CRITICAL RETROSPECT
OF
MEDICAL AND PHYSICAL LITERATURE.

[FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC.]

Annals of Medicine for the Year 1799: exhibiting a concise View of the latest and most important Discoveries in Medicine and Medical Philosophy. By A. Duncan, Sen. M. D. and A. Duncan, Jun. M. D. &c.

[Continued from pp. 482—486 of our last.]

V. Observations on the Pemphigus Major of Savages. By Dr. R. Hall, Physician, Jedburgh.

In a former paper Dr. Hall had given it as his opinion, that Pemphigus is merely a sporadic disease. Some other practitioners believe it to be contagious. "An opportunity soon occurred of submitting this opinion to the test of actual experiment, by the reappearance of the disease, in one of the two patients who had been subjected to this affection, nearly about the same period, in the preceding year.

"Mrs. H. had, for a few weeks previous to the present attack, been occasionally subject to slight febrile paroxysms, for which bark, &c. had been prescribed, but were never diligently employed.

"Towards the evening of the 28th July, she was seized with giddiness and head-ach, a sense of great lassitude and weakness, with other precuratory symptoms of fever. On the following morning, her skin was preternaturally hot; pulse frequent, weak, and irregular; head-ach rather more violent; respiration somewhat oppressed; was thirsty, but not collyve; her tongue parched, but not foul. She had passed a restless and uneasy night, and said, that she now apprehended the nature of her disease would prove similar to that which she had experienced last year. In the evening, a single vesicle appeared on the thigh.

"30th. She had been equally restless as on the foregoing night; and to an aggravation of the former symptoms were now super-added, great irritability of the system, and frequent, but irregular shiverings. In the course of the day, five more vesicles made their appearance on different parts of the body.

"Aug. 1. A small one appeared on the exterior part of the meatus auditorius. By the evening of the next day, all the febrile symptoms had suffered a considerable abatement; but she continued, for a few days, affected with much languor and debility; had a slight exacerbation of fever every night, with an evident apyrexia in the morning.

"Towards
Towards the decline of the complaint, an eruption of small pimples came on, especially about the neck and arms, similar to those excited by nettle burning; but which soon went off, without any bad symptom. The disease was mild, in comparison with that she had sustained in the preceding year, and shorter in the term of its duration. The vesicles were few in number, and wholly confined to the external surface of the body. Those that did appear, were filled, however, in like manner, with a yellowish fluid, and of the same magnitude as on the former occasion. They were painful upon being touched, but the circumference skin was not much inflamed. Of two or three that were punctured, she complained a good deal, and observed, that her sensations after the operation were similar, as she conceived, to what would have been felt by her upon the application of any corrosive or caustic matter to the same part of the body. Upon the most diligent scrutiny, I could not discover that any person, either in the town or neighbourhood, had been affected with a similar complaint; nor was the disease communicated to any one, although, both now and in the preceding attack, the patient had, at my particular request, continued to allow a person to sleep with her during the whole period of her illness.

"Both during the progress, and at the height of the disease, some of the fluid with which the vesicles were filled was taken, and with it I inoculated myself and two other persons, in both arms, making three punctures in each arm. In one of the patients, on the day after the insertion of the matter, a single puncture exhibited a very slight degree of inflammation; not, however, more than what frequently occurs from a scratch or puncture made with a clean instrument. But neither in this patient, nor in the other two, was any constitutional effect, or the least perceptible indisposition, produced. The result of these attempts to communicate the disease, by inoculation and contact, although not perhaps sufficiently numerous to prove decisive of the question, is at least extremely unfavourable to the hypothesis of those who assert the contagious nature of pemphigus, and tends strongly to support and confirm the negative conclusion.

From the foregoing statement it would appear, that the following inferences may be fairly deduced.

1st, That pemphigus is a disease of which persons are susceptible more than once in the course of their lives.

2ndly, That the disease originates where no source of infection can possibly be discovered, and seems generally connected with more or less of an affection of the whole system.

3rdly, That patients labouring under it may have constant intercourse with others, and yet never communicate the disease to any of them.

4thly, That the disease is not communicable, like the cow-pox or small-pox, by inoculation.

On the whole, when we comprehensively survey the evidence recorded by recent writers on the subject, as well as that furnished by the present and former cafes, we must, I apprehend, be necessarily
Dr$.
Duncans' Annals of Medicine for 1799.

farily led to conclude, that the pemphigus major of Sauvages is an affection merely sporadic, and not of a contagious nature.

"That the symptoms accompanying one or other instances of this affection, are those which attend febrile diseases, whether inflammatory or putrid, the cases given by Drs. Dickson and Stewart, and the one recorded by Mr. Christie, sufficiently evince. In practice, therefore, it would appear, the most important distinctions are, to ascertain,

1st. When the fever is of an inflammatory nature, and accompanied with strong and increased action of the vascular system.

