

The
Actions and Uses of
Mercury

Jm M. Renton

A Modified Librarian's Receipt
Every article a lump 6 - or pulv. 10 - or solid 10 - or liquid 10 - or 32
1.

The Actions and Uses of Mercury.



There is no drug in our vast
Materia Medica that has been
more used, as a cure for disease,
or that has met with greater
abuse in its use, than Mercury.

This may in part be account-
ed for by referring to its numer-
ous actions, & externally as well
as internally, on the human body.
Ancient Practitioners, of no distant
date, taking advantage of its
virtues as a curative agent,
have continued to push in the
drug - small quantities having
failed to cure - thinking that
too much could not be taken of
so certain a cure; and thus have
produced the most disastrous
effects with which the human

11.

frame could be afflicted - simulating secondary and tertiary Syphilis in no small degree; -

Happily, since practitioners of the present day have in a great measure ceased to abuse, and with some men its use even, the drug, we seldom or never see these effects developed -

Vestiges of the old school however are still occasionally seen in our Hospital & Dispensary practices: - But altho' some have abandoned its use altogether, & altho' many diseases in which it was employed are now entirely cured without it, yet its efficacy as a medicine cannot be doubted: And there is no doubt but that it will ever hold a prominent position in the British Pharmacopoeia. -

It may be perhaps not entirely out of place in the first instance to allude to a few observations which should be carefully attended to in the administration of Mercury -

There is a certain class of people that will not tolerate Mercury at all! The smallest quantity of Calomel may produce irritation, salivation and even sloughing; and as a standard rule Mercurialization is entirely contra-indicated in Cachectic conditions whether they be Stomachic, Sphilitic or Chlorotic. -

We observe that in tropical climates, patients bear much larger quantities than they do in temperate or cold ones. It is perhaps more readily got rid of by the secretions in tropical diseases, as it is not uncommon to give 3ss doses of Calomel - With opium the Contra principle holds -

Children will bear large relative quantities of mercury; tho' they stand Opium badly. -

Mercury is rapidly carried off by their secretions, sometimes inconveniently so, and it is difficult to produce a constitutional effect on a child, in some acute diseases, we are obliged to have recourse to ^{the} slower process of inunction. I have to administer milder forms as Hydrag & Creta.

We can't give Opium to retain the Mercury in the system. -

We know when a child is under the influence of the drug, by the stools becoming slimy & greenish; and not by salivation as in adults. If it does occur however, it is generally very severe.

Special Actions of Mercury.

Alterative

As an Alterative, Mercury in small doses stimulates the Capillaries - at the same time

V.
stimulating the absorbent system -
to a new and healthy action,
restoring the secretions, when vit-
iated, to a proper condition with-
out materially increasing the quan-
tity, thus checking at the onset the
tendency to morbid deposit, which
is so characteristic of chronic
disease; By stimulating the ab-
sorbents also, the drug promotes
the elimination of any morbid
deposit that may have taken place.

Alteratives of the ordinary class
such as Sarsaparilla, Guaiacum
&c improve secretion, but they
scarcely promote absorption.

Again Iodine & its various prepara-
tions are allied to Mercury, acting
like them as powerful alteratives
& absorbents; But Iodine acts as
a stimulant to the circulation, whilst
Mercury rather depresses it; In the
glandular system too Iodine acts more
powerfully than Mercury, so that
the former is more adapted to

Strumous & cachectic states of the system, whilst on the other hand the latter will be more esteemed in Chronic Hepatic diseases - Heart - Brain &c. when the condition of the patient is moderately good - when he possesses Stamina &c. is assuredly not Cachectic.

Cathartic.

Mercury in the form of Calomel is a true cholagogue Cathartic, acting by increasing the secretion of bile - the natural purge - more or less of all the other secretions; and even if we have no direct proof of their action on the Liver, we might almost have affirmed that they especially increase the secretion of bile, from the obvious way in which bilious symptoms yield to their action. We have direct proof of this in the careful experiments, on a dog, made by Mr. Buckheim.

