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EDITORIAL NOTES ON PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

DESTROYING THE VITALITY OF THE PULPS OF TEETH.

BY W. GEO. BEERS.

Whenever it is absolutely necessary to destroy the vitality of the pulp of an incisor, cuspid, or bicuspid, previous to filling, I prefer doing so by immediate extirpation with an instrument, if possible, rather than by means of arsenic. Any one acquainted in the smallest degree with the anatomical and physiological character of the tooth structure and adjacent parts, must admit the occasional tendency of such poisons as arsenic to be absorbed beyond the particular point for which they are intended; and also the risk one runs in using it at all in the highly vascular teeth of children, and where the full development of the fangs may not have been an accomplished fact.

That arsenic has been a boon to the intelligent dentist, who could discriminate when and how to use it, is not denied; but that it has led to grave mistakes and much malpractice, particularly in the hands of quack practitioners, is a fact which any honest man, using his ordinary powers of observation, can scarcely venture to dispute. The possession of a substance which will mitigate the agony of hyper-sensitive dentine, and rid the quack of the impediment of an exposed pulp, is a substance sure to be abused, and a dangerous article to admit into the dental pharmacopœia. Unquestionably, many pulps are destroyed by its use, which are worthy of conservative