

neurasthenic tendency is of special importance. In the analogous affections of malarial origin, a few months' delay is not of vital moment, a change of residence at any time being sufficient to effect restoration. In the neurasthenic form, however, the morbid tendency is strongly progressive unless remedially interfered with.

The treatment recommended consists in judicious use of the various nerve tonics, with rest and a largely improved diet. Alcohol was badly borne in the cases observed by Dr. Van Deusen, though he uses stimulants in the event of extreme exhaustion. The brain, long unused to a full and steady supply of rich blood, is oversensitive at first to all which stimulates the cerebral circulation. Sponge baths and spirit frictions are thought safer in the maniacal stage than the hot baths useful in more sthenic cases. Gentle exercise in the open air, long continued but kept within the bounds of fatigue, is desirable. During convalescence, what the writer calls *recreative occupation* is advised.

The following remarks are true of most forms of mental disease. "As a relief for depression, travelling is very likely to be suggested, but is very seldom beneficial. The different stages of a journey cannot be so arranged as to secure regularity in sleep and in taking meals. The mode of preparing food and its character cannot be made to meet the requirements of the case. New ideas are presented so rapidly as to cause great weariness, and it is not at all uncommon to meet with instances in which the patient leaving home suffering from depression simply, returns more deeply melancholic or even maniacal." T. W. F.

Plain Talk about Insanity; its Causes, Forms, Symptoms. With remarks on Hospitals and Asylums, and the Medico-legal aspect of Insanity. By T. W. FISHER, M.D., late of the Boston Hospital for the Insane. Boston: Alexander Moore. 1872. 8vo. Pp. 97.

This little book is a reprint of several papers which appeared in the periodical known as *Good Health*, although there is nothing except the publisher's name to show this.

As a popular treatise on Insanity, the book supplies a want. If read, we believe it will do good. We fear that its unattractive form and the too free use of medical terms in the first part may deter many from reading it. The last part is not open to

the latter objection and is a very timely and desirable review of hospitals and of the importance of hospital treatment for the insane.

The author is decided in his statement that insanity is only a symptom of disease of the brain, and that, in its study, we have nothing to do with mind apart from its organ, the brain; this view of the subject cannot be kept too prominently before the public mind, as there is such a tendency to look upon insanity as a disease of a metaphysical entity, supposed to be immaterial, called mind. This is not so, and for that reason we are sorry to see in the next paragraph the statement that "these structural changes are, however, more likely to be the results, than the causes of insanity." We think this statement as objectionable as one which makes tubercle, cheesy degeneration, consolidation, bronchial inflammation and other changes in the lungs the results rather than the causes of the symptoms found in lung disease—i. e. cough, dyspnoea, fever, &c. The word insanity for us is merely the name of a group of phenomena which are the symptoms of brain disease, as Dr. Fisher says in the first paragraph.

We had marked passages to refer to which touch on important points and with the opinions of which we heartily agree. But we find there are so many such that we can only mention a few to which our attention has been also strongly directed. One is the injury from continued study as affecting the health of young girls particularly. If the injury caused by the present system of study could be known, parents would have their eyes opened to the fact, which would surprise them; in order to acquire a slight temporary reputation for mental ability and good scholarship, their children are allowed to endanger the happiness and content of a life-time.

The necessity of accepting the advice of a competent physician in regard to the treatment of a case of insanity, and also as to hospital treatment, is very properly mentioned; the nature of the treatment generally employed, and the advantages of hospital life are also clearly described.

We cannot but admire the happy turn given at times to a thought—e. g., "Pulling out of the intestines, gouging out an eye, or sawing off the tongue, are a few of the *eccentricities* in which such patients may indulge." Again, speaking of the sudden acts of violence at times committed by the insane, as killing children, wife

or husband, or committing suicide, he says, "The writer once undertook to make a scrap-book of these *pleasant* items."

We hope that the book will be generally read, and it will open the eyes of those who read it to the delusions which are so prevalent in regard to insanity and insane hospitals. The sooner the truth is known the sooner will the horror and disgust with which these unfortunate sick have been regarded disappear. In this department knowledge will dispel the darkness and mystery which has surrounded the subject in past ages. s. g. w.

Smallpox: the Predisposing Conditions and their Prevention. By Dr. CARL BOTH. Boston: Alexander Moore. 1872. Pp. 50.

We are at a loss to know whether the author of this work has intended its perusal to be confined to thoroughly scientific people or for the "people in general," or whether it is to occupy a middle ground of instruction. In either event, the reader is treated to ideas of exceeding novelty concerning the etiology and prophylaxis of a loathsome disease. These truly original theories may be best exemplified by one or two quotations, which will suggest their own proper deductions.

"But what is smallpox? It must be admitted by all that smallpox consists in an escape or exudation of something into the skin which causes it to swell, and by a process of putrefaction destroys it, and not unfrequently carries off the patient. This mass * * * *must* necessarily come from the blood; therefore, it must be something in the blood which is abnormal, sickly or bad." * * *

"We find smallpox a regular visitant wherever, from any cause, salt has become scarce. * * * The Prussian army had no smallpox during the late war—and why? They were well provided with *pea-sausages*, which contained not only salt, but *all* the necessary ingredients the human body requires for health and vigor. * * * The reason for the comparative freedom from smallpox in Boston is very simple. In no city in the world is there so much salt used, in proportion to the number of inhabitants, as here. It would be difficult to find a table where salt was not placed before each person, and at almost every meal, with the exception, perhaps, of tea." * * * "I maintain that of *one hundred children in all our American cities, seventy-five are more or less deficient in the amount of salt required, and that this deficiency is substituted by su-*

gar. The consequence is scarlet fever, measles, chickenpox or smallpox, according to circumstances." * * * "The *proper* use of salt is the scientific and most certain prevention of smallpox, both in theory and practice, that I have any knowledge of." * * * "This theory, if correct, must hold good in all cases, without a single exception; and if nothing can be found to disprove its correctness it holds that the *proper* use of salt, in the human economy, will eradicate smallpox at once and forever.

"Therefore the use and office of salt should be more generally known and taught in all our public schools."

The medical profession should rejoice to learn all this. Theories and counter-theories of vaccination, revaccination, vaccinosyphilis, cow-virus, humanized stock—*requiescant in pace!*

Handbook of Skin Diseases. By Dr. ISIDOR NEUMANN, Docent an der k. k. Universität in Wien. Translated from the Second German Edition, with Notes, by LUCIUS D. BULKLEY, M.D. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1872. Pp. 467.

A most extended clinical experience in cutaneous diseases, habits of patient industry, a clear head and a concise and telling method of expression, had already given Neumann a wide reputation as a practical teacher while as yet shining only by the reflected light of the great centre of the dermatological system, Hebra. In 1867, if we remember aright, Neumann began, in Wedl's laboratory, a series of microscopical investigations into the pathological histology of various lesions of the skin, and, stimulated by an unfortunate mistake made in the Imperial Academy of Sciences, has since devoted much time and attention to this branch of his specialty, so that at present he ranks among the very first authorities upon the anatomy and etiology of diseases of the skin. To these subjects, previously neglected, he devotes the chief portion of his book, the special value of which depends largely upon the described results of his original researches in these directions.

To detailed minutiae in regard to the therapeutic management of diseases of the skin, Neumann does not descend. He writes for his countrymen, to whom the lamentable ignorance existing in England and America with regard to so important a branch of medicine as dermatology, is a thing simply inconceivable. While not adapted, however, to the needs of a begin-