

among a class of patients whose love of luxuries predominate, spending as they do, yearly, hundreds of dollars on superfluous clothing, whiskey, tobacco, and o'her ways perhaps more disreputable; yet feeling that every cent spent upon their teeth is entirely thrown away. Perhaps, gentlemen, you think I have drawn a dark picture; and dark it is, indeed, when we consider that the dental profession is almost entirely responsible for it.

Perhaps you will ask how are they responsible for it? When I beg leave to ask how many good dentists are there among us and what percentage of good operations come under our observation; what proportion of first-class operations do we individually make; or, to put the question in a plainer form, I will ask is there a dental surgeon present who is perfectly satisfied with ten per cent. of his own operations? I think I can safely answer that question, by stating that there are but few among us who make five per cent. of their operations nice enough to stand their own criticism. If this be so with the best, what can be expected of the mass, and how can we expect the people to have confidence in the abilities of dental surgeons? and in making this statement I refer to perfect operations, fillings which will preserve the balance of tooth substance and restore contour, with all natural convexities and concavities. If all this be true, there has been already a formidable array of obstacles presented, and to those are added the cost of gold, sensitive dentine preventing proper preparation of the cavity, and mental and physical inability to bear the operation extending over three or four hours. The saliva too frequently proves decidedly troublesome, a very small amount of moisture being sufficient to destroy the integrity of the filling.

Many patients are decidedly hard to manage, seeming inclined to give all the trouble possible, and finally indicating that they, and not the operator, should receive the fee for the operation.

Now it is well known that either of the above obstacles are frequently very troublesome to contend with. But when we are forced to combat them all combined, as we frequently are, the making of a good gold filling is rendered impossible. Therefore it becomes evident if we are to attempt to save certain teeth in certain cases, we must resort to a material less costly and more readily introduced. But now we find ourselves in difficulty, because the large number of inferior materials in use indicate to us at once that we are not possessed of any one material suitable for all cases. Some of them are too soft, they will not resist the force and wear of mastication; others dissolve in the fluids of the mouth; while a dark color is decidedly objectionable for a filling in a front tooth. As belonging to, or representatives of, the three classes, I will name the