

as a literary character once observed of another author, eagerly perused the manuscript of a satirical drama, *Eléonore Hypochondre ou les Médecins Vengés*. The name is an anagram of Molière; the author thoroughly understood the great dramatist's weakness.

Dr. Brown shows us how the end came at last. Molière went on acting, though hæmoptysis became frequent, and emaciation progressed rapidly. He was taken mortally ill when playing the part of Argan in his own *Malade Imaginaire*. He went home and died within an hour. Within that hour he grumbled about his wife's soup, yet he asked for a pillow stuffed with drugs which that lady had made him. It was only internal remedies that he objected to. He also examined his sputum, and declared that it showed nothing unusual or alarming. Then he quietly expired. Medicine had seemed to him a good subject for satire. He found, like Macbeth, that it could not "minister to a mind diseased," nor could it cure his phthisis, allowing him to continue his arduous duties at the same time. No wonder he was hard on doctors. We know that he expected too much, and that he did not understand our art. But so it will always be with the general public, as it was with the great comedian.

Yet, all through Molière's attacks on doctors, even in his most extravagant flights, there is much for us members of the profession to reflect upon. Our art has advanced, but, like other men, we have our special failings. As Dr. Brown observes in his excellent sketch, which we have been considering in these paragraphs, "The picture Molière bequeaths of petty medical vanities, jealousies, and rivalries does not apply to his time only, but to all time; consequently it behoves us, in witnessing the scenes so invariably true of our own infirmities, to study them and correct them if we can."

DIE FÄRBETECHNIK DES NERVEN SYSTEMS. [The Technique of Staining the Nervous System.] Von Dr. B. POLLAK. Berlin: S. Karger. London: Williams and Norgate. 1897. (Cr. 8vo, pp. 136. 2s.).

DURING recent years several books have appeared in various languages on this subject, and to English-speaking workers. Goodall's excellent manual on the microscopical examination of the brain will undoubtedly be already known. As in most books of this kind a chapter is included on the preservation of the brain. The best method, however, is not included among those given here; for a minimum of shrinkage, good colour, and satisfactory differentiation of grey and white matter, Laskowsky's method has given the best results. Chapter II includes sections on hardening, embedding, section cutting, etc., and in Chapter V, on staining, sections are allotted to the demonstration of ganglion cells, medullary sheaths, axis cylinders, neuroglia, etc. Short chapters are also given to photographic methods, and to the changes in the weight of the brain due to hardening agents.

The author has wisely adopted the method so successfully used in v. Kahlden's *Histologische Technik*, of giving a summary in most cases of how the method is precisely carried out. The book is not intended for beginners, as a certain knowledge of general principles is presupposed. New and satisfactory methods are those most minutely described. Occasionally the author's own views as to the value of a method are not precisely stated, but this is largely compensated for by the chapter at the end, in which the methods recommended in the examination of the various parts of the nervous system are well summarised. This book will no doubt prove of much service to those interested in the subject, and can be thoroughly recommended.

CHINA: IMPERIAL MARITIME CUSTOMS: MEDICAL REPORTS FOR THE HALF-YEAR ENDED MARCH 31ST, 1896. Fifty-first issue. Shanghai: Published by order of the Inspector-General of Customs.

THIS number, in addition to the paper by Dr. Matignon on Typhus Fever in Northern China, to which we refer elsewhere, contains a report by Dr. John D. Thompson on the Health of Hankow, embodying some valuable observations on the typhoid fever of that port, as well as on thermic fever, liver abscess, and other diseases. Dr. Thompson remarks

that there can be no doubt that typhoid fever exists plentifully among the Chinese. Details of some of these native typhoid cases would have been appreciated. It is now well known that the disease is common enough among European residents almost everywhere in China and Japan.

Among Dr. Hart's surgical memoranda we note a case of ligation of the femoral artery for elephantiasis of the leg. We were under the impression that this operation had been given up owing to the risk and to the want of permanency in the results. It has been generally believed that in those cases in which the femoral artery has been ligatured the benefit accruing was attributable more to the associated bandaging, rest, and elevation than to the temporary arrest of the circulation in the limb; for, if in a case of double elephantiasis of the legs, one leg is treated by ligation of the femoral artery and the other with elevation and bandaging only, the results will be as good and as lasting from the latter as from the former. In neither case is the benefit permanent.

The other reports in this volume contain matter of interest, but for lack of an index or other device for facilitating reference their value is much detracted from.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF NITROUS OXIDE AND OXYGEN FOR DENTAL OPERATIONS. By F. W. HEWITT, M.A., M.D. Cantab. London: Claudius Ash and Sons. (Demy 8vo, pp. 116. 4s.)

