

mities" as instanced in vertebrated skeletons. From that period to the present, comparative anatomy has progressed by the discovery of analogies alone, and species have been fused with species according as the law of form came to be more philosophically understood.

The "anomalies of organization" still baffle the efforts of the comparative anatomist at interpretation, and they yet remain as blots upon this fairly-written page of science, interrupting what should be given in current meaning, and by their presence causing an unconnectedness in its sentences. There is no anomaly to the law of gravity! and there will be no anomaly to the law of form when this shall have been searched at its foundation within the nature of things. In the works of Newton may be found a presentiment of what the science of comparative anatomy must one day reveal to us: he writes, "In corporibus animalium, in omnibus fere, similiter omnia posita."

Russell-place, Fitzroy-sq. Feb. 1846.

REVIEWS.

The Transactions of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association. Vol. xiv. pp. 285. London: Churchill; Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper. 1846.

In this country, we believe, the idea of presenting yearly reports or retrospective addresses on the progress of medicine and surgery, originated with the Provincial Association. The idea was a good one, and during the first years of operation, when the crack hands of the provinces were to be selected, the reports were of the highest interest. That interest has even been kept up to a very considerable degree by a succession of talent most creditable to our provincial brethren. But, unfortunately, the idea was so good that it has been appropriated in various directions. Other retrospective reports have appeared, some of them of "high literary" character, some painstaking, and microscopic enumerations of the scientific progress of the year, and others, digests of the ideas that have been entertained by the medical community during the time. Subdivisions have been introduced, and we have half-yearly and annual reports of the different branches of medical and surgical knowledge. All this is unfortunate for the parent which gave birth to the plan. A large association, with its necessarily cumbrous machinery, cannot compete on equal terms with half-yearly or quarterly publications. In time the association will probably have to strike out some fresh path, and to place the retrospective addresses on a new footing.

The addresses in the present volume, very excellent in their way, are the productions of Dr. Charlton, of Newcastle, and Mr. Teale, of Sheffield. They are the careful collection of the facts of the year, without much attempt at generalization or induction beyond the materials under their hands. Both of them are compiled with extreme precision and care.

Besides the retrospective addresses, there are papers on "Grinders' Asthma," by Dr. Favell, of Sheffield; on Inversion of the Bladder, by Mr. J. G. Crosse; a Statistical Report of the Reading Dispensary, by Dr. Cowan; and a Statistical Report of the Surgical Department of the Royal Berkshire Hospital, by Mr. George May.

The paper of Dr. Favell is perhaps the most important of the volume. It enters fully into the different descriptions of grinding carried on in Sheffield, the symptoms of the disease, the causes from which they arise, and the organic changes with which they are connected. The author's words are, "The object which I have peculiarly in view in the present communication, is to determine the pathology of grinders' asthma, or rather, perhaps I should say, to exhibit the lesions of the respiratory organs which morbid anatomy most frequently reveals in the persons of those who have fallen victims to the disease." The minute appearances found on post-mortem examinations are given in seven cases. The general results were, "tubercles, small bodies resembling currants, disseminated extensively on the surface, and throughout the substance of the lungs; large masses found in the different portions of the pulmonary tissue;

emphysema; dilatation of the bronchial tubes; inflammation of the lining membrane of the bronchi, trachea, and larynx; adhesion of the pleuræ; enlargement of the bronchial glands; enlargement of the heart; and a granular condition of the kidneys." But the essential organic changes are, tubercles, the currant-like bodies, and the peculiar masses referred to. In four only of the seven cases were tubercles found, so that the disease is not necessarily tuberculous. Dr. Favell remarks of the currant-like bodies—"A frequent examination has convinced me that they consist of nothing more than the dilated extremities of veins, containing some of the solid constituents of the blood. I have often met with precisely the same appearances in other cases, where there was much congestion of the pulmonary vessels, and have traced their connexion with the scalpel." Of the masses found distributed through the different portions of the lungs, the author remarks, "Sometimes they are of a greyish colour, at other times they are black; sometimes they are extremely dense, at others they are cut with ease. In some instances, I believe they are occasioned by the effusion of blood into the parenchymatous substance of the lungs, constituting what is properly termed pulmonary apoplexy; but in the majority of cases they are doubtless the consequence of pneumonia, either in the acute or chronic form, and to which the grinders are particularly liable."

