

Our experience has long since convinced us that in many cases the affection is in great part the result of mental disturbance caused by reading treatises on the subject, or by alarm created by the misrepresentations of charlatans who have found this a most profitable field, and they have cultivated it without remorse for the wretchedness and despondency, sometimes even tending to suicide, which they thereby inflict on their victims. We are sustained in this view by the high authority of Mr. Curling, who says:—

“In a great proportion of the cases which come under notice in practice, the complaint [spermatorrhœa] is extremely slight, or more mental than real. The ability to perform well the duties of the sex is a matter of such concern to most men that it is not surprising that timid or weak persons, misled by artful advertisements and empirical works, should sometimes be troubled with unfounded fears, and fancy that they are incompetent and labouring under spermatorrhœa when no such disorder exists. The minds of these persons are usually more or less unhinged by dyspepsia, and the discharges natural in health are regarded as morbid. They are reminded, in the writings alluded to, of having once practised the foolish habit common in schools and too little restrained by teachers, but which have been long abandoned, and have left no permanent ill effects. I have met, indeed, with men, even of great intelligence, who have been so impressed with the conviction of being seriously affected with spermatorrhœa, or who have been so unhappy in consequence, without any real cause, that their condition has amounted almost to monomania. Care is required in dealing with these cases. Medical men are too apt to treat the complaints of such patients lightly, making no efforts to allay their anxieties; a course which often leads them to apply for aid in illegitimate quarters, and to become the victims of unprincipled men. The surgeon should endeavour to obtain the patient's confidence, and whilst paying due attention to his general health, should strive to convince him of the groundless nature of his fears, and of the unimportant nature of his local complaint.”

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ART. XXXII.—*A Guide to the Practical Study of the Diseases of the Eye; with an Outline of their Medical and Operative Treatment.* By JAMES DIXON, F. R. C. S., Surgeon to the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital, Moorfields. From the third London edition. 12mo. pp. 400. Phila.: Lindsay & Blakiston, 1866.

In our number for Oct. 1860, we have expressed our estimate of this useful and reliable guide to those commencing the study of eye diseases. Though somewhat limited in its scope, all the subjects embraced in it are discussed sensibly, and the therapeutical directions are marked by calm and sound judgment.

In the present edition the author has not restricted himself to a revision of his former one, but a considerable portion has been rewritten, and the remainder rearranged and corrected. These changes have considerably added to the value of the work.