

a prospect of the symptoms returning, might still remain; he (Ricord), however, had established the law of the unicuity of the diathesis of syphilis. The law of syphilis was the same as the law of small-pox, cow-pox, or measles. A man could have but one attack so long as the disease remained in the constitution—that was to say, according to his opinion a new attack could not take place while the system was still under the influence of the old diathesis. Well, it was exactly so with syphilis; as long as a patient was labouring under the diathesis of syphilis, another infection of syphilis could not occur—it was impossible. For instance, after indurated chancre, and the appearance of secondary symptoms, it was not possible for the patient to contract a new indurated chancre, with swelling of the glands, manifestation of skin disease, and so on. After one attack the patient could not have another infection as long as the influence of the first remained in his body; a second contagion could not take possession of the system at the same time. If, perchance, something of the kind took place, the symptoms would not follow the regular evolution. So, when a patient had constitutional syphilis, if a new chancre appeared to be hardened they would not find the glands swell, or the early manifestation of skin disease appear; and so of other symptoms. Superficial ulceration might take place, just as a spurious form of vaccination might arise on one who was still under the vaccine influence; but it was not a true case, it was not attended with the sequelæ. But if the constitutional disease were cured, if the syphilitic disposition were completely eradicated, then the patient would be able to contract a fresh indurated chancre, with all the subsequent symptoms. If this were the case—and he had observed it with great care, his experience dating back forty years—it proved that syphilis could be cured; and if syphilis could be eradicated, to ascertain whether a patient was cured or not when all the symptoms had disappeared there would be nothing else to do (though he knew that could not be done) but to try inoculation from an indurated chancre. If vaccination did not take, they were sure the vaccine disposition continued; if it did not continue, vaccination could take effect. In regard to syphilis, the proof had not been carried to this extent; but he had been able to observe that as long as the syphilitic influence continued, a patient could not contract an indurated chancre anew, and, that, consequently, if cured, a new infection might take place. This was a great point gained in science, and it proved what he had said, that syphilis could be radically cured. Now, as to the treatment of the disease. As he had told them, Mr. Acton's ideas were completely his ideas, explaining his manner for treatment and his practice. He would first speak of the treatment of the first stage—that was to say, the primary sore. As soon as he had ascertained that there was a hardened chancre, with a swelling of the glands—not inflammatory, because the glands in this case never suppurated,—he immediately instituted the mercurial treatment. There was one point on which there was some difference of opinion: many believed that it was impossible to prevent the accession of the secon-

dary symptoms, the first manifestation of constitutional disease; many thought that no matter what treatment was employed the sequelæ would appear. Well, he had ascertained that if the treatment were soon begun and well carried through, the bursting out of the first secondary symptoms, the roseola, the swelling of the glands of the neck, etc., might be prevented. If this were not frequently the case it was because the treatment was resorted to too late, when the disease had had time to take root, and secondary symptoms were about to show themselves. In such cases it was not astonishing that secondary symptoms should appear, and the treatment ought not to be blamed; if the treatment were steadily continued they soon disappeared. But if the treatment were begun early, the observation of forty years gave him the assurance that secondary symptoms would not appear. When secondary symptoms had appeared the best treatment was, as Mr. Acton had said, mercury. If they wished for a perfect cure, this treatment must be continued. In general it was not persisted in long enough; it was dropped as soon as the symptoms disappeared, or a short time after, and then it was not astonishing to see them reappear. But if the treatment were continued five or six months, having regard at the same time to sustaining the constitution in general, relapses would be found to be infrequent. He observed very few cases of relapse, and there would not be many when the treatment was well kept up—when the patient had patience enough, and the physician sufficient courage. After six months of that treatment and no symptoms re-appearing, then the treatment with iodine must be begun, and continued for five or six months more. When a patient went to him, he said, "You will have a year's treatment—do you consent to that?" "Yes." Very well; we will go on. If not, good-bye." There were cases in which syphilis occurred in a healthy person—the only disease was syphilis. Then treatment was very easy—the case was a simple one; they had but one enemy to fight—all went on regularly. But, unhappily, in many instances syphilis was not alone; there was something else—scrofula, skin disease, scurvy, low constitution, poorness of the blood. They must understand that such complications as these altered the case; the treatment did not act so powerfully as it would do in the first case, as many of these complications were aggravated by the treatment. For instance, syphilis and scurvy might co-exist—and the characteristic of the latter was poorness of the blood, while that of the former was a plastic condition of the blood. Here, therefore, was a counteracting influence to the treatment for syphilis. Now one thing must be known, Perhaps he was speaking too long? (No; go on.) Well, in many instances syphilis became the secondary consideration, and they must begin with the constitution of the patient, as debility was the disease that required first treatment. They must attack the strongest enemy first. Syphilis was sometimes quiet, and stopped and waited till they came to it. So, when they had improved the constitution, they might commence with the treatment, and they must begin by treating the constitutional complication.