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Vol. I

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No. 3

An Erroneous Decision

BY DR. LEO. E. EVSLIN.

The Appellate Term of the Supreme Court recently denied that the knowledge of a dentist concerning his patient is privileged under the law as the knowledge of a surgeon, physician or nurse. The dentist's patients, that is the public at large, will hardly agree with this decision, for many patients, especially ladies, while they may willingly admit of having undergone an operation for appendicitis or the like, will not care to have their dentist advertise the fact of their having had a fractured jaw repaired or of being the possessor of a set of artificial dental substitutes. However, the above consideration is the least as compared with the much finer point involved in the decision, that is, the indirect denial that the dental profession is a part or specialty of the healing profession. While the nurse, who has no lawful right, for instance, to make a subcutaneous injection of any poisonous substance, is declared by this to be of the same jurisdiction as the surgeon or the physician, the dentist who is constantly engaged in the practice of minor surgery, and has the lawful right to prescribe and introduce substances of a very poisonous and dangerous nature while performing local or general anæsthesia or treating the teeth, the gums or other lesion in the mouth, is denied that honor.

The law in the form of legislative acts requires of the dentist an adequate education and examinations and the degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery, and, by virtue of this makes of him a member of the healing profession. The Supreme Court by this decision denies him the honor and the responsibilities connected with it.

It is not necessary to go far for arguments to prove the fallacy of this decision; the following citations from this decision prove it conclusively:

"Strictly speaking," says the court, "a dentist might be included within a description relating to those who practice surgery, but as the term surgery is employed in the statute it does not include one engaged in the practice of dentistry."

"Within quite recent times it was customary for barbers and blacksmiths to extract teeth. Formerly the work of filling and plating teeth was frequently performed by the jeweler. A process of integration and differentiation has come into existence."

"That this specialization has resulted beneficially to the community and that dentistry has now become a highly developed science, is doubtless true. But this fact does not militate against the construction of Section 834 of the Code of Civil Procedure, excluding a dentist from the operation of its provisions."

There also was a time, and not very remote at that, when surgery and medicine were products of human ingenuity to obviate pain and suffering rather than based on scientific principles, as it is today. It also underwent, as all sciences do, a process of integration and differentiation, before it reached its present state, and what is more, it is still undergoing this process in spite of its comparatively high efficiency. Dentistry in the forms of primitive specimens for the replacement of lost natural teeth, as found in the different museums, or as the rudimentary dentistry practiced by the blacksmiths, barbers or the patients themselves, was also human ingenuity to help themselves the best way they could in the effort to obviate pain and suffering. But what has this primitive dentistry in common with the dentistry of today? Surely not more than medicine of one hundred years ago with the medicine of today. Is not dentistry of today, strictly speaking, oral surgery, and do not men practicing it constitute a part of the healing profession? In order to treat a tooth must not the dentist have a knowledge of the anatomy of the same, the physiology, the pathology and embryology in connection with mechanics? In order to operate and treat the gums, the palate, must not the dentist know besides the above, the principles of general surgery, and lastly in order to perform anæsthesia, whether local or general, must he not have a general knowledge of the heart and the respiratory organs? In a word the dentist must know all the fundamental branches that make a science of medicine and surgery, and he is responsible before the law in cases of death resulting from negligence due to lack of this knowledge.

It seems but natural that if a man or a body of men bear the responsibilities of the healing profession, they should enjoy the privileges of the same, especially in the case where the divulgence of professional secrets in dentistry may create as much trouble as the divulgence of any secrets in connection with disease in general. Apparently the old truth "that in order that laws and ethics be beneficial and effective they must be in accord with the times" holds good in this case as well.

THE NEED OF PROGRESSIVE DENTAL SOCIETIES.

By DR. M. S. CALMAN.

The more dentistry is advancing, the greater becomes the need of progressive dental societies, in contra-distinction to the present inactive societies. Up to the present day, most dental societies have given too much of their time to the reading of papers on

dental subjects and to routine matter, which a committee could very well have disposed of. This routine work has been the cause of much personal abuse, the formation of cliques or factions and other very unprofessional acts on the part of the members of these societies. Little or no time has been devoted to the discussion of matters of great and immediate importance, which if carried out would be of great value to the community.

