

the removal of a watery element from the blood. This organ was the large sub-maxillary gland, and to his surprise at first, he found that at certain periods the blood in the small sub-maxillary vein was black, at other times red; that during the process of salivary secretion the venous blood was red, and that as the gland reposed the blood assumed its black colour.

The experiment to determine this was performed on a dog. He dissected carefully the sub-maxillary region, exposing the gland, with its artery, vein, nerve, and duct. On exposure of these parts, the blood in the small sub-maxillary vein was black; the gland was reposing, there being no salivary secretion. A sponge dipped in vinegar was now applied to the tongue, thus inducing rapid salivary secretion, and at the same moment might be observed the gradual change in the colour of the blood in the sub-maxillary vein from black to red. As the flow of saliva ceased, the blood gradually reassumed its dark aspect. The small nerve going to the gland was now irritated by the forceps; secretion recommenced, and again were witnessed the same changes in the colour of the blood. The nerve being now divided stopped the secretion, and the venous blood again became black. Finally, the divided nerve was galvanized; this induced another flow of saliva; the small vein was at this moment opened, and the gradual change in colour of the blood from black to red or scarlet was visible to all as the blood flowed into glass tubes.

From this experiment, only lately performed, M. Bernard comes to the conclusion, that the blood in the renal veins, as also in the sub-maxillary, is red owing to the same cause—to the removal from the blood of a portion of its watery element by the process of secretion; that in the kidney this removal is continuous, whereas in the sub-maxillary gland it is intermittent and variable.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Bue de l'Ecole de Médecine, 4, Hotel
St. Pierre, Paris.—Jan. 1858.

HENRY HARGITT, M.D.

TREATMENT OF SYPHILIS IN PREGNANT WOMEN.

[LETTER FROM LANGSTON PARKER, ESQ.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Some difference of opinion exists amongst surgeons with regard to the effect of treatment upon pregnant women labouring under constitutional syphilis. Will you allow me to state, through the medium of THE LANCET, the conclusions I have been led to form, after a long and extensive experience, on this subject. If a woman has been diseased previous to her pregnancy, and at the time of conception has a well-marked constitutional syphilitic taint; or, if healthy at the time of conceiving, she contract primary sore, and become constitutionally diseased early in her pregnancy; there may be a hope of cure, during pregnancy, with a prospect of preserving the child, if an appropriate treatment be adopted. But, if the woman have been perfectly healthy previous to her conceiving, and the ovum be diseased by the semen of a tainted father, and the mother become subsequently affected through the medium of the fetus in utero, there is little hope of cure till after delivery. It will be perceived that the etiology of the disease, as far as the mother is concerned, is essentially different in these two classes of cases. The safest treatment to be followed is a combination of mercurial frictions with the mercurial vapour-bath.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Birmingham, Jan. 1858.

LANGSTON PARKER, F.R.C.S.

PETTICOAT PHYSIC.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your admirable remarks, on the 9th inst., under the above heading, will doubtless draw forth opinions from various quarters, and by a thorough discussion of the subject, it may be hoped that the masculine-minded ladies referred to, will take alarm at the allegations which they are rendering themselves liable to. It is truly unwomanly to thrust themselves thus into public view, to make a *profession* of physic, and a practice of medicine and surgery in hospital infirmaries, &c. Above all, seeking for titles and degrees in connexion with such practice is a sign of the want of that choicest attribute of woman—modesty.

The effrontery, however, does not stop here. An appeal to the English purse to support such un-English proceedings may be considered

"the head and front of their offending."

Whilst agreeing so far with the spirit of your remarks concerning our Transatlantic neighbours, be it understood that I think it desirable for women to acquaint themselves with the plain principles relating to the practice of medicine, the laws of physiology simply set forth, and all matters connected with the preservation of that wonderful piece of machinery (Nature's handiwork)—the human frame and constitution; every subject, in fact, that may come within the scope of woman's powers of mind and body. Every quality and capability should be cultivated which can make her an intelligent and skilful agent in her own sphere of action—home.

Medical men are fully aware of the important aid they sometimes obtain in the sick-room from intelligent and practical wives and mothers. The value of such skilful handmaids is duly appreciated. Would that the want of them had not so frequently to be deplored! If those well-intentioned, but ill-judging persons, who write and talk so much of late about "woman's work" would direct her attention to the importance of her *home* duties instead of inducing her to seek remunerative employment beyond its precincts, a far greater amount of benefit might result, not only to the present generation, but to that which would follow.—I am, Sir, yours &c.,

January, 1858.

M. A. B.

Medical News.

APOTHECARIES' HALL.—Names of gentlemen who passed their examination in the science and practice of Medicine, and received certificates to practise, on

Thursday, January 21st, 1858.

BARRETT, JAMES, Banbury, Oxon.

DAVIES, HENRY HARRIES, Llandyssul, S. W.

EQUALIZATION OF THE POOR-RATE IN THE METROPOLIS.—An important meeting of Medical Officers of Health, and other members of the profession, was held on Wednesday, the 27th inst., at the London Coffee-house, Ludgate-hill, for the promotion of this object. The chair was occupied by Dr. Barnes, and the meeting was also addressed by Mr. Liddle, Dr. Challice, Dr. Hillier, Mr. Rendle, Mr. Mitchell, Dr. Baines, Mr. Pittard, &c. Many striking facts and arguments resulting from the direct observation and experience of these gentlemen were brought forward. The early period of our going to press prevents our publishing an adequate report.

ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL.—The annual meeting of the governors of this hospital was held on Tuesday last, in the board-room, General Watkins in the chair. The Rev. J. B. Owen read the report, which stated that during the thirty years the hospital had been established, 608,685 sick and destitute persons had been relieved. The donations during the past year had amounted to £3152, the annual subscriptions to £1528, and the legacies to £1049, making a total of £5783 19s. 9d.; which, including a previous balance of £246 19s. 4d., make £6030 19s. 8d. On the expenditure side, the principal items stood thus:—The debts owing from 1856 paid were £1865 12s. 7d., and the expenditure of 1857 had been £4031 13s., making a total of £5897 5s. 7d.; so that the balance left at the commencement of this year was £133 14s. 1d. The Committee congratulated the Governors on the cordial unanimity and co-operation of the medical staff and the weekly board, both of whom they complimented for their important services; and also bore grateful testimony to the indefatigable exertions of Mr. W. Marsden, the founder of the hospital.

PATHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.—A large and handsome salver, bearing a complimentary inscription, has been presented to Dr. Quain by a number of the members of this Society, in recognition of his invaluable services as honorary secretary during a period of nearly six years.

VERDICT OF MANSLAUGHTER AGAINST TWO MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS.—At a late inquiry into the cause of the death of Betsy Brisker, a young married woman, before Mr. Kipping, the coroner for the borough of Maidstone, at the Old English Gentleman Inn, Tovel, within that borough, it was alleged that the death of the deceased was occasioned by the unskilful treatment to which she was subjected at the hands of two medical men who attended her in childbirth. The jury, after hearing the evidence, returned a verdict of manslaughter against Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Ayerst, but at the same time expressed their sympathy with the latter on account of his advanced age.