Reeves, of West Virginia, and Stephen Smith, of New York, were appointed a committee on organization, to report at the meeting in May. The American Medical Association meets in Washington in May, and another reason for holding the meeting in Washington is that the representatives of the State Boards may have an opportunity for conferring with members of Congress from their respective States, in regard to national sanitary legislation. It would seem that whenever the health authorities of all the States shall meet, discuss, and agree upon the course they will pursue with regard to yellow fever, cholera, scarlet fever, small-pox, diphtheria, or any disease which endangers public health without regard to State lines or borders, and whenever all State Boards shall act in concert, considerable progress will have been made in solving the problem of what are the best methods for national action in regard to inter-State and marisme quarantines, or inspection and disinfection, as well as in the practical control of epidemic diseases within the several States of this country.

A reason for this proposed new mode of action is the belief among leading sanitarians intrusted with the official execution of practical health measures, that while the work of the American Public Health Association is of inestimable value in promoting the interests of sanitary science and sanitary reform, there is a constantly increasing need for an annual conference of State and other health officials in regard to practical affairs of their every-day work, some part of which work can not profitably be discussed in a public meeting consisting largely of persons not familiar with its details, and not directly responsible to the people for the best possible care for the safety of their health and lives.

In fulfilling the duty assigned to it at the meeting, this committee respectfully requests that your board appoint a delegate to the meeting in Washington, in May, 1884, and that you will cause to be sent to this committee, or to be given to your delegate, a certificate of the appointment of such delegate.

It is hoped that each delegate will be prepared to clearly detail specific subjects on which there is need for comparison of views, or for cooperation; and to express his own views, and, if practicable, the views of his board respecting the same. It is respectfully suggested that each delegate prepare a brief paper for presentation at the meeting; because in that way, better than in any other, will each delegate be prepared to express himself clearly and concisely, and the direction which the proposed associated action shall take be most likely to be that best calculated to aid and improve the several branches of the public health service in this country.

Very respectfully,

Henry B. Baker,
J. N. McCormack,
March 4, 1884.

First meeting to be held on the second day of the session of the American Medical Association.

BOOK REVIEWS.


This volume contains the substance of a course of lectures delivered in the University of New York, supplemented as the writer states, by an account of the peculiar methods of treatment of various American and European authorities, thus forming a manual of reference.

The work has been done with no great thoroughness or completeness. In fact, as a work of reference it is not equal to several of the standard treatises from which it is largely compiled. Those parts of the work which are really most telling and attractive are the long quotations from Acton, Hammond (Male Impotence), and similar well-known works.

We do not like the tone of the book. "Sons of Manhood" is a definition not too loose for the writer's taste, as he employs it more than once.

The value of a work which expressly treats continence among the causes of disease and insanity (p. 62) is at least highly questionable. Its pages abound in falsely colored statements set down as scientific facts, which are merely the theories of obscure writers, or else crude generalities of the author himself. There is an utter want of clearness in the statement of cause and effect, as in the satyrisis of phthisical patients, which he states as proof of the power of masturbation to cause consumption. Few more misleading or unnatural statements have ever been put in print than that "varicocoele in young persons" is a "positive sign" of "masturbation or sexual excess—generally the former" (p. 22). See also p. 62: "Masturbation is a universal vice in civilized countries. A very large majority of both sexes indulge in the habit from early childhood. In savage lands it is of rare occurrence." Of which alleged facts no evidence is offered.

"Erotic tendencies," p. 66, are said to be "fostered by sedentary habits," a statement directly in contradiction to experience and good authorities.

On page 76 we find the following: "During sexual intercourse the expenditure of nerve force is compensated by the magnetism of the partner. In all cases, or in almost all cases, there is a return of that nature which prevents injury." Pseudo-pathology can exhibit itself in no worse light than in the above passage. What is this "nerve force" which is to be "compensated" by the magnetism of the partner? It would be well for the author to explain when and how he made this interesting discovery. We are almost forced to believe that the book was written partly for non-professional readers. Otherwise why are common names inserted in parentheses after the scientific?

The poor hypochondriacs who are described as having lost their "manhood," are the unhappy victims too often of books of this class. Their cases would present much less difficulty to the neurologist,
who, unfortunately, sees many of them, could he banish from their minds the rubbish of false pathology they have imbibed about "male impotence," "spematorrhœa," and "emissions."

