Gout and Goutiness, and their Treatment. By William Ewart, M.D. (London: Bailliere, Tindall, and Cox. 1896. 580 pages. 12s. 6d.)

A title so comprehensive as that adopted by Dr. Ewart carries with it a prescriptive right to traverse at will the whole gamut of medicine. It reflects, therefore, most creditably on his powers of selective discrimination that he has not availed himself of this licence beyond the limits of 580 pages. Avoiding proximity without sacrificing the literary character of the work, Dr. Ewart has elaborated a work which will rank among the classics of medicine, and as a text-book on gout it is without a rival. As a treatise on gout one might have been better pleased with a freer expression of personal views, and the reading might have been all the lighter for the inclusion of a few clinical and descriptive pictures of the various phases of gout; but as a text-book their exclusion is so much gain.

The book is divided into ten sections, of which the follow-are the most important: (1) Theories; (2) Chemistry; (3) Morbid Anatomy; (4) Clinical Study; (5) Treatment; (6) Medical Springs; (7) Prophylaxis. Dr. Ewart has evidently recognised the difficulty of adhering strictly to the natural limitation of the various sections, and of making each complete in itself, without reiteration or redundancy. The chapter on pathology illustrates this difficulty. Only twenty-eight pages are exclusively devoted to this subject because most of the important points which belong properly to it have been dealt with under headings—"Theories," "Chemistry," and "Morbid Anatomy"—from which, indeed, they could hardly have been excluded. As we have remarked before Dr. Ewart is not very explicit as to his personal views, and nowhere is this more apparent than when treating of the pathological problems. With regard to the direct origin of uric acid from deficient and degenerate leukocytes, as believed by Horbaczowski, he has little to say in contradiction; but this is about the only indication we can gather as to the trend of his views on this most important subject.

In speaking of structural changes in "goutiness," Dr. Ewart observes that they are minute in proportion to their wide extent, and are such as not to be recognised in individual cells; they are, nevertheless, "obvious, most marked in the modification of the external epithelium, and particularly the epithelial cells, the latter having been considerably thinned. The same structural delicacy may be inferred to exist in the nervous system from a consideration of its functional relation to the skin," and, he might have added, from its common embryological derivation from the epiblast. This is a considerable concession to the nervous theory. With regard to treatment, Dr. Ewart's remarks are of the first importance, and, indeed, they occupy nearly half the entire pages of the work. Speaking generally as regards the results of treatment, he says, although not entirely successful, we must remember with Heberden "it should not be considered a reproach to medical men till they are permitted to attempt a cure of the disease, or until they can find gouty patients who will follow their advice. As to the curability of gout, Dr. Ewart's own answer is, "Gout is curable, but some of its worst results are not: if our atiology is right, if gout is self-inflicted, if it is the outcome of absolute or relative inactivity, coupled with over-indulgence—in short, a manufactured product of civilization—it is certainly pre-destined to fall after its onset." In the treatment Dr. Ewart does not always regard theoretical consideration of the pathology as the best guide; for instance, carbonate of soda is invaluable in many gouty conditions, and yet, according to Sir W. Roberts, its theoretical interaction with the urates is calculated to intensify rather than modify the symptoms. All sides of the question are, however, most fairly and impartially dealt with, and this new work on gout and goutiness will be read and digested by all members of the profession with a deep sense of appreciation.