

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

HANDBOOK OF GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL PATHOLOGY. By DR. AUGUST HIRSCH, Professor of Medicine in the University of Berlin. Vol. i.—Acute Infective Diseases. Translated from the Second German Edition by CHARLES CREIGHTON, M.D. London: New Sydenham Society. 1883.

PROFESSOR HIRSCH, in his preface, dwells with parental pride and partiality on the influence which the earlier edition of his work, published some twenty years ago, had in giving greater precision to the study of etiology, and in fostering and encouraging inquiries in this direction. Some may be inclined to think that he claims a little too much for his offspring; but there can be no doubt that the present edition of the work, as represented by the first volume, excellently translated by Dr. Creighton, fills a void which has been long felt in English literature. The facts and arguments exist it is true, and Dr. Hirsch has not sought to contribute much original matter; but the student has had to roam far afield to find these facts and arguments which Dr. Hirsch has grouped together and classified. The volume is calculated to be especially valuable to British surgeons serving abroad, as the excellent abstracts of the opinions and experiences of observers in all parts of the globe, together with the numerous references, make this single volume a veritable library of reference. It is only just to say that Dr. Creighton has very greatly contributed towards this end by providing a copious index, which is of the greatest assistance in using the book. The material bearing on each disease, moreover, is so arranged as to be exceedingly convenient for reference.

The first chapter is devoted to Influenza, and in it the geographical distribution of the epidemics of that extraordinary disease, as well as its nature and mode of extension, are fully discussed and illustrated. Dr. Hirsch decides against the theory that the disease is communicable or contagious; but some of the arguments used are in curious contrast with those held by the author when dealing with cholera. Indeed, the chapter on Asiatic Cholera, though very learned, and most valuable as a storehouse of facts, contains some loose reasoning, and more than one contradiction. That the home of cholera is India, and that the disease never arises in any other country except as the result of an importation of the morbid poison; this is the position taken up by Dr. Hirsch, who contends that the two arguments on which the view that cholera can originate autochthonously beyond the Indian territories is founded, are unsound. As to the first argument, namely, that at times of pandemic prevalence of cholera, epidemics arise in distant countries without communication, he believes that it rests on errors of observation, or on imperfect information. The second argument rests on the occurrence of sporadic cases or small localised epidemics, and this Dr. Hirsch disposes of by assuming an error of diagnosis, "the confounding of two forms of disease, which certainly approach one another closely in the matter of symptoms, but, as regards their origin and clinical history, have nothing in common." How, we may remark incidentally, two diseases can be said to approach one another closely in the matter of symptoms, and yet to have nothing in common in their clinical history, we fail to understand. "Cholera Indica," says Dr. Hirsch, "is a distinctly communicable disease, with a mortality of 50 per cent.," while the other disease, "the so-called cholera nostras, has not exhibited a single trace of communicability, and runs a course which is never fatal, except under certain peculiarly unfavourable circumstances, such as extremes of age, debilitated constitution, and the like." Now it might be observed, with regard to this argument of Dr. Hirsch's, that he begs the question in the statement with regard to "cholera Indica," and that the statements with regard to "cholera nostras" are certainly incorrect. In the first place, as stated on the previous page (431), it does occur in epidemic form; and, in the second place, it is occasionally fatal to the youngest and most robust under the most favourable conditions. The real question is, are we justified in arguing, from identity of symptoms, an identity of cause? Cases of sporadic cholera occur in England, and in other European countries, which present all the symptoms of "cholera Indica," which physicians of large Indian experience say they cannot distinguish from cholera as seen in India, and which end fatally. Dr. Koch has the courage of his opinions, and teaches that, in such a case, the diagnosis must depend upon the result of a search for the cholera-bacillus; if it be

