Part Second.

REVIEWS.

Om Betydelsen af Smärtor i Hjertgropen. Klinisk framställning, af Félix v. Willebrand, Doktor i Medicinen och Kirurgin, Professor. Helsingfors: 1856. Pp. 120.

On the Import of Cardialgia. A Clinical Sketch, by Professor Félix v. Willebrand, M. and C. D. Helsingfors: 1856. Pp. 120.

It is not often, in our office as critics, that we have laid before us a treatise from Finland, by a Professor of that University which now represents, at Helsingfors and under a Russian government, the older institution originally founded at Abo by Gustavus Adolphus and his eccentric daughter. Yet, if we are to judge from this able essay by Professor Willebrand, there is good reason for us to desire that our acquaintance with the labours of our brethren in Finland had been of a more intimate description: and that our truly cosmopolitan science, drawing its resources from wherever man is congregated, and finding its illustrations and its contrasts, its proofs and its tests, under every variety of climate and of social existence, had enjoyed more frequent and enlarged opportunities of ascertaining what addition to its stores of knowledge might be gathered for us, in a quarter hitherto even less disassociated by distance than by political and administrative barriers.

The description of affection, which finds its manifestation in the symptom of cardialgia, or of pain at the pit of the stomach (Smärtor i Hjertgropen), as it is popularly designated, is one of remarkable prevalence in Finland. With the poorer classes, it constitutes fully a third portion of their prevailing ailments; and consequently none is so frequently submitted to the skill of the physician. For the most part a result of dyspepsia, and having its immediate basis in the development of acidity, Prof. Willebrand appears to attribute its ordinary occurrence to the extensive use of the potato as a means of sustenance, while the drinking habits of his country, he tells us, perform their melancholy part. But the extraordinary prevalence of cardialgia is by no means restricted to this province, or, indeed, to any single tract of the adjoining countries. We recollect to have observed that Dr Bremer,1 in his remarks on the nosography of

1 Forhandlinger ved de Skandinaviske Naturforskeres fjerde Möde, pp. 363, 370.
North Jutland, in Denmark, describes a chronic cardialgia, designated by the commonalty as the "complaint between the stomach and breast," as subsisting endemically in that district; and he only hesitates to ascribe it to the large quantities of fatty substances habitually used in diet by the wealthier peasantry, because the disease is equally prevalent among the poorer classes who are debarred from this description of indulgence. Professor Huss, in his interesting survey of the endemic diseases of Sweden, mentions cardialgia, popularly termed Magfen, but sometimes Vattflen (Scot. Waterbrash), or passing under a host of other designations, as the most prominent of all in point of frequency of occurrence and extent of diffusion. He assigns as its causes, the disproportionate use of potatoes, and of soured bread; as well as of acid drinks, as sour beer and milk, with the excessive indulgence in coffee and ardent spirits; while nitrogenous foods are more rarely consumed, or are with difficulty accessible. Amongst our Scottish peasantry, the affection is also abundantly prevalent; and it has occurred to us to observe, that by no article of diet is it more readily caused, or at least more decidedly aggravated, than by the customary pottage (kail), containing the cabbage so unfailing in our cottage gardens.

Though, in the most instances, a product of simple indigestion, and removable with its cause, Cardialgia, we need not remind the pathologist, may appear as a forerunner, or a concomitant, of ulcer of the stomach, or of scirrhus. Under the former condition especially, haemorrhagic erosion, producing hæmatemesis, will give gravity and significance to the diagnosis; though the experienced physician will call to his recollection, that, with regard to the female, if she be the more liable to cardialgia, and, at the same time, be really the more subject to hæmatemesis, there are abundant proofs that the simple vomiting of blood, frequently, or even ordinarily, represents in her a less serious and more curable condition than in the male. There is suggested to us here another observation which we have chanced to make; and which, unlike the former, and possibly from the mere casualty of its origin, we do not recollect to have seen remarked elsewhere. In two severe cases of disease of the stomach, the one of haemorrhagic ulcer, and the other of scirrhus, our patients presented occasionally, on first awaking, a kind of sense of double consciousness; and used to express themselves as puzzled, for a short interval, as to which of two existences, into which they conceived themselves to be corporeally divided, was really their own. Whether this curious condition was purely a coincidence, dependent upon remote and disassociated causes, or was rather a result of disturbed innervation, through an influence immediately exerted upon the solar plexus and thence upon the great sympathetic system, we shall, meanwhile, make no effort to determine, but the fact appeared to us worth noting.