AFTER the failure of Wells's public demonstration of the use of nitrous oxide as an anæsthetic its employment fell into abeyance until revived by Colton and Smith in America and Rymer and Evans in this country. To Clover's ingenuity we probably owe the present general adoption of the gas. Paul Bert, whose knowledge of physiology told him a gas which did not supply oxygen to the organism could not be a wholly satisfactory anæsthetic, undertook experiments by mixing air and later oxygen with the nitrous oxide to remedy this defect. Bert pronounced the first plan unsatisfactory, but although he never perfected a simple means of giving oxygen with nitrous oxide, he entertained a high opinion of the value of the mixture. Klikowitsch, Winkel, Döderlein, Zweifel, and Martin (Lyons) used the mixture with more or less satisfactory results, and notably the last named systematised its administration. A further step was made by Hillischer, of Vienna, who introduced an improved apparatus and reported some thousands of cases. Dr. HEWITT in his book details how, after using this apparatus without getting satisfactory results, he undertook experiments culminating in an elaborate inhaler, the full description of which he gives. The extreme difficulty of ensuring a due control of the individual gases so as to be able to gain even an approximate percentage of oxygen in the mixture renders the use of the inhaler and the management of the mixture perhaps somewhat complicated. This drawback, the writer tells us, is more than compensated for by the results which can be achieved when a mastery of the method has been acquired. The chapters dealing with the practical details should render this now possible. Dr. Hewitt, like Hillischer, believes very much in the use of oxygen with nitrous oxide, and has succeeded in presenting it before his readers in glowing colours.

NOTES ON BOOKS.

TRANSACTIONS AND PERIODICALS.

The Westminster Hospital Reports, vol. x. Edited by Dr. R. G. HEBB. (London: Messrs. J. and A. Churchill. 1897. Demy 8vo, pp. 352. 8s.)—The editor is to be congratulated upon the issue of an unusually interesting volume of reports. It opens with a paper by Mr. Holthouse, entitled *A Brief Sketch of Some of the Vicissitudes Encountered by the Westminster Hospital Medical School between the Years 1841 and 1854*. This paper is due in part to a fortunate but purely accidental omission in a short notice of the Westminster Hospital, which appeared in our pages in July, 1895. We say advisedly a fortunate omission, for it has caused Mr. Holthouse to write his personal recollections of a time whose

history was almost lost. Mr. Holthouse has thus done a service to the medical history of the metropolitan hospitals, whilst he has at the same time vindicated his right to be called one of the best friends of the school, for he helped it greatly in the time of its adversity. This paper is followed by an equally interesting one by Mr. Macnamara on Life in the Indian Medical Service, a paper which glows with local colour and reads as well as one of Rudyard Kipling's tales. There is a tiger story, with cholera reminiscences, a suspicion of "the big drunk draft" and memorials of the mutiny, all in the space of fourteen pages. Dr. Wills and Mr. Tubby contribute good work in each of their respective spheres, whilst Mr. Bond publishes the raw material, which might have been worked up into a valuable contribution to forensic medicine. The paper by Dr. Marett Tims is perhaps worthy of especial commendation. With only thirteen bodies to dissect, he has nevertheless placed upon record twelve anatomical abnormalities. Mr. Gossage contributes records of two cases, and Mr. de Santi deals with the operative treatment of cerebral and cerebellar abscesses in connection with disease of the middle ear, giving clinical notes of three cases in which he has explored the brain. Mr. Glassington, Dr. F. S. Palmer, Mr. J. R. Long, Dr. Parkinson, and Mr. Percy Paton each publish interesting cases, whilst Wilson Hake issues a preliminary note upon the phenomena of deliquescence. The volume concludes with the ordinary statistical reports, and with a list of the specimens which have lately been added to the museum.

The Transactions of the Fourth Session of the Intercolonial Medical Congress of Australasia, which was held in Dunedin, New Zealand, in February, 1896, have been published. The Literary Committee apologise for the delay in the issue of the volume, which they attribute to the fact that a large part of the matter had to be sent in proof to Australia. The volume, towards the expenses of the production of which the Government of New Zealand contributed, contains papers read at the Congress. Among these we may call attention to a paper by Dr. R. Scott Skirving, containing notes of four cases of acromegaly, and particulars of another case in which a tumour of the pituitary body was found *post mortem*. This patient, a man aged 34, presented symptoms which led to a diagnosis of cerebral tumour. He died rather suddenly during a fit characterised by opisthotonos, but without loss of consciousness. This case did not present distinct symptoms of acromegaly, the lower jaw was not prominent, the extremities were distinctly small, and the bones of the skull were of normal thickness. The paper is illustrated by photographs of some of the cases, and is a very valuable contribution to the study of this obscure disease. Among papers giving information as to matters of local interest, we may mention one by Mr. T. Hope Lewis, M.R.C.S., Health Officer of Auckland, New Zealand, dealing only too briefly with the thermal springs in the colony. The volume concludes with a most careful study, illustrated by microscopical sections, of the histology of twenty-nine cases of primary neoplasms in the kidney by Professor Allen and Dr. T. Cherry, of Melbourne.

