

danger of transmitting diseases from one patient to others by the careless dentist is peculiarly great. His fingers and instruments are so constantly going from one mouth to another that even though ordinary care be used there might still be danger. But what can be expected where no care at all is taken? Where rubber dam and finishing strips are used over and over, and even where the hands are seldom washed?

I remember calling upon a dentist, a college graduate, and while there he invited me into his laboratory and there I saw stretched across the end of the room a line on which was hung to dry several pieces of dam. He asked me if I used my dam over. I replied in the negative. He said he never used it on different patients but did on the same ones. I have no doubt it is possible to thoroughly cleanse and sterilize a piece of rubber dam, but I think the saving is too inconsiderable and that the patient would much prefer to pay an extra fee and be sure it had not been used before either on herself or others. In another office I saw a dentist at his chair finish a gold filling, and saw him take from a drawer in his cabinet, which was nearly full of partly worn out strips, some of these to finish the filling, and, when through, back they went into the drawer again, to be used on the next victim. I have also seen dentists in cleaning teeth and polishing fillings for different patients dip their rubber points into the same box of pumice until it was all gone, when it would be refilled and the same thing repeated.

What possibilities, indeed what probabilities of infection there lies in such careless practices. Perhaps none of these charges could be justly laid to any of you; but is there one here who honestly believes he is, at all times, as careful as he should be? If there is such to him I uncover my head.

On every operating table should be some means of sterilizing instruments. Forceps and trays may be cleansed and sterilized in boiling water.

The rubber dam, when a clean piece is used, is a great preventive of infection, and besides makes it possible for the operator to do better work.

It has been said that you can judge of a nation's civilization by the amount of soap it uses. I believe you can judge of the kind of dentist a man is by the amount of dam he uses (rubber dam).

These dangers of infection through the carelessness or ignorance of the dentist have been little thought of by our patients in the past; but they are beginning to realize the dangers and appreciate our efforts to prevent them.

To our patients we owe the best that is in us, and he who gives freely his *best* services, every time, is certain to reap a rich reward not only pecuniarily but in the gratitude of his patients, the respect and esteem of his profession, and the conscious satisfaction of