therefore no longer necessary to be reconsidered in detail." and by the omission of all the illustrative cases which were perhaps necessary in support of propositions advanced by the writer, in the earlier part of his career, when he was less known and less entitled to speak *ex cathedra* than at present. In this course we think the author is right: he is now so generally recognized as the highest living authority on the subjects concerning which he writes, that the mere fact that a certain opinion is held by Sir Henry Thompson, on these topics, is of more importance and will carry more weight than an argument derived from any individual series of cases, which after all may perhaps be susceptible of being read in more than one way, and which under any circumstances might probably be counterbalanced with an equally long series collected with a view of proving an opposite doctrine.

The author's views upon the subjects discussed in this volume are so familiar to our readers, from the notices of previous editions which have appeared in our pages, and from a more recent notice of his "Clinical Lectures," in our number for last April (pp. 509-511), that it would not be worth while for us to enter into any detailed examination of the present volume. Suffice it to say, that it is a most learned as well as most practical and trustworthy treatise upon the subjects with which it deals. We have read it through with great care, and with constantly increasing interest and admiration. We are particularly glad to be able to say that the criticism which we felt compelled to make as to the tone of the "Clinical Lectures," is in no wise applicable to the volume now under consideration. While bearing on its every page the evidences of profound research and wide reading, as well as of large practical experience, it is both in its conception and in its execution, characterized by that dignity and true modesty which, while eminently befitting the writer who is conscious of his own power, and who possesses real independence of judgment, is but too often slighted by both tyro and teacher, under the mistaken notion that flippancy shows originality and freshness, and that contempt for others will insure attention and respect for self.

This edition is neatly and very accurately printed, and accompanied by three plates (the frontispiece of former editions is omitted), and forty-seven woodcuts. We are glad to know that it is to be republished in this country, and trust that it may be widely distributed among the surgical practitioners of America.

J. A., JR.

ART. XXXV.—*On the Action, Use, and Value of Oxygen in the Treatment of Various Diseases otherwise Incurable or very Intractable.* By S. B. BIRCH, M. D., London; formerly Demonstrator of Anatomy Medical School, Manchester, &c. Second Edition. 8vo. pp. 149. London: John Churchill and Sons, 1868.

THIS book is not large, but it is too large. Our comment is friendly, and proceeds from a desire to see every new remedy and therapeutic method laid before the profession with conciseness and precision. It is not otherwise possible to understand clearly the value of any treatment so far as ascertained, or to determine what is undecided, by accurate additional investigation. We might justly expect in a volume with the title of this, first, what is known of the general chemical properties of oxygen in its ordinary atmospheric form and in its several allotropic conditions; secondly, an account of its effects upon the various functions under physiological circumstances and different modes of administration; then an equally definite record of the special results observed after its employment in diseased conditions; and lastly, a statement of the indications and contra-indications for its use.

The author does, indeed, treat of these several divisions of the subject, but confuses them by an involved and needless discussion of the intimate *modus operandi*. Instead of systematic reports of the effects produced upon respiration, circulation, and other cardinal functions, we have an intricate dissertation

upon atomic polarity, motility, and modified force. The importance of being guided by the "constitutional predisposition, and the abnormal conditions incidentally existing in the organism of each patient" is repeatedly referred to, but we are left in doubt as to the special circumstances so grouped.

The clinical illustrations are thirty-one in number, and consist of chronic cases, widely different in character, in which other remedial treatment had failed. They are reported in general terms, and do not, therefore, admit of accurate analysis. The beneficial effects obtained can apparently be referred in all to improvement in the general nutrition, and in this we judge the real value of the remedy consists; acting probably through its influence upon the blood and circulation. Dr. Birch says, "The diseases *par excellence* in which the gas has afforded me the most gratification, are those attended with either local or general venous congestion—a preponderance of the venous over the arterial, and torpidity of the capillary circulation. The good effects have been, as a rule, most decided in persons of a gouty or strumous habit, or otherwise in a state of general *malaise*, with great liability to colds and sluggish circulation, either constitutional or superinduced by an atomic and oppressed condition through over-feeding and other luxurious or indolent habits." The author maintains with much earnestness that the effects obtained cannot be referred to mere super-oxygenation; nor are they to be explained by the quantity, but by the modified condition of the gas administered. To insure its requisite energy as a therapeutic agent the oxygen should "be either nascent or carefully subjected to the electrical current immediately before employment, or properly condensed, so as to be available for release, measurement, and administration, at a moment's notice." "Nine to twelve pints of the pure gas, diluted with about seventy-five pints of air, may be stated as a fair medium dose; and the inhalation of this quantity should, *mutatis mutandis*, extend over a period of at least half an hour." For administration by the stomach, Dr. Birch prefers super-oxygenated water, ozonized water and oil, and oxygenated bread, to peroxide of hydrogen; but he fails to give us distinct advice as to the cases in which these are better than inhalations.

The author complains at length that his labours have been, with a few gratefully enumerated exceptions, ungenerously met by indifference, prejudice, and contempt; and a really valuable remedy unjustly classed with pseudo-scientific pretensions and bread-pills. We do not wish to enter into the details of the controversy, and cannot here make any extended reference to the reports of Richardson, Pavy, and others who have used oxygen in different forms and in different diseases. We certainly believe that its modified administration is something more "than taking a little extra fresh air," and in view of the results already obtained and the continued investigations of chemists upon allotropic conditions of the gas, and upon the highly oxygenated compounds, we encourage Dr. Birch to pursue his work. We cannot doubt that a more scientific statement of what he has thus far accomplished, and a carefully digested account of subsequent observations, will secure for him the unprejudiced and eager attention of all who are fond of new methods of treatment, and particularly of those who have to do with "diseases otherwise incurable or very intractable."

E. R.

ART. XXXVI. Reports of Thirteen Hospitals for the Insane.

1. Dr. HARLOW, in the report of the *Maine Insane Hospital*, for the year ending with Nov. 20, 1868, recommends the erection of an additional wing for the accommodation of men.

	Men.	Women.	Total.
Patients in course of the year	234	234	468
Discharged cured	38	25	63
Died	11	16	27
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