

mercury (even though inert in the metallic state, which is not proved, however,) would make two drachms of the blue mass, or forty official blue pills, or about fifty-four grains of corrosive sublimate, or would yield forty-seven grains of calomel, or nearly forty-two grains of black oxyd of mercury. Now, no scientific man could be surprised at witnessing constitutional effects from the presence of such quantities of any one of these drugs. But the amalgam advocates may, and do object, that these compounds are not liable to be formed in the mouth, but with the next breath, they go on to lament the 'blackness,' 'discoloration,' 'coloration,' &c., through all the changes, ascribing it all the while to *oxydation*, thus acknowledging that the last named condition almost invariably results. And it is objected, too, that if formed at all, these drugs are formed, and therefore introduced so slowly and gradually that they can produce no perceptible effects. But such objectors manifest an ignorance of scientific truth hardly excusable in this enlightened age of the profession. The slow and gradual introduction is the important point to be considered. It is here that the danger lies. When rapidly introduced, the system is aroused and rebels, and much of the poison is ejected. This slow introduction is nothing else than "nurturing up wrath against the day of wrath," as in the case of the man that wore the metal in a leathern bag.* The poison could only pass infinitesimally into the system; yet in six years it did its work. And those who wear amalgam plugs in their mouth for six years, and especially for 'fifteen years,' have no security that their fate will not be similar. When we read of old practitioners, whose neighbours, as well as themselves, have all along been using amalgams, and who yet assert that they have never seen a case of ptyalism or other constitutional disease arising from their use, we must be excused if we look upon them "with considerable doubt, as to the value of their judgment, or opinions as reliable diagnosticians."

"One cannot believe that amalgam fillings can produce ptyalism, because this is produced through the general system whether the mercury is used externally or internally. Now it is not probable that any one believes that amalgam plugs can produce ptyalism by mere local action."

"Another is a disbeliever because 'it is well known that mercury uncombined is inert'—which is merely an assertion—and because 'equally so must it be when combined with silver or tin,' which is a mere assumption. And he is further confirmed in his position from the fact that the proto-chloride of mercury (calomel) and deuto-chloride of mercury (cor-

* Dr. Watt refers to a fatal case, attended with salivation, brought on by wearing a leathern bag containing a few drachms of liquid mercury.