2ndly. When the fever has a tendency to the typhoid type; is marked by great debility, and symptoms which denote a tendency of the fluids to putrefaction. In the first case, it will be obvious, that evacuation and other antiphlogistic remedies, suited to the nature of the case, will be proper. As, on the other hand, in the second, it will be equally necessary to shun all evacuations, and to employ those remedies alone which support the strength, and give tone and vigour to the system.

"From the whole concourse of symptoms, in the present, and in the two cases of this affection formerly communicated, we are naturally led to infer, that the disease, in a great measure, depended on a certain state of debility, and a tendency of the fluids to putrefaction.

"The general indications of cure thence deducible, are sufficiently obvious.

"In the case now under consideration, on the first accession of the complaint, when the skin was hot and dry, a mild antimonial was exhibited, in order principally to excite a gentle diaphoresis; but its use was soon discontinued.

"Afterwards, opiates combined with vitriolic ether were found very useful in diminishing the effects of irritation, and in promoting the determination to the surface. The bark and other tonics, particularly the nitrous acid, in a state of proper dilution, were early administered, and proved very effectual in obviating the effects of debility. By these means, and the posterior employment of other auxiliaries, the health of the patient was speedily re-established."

VII. History of a Case, terminating successfully, in which an inverted Uterus was extirpated. By Mr. ALEXANDER HUNTER, Surgeon, Dumbarton.

We pass over the first part of this case, and only present our readers with the conclusion:

"When the womb first came down, it was nearly of the size of a small pine-apple, and felt hard. The second time it was smaller, but still harder. Before returning it into the vagina, a trial was always made to reduce the inversion of it; but after the first time, the fundus was only dinted by any force that could be used.

"The prospect before the patient was now deplorable. The

restoring
restoring the uterus was absolutely impracticable; and, if allowed to remain in its present situation, it must be very distressing.

"About a fortnight elapsed in this way, when a new set of symptoms took place. A discharge of a thin watery nature began to flow from the whole surface of the womb, which gradually increased in quantity, and became so extremely foetid, that it was very disagreeable to enter the room. And, though great attention was bestowed, the bed was always wet. Her strength was soon much reduced. And, notwithstanding a liberal use of bark, elix. vitriol, and port-wine, severe hectic attacks came on.

"In this state of the business, no plan could be figured for saving the patient, without amputating the uterus. Every endeavour I had used for procuring information, either from medical men or books, left me still in the dark; as in every case of inversion mentioned, not one was to be found, where the patient had survived for any time, unless the womb was directly returned. But, after considering that the organ was not immediately necessary to life; that very extensive wounds, even in its distended state, has been made without any ill symptoms; and that, in its present situation, the functions were for ever destroyed; indeed, that it was now only a burdensome mass; and the woman herself wishing eagerly to be relieved from the miserable way she was then in, it was determined to extirpate it.

"I began the operation, by fixing a strong ligature on the neck of the tumor, close to the os externum. But being fearful of palmodic affections from this compression, I waited six hours without proceeding farther. During all that time, however, no complaint was made, no pain was felt.

"With a scalpel the whole uterus was then cut off, close to the ligature. Still neither symptoms of pain, nor even uneasiness, were perceived. And, I believe, the operation was over before the patient knew it had been begun. She was then laid to rest, and an opiate administered.

"During the night she slept well; and, next morning, was very much refreshed. The hectic symptoms went off; her appetite returned; and, in fourteen days, she was able to get out of bed. At the end of a month she was perfectly recovered.

"Since that time she has enjoyed a very good state of health; except now and then some touches of hysterical head-ach, and sometimes stitches and phlethoric symptoms in the spring and summer months. She does not menstruate, although still a young woman. She has a tendency to obesity, and even all her precautions cannot counteract it.

"From what happened in the preceding case, it will probably be allowed, that the womb, when not in an inflamed state, may be handled, or even wounded, without pain; that the whole of it may be cut off without injury; and that, in case of inversion, attended with feverish flooding, if the womb cannot be returned, the haemorrhage may be prevented, by tying a ligature round the neck of the uterus.

"Some
Some months after this case happened, I gave the uterus to Dr. Jeffray, of Glasgow, who, I believe, still has it.

XII. Observations on the Benefit derived from the Application of cold Water, in Cases of Scarlatina Cynanchica. By Dr. Geo. Mosman, Physician, Bradford.

A boy, eight years of age, on the 31st of July last, was seized with great latitudes, with rigors, succeeded by extreme heat, thirst, fore throat, and every symptom characteristic of that species of pyrexia, denominated Scarlatina Cynanchica.

On the following day, the apothecary to the family was consulted, and prescribed an emetic, which operated well. He was then directed an aperient solution, which procured him several evacuations, without any abatement of symptoms.

On the morning of the 2d of August, when I visited him, the whole surface of his body was covered with a scarlet eruption. His tongue was dry, and exhibited a fur approaching to black; the internal fauces were considerably tumefied, and were of a deep red colour; his eyes had the appearance of an incipient suffusion upon the tunica albuginea; his pulse beat 135 strokes in the minute; his urine was scanty, and singularly pale.

