The *Bladder* was partly filled with natural urine, which escaped by an ulcer into the vagina.

The *Uterus* was enlarged, very dark, and congested, containing an ovum of about seven or eight weeks; ovaries very large, and in one a large corpus luteus.

HEAD AND SPINE. The vessels of the scalp; dura mater, and pia mater, were much distended with dark fluid blood. Some serous effusion was present in muscles of the pia mater, upon the convolutions; none in the ventricles. The substance of both cerebrum and cerebellum was perfectly natural, except, perhaps, having more vascular points on being sliced. The medulla oblongata was firm and natural. The spinal veins were congested; the medulla spinalis itself was natural, except perhaps (but of this I am doubtful) rather softer than usual at the bulbous expansion about the seventh cervical vertebra.

At the inquest, I suggested a chemical analysis of the contents of the stomach, which I had secured; but, as there was an absence of any suspicion of the death having been occasioned by any one than herself, and, on the question being put to me, whether I could give a confident opinion as to strychnine being the cause of death, which I could, the jury, to whom the question was left by the coroner, did not consider it necessary.

Subsequently, for my own satisfaction, with the kind assistance of my friend Mr. Morley, an analysis was made on Wednesday night, one hundred and fourteen hours after death, and eighty-four after examination, when strychnine was most decidedly detected by us in considerable quantity, by the method mentioned in toxicological works. The interior of the stomach was well washed with distilled water, which, being added to the contents taken from the stomach, and acidulated with sulphuric acid, was boiled for some little time, and filtered; then neutralised with lime, and again filtered, and evaporated to dryness: a portion of this residue, on being dissolved in spirit, gave, on the addition of a small quantity of nitric acid, the characteristic brown tint of strychnine.

So much was obtained in this manner, that a solution in spirit was left at our School of Medicine, to enable Dr. P. Smith, the lecturer on medical jurisprudence, to exhibit to the students from time to time the tests for strychnine from that actually obtained from the stomach of one poisoned by it.

I was not then aware that there existed any insurmountable difficulty in detecting strychnine within a short period after death, nor do I now understand the grounds upon which such an opinion rests, unless it be meant that, when the patient lives for some considerable period after the administration of the dose, the substance may be digested, and thus all traces be removed before death; but I much doubt whether such a dose, unless frequently repeated at intervals for some time, so as to keep up its action and a constant spasm, would prove fatal, unless by exhausting the nervous power, when symptoms would be different. If the dose be sufficient to cause death within four hours, I suspect it may commonly be found; and that it does not necessarily undergo decomposition for a considerable period after death, the present case furnishes conclusive evidence.

BRONZED SKIN: DEATH: POST MORTEM EXAMINATION.

By C. M. THOMPSON, Esq., Westerham.

In connexion with the subject of bronzed skin, mentioned by Dr. Budd, I will relate a case which occurred in my own practice, and may be interesting, because it was followed by a *post mortem* examination. It occurred many years ago; but, owing to its peculiar circumstances, is indelibly impressed upon my memory.

I was called to a woman "of colour", about thirty years of age. The skin over the whole body was dark bronze; the palms of the hands were white; the conjunctivæ were perfectly clear and white.

Having no doubt of her being a woman of colour, but a little puzzled by the shape of her features, I inquired from what country she came? At this question she seemed vastly amused: assured me she was a native of my own neighbourhood, and reminded me that I had attended her on many occasions, some years before, while residing with an aunt in my town, at which time she was a fair and pretty girl. Having overcome my astonishment, I proceeded to examine her case. She stated that this discoloration had followed upon a fever, and had gradually increased. She was now suffering from severe dyspepsia, loss of appetite, frequent vomiting, emaciation, and also from violent spasm, resembling gall-stone. There was no proof, however, of bilious obstruction; the eye was clear, the urine limpid, and the motions of a bright ochre colour.

I need not detail the treatment; nothing gave her relief; and after lingering for two months, she died from an unusually severe attack of spasms. The *post mortem* examination showed all the viscera in a healthy state; but the gall-bladder was greatly distended, and its duct entirely obliterated, while the hepatic duct was pervious.