1 Om Sverges endemiska Sjukdomar, p. 89.
Professor Willebrand leans throughout to that strictly pathological school, which admits the existence of no disturbance of function without a corresponding alteration of texture, and attaches generally no importance to dynamic influences in disease; though he admits, referring to his special subject, that cases occur where the functions have been materially affected, yet where, at least, neither by scalpel nor microscope, could any modification of structure be demonstrated. We could have wished that an author, so generally judicious, had not confined himself to a view of the living processes so narrow as this, and so prone to lead to defective conclusions. To refer, with absoluteness so undeviating, to merely physical causes and conditions, is to mistake the apparatus of life for life itself. It seems to us, in the present state of our knowledge, to be to deny the essence and power of innervation, as innervation, if we deny the possibility of modifications of innervation; and refuse to admit, apart from all extrinsic considerations, the evolution of corresponding results in modifications of sensation or action. That is but a pretentious philosophy which affects to expound or demonstrate these, through the application of a few easily devised or conventional phrases: but it would be the shallowest of philosophies which repudiated an agency merely because its operation was inscrutable. But if the professedly materialistic pathology of our author be open to cavil as too peremptorily exclusive, it at least leaves him, for the most part, averse to fanciful hypothesis and speculation, and presents no barrier otherwise to his showing himself practically sound, well-informed, and experienced. The doctrines of many of the best observers in the French, German, and English schools are familiar to him; and we recognize with pleasure his just appreciation of the views of Broussais, Bernard, Abercrombie, Rokitansky, Virchow, Jaksch, and Oppolzer, in relation to his theme. His own immediate opportunities, moreover, have evidently neither been scanty nor neglected.

In taking occasion to deny that ulcer of the stomach can often be reasonably attributed to the liberal use of tartrate of antimony in disease, as has been asserted in the schools of Vienna and Prague, Prof. Willebrand introduces a notice of the mode of treating certain forms of syphilis, which has been extensively adopted in the Hospital for the naval service; where half a grain of the tartrate has been given every two hours, and continued persistently for three weeks or a month, without the slightest indication of any injurious effect upon the mucous membrane. This allusion to the subject of syphilis, in relation to Finland, reminds us of the remarkable details recently given by Dr Rabbe, in his historical sketch of the prevalence of the venereal disease in that country, published in the fourth volume of the Transactions of the Finnish Medical Society. Syphilis, it appears, was unknown in Finland before the commencement of the seventeenth century. Since the Thirty Years' War, however, its diffusion has been gradually greater and greater, in defiance of all preventive measures. Already, in 1787, the Medical Board
stigmatised the disease as an overwhelming pollution, more destructive to the country than war or pestilence. In 1847, 3131 cases, and in the year following, 2701, were treated in the Lock wards. In these years, new, and most stringent sanitary regulations were instituted; while it was announced, with an obvious policy, that all syphilitic patients would receive free cure and maintenance in the hospitals. The population being computed not to exceed a million and a half, these brief statements, and the necessity for this rigid supervision, give so little enviable a representation of their social habits and condition, in either direction, that one need affect no great stretch of philanthropy abroad, or unconscionableness of evil at home, who would desire that, on some future occasion, Dr Rabbe may be able to gratify us with some better account of their morals, and Dr Willebrand of their digestion. The practisers of syphilisation, an ordeal worthy of the disease, would be busy men in the hospitals of Helsingfors.

We cannot enter into any close examination of the therapeutic part of Prof. Willebrand’s treatise. The remedial means which he suggests are not novel, while, whether with reference to the simple disease, or its complex condition, they are expansively considered, and judiciously estimated. Where it is necessary to obviate constipation, he prefers to the use of opium, from ten to fifteen drops of chloroform, internally administered; and he recognizes advantages also in the employment of belladonna or atropine. We have twice seen the common belladonna plaster, applied to the pit of the stomach for gastralgia, give rise to delirium; on both occasions of an agreeable description. The favourite treatment of the author, in cases of ulceration, is that with cod-liver oil, adding to each dose five drops of tincture of opium; and this with strict abstinence from animal or milk diet, to obviate the free secretion of pepsin, which, following Bernard, he views as exercising a prejudicial influence on the denuded surface. We record this willingly, although we fear that cod-liver oil starts up too frequently, and appears too much as a panacea everywhere, not to excite unpleasing reflections in those who study the tendencies of the human intelligence, especially as displayed in their relations to the science of medicine. For ourselves, where there is simple cardialgia, we think we have best succeeded with alkalies, infusion of colombe, and hydrocyanic acid, along with a diet variously regulated by the specialties of the individual or the ailment: while in ulceration, we have had cause occasionally to recognize conditions of anaemia, till the removal of which it appeared to us that no reparative process could be hoped to be successfully instituted, and in these we have seen signal benefit from the use of a saline chalybeate.

Upon the whole, the essay of Prof. Willebrand has afforded us high gratification. Its manner has much the air of that of a clinical lecture by an able teacher. There is no very rigid sequence: but,
if it be sometimes discursive, it is never incongruous, and it is always intelligent and perspicuous. His theme, variable in its own sub-
structure, compels a certain looseness of association in its revision; yet we are never suffered to forget, for an instant, that we have before us the observations of an enlightened pathologist and practitioner. The cardialgia of which he traces the connexions, and indicates the cure, is one thing with the attenuated sufferer from scirrhus of the pylorus; another, in the pallid and half exanimate survivor from a severe attack of hematemesis and melâna, the result of ulceration; another, in the sufferer from simple indi-
gestion; and still another, and one where the misery is more equally divided between the patient and the conscientious phy-
sician, but a treasure to the charlatan, when we can find little consistency between the clamours of the hypochondriac and the indications of their source. "Ah! mon ami, te voila gros et gras!"—
"Que voulez vous, Monsieur? C'est la misère!"