In this action mercurials at the same time produce a general Alterative effect on the secretions

Perhaps the best theory of their action is, that the Mercury is taken up by the ordinary principle of absorption. A large proportion being carried by portal imbibitions to the lobules of the liver; a small quantity perhaps being carried by the ordinary absorbents into the general circulation, thus accounting for the Alterative Effect.

Sedative.

In large doses Calomel seems to act as a direct sedative; lowering the pulse by diminishing the activity of the circulation.

Antiphlogistic.

As an Antiphlogistic Mercury is almost universally employed in combination with auxiliary remedies, the more important of which are Opium when we wish to check Effusions &c or astringents of secretions; or Tartar Emetic or Ipecac when we wish to promote secretion - Calomel is said to

subdue inflammatory diathesis
- It checks morbid Effusions - It
restores the secretions, and promotes
the absorption of morbid results -

Many views are held as to
the mode in which Calomel subdues
inflammation -

1st John Hunter considered it
to act as a contra-stimulant pro-
ducing a powerful action of its own,
under which inflammation
was arrested; the Capillaries re-
turning to their natural state, so
that secretion &c would be improved

2nd It has been supposed to
produce a peculiar contractile
state of the Capillaries counter-
acting that state of dilatation
and want of tone which so char-
acterises the inflammatory condition

3rd Then again it has been
imagined to influence the fibrine
of the blood, which is always in
excess in acute inflammation.

It appears to diminish the quality

and lessen its plasticity, thus checking the tendency to morbid plastic Effusions; and in confirmation of this view it has been observed that when the system is under the influence of Mercury, independently of inflammation, the quality of the fibrine and its coagulable power is lessened, and even a certain extent of hemorrhagic diathesis may be induced.

4th A very common notion is, that it acts as a sedative diminishing the force of the circulation & so checking determination and Congestion, so that the Capillaries are able to resume their normal state; the morbid Effusions being thereby arrested and the restoration of the natural secretion is restored.

Mercury then as an Anti-inflammatory agent may be thus compared with Antimony, and

Bloodletting. The immediate effect of Bloodletting is mechanical; that of Antimony, nervous; that of Mercury, hematic. Bloodletting weakens the force of the heart by diminishing the pressure ~~of~~ on the vessels; Antimony diminishes the pressure on the vessels by weakening the force of the heart; and Mercury does both of these things, by impoverishing the blood.

Antimony then by its more powerful sedative effect, arrests inflammation by reducing the pulse; but Mercury reduces the pulse by arresting inflammation. Thus do Antiphlogistics exert that operation in the blood which is essential to Catalytic medicines; favouring absorption and counteracting Effusion; but, from its nature, the action of Mercury is slower than that of the others and for the same reason more lasting. —

Antisyphilitic.

XI.

As an Antisyphilitic, Mercury has been much used, and still continues to be employed by many in certain cases of primary and secondary Syphilis; sometimes merely in alterative doses, sometimes to incipient salivation..

As to the mode in which it subdues Syphilis, many, various, and conflicting opinions have been entertained, some think that the effect is due to its alterative action and the free restoration of secretion & excretion, by which the morbid matter is eliminated from the body; but perhaps the best view, entertained by Ricord, is that it decomposes or otherwise alters the character of the Syphilitic virus, at the same time that it facilitates the elimination of the matter thus changed, by the various secretions & excretions..

The old Pathologists on the other hand, thought that it acted

as a contra stimulant exciting a disease, more powerful, of its own; - Certain it is that salivation does not cure; but is merely an indication of the system being under the full mercurial influence. - If induced, it should only be to the most incipient stage - There should just be a little tenderness of mouth - slight change of gums and slight fetor. The state may then be maintained by diminished doses, and anything beyond it is an unmitigated evil -

Uses of Mercury in Disease. Fevers.