I may here mention that I have, in the course of my practice, met with four cases of what is vulgarly called "black jaundice." In all these the bronze discoloration was very great; but there was a marked difference between these cases and the former one, inasmuch as the orange eye and the obstructed bile clearly indicated the nature of the disease. In two of these I was enabled to make a *post mortem* examination, and in both I found the gall-ducts entirely obliterated; in one, from cancer of the pancreas; in the other, from simple occlusion of the common duct.

THE METEOROLOGY OF 1855.

By J. A. HINGESTON, Esq., Brighton.

COMPARED with the fatal year of 1854, the weather of 1855 was both fine and healthy. The commencement of January was warm, the temperature being as much as 12° Fahr. above the average; but it was followed by severe cold, which lasted from the 18th of January to the 21st of February. There was a good deal of snow and ice; and on the 18th of February, which was the coldest day of all, Fahrenheit's thermometer fell as low as 9°. The feathered tribes suffered severely; the thrush family sought shelter in the public thoroughfares of towns and villages, and both land and water birds were driven instinctively to the more southern parts of England. Many shrubs and perennials were killed by the frost.

From March to November the weather was fine. The summer was mild and pleasant, and the autumn warm. There were six months of continued fair weather, and the number of fine days throughout the year amounted to 196. The mornings were particularly beautiful, and the starlight nights in the autumn most enchanting.

On comparing the climate of the Crimea with that of the south coast of England, a great similarity will be observed between the two countries. They are both upon the same isothermal line. (See *Kaemtz's Meteorology*, plate vi.) Troops encamped on the open downs near Brighton, far removed from their supplies, and harassed with the slow operations of a siege, would not have suffered less during the winter here than the allied armies did on the plateau between Sebastopol and Balaklava; and the hurricane that broke upon this coast on the 25th of October last would not have proved less disastrous than that which wrecked so many of our transports against the rocky coast of the Crimea on the 14th November, 1854—particularly so large a craft as the steamship *Prince*, heavily laden, with a lee-shore close astern, and nothing but a single stream anchor to hold her head against the fury of the storm.

From the 25th of March to the 5th of May, a drought prevailed, relieved only by a few light showers. In May, 1.50 inches of rain fell, but the drought returned, and continued till the 7th of July. The grass was burnt up, or its

growth checked. But the dews were heavy at night. The harvest time was good. September was dry until the equinox. The remainder of the year was wet, but agreeably so, the rain falling in showers, with intervals of open weather, highly favourable to every kind of agricultural operation.

The same drought extended throughout Europe. It was severe at Malta; and the springs of Broussa, in Asia Minor, were dried up.

The amount of rain-fall, melted snow included, was, in this locality, 21.40 inches, of which two-thirds fell between the 9th of July and the 31st of December.

Earthquakes were frequent throughout the year. Constantinople was shaken by one on the 1st of January, and shocks were felt occasionally in that capital till the middle of April. Broussa was overthrown by one; and Mount Olympus emitted smoke like a volcano. Vesuvius was in action in the month of May. In July, there was an earthquake that extended along the valley of the Rhone, the south coast of France, and reached as far as Piedmont and Italy. On September 17th, there was a shock at Melbourne, in Australia; on the 29th of the same month, a very severe one, with a sudden rising and sinking of the sea, upon the coast of Japan; and a severe shock was felt, on the 8th of November, at Malta. Earthquakes are most likely always recurring; only, from our present rapid mode of communication with the rest of the world, we hear more of them, and they are also more accurately reported now than they used to be formerly.

The cholera threatened to break out again in this country in the spring of the year, but it declined after May, and only a few cases have been since reported. Upon the whole, the health of the population has improved, and the mortality has been low. But this terrible pest has not forsaken Europe; it was at Constantinople, and in the Crimea, in March, April, and November; at Florence and Genoa, in July; and at Palermo, Naples, the Ionian Islands, St. Petersburg, and Poland, in the month of December.

The barometer averaged 29.700 from January to June, and 29.800 from July to December. Fahrenheit's thermometer was as much as 13° and 17° below the average in February, and from 3° to 6° below the average for the first six months. The second half of the year was warmer than the first. From July to November, it was about 2° above the average; but December 6th it was 5°, and December 22nd as much as 17° below the average; whereas, on the 28th December, it was 10° above it.

As to the direction of the wind, the S.W. prevailed over the N.E., in the proportion of thirty to twenty weeks, or three-fifths of the whole year.