The Constitution of the Animal Creation, as expressed in Structural Appendages. By G. Calvert Holland, M.D., Honorary Physician to the Sheffield General Infirmary, etc., etc.

Dr Calvert Holland is probably known to some of our readers as a prolific and ingenious writer, theoretical as well as practical, on a variety of subjects connected with physiology and medicine. The present work is the twelfth he has presented to the medical public, and that after having "for more than thirty years zealously culti-
vated physiological pursuits."

The subject he has chosen is both interesting and extensive. The great variety in the form of the cutaneous appendages in animals; the differences observed in the different species, and in the two sexes; the modifications which they present under varying external conditions; and the endless variety in their local distribution, present a wide field for physiological speculation. Naturalists, going on the safe ground that everything has its use else it would not be, have generally rested satisfied with pointing out, in a general man-
ner, the adaptation of the different cutaneous appendages to the habits and general requirements of the animal; the correspondence is, in most cases, so obvious, that we rest satisfied with the fact, and it is philosophical to do so. There are few who do not acknowledge this general doctrine of design and utility as applied to the cutaneous appendages. The necessity of a cuticular covering in all animals, and the purposes served by it, are so apparent, that we are naturally led to take the same view of all its modifications, however diversified, and to assume that they are necessary to the comfort and well-being of the animal.

But if, while thus accepting generally the doctrine of design and
utility, we descend to a more minute examination of the varieties of the cutaneous appendages, and more especially of the diversities in their local distribution, we shall find that in perhaps no other department of physiology do we meet with so many curious and difficult questions—questions which do not appear capable of being solved by a reference to the general law referred to; and in the discussion of which, physiologists have hitherto rested satisfied with a simple statement of the peculiarities observed, conferring their inability to offer any satisfactory explanation of them.

It is to this part of the subject that our author has principally directed his attention. He professes, in the first place, to have discovered the cause of all the differences as to local distribution of the cutaneous appendages observed in the same animal; and then proceeds to the consideration of the varieties in different species; and thence to draw general conclusions as to all organised beings. From the outset he is opposed to the doctrine of design, and states his objections to it as follows:

"The hair has been studied elaborately in its anatomical conditions, and in its relations to the tissues in which it originates; but the functions it exercises in the animal economy, and the causes to which it owes its growth, have awakened no particular interest with physiological inquirers. With few exceptions, the only remarks which it has suggested have been in reference to its imagined utility as a covering or protection, or as an appendage adding materially to the beauty of the human figure. But if the hair of the head is intended to protect it from external injuries, or to keep up the natural degree of heat, we may reasonably ask, why does it, after the prime of manhood, disappear to a great extent from this particular region? It decays when, clearly, it is most urgently required for the purpose assigned to it. Again, with regard to beauty; if the human being had not been invested with hair upon the head and in the several regions of the face, the presence of which appears indispensable to our notions of loveliness, dignity, or character of expression, the human figure would no less have excited agreeable emotions; and had a solitary individual fallen under our notice displaying these appendages, how startled and shocked we should have been at the aspect of such a monstrosity!"

Having thus put aside the theory of utility or beauty being a sufficient cause for the production of hair, our author proceeds to state that the original cause is to be found in the nervous system. All appendages are excrementitious; they are the effete matters resulting from the action of nervous matter; and he thus explains their appearance in different regions:

"The stomach, liver, pancreas, and intestines, expend their nervous power and contribute their vital resources towards the accomplishment of the digestive process. The matters arising from the action of these organs are expelled in the condition of feces. The regions where hair abundantly exists, as the head, face, axilla, pubis, and chest in the male, are the seat of, as well as in the vicinity of, excited vital actions; and the superfluous matters which these create have to be expelled. These matters have no outlet analogous to that possessed by nerves in other situations, and hence the presence of hair in certain localities. It is evident that, where nervous matter is concentrated in masses or liberally distributed to particular structures, the corresponding superficial regions, in man, are abundantly invested with hair. A limited amount of
nervous energy is distributed to the cutaneous surface in women; and this is one of the causes of the absence of hair in those regions in which it is copious in man. The organic necessity which gives rise to hair on the face of man, produces the mane of the lion and the tail of the peacock. They severally owe their origin to a necessity of the animal system. They are supplementary organs developed in the ratio of the activity of more important (nervous) tissues; and they offer themselves as a means for using up the superfluous elements created by the latter. The internal organs, in the vigorous exercise of their functions, create external appendages in harmony with their requirements; and the growth of the latter is the appropriation of matters which could not otherwise be disposed of. In whatever part of the body these appendages appear, it is in association with a copiousness of nervous matter, energetic in its functions, which has no outlet for the residue of its vital processes except in the creation of external appendages. The tissues which throw out the appendage do not create the materials which enter into its composition; these exist in the blood, and, consequently, are not confined to any locality. Why, then, do we find hair in certain regions only, and not diffused generally over the surface? The reason is evident: particular parts of the cutaneous surface represent different degrees of vital action in subjacent tissues, and hence the organic necessities for the expulsion of useless elements will vary with these circumstances. There is nothing (adds our author) unphilosophical in this train of reasoning."

