

Cystic Disease of the Ovaries, and by Mr. Irvine, F.C.S., and Dr. Woodhead on the Secretion of Lime by Animals. Dr. Woodhead also gives a full summary of his lectures on *Tabes Mesenterica* and *Pulmonary Tuberculosis*, delivered before the Grocers' Company in London last year. The volume is excellently printed and illustrated, and will, we trust, be the first of a long series of annual publications which will take a high rank among scientific reports.

Diabetes: its Cause and Permanent Cure. By EMIL SCHNÉE, M.D. Translated from the German by R. L. TAFEL, A.M., Ph.D. London: H. K. Lewis. 1889.—A work with the above title ought to attract attention. The "permanent cure" of a disease which has hitherto been regarded as incurable, although capable of alleviation, is a sufficiently bold assertion to render it incumbent on the critic to study attentively the reasoning offered in its support. We have done this, and confessedly are disappointed. For what does it all amount to? Simply this. The author has long been convinced (how or why he does not explain) that diabetes is due to hereditary lues venerea—not necessarily transmitted from the immediate progenitor, but from even more remote ancestors! As a consequence the whole of the protoplasmic elements of the body are vitiated, and all that has to be done is to effect "a transformation of the protoplasm" (!)—a task which to the unsophisticated would appear more formidable than it does to our author. He thinks that Ebstein's views, which did not do more than emphasise the fact of individual predisposition to the disease founded on a physiological study of tissue-metabolism, are confirmatory of his thesis that syphilis (lues) is at the root of all diabetes. We venture to think that such a conclusion will not be accepted by the profession at large without far more evidence than is vouchsafed by Dr. Schnée, in spite of his dogmatic utterances and slightly veiled contempt for all previous writers on the subject. Nor is it easy to discover in what material degree his therapeutics differ from those mostly adopted. His dietetic regimen is in accordance with prevalent teaching, and his rejection of most forms of drug treatment not novel. But we ought, perhaps, to add that he lays store by mercury, chromate of potassium, and Carlsbad waters, upon the efficacy of which latter his position at Carlsbad should entitle him to speak. Although the author cites cases in which he has cured diabetes, it will, as we have said, need more facts than he furnishes to convince the profession that he is on the right track. It is a pity, too, that the translation is not more technical.

On the Influence of Carbonic Anhydride and other Gases in the Development of Micro-organisms. By PERCY F. FRANKLAND, Ph.D., B.Sc. Lond., &c., Professor of Chemistry in University College, Dundee. Reprinted from the Proceedings of the Royal Society.—Professor Percy Frankland, who in zeal and scientific acumen is following in his father's footsteps, here presents the results he has obtained by plate cultivation of several well-known organisms in certain gases. The organisms selected were: (1) *Bacillus pyocyaneus*, (2) Koch's comma spirillum, and (3) Finkler's comma spirillum, all procured from the Hygienic Institute in Berlin. By ingenious management these organisms were presented to gelatine plates in atmospheres of hydrogen, carbonic anhydride, carbonic oxide, nitrous oxide, nitric oxide, sulphuretted hydrogen, and sulphurous anhydride. The result of the experiments showed that hydrogen had the least deleterious effect on the organisms; carbonic anhydride had a very great effect; while nitric oxide, sulphuretted hydrogen, and sulphurous anhydride were deadly, and destroyed the life of all the organisms upon which experiments were made. These experiments tend to confirm the previous belief that carbonic aeration is a safeguard to drinking-water, and to

establish more firmly than before the value of sulphurous acid as a disinfectant. It is true that nitric oxide and sulphuretted hydrogen are shown to be of equal efficacy, but neither of these can have practical value for sanitary purposes.

Looking Backward. A.D. 2000–1887. By EDWARD BELLAMY. Seventeenth Edition. London: W. Reeves.—This is a very clever little book, exceedingly well written, and, to judge from the fact of its having reached its seventeenth edition (!), must have aroused considerable interest in the minds of a large number of the reading public. Its author is supposed to have awakened from a trance extending over more than a hundred years, to find himself amidst a society in which the State transacts all the business of the nation without trenching on the liberty of the individual, in which the waste arising from pitiless competition is avoided, every citizen is directed and trained to the work for which he is fitted, temptations to idleness or to luxury are removed, and the extremes of wealth and poverty accordingly unknown. The benefits of national co-operation are depicted in glowing colours; in fact, a millennial condition of happiness and content is portrayed which is calculated to make every lover of his species ardently wish it were possible of realisation. Whether it be so or not, we are of opinion that books of this kind do good by directing increased attention to the many acknowledged evils of social life, and stimulating thought towards feasible methods of removing or at least ameliorating them.

A Compend of Obstetrics. By HENRY G. LANDIS, M.D. Fourth Edition.—This is, in fact, a catechism of obstetrics, intended to embody the principal facts of the subject. As a cram-book it would be likely to be disastrous to the student who had not properly learnt the subject; as a reminder of the principal facts it might be useful. In such a book a writer must necessarily be dogmatic, and if we do not always agree with his dogmas, the book contains much with which we do agree. Of a fourth edition no further criticism is necessary.

CAN PNEUMONIA BE CUT SHORT BY ANTIPYRIN?

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The questions raised by Mr. Counsell in *THE LANCET* of April 13th are of such importance that they deserve careful consideration and a reply. He records a case which he believes to have been one of pneumonia, and he hints that he cut short the course of the disease by giving antipyrin.

The questions Mr. Counsell asks are—whether the case he records was one of pneumonia, and whether pneumonia ever "aborts" without treatment. In answer to the first question, I should say that he has not brought forward sufficient evidence to prove that his case was one of pneumonia. It is, to say the least, extremely rare for a patient to have that disease three times in four years, and the physical signs in the third attack (which is the only one which he records in detail) are not incompatible with a different diagnosis.

With regard to the second question, Does pneumonia ever abort without treatment?—of course the meaning of the question depends on what is understood by the term "abort." If it be implied that pneumonia always runs a definite course with regard to time, and that recovery at an earlier period is "abortion," from my own experience I can say with confidence that pneumonia may "abort" without treatment, because I have noticed that the time during which the disease lasts is very indefinite. And in the case of a disease which does not last a definite number of days, it is unscientific and erroneous to conclude that the disease has been cut short because a fashionable drug has been given to the patient.—I am, Sirs, yours truly,

RICHARD SISLEY, M.B., M.R.C.P. Lond.,
Medical Registrar and late Curator of the
Museum of St. George's Hospital.

April, 1889.