

quite soft; and to have very perceptibly diminished in quantity. But in the face of these impossible, yet absolutely necessary changes, we find amalgam fillings still solid and sound after being in the mouth ten and twenty years, and not a single symptom of mercurial action, local or general, upon the system! With equal propriety it might be urged against gold, that because, when highly oxydized, it becomes a powerful medicinal agent, therefore it should not be used as a filling for teeth. The error of those opposed to amalgam proceeds from a want of discrimination between diseases totally different in their cause, character and consequences."

It is very strange and suggestive that out of the thousands of times and for the many years in which amalgam has been used, and in many instances abused, that so few cases of local or constitutional disease arising from its use are heard of; and it must be remembered that, if such evil results ensued from amalgam, it is not likely they would entirely escape the observation of such intelligent and responsible men as those I have quoted. It is equally strange and suggestive that a case of such supposed disease was never met with by any but those who opposed amalgam; and that not a single new argument against its use has been adduced for a quarter of a century, while, on the other hand, the quality of the material has been vastly improved, and the importance of careful manipulation thoroughly understood.

In concluding this hasty review of Mr. Bowker's article, I trust I will not be misunderstood, and here, I think, I may venture to speak for a large majority of Canadian dentists who use amalgam. The proceedings of our Dental Societies will convince you that "gold" is acknowledged to be, by far, the best material for filling teeth for the large majority of cases; but there are circumstances and occasions when gold or tin foil cannot be used to the best advantage. Those who oppose amalgam admit this, and what do they use instead? Preparations of gutta-percha, "Osteo-plastic," and other such soft fillings. The former will soften in hot water, and neither can preserve the teeth intact more than a few months. With the greatest care to use only the best amalgam, the purest mercury, to thoroughly remove every particle of decay from the tooth, and prepare it as carefully as if for gold, and sure that the proportion of mercury is not 64 parts to 36 of silver, we hold that amalgam arrests decay, and cannot cause either local or constitutional trouble of any kind. On the other hand, we freely acknowledge the possibility of injurious results from Mr. Bowker's proportion of 64 of mercury to 36 of silver, especially if the compound is the old "Royal Mineral Succedaneum." Even the best amalgam has its place; it is kept there. Those who use it in front teeth, and for small cavities anywhere, are quacks;