operators this material had properties and advantages which could not be set aside, and even prominent dentists endorsed and used it in their practice. Individual opposition was in due time followed by the official action of the American Society of Dental Surgeons. In 1841, this society first announced that any material containing mercury was injurious; it next declared (1843) the use of amalgam to be malpractice, and then (1845) it wer, to the extent of asserting that the refusal to sign a pledge not to use this material was equivalent to malpractice.

As might have been foreseen, the first measure based upon the injurious effects of mercury—a disputed point—did not accomplish its object, while the second measure, attempting as it did to control men's opinions, if not their consciences, could not be enforced even among those who condemned the use of mercurial preparations. In point of fact, these measures were more effective in breaking up the society than in suppressing amalgam. The society retreated from its position by repealing the "protest and pledge" mandate, though strangely claiming at the same time that the resolutions had accomplished their object.

It has often been said that the antagonism sprang wholly from prejudice; but the attitude of its opponents is easily accounted for when the nature and origin of the material is recalled in connection with the character of the men who introduced it to the profession. Again it has been asserted that the opponents to this material were ignorant of its compounds and properties. The facts in the case are, that those who opposed amalgam did so because they knew it was composed of base metals, and because mercury was an essential ingredient, as well as because it discolored the teeth and disfigured the mouth. Not a little has been claimed for the tests and experiments to which the advocates of amalgam subjected this material; yet we look in vain for any evidence that these alleged investigations proved anything or established anything reliable.

For about twenty-five years amalgam was made from coin silver and mercury. Excepting Dr. Evans' objectionable formula, none was given to the profession until 1855, when Dr. Elisha Townsend, of Philadelphia, published his formula for an improved amalgam alloy.

The most conspicuous fact in connection with the use of the silver coin amalgam was that fillings made of it turned almost black and imparted their color to the teeth. Dr. Townsend's alleged improvement consisted in refining out the copper, and making the alloy to consist of five parts of tin and four of silver, and after mixing, washing the mixture with alcohol. This for-