

Dentistry shall not have attained its proper status until every practitioner possesses the degree of M.D. or is provided by his college with its equivalent. I am aware that the course in dentistry even at present comprises that necessary knowledge. But how can the medical profession and the general public be so informed that they may appreciate the dentist at his actual value as a professional man? This recognition must come chiefly through the physicians by their recognition of the dentist as an equal and a co-worker in the healing art. It were better for this movement to take place on the part of the physicians, but to whom are we to look, and how long shall we wait for the man of the hour who is to bring to pass this desired result? Experience has shown that such a movement cannot proceed from above downward, it must grow out of its own inherent strength and desire a natural evolution from below upward. The dentist must deserve, demand, and make good his claim for recognition.

Too many physicians of a lower order are apt to treat the subject of dentistry with a supercilious sneer. Who is Dr. Blank? Only a dentist, a tooth-puller, forgetting that the reproach of "saw-bones" is not yet entirely removed. Some dentists are undoubtedly ignorant, some bunglers, some quacks. Is medicine never open to similar charges? I have seen physicians make grave blunders in the administration of chloroform. Physicians have been known to apply a poultice to the external surface of the cheek for alveolar abscess. Physicians have treated patients for indigestion year in and year out without discovering that the stomach was not provided with teeth. The close relations between dental conditions and the general organism are so important that they deserve much attention upon the part of both professions. The physician and the dentist should work together in complete harmony for the relief of human suffering.

The duty of the physician is clear. He should acquaint himself fully with the bearings of dental conditions upon the general system. He should acquire knowledge of the scope and possibilities of dentistry in dealing with those conditions. He should call in the aid of a dentist when such is desirable and thus make his own efforts more likely to be successful.

Indigestion is a difficult and unsatisfactory disease to combat, because it is of a secondary nature and depends greatly upon derangements of other functions. Impairments of the eliminating functions of the skin and kidneys through exposure to cold, impairment of the functions of the liver, which is the sewage collector of the body, obstructions and irritation of the intestines through lack of time and careless habits are all fruitful causes of indigestion, but the prime cause in otherwise healthy individuals is the projection into the stomach of improperly masticated and unsalivated food.