

REVIEWS.

THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS. Professor Stuart's Reply to Sir William Moore, and the Speech of the Secretary of State for War on the Army Estimates. London: British Committee of the British, Continental, and General Federation. 1895. (1d.)

THIS pamphlet, issued by the well-known Committee who oppose the Contagious Diseases Acts, is from the pen of its Treasurer, Professor STUART, M.P. It is a reprint of a reply to an article by Sir William Moore in the October number of the *Humanitarian*. Sir William's outspokenness on such matters is well known, and he ought to consider it a compliment to his trenchant article that it has called forth the heavy artillery of Professor Stuart.

We, for our own part, are rather sick of this controversy, when it is merely based on a weary and barren wrangle over statistics, embracing the period since the Acts were first passed. We have long held, and often reiterated, that by themselves the ratios per thousand of army admissions from venereal diseases are of dubious value, because they are unequal, in that simple venereal ulcers have sometimes been included and at others excluded; comparison between things unequal must therefore be misleading. It is also notorious that through the see-saw of politics the Acts themselves during their enforcement were most unequally administered. We therefore demur to their value or otherwise resting on a mere statistical argument, and we rather wonder the opponents of the Acts should condescend to discuss it, seeing they declare their opposition does not rest on mundane expediency, but flows direct from the highest region of ethics and morals.

With rare exceptions, the medical profession simply views venereal diseases as it does any other contagious affections, as diseases to be combated and controlled by all lawful scientific means. The profession seeks to destroy the germs of syphilis by the same or similar means as those used against anthrax, cholera, or diphtheria. It is even a greater scourge than these diseases, in that it extends to hapless children, who surely can have no moral responsibility in contracting it from their parents or nurses. The profession of medicine, therefore, cannot have part or lot in an agitation which would foster a disease they seek to combat. To them all disease is alike a physical and material evil of environment, to be overcome by every natural weapon which Providence has placed in our hands or heads.

THE YEAR BOOK OF TREATMENT FOR 1895; a Critical Review for Practitioners of Medicine and Surgery. London, Paris, and Melbourne: Cassell and Co. (Crown 8vo, 480 pp. 7s. 6d.)

THE eleventh issue of this useful *Year Book* is of the same character as previous publications. The general aim of the annual is to give within a reasonable compass a fair summary of the new material contained in medical periodical literature during the previous year. Such a task could not be carried out by any one hand, since the aim of the work is to present not a mere collection of cuttings and abstracts, but a considered review in which only the more solid contributions to the various departments of medicine and surgery are noticed. To this end the Editor has secured the services of a large staff of contributors, who have for the most part selected and arranged their material with skill, so that each article may be read as a consecutive essay. The new names among the contributors are those of Dr. Coupland, who has undertaken the section on Diseases of the Heart and Circulation; Mr. William Rose, who contributes the article on General Surgery; and Dr. Whitelegge, who has written a very brief, but at the same time extremely interesting, note on Public Health and Hygiene. The task of dealing with the subject of the treatment of Diphtheria by Antitoxic Serum has been divided between Dr. Sidney Phillips, who has written a well-arranged article on the general subject, and Mr. Edmund Owen, who has a somewhat critical note on the influence the method is likely to have on the surgical treatment of diphtheria. The volume contains a classified list of new books,

new editions, and translations, and an index not only to the subjects treated, but also to the authors quoted. We may safely say that this volume is one of the best published, within anything approaching the same compass, in any language.

ON CHOREA AND CHOREIFORM AFFECTIONS. By WILLIAM OSLER, M.D., F.R.C.P., Professor of Medicine Johns Hopkins University, etc. London: H. K. Lewis. 1894. (Cr. 8vo, pp. 134. 5s.)

WHEN we take into consideration the fact that chorea is a common disease, and the further fact that it has for generations excited the interest and curiosity of physicians, it must be confessed that we know singularly little about it. Its etiology is obscure, its pathology unknown, its prognosis doubtful, and its treatment empirical and unsatisfactory. The motto which Dr. OSLER quotes from Bouteille's *Treatise*, published in 1810, is still applicable: "Everything is extraordinary about this disease; its name is ridiculous, its symptoms strange, its character doubtful, its cause unknown, and its treatment problematic." We may therefore be grateful to Dr. Osler for having presented us with an excellent essay on chorea, which occupies rather more than half of the book before us. It is founded in great part upon the casebooks of the Infirmary for Diseases of the Nervous System, Philadelphia; but an additional series of cases is drawn from the practice of John Hopkins Hospital. Dr. Osler thus rests his conclusions in part upon the published results of his predecessors, in part upon his own observations.

Perhaps the most important section of the essay is that which deals with the after-history of the heart in patients who have had chorea. Dr. Osler succeeded in finding 140 patients two or more years after they had been under treatment for chorea at the infirmary mentioned. The results for a first series of these cases were published in 1887.¹ The complete results given here are highly interesting. They appear to show that the proportion of cases of chorea in which the complicating endocarditis lays the foundation of organic heart disease is much larger than has hitherto been supposed. The heart was normal in only 51 cases, in 72 there were signs of organic heart lesion, and in the remaining 17 there was cardiac disturbance, which might reasonably be regarded as functional. A very significant fact is that no fewer than 66 per cent. of the cases which presented organic heart disease at a date two or more years subsequent to the attack of chorea, gave no history of rheumatism. The relationship between chorea and rheumatism is a problem as yet unsolved, but such an observation as that just quoted certainly militates against the view that chorea is only one of the rheumatic states; and Dr. Osler puts forward as a tentative conclusion the opinion that "very probably the cause of chorea will be found to be a poison allied to, but not the same as, that of rheumatism."

The book before us also contains two short essays upon choreiform affections, the one on habit spasms and tic, the other on chronic progressive chorea (Huntington's chorea). It is much to be regretted that the term "chorea" has been applied to these disorders. Neither class has any true connection with chorea minor, and both are as far asunder as the poles. Dr. Osler's account of chronic progressive chorea is valuable, but the essay on habit spasms is perhaps of still greater value; for it is, we believe, the first attempt to reduce this very heterogeneous and puzzling class of cases to order. It is, moreover, the most complete presentment of the facts which has hitherto been made in the English language, most of the literature on the subject having been contributed by French writers.

The book, though small, is one which will well repay perusal, and it cannot fail to add to Dr. Osler's already high reputation.

¹ *Amer. Journ. of Med. Sci.*

OWING to some defect in the heating apparatus, the Deaconess Hospital, Cleveland, Ohio, caught fire on February 1st, and three patients and one nurse were burned to death.