

general, in both males and females; and typhus fever, with its various accompaniments, and in a variety of forms.

That the parturient female should be more subject to the influence of the epidemic constitution of the atmosphere productive of that peculiar pathological condition in which, we presume, both erysipelas and childbed fever essentially consist, and that, in her, the lesions should be chiefly detected in the pelvic viscera is not at all surprising.

But it is not only by contagion, in the proper sense of the term, that puerperal fever may be propagated, but it may also by direct inoculation; by the hands of the accoucheur introducing into the vagina or uterus a virus derived from patients labouring under severe forms of erysipelas, or in examinations of the bodies of those who have died of peritonitis, or phlebitis, or, probably, from the diseased secretions of the vagina in certain cases of childbed fever. The possibility of the induction of puerperal fever in this manner is very fully established by the experience of the physicians having charge of the lying-in departments in the general hospital of Vienna; where, according to the statement of Dr. Routh, by taking measures to prevent the possibility of inoculation in the manner referred to, the disease, which, previously, had prevailed to a fearful extent, has become of comparatively rare occurrence.

Dr. Fitcher having been led by numerous examples, most of which have occurred in his own practice, to adopt the belief "that puerperal fever is, in a majority of cases, essentially a traumatic erysipelas," the predisposition to, and approach of which may be foreseen and guarded against; consequently repudiates the idea of its propagation by the touch of the accoucheur, and he "holds it to be fallacious to resort to such extraordinary modes of explaining phenomena that may be accounted for, on the same principles that are applicable and daily appealed to, in speaking of the spread of other epidemic diseases, such as influenza, typhoid fever, and the dengue of the south, all admitted to be dependent upon a peculiar atmospheric constitution, and, in the opinion of many, spread by the influence of a special contagion."

It is true, that in numerous instances it is scarcely possible to determine with certainty whether the spread of puerperal fever is due to contagion, or is referable to a peculiar morbid condition of the atmosphere of a particular district, or town, or hospital; but, there are, not unfrequently, particular circumstances connected with the spread of the disease which cannot be accounted for upon, but are directly opposed to, the supposition that it is due, in every instance, to a general or local atmospheric cause; while, at the same time, facts are adduced which go absolutely to prove that its propagation is, in some instances at least, caused by contagion or inoculation. In this it resembles many of, if not all, the other known contagious affections, which may originate from epidemic or endemic causes, and be propagated by contagion, or communicated by inoculation.

D. F. C.

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ART. XIV.—*A Treatise on the Practice of Medicine.* By GEORGE B. WOOD, M. D., Professor of the Theory and Practice of Medicine in the University of Pennsylvania; President of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia; One of the Physicians of the Pennsylvania Hospital; One of the Authors of the Dispensatory of the United States of America, etc. etc. Fourth Edition. 2 vols. 8vo. pp. 852, 864. Philadelphia, 1855. Lippincott, Grambo and Co.

THE announcement of a new edition of Dr. Wood's treatise on the practice of medicine may be made in a very few words. We take it for granted that there are very few physicians in the United States who are not by this time perfectly familiar with the work, or, who have not formed for themselves a just estimate of its merits.

We know of no treatise which presents a more full and accurate synopsis of the present state of our knowledge, in regard to the pathology of the leading ailments incident to the human organism: no one that can, with greater safety,

be placed into the hands of the student as his guide to correct views in reference to the nature, causation, symptoms, and march of disease, and to sound practical directions for its treatment; no one that may be consulted, as occasion demands, by the practitioner, with greater profit and satisfaction.

Devoid of all pretension in his teachings, Dr. Wood's sole object in the preparation of the present treatise was evidently "to present, along with the results of his own personal observation, experience, and reflection, in reference to the practice of medicine, such a view of this important department of medical science, as fairly to represent its general condition at the time." And this object, all who have studied the work with candour and attention, will acknowledge, has been kept constantly in view by the author, and very successfully attained.

We meet, in its pages, with no straining after the questionable character of originality by the enunciation of novel and startling theories, or of attractive, but misleading generalities, nor any attempt to build up an exclusive plan for the treatment of disease, by rejecting with contempt, or ignoring the accumulated and concurrent experience of his predecessors or contemporaries. But, in a concise, perspicuous, unornate style, Dr. Wood delineates the broad outlines of the theory and practice of medicine, as recognized and illustrated by the most reliable and recent of the authorities in our profession.

In the present edition is incorporated a faithful digest of whatever may be esteemed true and useful, that has been developed since the appearance of the former one, in reference to either of the subjects embraced within the general scope of the treatise; it will be found, therefore, fully brought up to the present time.

D. F. C.

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ART. XV.—*The Principles and Practice of Obstetric Medicine and Surgery in Reference to the Process of Parturition.* With sixty-four plates, and numerous wood-cuts. By FRANCIS H. RAMSBOTHAM, M. D., Fellow of the Royal College of London; Obstetric Physician to the London Hospital, and Lecturer on Obstetric and Forensic Medicine at the London Hospital Medical College, etc., etc. A new American Edition, revised by the Author. With Notes and Additions, by WILLIAM V. KEATING, M. D., A. M., Lecturer on Obstetrics and Diseases of Women in the Philadelphia Medical Association, Physician to the St. Joseph's Hospital, Member of the American Medical Association, Fellow of the College of Physicians, Member of the American Philosophical Society, etc. etc. *Τὰ μὲν ἅλλα καὶ πόσιμος καὶ μεταβολὴ φύξης ἀνθρώπων. ἡ Τέχνη δὲ σωτηρία.* 8vo. pp. 648. Philadelphia, 1855, Blanchard and Lea.

THE work of Dr. Ramsbotham has been now for many years before the medical public, and has received the almost unanimous approval of the professional periodical press for the clear and accurate demonstrations it imparts of the doctrines of obstetrical science, and the sound practical precepts it inculcates. It cannot fail always to command a high rank among the numerous treatises which have, of late years, been presented as guides to the student in the acquisition of the necessary elementary knowledge of the principles and practice of obstetrics, and as books of reference for the practitioner who desires to refresh his memory on the leading points connected with the rules and practical details of his profession as recognized by the best authorities of the day.

Sufficiently full in its details, while in its style it is clear and concise, it is, at the same time, plain and unpretending, but sound and explicit in the practical instructions it inculcates, and cautious in the exposition it presents of the particular conditions under which manual or instrumental interference is demanded in the conduct of labor, with reference to the safety of the mother or child, or of both. Every important point connected with the anatomy of the organs concerned in child-bearing, and with the changes they undergo during