I had not an opportunity of applying to him the thermometer, but his skin felt intensely hot.

Previous to the occurrence of this case, I had perused Dr. Currie's admirable treatise on the use of cold water in fevers. As I have been in the habit for several years past, of exhibiting and applying cold liquids in almost every case of pyrexia, the practice was not new to me. But Dr. Currie's mode of application is different from mine. He directs the patient to be taken out of bed, during the hot stage, and to have water thrown upon the whole surface of the body. I have constantly recommended cold vinegar, or vinegar and water, to be applied, at the period specified, by means of a sponge.

The effects produced upon the system by Dr. Currie's method and mine, are precisely similar; and I am confident, from an enlarged experience, that, if it be possible to render the phenomena of fever less formidable, or to arrest their progress, the application of cold water is the instrument to be employed.

It is true, that the popular prejudice against the exposure to cold in the hot stage of fever, is remarkably strong, and I have found much difficulty in combating the error. When I once succeed, however, in persuading my patients to make the experiment, there needs little art to induce them to repeat it. The use of cold fluids is so refreshing to them, and produces so complete a solution of the intense heat and restlessness, under which they labour, that upon every recurrence of similar phenomena, they are eagerly solicitous for the same grateful application.

The father of the boy whose history I now relate, is a well-informed man, and I found little difficulty in obtaining his sanction to a practice which was deemed conducive to the restoration of
of his child, and which might probably obviate the danger of contagion in a very numerous family.

"When I first visited my patient he was under the influence of the hot stage, and there appeared not the smallest tendency to its solution by perspiration. I therefore introduced into his chamber a free current of air. I then directed him to be placed in the middle of the floor, and the whole surface of his body to be sponged with cold vinegar.

"I saw the operation performed; and although he was at first much averse to it, yet he felt its cooling and refreshing to him, that he never afterwards objected to a repetition of the experiment. The attendants, therefore, had recourse to the application as often as he felt hot, or appeared to them to be so, and with the most beneficial effects. But they had the strictest injunctions, not to hazard the application, when he had the least chillness upon him, or when there was the smallest tendency to perspiration. In either of these cases, I conceive the practice to be highly dangerous; but during the hot stage of fever, I have uniformly found, that the application of cold liquids reduces the frequency of the pulse, and increases the strength. It has also a wonderful effect in obviating the tendency to delirium, in diminishing thirst, in increasing the effuence of the skin, and in inclining it to a gentle moisture.

"In the present case, these effects were strikingly exhibited indeed.

"From the apparent violence of the attack, and the early period at which the most alarming symptoms made their appearance, I had every reason to prognosticate the approach of delirium, accompanied by those phenomena which preceded the last catastrophe. On the morning, however, of the fourth day of fever, I found that he had had a good night, and was then very composed. His tongue was moist; his pulse reduced to 120 strokes in the minute; his skin felt soft, and the febrile heat was much diminished.

"I should have observed, that from the first of my attendance, I had directed him to have a tablespoonful every hour, of equal parts of aq. ammon. acetat. et aq. fontan. And the attendants were instructed to give him a tablespoonful or two, occasionally, of the opening solution already mentioned, so as to keep the bowels in a state of solubility. His common drink was cold water.

"This morning there appeared a little sloughness on the tonsils; and I ordered him a gargle with mel. rosa et bordeat. acidulated strongly with the nitrous acid. The cold applications were constantly used on the approach of the hot stage; and to each dose of his julep, a few grains of nitre were added.

"During the whole of this day, he continued to derive relief from this practice; and, on the morning of the 5th, his urine was nearly the colour of bright water. His tongue was clean and moist; his pulse 105; the sloughs in his throat had disappeared; and from this period he recovered rapidly.

"Seven of the family were successively seized with the same

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species
species of fever; and, by a similar treatment, were all speedily re-
stored to the most complete health.

"In one of the cases, the most serious consequences were mani-
festly combated successfully by the practice described. In no in-
stance was the fever protracted beyond the 5th or 6th day.

"I have thus sketched the most prominent features of a solitary
case of scarlatina, cured by the use of cold applications; and were
it necessary to establish the efficacy of the practice, I could adduce
a very considerable number.

"During my attendance on this family, I caught the contagion.
The symptoms of scarlatina were distinctly and rather strongly
marked; but by the timely application of a shower-bath, twice a
day, the febrile affection was speedily removed. I took no medi-
cines.

"If the good effects of this practice be deducible from the cold
produced by the process of evaporation, are there not other appli-
cations which would more effectually and powerfully accomplish
the object proposed?"

XIV. Medical Cases; by John Haxby, Physician, Pontefract.

3. A case of enlargement of one of the spinal vertebrae, gradu-
ally disappearing on an enlargement of the trochanter major of the
right thigh, which was succeeded by hydrocephalus, terminating
fateally.

"W. S. aged nine years, had for some time laboured under im-
mobility of the lower extremities, with confinement of the bow-
els, and a degree of dysuria; owing to an enlargement of one of
the spinal vertebrae.