We have given our author's statements on this subject as concisely as possible. They afford a very fair specimen of the "train of reasoning" which pervades the whole work, and which, without exception, is the most unphilosophical that has ever fallen under our observation. From beginning to end, we meet with nothing but assertions which are destitute of anything like proof, and whose only merit is their novelty. The idea that hair is the effete matter of the nervous system, seems to have struck our author's fancy; and he has assumed it as true and correct, and tries to explain all the varieties of cutaneous appendages in accordance with it. The frequent absurdities into which this theory betrays him, he seems entirely unconscious of: whenever any fatal objection presents itself, it is at once got over by assuming an organic necessity; an expression which he seems to have borrowed from the "Vestiges of Creation." He is never at a loss for an explanation of the existence or non-existence of hair on any part. The large amount of hair on the scalp is asserted to be a direct result of the vital actions going on in the brain underneath, and of nothing else. But the brain lies behind the brow: we ought, therefore, to have as abundant a crop of hair here as on the scalp; but "the optic and olfactory nerves are connected with the fore part of the brain; the functions of these nerves are carried on at the expense of a large amount of nervous power, which leaves no useless elements to be emitted, and hence the absence of hair on the skin over the anterior cerebral lobes." The presence of hair in the axilla is accounted for by the abundance of nervous tissue there existing, in the form of "the brachial plexus, which forms a centre of remarkable vital actions." No distinction is here drawn between nerves merely passing through a part and nerves distributed to a part. Again, the absence of hair along the
spine is thus accounted for: "The brain and spinal cord are two organs which have little in common; and the difference, which is obvious, satisfactorily explains the absence of hair in one region and its presence in the other. The spinal cord is a medium of communication between the cerebrum and animal system generally: it is not like the brain, the seat of independent faculties." If, on these grounds, we have no hair on the spine, why should we have it in the axilla merely because the brachial plexus is there? This is a reductio ad absurdum to which our author's "train of reasoning" again and again leads. He would have been quite as philosophical, and as near the truth, had he asserted that we really have a mane all down the spine, and a caudal tuft opposite the lumbar plexus, but have been kept in ignorance of the fact, because they are on our backs.

We might have followed our author further through the chapters devoted to the appendages of the lower animals, where, among other things, we are informed that "the production of a tail would seem to be an organic necessity springing out of the position and action of the two lower extremities of the animal." But we would only tire our readers by a repetition of wild theories and false reasoning, such as we have given above. It has never been our lot to review a book so utterly destitute of anything like logical reasoning, or so full of gross errors and absurdities. Its publication can do no good; it can only be productive of injury, and even disgrace to medical science, by bringing it into disrepute with those who, in their ignorance, may accept our author's views and his mode of reasoning as specimens of medical literature.

Osteological Memoirs. The Clavicle. By John Struthers, M.D., F.R.C.S.E., Lecturer on Anatomy. Edinburgh: 1857.

The memoir before us is one of an intended series, which we trust the author will persevere in completing. The task which the writer has entered upon will be one of considerable labour, if carried out in the style and manner of this admirable memoir on the clavicle. We have perused this exceedingly minute, and in some respects original, contribution to osteological literature, and have to express our regret that the entire series is not now before us, as then a desideratum would be supplied, namely, the existence in our language of a most comprehensive treatise on human osteology. A high degree of praise is justly due to Dr Struthers for designing a work on this plan, and then executing this portion of it, with considerable judgment, excellent method of arrangement, and precise descriptions, so suitable to an anatomical undertaking of this nature. We confess that the perusal of this memoir has convinced us "that descriptive anatomy is far from being an exhausted science;" and
that we hail such accurate memoirs, on special parts of the human frame, as valuable additions to our means of studying a fundamental department of descriptive anatomy. To the diligent student, to the surgeon, who may require particular anatomical information, or even to the lecturer, a series of such memoirs, abounding in the most minute details with respect to varieties in size and form presented by the bones, their peculiarities at different periods of life, the disposition of their articular surfaces, the precise attachments of the ligaments, the prominences or depressions corresponding with muscular and tendinous insertions, and also containing the most accurate measurements and useful practical observations, cannot fail to prove deeply valuable and instructive.

The student of anatomy, who once masters such a lesson, has laid down the foundation for a more facile comprehension of analogous details on other branches of inquiry. We cannot permit ourselves to doubt, that a work of useful labour so admirably commenced, will be carried out in the style of the present memoir; and we hope that the author may find time, amidst his arduous duties as a lecturer on anatomy, to bring the series of osteological memoirs to a conclusion.

The work, so ably conceived, can be completed by perseverance in the patient and philosophic spirit in which it has been commenced; and we sincerely trust that all cultivators of anatomical science may countenance an undertaking of so much utility and interest. We are unwilling to select any passages from a treatise in which each page has been written with equal perspicuity and accuracy. We therefore conclude, by again expressing a hope, that it may be soon in our power to notice further contributions from this able and accurate author.

