

in some cases all the symptoms and signs disappear for a time, and then relapses occur. The percentage of relapses after a careful treatment has not been definitely determined.

#### THE WASSERMANN REACTION.

This serum test occupies a very important position among the diagnostic methods used in studying syphilitic patients. In a patient recently infected the reaction may be absent, so that one should not wait for a positive reaction before instituting treatment, if one is convinced of the presence of syphilis. This negative phase does not last long, so that if the patient is untreated, the Wassermann reaction soon becomes positive, and remains so as long as the patient is actively syphilitic. Moreover, Boas, of Berlin, found in eleven cases of early and four cases of late latent syphilis which had been untreated that the Wassermann reaction was positive.

Ehrlich calls attention to the importance of watching the Wassermann reaction after the use of "606," for it is found that after a negative reaction has been obtained the blood may again become positive, which is an indication for another injection of the drug. Another type of case in which the Wassermann test is very valuable is to determine the presence or absence of active syphilis in a patient who presents none of the ordinary symptoms or signs of the disease. If such a patient has not received anti-syphilitic treatment a negative reaction practically excludes a diagnosis of syphilis. On the other hand, if the patient had been treated, a negative reaction does not determine whether or not syphilis is present.