

rice grounds, and to the expediency of the latest Italian legislation on that subject.

The remainder of the same day's sittings was filled up by a discussion between Professor Bacelli, of Rome, on the one hand, and Professors Herzen and Schiff, of Florence, on the other, on the part to be assigned to the spleen in the function of digestion. Professor Bacelli repeated a theory which he had already published last June in the *Imparziale*, under the title of "A New Function of the Spleen," where he maintained that the spleen, with its *vasa brevia*, is to the peptic cells of the stomach what the *vena portarum* is to the cholagogue cells of the liver. Dr. Herzen, whose critical observations, already published in the *Imparziale*, had not been taken into account by Prof. Z. Baccelli, rose and repeated them. His objections were, first, that Bacelli's ideas were not at all new, but might be found, in almost the same words, in several old writers; amongst others, in the sixth volume of Burdach's *Physiology* it was shown that the analogy with the *vena portarum* could not be maintained, because conclusive experiments had, a few years ago, been published by Professor Schiff, proving that the secretion of the bile continues if the blood of the renal artery be artificially led into the ramifications of the different veins of the liver. The analogy, therefore, would consist in the fact that the spleen is not more indispensable for the formation of pepsin than the blood of the *vena portarum* for the formation of bile. But, secondly, as Prof. Bacelli evidently admitted, the blood of the *vena portarum* is indispensable for the secretion of bile; the necessary exclusion of less analogy is that the blood coming from the spleen is indispensable for the secretion of pepsin;—a theory, said Dr. Herzen, entirely false, because many experiments have proved that in animals, well restored after the extirpation of the spleen, the secretion of pepsin not only continues, but the digestive power of the stomach is greater than in the normal animals; so that if the spleen has anything to do with the quantity of pepsine secreted by the stomach, it is to be considered not as contributing to the formation of the gastric fermentation, but, on the contrary, as hindering the production of a maximum quantity of the same.

On these two rival theories a very animated discussion arose, which was important, not only in itself, but from its bearings on the still more important inquiries subsequently made known relating to cancer, which the experiments of Prof. Schiff have stimulated to an extraordinary degree.

The morning of the 23rd was divided between the treatment of two topics—the succor to be given to the wounded in actual warfare, and the improvements to be introduced into hospitals. On the first point, some extraordinary bulletins were read from Marshal Vaillant and Dr. Champouillon, showing the utter inadequacy of the medical and surgical assistance during the French campaign in Italy in 1859.

The afternoon sitting was held in the Royal Museum of Natural History, where one of the Professors, Schiff, read a paper which will, probably, be considered as the most important contribution rendered to the International Medical Congress of 1869, and the science which it was intended to pro-

mote. After a long and careful series of experiments, Professor Schiff has established, that whilst great danger attends the attempted reduction of cancer by the application of the gastric juice, no such dangers are involved in the application for the same purpose of the pancreatic juice, which is found only to affect the unhealthy tissues. Prof. Schiff illustrated this conclusion not only on proportions of bodies to which the two juices had been applied, but by a living patient, in whom all the more alarming symptoms of cancer had, under the application of the pancreatic juice, disappeared. The loud cheers of the Congress testified to the unanimity of approbation with which the members greeted these researches.

At the sitting of the 29th, the discussion on hospitals, commenced the previous day, was continued, and brought forth many interesting points of comparison between the arrangement and ventilation of the various European hospitals, much admiration being expressed, in particular, for those of Russia.

At the afternoon sitting of the same day, the services rendered to public health by Prof. Bacelli, in the establishment, now greatly diffused, of sea-side hospitals for the scrofulous poor, were generally acknowledged.

At the morning sitting of the 30th, the statistics transmitted by Professor Tassi, director of the Roman hospitals, on the special effect of railways on health, were regarded as very startling. They established that Europe presents an average annual number of 350,000 sick and 4,000 killed, without counting accidents, solely in consequence of railway influences. The statistics presented by Prof. Alcalco, on the relative mortality among the inmates of the different stories of houses in Palermo, were not less suggestive. In the period between last February and June, 1,192 individuals died in Palermo; 605 on the ground floors, 365 on the first floor, 119 on the second floor, and 104 on the third floor of the houses. Nothing can more luminously illustrate the relative health of the higher strata of air in continental, especially Italian, cities.

The sitting of the 1st of October, was remarkable for the statistics which it elicited on the vast preponderance of female over male births announced in Italy to the local authorities—a preponderance so large as to suggest the probability that in order to evade the conscription, many male children are registered as female.

The subsequent proceedings were of a purely formal character, relating to the arrangements for the next Congress—to be held in Vienna—and, as have already had occasion to mention, a most delightful pleasure trip to Monté Catini, on the 3rd instant, wound up the proceedings of the Congress by a generally appreciated and admirably arranged fête.—*Special Correspondence Medical and Surgical Reporter.*

Reminiscences of Royalty and Medicine.

Mr. Keate was the son of a man who had rendered himself conspicuous in the last century as one of the surgeons to St. George's Hospital. Robert was sent early to sea, and was assistant-surgeon of the vessel-of-war in which Prince William Henry, Duke of