Mercury has been much employed as a purgative in the treatment of Fevers; and is said to reduce the abdominal distension, calm the delirium, and allay the fever; the tongue becoming soft & moist under its influence, & very probably tending to eliminate

by the bowels the poisonous cause of the symptoms. I have seen it useful when given during the first few days of the setting in of the fever as a simple evacuant of irritant matter, but to continue its use is decidedly bad, any further than as a simple purge as symptoms may demand.

The enormous repeated doses of Calomel that have been administered in Yellow & Bilious Remittent Fever is indeed astounding; but it has been proved that if one half of an Epidemic of either of these fevers be treated on the Mercurial plan & the other half without the use of Mercury, there are as many if not more recoveries under the latter mode of treatment than under the former; so that among our brethren abroad, the use of Mercury in these diseases has now almost entirely

fallen into oblivion. It is counted as a thing of the past. One of our most Eminent Practitioners of East India, observes: "The practice, at one time too common, of exhibiting Calomel in doses of ℥ ss grains three or four times in the course of the day, without any very definite objection view, & continuing it for a succession of days, cannot be too strongly discouraged. Not only is it unnecessary, but, for the following reasons, often positively injurious.

In watching the progress of cases thus treated, it is not difficult to detect a train of symptoms much more fairly attributable to the treatment than to the disease, because it is in cases thus treated that this has been chiefly observed.

The symptoms to which I allude are uneasy feelings, sometimes amounting to pain, with a sense of oppression or sinking at the Epigastrium

& occasionally gripping of the abdomen, for which leeches are not
 infrequently applied, & purgatives
 unnecessarily given. The frequent
 repetition of the Calomel keeps up
 also a fool state of the tongue, nausea
 & irritability of stomach, aggravates
 the febrile excitement, & produces
~~the~~ an irritable state of the bowels,
 marked by frequent watery dis-
 charges. The convalescence of
 cases thus treated is always tedious,
 & frequently complicated with diar-
 rhoea & clay-coloured dejections" —

"I am of opinion, says the same
 writer, that an endeavour to induce
 mercurial influence in Remit-
 tent Fever is erroneous in theory
 & of no value in practice; not
 only so but "it is opposed to all
 rational theory, & very injurious
 in practice".

Calomel has been much used
 as a sedative in Typhoid Fever by
 Mr. Ross & others, and as they say

with great advantage. To produce a sedative effect it should be given in i or ii ℥ doses, repeated three times a day during the first attack of the disease; and Mr. R. states his belief that this remedy promotes the healing of the intestinal ulcers.

How this should come about is beyond my comprehension; for would not rather the hydragogue effect of the Calomel increase the irritation of the bowel & so prevent the ulcers from healing? - However he goes on to say that he has employed it nearly one hundred times, and always with perfect safety to the patient -

Inflammation of the Serous & Fibrous Tissues.

We have already seen the most probable way in which Mercury acts as an Anti-inflammatory agent; so that it only remains for us to notice what inflammatory diseases Mercury has been found advantageous in simple Meningitis and in

Acute Hydrocephalus mercurij is generally employed both as a purgative & for the purpose of producing its constitutional effects. The course advocated by Professor Gooles, after considerable experience, and which seems to me perfectly feasible, consists in the administration of Calomel in $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ grain doses, twice daily; together with theunction of 1 or 2 drachms of the milky Mercurial ointment into the shaven scalp once in 24 hours. In the tubercular forms of these diseases I am no advocate for such an heroic remedy; but rather trust to the administration of the various preparations of Iodine, on the principle that a sthenic state of constitution requires rather to be stimulated than depressed as Mercury would do.

Pericarditis.

"As says Graves, 'a person is seized with very acute pericarditis, how

unavailing will be our best directed efforts unless they be succeeded by a speedy mercurialization of the system"; - Dr. Stokes seems to subscribe to this doctrine. Dr. Marpham on the other hand doubts its action in this disease. The acute, primary, idiopathic form of the disease generally tends to cure without the intervention of active remedies; but if the attack be one of rheumatic origin & of a chronic type, or, if in other cases there is a persistence of the Effusion, Mercury should be given with Opium, and continued until its constitutional effects are slightly developed.

