

ON LATENT INFECTION AND SUBINFECTION,
AND ON THE ETIOLOGY OF HEMOCHRO-
MATOSIS AND PERNICIOUS ANEMIA.*

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I can remember, as well as though it were yesterday, sitting in the large bacteriologic laboratory at the Institut Pasteur, close upon ten years ago, and hearing Roux, that clearest of lecturers, recount step by step the fascinating story of the discovery of the anthrax bacillus and the elucidation of the etiology of splenic fever—the history, in short, of the establishment of bacteriology as a science directly bearing on disease. More especially there remains vividly impressed upon me the almost paradoxical point which Roux then made, that mistaken facts and incomplete observations accepted as facts may be of temporary benefit and may aid advance. As Roux pointed out, the most clinching argument brought forward by Davaine, in favor of regarding the anthrax bacillus as the active agent in infection, was that if a pregnant sheep or cow died of the disease, the maternal blood, which contained abundant bacilli, was capable of causing the disease in other animals, whereas the blood of the fetus, which he found free from germs, was absolutely harmless, even when inoculated in large quantities. We now know that the fetal blood in infectious diseases is not necessarily free from the germs of those diseases; the fetus may suffer from the same infection as the parent. Davaine himself, and those attempting to repeat his observations, might have obtained different

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