The words of Gant in his latest preface cannot be too often repeated to the profession in this connection. (See p. 6, "Diseases of the Bladder," by Frederick Gant, F.R.C.S., Birmingham & Co.) "The author having seen—and quite recently—so much deplorable error and misery resulting to patients from studying diseases of the urinary organs, he has written this treatise in a purely technical form; and thus to render the whole as unintelligible as possible to the public. The majority of the latter class would, indeed, be better able to walk barefooted to Jerusalem, than readily to comprehend the greater portion of the text. The personal histories of the cases have been purposely omitted."

This has the manly ring, and is a fitting introduction to Professor Gant's fifth edition of his valuable treatise on the bladder, prostate and urethra. The work is well known in former editions, and comes out now enlarged and revised in some parts. The surgical anatomy of the parts is wholly rewritten, and now appears in a very attractive form. In all discussions save on the subject of rapid improved lithotrity, the author's views are valuable and abreast of the day, but here there is a distinct failure to recognize the importance of the improvements of Bigelow, and the radical changes they have brought. The subject is handled too cautiously, and points are stated as still in doubt which have long since been completely established. Outside of this deficiency, which is not uncommon with English writers, the treatise is a thorough and complete one, in some respects more so than any other. This is especially true of the various unusual and obscure bladder and urethral affections whose treatment is too slightly passed over in many American text-books.

E. W. A.


A prominent idea set forth in this work is defined as "conservatism," or "expectant" treatment of hip disease. A large amount of discussion is given to the relative merits of this expectant or waiting treatment and the mechanical treatment, so-called, of most orthopedists. It is evident that the author has been led into a vagary, in part resulting from a wrong point of view, and from want of comprehensiveness in his survey of the subject. As is often the case with specialists, the very minuteness of his knowledge has led him to become careless or oblivious of the most obvious and fundamental facts of his subject.

The author's mind seems incapable of receiving broad views. It is perversely narrow. The mechanical treatment of hip disease is not falling into disuse, and has not proved a practical failure, as the author in effect assures us. How any intelligent observer of the drift of professional opinion could make such an assertion, is not easy to understand.

The following illustrates the strange obliquity of the author's mental eyesight: "Year after year witnesses the introduction of new forms of apparatus, new methods of treatment, or revivals of the same principles in old apparatus, and year after year witnesses the failure of the same to meet the diseases set forth."

Here we find the significance of facts wholly distorted to meet a whimsical theory. The multiplication of orthopedic appliances, all designed to meet the same indication, on the same general principle, is the strongest possible evidence of the value and permanency of that principle. It would be as well to say that the numerous forms of pessaries are an argument against all pessaries, or that the existence of two or more methods of dressing a fractured limb is calculated to throw discredit upon the use of all splints and bandages. Every new hip splint invented is an item of evidence for, and not against, the mechanical treatment of hip disease.

The book is valuable for the minute information it contains on a large variety of obscure affections about the hip. A careful analysis of the varieties of hip disease has been elaborated in a series in the chapters entitled "Sprains of the Hip" (chap. III), "Neuroses of Hip" (IV), "Rheumatism of Hip" (V), "Coxo-Femoral Periarthritis" (VI), "Bursitis of Hip" (VII), "Acute Primary Synovitis" (VIII), "Acute Epephyritis of Hip" (IX), "Diastasis of Head of Femur," "Periostitis of Hip" (X). These chapters are valuable summaries, and are all preparatory to the real important topic of the work, viz.: Chronic Articular Ostitis of the Hip, or real hip disease, whose discussion occupies the latter half of the book (chaps. XI—XVIII). This work contains the first complete chapter ever published upon Bursitis of the Hip, although many writers have alluded to the affection.

E. W. A.

DOMESTIC CORRESPONDENCE.

FROM WASHINGTON.

On March 3 Mr. Willis introduced a bill into the House of Representatives (H. R. 5650) for the promotion of anatomical science and to prevent the desecration of graves. It provides for the delivering of such bodies as are to be buried at the public expense, and as coming from any of the charitable or correctional institutions of the District of Columbia, to the medical colleges of the District of Columbia. If the deceased should have requested that he be buried, should his kindred claim him within twenty-four hours after his death, or should the deceased be a stranger or traveler, the body shall be buried. Bonds are required that the bodies are to be used for a prop-