money. He lifted vesicovaginal fistula out of the Slough of Despond, and gave us a speculum which will never be superseded. He rode no grovelling hobbies.

Perhaps there is no instrument used in gynecology which has furnished so large a field for hobby-riding as the invention of specula. If cutlers would only agree to designate them by numbers — say from 1 to 1,000 — instead of the inventors' names, the evil would be lessened; but I cannot agree with Mr. Lawson Tait, in a recent New York address, who proposes to abolish both speculum and uterine sound. One may ride a negative, as well as a positive hobby.

IV. CONSTITUTIONAL.

Nearly a century ago, John Abernethy pointed out the great importance of constitutional treatment in surgical diseases. He wrote a famous book on the subject, and the medical wits of that day used to say that Abernethy charged his wealthy patients a guinea for advising them to buy his book! Dr. Fordyce Barker and Dr. S. Weir Mitchell are worthy successors of the great London surgeon. But it is not every one who can afford to pay one hundred dollars per week for board and treatment; and, fortunately, every patient does not require to be put through the course of training which Dr. Mitchell enforces. Our own Dr. Field, of Newton, Mass., has also devoted a great deal of time to the elucidation of this question.

One reason why women need constitutional as much, if not more, than local treatment, is because uterine diseases are generally of an insidious, bearable nature; and, partly from false delicacy, women do not apply for assistance until the whole system has become more or less affected.

Leucorrhœa — the commonest of all female complaints — often depends on constitutional disorder or disease, and does not become local until the continuous maceration of the cervical and vaginal tissues results in abrasion, puffiness, or something worse. If we cure the abrasion, often called ulceration, we have not cured the real disease, which may depend on indigestion, imperfect aeration of the blood, starvation of ganglia, kidney disease, or some other trouble.

In young girls, amenorrhœa may follow excessive mental application at school; and the remedies would not be an intra-uterine pessary or emmenagogues, but less brain work, pure air, bathing, and gentle out-door exercise. I see such cases nearly every month.

In married women, who have borne children, one of the commonest conditions we meet with is a torpid liver, complicated with constipation. I know that the liver has long acted as a sort of scapegoat to carry off the physical sins of the people, both masculine and feminine; and prominent physicians like Dr. Matthews Duncan, deny that it is so often guilty of producing or aggravating disease as it is accused of. The influence of mercury as a cholagogue has been called in question too, by recent experimenters. But I also know that I have administered hepatic pills to that class of patients with the best results. They are more alterative than laxative. If the constipation depends on retroflexion, of course that must be attended to. Ordinarily I depend on diet, massage, force of habit, and enemata, to relieve constipation. But the physician's *bête noir* lurks in the nervous system. We call it hysteria, neurasthenia, or something else, according to the prevailing fashion. As a general rule, the uterus has but little

to do with it. We occasionally meet with similar symptoms in men. Hysteria attacks women more frequently than men, because the former are naturally more exposed to nervous perturbation, are more emotional, and the weaker vessel founders.

The real origin lies in the present phase of civilization — a crazy competitive race, with disease for prizes, and death for the paymaster. Our so-called civilization is the rank soil which raises so copious a crop of faith curers, homœopathic jugglers, wholesale lying druggists, and reprobate doctors, all riding one hobby — Money! But this, I fear, is forbidden ground. We must "learn to labor and to wait."

Pharmaceutical Memoranda.

LANOLIN.

BY B. F. DAVENPORT, M.D.

UNDER the name of Lanolin, Prof. Liebreich, of Berlin, has recently introduced as a base for ointments, etc., the fat obtained from sheep's wool. This substance is one of the so-called cholesterin fats which are formed in the animal keratin tissues. It is much more completely and rapidly absorbed by the skin than the ordinary glycerine fats, or the paraffine. The preparation is an emulsified form of suet, or crude wool fat. It is perfectly neutral, difficult to saponify, and has not a tendency to become rancid. Its capacity for absorbing water is so great that it works up with over its own weight of it, forming there with a plastic cream-like mass. It combines freely with glycerine, forming with it an excellent basis for ointments, pomatums and cosmetic purposes. It is so rapidly absorbed by the skin as to form a very efficient means of administering remedies. A mercuric chloride ointment made up with it containing but one-thousandth of one per cent., induces the characteristic metallic taste in the mouth within a few minutes after its application upon the skin of any part of the body, and if containing ten per cent. potassium iodine, the presence of iodine in the urine can be shown in from a half to three-quarters of an hour, and after several applications it will continue to be eliminated for about a fortnight. Lanolin was used by the ancients, being mentioned by Herodotus, Pliny and Aristophanes. Under the name of *Æsypum* it was mentioned in the Florentine Pharmacœpia of 1560. — *Pharm. Rundschau*.

Reports of Societies.

MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY.

COUNCILLORS' MEETING.

THE annual meeting of the Council was held at the Medical Library, Boston, on the evening of Tuesday, June 8, 1886. One hundred and seven Councillors were present. The meeting was called to order by PRESIDENT HOMANS at seven o'clock.

After the reading of the record of the previous meeting by the Secretary, and its acceptance, the roll of those composing the Council for the year 1886-87 was read. The Secretary announced the names of