

The substances, commonly, used as such are mercury, iodid potassium, gold, antimony, mineral acids, guaiacum, and sassa.

**MERCURY.**—A long and violent controversy has existed about the antisyphilitic virtues of this agent. And as is usual, in human disputes, men have warmly espoused opposite extremes of belief. At one period, mercury was considered to be indispensable in syphilis; at another, that every form of this disease could be cured without it. An undue persuasion, of the truth of the first opinion, led to the extravagant use of the mineral; and an equal conviction, of the sureness of the second, to its utter neglect. Boerrhave directed, that for the cure of syphilis, four quarts of saliva should be spat daily for six weeks, after which a gentler salivation should be maintained for six weeks longer: at the same time the patient was huddled in bed, envaulted within heaps of blankets, caged in the smallest room, and stewed, under hot baths. On the contrary, Morgagni, during the eight years he was a student at Bologna, never saw a physician use an atom of mercury. These are clearly examples of abuse and of non-use of the remedy; and as may be expected, both systems were productive of evil:—under the regime of abuse, some culprits preferred death to the cure, while others in seeking a cure encountered death;—under the sway of non-use, syphilis had become a kind of family property, in which, the sins of the fathers were visited upon the children. At the present day, mercury is either used moderately or not at all. While the evils of the first error are thus removed, those of the second continue. But, in order, to determine upon the real merits of the two sides, the following advantages, of each, should be known.

Without mercury,—1. Syphilis is removed in a shorter time; the duration of the symptoms is greatly abbreviated. This is fully established by extensive experiments conducted, by Dr. Fricke, in Hamburgh General Hospital, and by a report of the French Council of Health, in 1838, founded on the observations of Surgeons, of Regiments and Military Hospitals, in various parts of France. In Hamburgh the mean duration, of cases treated without mercury, was 51 days; and of those with a mild mercurial course 85 days. I must here observe that this extreme intractability, under mercury, has never yet been witnessed by me in Canada—the usual duration of cases here being from 4 to 8 weeks: and I believe surgeons, elsewhere, have met with a similar experience. In France the cure by mercury was  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd longer, than by any other treatment—thus confirming the proposition in its general statement. 2. The proportion of relapses is less after simple treatment, than after the mercurial. The report of the Council of Health of Sweden for 1822, records that half of 40,000 cases were treated without mercury and the