Endocarditis.

In this disease the use of Mercury has not been much investigated; but should be given, on anti-inflammatory principles, at the onset of the attack.

Pericarditis.

Mercury, preventing as it does

the process of Effusion and causing the absorption of effused products, is employed with great advantage in Pleurisy. At the onset of the attack, a full dose of Calomel & Opium, contemporaneously, or nearly so, with bloodletting, will promote the good effects of vascular depletion, & often prevent the necessity of repeating this measure.

Peritonitis.

The treatment of Calomel & Opium in this affection is universally acknowledged; and the effects produced are most remarkable; but whether ^{the} virtue resides in the Opium or Calomel is still in doubt, - probably it is the combined action of the two drugs. This is one of the diseases in which it is difficult to induce salivation; on that account we are warranted to administer the drug *ad libitum*, and when salivation is accomplished the patient usually recovers.

I have seen the most remarkable effects produced by this treatment in the puerperal form of Peritonitis, even when the patient has been reduced to the lowest stage of Exhaustion by hemorrhage, so that the pulse could be scarcely felt at the wrist -

Rheumatism.

I cannot speak from experience of the mercurial treatment in this affection; but from the high Authority of Dr Copland, it would appear to be contra-indicated.

Yet in the subacute and Chronic stages, we might put an end to the lingering stiffness of the joints, thickening of the ligaments, the periosteal swellings, muscular & neuralgic pains which are so severe during damp weather and vicissitudes of temperature, by a very gentle and sustained mercurial action.

Inflammations of the Parenchymatous Organs:-

Pneumonia.

From what I have seen of the treatment of this disease in ^{the} Edinbro' Hospital, would lead me to consider that Mercury was of little use except as a purgative; - Not that cases have ^{not} been cured by depletory measures; but that under an opposite mode of treatment, patients not only get well as often & as rapidly, but the convalescence of cases thus treated is more favourable to ultimate recovery -

Acute Hepatitis.

According to some writers, next to local & general depletion Calomel should be employed, but only as a purgative & with anxious care to avoid its constitutional effects, the latter tending to impair the vital energies & to keep up the excitement & irritation in the inflamed parts.

It should be given in doses of $\frac{v}{x}$ grains at intervals; for there is such a rapid tendency to disorganization

ulceration or other morbid results, that we cannot wait for the more gradual effect of ordinary doses.

It is by the double action of purging & increasing secretion at the same time that calomel relieves the loaded & inactive vessels of the diseased organ, & may nothing of the other acknowledged physiologic influences of the mineral, formerly mentioned, and indeed is even thought by some to be indirectly tonic, by restoring to the blood the natural tonic principle of the bile, that mercury has been so much employed in acute tropical diseases.

In Chronic Hepatitis, it is of great use, so long as the disease is owing to congestion - when the liver is enlarged, - tender upon pressure, sometimes indurated, - and its secretion is scanty; here it is usual to administer the drug both as a purgative and for its constitutional effects -

Jaundice.

When this symptom is dependant on a Congested state of the liver, the object is to unload the portal circulation; - we therefore give Mercury usually in the form of blue pill with or followed by Aloes or Rhubarb so as to maintain a gentle action on the bowels. - The general alterative effect of the Mercury, removing congestion & improving secretion is here of service.

Peritonitis.

Mercury, in this affection, is usually given on account of its Anti-plastic effects; - And in the Rheumatic & Syphilitic forms of Peritonitis, where the fibrinous Effusion is great & rapid, it is of much use, but should be given with some degree of caution in the Rheumatic form, because the mercurial impression, directly favourable as it is, exposes the patient to relapse by increasing his susceptibility to cold, already

exalted by the Rheumatism.

