

of patients, and special modes of investigation are dealt with, followed by chapters devoted to the examinations of the various "systems." The diagnosis of skin diseases is considered at some length. The topography of the brain and the functions of the cerebro-spinal systems are explained, introductory to the diseases of the nervous system, and the examination of the insane. Many other subjects are discussed with more or less fulness, which cannot fail to be useful, not only to medical students in India, but to isolated medical practitioners in charge of hospitals and dispensaries among the natives of that great country. Those who have mastered the contents of this useful work, not merely by rote, but in the proper acceptance of the term, have taken a long step to make themselves good diagnostic physicians, without which they can never be good doctors.

*Transactions of the Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom.* Vol. X. Session 1889-90. (London: J. and A. Churchill. 1890.) It is not necessary to do much more than chronicle the appearance of this annual volume. The work of the Society has been regularly reported in these columns during the year, and in this volume will be found the original articles of great interest to specialists, abstracts of which have already appeared in these pages. Some of the lithographic illustrations are excellent reproductions of the original drawings, but not quite so much can be said for the photographic process plates.

*The Westminster Hospital Reports.* Edited by OCTAVIUS STURGES, M.D.Cantab, F.R.C.P., and GEORGE COWELL, F.R.C.S. Volume VI. (London: J. and A. Churchill. 1890.)—The sixth volume of the *Westminster Hospital Reports* is somewhat smaller than some of its predecessors. It contains the usual official reports of the Registrar, and some clinical notes of special cases. The more elaborate papers range over a large number of subjects. Dr. Sturges has a thoughtful article, "On Prognosis in Pneumonia"; Mr. Macnamara contributes a carefully-considered essay on "Granular and Tubercular Conjunctivitis," and Dr. de Havilland Hall briefly discusses the "Causes and Treatment of Asthma." Dr. J. B. Potter reports four additional cases of fibroid tumours of the uterus treated by electrolysis. He expresses a very guarded opinion as to the value of this method of treatment, but concludes with the observation that, on the whole, he is "inclined to think that the benefit is mainly due to galvano-caustic action; and that, probably, a similar result might be obtained with treatment less expensive, troublesome to manage, and cumbrous." Dr. Donkin publishes condensed reports of some clinical lectures of a very practical kind on the treatment of some intestinal disorders of childhood. A note by Dr. Hebb on the germicidal action of the blood contains a summary of recent publications on the subject, and Mr. Morton Smale has a short illustrated article on the treatment of fracture of the lower jaw. Mr. Cowell contributes a sympathetic obituary notice of the late Dr. Fincham.

## REPORTS AND ANALYSES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF NEW INVENTIONS IN MEDICINE, SURGERY, DIETETICS, AND THE ALLIED SCIENCES.

### EFFERVESCENT CARLSBAD POWDER.

This effervescent preparation is stated to contain amongst other ingredients the active principle of the Sprudel salt obtained direct from the mineral water. It is an improvement upon the ordinary crystalline form of Carlsbad salt in use, as a solution can be readily made by stirring the powder in water. Our analysis of the Effervescent Carlsbad Powder shows that it contains the various salts which are known to exist in the Carlsbad springs. The taste is not unpleasant, so that it can be easily taken, and its action we find to be mild but efficient.

The sample has been sent by Messrs. S. Kutnow and Co., 66, Holborn Viaduct, London, E.C.

### BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION. SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1891.

SUBSCRIPTIONS to the Association for 1891 became due on January 1st. Members of Branches are requested to pay the same to their respective Secretaries. Members of the Association not belonging to Branches are requested to forward their remittances to the General Secretary, 429, Strand, London. Post-office orders should be made payable at the West Central District Office, High Holborn.

## British Medical Journal.

SATURDAY, MARCH 7TH, 1891.

### THE GOVERNMENT FACTORY BILL.

SINCE the leading article on "The New Factory Bills" appeared in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of February 28th, we have had the advantage of learning from the author of the Government Bill, the Home Secretary, the principles aimed at in that project, and the grounds upon which he bases his reasons for abolishing the office of certifying surgeons. The latter must engage our present consideration. But we will first remark that the debate that followed on the second reading of the Government Bill was remarkable for the small encouragement lent to the Home Secretary's scheme for the destruction of the medical organisation of the Factory Act as now existing. The sense of the House was decidedly adverse to it. Its opponents comprised, among many members well known for their interest in social questions, Sir Lyon Playfair, Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Dr. Farquharson, and Sir W. Foster. Some half-hearted general approval of the Bill as a whole was given by a few members representing textile districts, and Mr. Stuart Wortley, one of the backers of the Bill, did his best to bolster up the lame and fallacious arguments urged by Mr. Matthews in its favour.

The Home Secretary's first contention is, that as the Education Act requires proof of age for all children, and as the certificates given for the purpose are available for factory purposes, therefore medical men are quite unnecessary to watch the ages at which children and young persons are entered for work in the required registers. This assertion is not wholly true. Certifying surgeons continually find it necessary to compare the certificates with those who present them to guard against personation, and, still more, to closely examine the dates affixed to detect alterations, and such tampering with age certificates is of no very rare occurrence.

It may be said that this examination of the documents produced is the work of the individuals to whom are entrusted the duties of registering the names of those applying for employment. So, indeed, it legally is, but experience proves that irregularities, such as cited, are mostly overlooked by them.

Again, it is no prescribed duty of the certifying surgeons to inspect the evidence of education required, yet those officers customarily do examine the certificates of the standard passed, note their entry, and often discover alterations of figures designedly made to obtain employment in half time or whole time work. And it must also be remembered that there is a certain proportion of children born abroad, or