

Editorial Comment “Graft”

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At a recent meeting of the Physicians' Club of Chicago the subject of "Graft" was under discussion, and Mr. Clarence Darrow, a well-known lawyer, defined graft as follows: "The effort of any human being to take from society or from another human being or animal more than he really gives to society in return." Graft is a subject which is receiving widespread attention at the present time.

Graft in congress, graft in various departments in Washington, graft in state affairs, graft in municipal affairs, graft in the conduct of the public press, graft in the pulpit, graft everywhere seems to be the order of the day. We have to deal with graft in the medical profession and let us see to it that it is even more energetically dealt with than is being done with graft in private life. The surgeons and specialists in high places who indulge in graft by offering other physicians bribes in the form of commission for patients sent to them, as well as physicians who accept these bribes, should be exposed and denounced by the honest men of the profession. The grafters who write high sounding but meaningless praise of every secret nostrum, the manufacturer of which promises returns, is also deserving of our serious attention.

The man who advertises his operations and practice by newspaper interviews on the faintest pretext or on no pretext at all, is guilty of graft, and no effort should be spared to show him the evil of his ways, or to expose him.

The medical hypocrite whose religion may be covered by a postage stamp but whose character is still smaller than his religion, exercises graft when he works at the church for practice to the disadvantage of his more scrupulous and less grafty brother.

The cheap medical college whose only excuse for existence is the advertisement of its faculty, and which has nothing of value to offer to the student but the promise of an easy and shortened course, and farcical examinations, is one of the most pernicious forms of medical graft and one which the profession should discourage at every opportunity.

The red-lighted-machine-made specialist who surrounds himself with senseless but gaudy and impressive machinery for the purpose of catching the support of the unwary general practitioner and impressing the public, is indulging in a species of graft which has made many of this class successful business men but poor physicians.

And so we might go on at great length in the discussion of graft, but perhaps to no good purpose. Most of us recognize graft when we see it, particularly medical graft. Let us carefully label it as opportunity arises and assign it to its proper place, i.e., beyond the pale of professional countenance—in the realm of quackery and charlatanism.

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