The year closed with very cold weather, preceded by a thick fog November 17th. On the 2nd December, a severe frost set in, and went on increasing in intensity till the 22nd of the month, on the morning of which day, an hour before sunrise, the mercury fell as low as 16° Fahrenheit: but on the following day it thawed, and, on the 26th of December, the thermometer rose as high as 50° Fahr. The ice was four inches thick, and the snow covered the ground.

This cold weather was ushered in and dismissed with meteors. One was visible at London, Oxford, and Worcester, on November 30th; and, just before the frost broke, two others were seen, the one, December 15th, at Gateshead, in the shape of a pillar of pale light; and the other, like a fire-ball, on the 19th December, at Barnsley, Leeds, and Bedford. These meteors, if they be not *aërolites*, are most likely modified auroras; for they trouble the magnet, and excite the electrometer.

On the 25th of October, there was an eclipse of the moon, visible in England; and the earth was not far from the shadow of the moon at its next change to new, November 9th. The deprivation of reflected solar light occasioned by the eclipse, and the subsequent proximity of the moon's shadow, may help in accounting for the very severe cold weather that followed in December.

Reviews and Notices.

LETTERS TO A YOUNG PHYSICIAN ON ENTERING INTO PRACTICE. By JAMES JACKSON, M.D., LL.D., Professor Emeritus of the Theory and Practice of Physic in the University of Cambridge, U.S., etc. Third edition. pp. 344. Boston and New York: 1855.

THE precepts of a man who has been engaged in active life for upwards of half a century are worthy of attention, in proportion to the measure in which he recognises the necessity for progress, and to the merit which he accords to the aids which his more active younger brethren are enabled to apply to the investigation of the problems of science. On this principle, an old man, who expresses his contempt for modern advances, merely because he cannot appreciate them—because, as he says, "he has got on very well without them, and does not see the use of them"—is deservedly regarded as but a living relic of a past age. We treat him with respect on account of his age, and because he has probably, at some period of his life, been an useful member of society; but we cannot look up to him as an oracle whom we are in duty bound to follow.

Of a far different stamp is the writer of the work before us. Engaged in active practice for upwards of fifty years, a careful observer and recorder of facts, he recognises, while he endeavours to impart to his juniors the practical knowledge which his long experience has enabled him to attain, the fact that he is and has been but a pioneer in the ever advancing field of medical science. Thus, in his dedicatory epistle to his friend Dr. Mason Warren, we find the expression of such liberal sentiments as these:—

"It has been my delight for many years past to point out to others what a respectable body of junior practitioners has been rising up around us. Compare the power of distinguishing diseases, and the discretion in treating them, shewn in young men of the present day, with the like characteristics of our medical men forty years ago, and you will find the advance to be very honourable. Medical science has been increasing in Europe and in this country.... In looking at one, and now another, who have succeeded me in office, I think it enough to boast of that I aided in teaching them how to learn. I should be sorry to believe that they had not gone ahead of their predecessor. I only beg that they will allow him to be a sort of honorary member in the corps of *young physic*."

And when he begins to address the "young physician", he writes after this manner:—

"In some respects I should call on you for instruction, rather than offer instruction to you. For instance, knowing how you have applied yourself, I should regard you as an authority in microscopic anatomy, or on nice points of organic chemistry. But I have been working, in my fashion, for more than half a century. I have been travelling through the country upon which you are entering. Its high-roads and its bye-paths are somewhat familiar to me. You have studied them in the books and on the maps; and I doubt not you have studied them well. Yet I may be able to communicate to you some useful knowledge respecting them, although it relates to small matters only." (p. 8.)

Such expressions as these are sufficient to encourage one to proceed further, and hear what Dr. JACKSON has to say.

Taking up the question of the position of medicine as a science or an art, the author at once recognises its uncertainties and its imperfections. These, however, one need not be surprised at, if a survey is taken of other pursuits, the results of which are almost certainties in comparison with those of medicine. The navigator and the agriculturist may follow out with exactitude the instructions which they have received, and act rigorously up to the principles which they have learned; but in both cases, the variations in natural phenomena—unprovided against because they cannot be foreseen—wreck the ship, or cause the crop to fail; and all this may be consistent with the wisest management on the part of the sailor or the farmer. Is it, then, the author asks, surprising that there is much uncertainty in the success of the medical art, in which we have to deal