

compatible with durability. In preparing for the insertion of a gold filling we are careful to remove all decay, to cut margins down square and smooth. Are we always so careful in the preparation for amalgam. We trust to thin and brittle edges of enamel unsupported by dentine—edges that we know would be pounded off were we inserting gold; we leave slight dark spots unremoved; we do not prepare cervical margins thoroughly enough. In approximal cavities amalgam fillings are often wanted without attempting to restore the contour of the tooth and the side walls are left so that the margin of filling is at the point of contact, thus endangering the permanency. There is also a lack of carefulness on the part of some operators to finish approximal cavities properly. A fine tape or sandpaper strip is the best means of finishing. You have often seen approximal fillings where there is a mass of amalgam overhanging the cervical portion of the cavity in such a way as to be an irritant and constant source of trouble. Food particles are thus also retained at the weakest point of the cavity and the inevitable follows. Crown cavities of very innocent nature are filled without a careful following out of seams of decay between the cusps.

Many cavities are filled entirely with amalgam when combination fillings would be infinitely better, as in large fillings the tendency to shrinkage is lessened by filling the greater portion of the cavity with cement. Before the cement is set the amalgam may be burnished, thus adding strength to frail cavity walls.

There is, however, a danger which must be guarded against here. The margins of the cavity must be freed of all cement, or otherwise there will soon be a leakage from its dissolution. I have noticed this mistake in cases where pulps have been capped with a small amount of cement.

The use of a moisture-proof varnish is of great advantage in a cavity, as margins are better protected. A good varnish for this purpose is composed of virgin rubber and gum mastich dissolved in Ch.-Cl.<sub>3</sub>. Although some of our best authorities advocate a soft amalgam, I believe in a pretty dry mass carefully inserted and followed by use of a rotary burnisher in the engine, and tin or gold-foil or alloy filings used on top to absorb any surplus mercury that may come to the surface. Your filling will then be hard almost by the time your patient leaves the chair. It is preferable where possible to have patient in a second time for polishing, as this tends to carefulness and leaves filling in a better condition of polish.

Finally, my brethren, amalgam fillings fail because they are inserted for forty cents. If the people want a dollar's worth for forty cents, some men will always pretend to give it, and amalgam fillings will frequently fail.