A Handbook of Chemical Manipulation. By C. Greville Williams, Lecturer on Chemistry in the Normal College, Swansea. London, 1857.

The classical work of Faraday on chemical manipulation has for many years been out of print, and the wonderful advances of organic chemistry have necessitated the adoption of new processes and complicated apparatus, which require special description, not only as regards their construction, but as to how they are to be used to the best advantage in the laboratory. Our ordinary text-books of chemistry are sufficiently occupied with the description of simple bodies, and the processes necessary for the production of their compounds. Hence, to the student, such a work as this of Mr Williams, describing the ordinary operations of the laboratory, and at the same time fully explaining those required by the higher organic chemistry, must be of great importance. Mr Williams brings to the task a thorough
acquaintance with the subject-matter of his book. For several years he officiated as principal assistant to Dr Anderson in the laboratory of the University of Glasgow, and his present position shows what good use he made of the advantages there enjoyed. The style is clear and concise, and the descriptions are easily followed, aided as they are by upwards of 400 excellent woodcuts. To mention that the work is issued by the house of Van Voorst, is at once to guarantee that the getting up of the book is of the best description.

Ophthalmic Hospital Reports and Journal of the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital.

A Journal devoted to ophthalmic medicine and surgery has been a desideratum in medical literature, which we have long wished to see supplied. We therefore hail with much pleasure the appearance of the first number of such a periodical. The "Ophthalmic Reports" have been originated by the surgeons attached to the noble Eye Institution at Moorfields (perhaps the largest in the world), who have thought that there alone "much valuable information is gained and lost that should be preserved." Its projectors, however, do not intend that it shall contain exclusively the records of cases occurring at this hospital, but its pages will be open to any contributions from other quarters calculated to advance ophthalmic surgery.

The present number bids fair for future success. It contains valuable papers by the editor, Mr Streatfeild, Mr Bowman, and Mr Poland; and the quarterly report of operations at the hospital by the curator, Dr Bader. Of these papers we shall probably have occasion to speak when a future number appears; at present we would merely direct attention to them, and say that they worthily sustain the reputation of their authors.

We heartily wish the "Ophthalmic Reports" all success.

The Chemical Atlas: or, Tables showing at a glance the operations of Qualitative Analysis. With Practical Observations and Copious Indices of Tests and Reactions, accompanied by a Dictionary of Simple and of Compound Substances indicating the Tests by which they may be identified, and a Dictionary of Reagents indicating their preparation for the Laboratory, the means of testing their purity, and their behaviour with substances. By A. Normandy. London: George Knight and Co. 1857.

These tables of Dr Normandy's are of the most elaborate description, form a large atlas, and constitute a complete system of qualitative analysis. The tabular form has long been recognised as an
approved method of conveying instruction; and in no science is it calculated to be of such service as in chemistry, the experimental results of which, following in a certain sequence, readily admit of being expressed by a columnar or diagrammatic arrangement. The ordinary manuals of analysis in the hands of students are very fatiguing works to read, not merely from the dryness of the subject-matter, but also from the intricacy of the arrangement of the text, and the endless subdivisions and references necessary to complete the chemical history of any one substance. Now, all this is avoided by mapping out the various steps of the analysis. Of this fact Dr Normandy has taken advantage, and with laborious industry has expressed, in a series of tables, the present condition of qualitative analysis. We have carefully inspected the Atlas, and have been struck at once with the clearness of the arrangement and the fulness of the details; and any one following the directions in the preliminary observations, cannot fail, by the use of the tables, to arrive at just conclusions with regard to the nature of any substance. The work, accordingly, is intended not only for the ordinary student, but also for those who, possessed of chemical appliances, are yet unprovided with a teacher, and are desirous of perfecting themselves in analysis. The two dictionaries, the titles of which we have given in full, are contained in a separate volume, and form a useful complement to the Atlas. One contains an alphabetical list of simple substances, with their appropriate tests; and the other, a very full and most useful collection of reagents.

Report of Scottish Lunacy Commission; with Appendix of Evidence. Presented to both Houses of Parliament, 1857.

Lunacy Act (Scotland), 1857.