"Cauterics were applied to each side of the prominence, and
kept open some time; during which there was a slight alleviation
of his complaint. But as the amendment was not in proportion to
his expectation, nor equivalent to the sacrifice of his ease from the
irritation of the cauterics, about two months after their insertion he
allowed the ulcers to heal.

"Very soon after this, the trochanter major of the right thigh
bone began to be enlarged; and in proportion as it increased in
bulk, the diseased spinal vertebrae was diminished, till at last there
was no inequality in the appearance of the spine.

"The trochanter continued to be enlarged for about a month;
though great pains were taken to reduce the swelling by friction
with spirituous embrocations, which was at length effected; and
now he could walk with perfect ease, as far as could be expected
from his reduced strength; but he soon began to complain of pain
in his head, which became more and more violent, so that when
I saw him, (which was about a week after it had come on) he ap-
peared to have every symptom of hydrocephalus internus, ex-
cept strabismus, which supervened in a day or two, when he died.

"Was the hydrocephalus, in this case, at all connected, as cause
and effect, with the previous enlargement and subsequent dimin-
ution of the trochanter major and spinal vertebrae?—Would the
timely re-infertion of the cauterics have prevented hydrocephalus?"

This
This volume contains a variety of other important cases and hints, for which we must refer our readers to the work itself. As memoranda in the Materia Medica, we notice a case of tetanus cured by the liberal use of wine; a case of epilepsy cured by milk and opium; cases of croup cured by hydrarg. muriat. mitis, and by the polygala seneca.

A brief History of Epidemic and Peftilential Diseases, with the principal Phenomena of the Physical World, which precede and accompany them, and Observations deduced from the Facts stated. By Noah Webster, Member of several American Societies, &c. 2 vols. 8vo. pp. 1301. Price 18s. in boards. London, Robinsons, &c.

This comprehensive and elaborate work commences with an account of the diversity of opinions respecting the cause and origin of pestilence. The author then presents his readers with historical views of pestilential epidemics, and the phenomena in the physical world which preceded, attended, or followed them, from the earliest accounts down to the year 1798. These subjects occupy the first volume.

The second volume begins with a tabular statement of the bills of mortality for the two last centuries, which the author introduces thus:

"Our accounts of diseases and the phenomena of the world, which appear to be connected with them, are altogether imperfect. But in the two last centuries we have a tolerable history of diseases, and occasionally an account of the seasons and remarkable occurrences. In the following tables the reader will find the bills of mortality for London, Augsburg, Dresden, Boston, one church in Philadelphia, with the bills of a few years for Paris and Dublin; to which are prefixed such of the remarkable phenomena of the elements as I have been able to collect.

"As winter makes a part of two years, the word severe is set against the year in which the winter began. Thus, against the year 1607, the word severe refers to the winter of 1607-8. The blanks denote, either that nothing singular occurred in those years, or that I have no account of the occurrences. Further enquiries might probably enable me to fill many of those blanks.

"Bills of mortality do not exhibit a complete view of epidemics, as some of the most remarkable, especially influenza, destroy but few lives; and the bills of the years when that disease alone prevailed, are remarkably low. It is often the immediate precur sor, in spring, of pestilential diseases in autumn, in which cases the bills of the year are very high."

The second volume also contains remarks on the tables; on pestilential periods; influenza; on the order, connection, and progress of pestilential epidemics; on the extent of a pestilential state of air; conjectures on causes; means of prevention, &c.

* See Foreign Literature, p. 569.
Considerations regarding Pulmonary Consumption. By Thomas Sutton, M. D. Member of the Royal College of Physicians, and Physician to the Forces; 8vo. pp. 120. London, Robinsons.

The leading objects of Dr. S. in this pamphlet appear to be to invalidate the common opinion respecting the cause of emaciation and death in phthisis. Observing that many patients die of this disease, when attended with very little cough or expectoration, and certainly, with no marks of purulent expectoration, he concludes that the symptoms often depend on some other cause. In such cases, he thinks the cause of death "is such a decrease of the stimulating quality of the blood, as at last to render it incapable of continuing the circulation. This inference is supported by the appearance of the blood drawn, which contains a very small proportion of coagulum."

At p. 19, Dr. S. gives the following opinion, viz. "It may not be improper in this place, to state an opinion regarding the source of those happy feelings, high spirits, and that constant hope of a favourable termination of the disease, which have been observed to attend consumptive patients.