not present, then the case is not one of cholera Indica. Such a position is perfectly comprehensible and clear; it reduces, some may say, the diagnosis of cholera to a matter of mycological classification, but it is consistent; and if Dr. Koch's view of the importance and constancy of his bacillus be correct, it is quite sound. Dr. Hirsch, however, admits and relies upon the evidence afforded by symptoms, and his argument, as we have shown, is two-edged; but although he entertains and expresses decided views on the nature of cholera, he does not hesitate to give, with judicial impartiality, the arguments and facts adduced by those who hold opposite views. This is indeed the great merit of Dr. Hirsch's work, and the one which must render it so exceedingly useful to our fellow-countrymen abroad. On every disputed point, with hardly an exception, all the facts which are required in order to form an opinion, are given, and the reader is thus able to draw his own conclusions.

The chapter on Malarial Diseases is of remarkable excellence; it is full, systematic, and well digested, and a voluminous bibliography is appended. The same remarks apply with equal force to the chapter on Yellow Fever. Plague is also dealt with at some length; and the etiology of typhoid fever is discussed with a good deal of detail, and with a command of the foreign literature of the subject such as few but Dr. Hirsch can possess. Relapsing fever and bilious typhoid he considers to be special modifications of one and the same morbid process, and they are therefore treated of together. The remaining chapters of the book deal with sweating-sickness, small-pox, measles, scarlet fever, and typhus fever.

The book, as we have already shown, is a splendid monument of Dr. Hirsch's industry and learning, and will be highly valued in this country in the admirable English dress which Dr. Creighton has given it. Very great credit indeed is due to the translator for the thoroughness with which he has carried out his task, and the excellence of the volume regarded from a literary point of view.

CLINIQUE MÉDICALE. Par le Dr. NŒL GUÉNEAU DE MUSSY. Vol. iii. Pp. 736. Paris: Delahaye et Lecrosnier. 1884.

THE whole volume is devoted to a theoretical and practical study of typhoid fever; and the first part deals with its etiology and prophylaxis. The theories of Murchison and Budd are discussed at length, and the belief in a specific virus, or micro-organism, is repeatedly expressed by the author, who, however, does not appear to have made any original researches on this subject. We do not think he is right in stating that Murchison's theory is still almost universally accepted in England. The prophylactic measures differ only in unimportant details from those recommended by Murchison. The systematic description of the symptoms does not occupy more than a hundred pages; but the disorders of each system are dealt with subsequently, in separate chapters, which form the greater part of the book. This arrangement has the obvious drawback of necessitating numerous repetitions, and of leaving a somewhat confused idea of the general aspect of the disease. Great stress is laid upon the division into periods, of which the author admits six: incubation, invasion, acme, crisis, termination, and convalescence. Each of them is described carefully, and many useful hints are given, which show that the author has had a considerable experience of the disease, and has been able to study it under all its clinical aspects. The diminution in the fullness of the pulse, when the patient is made to sit up in bed, is mentioned as the best criterion of the patient's strength. Some unusual symptoms, such as obstinate vomiting and violent fits of coughing, are explained by the swelling of the cervical lymphatic glands. The mortality is said to be greater in women than in men before the twentieth year of age; and the fact is explained by the debilitating influence of the menstrual functions.

The chapter on Sudden Death in Typhoid Fever is one of the most interesting. The author adopts Dr. Huchard's view, according to which death is generally due in those cases to anæmia and syncope; but a direct action of the virus on the central nervous system is considered probable in some instances.

The numerous disorders of the nervous system have been the subject of careful study on the part of the author; and the result of his observations is summed up in an instructive manner.

In the chapter on Diagnosis, the author ascribes to Dr. Lombard, of Geneva, the honour of having first established a distinction between typhoid fever and typhus, in 1836.

The treatment of typhoid fever is described with sufficient detail in the last chapter, and the different methods are examined critically. The author recommends moderate doses of salicylate of soda, but does not approve of cold baths in ordinary cases. He also warns his fellow-practitioners against the indiscriminate use of stimulants.