

No preceptor should accept, as a student, one who lacks the principles of a gentleman, and it is a serious matter when a student has a preceptor who is lacking in this direction.

As we said before, some cannot be spoiled by environment, but more are influenced by surroundings. What then can be expected of the student who graduates from an office where all professional etiquette is disregarded, and every principle of the golden rule violated ; where the public are informed by flaming advertisements that they can be better served than elsewhere, or that they can be as well served at greatly reduced fees, and then are imposed upon, either by trickery or incompetency ; who also slanders and misrepresents his confreres to his patients ?

The ideal preceptor selects only a student who manifests a desire for an education, and has natural mechanical ability, and who is of good moral character. He teaches him neatness by keeping himself, his office and laboratory neat and clean. He has a place for everything and keeps everything in its place. His office library is supplied with books of reference. He takes a number of up-to-date dental journals that he and his student may see the latest methods and appliances pertaining to their profession. He attends the Dental Society meetings to become broadened and improved by contact and interchange of ideas with his professional equals. In his operations he is thorough and conscientious, gentle, but firm, upholding the dignity of his profession at all times. He lays out for his student a course of reading upon practical dentistry. When working in the laboratory he has his student at his elbow, and explains each step in the work he may be doing. He gives him some lessons in operative technique, and, as soon as he can appreciate it, brings him to the chair when operating for some one who may not object to the presence of a third party, and explains what is being done and why.

As soon as the student, by reading and demonstration, understands the principles of filling and extracting teeth, his preceptor allows him to commence operating upon the living subject, very simple operations at first, and increasing in difficulty as he advances in experience. His preceptor examines the operation at various stages, pointing out any decomposed tooth structure which may have been overlooked, walls too frail to be left with safety, extra retention necessary, etc. If gold filling be inserted, he sees that the retention points are being well filled, cervical wall well protected ; that the gold be well condensed around the enamel margin ; that overlapping material be removed in finishing, etc. But, says one, what busy practitioner can afford to devote as much time as that to a student ? He might better do the work himself. The busier he may be the better it will pay to take time and pains to give this personal instruction and demonstration.