We return to the subject of lunacy and lunatic asylums in Scotland, partly to fulfil a promise made to our readers six months ago (E. M. J., vol. iii., p. 1113), and partly in order to put them in possession of a document which has come into our hands since we wrote upon the subject in June last, and which appears to us worthy of attention. Preferring, as we do, to steer clear of general political discussions, and having expressed our opinion of the Commissioners' Report before it had undergone the criticism either of the House of Commons or of the country, we have felt little disposition to meddle with the hotly contested subject of Lord-Advocate Moncreiff's Lunacy Bill, or with the feuds of Mr Ellice and the Board of Supervision. It is not for us to discuss questions relating to centralisation, and boards, and salaries, and Government patronage, and unpopular taxation; to record the deliberations of Commissioners of Supply, the debates of Town Councils, the outraged dignity of Parochial Boards, the eloquent recriminations of Sheriffs, called into exist-
ence by the wrath-provoking Report of the Lunacy Commission. To do justice to such themes would require the pen of Homer, or of a modern newspaper editor. But now that it is all over, we may venture to repeat the expression of our decided conviction, that the Report of the Commissioners has been severely tried and has not been found wanting. It was, perhaps, hardly possible to have prosecuted so delicate an investigation without some appearance of injustice to individuals; and, in speaking out simply and strongly their sense of the deficiencies existing under a faulty system, the Commissioners may have furnished materials for unjust or too sweeping charges, by influential public men, against excellent public servants; but we are very sure, after reading everything that has been said by authority on the subject, that our original judgment was substantially correct—the Report is a good and an honest Report. The authors of it deserve the thanks of the public, not only for searching out and declaring the truth, but for doing so in such a manner as to engage the sympathies of the nation at large on behalf of the unfortunate class whom it was their object to protect from neglect and cruelty. It was, unquestionably, owing to the clear, and, as some thought it, too harsh style of the Report, that Lord-Advocate Moncreiff's bill did not share the fate of Lord Rutherford's. The instincts of humanity were aroused; and the bill was carried through Parliament, in the face of objections to its details more numerous, and more urgently pressed, than those to any other measure of the session.

The outcry, favoured, or rather led, by those who wished to defeat the bill, against centralisation, appears to us to afford a remarkable instance of the degree to which the public are often biassed by a name—\( \text{vox et preterea nihil} \). Centralisation is wrong in some cases, and right in others. Wherever the State, as such, has no interest, and no duty, paramount to those of individuals or of minor societies, there is no plea for centralisation; but where it has such an interest, or such a duty to the public, then interference, in some shape or other, is unavoidable; and the more directly that interference emanates from the Crown, the less likely is it, in our opinion, to be abused. The State, by its own act, and for its own ends, removes the lunatic from legal responsibility, and deprives him of the control of his person and means; and as it is the duty of the State, and no one else, to do this, so it is clearly the duty of the State, and no one else, to protect the defenceless being who, for the security and comfort of society, is thus secluded and compelled to live without the law. Nothing, we think, can be more clear than the direct responsibility of the State in this instance; and the more plainly that responsibility is shown forth—the more it is concentrated—the better for the insane, and, ultimately, for the public. We are, therefore, entirely in favour of a Lunacy Board; and especially of a permanent Medical Commission, to inquire and report on the treatment of lunatics.
Of the Commissioners actually chosen we would desire to say nothing, save that the two superior medical appointments are such as to give every confidence that the duty will be well performed.

We are by no means disposed, with a new and untried Act before us, to speculate or raise questions as to its probable working. But there are one or two subjects which so directly touch on the daily duty of our profession, that we trust they will receive early consideration.

In pronouncing a patient to be insane, and fit for confinement, the medical man has no power, as the law at present stands, to make any difference between the most acute case of maniacal delirium, or of temporary aberration from any known cause, and the most confirmed case of monomania, or of dementia. This, we think, is an injustice to the medical man, inasmuch as it often makes him hesitate to incur the responsibility of confining a patient whose paroxysm of disease is likely to be short, but in whom, nevertheless, the risk and inconvenience of treatment at home are not small; and it is an injustice to the patient, because it often leads, especially among the poor, to a degree of rough handling which is in the highest degree objectionable, and anything but curative in its operation. We have seen many cases of delirium tremens, in particular, treated at home at the greatest possible inconvenience, which would have been far better treated in a public institution; in a special department, for instance, of an hospital or lunatic asylum. The same remark applies to many instances of puerperal mania, and other forms of acute disorder of the brain, which are often most unscientifically and rudely treated, because treated without the appliances and means which can only be had in a special institution. We think it would be well in such cases to give the medical man, and the relatives, a power of confinement, not under a legal warrant, but under a simple order of the Commissioners or of some local authority; making the order subject to revision at a certain fixed date, beyond which it would either expire, or be commuted for a legal warrant in the ordinary form, issued at the instance, and under the direction, of the Commissioners or their deputies, after due inquiry into the circumstances of the case, and reception of evidence if necessary.

We are convinced that medical men often decline to exercise their power of signing certificates of lunacy, in cases in which, so far as the patient is concerned, confinement is not only warrantable, but absolutely necessary; and this partly from the serious character of the consequences accruing to the patient confined under a legal warrant, but also from the feeling that they thereby lose sight of their patient, and may not unnaturally incur his displeasure, on his becoming sane, for deserting him in his hour of need, by placing him in the hands of a stranger. We should like, therefore, to see a special class of establishments, or of departments in connection with our present establishments, or both, in which persons affected with acute disorders of the brain would receive treatment under the con-
ditions above alluded to, and in which the services of the ordinary attendant would be continued, in consultation with a resident medical officer, skilled in the special management of such cases.

Again, it sometimes, though rarely happens, that legal disqualification is incurred by persons, to whom it is unquestionably a great hardship, and who may yet be said to be, in a sense, insane. We remember a case in which a worthy and highly intelligent, though eccentric lady, was hurried off to an asylum in consequence of a piece of particularly extravagant conduct. Almost immediately afterwards she was released by the physician of the asylum, who found no trace of insanity about her. Yet, on account of this unlucky escapade, she incurred an amount of legal and other expenses which seriously encroached upon her means; but which might have been saved, had it been possible to seclude her for a limited time, without a warrant, and upon a simple order, subject to the revision of the Commissioners.