Similar alterations of structure have been observed as the result of pneumonia, by Drs. Hodgkin, Addison, and Williams. Finally, Dr. Favell draws "the general conclusion, that the disease essentially depends upon congestion or inflammation of the parenchymatous structure of the lungs, in some cases giving rise to the formation of tubercle, and in others, occasioning pulmonary degeneration without tubercular deposit." The subject of treatment is merely glanced at, the first indication being, according to Dr. Favell, "to subdue existing inflammation, and the second, to support the strength of the patient."

Mr. Crosse's paper is short, and is accompanied by an engraving. It is a description of a rare and almost unique case of inversion of the bladder through the urethra in a young girl, one of the ureters opening on the exposed surface, and producing stillicidium urinæ from the tumour. The surgeon who first saw the case, entertained the idea of removing it as a common tumour by ligature, but on the nature of the case being ascertained, the prolapsed organ was reduced, and replaced, by the taxis. The child was at this time between two and three years old, and at fifteen, Mr. Crosse ascertained that she was still troubled with incontinence of urine, though no return of the vesical displacement existed.

Dr. Cowan's numerical report is drawn up with his accustomed accuracy and carefulness; it must form a very interesting and useful tabulated view of the diseases which occur in the district to which it refers. There is one portion, bearing on statistical philosophy, which we extract for remark:—

"From the extensive comparative investigations of Mr. Watt, it seems that the deaths, by various diseases, are nearly identical at the same age, and that whatever the total amount of deaths by each disease may be, the proportion which the deaths, falling at certain periods of life, bear to the whole deaths of these respective diseases, *remains the same.*

"This interesting law proves the existence of general influences regulating the life and health of the community, however variously expressed by the greater or less prevalence of particular complaints, and also indicates how difficult must be the correct solution of a therapeutic problem, where agents other than those we are employing are so materially influencing the result. In fact, the whole philosophy of medicine can be very imperfectly apprehended by a being so limited in capacity and duration as man; and a juster estimate of the vast extent and difficulty of the inquiry would tend both to repress much hasty and presumptuous generalization, and establish a juster estimate of the true limits of human instrumentality.

"If so much is to be attributed to the action of external agencies, and if by these are chiefly regulated the nature and amount of illness and death, it is manifest that our expecta-

tions of future benefit must be founded far more upon improved hygienic regulations than upon additions to our pathological or medicinal resources.

"As science in its widest sense really advances, will the specific power of drugs be less and less admitted, while the physician's claims to respect and confidence will be found to rest far more upon his practical acquaintance with, and power of adjusting, those general conditions, which are adverse or favourable to health, than upon his supposed familiarity with agents directly adapted to the cure of disease."

We trust all this is the expression of a transient thought rather than of an established conviction. Otherwise, let Dr. Cowan examine himself. He is harbouring a medical fatalism, or, what is worse, a scepticism of the powers of medicine. Doubtless the pregnant-meaning words, "Time is short! Art is long!" are as true now as when they came fresh from the pen of Hippocrates. In a generation or in a life, no diminution of the law of mortality is seen when large and extended observations are made. But statistics is as yet too young to aver with confidence that the triumphs of our art do not produce an ameliorative impression on disease, and the duration of human life, an impression destined to go on increasing with every succeeding age. The position of a conscientious physician must indeed be gloomy, who toils on in the profession, oppressed with the idea, that an inexorable hand, in the shape of a numerical law, is extended over him, rendering a given number of deaths in a given number of cases an imperative necessity. If we look to immense numbers and become confused, let us individualize our observations,—let us look near as well as far off, and consider, whether does a greater number of deaths occur in the practice of a skilled or an unskilled physician, or in cases left to natural chance? We believe the honest determination of this question is calculated to brighten Dr. Cowan's sombre reflections. Human life, we doubt not, apart from moral causes, will tend to become more and more valuable from the influence of public medicine or hygiene, which will eventually moderate or destroy all contagious diseases: and of private medicine, the domain of the practising physician, by the gradual but sure improvement of the methods of treating individual diseases.

The surgical report of Mr. May extends over six years, it is very carefully compiled from the hospital books and annual reports, but it presents no salient points for criticism.

