

After the filling has been made somewhat higher than the tooth, carve the top of the filling until it is shortened about the height of the tooth. Remove the gutta-percha by sticking a heated instrument into it. Bend back the matrix ends, and if the amalgam has been properly packed, there need be no hesitation about grasping one end with pliers and pulling out sideways. Carve filling to perfect contour with the sharpest trimmers, and burnish tinfoil on to the filling to absorb the mercury, continuing until the tin will take up no more. Smooth the approximal surface by passing a waxed silk with pumice, or other polishing girt, between the teeth, and after making sure that no loose particle of the filling is left at the cervical border, remove the dam. Carve to a perfect articulation. Ten minutes polishing at a subsequent sitting will make such a filling "a thing of beauty and a joy forever." It will defy caries.

Where the patient's time was limited, I have frequently been obliged to fill at a single sitting, cavities in the anterior and posterior surfaces of a molar, both of which required contouring. In such cases after the first is finished, I separate the other space with the Perry separator and insert the second filling. The only effect of the intense pressure on the first filling is a little brightening of the surface, due to mercury. One thickness of tinfoil absorbs all that appears. This is a test severe enough for any amalgam filling.

Should the cavity extend so far beneath the gum margin that it is impossible to carry the dam beyond its edge, prepare and smooth the margins, and fit a matrix, smoothing its sharp corners and edges. Slip it to place and apply the dam. Then proceed with gutta-percha to hold the matrix against the cervical edge, just as if the dam had been placed on first. The only difference in succeeding steps is that more care must be used in getting such a thin layer of cement at the cavity edges as gives the best results, and in removing every vestige of cement from the very edge.

In ninety-five per cent. of amalgam fillings put in by me, I use a cavity lining of cement. The benefits of cement are five-fold; (1) it retains the filling; (2) it preserves the color of the tooth; (3) it prevents the metal from transmitting sensations of heat and cold to the pulp; (4) by its use we save valuable tooth structure, as owing to its adhesive properties we do not require so much cutting for anchorage; and (5) if caries should occur in any part of the tooth near the filling and should extend to the filling, it progresses less rapidly than if no cement had been used. Amalgam in contact with dentine in a live tooth discolours it, and by virtue of that very discoloration preserves it, but no one has yet seen the same happy effect follow the contact of amalgam with enamel. There may be a slight discoloration but there is also a