The writer of this article desires to present a program of activities, which our present dental societies or societies that may be organized in the future, would do well to adopt as their immediate working-program. It is as follows:

1. *The Education of the Public.* So long as the people remain in ignorance as to the important part the teeth play in the conservation of health, just so long shall we be guilty parties to the results brought about by the disease-breeding bacteria of a filthy oral cavity. It is our duty to see to it that in the present century no one should be left in ignorance of the value of sound teeth.

We can reach and educate the public by:

(a) A systematic distribution of leaflets written in a plain and attractive manner.

(b) Through the press, which is a most powerful educational factor.

(c) Through a series of public lectures, given in public schools and halls, and illustrated with stereopticon views, will prove both interesting and instructive.

2. *Recognition by the State.* Work for the enactment of a law, creating a Board of Dental Examiners to work in conjunction with the Board of Health. This Board of Dental Examiners should:

(a) Render practical talks to the school children from time to time.

(b) Teach the children the use of the toothbrush and mouth washes.

(c) Establish dental clinics in every public school building, for the treatment of the teeth of children whose parents can't afford to pay for service.

(d) Have incorporated in all school textbooks, a chapter on the importance and care of the teeth.

3. *Fight Corruption.* Work for the immediate enactment of laws that will abolish the dental parlors and all fake dental "offices." The present laws are inadequate. A *prison* sentence for a long term will do more to discourage the illegal practice of dentistry than the present insignificant fines do.

4. *National Recognition.* Work for the national recognition of the dental license, which is another important as well as progressive step in the advancement of dentistry.

Lectures on dental subjects by well-known men of the profession, and the reports of committees elected to carry on the work outlined above, should form the greater part of the program to be carried out at regular meetings of the society.

The above program ought to be adopted by all dental societies and if seriously carried out, would redound to the betterment of the community and the uplift of the dental profession.

CURING DISEASES

When some disease is studied the process of elimination is used to discover its cause. Thus in the efforts to find the organism that produces infantile paralysis, which is becoming an alarmingly prevalent scourge in this country, they take the blood of children and monkeys that have the disease and examine it under scientific rules and compare it with the blood of those not affected by the disease. By finding one element in the sick blood not found in the others they assume that such organism is the cause of the trouble. All diseases are thus being analyzed. Now if the study of social conditions were thus examined the causes of poverty, crime and other ills would soon be discovered—in fact, the cause has been discovered, but those who profit by the ills are in control of the law and refuse to permit the cure. The germ of private capital is everywhere the disturbing cause of social inharmony. Eliminate that and you have done away with the need of prisons, insane asylums, charities and courts. Were private ownership of productive sources not recognized, who would commit any kind of act, to say nothing of crime, to get possession of such things? When the only thing that can buy food, clothing, shelter, instruction and pleasures is the certificate of so much personal service in the production of these things, who would hold up a man or rob a house or a bank, or bribe public officials for gold or silver, when neither would buy any of these things? As things are today, crime is encouraged and made easy—for when you can get possession of money or capital, legally or not, you can have anything the market affords. Establish Socialism and no one could get any good out of any robbery or money or capital that they had not come by in the regular way. That may seem absurd to you, but it is nevertheless true.—*APPEAL TO REASON*

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EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

As students and future professional men we lull ourselves in the sweet illusion that we have nothing in common with the working class and therefore all movements that tend to better their condition are either treated with indifference or ignored by us. And yet when one observes the condition of the average professional man of today he will find that his livelihood depends to a great extent upon the laboring class. It is they who form his clientele and his income fluctuates with theirs. One of the chief reasons why the income of the average dental practitioner or medical man is so small is due to the fact that the wages of the workers are so low that they leave but a small margin for dental and medical service.

Prof. Albion W. Small says: "No man can live, bring up a family and enjoy the ordinary human happiness on a wage less than \$1,000 a year."

