

GOOD OF THE ORDER.*

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The subject is wide and deep, and I shall only touch upon a few factors that impress me as being highly important, and somewhat overlooked in our discussions.

One and all approve of the extended time required of students in their preparatory studies, and the higher standards in examination, which tend to make the results desirable and satisfactory, for a man to practise dentistry to-day cannot be too well informed.

There is one element or characteristic in a man's make-up, or fitness to practise dentistry, that is overlooked, or not given the prominence due, viz., his mechanical skill, or ability to work with tools, and obtain good results, servicable as well as artistic.

In the days of old, every operator possessed this qualification, in fact he could not practise without it; it was the keystone to the dental arch, without which the temple was incomplete. It was his stock-in-trade, speaking after the manner of men.

As the higher education of dentists advanced, less stress has been put upon this qualification, and the results are apparent to us all.

Diplomas are obtained by the graduates of our dental colleges for high standing in all the studies required in the course, and many graduates are better prepared to teach than to practise.

How many are first-class mechanics in the art of dentistry? No fault of the instructors, none of the graduates themselves. A wide difference always exists between theory and practice. Look over the field and note the number of inefficient operators in practice to-day, whose influence and work is lowering the high standard of our noble art, by advertising bargains, warranting their work (and God knows, it needs it), plugging teeth at fifty cents a cavity, and earning five dollars or better per hour.

What a drag, aye, disgrace, is this! And yet they display their diplomas and are therefore entitled to a living. As a rule they only lack one thing. They do not possess mechanical skill, they never did, and worse still, they never will.

I think the practice of one or more dentists in every town and city will justify my statements. What is the remedy? To my thinking there is only one. Let all the dental schools throughout the land take students on probation. Give them a good opportunity during their first term to test their possibilities as mechanics, and failing in this vital qualification, let them step down and out,

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