BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

ART. XIV.—*A Universal Formulary: containing the Methods of Preparing and Administering Official and other Medicines. The whole adapted to Physicians and Pharmacutists.* By R. EGLESFELD GRIFFITH, M. D. *Selecta sunt quæ medicum nobilitant.*—LINNÆUS. Philadelphia, Lea and Blanchard, 1850: 8vo. pp. 564.

AN embarrassment has been long felt by the young practitioner, in the want of some work of ready access, embracing in a succinct, and at the same time full, manner those minor points in the practice of his profession which, though of daily demand, are very apt to be neglected or overlooked while in pursuit of the higher attainments of the profession. Well instructed in the *modus operandi* of medicines, and the forms in which they may be prescribed, he may meet with promptness the demands on his skill in the more simple indications of disease, but with the occurrence of circumstances in which his judgment would point out the application of more than one article capable of affecting beneficially the pathological condition, and the combined influences of which would be of superior efficacy, the want of familiarity with forms of prescription leads to hesitation, and consequently uncertainty as to results. To such, the presentation of formulæ constructed on correct principles, and in which the ingredients are properly adapted either as remedies essential to their curative power or as adjuvants to render them more acceptable to the patients, must be welcomed as an aid under embarrassing circumstances. To the more advanced practitioner, it affords occasional assistance in reminding him of combinations which have stood the test of time, and in which experience has shown some superiority of the associated means over their simple and unconnected application. The pharmacist will also find advantages in its possession, in the positions in which he is frequently placed, either in the demands of his occupation for judicious formulæ, or prescription of particular combinations under unusual or unfamiliar conventional names, in the extraction of various active principles, of vegetable origin, and in the production of those chemical compounds which, by choice or necessity, he may deem advisable to prepare for himself.

The work at present under notice is well calculated to afford assistance under the embarrassments pointed out, and also by affording useful information on various other points, of an equally practical character. It consists of several distinct portions, the *Universal Formulary* occupying more than one-half of the bulk of the volume. The first part, or "Introduction," treats of weights and measures, the forms and modes in which remedial substances are administered, and important directions for the management and arrangement of the sick room. Under the weights and measures, are comparisons of the different standards, and approximate comparisons of the conventional or domestic measures so frequently used. Specific gravity, its practical application, the instruments employed, the relation which they bear to a fixed standard, are also considered and enforced by several tables very judiciously selected. Although, in the formulæ themselves, the use of Latin terms, of signs and abbreviations, has been rejected, we find also under this part an explanation of abbreviations and a vocabulary of words, embracing not only those in common use, but also so copious as to be available on all occasions. The observations on the sick room we would commend to the notice of all young practitioners, as points to which they should devote their attention, and this the more particularly, inasmuch as the necessary arrangements are too generally left to the management

(frequently injudicious) of nurses or friends, and the conduct of which, in many cases, modifies either for good or evil, the progress of the case.

The most striking peculiarity of the second part, the Universal Formulary, is the total rejection in the prescriptions themselves of Latin forms, and the conventional signs and abbreviations for weights, measures, &c., a modification which in part will meet with very various degrees of favour. The adoption of the full expression for weight, instead of the signs in use, is to be approved of, from its avoiding a source of error, which may result from want of legibility in the writer, or care and attention in the reader of the prescription. This part, though a Universal Formulary, does not consist of prescriptions solely, but the arrangement being in the alphabetical order of the names (official as far as possible) of the remedies themselves, advantage is taken to introduce, under each head, a concise account of its source, nature, mode of preparation, effects, and doses, with some other incidental observations of practical application, with an enumeration of the diseases in which they have been recommended. The sources from which the formulæ have been derived are appended to each formula, and are very numerous, embracing names of high reputation in medical and pharmaceutical science, the former giving authority for the rational constitution of the formulæ and their applicability to particular states or stages of disease, and the latter the eligibility of the processes and pharmaceutical preparations which they have recommended. In the selection, considerable judgment has been exercised, and repetition of formulæ with but slight modifications only, has been avoided; and in those instances where this appears, there is much room for doubt which formula is on the whole best, and whether under certain circumstances either may not become preferable, as better adapted to the peculiarities of the case.

In addition to parts before noticed, we have directions for preparing such articles of diet suitable to the varying states of disease, and capricious or sated palate of the sick and convalescent, as have not been previously noticed in the preceding formulary; together with a list of incompatible substances, a posological table, a table of pharmaceutical names, embracing a comparison of the names adopted in all the British and the United States Pharmacopœias, official observations on the forms in which medicines are used, and their mode of preparation, the external application of remedial measures, an account of poisons, their tests and antidotes, and three copious tables of reference, viz., an index of diseases and their remedies, an index of botanical and pharmaceutical names, and a general index, adding considerably, in a general point of view, to the advantages of the work.

In respect to the typographical execution, we can see no reason to complain; the paper is good, and the type of such size as not to render the bulk of the volume too great, while at the same time it is sufficient for a work of reference, and of such distinctness as to cause no loss of time in the search for any particular subject. We would, in conclusion, hope that the publishers may meet with that success which their enterprise deserves, and which the well-earned reputation of the author would lead them to expect. R. B.

ART. XV.—*An Introductory Lecture to the Course of 1849-50, in the Medical Institution of Yale College.* By J. KNIGHT, M.D., Professor of Surgery. 8vo. pp. 20.

THE important etiological question, the propagation of communicable diseases, briefly discussed by Dr. Knight in this able and interesting lecture, is beginning to excite the attention of medical philosophers on both sides of the Atlantic. There is perhaps no subject of greater importance to the physician, and to the public in general, than the manner in which diseases are propagated. It is one, however, in regard to which it is extremely difficult to arrive at positive conclusions—to distinguish certainly between the dissemination of diseases by a morbid condition of the atmosphere generally or of a given locality, and by a specific poison emanating from the bodies of the sick. Rejecting the falla-