It would be by some such contrivance as this that we would propose to deal with those most perplexing cases of habitual, and, apparently, incontrollable desire for alcoholic stimulants. We apprehend that the desideratum here is some way of disposing of the case, which would not place the medical man in the dilemma of either doing nothing, or at once consigning the patient to all the consequences of confinement under a warrant. No one can doubt that this class of persons ought to be under surveillance; but the public will not readily be brought to accord to two “medical persons” (as the Lunacy Act rather vaguely denominates them), the full and unlimited power to sign away the liberty of all the habitual drunkards in the kingdom. We would propose that the function of the medical man, in the first instance, should be to confine such persons pro tempore, under a simple order, having force for a month, or even less. The Commissioners, or their deputies, would then, if necessary, hold an inquisition on the case, the result of which would be recorded in their books: if the patient was set at liberty, it would be probably the best of warnings to him; but if the evidence of repeated confinement, or of violence to persons, and destruction or injury of property, were such as to justify the issue of a warrant in legal form, this would be done with the assent of the Commissioners. Thus the responsibility of the medical man would be lightened, and the public would probably be satisfied with an apparent inroad on individual liberty, against which much opposition is to be expected; but which, we feel convinced, is required equally for the public welfare, and for the protection of the habitual drunkard.

This plan appears to us in various respects preferable to that suggested in the late Lunacy Report. The Commissioners propose “that some plan should be devised, whereby a degree of authority might be legally retained over such cases, allowing, at the same time, a certain amount of freedom. Such a check might, we think, be exercised in a very salutary manner, by first placing them in
asylums, and then allowing them to leave on probation, which should terminate at a fixed period, or be subsequently extended, as might be deemed advisable." This is the reverse of our plan; and, though not incompatible with it, presents the disadvantage of requiring the complete legal disqualification as the first step in the proceeding; while the method we have proposed above would quite as effectually keep the habitual drunkard under surveillance for a time. In either case, when released, he would be so under the influence of a salutary fear of losing his liberty again; but in the one case he would be disqualified from making a will, or managing his affairs, even when sober, and would therefore live under a sense of legal degradation; in the other, he would to all appearance be a free and responsible agent, but would know that temporary, and perhaps permanent confinement, was to be his lot whenever he gave way to his propensity. We think this a state of existence much more conducive to reform than the other.

But we have too long detained the reader from the document which we promised him at the outset. It has been placed in our hands for publication by one who prefers to write anonymously, but whom we know to have given long-continued and great attention to the subject, and to be, from his opportunities and character, well entitled to speak on it.

"Reference is made in the Report to two subjects, both of which appear to us highly important, and which deserved from the Commissioners more extended remarks. We allude to the want of greater consideration to cases of dementia as a class, and also to the want of attention to these and other patients during the night-time, in most of our asylums.

"Insanity being a disease which is characterised by an infinite variety of forms and results, it is sometimes difficult to apportion to each class of patients a due share of attention. The more acute symptoms, and the manifestations of increased action, come prominently under the observation of superintendents, who, whilst properly devoting much time to the alleviation of such cases, may possibly fail to extend a sufficient regard to an opposite and less attractive body of inmates. Reduction of excitement and regulation of conduct among an insane community, are, of course, essential; but, at the same time, the listless and apathetic members should not be overlooked,—a circumstance which we fear to be the case in large asylums, where officials are overtaxed with an endless variety of duties.

"The highest faculties of superintendents are properly employed in devising plans of treatment for those capable of appreciating intellectual and moral agencies, and much time is judiciously spent in this respect: it is, nevertheless, equally necessary to devote much consideration to those patients in whom the malady has advanced to an extreme degree, and who, from defective consciousness and erroneous practices, have fallen into a deplorable state. Indeed,
it might be argued that in insanity, as in other diseases, the worst class of cases require the most attention. And, further, it is important to bear in mind, that as a disease it differs from other affections in one respect, namely, that in the most aggravated forms there is the least complaint of suffering,—a fact not to be disregarded; but it might be supposed, because patients do not complain, there is, therefore, no ground for complaint. A state of inactivity, it appears to us, calls for a remedy, as well as one of over-action; and hence, any abatement of the natural functions of the brain should be carefully watched, and judicious stimuli brought into operation, with a view of keeping alive the expiring faculties. It is the more necessary to urge the importance of this matter, knowing that with many it is deemed right that a patient, if quiet, and consequently not troublesome, should be left undisturbed,—a condition, be it remarked, which often results in a loss, not only of the higher powers of the mind, but also of the natural instincts, and thus the individual is reduced to a lamentable state of degradation. He gradually loses all sense of refinement and civilisation; he sinks lower and lower in the scale of humanity, until at last he becomes insensible to the ordinary decencies of life, and is reduced, in fact, to a condition little if at all superior to the brute creation.

