

ON THE NECESSITY OF ARTISTIC KNOWLEDGE AND
CRITICAL TASTE TO HIGHEST SUCCESS IN THE
DENTAL PROFESSION.

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The art of healing, including medicine and surgery, of which latter dentistry is a special department, centres upon itself a wider range of collateral science than any other. It draws from every source of information something which can be applied to the alleviation of the miseries of mankind. Dentistry being only one department of the art, does not necessarily demand from its professors so wide a range of medicine and surgery combined, but there are doubtless few who practice it that are as yet aware how far the resources of the profession can be enlarged, by knowledge of principles and facts pertaining specially to other arts and professions. The object of this paper is to call the attention of the profession, especially its younger members, to the importance of the study of the fine arts, particularly that of portrait painting and modelling, with reference to the direct application of the knowledge and the critical taste thus gained, to the practice of dentistry ; and also to show how such application can be made to the rational correction of malformations and artificial deformities.

Comparatively few are gifted by nature with perfectly formed jaws and teeth, but in the present state of the art we should hesitate to avow that any ordinary case of malformation could not be corrected, and that without the sacrifice of teeth or the infliction of serious pain or inconvenience to the patient.

But natural malformations are scarcely more frequent than artificial ones, caused by the injudicious and unnecessary extraction of teeth. It should be admitted as an axiom of modern dentistry, that *the extraction of any tooth from a young or old jaw, is certain to give rise to more or less permanent deformity.* Surely it is unnecessary at this day to substantiate this truth by argument. Every dentist has the proof at hand in the casts of jaws from which teeth have been removed. Let him compare the side of the jaw from which teeth have been taken with that in which the teeth remain, and assign if possible, any other reason for the difference, which is certain to be found.

Such deformity is much more likely to occur, and to assume exaggerated proportions in young jaws, yet it is the constant practice of