

gums, alveolar process, antrum and adjacent bone, both by operative and mechanical means. It also includes prescribing for constitutional treatment when such action is necessary in the treatment of abscesses, trigeminal neuralgia, etc. A person therefore must be qualified according to law if he is to pursue the practice of dentistry or he will be doubly liable for damage: firstly, for practicing without a license; secondly, for lack of necessary skill.

According to law a dentist is responsible for his work. When his assistant does not perform the operation prescribed the dentist is responsible if present, but not so if absent. If the patient requests the act of the dentist, such as the extraction of a sound tooth, he assumes the responsibility, but the dentist is responsible as to the manner in which the operation is performed. If the patient is insane the responsibility of the case rests solely with the dentist. The same applies if the dentist uses new instruments or new drugs with which he is comparatively unacquainted. This is a hard rule, but is for the protection of the public and to prevent experiments being performed upon them. Patent nostrums must have a good reputation to be in general favor. When a dentist operates in a manner contrary to any old established opinion he is liable to censure. A dentist is gravely responsible if he operates when he is intoxicated or when he has not the necessary appliances at hand. These are a few of the responsibilities resting upon dentists.

Should a patient bring into court a case against a dentist it would of necessity be for malpractice. This may be defined as improper management of a case, or such treatment as produces injury, or is illegal. From both a dental and legal point of view it may arise from wilfulness, negligence, or ignorance, and subjects the offender to penalties in any of these categories according as error or criminality is proved.

A case under the head of wilfulness can be entered only when the dentist has expressed malice and an intent to commit wrong.

Negligence may be divided into three degrees:

1. Slight: Where lack of great care and diligence is shown.
2. Ordinary: Where ordinary skill is wanting.
3. Gross: Where total lack of care is shown.

The state of the patient's health makes a difference in the degree of negligence, the law recognizing that more care should be shown a patient in poor than one in good health. A dentist pursuing obsolete methods is held to be negligent. It is of the utmost importance that his instruments be antiseptically clean. Omission of this is a case of negligence of the most inexcusable type. Negligence is due to want of care, want of habit, loss of morals, and indifference to business. If the patient by ordinary care could have avoided the negligence of the dentist, he can make no case. But