

NOTES ON DENTAL PRACTICE

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Notes on Dental Practice by Henry C. Quinby

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HENRY C. QUINBY

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DENTAL PRACTICE**

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DENTAL PRACTICE.

BY
HENRY C. QUINBY,

LICENTIATE IN DENTAL SURGERY OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN
IRELAND, AND MEMBER OF THE ODONTOLOGICAL SOCIETIES
OF NEW YORK AND LONDON.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

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PREFACE.

It has not been my purpose, in this work, to attempt to wade in the deep waters of physiological and pathological research. I am content to leave the elaboration of theories, and the search after causes, in the able hands that are now, on both sides of the Atlantic, pursuing these investigations with a trained skill which cannot fail to give us much more light on the now hidden, or only suspected, sources of dental disease, and to confine myself, as strictly as a clear explanation of my meaning will permit, to the treatment of abnormal conditions of the teeth.

Dentists may well be proud of the progress that has been made in the last fifty years, not only in the facilities for teaching, but in the matter taught, in dental science. Even twenty-five years ago the men of education and social position in our profession were few in number, while the rank and file were looked

upon as mere petty tradesmen—deservedly so—for they held their knowledge as a collection of trade secrets, to be jealously guarded, and handed down from father to son as so much stock-in-trade; and they scarcely dreamed of the possibility of improving their position, and increasing their professional knowledge by the free interchange of thoughts and ideas with their fellow-practitioners. The dealer in dental instruments and materials looked upon the majority of his customers as his inferiors in every respect, and if he listened at all to any suggestions for improving his wares, it was with the indulgence and condescension of one who was quite sure he knew, better than anybody could tell him, what a dentist needed, and that what he considered proper should be accepted with thankfulness. To the general public the word dentistry meant tooth pulling, and as in the last century the barber practised blood-letting and called himself a surgeon, so, within the memory of many dentists, the chemist has considered himself a dental practitioner because he possessed a key for extracting teeth.

But a brighter prospect for dentistry began to open in the second quarter of the nine-

teenth century. Societies were organised and meetings held for the discussion of professional subjects. A dental hospital was established in London, and the example was soon followed in some of the other large towns, and students were admitted to see the operations. A College of Dentistry followed naturally, and finally the Dentists' Act of 1878 was obtained from Parliament by the sheer persistency of a few of our leading men, against whom every possible form of discouragement had been hurled. But this Act gave us a position in the list of learned professions, which we may reasonably hope will continue to be, as it has been, attractive to men of education and natural mechanical ability.

There is, however, much yet to be learned; and the teachings of experience, as well as the researches of trained scientists, being valuable to the student, it becomes the duty of those who have seen much practice to make its lessons known to the profession, and thus add as much as possible to the available knowledge. This, therefore, must be my excuse for publishing these notes.

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