The average yearly income of the American workingman is about \$600 a year. Investigators of the Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor submit statistics showing that a family of five on a monthly income of \$72.90 will have only \$3.95 for doctor and dentist's bills, while an income of \$60 per month, throws that family entirely upon charitable hands as far as medical and dental needs are concerned.

The time has passed when the professional man could claim that his practice will be confined entirely to the middle class or the "rich" class. The middle class is constantly diminishing in numbers and its income decreases proportionally to that of the working class, while the rich bestow their favors upon those of their own class.

Our interests as professional men are closely bound up with those of the working class. It behooves us therefore not only to take a theoretical interest, but also an active part in all social and political movements that tend to better the workers' conditions.

Our cover page has been designed by the talented member of the Junior Class, N. Y. C. D., Mr. Jacob R. Schwartz '13. The beauty of it adds greatly to our magazine and the "Progressive Dentist" takes this means of thanking Mr. Schwartz for his contribution.

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

On Friday evening, March 1st, at 8 p. m. sharp, a regular meeting of the Chapter will take place at 56 St. Marks Place (8th St.). Miss. Lena Robins will deliver a talk on "Forces Making for the Emancipation of Woman". Discussion will follow. Everybody welcome.

THE MAN

DR. WM. J. ROBINSON

Editor of the "Critic and Guide", etc., Pres. of the American Society of Medical Sociology, will deliver a talk on :

THE SUBJECT

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THE DATE

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THE PLACE

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On Friday evening, Feb. 16th the Chapter held the First Annual Ball, to celebrate the second year of its existence. The affair proved an all around success. Aside from the entertaining feature the affair acted as a sort of reunion of old acquaintances and the making of new friends. Those who attended the affair will long remember that day.

THE SOCIALIZATION OF DENTISTRY

By WM. MENDELSON, '12.

From a policy of "Man's inhumanity to man, that made countless thousands mourn" the world is gradually but surely turning to that of "Man's humanity to man, that will make countless millions happy."

In every department of human endeavor we see this policy applied. In our political life men are beginning to clamor that the policy of the government be the greatest amount of good for the greatest number. In our industrial life the protection of life and limb is being proclaimed by an ever increasing part of the world as of far more importance than profits to a few. And even in our commercial life that bugaboo of private property where no one has the right to interfere, the demand for government interference for the common good is ever increasing.

And so it is with those professions which are in the nature of social service, professions such as medicine and dentistry. At first the more advanced brothers of the profession formed organizations for the purpose of forcing their more practical brother to realize that the service he is giving to the community should be of vaster importance to him than his pecuniary reward.

The oral-hygiene movement of today is a step in the direction of turning dentistry into a profession for the common good. But this progress toward socializing dentistry is naturally slow because of the social system under which we live today, where profit and not service to one's fellow-man is the strongest incentive in life.

Did you ever stop to think what benefits dentistry would confer upon humanity, upon itself and upon the dental practitioner if it ever becomes socialized, I mean if it were turned into a profession where the dentist was employed by the state and where the great incentive would be to serve to the best of his ability the community in which he lives?

Think of the countless thousands of young children to-day that need dental work and which they cannot afford to get. In the City of New York alone, there are about two million cavities in the teeth of the school children that need attention.

Think of the countless thousands there must be throughout the country. Think of the millions of adults that need dental work of some form or other and are not able to have same attended to for pecuniary reasons. The value to the community in health from a proper attention to the dental needs of its citizens cannot even be appreciated today.

As for the profession itself, what could there be better than when the incentive would be service to your fellow-man instead of private gain? Men would do only the best and most conscientious kind of work because there would be no interest or gain to do otherwise.

Think what it would mean to the practitioner when his livelihood is insured so that he can enjoy life in its fullest sense, without having to compete with his fellow practitioner.

He could constantly perfect himself by way of study and practice without fear for the days when he would become old and unable to continue his calling, reaping the joy that comes to one feeling that he has done his best for his fellow-man.