"Pleasant and exhilarating sensations are, I believe, common to all persons under a certain state of debility from disease, unconnected with uneasy feelings. They may be occasioned by the common stimuli of intellectual exertion, of the circulation of the blood, of food, &c. upon the debilitated body; as it is evident, that the same stimulus has a greater effect upon persons debilitated by disease, where no powerful agent continues to occasion further debility, than, ceteris paribus, upon those who are in health. I have experienced such sensations after two severe fits of typhus fever, when, being very debilitated, I had the same pleasurable sensations (Dr. Darwin's expression) as if I had been in cheerful company in health, and had drank moderately of wine. But striking instances of such effects from debility are observed by medical practitioners, in patients who have been tormented by inflammations in the bowels, which have ended in gangrene. In such cases, it has often been observed, that patients are in remarkably good spirits, and cannot be readily convinced that they are in any danger. These feelings are occasioned by debility, brought on by sickness, pain, want of sleep and of food, which is acted upon by the common stimuli of intellectual exertion, of food, of the circulation of the blood, &c. and have the effect, in the way related, of producing a considerable degree of cheerfulness, though unhappily of short duration. This cheerfulness and hope is more observable in phthisical patients, because the disease is of considerable duration, and because the debility gradually increases; and the patients, at least ten hours in the day, are, during the greater part of their disease, free from uneasy sensations. But, while affected with pain, or tormented with the irritation of heat in the night, paroxysms of hectic fever, there is no more cheerfulness and resignation in them, than in people labouring under equally unpleasant sensations in other diseases."

In Section IV. the author states his own cause of phthisis, which
is, an obstruction in the mesenteric glands. This hypothesis he supports by cafes, and reasoning. We believe with Dr. S. that tabes mesenterica and phthisis are often combined; but we also believe that they may exist independently of each other, which he appears to doubt; for, at p. 31, he says: "Hence it appears to me, that phthisis pulmonalis is caused by a disease in the mesenteric glands, and that the tubercles in the lungs, and some other of its symptoms, are excited by sympathy."

Seft. VI. contains "General observations respecting the action of sympathy in consumption. VII. Predisposition. VIII. Cause of emaciation and debility, IX. On hectic fever;" the cause of which, Dr. S. believes to be, "an obstruction of the perspiratory organs arising from the defective circulation."

XIII. On the Cure. When Dr. Warren looked into any new medical work, which he had seldom leisure to do, he first examined the method of cure; and if he found nothing new there, he searched no farther. Our author recommends the usual remedies, though he explains their operation somewhat differently from his predecessors. Emetics seem to be his favourites, as they were of Drs. Symonds and Reid.

The pamphlet is concluded by an Appendix, containing ten cafes, examined after death, which tend to confirm the author's opinions.

Though we observe several inaccuracies, and what we deem errors, in the above work, we are nevertheless convinced that it is well calculated to improve the theory and treatment of this important disease.

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A short Account of the Infectious Malignant Fever, as it appeared at Uxbridge, and its vicinity, in the Summer and Autumn of the year 1799; with a detail of the good effects of Yeast and Vital Air, in the different stages of that Disorder. By a Medical Practitioner. 8vo. pp. 50. price is.6d.

We are sorry that the ingenious author of this pamphlet has not given his name to it; for medical facts generally require all the aid they can derive from the authentication of a name.

The disease appears to have been the cynanche maligna in its worst form, and highly contagious among the poor. The symptoms agree with those described by other writers, but in the cure the author says:

"The manner in which I have usually administered the yeast, has been, by putting a tea spoonful, or more, according as it agreed with the stomach, into a quart bottle, and filling it up with mild porter; of this the patients took a glass full, every hour, or oftener, if they were thirsty.

"I have found it particularly useful in a great number of cafes; and, therefore, I cannot avoid recommending it as a most powerful antifeptic, in malignant fevers. I have generally given it from the beginning, and persisted in its use, till a restoration to health took place.

"But
"But there is another remedy, not usually recommended in this disorder, that I have found particularly serviceable, viz. the oxygen gas, or vital air, inhaled into the lungs; it does not appear proper, at the beginning of the fever; but, when the symptoms of debility come on, and the eruption assumes a dark purple colour; then, I found a frequent exhibition of it to alter that appearance surprizingly.

"When I first used the vital air, I prepared it from the black calx of manganese; but finding the process took up more time than I could conveniently spare, and observing the difficulty there was, in inducing a patient to sit up in bed, to inhale it, I made use of the following method, which is much more simple, and answers equally well, without occasioning the patient any fatigue, or giving the attendants unnecessary trouble.

"I first caused the doors and windows of the sick person's chamber to be closed; and then, taking a chafing dish with some live coals, throw into it half an ounce of purified nitre in powder, which immediately fills the room with a thick, white cloud, that continues wafting about for a considerable time.

"On examining a patient, during this operation, I never fail to find that it increases the pulse; and, however low it may be, does, for a time, give it a degree of vigour and energy. In a few minutes more, the difficulty of breathing diminishes; the blood vessels of the cheeks and lips become of a more florid hue; and a gentle perspiration breaks out on the skin.

"This process I directed to be frequently repeated, in the course of the day, and I have seldom seen it regularly persevered in, without producing decided benefit."

*An Essay on the Analysis of Mineral Waters. By Richard Kirwan, Esq. F. R. S. &c. 8vo. pp. 279. London, Bremner. Price 7s.*

Such is the well earned celebrity of Mr. K. as a chemist, that it is sufficient merely to announce the subject and the author, in order to secure readers.

