

strength to the finger to depress the jaw, and protects it from a bite. If the patient should grip your ring, and you wish to withdraw it, simply turn it so as to bring the lip to one side, when it may be withdrawn "in spite of the teeth."

A FEW THOUGHTS ON AMALGAM.

By CHAS. HARDING, London. Eng.

Of late years there has been so much improvement in the manufacture of amalgams for filling teeth, that they have become more popular in cases where gold cannot be used to advantage, and the most eminent practitioners in all parts of Europe use amalgam for their best as well as poorest patients. I do not refer, of course, to those impure and filthily prepared combinations which earned for any amalgam, however good, the unreasonable opposition some years ago in the United States. There is as much difference between a properly prepared amalgam and these dirty preparations, as there is between pure gold foil and gold foil adulterated with lead, and, while believing that we should always use gold when we can, the practice of respectable dentists, for twenty-five years, will bear witness to the usefulness of amalgam, when a soft plug is required. In this connection I might say, that in judging of amalgam, it is erroneous and unfair to do so by the work of quacks. Let us take its history under the manipulation of honest men, the only fair way to judge any material for filling teeth.

The charge of "salivation" from amalgam is held in Europe as mere assumption, and I would advise looking beyond it, in diagnosis where amalgam is present in the teeth. Recently I had a patient, aged 29, who came to me, and accused amalgam, I had inserted three years before, as the cause of ptyalism presented. "My dear friend," I said, "tell me how long is it since you were treated for syphilis, and what quantity of mercury did you swallow." That person collapsed.

One point strikes me of importance in securing a clean face to amalgam, and smoothness of surface at the edges of the cavity. In the first place, the edges should be as carefully smoothened as if gold is to be used, and the entire preparation of the cavity done as thoroughly as possible. The cavity should be carefully dried and kept so during the plugging; the silver and tin should be ground fine in a mortar after being filed, and washed in salt and water, and dried, then washed again in alcohol and dried in the sun; the mercury should have no sediment. I always purify mine by distillation of the red oxide. The amalgam should be made in a small mortar, and after being well rubbed together, the excess of mercury should be squeezed out,