

entire agreement, and in directions calculated to confer the utmost benefits upon the public, supposing the medical profession not to be all in the wrong, but here the matter in question is in quite a different category.

There are just a few dentists, we suppose, who imagine that mercury in the mouth in the form of an amalgam, or as the coloring matter of red india-rubber, may be capable of exerting its influence upon the individual ; and it is sought, not to convince dentists by adequate evidence that such is the case, but to impose the views of an infinitesimal minority by legislative enactment upon their fellows. It reminds us of the rule once in force in some of the American dental societies, which excluded from their ranks any one who had ever used amalgam. Neither red rubber nor even amalgam are absolutely indispensable in dental practice, and if it could be shown that ill effects followed their use, every intelligent dentist would at once abandon them. But how can the "General Court of Massachusetts" judge of the value of the evidence on such a matter? And even granting that some sort of evidence were forthcoming, what would be thought of a bill to prohibit the use of iodoform or of antipyrin, or of carbolic acid, because all have, beyond a doubt, occasionally produced poisonous effects?

That such an attempt should be seriously made leads us to say a word upon the evidence available against these substances. Some years ago a hospital physician, since dead, brought before the notice of the Odontological Society of Great Britain a number of cases of alleged mercurial poisoning caused by red vulcanized india-rubber plates, all of which had occurred in his own practice. The society, recognizing the great importance of the subject, appointed a committee to collect evidence and report upon it ; the result was that, in response to circulars sent broadcast to dentists, not one single case could be found which bore investigation. The Hon. Sec. of the society personally investigated several alleged cases, and on one occasion travelled a considerable distance to examine what was stated to be a very marked and typical instance of local irritation attributable to the use of red vulcanized india-rubber plates. His report was that all the described symptoms were there, but that there was dirt enough to account for all abnormal conditions, and it was also clearly shown that all the phenomena upon which the physician had relied were equally to be found under black rubber plates, and even under gold plates.

As the irritation appeared most commonly where want of cleanliness was conspicuous, it was not surprising that it was more common under vulcanite plates, inasmuch as the out-patients of hospitals are not on the whole remarkable for their cleanly habits ; besides this it is well known that when plates are not sufficiently long and often out of the mouth, the non-conducting nature of the