The term *mineral waters,* is specially applied to such waters only as are distinguished by a peculiar colour, taste, smell, or other obvious property, from common spring, lake, river, or other water, fitted for economical uses. Mineral waters, thus understood, have long attracted the attention of mankind by their *medicinal* powers. These, indeed, can properly be inferred only from their repeatedly experienced effects; yet, even with this restriction, the knowledge of their contents must be deemed highly important, not only for the purpose of imitating such as are found beneficial, in countries where Nature does not afford them, but also for the purpose of discovering the medical powers, and mode of action, of certain ingredients taken in a certain proportion, and a given degree of dilution, with a long train of consequences that may in time be deduced from this knowledge. There are also many other points of view, in which an acquaintance with the contents of mineral..."
nereal waters must be deemed of importance; and we are convinced
that the subject could not have fallen into more able hands.

The work is divided into Two Parts. In the first part is con-
tained an account, 1. Of substances found in mineral waters. 2. Of
the tefts of those substances.

The second part treats of the analysis of mineral waters, viz.
1. Of the common method, by tefts, evaporation, crystallization, so-
lution, precipitation, &c. to each of which Mr. K. states his ob-
jeclions. 2. The new method, by determining the existence and
quantity of elastic fluids, by estimating the solid and liquid ingre-
dients. 3. The use of spirits of wine in the analysis of mineral
waters. 4. Tables, 1, of the quantities of real acid in mineral
acids; 2, of the quantities of acid absorbed by different bases; 3,
of the quantity of each base absorbed by each acid; 4, of the
proportion of ingredients in neutral salts; 5, of the length in feet
of a column of common air at different barometrical heights and
different temperatures. 5. Appendix, containing new experiments
on various saline solutions.

Medical Facts and Observations, Vol. 8, pp. 240. 4s. 6d. Callow.

The public are indebted for the present, as well as the former
Volumes of this useful Publication to Dr. Simmons, a gentleman
long eminent for his learning and abilities. As this collection of
papers holds an equal rank with the preceding, for curiosity as
well as interest, it will be in the hands of every person who is
anxious for the improvement of medicine and surgery; little there-
fore need be said in recommendation of it. This volume contains
twenty-three papers, any of which might be selected for the en-
tertainment of our readers; but we choose the following case, as
it may tend to diffuse the knowledge of a remedy, for a very dif-
tressing complaint, which may be easily obtained and administered
by every one.

"Ann Fuller, a single woman, aged forty-two years, has, at
different times, in the course of the last five or six years, laboured
under a suppression of urine; and in some of those attacks, no
urine passed from the kidneys to the bladder for ten or twelve
days each time; the catheter having been repeatedly introduced
to determine this fact.

"In the years 1794 and 1795, she was confined to her bed seven
months in a state of great agony. The pain extended across the
loins, and down the course of the urethra, and was frequently
attended with violent and long continued vomiting of blood. In
the course of this attack, the left ureter might be felt distinctly
in the groin, enlarged to the size of an hen’s egg, and extremely
painful when pressed. This was evidently occasioned by the pre-
fusion of calculi, which she afterwards voided in great number, with
blood in considerable quantities, frequently half a pint at a time,
without any mixture of urine.

"For her relief a variety of remedies was had recourse to, such
as
as repeated bleeding and warm bathing, saline purgatives, emetics of different kinds, camphor and opium in large doses, uva ursi, mephitic alkaline water, &c. To the camphor, combined with opium, which brought on a copious diaphoresis, she was more than once indebted for a mitigation of her painful symptoms. The mephitic alkaline water was tried repeatedly, in different forms, plain, and with additions, cold and warmed, but it constantly occasioned pain of the stomach and vomiting.  

"At length, the hematuria continuing, accompanied with a good deal of pain, and every remedy that had been administered having failed to relieve her effectually, Mr. Gabriel Allen, my assistant, suggested to me a trial of a decoction of peach leaves, from which he had occasionally seen good effects in cases of nephritis. He was first led, it seems, to the use of this remedy by a person, not of the medical profession, who was much resorted to by patients labouring under complaints of this kind, and who made a very successful use in such cases, of an electuary, composed of honey, and peach leaves dried and powdered; together with a decoction or infusion of the leaves:  

"After having seen so many other remedies fail in this case, I was anxious to try the effect of this new medicine. I say new, for although different writers on the materia medica, mention the anthelmintic properties of the leaves, and likewise of the flowers, of the peach tree, I do not find that any of them have noticed their effects in affections of the urinary passages.  

"A decoction was accordingly prepared, by boiling an ounce of dried leaves of the peach tree, (Amygdalus Persica, Linn.) in a quart of water, till it was reduced to a pint and a half. Of the strained liquor she took a pint daily, and at the end of thirty hours after she began the use of this remedy, she voided clear natural urine, and in a few days recovered.  

