

Through the instrumentality of Dr. Henry A. Baker, who is to be with us at this meeting, about thirty dentists met and an organization effected; its first meeting being held in the parlors of the Pavilion Hotel at Montpelier, March 21st, 1877. Dr. James Lewis, who has faithfully and devotedly helped and watched its progress through these years, was chosen its first president.

This, the twenty-fourth birthday of this society, whether it be the last of the nineteenth or its first in the twentieth century, should be celebrated as something eventful in its history. Imagine, if you will, this society in its progress onward and upward, called to a halt at this marking place, while we turn our attention to its influence in the past, and make plans for its further usefulness and development in the future. While we are called from labor to refreshment, as it were, upon the sublime plane to which this and other societies have led us, let us consider first of all what dentistry was before the forming of such an organization known as a dental society.

Without doing an injustice to the pioneers of dentistry, their methods of doing business and the motives which actuated them were most interesting, as compared with our present standards; their handbills and advertisements laughable in the extreme—I say laughable, because of their apparent sincerity and honest endeavor to excel in what was then a new science. Handbills and advertisements, etc., are not laughable with us to-day; they are malicious, because every *dentist* at the present time knows better.

It was not uncommon sixty years ago for those who entered the dental office as assistants, to be compelled to swear never to reveal the secrets there imparted. Of course there are certain things occurring in dental offices to-day, the secrecy of which assistants should not reveal; but I speak more especially *now* from a patient's standpoint, while under an anesthetic. I remember, even in my days of studentship, a dentist very cautiously imparted to me one of his secrets. It having been a secret so long now, I will tell it you: "Always wash your amalgam with spirits of camphor, if you want it to last till doomsday."

It has occurred to me since that he got it right, as I now understand what he meant by "doomsday."

Of course, secrets and secret-mongers did not die with the birth and development of dental societies, but have seemingly gone through a peculiar metamorphosis, from the fact, that the secret of their secrets is the secret of their humbugging with their pure gold, double jointed, quadruple attachments, known only to themselves.