

a keen insight into human nature, for patients are not *only* human beings, but individuals, and one must see in a flash the best way to deal with each case. A well-bred ease of manner is always reassuring. To preserve a solemn silence during the preliminary stages of the operation gives a funereal tone to the proceedings that forces the patient's heart into his boots.

On the other hand to keep up a jaunty and familiar chatter to a comparative stranger may inspire him with a disgust that will barely allow him to remain in his chair. It is most unseemly to be continually talking while our patients are in pain, and nothing is so aggravating, and makes a patient so little inclined to "suffer and be strong," as an operator who keeps up a ceaseless flow of irritating commonplaces, and asks questions, any reply to which the rubber effectually prevents.

"Nothing so tends to alienate friendship as a difference of taste in jokes ;" and it is possible that a dentist, while imagining himself particularly agreeable or particularly witty, may be sowing in the patient's mind seeds of fatal distrust in his conscientiousness and skill.

Cases may be easily recalled where men of the highest position in our ranks, from their grasp of professional technique, have made the most unfortunate failures from want of *savoir faire*. The converse of this is also to be met with ; men, unhappily inferior operators, conduct immense practises and make large fortunes simply by trading on their accurate knowledge of human nature.

The best way to secure a patient's confidence, that element indispensable to success, is to be perfectly natural. Let him see that you know what you are about, but do not think it necessary to give verbal information on that point. If he believes in you it is unnecessary, if he does not it will only make him more suspicious. Explain the character of the operation simply and clearly as far as you think it wise to do so, for fear is more often caused by the anticipated severity of the operation than by actual physical pain ; and patients who have confidence in their dentist often suffer more in the reception room than in the chair.

Garrick said, "A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind," and if dentists were operated on a little more often themselves, they would sympathize much more with the patients under their care. Often a timely word of sympathy will enable a patient to endure bravely, and an assurance from the operator of knowledge of pain given, or a warning of pain to come, will help him to overcome difficulties that would be otherwise insurmountable.

In these days of antiseptic surgery little need be said on the great subject of cleanliness, but we must remember that the patient is very quick to detect and make mental note of the slightest blemish in this respect. I am sure, however, we should never so far forget ourselves or our profession as not to have spotless hands