"From that time she has constantly kept by her a quantity of the dried leaves, and on the least return of the symptoms has had recourse to the decoction again. Since that period, she has had several slight returns of gravel, and has even passed some small calculi, but she has had no return of the hematuria. Her present comfortable state of health she attributes to the use of the decoction of peach leaves; at any rate, it seems to be deserving of a trial in similar complaints. I have tried it in a variety of instances besides the one which is more particularly the subject of the present letter, and I am deceived if it is not a medicine of considerable efficacy in complaints of this kind. Upon these grounds it is that I have ventured to recommend it to your notice."

Observations on the Effects of various Articles of the Materia Medica, in the Cure of Lues Venerea: illustrated with Cases. By John Pearson, senior Surgeon of the Lock Hospital and Asylum, and the Public Dispensary; Reader on the Principles and Practice of Surgery, pp. 200, 4s. 6d. Callow.

This work is extremely well calculated to calm the agitation in the minds.
minds of those, whose opinions have been unsettled on the treatment of the Venereal Disease, since the introduction of the new remedies. The situation the respectable author has long held, gives him full claim to the confidence of the public; and the work evidently shews, that it is the production of a mind well adapted for careful observation and sound judgment. The author has given us a candid examination and estimate of the confidence to be placed in the effects of the ligum guaiaci, radix china, radix farfaparilla, mezereum, cincbona, opium, cicutu, saffaffra, juniperu, bardana, japonaria, dulcamara, juglans, lobelia jypbilitica, astragalus exca- fus, ammonia preparata, terra ponderofa faltita, certain preparations of mercury, mercurial fumigations, and nitriolic, marine, and nitrous acids. In the chapter where the author inquires into the ill effects that sometimes attend the exhibition of mercury, we select with pleasure, the following just and manly remarks.

"Indeed, I am so far from feeling alarmed or perplexed, at the examples of ill success, which occasionally attend the exhibition of mercury, or from considering thofe misadventures as reflecting disparagement or disgrace on that mineral, that I am rather surprifed at the fuccefs which fo often attends the indiscriminate ufe of it.

"There is a description of men who fcatcer broad their crudities very liberally, in compendiums and eflays; a class of productions, feldom calculated to convey information, but principally designed to perform the office of a midwife, by bringing their compilers into public view. With the fpurious intelligence collected from thefe retailers of fresps, many people furnifh themselves with a flock fufficient to undertake the care of their own complaints; and, not uncommonly, impart the precious commodity to others, who are lefs learned than themselves.

"That mercury, conducted by men of fuch endowments, fould often fail of doing good, nay, that it fould frequently inflict great mifchief, would be according to the natural order of things: but, that it fhould ever prove finally benefcial, ought certainly to redound to the credit of a medicine, whose falutary agency cannot be invariably frustrated by all the blunders of fardy ignorance.

"He who fhall difcard all general rules, because they admit exceptions, ought likewise, for the fake of confistency, to renounce all science, because human knowledge is fallible and imperfect.

"My opportunities of administering mercury, have not ex- tended to lefs than twenty thoufand cases; and I feel myself fully authorized to affert, that it is a remedy always to be confided in, under every form of lues venera; and, where we have only that one difeafe to contend with, that it is a certain antidote, and as safe in its operation as any other active medicine, drawn from the vegetable, or the mineral kingdom. Let me not be misunder- ftood here, as if I meant to fay, that it is a certain and safe remedy, in the hands of any one who undertakes to dispence it. Quite the contrary:—for a multitude of indisputable proofs might

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be adduced, that ignorance and error often render it one of the most precarious and mischievous medicines in use."

We cannot refrain quoting the following useful caution. "Many persons have taught, that during a course of mercurial injection, it is unnecessary to continue the friction until the ointment be absorbed; and that the same medicinal effects will be obtained, by merely spreading it over the surface of the skin, as by the more laborious process of rubbing it in as completely as possible. Nothing can be more at variance with truth than this instruction; nevertheless, a doctrine so peculiarly grateful to the feelings of indolent and irresolute patients, has not failed to acquire considerable currency. I do, however, most strenuously protest against this slovenly and insufficient mode of applying the ointment; a mode which must finally end in the injury of the patient, and the disgrace of the surgeon. But I do not think it sufficient simply to oppose so delusive and dangerous opinion, without urging it as a matter of no inconsiderable importance, that the patient himself ought always to perform the friction.

"There may be circumstances indeed, under which an impertinent necessity may constrain the violation of this precept; but, whenever it is infringed, it is always at the peril of the patient's safety, unless the attendant conduct it with an accuracy and dexterity which is seldom possessed by those who undertake this disgusting office. Many instances have fallen under my notice, where the ill success of the surgeon could be manifestly traced to this source; and where a compliance with the advice I have now suggested, has been immediately attended with the desired effect."

At the end of the work the author has drawn up some general conclusions, which are too valuable to withhold from our readers.