We regret to see so large a space devoted to the mere lists of officers and members of the Association. No less than sixty-four pages, or nearly one-fourth of the whole volume, is occupied in this manner. Room should be economized in this and other respects, so as to afford a greater number and variety to the papers. As regards the contributions published, the Association should endeavour to rival the transactions of the Medico-Chirurgical Society. The publication committee should refer to the expressed objects of publication by the Association. These were, original essays or reports of provincial hospitals, dispensaries, or private practice; the increase of knowledge of the medical topography of England through statistical, meteorological, geological, and botanical inquiries; investigations of the modifications of endemic and epidemic diseases; the advancement of medico-legal science through reports of cases occurring in the provincial courts of justice. This is a bold, comprehensive, and highly valuable scheme; but if we look to the present volume as a part of its fulfilment, there are signs of meagreness and inefficiency, not so much as respects the quality of the papers, but as respects their limited number. Surely the topics afford scope enough for variety, if the men were inclined to work them. A hint may be valuable both to the members and the governing body of the Association.

There is one other point to which we will refer. In the lists of the many hundreds of members we observe only two titles are used,—M.D. to indicate the physician, and the word "Surgeon" is applied to all others, whether hospital surgeons or not. If this is to be taken as any indication of the senti-

ments of provincial medical men, it is clear that they prefer the old term, "surgeon," to the new phrase of "general practitioner," or the obsolete title of "apothecary."

The Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science. 8vo, pp. 275. February, 1846.

THE Dublin Medical Journal, which has long ranked as one of the most able representatives of medical science in Ireland, has recently been transformed into a quarterly periodical, under the editorship, we understand, of Mr. Wilde, the well-known and generally respected Dublin surgeon. Under his able management, we have no doubt that the Dublin Quarterly will prosper, and increase the high character which it bears in periodical medical literature.

The first number, which we have now before us, promises well for the future. In addition to a very interesting and elaborate preface by the editor, narrating the history of periodic medical literature in Ireland, including notices of the medical and philosophical societies of Dublin, it contains several valuable original articles, and other interesting matter. One of these articles, that by Sir Philip Crampton on lithotripsy, we partly re-produced in a recent number, (see THE LANCET, Feb. 14th.) That by Dr. Graves, on the relapse periods of ague, will likewise amply repay perusal. We have, also, particularly noticed a very able review of homœopathy and homœopathic writings.

In conclusion, we wish our contemporary every possible success. We have the highest opinion of the Irish medical school—a school remarkable for its sound clinical character, and its freedom from speculative fancies, and wish well to its representatives in the medical press.

ROYAL MEDICAL AND CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY.

FEB. 24.—DR. WATSON, VICE-PRESIDENT, IN THE CHAIR.

ON THE POISONOUS EFFECTS OF ANIMAL FOOD WHEN EATEN IN A STATE OF DECOMPOSITION, WITH THREE CASES OF POISONING BY BACON, ATTENDED BY TEMPORARY DERANGEMENT OF THE MENTAL FACULTIES. By JOSEPH TOYNBEE, Esq., F.R.S., Senior Surgeon to the St. George's and St. James's General Dispensary.

THE author commences his paper by stating, that although numerous and valuable observations had been made on the effects of mineral and vegetable poisons, the medical profession possessed but very scanty information respecting the agency of animal poisons. Animal poisons act in three ways,—1st, by the gases evolved during putrefaction being respired; 2nd, by the introduction of decomposing matter into the system by means of wounds; 3rd, by its introduction into the stomach and intestinal canal. The paper referred to the latter class. It appeared that the putrefaction of animal matter was of two kinds—the ordinary one, in which meat is considered to be "high," the other which Dr. Christison describes as "peculiar," and which gives rise to the formation of a poison. The three articles of food which, under certain circumstances, undergo this peculiar change, are "a particular kind of sausage, a particular kind of cheese, and bacon." Between the years 1793 and 1827, or in the course of thirty-four years, two hundred and thirty-four persons residing in Wirtemberg partook of the sausage poison, of whom nearly one half died. Several well-authenticated cases of poisoning by bacon have been traced in Germany and France, but previously to the present time no cases of the kind have been recorded as having occurred in Britain; but, as Dr. Christison most justly remarks, "the defective system of medical police in this country would allow cases to pass sometimes without notice, and almost always without scientific observation; but it must not therefore be supposed that they are wholly unknown." The author proceeded to show that a poison of a similar character was developed in each of the three kinds of food alluded to; and he then detailed the three cases of poisoning by bacon which had been attended by him.

CASE I.—A barrister, aged thirty-five, partook of tainted bacon three times, but was not affected by it until the third day, in the morning of which day he became anxious, but transacted his ordinary business, and also had interviews with several strangers, and took careful notes of what occurred. Towards the afternoon he became dreamy; his imagination was disordered, and he found that his memory had almost