International Clinics (vol. iv, 1897. London: Thomas Lewin), contains a long series of clinical papers by American and British physicians and surgeons, dealing in some cases with examples of rare diseases, but more often with subjects of general current interest to the practitioner.

YEAR BOOKS.

We have received the fourteenth annual issue of the *Year Book of the Scientific and Learned Societies of Great Britain and Ireland* (London: Charles Griffin and Co. 7s. 6d.) which has been revised from data furnished by the several societies. The usefulness of this work for reference is well known, and the value of the lists of papers read at the various societies to scientific workers is considerable.

The Municipal Year Book for 1897, published by Mr. Robert Donald, the Editor of "London" (to be obtained of Horace Marshall and Son, 2s.) is a kind of directory of municipal bodies, and gives under the head of each town particulars

of the kind of work done by the municipality. Separate sections containing matter applying to all the towns in the United Kingdom are devoted to the largest municipal industries—the supply of water, gas, and electricity, the management of tramways, and the erection of artisans' dwellings and municipal lodging-houses. A special chapter is devoted to the municipal government of London, and a list of the metropolitan authorities is given. The volume contains other matter which will be of value to all those interested in municipal government.

REPORTS AND ANALYSES

AND

DESCRIPTIONS OF NEW INVENTIONS

IN MEDICINE, SURGERY, DIETETICS, AND THE
ALLIED SCIENCES.

COMALTANA WINE.

THIS is one of the class of wines now frequently prepared for use as a tonic and digestive agent, in which the principles of the coca leaves and of malt are combined. Comaltana contains, according to our analysis, 0.57 grain of cocaine alkaloid per pint of the wine, which is in that respect satisfactory when compared with many coca wines, which are sometimes entirely deficient in alkaloidal contents. It also contained 17.2 per cent. of malt and wine extractives, diastase being present in an active condition as shown by the action of the wine on gelatinised starch. The wine has a distinct flavour of coca leaves, and has evidently been prepared with port wine of good character. It can be obtained from the Comaltana Wine Company, Heckmondwike, Yorkshire.

HOMO BREAD.

MESSRS. M. AND C. WEST, of Lotts Road, Chelsea, have sent us a specimen loaf of wheatmeal bread, which they prepare by Bowyer's process, but without furnishing any description of that process. The loaf was of brown texture, well made, palatable, and had evidently been prepared from wheat meal containing the nutritious portion of the cereal minus the irritating husky fibre. It was a satisfactory specimen of nutritious bread.

DIGESTIVE TEAS.

UNDER the name of Puro Tea the London and Asiatic Tea Agency, of 22, Fenchurch Street, E.C., have prepared a tea by a patented process, which is claimed to possess the advantages of being suitable for dyspeptics and others who are unable to drink an infusion of ordinary tea. In the sample sent to us we found 9.7 per cent. of "tannin," 4.5 per cent. ash, and 40 per cent. extractives, but the essential difference between the Puro Tea and ordinary tea is that nearly one half of the normal acidity of the tea has been neutralised, and in such a manner, it is said, as to leave the flavour of the tea unaltered. An infusion of the tea made in the way usually practised by tea tasters gave a liquor of peculiar softness, and free from the sharp astringent taste of an ordinary tea infusion. Puro Tea would no doubt be appreciated by those tea drinkers who from various causes are debarred from drinking ordinary tea, and cases are mentioned in which it has been found that many persons are able to drink an infusion of a tea so prepared without any dyspeptic discomfort. The amount of tannin in tea ranges from 6 to 15 per cent. In Puro Tea there is no diminution by treatment in the amount of tannin; the only difference is that a part of the free acid of the tea, whether tannic acid or not, has been neutralised with alkali, and any property possessed by Puro Tea is due to this neutralisation.

We have also received a sample of the Pagoda Imperial Digestive Tea from Mr. John Dawson, of 31, Gloucester Road, Kew. It contained 9.5 per cent. "tannin," 5.05 per cent. ash, and 39 per cent. extractives. It is a good-flavoured tea, and has no doubt been treated in such a manner as to partly neutralise the free acid without affecting the total percentage of astringent material.