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Editorial - A Plea for Organized Dentistry

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The Dentoscope

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EDITORIAL SECTION

A PLEA FOR ORGANIZED DENTISTRY

IN spite of the universally accepted axiom that "in unity there is strength," and notwithstanding the abundance of evidence that organization in any group is necessary to promote the welfare of that group and of the interests it serves, still there are far too many members of the dental profession who say and who by their manifest attitudes, earnestly feel that dental organization means nothing to them. This attitude is assumed and maintained to excuse the inactivity, indifference and apathy of the individual who has failed to catch the accepted theory that dentistry is a profession and not a commodity.

The dental curricula now contain a course in Dental Ethics, in which, among other things, is stressed the duty of the dental practitioner to his profession. In spite of earnest exhortations in these connections, many of us still look upon the profession as a commodity bought and paid for when the financial requirements in the dental college have been met. No serious thought is given to the contributions to the profession in the nature of proven theories, standardized teachings and procedures, ingenious inventions (instruments, appliances and apparatus), by the pioneers of the profession. We make free use of all of these, without accepting any obligations or responsibility, as debtors to the profession.

Perhaps it is not out of place to recite just a few of the outstanding, unselfish contributions to the profession by our predecessors and contemporaries.

Pierre Fanchard, in 1728, gave to the profession a work entitled "*Le Chirurgien Dentiste*," a comprehensive work treating of all branches of dentistry as understood and practiced at that time. It was largely through the endeavors of Drs. Hayden and Harris that the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery was established in 1840. This marked the beginning of dental education in an organized way. Dr. Nathan Cooley Keep was largely responsible for the establishment of the Harvard Dental School. Dr. Edward Maynard invented, among other things, the barbed broach for pulp extirpation. Through the philanthropy of Dr. Thomas W. Evans we received the first liberal endowment for dental education. Dr. Greene Vardiman Black gave to modern dentistry a life rich

with scientific research and accomplishments too numerous to recite. We could continue with this recitation almost ad infinitum; the point should be stressed, however, that these pioneers and many others have given their respective benefits to the profession and to humanity with little or no thought of personal financial returns. At least this consideration in the majority of cases has been more or less secondary.

The profession has received these benefits and has used them freely. The sad feature is that too many of us by far fail to realize our position as debtors for the free use of this wealth of professional equipment that we have fallen heir to.

The ability to write books is not given to all, nor is there opportunity for research by the great majority of the profession. However, every single member of the profession can and should strive to perpetuate the high standards of the profession as established by these pioneers, by actively supporting dental organization, local, state, and national. It is only through organized effort that we can ever approach our ideals for economic betterment and for increased humanitarian service.

I should like to urge those who are more or less indifferent and apathetic in this connection to think seriously and logically as to their duty to organized dentistry and as to the personal and humanitarian benefits to be derived from the discharge of this duty. So join the ranks of the organization and become actively interested; cease and refrain from destructive criticism; offer a constructive suggestion when you have one and keep quiet when you have none. The day of "rugged individualism" is past in dentistry as in every other walk of life. It is only through unified and organized effort that the best interests of the profession and of those we serve may be promoted and the benefits to all substantially increased.

J. L. D.

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Be sure to read on Page 63 the release from the office of Dr. Beamon, Chairman, Program Committee, National Dental Association. The meeting is August 4, 5, 6, and 7, at Cincinnati.