BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

ART. XIII.—*A Treatise on Diseases of the Air Passages—comprising an Inquiry into the History, Pathology, Causes and Treatment of those Affections of the Throat called Bronchitis, Chronic Laryngitis, Clergymen's Sore-throat, &c. &c.* By HORACE GREEN, A. M., M. D. New York and London: Wiley & Putnam. 8vo. pp. 272.

IN these days of our literary dependence, when the best minds and the largest accomplishments of our medical countrymen are too often made to play the insignificant part of a master of ceremonies, introducing to the profession some foreign book, and then withdrawing from notice, with the gain of little credit but for courtesy,—it is refreshing to see the announcement of a work which, for good or evil, we may call our own: something which shall stamp its author with a positive value, and assign to him his proper station in the medical fraternity,—a contribution of materials, however small, to build up that national literature of which it is humiliating to reflect that the foundations are scarcely laid. It was cheering, therefore, to learn that a work had been published professing to treat of a class of diseases of which no country presents more numerous examples than the United States, and no part of that country more than the particular field of the author's observation. We were prepared to find in it familiarity with the pathology of the respiratory organs, a knowledge of what had been written and done concerning their treatment, and this augmented and improved by a long and extensive experience. How mortifying a disappointment we experienced, it is our unwelcome office to disclose.

The discursive title by no means truly describes the book which bears it. No diseases of the air passages are therein considered, unless incidentally, besides "follicular inflammation" of the larynx. The object of the treatise is to prove that this affection may be cured by a strong solution of lunar caustic, applied to the interior of the larynx by means of a piece of sponge attached to a whalebone handle. MM. Trousseau and Belloc long ago showed satisfactorily that this operation was not only feasible, but often capable of curing chronic laryngitis. Yet of these gentlemen the author speaks as follows (p. xi. of the Introduction):

"While I claim no credit for having originated the practice myself, I, on the other hand, give these authors none, for having, so far as I am concerned, suggested it; for I had been in the practice of cauterizing the larynx nearly two years before I had ever heard of Trousseau and Belloc. Their work was translated, and published in this country in 1841. In 1838, when in London, I had a conversation with Dr. Johnson, the late editor of the *Medico-Chirurgical Review* on the subject of chronic laryngeal disease."

Dr. Johnson referred to the frequency of the affection among public speakers, and suggested "that if proper applications could be applied below the epiglottis, no difficulty would occur in treating, successfully, the disease." Acting upon this suggestion, the author, on his return home succeeded "in entering the larynx, and thereby curing a well marked and severe case of laryngeal disease."

Now, it is surprising that Dr. Green did not know that the two physicians already named had given their method to the world at least eighteen months before his interview with Dr. Johnson. Their Essay was "crowned" at the meeting of the Royal Academy of Medicine, held on the 9th of August, 1836, printed in the *Memoirs of the Academy*, and published by themselves in 1837, and in the same year republished at Brussels. And it is no less astonishing that there should have been no mention of this work in a conversation held with the editor of the very periodical in which, a few months before (Jan. 1838), it had been reviewed. And if the reported conversation took place subsequently to April, 1838, it passes belief that neither Dr. Johnson nor Dr. Green should have been acquainted with an elaborate notice of MM. Trousseau and Belloc's essay which appeared in the *Br.*

and *For. Med. Review* for that month, in which the process of these gentlemen for cauterizing the larynx is given in full.

Nor is it easy to explain why Dr. Green should state that the translation of the essay appeared in this country in 1841, when a reference to its title page would have informed him that it was published in Philadelphia in 1839; nor how it happened that (vid. p. 197) "*several years* before the publication in this country of the work of Trousseau and Belloc, . . . he (1) became fully satisfied that for safety, efficacy, and certainty of action, no known local, therapeutic agent, can compare with the crystals of the nitrate of silver, in the treatment of laryngeal and bronchial affections,"—since he affirms that the suggestion on which he founded the practice was received in London, at the furthest, *one* year before the issue of Dr. Warder's translation.

Either there is a strange forgetfulness of the real circumstances which led the author to adopt the practice in question, or he must have remained in profound ignorance during three years and more of what was then notorious throughout the medical republic. Singular as the facts above mentioned must be considered, it is scarcely less so, that, not only is the general method of Dr. Green identical with that of the French writers, but that the resemblance extends to particulars, to the mode of applying the caustic solution, and to the strength of this latter, which is certainly greater than was previously employed in applications to the mucous membranes.

It must, still, be admitted that there is one point of dissimilarity between the two plans; the treatise of Dr. Green advises us to go a step farther than the Parisian doctors. They, indeed, proposed and employed cauterization of the larynx by bringing a piece of sponge, saturated with a strong solution of nitrate of silver, *in contact* with the opening of the larynx, and allowed the expressed fluid to flow into this organ, an operation which they confess that few persons will submit to a second time. They even went so far as to introduce the end of a *small roll of paper*, moistened with the solution, into the *upper part* of the larynx. But our bolder, or more dexterous manipulator speaks of thrusting a piece of whalebone, armed with sponge, down to the inferior vocal cords!

