

than half a barley corn. No disease of the kidneys, liver or bowels (so far as the latter were examined), nor of the *stomach*. But the pancreas was diseased in all its parts, firmly adherent to the duodenum, and more than usually adherent to other surrounding parts. It was not on the whole larger, perhaps, than natural, for while some parts of it were larger, others were less, and but for the place in which it was found, it could not have been easily recognized as the pancreas. Externally it was covered with closely adherent cellular and adipose matter, and internally it had wholly lost its reddish, motley appearance, being gristly, dense and heavy. The gall-bladder was so distended with healthy-looking bile as to resemble in shape and size a goose egg, which distension was doubtless owing to obstruction caused by pressure of the diseased pancreas—though search for other cause of obstruction was not made. And it is probable that the bilious diarrhoea was owing to some change in the position of the parts, which removed for a time the pressure of the pancreas from the biliary duct, thus permitting a distended gall-bladder to disgorge an excess of bile into the bowels; and that the diarrhoea ceased, not because the patient had taken one small dose of *hyd. c. creta et rhei*, but because another change of the relative position of the parts chanced at that time to restore the pressure. No ascites or anasarca. The brain not examined.

This case tends to favor the opinion that the function of the pancreas has a direct effect on the blood, and will serve to lead us to suspect the pancreas in those cases, not uncommon, where the countenance is permanently pale and sallow, but which are not benefited by iron or by remedies addressed to the liver.

That diseases of the pancreas cannot be recognized with any degree of certainty during the life of the patient, is a fact so universally known and admitted by the profession, that I scarcely need allude to it.

Ashfield, Nov. 27, 1843.

CHARLES KNOWLTON.

METALLIC PASTES FOR FILLING TEETH.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

Royal Succedaneum, Enamel Cement, Bone Paste, Diamond Cement, Mineral Paste, Lithodeon.

THESE are some of the names of a compound of mercury and other metals, by the use of which, for filling carious teeth, the public have been imposed upon again and again within the last thirty or forty years. With some slight variations, it has always been the same base article, under whatever name it has been presented.

I have always been unwilling to appear as an expositor of the abuses in dentistry which are at all times so much practised around us, except when they have become so excessive that I could keep silent no longer. And although I have witnessed the effects of this mercurial preparation for a long time, since its last introduction into our city and neighborhood, under one or another of the above imposing names, I have forebore to

notice the article in this way till I should be fully satisfied, by repeated examinations, of its nature, and result of its application.

Testimony relative to these points has been so abundant, and has flowed in so fast, of late, that it would be a violation of duty and conscience not to speak out, and speak plainly concerning it.

Teeth filled with this *mercurial composition* are almost immediately changed in their complexion. Front teeth, in a few days after this *cement* has been placed in them, become so blue or black as to be ruined in their appearance, while it is retained, even in cases where the anterior enamel is so perfect that a well-placed gold filling would not in the slightest degree change its natural healthy hue. Back teeth are often rendered so black, even into their fangs, that it is difficult if not impossible to restore them; and all this from the dark oxyd or salts of mercury which are formed from this metal in such a situation. Let one of these lumps of *cement* be removed after it has been placed in a carious tooth a few weeks, or in most cases in less than one week, and it will be found that its hidden surface, which was in imperfect contact with the tooth, will be as black as gunpowder—to say nothing of the offensive state of the tooth itself. But in addition to these effects, which are of the *least* consequence in the list, there follow pain, swelling, gumboils, ulceration, inflammation extending to adjacent teeth, swelling of the glands about the tongue, throat and neck, neuralgia about the jaws, face and temples; and where several large fillings are placed at about the same time in very hollow teeth, even *salivation* is produced in those who are highly susceptible to the influence of *mercury*. All these are effects which I have either witnessed repeatedly, or of which I have obtained accounts from the most respectable dentists in our country. I am even now called from writing, to examine a case—the effects of a large filling of “*lithodeon*,” in which the under surface of the tongue is constantly irritated, and has been several times ulcered by coming in contact with the mercury. And I have a collection of specimens—teeth that have been extracted, charged with “*lithodeon*”—which will fully illustrate the above statement; for I have found it requisite to extract more adult teeth in the course of the last two or three years, on account of the mischievous effects of *mercurial paste*, than for any one other cause, sufficient time having elapsed, since its last introduction here, to show, not only the immediate bad consequences, but very many of the remote.

The testimony of Dr. E. Parmley—a gentleman of high professional reputation in the city of New York—should have much weight in relation to this matter. He has in several instances expressed his opinion publicly concerning it. His language, as quoted in Maury's Dental Surgery, p. 152, is—

“For this operation” (the filling of teeth) “gold is the only substance known that can be permanently relied upon; although there are cases in which tin, and even lead, may be of temporary service when employed with skill and judgment. I regard cements, fusible metals, amalgams, succedaneum, and all other substitutes for the above-named metals, as impositions on the public, never having seen a single operation in which

these substances were employed, which would not have been more permanent, if even lead, the poorest of these metals, had been used ; because it is less subject to decomposition and oxydation, to say nothing of the poisonous qualities of the mercury which most of the others contain. I have never known a perfect master of the art of stopping teeth either to employ or recommend the substances which I here condemn ; and I believe the use of them is almost wholly confined to those persons who are unacquainted with this nice and difficult art."

This mercurial compound is still in use in our city and the country about it, I will not say by dentists, but by a host of impostors, "operators on teeth," whose advertisements fill a part of almost every newspaper ; some of whom perhaps are even ignorant of its deleterious effects, but many of whom know well its qualities, and too well to trust it in their own teeth. It is an article which can be applied by any one who can stop a hollow tooth with wax or putty, and if it could be retained no longer than these, its evils would be very greatly diminished.

I am fully aware that these *cements* or *amalgams* have been used in some cases where they *seem* to be of service ; but here, still, is deception ; for in all such that have come under my observation (and these are very numerous), it can be demonstrated, by an examination of them, that great mischief is going on beneath such fillings, and that a different and better treatment might have been adopted. J. F. FLAGG.

Boston, Dec. 5th, 1843.

THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON, DECEMBER 13, 1843.

Dr. Gibson's Introductory Lecture.—The Professor of the Principles and Practice of Surgery in the University of Pennsylvania, gave an introductory to the course of medical instruction, the present season, which must have been well received by the class, judging from the number and respectability of the committee asking a copy for publication. The discourse is particularly characterized by its good and parental advice to the students, on points essential to their health, morals, and success in the pursuit of professional knowledge in a great city. Dr. G. has lectured valiantly in this discourse on the value of temperance in eating—a crying sin of the land, which has been too commonly overlooked by those guardians of the public who go about doing good. He shows very clearly that going on foot is preferable to riding in a coach. Even horse-back exercise is not to be compared with walking. "Exercise of the kind (riding) is better for the horse than the master," he says ; "and the true way of preserving health is, for each man to depend chiefly upon his own bones, muscles and joints." All this we believe is philosophically true ; yet there is a comfort in riding which very few have the power to resist—and as far as our observation extends, the very learned lecturers on health, who descant so eloquently on the pleasures of travelling on foot, invariably ride them-