

and acted upon very definitely ever since the time when syphilis was first classed as a slow-staged exanthematic fever resulting from a specific contagium animatum."

Dr. Hutchinson says further that "the rehabilitation of mercury in professional esteem, which has followed on what has been witnessed in the small dose treatment of syphilis, must surely be credited as a very important advance in general therapeutics. The secret is to keep the dose small enough and to continue it long enough. It may be given in this manner in all climates to all races and at all ages, and with little or no interruption of the patient's ordinary mode of life."

#### A HISTORICAL SURVEY.

Dr. Iwan Bloch, in a historical survey, shows that syphilis first attracted attention in Europe when the French, under Charles VIII., sojourned in Italy. "Its sudden and mysterious appearance and its unknown nature caused the disease to make a profound impression everywhere, and to strike all men with horror.

"This horror sprang not so much from the complete ignorance concerning the new disease as from the fear which its severity and virulence spread abroad. The contemporary writers of every nation always paint the disease in the darkest colours. . . .

"Even to-day we see, wherever syphilis is introduced into a virgin country, the same acute course, the same intensity of its manifestations, as in its first appearance in Europe."

The writer shows it has been conclusively proved that syphilis was brought to Europe from the island of Hayti by the crew of Columbus after the latter's first voyage. The majority of the crew became infected with syphilis there, and returned sick to Spain, where several were treated by a physician of note, Ruy Diaz de Isla, in Barcelona, where the disease spread among the inhabitants. "The following year, 1494, Charles VII. of France began preparations for a great campaign, and attracted mercenaries from neighbouring countries. Amongst these were many Spaniards infected with syphilis. Thus it came about that syphilis spread during the stay of the French army in Italy, and finally, through the combination of so many circumstances favourable to an epidemic outbreak, achieved that sudden and terrible diffusion of which we have learnt."

It is probable that the disease was introduced into this country also by foreign mercenaries. The first definite references to it are made in the year 1497.

In Scotland, on September 22, 1498, James IV. published a decree ordering all persons suffering from syphilis to leave Edinburgh. They were to be taken to an island opposite Leith, and there to be treated. Any of them found in the town were to be branded on the cheek.

#### THE SURGERY OF SYPHILIS.

The chapters in the second volume, contributed by Mr. D'Arcy Power on "The Surgery of Syphilis," are most interesting. He shows that:—"Correct treatment needs accurate diagnosis, and no treatment of any disease can be more than empirical until the cause is known. Every advance in knowledge in any one branch of science reacts on many

other departments, with which at first sight it seems to have no direct connection. . . .

"These successive advances have been utilised in the diagnosis of syphilis. The changes peculiar to syphilis were soon recognised by means of the microscope, and similar changes, due to other causes, were readily discriminated. A group of swellings of the joints, which had been classified under the general heading of white swelling, or tumour albus, were soon subdivided by histologists into tuberculous disease, syphilitic inflammation, and sarcomatous synovitis. . . .

"Still further advances in physical science led to the discovery of the Röntgen Rays, and few discoveries have been of such signal importance to the surgeon for purposes of diagnosis in diseases and injuries of the bones. Many of these diseases and injuries which were formerly left unrecognised are now seen as clearly in the living body as if they existed in museum specimens. The application of X-Rays in cases of bone disease due to syphilis has been very instructive, and has enabled the effects of inherited syphilis to be observed at a more advanced period of life than had hitherto been thought possible, whilst at the same time it has helped the surgeon to distinguish syphilitic osteitis from allied inflammations due to tubercle and rheumatism.

"The most recent advances in the diagnosis of syphilis have advanced along the lines of experiment and pathological chemistry. The greatest interest at the present day attaches to the existence of an infective agent causing syphilis, and there are many reasons to suppose that the actual cause has at last been found in the spirochaete pallida, or spirochæta, which was described in the spring of 1905 by Dr. Schaudinn and Prof. Erich Hoffmann."

M. B.

(To be concluded.)

#### THE POISONS AND PHARMACY ACT.

The Poisons and Pharmacy Act, which came into force on January 1st, amends the list of articles to be deemed poisons under the Pharmacy Act of 1868, and allows persons who are not duly registered pharmaceutical chemists or chemists and druggists, but who are licensed by the local authority, to sell certain poisonous substances to be used exclusively in agriculture or horticulture, such as sheep dips and weed-killers. It provides that a pharmaceutical chemist or chemist and druggist who has more than one place of business must, in every premises where the business is carried on, have it *bonâ-fide* conducted by himself or some other duly registered pharmaceutical chemist or chemist and druggist. In the cases of bodies corporate, or, in Scotland, of firms or partnerships, the business of a pharmaceutical chemist or chemist and druggist may be carried on, so far as it relates to the sale of poisons, if it be under the control and management of a superintendent who is a duly registered pharmaceutical chemist or chemist and druggist, but in every premises the business must be *bonâ-fide* conducted, if not personally by the superintendent, by a manager or assistant who is a duly registered pharmaceutical chemist or chemist and druggist.

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