If Trousseau and Belloc were forced to substitute irrigation of the larynx with a syringe, for the application of the sponge, even to the aperture of the glottis, we question whether the recommendation of the author of the present treatise, backed though it be by the foregoing proofs of the originality of his method, will induce any discreet physician to thrust a miniature probang into the larynx, still less into the chink between the vocal cords, when the mucous membrane in these situations is made friable by inflammation, or already torn by ulcers. The objection to bringing a solution of lunar caustic into contact with the diseased surface is comparatively small, but the danger of conveying it thither after the manner of Dr. Green no such evidence as this work furnishes can ever disprove.

Whatever merit belongs to the treatise consists in its setting forth a tolerably full account of that form of chronic pharyngitis, which, with secondary chronic laryngitis, has so extensively prevailed in this country since 1830. In Europe it hardly finds a place as a distinct disease, in the systematic treatises, for the reason, probably, that it has hitherto been of rare occurrence in that country. It is only within the last year, that Chomel furnished a full description of this troublesome disorder, and, in doing so, he remarked that it seemed to have escaped observation almost entirely. He styles it "granular pharyngitis." Dr. Green gives it the ominous title of *tubercular sore throat*. The cryptæ, he says, "uniting, form angry looking *tubercles*, of the size of a split pea, which may be seen on the posterior wall of the pharynx." Or they may become distended "with a morbid secretion which will exhibit all the physical properties of *tuberculous* matter." Now, the words *tubercle* and *tuberculous* are, in the minds of most persons, within and without the medical profession, associated with an idea of inevitable death. Consequently the physician who announces his ability to cure tubercular sore-throat, soon comes to be regarded as little less than a worker of miracles, and his fame flies abroad upon the wings of newspapers, and his praise is upon the tongues of the whole legion of clerical and female gossips throughout the land.

Our author uses the words *tubercle* and *tuberculous* in their technical, pathological sense, and takes Louis, and the rest of the world who accept his conclusions, roundly to task, for asserting it to be a law of the system that, after the age of fif-

teen, tubercles are not formed in the upper air-passages; and that if this does occur in some cases, it is only by a very rare exception. Haase is quoted triumphantly to refute this rash conclusion. With what propriety may be judged, when we find the Swiss Professor declaring, in regard to laryngeal ulcers, superficial as well as excavated, that "Louis reckons them mere products of chronic inflammation, kept up by the irritant quality of the sputa in phthisis." Louis expressly asserts that "this is not the sole cause of the ulcers, because they may exist where there are no cavities in the lungs, and because they are not produced by the contact of the irritating sputa of pulmonary gangrene." Undoubtedly, they are sometimes tubercular; the only question is, in what proportion of cases they are so? As well as can be gathered from the present treatise, its doctrine appears to be that they are generally tuberculous, but, in most cases, independently of disease in the lung, though tending to produce it. Hence the importance of their cure! But here the stubborn results of Louis' investigations meet the author. If the ulcers of the larynx are tuberculous, a hundred chances to one there are tubercles in the lungs. There is no direct way of escaping from this law. For what says Haase: "I am not aware of any instance of the larynx and trachea running through a course of tubercular disease independently of pulmonary phthisis. The cases recorded by Trousseau and Belloc, as such, were in reality either of a syphilitic or of a carcinomatous character, &c., and had no connection with tubercle." Louis had already shown the irrelevancy of these cases. But, insists Dr. Green, "ulceration of the follicles of this membrane are occurring frequently, independently of phthisis." Again we quote Dr. Haase: "tubercle commonly accumulates within the capsules of the muciparous glands." Therefore, if the follicles are ulcerated, the chances are that the lungs are tuberculous. We beg to hold Dr. Green to this point. If he will have the granular inflammation of the pharynx and larynx tubercular he must submit to take tubercular lungs along with it. And what then becomes of the astonishing cures he has wrought? Or if the cures were real and permanent, and the lungs, therefore, not diseased, we should be glad to know, upon what medical, scientific ground, he has designated the malady, so often cured, as tubercular sore-throat?

