

and the grace of God ever eradicates the syphilitic virus; but time always does it; that is, the disease ceases to be virulent, and ceases to be communicable to another in any manner after a long enough time with or without treatment."

Why, then, should treatment be necessary? Because its aim is "to suppress symptoms, and prevent them from doing harm during their existence; to control symptoms and prevent relapse, without harming the patient in any way; so to manage the disease that it may not be contagious during its existence by keeping down such symptoms as yield contagious secretions, that the patient may be enabled to marry as soon as possible, to produce healthy offspring, and that the symptoms of the disease during their progress shall be restrained from leaving unsightly scars or damaging the structure of tissues or organs during their existence. These ends may be more certainly attained by the judicious use of the preparations of mercury and iodine than by any other means; and this is the reason why these drugs hold their place in medicine as anti-syphilitic specifics, notwithstanding the fact that the disease goes on and runs its full course in spite of their use, and notwithstanding the fact that much harm has doubtless been done with the drugs by their unskillful use."<sup>3</sup> Mercury can at least be said to paralyze the virus and act as an antidote to its toxins, or to increase the resistance of the host. It tides us over that period of virulence, when the host is overridden by the invader, when the invader is at the height of its power, when the host possesses the minimum resistance.

Does mercury act as a specific against syphilis? I believe not. Those who treat syphilis continuously for a definite period of time, believe that mercury does; that mercury acts as a germicide, but it is strange that such dilute solutions as we are able to circulate, are able to kill the virus when we remember that mercury circulating in the system of workers in mercury is apparently unable to act as a germicide, and prevent infection or the growth of the syphilitic virus. What action then may it have, that nearly all acknowledge its beneficial effect on acute secondary lesions?<sup>4</sup> It may perhaps act as an antidote to the toxins and thus let the body build up the tissues, or it may even favor the formation of an antidote formed by the tissues.

Probably nearly all the members of the profession in Montreal are followers of Jonathan Hutchinson, and believe in the specific, curative or antiseptic action of mercury; consequently this disease is usually treated here by the administration of mercury, more or less constantly for a definite period of time, say two to four years, irrespective of the