solemn dicta of our forefathers" (p. 681). Depletion and mercurialization, the old weapons of the oculist, he rarely uses. Even in purulent ophthalmia and gonorrhœal ophthalmia the Sangrado treatment is to be superseded by one of soothing and tonic remedies, and careful constitutional regulation. In strumous ophthalmia "the local application is too often just that which is most hurtful—nitrate of silver." The "barbarous proceeding termed scarification of the lids is, it is hoped, so nearly obsolete as not to require notice." Warm-water applications, soothing and sometimes feebly astringent lotions, fresh air, careful diet, and judiciously united tonics, substitute former expedients. It will be seen that Mr. Dixon becomes younger in his practice as he grows older in years.

The views of this surgeon are sufficiently well known by his already published works, and we have not space to discuss them here at any length. We may cursorily observe that we do not share Mr. Dixon's opinions as to the great and universal superiority of the upper section in extraction of the lens; nor is it correct to say that it has completely fallen into disuse. Two operators in the metropolis, at least, frequently employ the lower section, and find in it many considerable advantages, especially in the greater facility with which the lens is removed, the less danger of reclinatio or slipping back of the cataract, and the greater ease with which any necessary manipulations may be made after the section has been effected. One of these operators is Mr. White Cooper. In treating of obstructions of the lachrymal apparatus, Mr. Dixon by no means accords to catheterization from the nose the value which belongs to it. This method will often effect cures of obstruction in the nasal duct which Mr. Bowman's process will not reach; and it may be asserted that obstructions in the upper part of the apparatus are relatively less frequent than those of the lower. The ophthalmoscopic sections of Mr. Dixon are perfectly satisfactory, and his judgment on iridectomy and glaucoma accords with that of the majority of well-educated surgeons who have investigated this subject. Briefly, it is useless in "amaurosis with laceration of the optic nerve;" it is almost useless in cases of chronic glaucoma; it is decidedly useful in cases of acute glaucoma. Whether or not the removal of intra-ocular pressure be the essence of the success of the operation, experience shows that removal of at least some small portion of the iris is necessary to a permanently good result. Mr. Dixon's contribution to the "System of Surgery" is not one of the least valuable.

The whole series is highly creditable to the state of British surgery. A series of treatises thus composed by a large and selected body of the consulting surgeons of the metropolis claims to be tried by a severe test, as it assumes to represent the highest knowledge of British surgeons. This volume will, with some exceptions, well endure that trial. There is not in any modern language a series of treatises of equal merit, and thus far they do honour to the skill, judgment, and original powers of our English surgeons.

Health and Disease as influenced by the Daily, Seasonal, and other Cyclical Changes in the Human System. By EDWARD SMITH, M.D., LL.B., F.R.S., Assistant-Physician to the Hospital for Consumption and Diseases of the Chest, Brompton, &c. pp. 409. London: Walton and Maberly.

Dr. SMITH must be by this time pretty well known as an enthusiastic member of the medical profession, who has for many months, or even some years we may say, subjected himself to a series of not very agreeable experiments to determine certain problems hitherto very indifferently worked out by previous physiologic inquirers. For his devotion, his labour, and, speaking generally, the results he has arrived at, Dr. Smith may fairly claim the thanks of the profession. He has here collected, enlarged, and revised the various papers he has published in the "Transactions" of learned Societies and in different journals illustrative of these experiments, which have been prosecuted upon himself and others in health and

disease, almost without intermission, through a period of six years. Whether he has not generalized too quickly and laid down laws rather too dogmatically in some cases may be open to question. We are of opinion that he has, and that as further inquiries go on—based, it must be confessed, upon his own indications—he will find it necessary to less complacently insist upon the obvious truth of certain of his theories. The too ready way in which explanations are offered of certain pathological phenomena, and decided lines of therapeutic treatment pointed out as necessarily the proper ones, as based upon the often variable results of recondite physiological experiments upon the experimenter's own body, makes us desirous of seeing others go over the same ground before we accept all the numerous speculations upon cyclical changes in the human organism which are here placed collectively before us. With all this, however, it must be admitted that Dr. Smith teaches us much that we are ready to accept both as new and true in the history of the functional activities of the human frame. Whilst his book has on the one hand the aspect of severe science, it has on the other the capacity of forming pleasant reading, from the easy and practical way the conclusions arrived at are brought to bear upon many popular departments and questions in medical science. In the carrying out of his minute and what we cannot help thinking often tedious experiments, the author acknowledges the aid he has received from Drs. Sharpey, Carpenter, Williamson, and Frankland, as also from Mr. Dugald Campbell. The Royal and Medico-Chirurgical Societies, as likewise the British Medical Association, have freely permitted Dr. Smith the use of their illustrations. But in one quarter he applied for assistance in vain:—

"It is well known that animals grow more rapidly in spring than at any other season of the year, and this has been attributed to the abundance of herbage which they then find. A medical friend also assures us that he has ascertained by actual admeasurement that his children grow chiefly in the spring season. Being desirous to determine this interesting question, we made application to the governors of the Foundling Hospital for permission to determine the monthly rate of growth in height and weight, and the evolution of urea, on one day monthly, in a large number of the children of both sexes, and regret to state that it was refused."

We have thought that this liberal and enlightened act of a public body should meet here with its due recognition.

DOES THE HAIR LOSE ITS COLOUR SUDDENLY FROM EMOTIONS OF THE MIND?

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—This interesting physiological question was warmly discussed at the last meeting of the British Association in Manchester; and although I am well aware that there is good company to be found upon both sides of the question, I must content myself here by relating the following circumstances as they were told to me, first remarking that I have no reason to doubt the veracity of the narrator.

About eight years since, and being then about thirty years of age, in good health, and having dark-brown hair, he was engaged in Norway upon a new line of railroad from Christiana towards the interior. One day, while travelling upon this line at the rate of between thirty and forty miles an hour, and being accompanied by thirteen men and a boy, all riding upon the engine and tender, on running over an embankment which was parallel with the course of a river, from some cause the engine and tender got off the line, ran down the embankment, a height of about twelve feet, ploughing up the sand by the river-side for a considerable distance, and then fell over sideways. The travellers were thrown off in various directions. The boy was killed, and one of the men frightfully injured. My narrator was buried quite up to his neck in dry sand, but sustained no serious injury beyond the shock, which made a profound impression upon him, so much so that his appearance the next morning startled his companions; they described him as looking haggard and many years older, while his hair, particularly that growing from the temporal regions, had changed from brown to grey.—I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Newcastle-on-Tyne, Oct. 1861. RICHARD ELLIS, L.R.C.S. Edin.