

citizen, a worthy member of society, and his usefulness in the world may be said to be restricted only by his own personal limitations. But in the final analysis of what constitutes the individual's true relationship to mankind, it can never be claimed that a tradesman's responsibilities are of the same character as are those of the real professional man. It is true that very many men who have been ostensibly educated for a profession, and are supposed to have instilled in them the essence of true professionalism, never seem to acquire the vaguest idea of their real relationship to humanity, and continually conduct their practice in accordance with the principles of trade. This can scarcely be considered as an elevating influence upon the standing of the particular profession with which they are connected; in fact, it may truly be said that, in the history of all professions, this tendency has had a degrading effect more widely disseminated than that of any other single influence.

It may be profitable for us this evening to consider briefly some of the phases of professional duty in their application to us as dentists. You, as an energetic body of young men, have attained your present proud position as the result of three or more years of effort to acquire a certain kind of knowledge. That knowledge is of a special character. It is such that the average man has little cognizance of it, and you are thereby set apart from other individuals by this distinction. You have been instructed by men of eminence in their respective departments, and they have given to you the best of that which their years of observation have taught them. You have been examined by a Board discriminating in its judgment and conscientious in its decisions, and you have by this Board been adjudged competent to go out in the world and practise the profession of dentistry. In all of this you have been most fortunate; but I say to you now, with all the earnestness at my command, that by virtue of every jot or tittle of that knowledge which you have thus attained, are you doubly bounden in your obligations to your fellows. The acquirement of the kind of knowledge sought by you in your studentship may properly increase your prestige, but in fully as great a degree must it also increase your responsibilities. There is not one fact learned by you in college but the acquirement of that fact adds to your obligations.

Let us see the significance of this. As men of special training along lines that are unfamiliar to those who are to seek your services, you are at once placed before your patrons in the light of a professional adviser. They come to you, relying on the fact that you have information that they have not, or that other men have not, unless trained as you have been trained. Every time a patient takes your chair it is a tacit acknowledgment of your superior ability; it is an act of confidence by which they indicate their dependence upon you. That dependence once expressed should never be abused to the detriment of the patient.