The opening of the chapter on "the treatment of follicular disease" is defaced by one of the most unpardonable mis-statements it has been our lot to meet with. Dr. Chapman is there quoted as recommending a certain treatment for the cure of chronic inflammation of the larynx "of the ordinary kind;" as confessing also that it often fails, and that when it does so, the practitioner is left "nearly destitute of resources." Now, not one word is said by the author to indicate that chronic laryngeal inflammation "of the ordinary kind" is carefully distinguished by Dr. Chapman from "clergyman's sore-throat;" but, on the contrary, the impression is, and must be, made on every reader of the passage, that the disease of which Dr. Chapman laments the obstinacy, and that which Dr. Green confidently pronounces curable, are one and the same, the disease, namely, which the chapter professes to treat of—"follicular disease." Yet upon the very page where Dr. Chapman records the difficulties of treating successfully chronic laryngitis "of the ordinary kind," he expressly excludes from the discussion those forms of laryngitis which he regards as complicated with other affections. These are his words: "Take, as illustrative of my meaning, the case of the modified disease, so prevalent among our clergy. Commencing, I have said, in depravity of the digestive organs, the rectification of this apparatus is indispensable to the relief of the secondary and consequent affections. Guided by this principle, I have, at least, cured a host of cases, which had, or would have, resisted a different mode of management." It must be a feeble cause that needs the support of misrepresentations like this.

Dr. Green, not content with contesting MM. Trousseau and Belloc's claims to being the sole inventors of laryngeal cautery, is unwilling that M. Boudin should enjoy the credit of having first pointed out the (alleged) antagonism of phthisis and malarious fevers; first claiming for himself priority in the discovery, and then admitting that neither he nor M. Boudin is entitled to it. He, nevertheless, asserts the fact of such antagonism, and insists, moreover, upon the value of "miasmatic exhalations as a therapeutic agent, in the treatment of pulmonary diseases." "For many years," he observes, "I have been in the habit of advising my patients who were labouring under phthisis, or follicular disease complicated with phthisis, to visit places where an *aguish atmosphere* prevails." To illustrate the advantages of

this mode of treatment, three cases are given as amongst the most interesting of those which came under the author's observation; yet not one of which furnished any conclusive reason for believing it to be a case of tubercular consumption; for in none is there any record of auscultation having been practised. It appears from these examples that there is not a fair reciprocity between phthisis and ague; intermittent fever may prevent or cure phthisis, but the converse proposition fails; since all of the patients mentioned were attacked with ague in their sanative residence.

We need say little more of this treatise, except that it is printed with large type upon fine paper, a merit which it were well if medical books more generally possessed; that it is stereotyped, under the conviction, doubtless, that in a second edition it would require neither alteration nor improvement; and that it is illustrated by several coloured prints of follicular fauces which are hideous to behold.

It is an irksome duty to write thus disparagingly of an original American work, but we regard it as a paramount obligation resting upon all critics, to speak the truth without fear or favour. Sometimes, indeed, they may find certain features in a work, so admirable as to redeem many and evident defects, and then, they are privileged to bear lightly upon the more ungrateful part of their task. But in the present instance there is a moral defect for which nothing can compensate; a want of candour and fairness which no scientific excellence (if there were any) can atone for, and which, it must be confessed, would suffice to give an unfavourable bias to the most impartial judgment. Of the medical part of the work there is little new that is good, and still less good that is new. There is much in its arrangement which renders it next to useless as a pathological treatise; and much in its style which reminds one of those books which bear "internal marks of being addressed more to the public than the profession," and which Dr. Latham so emphatically cautions his pupils "never to read."

A. S.

ART. XIV.—*A Practical Treatise on the Diseases of Children.* By FRANCIS CONDIE, M. D., Secretary of the College of Physicians, &c. Second edition, revised and augmented. Philada.: Lea & Blanchard, 1847: 8vo. pp. 657.

THE issue of a second edition of this work proves that the favourable opinion of it expressed by us three years since, has been ratified by the medical public. We learn from the preface of the present edition that "every part of the work has been subjected to a careful revision; several portions have been entirely re-written; while, throughout, numerous additions have been made, comprising all the more important facts in reference to the nature, diagnosis, and treatment of the diseases of infancy and childhood, that have been developed since the appearance of the first edition." From a careful comparison of the two editions we are enabled to testify to the literal correctness of the foregoing statement. Several defects of classification have also been remedied; numerous peculiarities of orthography made to correspond with the received standards; many even minute errors and lapses carefully corrected; long paragraphs broken into more manageable portions; and lists of references, which before disfigured the composition by interrupting its continuity, have either disappeared, or been incorporated with the text. We have only to regret that while the author was thus improving the mechanical execution of his book, he did not perfect it by distributing his remarks under distinct heads, which would have greatly facilitated reference to particular points, and thereby increased the usefulness of the work. None can know better than himself the weariness of searching many pages for a passage to which there is no guide, and we trust, therefore, that in subsequent editions he will not neglect this expedient which is so peculiarly necessary in a work on practical medicine.

The introductory portion of the present edition relating to the pathology of infancy and childhood, is enriched by an excellent summary of the different forms of pneumonia in early life, a notice of the various affections of the nervous and lymphatic systems, a full account of the laws of development of tubercular and cardiac diseases; a sketch of inflammation of the kidney; and some remarks relative to alterations of the milk and the causes producing them.