

the last work on Operative Dentistry. It is a method which has caused frequent gangrene of the gums, and even necrosis of the alveolar process, because the arsenic generally oozes out of the cavity or touches the gums when being inserted. I refer to the use of a pellet of cotton on a small excavator, saturating the cotton with carbolic acid, then touching it to the arsenious acid, using what adheres to one side of the pellet. The authorities say one-fiftieth of a grain is enough. Now, just for curiosity, weigh one-fiftieth of a grain, and you will be surprised to find what an unnecessary large amount you have been using as a rule. Another mistake, I think, is using morphine or tannic acid in combination. It is the arsenic which devitalizes, and anything combined renders it either inert or prolongs its work. My belief is that it will act quicker if pure, and the quicker it acts the sooner it can be removed; the less chance there is, too, of discoloration of the tooth, because the sooner the dead pulp is removed and the pulp-cavity and roots treated, a healthy condition is ensured.

My method of applying arsenic in all cavities is simple and safe. I double narrow strips of thin paper: cut out diamond-shaped openings as big as a pin-head: open the paper, and cut it into as many small squares as there are holes. I now place the pure arsenious acid, made to the consistency of thick cream—country, not city cream—over the little opening; having another little bit of paper without an opening as a cover, and a pellet of gum sandrac ready. I dry the cavity; apply a mouth-napkin, or the rubber dam, touch the pulp with carbolic acid, drying afterwards lightly, pick up the paper with the arsenic, apply the opening immediately over the exposure, press the arsenic gently through the opening put in the paper cover, then insert the gum sandrac. Here is a neat, clean method, which can be used as nicely in approximal as in crown cavities, without danger of messing the margins of the gums. When a cavity extends below the gums, and the latter projects above the edge of the roots, I apply the rubber dam; or, at least, take extra precautions against moisture, and I am sure that neither moisture gets in nor arsenic gets out.

One idea that should have been exploded long ago, is that no injury ensues from leaving the arsenic in the cavity sealed up for a week. It is pretended that because the tooth proper is destitute of absorbents, and because the dose is not as great as any patient could swallow in a day, and because much larger quantities are used externally to destroy malignant growths, and because it is a powerful antiseptic and prevents decomposition of animal substances, it is safe to leave it alone. I maintain that it would be safer under any other condition; but just because of the structure of the dentine not possessing blood-vessels, and not having the power of soft tissue to absorb and eliminate poison readily and rapidly, the pulp imprisoned in unyielding walls, cannot bear what, for instance the stomach, could.