

remove it when once hard, and that it exerts a therapeutic effect upon soft dentine requires no deep scientific and microscopical examination to demonstrate. Teeth which seem to have almost an antagonism for other materials, are reconciled to the presence of copper amalgam, and lose all their malign repellent behavior, so detrimental to their own safety, under its protection.

But copper amalgam is said to be unreliable, in that some fillings after a few months or years become "cupped"—the surface wearing down as if by attrition or the action of some solvent. Such a filling presents a scooped-out or concave appearance, even though the edges of the cavity may still be covered by the material. They are generally of a light color, but this is due no doubt to the constantly wasting of the surface. Other fillings appear to disintegrate—to become quite soft and easily cut to pieces with an excavator.

In describing the peculiarities noticed in fillings of copper amalgam which have not resulted in success, I cannot do better than cite from a paper recently read at a meeting of the New York Odontological Society by Dr. J. Allen Osmun, of Newark, N.J. He says :

"1st. We have all seen cases that have filled us with admiration, black but clean fillings, hard as adamant, and edges absolutely perfect—the ideal plastic filling.

"2nd. Then again, we have observed fillings black, but dirty in appearance, teeth in the immediate neighborhood all discolored with the stain of the disintegrated filling, probably the black sulphurent of mercury—however, saving the teeth as far as recurrence of decay.

"3rd. The third class of fillings is much like the preceding, only with this difference, that at the cervical edge we find that the filling has decomposed, and in some cases entirely wasted, so that it does not afford the tooth any protection ; in fact, it resembles, to a great extent, the phenomenon observed with the oxyphosphate fillings, and leads one to the conviction that the same agent is responsible for this condition of affairs. This I consider one of the most deplorable situations that can possibly exist, much more so than the other which is so familiar, and has brought copper amalgam fillings into such disrepute, and which I assign to the fourth class.