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*On the so-called Cyaniform.* By Dr. C. NACHBAUR.

A COMPOUND of cyanogen,  $C^2HCy^3$ , analogous to chloroform, bromoform, and iodoform, is not known with certainty. Nevertheless Bonnet supposed it to exist in the fluid which he obtained by the distillation of acetate of lime with an equal quantity of prussian blue or cyanide of mercury, and of which he states that it contained no acetone, acetic acid, or hydrocyanic acid, but consisted merely of cyaniform and water, the latter of which could be separated by chloride of calcium. He describes cyaniform as a colourless, tolerably volatile, neutral fluid, smelling of hydrocyanic acid and tobacco-smoke, not inflammable, soluble in æther, alcohol, and water. No analysis is given.

A body of this kind appeared to be of great interest, and deserving of more accurate study. The author was induced by Professor Hlasiwetz to undertake the following experiments.

The mixture of cyanide of mercury and dehydrated acetate of lime was distilled over the spirit-lamp at a moderate heat in small portions (about 1 ounce at a time, as the employment of larger quantities gives a smaller result, especially in the most important product of this reaction). A yellowish fluid, which soon becomes brown, and has an empyreumatic odour mixed with an odour of hydrocyanic acid, is obtained; much mercury is reduced; towards the conclusion crystals appear in the neck of the retort, which behave like acetamide; and there remains in the retort a carbonaceous residue. The amount obtained is but small.

This crude product is a rather complicated mixture; it contains acetonitrile, acetone, and hydrocyanic acid; but what Bonnet regards as cyaniform, is a peculiar new base, the description of which will be the principal object of the following observations. It is obtained as follows:—

It is first rectified on the water-bath. For a long time the boiling-point of the fluid remains between  $171^\circ$  and  $176^\circ$  F., and  
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