

careful discrimination as to suitable cases for its use, and good judgment as to selection of appliance, is capable of affording the operator the greatest possible aid in the insertion of fillings in that class of cavities recognized as the most difficult ones we have to treat. With equal truth we must admit that it is an appliance which, in the hands of a careless operator, unwilling or unable to comprehend the true principles governing its use, is capable of leading to the very worst kind of failure.

A careless man will insert a more defective filling with the matrix than without it, while the man who manipulates it properly will do better work with it than without, or at least, will do the work fully as well, and with a great saving of time and labor. The matrix, if properly applied, instantly converts a complex cavity into a simple one. It provides us with a fourth wall, where otherwise we would have only three. It gives us a guide and support against which to build the filling, where without it we would have nothing but an open space with no outline to govern us. It leaves the filling in such a condition of surface and contour that little labor is required in finishing. It gives us a pocket at the conical margin into which the filling may be started without the necessity for drilling anchorage pits or grooves. The tooth at this point is usually extremely sensitive. It often occasions more pain to the patient to drill these pits than to otherwise complete the whole preparation of the cavity; and any appliance which will tend to lessen the sufferings of our patrons has at least one great point for its recommendation.

In fact, the matrix has proved such a source of comfort to the writer that he would as soon think of discarding any one of the old stand-bys of the operating case, as to attempt to practise without this much-abused appliance.

But we must not forget the dangers connected with its use. The objections urged against it have much force of logic, unless we are keenly alive to its limitations. One of the principal arguments of its opponents is that when the matrix is brought against the margin of the cavity, an acute angle is formed at the junction of tooth and matrix, into which it is difficult, or almost impossible, to wedge the gold. This often leads to poor adaptation of gold to the margins, which in turn results in failure of the filling at that point. The answer to this argument is, that no matrix should