

Silver Amalgam : Is it Injurious to Health ?

By MARK G. McELHINNEY, D.D.S., L.D.S., Ottawa, Ont.

Matters relating to the general health are of great importance, and should be carefully studied by all, and more especially by those whose business in life is the amelioration and cure of disease.

The physician and the dentist are continually coming into contact with suffering humanity, and it is as much their duty to enlighten and warn those seeking their services, as it is to study, and, if possible, to cure the immediate cause of suffering ; but, in this capacity of teacher, the professional man should be careful to teach only that of which he is certain, and avoid, above all things, the teaching of doctrines that are likely to prejudice the patient and injure his fellows.

While I believe most emphatically in the utmost freedom of opinion, thought, and discussion, I question the right of anyone to state dogmatically any opinion for the guidance of those not fully capable of weighing and considering the same, especially if that opinion be a theory that is, in itself, scarcely established upon fact.

From time to time patients come to us wishing to have amalgam fillings removed, because certain physicians have told them that their ill-health was directly traceable to the presence of these fillings. Often patients will object to having amalgam fillings inserted because certain physicians consider amalgam injurious to health.

If amalgam is injurious, conscientious dentists should discontinue its use. If it is not injurious, conscientious physicians should not prejudice their patients against it.

When an allopathic physician is not quite sure of his diagnosis, he throws the blame on the kidneys, the liver, or other internal organ more remote, and the subsequent history of the case usually shows that he was right. When some homœopathic physicians get to their limit of diagnostic ability, they blame it on amalgam fillings, and the patient immediately collides with a dentist.

In one who is a believer in homœopathy, an amalgam filling often makes trouble. In thousands who never heard of that system, amalgam still continues to serve a useful purpose and without harm.