We usually give from $\bar{i}$ to $\bar{ii}$ grains of Calomel, with $\frac{1}{4}$ grain of Opium every six hours until a slight impression is made upon the mouth.

But in the Syphilitic form we are authorized to carry the mercurial action further; however not to the extent to which our forefathers usually went. - In young Mercurious Siles I would not recommend the above treatment for reasons already stated; but rather trust to the absorbing effects of the Iodide of Potassium and general tonics while the state of the system demands

Inflammation of Mucous Membranes

Croup.

The cases of Croup which have come under my notice have all proved fatal with the exception of one; -

In not any one of them was Mercury employed; so that I have had no chance of testing its qualities in

this disease. We know that the mortality is at least one in every three cases whether Mercurials are given or not; but at the onset of the attack, it is highly probable that the defibrinizing action of the remedy upon the blood may limit, or even arrest, the formation of false membrane.

By some practitioners, Mercury has been highly praised in Acute Laryngitis. In Plastic Bronchitis it would also appear, theoretically, to be indicated; but there is no evidence of its utility in this affection.

Dysentery:

"Notwithstanding," says Mr. Twining, "all that has been written in praise of the general employment of large & repeated doses of Calomel, in the dysentery of India, whether that medicine be used to the extent of producing salivation or not; it will be easy to show that Calomel is not

only useless, but that in many cases of the dysentery of Brazil, it is exceedingly injurious. I speak without hesitation on this subject, from having too often seen the fallacy of trusting generally to the effects of Colomel, for the cure of the severe forms of acute dysentery; and having tried that medicine extensively in every stage of the disease."

I most certainly believe in Dr. Twining's statement; and that the cases which have been reported cured by this agent, is more attributable to the Opium or Specac, which are usually given along with it, than to the Colomel itself.

Dyspepsia.

Colomel has long been a favourite remedy for Dyspepsia, especially in the working classes, where the disease is generally functional. In Dyspepsia there is generally constipation and so by Catharsis it may act.

But it is given in small doses with another view - as an alterative - altering the secretions & improving the tone of the alimentary canal, & above all to restore a healthy action to the liver -

In Chronic Vomiting, this treatment is said to be very useful.

Cholera.

Calomel has been used in this most fatal affection, given in large doses repeated at intervals of $\frac{1}{2}$ or 1 hour & the quantity given has been enormous. Some supposing that it acts rapidly on the liver; others as an evacuant. Others prefer the exhibition of about $\mathfrak{ss}^{\text{ii}}$, combined with opium, every $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. However administered, we know that this mode of treatment has met with no better success, than the many and various other means that have been employed.

Dropsy.

Theoretically, Mercury would appear to be indicated in this affection; but we know that Dropsy is only a symptom, so that the cause must be first ascertained.

Intestinal Worms.

As an Anthelmintic, Calomel is of service, usually combined with Jalap. One of the most certain cures for Ascarides of the rectum is to introduce a small portion of mercurial ointment into the bowel daily, a bleeding time.

Icterus

Metallic Mercury has been used successfully in obstruction of the bowels. By Franceschini, a Tuscan physician, & concludes that it always arrests the vomiting attendant upon this affection, & that it never does harm by its local action, never produces phlogia. The quantity administered was between vi & xii ounces, in 3 or 4 doses, in the course of 5 or 6 days.

I now come to the much
quæstio vexata - the treatment
of Syphilis by Mercury -

Altho' some practitioners en-
tirely discontinue the use of Mercurials
in this disease, no doubt influenc-
ed in a great measure by the ab-
surd abuse of the mineral as
practiced by our ancestors, yet
I cannot help thinking that the
greatest abuse of Mercury is the
withholding of it altogether in
certain cases where it is theoretical-
ly indicated.

We have
already seen the most probable
way in which Mercury acts as
an Antisyphilitic, so that it only
remains for me to consider, in
what conditions or stages of Syphilis
should the mineral be given,
with best advantage, or withheld.