I sometimes dream that it would be the golden age of dentistry, and who knows but that it is a dream that may come true.

WHAT SOCIALIST OFFICIALS WILL DO FOR HEALTH IN SCHENECTADY.

PART OF MESSAGE OF SOCIALIST MAYOR DR. GEORGE R. LUNN TO THE
ALDERMANIC COUNCIL.
Health the First Need.

We propose to go as deeply into the question of health as our power and resources permit. We place health first in our administration as the one consideration that should outweigh all others. As Socialists, we recognize it as part of the duty of the twentieth century State to assume the responsibility for the health of its citizens. We assert that in so far as sanitary science shows health to be a social question, government must deal with this problem.

We propose to use the whole force of the Health Department as an educational power. Through lectures, demonstrations and exhibits, we shall seek to enlighten the people as to those social conditions which are at the root of so much disease.

For this purpose I ask you to support the Health Department in its efforts to lay a deep foundation for the physical welfare of the community.

The administration proposes to establish a system of records which shall give details as to the health of the individual child from birth to the wage earning period. A maternity and infancy nurse, trained also as a social worker, will be appointed. It will be her duty to teach the expectant mother the proper hygiene of the lying-in period, the care of her infant, to watch and report upon the health of the child until the time of its entrance into school.

In the public school rigid inspection by qualified physicians will begin—cases of illness and deficiency will not only be reported, but will be followed up by nurses. The record of the child which

began at birth will be continued at the school. Then when the time to begin work comes and the child applies at the Health Department for a certificate, its record will be returned to that department. In this way the health of the future citizen will not only be kept constantly under guard by the city, but a mass of data will be compiled which should prove useful to students of social science as well as to all Socialists who will use these facts to protest against child exploitation.

We propose not only to inspect conditions for uncleanness, but to demonstrate through specially trained social workers how even under the difficulties of poverty a certain minimum of decency can be obtained.

Hindered though we are by unjust laws, we shall nevertheless use every available power to make it possible for the people to maintain their homes in the face of the deplorable conditions that tyrannize over them.

We recognize tuberculosis as a social disease preventable by social remedies. We assert as Socialists that tuberculosis is due to economic and social causes. The community is, therefore, responsible for the disease, and must act upon that responsibility by remedying the vile living and working conditions which produce it. So far as the laws permit we shall work with prevention as our first aim.

For those who are afflicted with the disease, we shall to the limit of our power provide the most modern scientific methods of cure. We shall do all we can to see that convalescent patients are not put at work which will hinder their recovery. But cure is second to prevention. The disease must be wiped out.

LOVE OR POWER.

BY S. G. RICH.

It is frequently said by reformers that the Socialist attitude is all wrong. They want us to unite with them to get some one reform, to "clean up the city," or to "jail the grafters." They want us to appeal to "the moral sense of the people" instead of to the interests of one class.

How plausible this all sounds! How alluring to the sentimentalist! Yet it is founded on an entire lack of knowledge of how things happen to happen.

For example, they want all good citizens to unite on a fusion ticket to put thru some one or two reforms, which may be among our incidental demands. The history of reform and fusion parties in America shows us that very rarely have they achieved what they were elected to achieve, and that when they have done so, they have always put thru, also, other measures harmful to the working class. For these reformers are always petty capitalists, and unconsciously stand for the interests of that class alone. Shall we help *them* against ourselves?

We Socialists know that every party is the representative of some class and works in the interests of that class. We know that the interests of the working class lead them towards Socialism, and we are trying to awaken them to their interests. We know that all thru history, it has been POWER alone that has done anything. We don't see how "appeals to brotherly love" or to "the moral sense of the people" can accomplish anything that we desire; they have never yet accomplished anything at all.

We don't care particularly to "jail the grafters." Honest capitalist reform government is just as harmful to the working class; it isn't even going to give a little here and there to keep itself in office, as do the "crooks." As long as Capitalism lasts, it is a matter of no importance to us to "clean up the city." When we get hold of it, the reformers won't like our cleaning up, for they will be cleaned out along with the rest of the capitalist class.

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