

Successful fillings are those which replace tissue destroyed by decay, abrasion or fracture, endure, prevent future decay for the greatest possible length of time, rendering the teeth useful and comfortable, and producing the best possible appearance. Root canal fillings, temporary stoppings and filling of temporary teeth, will not now be referred to unless incidentally. As our definition is worded, a cement filling remaining useful for only eight months in one character of tooth, may be as successful as one of gold lasting thirty years in another kind of tooth. A few years ago I saw a large amalgam filling in a mesial cavity of an upper central, the work of Dr. Nathan Tupper, of Amherst, N.S., which had done service for thirty years, and from all appearances seemed quite capable of serving thirty years more. This was a successful filling. Had it been of gold it would have been more successful on account of the better appearance. Gutta percha, cement or amalgam fillings in cavities by no means thoroughly prepared, may be more successful work than perfect gold fillings inserted in cavities faultless in preparation. Such cases of course are exceptions, yet they exist, as for example in the case of a frail girl of a hysterical temperament. The former variety of work may be tolerated. The latter often discourages such patients, sometimes seriously injures them, and afterward the teeth are neglected. Without considering the peculiar and puzzling cases we have very great variety in the ordinary kinds of cavities and teeth of ordinary patients.

In practice the selection of the filling material is generally decided upon before the preparation. Gold is, as yet, the best and most reliable substance we have. It should be used for most cavities in the incisors, canines and bicuspid, mesial cavities of first molars, and occlusal cavities of first and second molars if the walls are strong. Exceptions to this will appear when speaking of other materials. Amalgam should be employed in buccals and lingual cavities of molars, unless small, the approximal cavities of the second and third molars, in any cavities in molars or bicuspid (excepting the mesial of the first) where the walls are frail or the teeth soft and chalky in character. It may be employed in the small palatal surfaces of incisors. Cement should be used in the anterior teeth of patients under fourteen years of age, or for older patients where the dentine is soft or the enamel thin and frail. It may be used in large cavities in the molars and bicuspid of the same character. Gutta percha might often be well selected for large cavities on the labial surfaces of incisors where acid or alkaline fluids cause rapid destruction of tooth tissue or of cement. It may be used in buccal cavities of molars, but will not be recommended. Tin will do excellent service in the posterior teeth. Porcelain inlays may do well (for appearance they are excellent) in smaller labial cavities of the anterior teeth. Combination fillings