

necessitated by the almost exclusive use of gold, but just so soon as it was known to contain mercury, a reaction set in headed by the Dental Societies, who excluded any member who used amalgam, "as it was urged every case of excessive flow of saliva (now recognized as a very frequent concomitant of periodontitis and particularly alveolar abscess), was pronounced mercurial ptyalism, and direful tales of wholesale loss of teeth, and large portions of jaw, were freely circulated" (Flagg).

In 1841, a committee reported to the Dental Society, "the use of all such materials was injurious to both teeth and mouths, and that there was no tooth that could not be serviceably filled with gold," which report was adopted unanimously.

In 1843, the Medical Society of Onondaga, N.Y., from information and facts gathered, "decided that although mineral paste had undoubtedly produced mercurial effects both severe and alarming, yet nevertheless the proportion of such cases was small when compared with the great number of instances in which it had been employed, but that no care in the combination or use of the paste will prevent its occasional bad effects." This opinion slightly modified seems to me the proper conclusion that, in those persons peculiarly susceptible to mercury, no care will alter the result; but in the great majority of cases, by care, proper materials properly manipulated, one might practise a lifetime and meet only one or two cases. In 1850, after a trial of 20 years, Flagg writes, "that the wretchedly compounded, wretchedly manipulated, wretchedly abused amalgam was gradually increasing in favor," and to-day it is doing such noble work that we know it has come to stay. Lately the old spirit of opposition has been reviving under a new form, with various degrees of emphasis chiefly by the Homœopathists, some of whom make the most extravagant assertions but which are not shared in by the great body of thinking Homœopathists.

It is our duty to be informed and prepared to meet this attack on such a material as amalgam, when we read such statements as the following contained in a paper read by Charles H. Taft, Professor of Dental Surgery and Therapeutics in Hering Medical College, Chicago, before the Massachusetts Dental Society at Boston, June 8th, 1893:

"The opposition to amalgam fillings, gentlemen, has come to stay. Let no one deceive himself on this point, or try to laugh it away, for it is by no manner of means confined to a few physicians practising in Boston. A little investigation will show that it covers a territory extending from Maine to California, and from Texas to the extreme North of Canada, while a visit to the shores across the Atlantic will show the same unyielding opposition."

In Ottawa we have a Homœopathic physician who totally condemns amalgam, while an older and more experienced practitioner