

From the foregoing it is evident that our duty to the profession is to do good work. How gratifying it is to know that our duties to ourselves, our duties to the profession, and our duties to our patients have the same goal—the good of mankind. The profession might well be discouraged at such a view of the results of this kind of advertising, were it not for the fact that there are in our ranks so many men who uphold the honor of the profession. No doubt the large majority of dentists do their best. Honesty is one of the most important duties we owe to the profession. We must do that which we promise to do, and not that only, but we must perform that which the patient should legitimately expect us to do.

Another subject that has commanded the attention of the profession for some time is that of patents. There are some who take the position that it is beneath the dignity of, and at variance with, the welfare of the profession to take out patents respecting dentistry; yet they would not be adverse to a professional man owning a patent on some article not related to the profession. Now how are we to approach this subject? What is to be our standard of ethics with regard to patents? Shall it be a monetary consideration, or shall we deem the praise of our fellowmen a sufficient offset to the pecuniary loss entailed? The question will arise, why should not dentists profit by the same brain force or chance that other people profit by? Are we essentially different from other people respecting our aims in life? It may be allowed that we deal essentially with human life, while, as a rule, others obtain patents only on articles that administer to comfort, and which are not, in the sense in which we are speaking, for the alleviation of human suffering. Yet a distinction of this kind is not sufficiently clear, because in some cases the line of demarcation between the two classes of patents would be hard to define. In all that we do we should be guided by the true aim of life, the fulfilling of our capabilities. At times we may be so blinded by our passions as to say, "Let each one do the best for himself." But if we wish to form true judgments on this subject we must constantly bear in mind the theory of the good of man. That mode of conduct which is at variance with such good is wrong. In order that men of ability may not be imposed upon, it is necessary that merit should be at a premium, otherwise the result of achieving much would be an excessive demand on their services. It is a law of our being, of our intellectual growth and development, that pre-eminence must have its reward. In the present stage of our intellectual advancement, the laws of our country—that is, the people—admit the advisability of offering a stimulus to man's inventive genius by protecting, for his advantage, the results of his labors. Doubtless this course of action has been pursued in order that mankind as a whole should benefit thereby; for it would be argued,