By reference to statistics, it has
been found that Mercury, indiscrimi-
nately given in all cases, does not ac-

-celerate, but that on the contrary it retards, the ordinary healing of primary sores; that it does not prevent secondary symptoms, but that these coming after its exhibition are generally severe; & that the tertiary symptoms are both most frequent & most severe, when Mercury has been profusely given in the previous stages.

On the other hand, an indiscriminate withholding of mercury, in all cases, will prevent a much less favourable general result, than when mercury is judiciously exhibited in those examples of the disease in which it is found by experience to be not only useful but in a great measure absolutely necessary to full & satisfactory elimination of the poison.

The generally received opinion among practitioners of the present day, then, is to administer it in primary chancre & bubo, when they prove obstinate, and

Especially the Hunterian, or true chancre. It is often used as a specific in the non-indurated chancre, provided always that the patient is not cachectic, at the same time that black wash is applied externally. It is totally contra-indicated however in all cases where the ulcer has an inflammatory tendency, or is inclined to spread, especially in Phagedæna, when of course the use of Salines & Antimonials will be indicated followed by Iodine, Sargol &c.

When Mercury is used in such cases it should only be to the least possible pygalium & should be continued by diminished doses, not only until the ulcer has healed, but all trace of induration has disappeared.

In the various secondary syphilitic affections, such as Sore throat - Eritis - various Eruptions, as Squamous - Tubercular

Bustulae or Papulae - Rupes - at a later period, Perioritis follows perhaps by nodes, Necrosis, Caries, Nocturnal pains in joints - Debility, Irritability, &c Mercury is very rarely used to the full extent, its place being taken by Iodine &c

In the Squamous Eruption a mild Mercurial course is perhaps the safest specific, unless there is a decided Cachexia; we may here use Calomel or Plummer's pill often in combination with Arsenic or Iodine or both.

In other cases if used at all it is merely as an alterative administered occasionally. It is thus used particularly in the Papular variety, especially when it begins to die away & become Squamous.

As a general rule in all secondaries, Mercury is contra-indicated so long as we have any inflammatory or febrile action

In the most advanced cases

stages, when the patient becomes cachectic, it is also deleterious except as an occasional alterative.

External Use of Mercury.

Mercury as an external application is gradually going into disuse, altho' it appears to act as a stimulant, irritant & even as an Escharotic.

Diseases of Skin.

It has been used as an ointment (Calomel $\mathfrak{z}\text{j}$, Lard $\mathfrak{z}\text{j}$) in Psoriasis with good effect, and is said never to produce salivation.

This ointment is also used in all superficial glandular swellings, with friction, when we wish their absorption hastened.

As a lotion of the bichloride ($\mathfrak{ss}\text{j}$ to $\mathfrak{z}\text{j}$) in Eczema, Couperose, Lichen & Chloasma, it is supported by some - also in Prurigo Pudendi -

Ulcers, whether syphilitic or

not, are often improved by mercurial dressings, when indolent, flabby, and in need of stimulation. For this purpose powdered Calomel, white or red precipitate ointment, black or yellow wash may be employed; always being careful that the constitution does not become affected by the strength of the preparation or frequency of application.

As a fumigation, Mercury has been gradually abandoned, on account of its producing the same bad effects as when it is given to too great an excess internally.

To get a patient under the influence of Mercury, the usual plan is to give about 15 grains of Bluepill a day - say 10 at night and 5 in the morning - adding to each dose about $\frac{1}{2}$ grain of Opium to prevent it passing off by the bowels;

At the same time it is usual to rub in the Ungt. Hg_8^{d} into the thighs or axilla, mixing with it a little Camphor, by means of Rectified Spirit, to make it more active; or we might use fumigations, which will sometimes operate more rapidly. In this way we generally produce an effect in about 4 or 5 days. If we want to do it more rapidly, the best plan is to give 2 grains of Calomel & Opium every 4, or even 1 grain every hour; or we may combine the Calomel with Pil. Hg_8^{d} . Sometimes we find considerable difficulty in producing the desired effect; more particularly in stout plethoric subjects, in whom absorption is sluggish. In such cases it may be necessary to intermit the Mercury & reduce the circulation by Salines & Antimonials, low diet & free purging; or even by

denudation, and then push in the Mercury both Externally as well as internally.

