PART SECOND.

Bibliographical Record.

Art. I.—La Médecine dans Homère. Par Ch. Daremberg. Paris, 1865. Pp. 96.
The Medicine of Homer. By Ch. Daremberg.

The indications contained in the Homeric poems of the state of medical and anatomical knowledge in the early period of Greek civilisation have a double interest for the scholar and historian, and for the scientific enquirer. They began early to furnish a subject for set treatises. The earliest attempt of the kind mentioned in Dr. Daremberg's list is a medical thesis at Paris; the date of time is given by him as 1670, but obviously by a misprint for 1570. The next in date mentioned by him is a larger and more systematic work by an Italian physician, Persona, of Bergamo, published at Venice, 1613. Both these attempts partook of the imperfections of the science and scholarship of their time. The Germans of the last and the present century took up the subject, but apparently with no great success, unless some of Welcker's papers may be considered an exception; but Welcker's strength was in his scholarship rather than his scientific knowledge. M. Malgaigne appears to have been the first in recent times to bring adequate professional acquirements to the study and illustration of the Homeric notices on medicine and surgery. Dr. Daremberg speaks with much respect of his predecessor's researches, which have been, he says, the point de départ of his own. But he is not satisfied with M. Malgaigne's conclusions on various points, and, we should imagine, he thinks more highly of his ingenuity and of his knowledge as a man of science than of his thorough and scholar-like acquaintance with Homer. In Dr. Daremberg himself both qualifications are united in a remarkable degree. Living in the midst of the medical science of Paris, he is, what has been till lately a rare thing in France, though it is, we believe, becoming less uncommon now, a really learned Greek scholar, and he is, probably, one of the first authorities in Europe on all matters connected with the literature of ancient medicine.

His essay seems to exhaust the subject, and takes account,
probably, of every passage and word in the Homeric poems which bear on his theme. He brings to a focus all the stray lights in them which tell us anything of the physicians, the anatomical knowledge, the physiology, the surgery, and the medicine of those early days. He is not inclined to think that we can go much higher than the earliest periods of Greek civilisation for the origin of medical science. It is not certain, he says, that oriental medicine, in any approach to a scientific shape, was older than the Greek; and in the next place, unlike the Greek, it has been the germ and stimulus of nothing beyond itself. "Our written medicine," he says, "flows, as from an inexhaustible source, from Greece." The Homeric poems represent a state of society in which many steps of civilisation, and some of the most important and characteristic ones, had been already taken; and among them, the functions of the healer of bodily evils had been distinctly recognised, and the attentive and discriminating observation of the structure and general laws of the human organization had made considerable progress. M. Daremberg dwells on the fact that the office and services of the "healers" Machaon and Podaleirius, in the Iliad, are so prominent, and contrasts this with the absence of any notices of the same kind in the military history of much more recent times, as among the Romans. Even the immortal gods have their special healer, Pseon, still distinct in Homer from Apollo, and, of course, much more from Asclepius. M. Daremberg notices, though he warns us against laying stress on the circumstance, that no "healers" are mentioned among the Trojans. The most important part of his paper is what may be called a medical glossary of Homeric terms. He collects and defines, as far as he can, every word in the Iliad, Odyssey, Hymns, and Battle of the Frogs and Mice, which has any anatomical or physiological significance. The collection is an important one; "for," he remarks, "the Homeric language is singularly rich, and for its age often curiously correct, in this matter;" and further, "the nomenclature of the Iliad and Odyssey has continued to be the scientific nomenclature of the Greek physicians, and by them has reached to our own days." From Homer to Hippocrates anatomy made little advance; the poet's language sufficed for the use of the great medical teacher and his schools till methodical dissection began at Alexandria; and, in the absence of experimental research, this language was surprisingly full and exact.

"Cette richesse de langage, ces notions quelque-fois précises sur la place qu'occupent soit les viscères, soit d'autres organes, cette détermination exacte des régions dangereuses, ce discernement si juste des chances de salut ou des chances de mort, supposent une tradition médicale et une habitude de l'observation. Sans doute on ne dis- séquait pas au temps des rhapsodes, mais déjà on avait mis à profit
toute ce que la vie domestique et le hasard des batailles peuvent révéler sur la structure des animaux et de l'homme."