"1. The guiacum, farfparilla, mezereum, walnuts, opium, and Peruvian bark, have often removed some of the primary and secondary symptoms of lues venerea, and have alleviated others. They are likewise each of them capable of removing certain sequelæ of lues venerea, where the farther administration of mercury would prove injurious. Yet, no satisfactory series of evidence can be adduced, demonstrating that any, or all of these vegetables, given singly, or combined, are competent to the eradicating of lues venerea from the animal body.

"2. It must be conceded, that certain indubitable symptoms of syphilis have disappeared, during a course of the vegetable remedies; but the same symptoms have generally recurred, even at the very time when the patient was taking largely of the medicines which had produced this temporary benefit. Even where the patient has remained apparently well during five or six weeks, the disease has nevertheless always returned; and, what is worthy of particular attention, the same symptoms precisely have recurred, which had been seemingly cured during the administration of the medicines alluded to. This fact may be considered as a proof, that venereal symptoms are not cured by them in any proper sense; because local appearances admit of a perfect cure by a mode of administering
3. The muriated barytes, and two of the mineral acids, when given to venereal patients, have the power of suspending, for a limited time, the progress of the disease, and of removing many secondary symptoms; but they are not equal to the subduing of the virus, and freeing the constitution entirely from the effects of that destructive malady. They may likewise be employed with great advantage in those phagedenic ulcers of the genitals, and of the groin, which may be classed among the sequelae of syphilis.

4. The nitric and nitrous acids have removed both the primary and secondary symptoms of syphilis; and, in some instances, it seems, that the former have not recurred, nor have secondary symptoms appeared, at the period they commonly fllew themselves, when the cure has been imperfect. But, as far as my own experience extends, and that of many respectable friends, who are connected with large hospitals, a permanent cure has never been accomplished by these acids, where secondary symptoms have been present.

The same acids, when exhibited with the utmost care and attention to many patients labouring under the primary symptoms of the venereal disease, and where they have agreed perfectly well with the stomach, have been nevertheless, found inadequate to the cure of those symptoms. Indeed, the failures which have occurred, both in my own practice and that of many of my surgical friends, have been so numerous, that I do not think it eligible to rely on the nitrous acid, in the treatment of any one form of the lues venerea.

But, while I am obliged thus to detract from the supposed merits of the nitrous acid as an antidote against lues venerea, I would by no means wish to see it exploded as a medicine altogether useless in that disease.

Where an impaired state of the constitution renders the introduction of mercury into the animal system inconvenient, or evidently improper, the nitrous acid will be found capable of restraining the progress of the disease, while, at the same time, it will improve the health and strength of the patient. On some occasions, this acid may be given in conjunction with a course of mercurial injection; and it will be found to support the tone of the stomach; to promote the appetite; to determine powerfully to the kidneys, and to counteract in no inconsiderable degree the effects of mercury on the mouth and fauces. These advantages are by no means unimportant; and certainly entitle the gentlemen who have been active in promoting the introduction of this acid into general practice, to the gratitude of the public.

I will not presume, however, to assert, that we have yet learnt all that can be known, of the best mode of exhibiting this medicine; nor will I suppose that we have arrived at the ne plus ultra of its virtues. Yet, in the present state of our information...
upon this subject, it would by no means be warrantable to substitute the nitrous acid in the place of mercury, for the cure of venereal complaints; nor to permit the knowledge we have gained respecting some useful properties of the former, to seduce us to reject what a long course of experience has taught us of the certain efficacy of the latter."

FOREIGN MEDICAL LITERATURE.

AMERICAN.

We have received the New York Medical Repository up to January last, from which we extract the following Articles:

A Dissertation on the bilious malignant Fever which prevailed in the Country adjacent to Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, in the Summer of 1799; by Lyman Spalding, M.B.

"In the cure of this fever, some hurtful and many useless applications were made. It was not in the least effected by those applications which are most extolled in the fevers of our climate. Most of the practitioners had never seen it before, and those who had, from motives of prudence, were unwilling to acknowledge its identity with that of Philadelphia.

"On the first attack, an emetic, administered in small doses, to operate cathartically, relieved the symptoms. The effervescing mixture given in the hot fit gave universal relief. New beer and acetic potations were highly grateful.

"Calomel, joined with other cathartics, was much used. Blistering, and mercurial ugent rubbed over the whole body, were useful.

"Cold air was highly grateful, and eagerly sought for. To establish a current of air through the room was of the first consequence: all the windows and doors were kept open, and the air put in motion by fanning. The rooms were constantly moistened with vinegar, or vinegar and water. Cleaning was of the first consequence: the patients were frequently washed all over with vinegar and water, accompanied with friction: a solution of muriate of soda was sometimes made use of. Putrid stools were instantly removed, and the fleshy corrected. All unnecessary apparel and furniture were removed.

"But the most dependence was placed upon the cold bath, when the hot fit was on. This infallibly gave instant and astonishing relief, rendering the paroxysms shorter and milder. It was applied either generally or locally, as the urgency of the case required; this was determined by the surface that appeared unusually hot. When the heat was partial or local, a corresponding bath was used."

"The