

blood will, it may be presumed, bring about a more correct diagnosis of fevers in malarious countries and assist rational treatment. Malta fever was treated until lately with large doses of quinine on the supposition that it was malarial in origin. In the same way it is too often assumed that any fever occurring in a malarious locality is malarial in character, and quinine is given in enteric fever, tuberculosis, liver abscess, &c., when a blood examination might have prevented the error. The nomenclature I would suggest for the three well-recognised species of malaria is the following:—

Malarial fever.—Synonyms: ague, intermittent and remittent fever.
a. *Tertian.*—Synonyms: hæmamoeba vivax, simple or benign tertian.

b. *Quartan.*—Synonym: hæmamoeba Golgii.
c. *Crescent tertian.*—Synonyms: Laverania laverani, æstivo-autumnal fever, malignant tertian, tropical tertian, remittent fever.

I have left out the commonly used terms "simple," "benign," "malignant," and "pernicious" as they are misleading. The so-called "simple tertian" may often be more severe than the so-called "malignant tertian." "Æstivo autumnal" is a term which may apply appropriately enough to the fever as it occurs in Italy, but in other parts of the world is unsuitable. The genius of Koch suggested the term "tropical tertian" for the third variety and this is undoubtedly an excellent name, but as the fever is also found in temperate climates it is also misleading. In regard to the scientific names, I think Golgi, who discovered that the parasite of malaria consisted of more than one species, should be commemorated, and also Laveran whose epoch-making discovery of the malarial parasite has, it seems to me, never been sufficiently appreciated in this country. In the present edition of the "Nomenclature of Diseases" the old term malarial cachexia has been left out. I would propose that in the next edition the chronic form of malaria, when the parasites have disappeared from the blood but the anæmia, pigmentation, enlarged spleen, &c, remain, be again given a place, and I would put forward the name: Chronic malaria; synonym: Malarial cachexia. This short note has been written in order that anyone who takes an interest in this question may have the opportunity of bringing forward other suggestions or criticisms. I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

DAVID BRUCE,

Lieutenant-Colonel, R.A.M.C.

Dec. 20th, 1902.

RIGHT-HANDEDNESS AND LEFT-BRAINEDNESS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Sir Samuel Wilks in his valuable letter¹ on the above subject shows, I think conclusively, that certain practical advantages result from the employment of one hand and arm exclusively for certain movements. I do not feel altogether convinced, however, that writing should be included among these. It is true that in writing "forwards" with the left hand the movements do not correspond with those employed in writing similarly with the right hand; nevertheless, one can learn to write quite well with the left hand, and it does not appear to me that any practical disadvantages attach to ambidexterity in the case of writing: it is simply a question of learning to write with both hands, and I have known children to show a preference for using the left hand rather than the right for writing. I am acquainted with a child who used to write all her home-lessons with the left hand, only writing with the right hand when she was compelled to at school. Now, through being constantly compelled to write with the right hand, she uses this one almost solely for writing, though she can still write fairly well with the left. This child, I may remark, is very fond of, and not a little skilled in, drawing and she always employs the left hand for this purpose.

These remarks prepare the way for the chief object of my letter, which is to raise the question whether by employing the two hands equally in writing and thus (presumably) the two sides of the brain equally in "word processes" more can be achieved in the realm of language than when one hand only is used for writing. If we can secure the development of the motor and sensory speech centres in both halves of the brain instead of one only, if, that is to say, we can enlarge the anatomical substratum of language, may we not hope to obtain in this way some increase in the capacity for language? This question is capable of being

answered by experiment. All that is necessary is to teach a number of children to use both hands equally for writing and to compare their gift of language with that of others who write with the one hand only.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Wimpole-street, W., Dec. 28th, 1902.

HARRY CAMPBELL.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Sir William Gowers has promulgated in his letter in THE LANCET of Dec. 13th a charming theory in the speculation as to the cause of right-handedness. But his theory loses much of its weight by being applicable only to those of our ancestors who inhabited the northern hemisphere, suggesting by inference that those south of the equator should all have been left-handed by choice. Now we know that this is not so and must therefore look for some other reason to account for right-handedness and all that right-handedness involves and includes. I would, as opposed to a celestial cause, propound the probability of a very mundane reason. When early man first learned the art of fighting with a weapon, however rude, it would gradually be borne on him that wounds of the right side of the chest were not so fatal as those of the left. Arguing thus he would construct a shield which should be carried on the left arm, leaving the right to wield his weapon and to strike his blow.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Kensington-court, W., Jan. 1st, 1903.

E. A. BARTON.

THE HOPELESSNESS OF THE BATTLE AGAINST CONSUMPTION SO LONG AS THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS ARE HYGIENICALLY UNREFORMED.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—A perusal of Mr. Felix Clay's criticism in THE LANCET of Dec. 20th (p. 1722) of my letter of Dec. 6th shows that he has failed to grasp the far-reaching effects of sanitary reforms of which hygienic elementary schools is one. He points to the cost of the schools and the difficulty of finding a sufficient supply of teachers for so increased a number. Moreover, he seems to take it for granted that these reforms can be thrust upon the nation at once in their entirety. If this were the case it must be admitted that the difficulties he mentions might arise; but reforms of the nature suggested are a slow growth, and it would doubtless take some years for the beneficent effects of the reforms to become manifest and for the population who, under the old régime, would have died from phthisis to grow up into useful citizens. Other difficulties besides that of obtaining teachers arise from the comparative sparseness of the population of the country which is making itself felt in various ways, such as the undermanning of the navy, the imminent conscription, and the waning power of colonisation. Is this to be wondered at in a country which placidly allows 60,000 of its most promising, active, and intelligent population to die yearly from a preventable disease? To illustrate this point allow me to take it for granted that the various plans of hygienic reform are in active operation and as successful as their originators could wish and that consumption is eliminated as a common disease almost as completely as leprosy. Then the 60,000 English men and women who now die annually in the British Isles from tuberculosis would be saved and added to the number of the wealth-producing population. In 20 years a number considerably above 1,200,000, which is the figure a multiplication of the former number gives, would be produced. As a means, however, of representing the increased population this number is unsatisfactory, while it fails completely as an estimate of the increased wealth and health of the country as it does not show the millions of ailing citizens freed from a life of chronic ill-health and sickness and the increased healthfulness and energy of the remaining portion of the population. Surely it is not unreasonable to suppose that the capital invested in the preservation of child life in the elementary schools and the closing of the various death-traps which abound in the kingdom will be amply repaid by the general well-being and prosperity of the community and that the cost must be a minor item in the general weal.

Opinions may differ as to the best method of treating a

¹ THE LANCET, Dec. 13th, 1902, p. 1658.