

THE DENTAL PROFESSION.

Read before the Dental Association of Ontario, at Hamilton, by RICH. TROTTER, *L.D.S., Guelph, Ont.*

I have chosen the dental profession as the subject of my paper, believing that a full and proper acquaintance with, and due appreciation of, its peculiar duties, connections, and relations, are of the greatest importance both to those who are immediately engaged in it, and to the public generally; because I consider that a production of this kind would be very suitable on the present occasion, and would be more interesting to a greater number of members of the Association, and which, if not very able, has, at least, the merit of being mainly original; and because I believe that one of the most essential duties we have to perform at the present time, is to inform or educate the people on the subject of Dentistry.

I do not wish to leave the impression that I consider the people of this Dominion ignorant or uninformed; not by any means; for I consider they will compare favourably with those of any other country in general intelligence. It is true I have been asked by a full-grown man what a dentist was: well, of course, I came to the conclusion that he was most decidedly not possessed of much general intelligence. That, however, was only an exception. But ours is, as far as we and our immediate forefathers are concerned, a young profession, created to a considerable extent by new necessities, and many, otherwise generally well-informed, do not duly appreciate the resources and sufficiency of the Science and Art of Dentistry to promote their health and comfort. This, I think, is mainly owing to two reasons; one is that it is only within a comparatively short period of time that so great a necessity existed, for ours being a specialty; and the other is that it is not long since dentistry has been established on a proper scientific foundation, or practised by any other than empirics, with some noble exceptions, of course. It is a fact that most dentists of experience will confirm, that there is not one-tenth of the benefit received from dentistry that there might be, and this is not owing to a want of means to pay for dental operations, so far as the people are concerned, but because through unskilled and defective treatment they have lost confidence in it, and because they have not yet got into the habit of looking upon early and continued attention to the teeth as a necessity for their health, comfort, and longevity. You may go into hundreds of large families, especially in rural districts, where, perhaps, they build fine houses, add farm to farm, dress expensively and fashionably, and live luxuriously, and yet pay no attention to the teeth unless