

COMMENTARY

VICTORIAN ERA ESTHETIC AND RESTORATIVE DENTISTRY: AN ADVERTISING TRADE CARD GALLERY

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There comes a time while reading practice-oriented, or esoteric, research articles when we all need to take a deep breath and find something a little lighter to read; something interesting where we can glean a few facts; something that does not demand our concentrated, rational, critical, scientific, and clinical thought processes; something that creates a link to the past; something that we can revel in for the pure joy of discovery. Such is the article by Dr. Ted Croll and Dr. Ben Z. Swanson Jr.

This is not an article that will change the way you practice. This is not an article that will alter your purchasing habits of dental materials, or affect your ethical attitude toward new trends within the profession. This is simply an article that you will enjoy reading just for the fun of it. And that makes it very worthwhile.

Congratulations are in order for those involved with this article for the foresight in predicting that other colleagues would find interest in the article. And congratulations also to the editor for daring to publish in a scientific peer-reviewed journal what some would think should appear in the throw-away press. But this article is not selling anything, save history, and that makes it very enjoyable and eminently qualified for these pages.

This article makes us stop and think about the ever-increasing speed of technological development. Yet, it also documents some of the similar claims of years past and today. One hundred years ago, our colleagues were disseminating marketing information on their business cards as perhaps the best way of spreading the word to new patients. Today, patients are lured by similar claims to buy the latest multithousand-dollar light in order to “have teeth so white and snowy.” Over a century ago, prevention was pushed with Calvert’s Carbolic Tooth Powder care from Manchester, England. It was interesting to note that of the three personal testimonials used, two were from deceased persons—we hope not from using the product!

Read this article and enjoy the illustrations of dentistry of years gone by.

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