

general notice at the meeting, two years ago, at Boston, where Dr. Keep, of that city, claimed large success in a number of recorded cases. It was a question in his mind if the material which Dr. Keep used was at all like the material sold under that name in the dental depots; and the gentlemen who had thus far spoken used the oxychloride of the shops, and not Dr. Keep's preparation, as far as he could judge. The whole claim really amounted to about this: A preparation, called oxychloride of zinc, consisting of a white powder, which is mixed into a mortar with an acid fluid, is plastered into the tooth over an exposed pulp; the patient has more or less pain for a longer or shorter time, and then it stops; after hardening, cut away the surplus material and fill the cavity with gold, and, where there is no subsequent pain, conclude that the pulp of the tooth is alive and all going well. Some modify this process by covering the exposed pulp with creosote before putting in the mortar, and claim that there is then no pain felt. A great many who had tried the same process had had a great deal of subsequent pain to contend with. But all this superstructure had been built upon the slight foundation of some temporary apparent success, opposed by a great deal, perhaps more, of evident failure, in the face of the well-known fact that teeth containing dead pulps might lie dormant years and then break out into the most troublesome activity; and also that pulps, after having been exposed, might, on the condition of the exclusion of air and moisture, quietly die and become atrophied. On the other hand, it was as certainly true that an exposed pulp was occasionally found which, having maintained its healthy vitality, and being protected from external irritation, threw out from its enveloping membrane a deposit of secondary dentine, which more or less perfectly shut up the opening into the pulp cavity. But these cases were so rare that men would go from one city to another to see them. Admitting all the favourable cases cited to-day as perfectly true, so far they were utterly insufficient to prove that the pulps in question were not now dead, or undergoing a slow destruction by the free acid whose presence had been so incautiously alluded to, or by the powerful escharotic (creosote) used to abate the pain caused by the acid, and whose legitimate action would be to destroy the soft tissue with which it came in contact, insuring to it only a less painful death. While experimentation was to be sedulously encouraged, he deprecated the confident assertion, as fact, of what was only supposition. Let us see what a few years may bring forth. Other theories, as well supported as the one here presented, had needed but a short time to run themselves out; and he was therefore the more careful not to fall at once into every new current, but rather disposed to prove all things.