1209, and suffering from ophthalmic diseases 1962; of the latter of whom 457 were under fifteen years of age, 324 were from fifteen to twenty, 662 from twenty-five to fifty, and 519 were over fifty years.

From the Report we find that of the total number of diseases of the eye registered and treated in the hospital of St. Mark's and the Dispensary during the year—viz., 1709—there were only 4 cases of glaucoma returned, and of those admitted into the house there were 8 only of iritis and of internal ophthalmia.

In the same document, a deficiency in medical education is pointed out, and very properly insisted on—"the want of compulsory education in ophthalmic diseases in curricula prescribed by the various licensing bodies in the British Isles." Until this want be rectified, we fear that the knowledge of these diseases will be limited, too much restricted to professed oculists, and as a consequence, except in large towns, where oculists can flourish, such diseases will be more or less neglected, and as in Ireland, the effect of that neglect will be witnessed in the large proportional number of the unfortunate blind. Moreover, without a diffusion of elementary knowledge of diseases of the eye, even periodicals exclusively devoted to them, must be of partial and very limited use.

ART. V.—Essai sur la Médication Isolante, ou Traitément des Inflammations en général par les Enduits Imperméables, avec des Observations Clinique, à l'appui, suivi de quelques Considérations sur la Nature et le Traitément de la Fievre dite Puérperale. Par le Dr. FERDINAND Benoist, Lauréat de l'Ecole de Médecine de Poitiers.

An Essay on "La Medication Isolante," or the Treatment of Inflammations in general by Impermeable Applications, with Clinical Observations in its favour, followed by some Remarks on Puérperal Fever. By Dr. F. Benoist.—Poitiers, 1864. pp. 62.

The author of this pamphlet has, from his own experience, taken a very favourable view of the mode of treatment indicated in the title of his essay. He adopts for his motto the dictum, that pathology to be successful must be founded on physiology—"La pathologie arrivera à pouvoir se greffer sur la physiologie." Accordingly, he connects the treatment which he advocates with the researches of Foucaut on the respiratory function of the skin, referring the discovery of it to Dr. Robert Latour, who, having been impressed by the coincidence of an increase of temperature in the portion of integument subject to inflammatory action, wherever situated and of whatever degree, came to the conclusion, that by protecting the part from the agent essential to the production of animal heat—viz., atmospheric air—the inflammatory process might be arrested.

This conclusion, the result of such induction, Dr. Benoist holds to be the finest discovery ever yet made in therapeutics, and, as he thinks, one amply verified by experience, and yet one that would have
remained unfruitful had not chemistry, by furnishing collodion, supplied what was wanted—namely, an impermeable covering.

Having passed his eulogium on this novel method, he expresses his astonishment at the attempt made to suppress it by ignoring it, or in other words, and they are his, by a conspiracy of silence.

He endeavours to show that, instead of being opposed to the best established facts in medical science, it is in perfect harmony with them, and affords aid to their explanation, instancing the beneficial effects of the exclusion of air in a variety of external injuries and superficial phlegmoses. He appeals, lastly, to the state of medical science, encumbered by a number of facts without a connecting link—in a word, waiting the advent of a Newton; and he asks whether that connecting link is not to be found in the doctrine which associates inflammation with animal heat? That this doctrine is true is his faith, his absolute faith, and that a revolution in medicine will be produced by its development. After further eulogy, he proceeds to the practical part of his subject, and describes how collodion should be used—a substance which, besides impermeability, possesses the two qualities most required, adhesiveness and a certain degree of elasticity.

Next, he gives in detail the results of his own experience comprised in twenty instances of various ailments:

"1. Contusion and sprains. 2. Erysipelas of the face quickly subdued by a covering of collodion. 3. Circumscribed phlegmon. 4. Phlegmonous erysipelas of the leg. 5. The same disease thrice arrested by the sole use of collodion. 6. Diffuse phlegmon of thigh and leg. 7. The same affecting the thigh and sterno-clavicular region, complicated with acute articular rheumatism. 8. Lymphangitis, erratic erysipelas of inferior extremity, and inflammation of a bursa mucosa. 9. General phlebitis. 10. Phlegmasia dolens. 11. Acute metro-peritonitis. 12. Acute peritonitis occasioned by an ovarian cyst. 13. Ovaritis, accompanied by a pelvic phlegmon, with suppuration after the use of bad collodion; three years after, a repetition of the ailment successfully treated by the application of collodion of a good quality. 14. Chronic peritonitis. 15. Periostitis. 16. Zona. 17. Milk-engorgements. 18. Adenitis. 19. Acute articular apyretic rheumatism. 20. Acute rheumatism of knee, with fever. 21. Poly-articular acute rheumatism with endocarditis."

In addition, the author states a case of supposed strangulated hernia, in which he says relief was obtained by the use of collodion; he appends a supplement of some other cases of diverse ailments, accompanied with remarks expressive of the efficacy of collodion in inflammatory cases. Such are his results generally; according to him, however, they have been aided in the greater number of instances by other modes of treatment.

Dr. Benoist concludes with the following propositions explanatory of medication by isolation:

"1. Motion is the result of the action of forces—electricity, light, caloric, magnetism, &c.

"2. Life is the general result of motion.

"3. Individual life or being is the result of circumscribed motion with a determinate end."
concluding propositions.

"5. Disease is a disturbance of the equilibrium, or in other words, an alteration of the forces one with another, whence a material alteration results.

"6. Inflammation is nothing more than an exaggeration of persistent motion occurring in one or more parts of the body, under the influence of an excess of caloric.

"7. Isolated medication is a means of preventing or checking such an exaggerated motion by the exclusion of the contact of the elements unexceptionably necessary to the production of animal heat."

We hardly know whether we are justified in giving so full an account of Dr. Benoist's paper. He is evidently an enthusiast; but how few are the discoveries which would have been made without this noble element of the human mind!

In considering his hypothesis, there are two questions which require to be answered: 1. Is the basis of it, the views of M. Foucault, relative to cutaneous respiration, correct? And 2. Whether, if so, the observations of the author suffice to support the doctrine founded on them? As to the first, we are not aware that the results of the researches of the physiologist made some twenty years ago have been confirmed; or, even supposing their truth to be established, it would follow that animal heat in any way depends on the action of oxygen on the skin. As to the second, granting that in many instances the application of collodion may have been serviceable, it far from follows that it should be so marvellously useful as Dr. Benoist believes.

It has been said that anything may be proved by statistics; is it not also true that the inductive method may be equally abused—i.e., by an array of cases, such as those enumerated, in which the result has been favourable, using a peculiar mode of treatment? There is no drug which has not in its turn effected wonders. How few are the ordinary ailments which, if not interfered with, would not in due course terminate in health! Great is the efficacy of the restorative power of the vis medicatrix! We remember having our attention directed to a famous and boasted styptic, the "aqua Binelli," which it was boldly asserted, and by some medical men of good repute in Naples, had the property of arresting haemorrhage even when large arteries were divided, and the results of experiments on goats were cited in confirmation of its efficacy. On examining this precious fluid, which was sold at a high price, it was found to differ from water merely in being flavoured by tar or creosote. The experiments were repeated, mere water being substituted (wet pledgets being so applied as to make gentle pressure, not to obstruct the flow of blood through the divided vessels), and the result was equally successful.

We think it highly probable that collodion may be of much service in every case in which the exclusion of air is indicated, and also in every instance in which it is an object to defend adjoining parts from irritating discharges; but these are humble uses compared with the functions assigned it by our author, and explained in his transcendental concluding propositions.