When we want to affect a child with irritable bowels, as in the case of Croup &c

The plan is to rub in well the Ungt. Hy. S^o., and give internally Hy. S^o c. Cretæ.

Lastly, it sometimes occurs that one preparation of Mercury will answer when another won't. The Iodide of Mercury will answer sometimes, and some people will be salivated by small doses where large ones fail in toto.

Bad effects of Mercury.

Mercurialism.

We have first its specific action induced, called Mercurialism.

The local signs of which are, coppery taste in mouth, peculiar fetor of the breath which is very offensive, the gums become tender with the formation of a red line on them,

and the teeth become loose,
Excessive ptyalism giving rise
to inflammation of the salivary glands,
ulceration of gums & inside of the
mouth; this may pass on to slough-
ing & that of a most obstinate char-
acter.

The Constitutional symptoms
are, more or less excited action of
the circulation & excitability of the
nervous system, giving rise to
the condition called "Mercurial Fever,"
and an increase of perspiration.

There is another effect pro-
duced, principally seen in Miners,
called "Mercurial Trembling",
and principally affecting the
muscles of the arms & hands.

In Nervous persons, the
nervous symptoms produced are
often very striking. Pains in the
head & limbs, which partake both of
a rheumatic & a neuralgic char-
acter are often produced. In
other cases, the senses are morbidly

excited, or the perceptions are perverted; a moody melancholy may overtake the patient, who may sink into dementia. In a few cases, Epilepsy results.

If a person should be exposed to cold during mercurial action, inflammation, especially of serous membranes, are very liable to occur under the strumous constitution.

Mercury is also very apt to cause, rather than remove glandular swellings & eruptions -

Ulceration.

The drug may promote interstitial absorption & give rise to ulceration in various parts of the body; and even in some idiosyncrasies will produce sloughing & gangrene; sloughing ulcers or Cancrum oris after measles in children -

Eruptions.

It may produce eruptions,

particularly when it has been rubbed in, accompanied by much local heat and tingling, and constitutional excitement.

We may have simple Erythema. The eruption may be vesicular - "Erythema mercuriale" - and sometimes even pustular.

Affections of the Bones.

When the mineral has been pushed too far, especially in connection with Syphilis, it is said to give rise to Prostatitis, Perioosteal Effusion, Nodes, Caries and Necrosis. In fact in connection with Syphilis, if used injudiciously, it may develop all the worst symptoms usually ascribed to that disease. This statement to a certain extent would appear true, from the fact, that since we now treat the disease with Mercury more rationally, we seldom see these horrible effects developed. Yet I have heard on good authority -

that among the Chinese, Mercury is not known as a medicine, and that following Syphilis all these affections are produced in their most aggravated form.

Lastly mercury sometimes produces a peculiar effect called "Erethismus Mercurialis" in which we have excessive debility with irritability of the heart and a tendency to syncope on the slightest exertion. In this way may prove fatal; in fact the effects are quite as bad as those produced by the abuse of Digitalis.

I now conclude this most extensive and difficult subject, upon which so much has been said and written from the earliest annals of medicine down to the present day, still leaving a wide field for investigation.

And although I may not have
enlightened the profession by
this simple dissertation, and
indeed am keenly alive to the
fact of its many deficiencies -
for it is out ~~of~~ⁱⁿ a student's power, (of)
who's whole time and mind is
occupied in preparing for his
examinations, to undergo much
original investigation. - Yet,
for my own sake in a future
career, I trust that I may not
have altogether strayed in
selecting the actions and uses
of mercury.