

announce to the public, in heavy type, that his prices are the very lowest and his work the very best to be had. In spite of the fact that our numbers have so largely increased, and in spite of the keener competition which must of necessity accompany such a condition, I am sure that much good and little harm would have resulted had it not been for the man who claims every virtue in his advertisement and performs but wreck and ruin in his work. The fact that he is not in our class professionally, or that your patients and mine seldom go to him, does not help the situation. His advertisements constantly injure us all by educating the public mind through sheer force of contact and repetition down to a scale of prices, to which no man can adhere, do good work and make a living, all at the same time.

It is almost impossible nowadays to pick up a daily paper, or even to go on the street, without seeing the lying advertisements of some dental parlor. When our patients come to us they do so because they have learned to shun the aforesaid parlors, and because they believe in our professional ability and reputable methods of practice. In the majority of cases patients are in a measure prepared to pay a higher scale of prices than those which they have seen advertised. But if, perchance, molars and bicuspidis present extensive approximal decay, calling for large contour gold fillings, at from \$5 to \$10 per contour, the desire to support the reputable men receives a severe check, and instinctively they remember the seductive "\$3-crown" advertisement. A thought then perhaps suggests itself that if an entire tooth can be covered with gold for \$3, why should it cost two or three times that amount to fill a cavity in it with the same material? and the intimation is more or less directly made that our price is too high.

Such being the condition of the patients' minds, what courses are open to us. Very often, by putting the facts in the case and the differences between the two operations clearly before our clients, we are able to show that ours is the best thing to be done and worth every cent which we propose charging for it. We may fail to carry conviction, and thus allow the patient to depart in search of some other dentist, whose prices are more in accordance with the newspaper list; or, worst of all, we may weaken, and when the prospect of losing a patient outright stares us squarely in the face come down at the last moment from our previously stated figure, with the request that, as this is a special price, the patient will say nothing about it. This is the worst method, because it directly tends to lower the standard of work of every man who employs it. If we were honest, we named as nearly as we could estimate it a fair price in the first instance, and to accept less means to be underpaid for the work. No man puts forth his best efforts when he feels that it is not for adequate compensation.