

Combination Metal and Cement Fillings.

By B.

It can hardly be denied but that the metals we use in filling teeth, are neither compatible with the tooth structure, nor as perfectly adapted to the marginal edges as the average cement preparations. If the ordinary cements were perfectly insoluble they would oust gold and amalgam from the market. We are so accustomed to extolling the various forms of metal fillings, that we perhaps overlook their disadvantages, and, in some cases, their positive injuriousness. If we could insert gold as easily as amalgam, several of the greatest objections to it would be removed. Any filling that demands great pressure, that requires hammering, etc., for condensation, that is difficult to use in inaccessible cavities, that exacts great strain and exhaustion of nervous force on the part of both patient and operator, that must necessarily be for the not-over-full-purse a costly material, has objections which we would, if we could, remove. Amalgam is no substitute under every circumstance for gold; and in itself considered, being a conductor of heat, shares in one of the objections to gold.

For several years past I have consistently practised, except in small cavities, a suggestion made before I was born, but which, like many other good ideas, is lost to the memory of some, and perhaps ignored in the practice of others. It is simply the use of any of the best cement fillings, such as made by White, Justi, Sibley, Johnson and Lund, as the base or bulk, with gold or amalgam as a cover.

Now this seems a very simple, old story, but at a dental meeting which some of your readers may remember, I challenged twenty dentists present to insert this combination filling in dead teeth in plaster-of-Paris settings; and simple as it seemed, only seven of them did it, under those favorable conditions, in a way to make them reliable had the operations been done in the mouth! The faults perpetrated were as follows: margins left thin or untrimmed, overhanging edges of enamel, improper trimming of the bone cement from the margins, starting the metal filling too soon in cases where gold was used as the covering; any one of these would cause inevitable failure in the mouth.

Briefly let me say, that I take care to have no possibility of these contingencies. In frequent cases where gold is used, I insert loose pellets into the bone cement before it hardens, instead of subsequently drilling retaining points or cutting grooves. I then use the hot air syringe rapidly, and it is easy to lay