BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

A Lecture Introductory to the Thirteenth Annual Course of Lectures and Evening Entertainments, at the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, at Philadelphia. By Edward A. Smith, M. D., Assistant Physician. Published by request of the Class.—1857.

LITTLE more than two centuries ago, medicine was defined and practically considered, among the most civilized nations, as the art of adapting specific remedies to indications of bodily disorder. Now, the notion of specifics obtains only with the ignorant, and the agents then used have in great part been laid aside, as either noxious or inert. While it is true that discoveries in chemistry and natural history are continually supplying the places of these discarded nostrums with valuable remedies, yet the greatest progress in medicine has no doubt been in quite another direction. This is evident from the present general statement of the science in terms: for although the facts of experience, in the progress at least of the less positive branches of knowledge, come before the logical conceptions of their subject, yet the latter, as the enlarged shadows, magnify and define for their easier study. Medicine has really gained a meaning wider and more comprehensive than we are apt to think. It will perhaps be generally stated to mean, the science of the prevention and cure of disease; and to this, in their sense of the latter term, the "advanced thinkers" of the profession would not object. But these claim that from being the synonym of the "physic" of the middle ages, all the meaning of the "physics" of the ancient philosophers is now due the term medicine. In this sense it treats of disease in its physical, mental, and moral manifestations, and includes all means for the improvement of the human race. Without passing upon this definition, or the system to which it belongs, it may at least indicate the extent of the change taken place in the practice of the healing art.

This is best illustrated, however, as is also that the ambitious definition noticed is only a magnified image of facts, in modern institutions for the insane. Of all the agencies which these supply in behalf of

humanity in a state of depravation the most fatal to its nobility and happiness, medicine in its narrow sense is only one among many of at least equal importance. The completest sanitary provisions and means for bodily comfort are deemed a prime necessity, and great improvements in the construction and fitting up of buildings for this purpose are constantly making. The agency of moral teaching and religious observance is fully availed of, and chapels and chapel-rooms are attached to these institutions. Bodily and mental hygiene are carefully studied, and liberally provided for, and finally systematic education of every sort completes a practical compend of the modern enlarged idea of medicine.

It is pleasant to dwell upon what has been effected in American institutions toward the perfection of this system, and the realization of this noble idea; and the Introductory Lecture of Dr. Smith, giving a history and description of the means of the Pennsylvania Insane Hospital for the recreation and improvement of its patients, fully represents all that has been done in this direction.

It is stated that in 1751, "the benevolent citizens of Philadelphia"—a title that has continued to be deserved as a general one to this day,—founded a hospital, from which the department for insane was separated in 1841, and the new building opened by Dr. Thomas S. Kirkbride, its present distinguished superintendent. "Means of diversion and amusement," says the lecturer, "have ever been a prominent object here, and year by year has been developed a plan, no where so fully carried into effect, as in this institution." The description which follows in the lecture, of what has been accomplished in this way, is perhaps sufficient proof of the statement; and when we consider that the institutions for the insane in this country have been established and operated from very different views of their purpose and the manner in which it might best be attained, with the different circumstances of their location and pecuniary provision, this will not be thought invidious.

The winter lecture-courses were begun in the year 1845, and have been continued with regularity and success to the present season. They have been upon subjects of natural science and historic description, illustrated by pictures and scientific instruments; themes calculated to excite curiosity, and fix the attention upon new and healthful objects. During the first season of 1845-6, forty-three lectures were delivered by Dr. John Curwen, then assistant physician, and now superintendent of the State Lunatic Hospital, at Harrisburg, Pa. The

twelfth season of the year 1856-7 was prolonged to nine months, comprising three weekly lectures. For the five years closing with the season previous to the one introduced, Dr. J. Edwards Lee was the principal lecturer, and is highly complimented by his successor. Many lectures have also been given each year by able and philanthropic gentlemen, not connected with the hospital. The introductory is an interesting and valuable record of the progress and success of the efforts, and the numerous benefactions which have created a marked excellence of an institution in all respects among the first of its class.

S U M M A R Y .

In an article entitled : "Illustrations of Insanity, furnished by the Letters and Writings of the Insane," which was published in a previous number of the JOURNAL, Dr. Brigham introduced the following letter as a specimen of most entire incoherence :

"MY DEAR SISTER : As the cedars of Lebanon have been walking through Edgeworth forest so long, you must have concluded that I have returned to the upper-world, but I am still in purgatory for James K. Polk's sins, which, if they do not end in smoke, surely have as good a chance of beginning that way as the ideas began to shoot, for if T. had not left his trunk on the cart at the Depot, our shades would have been a deuced sight nearer to Land's End than Dr. Johnson said they would by the time the Yankees rebelled,—(ad interim) but I am now about between the porch and the altar, as Dr. — used often to express himself, under the droppings of the sanctuary, where I wish to forget old things for a time at least, and return to some better place than the last. I could have kicked plagiary to the seventh seal.

"Do you know what this same long, taper roller is ? well pop it off, if by their works ye shall know them. Pollock has as good a right to be a D. D. as that doctor we read of in Blackwood that sought so long for spoons and found them not, because they were all lead until they were new burnished in Holyrood palace very near the place where Polk traced his pedigree, a little too near the loins of William the Conquerer, for the pleasures of memory or sense either, for Thompson, Bryant, Africaner, Ainsworth or anybody else. I said I had been to the Poles, and S. had been there, and let T. Y. be witness that it was something more than stars, it is one thing neither you nor I can comprehend till we compare notes, but there is the least pit in hell that you ever saw, or ever will see, and a certain little white Devil just as ready now as ever to lend a helping hand to the cook to give her a lift over those bars. If you should ever be inclined to try Nebuchadnezzar's hollow furnace, for he did not wash all my guilt away did he ? No