

upon the public, and explain to him that to succeed he must be possessed of that ability and stamina only obtained by the very best instruction possible. That when he has completed his course, it will have been a more than ordinarily successful one if he is able to read his professional journals and separate the chaff from the wheat. And at whatever sacrifice to himself, for his own good and future success, he ought to attend the hardest and most exacting school he can find, and try to commend one in which the unadvertised course is least prominent.—*Dental Review*.

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## DECADENCE OF THE DENTAL FEE \*

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By ARTHUR G. SMITH, D.M.D., PEORIA, ILL.

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I believe it was Grover Cleveland who made the remark that "We are confronted by a condition and not a theory," and in the subject under consideration I am sure that we will all agree with his statement. While there are, perhaps, some exceptions, it is undeniably the general rule that, for the last ten years, and particularly for the last five, the trend of prices for dental services has been steadily downward. One of the first explanations which comes to mind is that everything else has gone down and our fees have simply shared in the general reduction. The fact that a dollar buys more now than it did five or ten years ago is one of the reasons which we continually give to make ourselves more content with the fewer number which we are receiving for services.

That there is a modicum of truth in this no one would be foolish enough to deny; but it by no means touches the main cause, as we can readily see. What has caused the drop in prices of general merchandise in the past three years? In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the answer can be given in two words—improved machinery, with its consequent increase of production and lessening of first cost. Will this reason also explain why our fees have been reduced? Most assuredly no. With the exception of trifling reductions in the price of some supplies, all our material now costs as much as ever; rents are certainly no lower; and the filling which ten years ago required an hour for insertion, refuses, with all the aids which we can now command, to be properly placed in any greatly lessened amount of time.

There are also other facts which must be taken into account. The cost of acquiring a dental education is greater now than ever

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\* Read before the First District Dental Society of Illinois, at Monmouth, Sept 27th, 28th, 1898.