembrance of the past.

I heeded not—my bark was launched
 With his, on life's swift tide;
 And earth holds not a happier heart
 Than mine, his—second bride.

I know that he has loved and lost
 What life may ne'er give back;
 The flowers that bloomed in freshness once
 Have withered on his track.

I know that she, the angel called,
 Looks out from yon blue heaven,
 A watcher o'er the earth-bound soul,
 From which her own was riven.

Together do we oft recall
 This dream of other years;
 Nor do I love him less to know
 He once had cause for tears.

MECHANICAL DENTISTRY.

The distinction, as commonly interpreted, between the leading divisions of Dental practice, Operative and Mechanical, has led many to unjust and indefensible conclusions in regard to the essential character of these different departments. While the *objects* contemplated in their practice are strikingly diverse, the nature of the requirements brought into requisition are, in all important respects, the same. A bare knowledge of the *principles* involved will not suffice in the practice of either; hence neither the one or the other is strictly a *scientific* pursuit; nor is either strictly *manipulative*; therefore neither is strictly *mechanical*. To practice intelligently either mechanical or operative dentistry, presupposes a knowledge of both science and art. It requires an informed and cultivated judgment to determine precisely the very best *method* of constructing artificial dentures for the never-ending variety of cases, differing always, in some respect, in their requirements. An intelligent perception of such individual requirements, and a ready capability of accurate discrimination, involves purely an act of the understanding based on a knowledge of correct principles; it is indeed science, as distinguished from merely manipulative skill or art. Having determined by the application of such aids as science affords, the most approved method of procedure, it is

only for the hand to give form to the conceptions of the mind;—and this is simple *mechanism*. Mechanical Dentistry, therefore, involves alike the application of science and art.

The same remarks apply strictly to what is termed Operative Dentistry. Before an instrument is applied the educated practitioner takes into account all the conditions of decay, and all the surrounding circumstances that may in any way affect the success of his operation. He determines upon the necessity of preliminary treatment; the precise form he intends to give his cavity; the particular manner in which he designs to introduce, consolidate, and finish his filling; and all these are purely mental acts predicated on an acquired knowledge of the principles of his art;—it is the *science* of operative dentistry. The hand now follows with such instruments as are necessary to accomplish the pre-determined purposes of the operator, and this is the *mechanism* of operative dentistry.

How plainly, therefore, is there a *unity* of requirements and a *unity* of practice in the various functions of these departments.

How often has it been said, "Oh! he is a good *mechanical* Dentist." It is too often, in one form or another, an expression of implied disparagement, and that too upon the lips of those whose reputation and interests are deeply concerned in vindicating, rather than in depreciating, this branch of our common profession in the popular mind. The plain import of such an expression is, that the one referred to is a clever-enough craftsman,—*nothing more*. Now there is nothing in this branch of our art that will justify for a moment any one devoted to another department of dental practice in expressions which, either in manner or matter, convey to the public or professional mind a diminished sense of its dignity and importance, or the high character of the qualifications concerned in its practice.

To be a good mechanical operator, embracing all the varied functions incident to its complete practice, implies such measure of capacity and attainments as fit him for all the departments of Dentistry. It implies educational attainments, skillfulness, a ready and accurate judgment, and great integrity. Suppose for a moment that Dental practice contemplated nothing more than the substitution of artificial for the natural teeth. Would we wish to know less of anatomy than now? Could we dispense with a knowledge of physiology, pathology, and therapeutics? Would we be content to ignore chemistry and trust to blind chance in the

laboratory? On the other hand, would not the demands of these collateral branches upon our attention be just as urgent and imperative if we would aspire to a higher success than usually follows empiricism?

The introduction of unworthy and incompetent practitioners into the ranks of the profession we believe is, in a great measure, attributable to the estimate of qualification which some have sought to fix upon those deemed fit to practice mechanical Dentistry, namely, that its chief requirement is *mechanical tact*. There are multitudes of those, most generally of mean capacity and destitute of aspiring impulses, who imagine themselves endowed with a natural and peculiar aptitude for mechanics. They enter the profession under a complacent and good-natured agreement with themselves to subordinate all other pursuits in the profession to merely manipulative dentistry. They fancy themselves peculiarly fitted for the practice of Mechanical Dentistry, and impertinently thrust their self-styled *natural genius* forward as an equivalent for educational attainments, and the healthier products of a laborious experience. Golden visions of future thrift and independence fill up the measure of their aspirations,—and this is the beginning and end of their professional life; for such, certainly, we can have no words of encouragement. We would not disparage that faculty which confers upon its possessor the power to execute readily and skillfully with the hands; it is indispensable to the Dental artisan. But in and by itself, it is but the part of a harmonious whole that must go to make up the qualifications of the Dental manipulator. A man trusting to this faculty alone, may act, automaton-like, at the bench or over the crucible, with another head and other brains to direct, but there is no margin for expansion or enlarging usefulness—he wastes his life in the ignoble capacity of *imitator* or *copyist*. Such fitness, unsupported by liberal, scientific attainments, will cut but a sorry figure in these stirring times, when the intellects of men are striking out so sharply in the race for distinction and eminence.—*Dental Lamp*.

THE GENERAL POISONER.

It would be worth while to enquire whether any connection exists between the defective intellect of the baker and the sulphate of copper he puts in his bread? And whether that defect entitles him to mercy? And what is to become of the population, supposing that to be the case? It may not be very lamentable to eat potato-starch with arrowroot, roasted wheat with coffee, sugar

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