

value or depreciate these accomplishments. They are essential to a thorough dentist, but they are far from being the only qualifications needed. Indeed, they are not the first requisites. A beautiful and substantial filling may be inserted in a tooth that was in no condition to receive it, and it may be but an injury instead of a benefit.

The education of the dentist should not begin in either the laboratory or the operating room. Before the student is prepared to commence operations in the mouth, he should be taught the underlying principles upon which a true practice must be founded. He must learn what is disease, and the steps necessary to secure a return to health. To put even the finest filling into a diseased tooth, perhaps over a dead and putrefying pulp, is not dentistry. To insert even the most beautiful artificial plate over tissues that are in an inflamed and sloughing condition, is not good practice. The dentist who is worthy the name of a professional man, must be able to diagnose disease of any of the tissues of the oral cavity before it is too late for cure. He should recognize inflammation of the osseous structure in advance of necrosis, and be able to use the proper remedies, both local and general, before a resort to surgical means becomes a necessity.

There is among dentists a great misconception of what is truly practical. As has been very wisely said, all true practice must be founded upon true science. There must first be a comprehension of what is physiological law, before one is fitted to deal with pathological cases. This world is not ruled by mere chance. It is governed by immutable, unchangeable principles, whether it be in its diurnal revolutions and the succession of the seasons, or in the evolution of a blade of grass. All function is the result of certain fixed regulations, and all disease is the result of violation of these physical statutes.

He who comprehends law and the principles upon which it is founded, is the only really practical man. If he be consistent, he is intensely practical, and is impatient with error and falsehood because they are not practical. He loves science because it is the only gateway to really practical achievements. He knows that he cannot really be practical unless he is first scientific, for all practical things must rest on a scientific basis. Science is law, and without it there can be nothing practical, or really practicable.