The Man of Science, the Man of God—Sir James Y. Simpson. By the Rev. CHAS. BULLOCK, B.D. London: Home Words Publishing Office, Paternoster-square.

THE scientific reputation of Sir James Simpson is world-wide. The double presentation of his mind and character which is set before us in this modest volume and in the larger "Life" is perhaps less widely familiar. In these pages, while personal faults are not denied, the rise and growth of qualities which proved in their application so useful to mankind are clearly brought out. Professor Simpson, it may be noticed, was not, like some great men, a human phenomenon from his earliest youth. As a boy he evinced, nevertheless, the elements of mental and moral faculties which needed but the stimulation of circumstances, not always favourable, to develop a strong and helpful as well as a keenly perceptive character. He was quick, industrious, tenacious of memory, and generally liked because of his kindness of disposition. As a student he was of the working order, and achieved considerable distinction in a time when the Edinburgh school did not abound in scholastic honours. When, after graduation, he became a practitioner, the same laboriousness was one of his most striking characteristics. Energetic and resolute, sleeping often far too little, persevering in spite of occasional ill-health, he did full justice to scientific sympathies which were wide and yet particular. He was no mere specialist, though leaning from the first towards one department of medicine. Matters of the most general, even comparatively trivial, interest engaged his attention for the time being almost as if they formed the chief business of his life. Investigations in anæsthesia very early entered into his varied curriculum of self-education, and when at last, in 1847, he saw the dawn of his own great discovery in the successful use of ether for this purpose, he "could think of naught else." As a man Professor Simpson did not belie the promise of boyhood, but, notwithstanding the faults of an impulsive nature, exaggerated by the bustle and battle of life, gave in his day many proofs of a genial and considerate disposition to friends and patients of every station. Neglect of professional engagements has been attributed to him by some, but this was commonly the natural consequence of over-work. Till he had reached the prime of manhood Professor Simpson's most active life was almost entirely an intellectual one. Religion did not show itself much upon the surface. Certain forms he acknowledged; he chose his church, but it is not till within some twelve or thirteen years of his death that we find any important profession of his personal views upon the subject. It does not appear, however, that his ultimate adhesion to the simplest principles of evangelical belief was quite a sudden matter; it was rather the culmination of previous deliberations, and was characteristically outspoken. The reading public will find much to interest in this little work. One or two errata might be excluded from later editions, such as "Wallis" for "Walter" on p. 48, and "Turner," we suppose for "Thomas" Keith on p. 55.

On Medical Climatology: a Scheme for defining Local Climates by combined Meteorological and Phenological Observation. By CHARLES ROBERTS, F.R.C.S., &c.

THIS is a short paper read by Dr. Roberts at the congress of the Sanitary Institute held at York last September. The title explains the proposed method of the author. Linnæus long ago collected information with the view of showing the influence of locality upon the leafing, blossoming, fruiting, and fall of the leaf in plant life. We are accustomed to estimate the climate of any given locality by purely meteorological considerations. Mr. Roberts holds, and we think with good reason, that a combination of these two methods might lead to results of great practical utility. He points out that "plants are most exposed to, and most

distinctly declare, the geological and climatic conditions of a country or district. Being fixed to the soil, they show its character; and being confined to one place, they sum up the whole range of meteorological phenomena to which they are, and have been, exposed." The researches of Bowditch in America and of Buchanan in this country have shown how important a factor the character of the soil is with regard to the etiology of one important disease—viz., phthisis, Mr. Roberts proceeds to tabulate the dates of the various epochs of plant development in different localities, and then works out the temperature and moisture equivalents for these periods. On page 5 he gives an interesting diagram, showing at a glance the relative viability of a few common trees, shrubs, and flowers in London and its neighbourhood. Mr. Roberts' methods of observation are full of interest to the botanist, and have promise of real utility for the medical climatologist and the practical physician.

New Inventions.

ATKINSON'S "PERFECT" TRUSS.

MR. B. J. ATKINSON, formerly of 3, Hemming's-row, Charing-cross, but now of 7, Mill-street, Hanover-square, W., has recently patented an important improvement in trusses. This consists in uniting the pad to the spring of the truss by a universal joint, thereby allowing it, when necessary for adjustment, to be moved in any direction. When the wished-for position has been attained, a lever, acted upon by a binding screw, compresses the ball of the joint and completely fixes the pad. The accompanying woodcuts will afford a good idea of its construction. When an alteration

in the position of the pad is required, the binding screw is released, the pad adjusted, and the screw again tightened. A special feature, also, of this truss is that it is made to press over the internal ring, and slightly in advance, without pressing upon the spermatic cord; and further, from the peculiar formation of the pad (a perpendicular section of which will show a parabolic curve) pressure may be made by a comparatively flat surface or a more or less obtuse one, at the discretion of the surgeon. The whole design has been very carefully considered, and can best be understood by an examination of its parts. The form of truss varies, of course, in the case of femoral hernia, though the above remarks apply as well to this condition. The practical surgeon will see the great advantages presented by this kind of truss.

