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EDITORIAL NOTES ON PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

SEPARATING TEETH PREPARATORY TO FILLING.

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As it is admitted, on all hands, that it is necessary to have room enough to work in before we attempt to fill proximate cavities, the thing to be considered is, what is the best method of obtaining this room, or rather in what manner can the teeth best be separated.

Many substances have been employed for this purpose, from time to time. Twenty years ago wooden wedges were used almost exclusively, but as they were not easily retained in position they were abandoned, to be succeeded by bits of India rubber. These, by being stretched out till they formed only small threads, could be passed between the teeth, and by contracting would force the teeth apart. But as the rubber "didn't know enough to stop contracting when it had separated the teeth sufficiently," it gradually went out of use, to be superseded by other substances. Latterly, what is called "forcible separation" seems to be taking the place of all other methods. The teeth are forced apart by driving a wedge, made of some firm, solid wood, between them, as near the cutting surfaces as it can be done, and then driving another wedge at the necks of the teeth. The former produces the separation, and the latter retains it after the first has been withdrawn. By this process the operator is enabled to fill at once; but, after having tried it on a large number of patients, I have found the pain so intense, that I have abandoned