

OFFICE VISITING

The exchange of office visits by orthodontists is becoming an antiquated practice. There is small likelihood that it will return. Economic necessity has appropriated business methods of office efficiency. Even recreation is regimented and pursued with feverish intensity along avenues hemmed in by the strictest technic and prescribed code of behavior. There remains no time for the gentle courtesy of office visiting. Interchange of professional ideas is provided by scientific meetings, dental schools and study clubs whose rules of presentation and reception are formulated by custom. Except for the overlapping of professional meetings it is a great achievement in time conservation. Yet one cannot be denied a furtive retrospective glance tempered with more than a trace of regret.

There is something to be said for a few hours spent at the chair side of a fellow orthodontist in his ordinary routine of practice. His patients present the same problems, ask the same questions and offer the same alibis. He has failures and successes. There is comfort and inspiration in this association. Despite intimacy through social contact or familiarity with formal presentation in scientific meeting one never knows an orthodontist until he is seen at work in his own office.

It is reassuring to learn that in other offices all finished cases do not look like the "after" casts shown in illustrations. It is stimulating to see difficult problems handled successfully. It is interesting to observe a bit of simple and effective technic which had never occurred to you. All of these reactions are very healthful. They tend to level our peaks of egotism and fill in our valleys of despair. We may be convinced that theories at which we scoffed can be applied with enviable result.

Nor is this an entirely one-sided pastime. The annoyance of interruption may be amply repaid by solutions which result from discussion. Many of our cases would benefit by verbal analysis. When this mental activity is stimulated by a congenial and critical audience the end is more gratifying. The average practitioner is forced to work too much alone for his own good.

The proof of the pudding is, after all, in the tasting. Notwithstanding the very real advantages provided by the presentations of papers, clinics and demonstrations to large groups the sampling of these methods at their source has its points. Here the handicaps of rhetoric and the fog of erudite discussion disappear and accomplishment is viewed with naked frankness. Be it scientific laboratory, orthodontic clinic or private office the real test of its published results is in observation of method and practice at the source. And the benefit to observer and observed is mutual.

H. J. N.