A MODIFIED FORM OF URETHROTOME.

A LARGE majority of surgeons are agreed that internal division is the best treatment of many strictures of the urethra. Of the innumerable instruments for the performance of this operation which I have seen or have been able to find described, all of them, while possessing many good and ingenious qualities, have had also some one or more faulty features. My aim has been to combine in one instrument all the good and eliminate all the bad points. I do not claim for my instrument many original features, only that it possesses the merits and avoids the faults of its predecessors.

That this instrument possesses the other qualities of a perfect urethrotome as given above will be seen from the following description. It consists essentially of a jointed knife (A, fig. 1), which can be projected from a sheath (B) to regulated distances. This is effected by pressure on the button (c, figs. 1 and 2), which is continuous with the steel rod (E, fig. 2) tightly fitting the tube (F), the end of this rod being the knife (a), and the rod being reduced and tempered for a short distance from the knife. The other blade (b) also runs into a fine-tempered end-piece, which rests against the solid probe point, either straight (H) or curved (H'), which screws on at o. The blades are withdrawn on removal of the pressure by the spring (K, Fig. 2). The extent of projection of the knives is regulated by the graduated wheel (L), turning

Fig. 3.

There seem to me to be required in a perfect urethrotome at least seven qualities—viz.: (1) to be used with one hand; (2) to cut either from before back or from behind forward; (3) to incise any part of the circumference of the urethra; (4) to be easily regulated, so as to cut to any depth, even when the blades are out of sight in the urethra; (5) to be of the smallest calibre possible when the blades are sheathed; (6) to be adapted to carry a guide bougie; and (7) to be easily cleaned. The value of the first of these may not be apparent; but with one hand you have a much more delicate sense of touch, which is all you have to rely upon in this operation. Who would hold a probe or a catheter with both hands? It is also advantageous to be able to grasp and steady the urethra with the free hand. To attain this the projection of the knives must be produced by flexion of the fingers, because this is more powerful than extension, and much more completely under our control—I presume in consequence of our habituation to use all instruments by the aid of the flexor muscles.

on the screw (d), and held in place after setting to the required number (French gauge) by the spring wedge (c). The whole tube (F) carrying the knives is only slotted for a short distance, and the steel rod is squared and fitted to a square box at the point f, Fig. 2. To clean the instrument screw off H. Turn the milled head (c) until the two parts of the rod which are united by a screw at k, Fig. 2, are separated. The anterior part of the rod with the blades can then be drawn out at the end (o). The spring box unscrews at m, Fig. 1. Fig. 3 is the conducting bougie, which can be screwed on at n, Fig. 1, in place of the probe point. The tube carrying the knife-rod is only slotted for two inches and a quarter, and is thus rigid. The square socket at f, Fig. 2, prevents twisting of the knives.

The instrument has been most satisfactorily made for me by Messrs. Hilliard and Son, Renfield-street.

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NINTH INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CONGRESS.

IN the section on Medical Climatology and Demography of the Congress to be held at Washington in September next, the following scheme of subjects for papers and discussions has been prepared:—

1. Importance of the study of climatology and demography in connexion with the science of medicine. 2. What constitute determinate climatic characteristics. 3. The effects of climate on the human race as manifested in local demographic conditions; and of the several elements of climate as shown by coincident meteorological, morbidity, and mortality statistics. 4. The question of acclimation. 5. Relative advantages of mountain and seaside resorts for recuperative purposes and as palliative or curative in certain diseased states of the system—segregation *versus* aggregation of invalids at health stations. 6. The therapeutic value of natural mineral waters. 7. Accurate records of prevailing sickness in any community a necessary factor in

any comprehensive system of vital statistics. The responsibility of Governments to amply supply their people with the climatic and vital statistics of their respective countries. 8. Collective investigation, apart from aiding the study of the natural history of disease, as contributive of numerical data having a demographic bearing—(1) as to the kinds and proportions of prevailing diseases; (2) as to the absolute amount of daily sickness and consequent loss of time, occupation, &c. 9. Medical nomenclature considered in its practical relations to vital statistics. 10. The melioration of demographic conditions effected by preventive medicine. Influence of the physical well-being of a population upon its economy. Offences against moral and civil law in their medical relations to demographic circumstances.

Albert L. Gihon, M.D., P. O. Box 291, Vallejo, California, is president of this section; and Charles Denison, M.D., of Denver, Colorado; Isambard Owen, M.D., of Hertford-street, Mayfair, London; Dr. E. Bertherand, of Algeria; and Dr. A. Wernich, of Cöslin, Germany, are the secretaries.