"To obviate such results, we deem it essential that the various degrees of unconsciousness, and other effects which arise from long-continued disordered action of the brain, should have greater importance attached to them, and receive due attention. The incipient tendency to lapse into an apathetic condition, or to contract bad habits, should be met, and on no account should the terms 'wet,' or 'dirty,' be used to designate a class of patients."

"Among the more common effects observable in advanced stages of the disease, are a disregard of personal cleanliness, and of a due obedience to the calls of nature. The natural power over the sphincters becomes in some degree weakened; and hence the ordinary control over the evacuations is to a certain extent suspended, and the patients too often are set down as wet or dirty cases, and treated accordingly.

"We have thus far spoken only of the preventive means as antagonistic to a state of degradation, and we now come to treat of the practicability of reclaiming such as have been allowed to sink into this condition. Many heart-rending details are given in the Report of the proceedings adopted towards men and women so afflicted; and many of our readers, acquainted only with the ordinary arrangements of a general hospital, will doubtless have heard with surprise, that so many special and objectionable contrivances are in use in our lunatic hospitals. Without reverting to statements of the gross and disgusting treatment to which these unfortunates have been subjected, we deem it essential to give a brief outline of the plan usually pursued in regard to them; from which it will be evident that they have been deemed hopeless and irrecoverable, and they
have been disposed of accordingly, in a manner condemnatory of
them as a class of patients, and utterly at variance with sound prin-
ciples of treatment.

"In general, such patients are dressed in coarse clothing, and they
pass the day listlessly in an unattractive sitting-room, or confined
airing court. The bed-rooms are not supplied with the ordinary
conveniences, and the occupants are placed on bed-frames and bed-
ding so designed as to meet their infirmities; and thereby, as it ap-
ppears to us, bad propensities are encouraged rather than checked.
The patients are locked up at an early hour in the evening, and so
left till late the following morning. They pass the greater part
of each twenty-four hours in a disgusting condition, respiring
a highly contaminated atmosphere; and then they are rudely and
imperfectly cleansed and transferred to the sitting-room, to pass the
day as before. Little or nothing, in fact, is done to excite atten-
tion, or to promote better habits.

"In the very worst cases, where diseased action has advanced to
an extreme degree, some share of consciousness generally remains;
and there is little doubt that this remnant of observing power will
be employed in noticing simple arrangements, especially such as
have reference to the bodily functions. Hence there is good reason
to believe, that contrivances designed to ensure the passage of ex-
cretions through the bed-frames prove suggestive, and encourage
inattention to the calls of nature. It is to be feared the very pre-
parations made, indicate to the patient that a continuance of his
bad habits is expected; and the result is, they become perpetuated
and confirmed.

"Such special contrivances may be regarded as mere expedients,
or substitutes for attention on the part of the nurses, who, finding
an abundant provision of this kind, naturally consider it to be ne-
cessary, and accordingly make no attempt to discontinue its use.
Presuming that the patient is so unconscious as to be insensible to
the calls of nature, the nurse deems any effort to promote voluntary
power to be futile, and every personal service is accordingly done
for him often, it is to be feared, in a rude manner.

"If, instead of this course of procedure, good bedding be provided
for the patient, and he be made aware of his necessities during the
night-time, and induced to wash and dress himself, a beneficial ac-
tion would be engendered. He would pass the night in a state of
comfort, and begin the day by exercising a voluntary effort, which
might be turned to good account as a salutary action, preparative
to some useful occupation.

"Indeed, there can be little doubt that when a patient is rescued
from his degrading habits, and made sensible of the decencies and
proprieties of life, the first step is taken towards mental improve-
ment, and probably even to ultimate and complete recovery. His
physical condition is benefited, the faculty of attention is awakened,
a power of self-control is established, and a feeling of self-respect
The branch of treatment we have thus far discussed, important though it be, is by no means attractive, and hence the necessity of forcing attention to it in all its bearings; and in so doing, we have taken a broad and scientific view of the subject, and endeavoured to show that the principle to be adopted is to cure, not to palliate, and thus to confirm the evil. The objects to be sought, appear to us to be, first, as respects the patients, to excite attention, to promote self-control, to recall a sense of decency, to foster the better nature, and to bring into play the higher faculties of the mind; and, secondly, as respects the establishment, to remove a nuisance, render the atmosphere pure, elevate the moral tone of the inmates, improve their physical condition, and to diminish the rate of mortality.

Such a work of reformation, we are aware, is by no means an easy or an enviable task, but it nevertheless is not a hopeless one; and hence we feel called upon, as promoters of the good management of our hospitals, both general and special, to speak encouragingly on the subject. In so doing, it is almost needless to remark, that long standing bad habits cannot be removed in a day, and that great patience and perseverance will be needed to overcome conditions which have been more or less confirmed by long continuance.

Before dismissing this branch of our subject, we venture to remark, that it is in no way derogatory to the position of gentlemen practising the highest department of medical science, to devote some portion of their time and energies in elevating the condition of the most debased portion of their charge, and thus to improve the general tone of the whole body of inmates."