M. Daremberg’s collection of terms is a novel and valuable contribution, not only to the history of anatomy, in which it gives us the earliest efforts at distinct specification and terminology, but to the correct knowledge and definition of a characteristic portion of the poet’s language, and, as far as we have examined it, appears to be very complete, and to be executed with the cautious and conscientious modesty which befits a subject in which the most learned man will most feel the imperfections of his knowledge. The special merit of M. Daremberg’s attempt at definition is that he keeps fully in view the necessary generality and vagueness of such language when appearing in a popular form, yet, without pressing it to an improbable and forced nicety, he shows how it bears evidence to the clear and keen perceptions of the race which used it.

Next to this glossary the most curious portion of Dr. Daremberg’s paper is his classification of wounds. He mentions 141 separate kinds of wounds, definitely fixed to particular parts of the body, and he observes that the gravity of each and the chances of life going with each are clearly known and discriminated. With this the most material and full portion of his survey comes to an end. Of physiology proper, of diseases, of medical remedies and treatment, of the surgeon’s craft and devices, the Homeric poems have much less to tell. We learn more of the application of bandages and so forth from representations on Greek vases, of which Dr. Daremberg has engraved some examples, than from anything that the Homeric poems teach us. M. Daremberg brings together all that is to be found; but it does not come to much. A question has even been raised, whether Homer bears witness at all to the existence of the physician, as distinguished from the surgical healer of wounds. Dr. Daremberg thinks that he does, and controverts the opposite view of his predecessor, M. Malgaigne. But his arguments hardly go further than to meet the negative presumptions of M. Malgaigne. M. Malgaigne argues that as the cure of disease is, unlike wounds, always referred to a divine power, there could have been no recognised physicians. M. Daremberg answers justly, that in the days of Hippocrates, and as late as Roman times, when there were physicians, it was common to speak in the same way. But he urges, as a positive proof of the recognition of the physician’s business in the Odyssey, the mention of him in the speech of Eumæus (xvii, 383), who encounters, among the wanderers whom men ask into their houses, τῶν οί δημοσεργοί ἔσαυ, the ἵππηρα κακῶν—

"Those who in some craft excel, Framer of spears, leech, seer, or bard divine."

"Who," he asks, "is this healer of evils?" And he urges that the
word cannot mean a healer of wounds, but contains "a manifest allusion to internal medicine." This seems to us to be pressing words too far. If the word have this meaning, it is from the intrinsic probability that among people such as those described in the Odyssey, with their builders, and artists, and poets, the art of the physician must have appeared, rather than from the impossibility of confining the terms ἰησοῦς κακῶν to a healer of wounds and fractures. But the phrase can hardly be taken as a positive and unambiguous proof of the distinction existing between "internal medicine" and surgery. To all who are interested in the subject Dr. Daremberg's paper will be very acceptable; its good sense and simplicity are equal to its careful learning, and it has the advantage of being concise, succinct, and unencumbered with any needlessly diffuse comments or digressions.

ART. II. On certain Moral Aspects of Money-getting.—By W. T. Gairdner, M.D., Professor of Practice of Medicine in the University of Glasgow. Pp. 47. Glasgow, 1868.

Dr. Johnson's saying, that "there are few ways in which a man can be more innocently employed than in getting money," though it had perhaps a touch of satire in it, was meant on the whole in earnest, and is a sound one; but all who believe the morality either of Paganism or Christianity will admit that it asks both for qualification and explanation. Dr. Gairdner in this pamphlet, which was in its original shape an address to an association of young men mostly in business, attempts to give these. His question is, under what condition does trade—that is, direct money-making—escape, as it is plainly the fact that it does, in numberless instances, in modern society, the condemnation of being a service of Mammon, and prove itself capable of going on in harmony with the morality of the New Testament? The fact that it is so capable he assumes, as, of course, he is entitled to do, with the experience of the numberless noble shapes which the merchant's calling has taken under the influence of religion and a high morality; and the explanation of it he finds in the idea, characteristic of Christian times contrasted with the civilisation of the old world, that wealth, and the trade of getting it are to be regarded as one among the manifold and diversified ways of concentrating and turning to account, for the service of mankind, the powers and opportunities which are given in the world as we find it.

The "master-key" to the inquiry is to be obtained by "viewing wealth, not as a mere power or force, but as a ministry or service;" and this view, he adds, is one "peculiar to modern times, and one which may be regarded as practically unknown to the ancient world." Of course he is far from forgetting the imperfect degree