

REVIEWS.

THE NATIONAL MEDICAL DICTIONARY: INCLUDING ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, ITALIAN, AND LATIN TECHNICAL TERMS USED IN MEDICINE AND THE COLLATERAL SCIENCES, AND A SERIES OF TABLES OF USEFUL DATA. By JOHN S. BILLINGS, A.M., M.D., LL.D. Edin. and Harv., D.C.L. Oxon., M.N.A.S., etc.; with the collaboration of W. O. ATWATER, M.D., FRANK BAKER, M.D., S. M. BURNETT, M.D., W. T. COUNCILMAN, M.D., JAMES M. FLINT, M.D., J. H. KIDDER, M.D., WILLIAM LEE, M.D., R. LORINI, M.D., WASHINGTON MATTHEWS, M.D., C. S. MINOT, M.D., and H. C. YARROW, M.D. 2 vols., large 8vo., pp. 731, 799. Philadelphia: Lea Brothers & Co., 1890.

WITHOUT disparagement of the other valuable medical dictionaries already in use, this one may be fairly said to be the most desirable for possession and reference by both students and practitioners. Dr. Billings would have been the choice of the profession for such a task, could it have been submitted to suffrage; not only because of his ability and medical scholarship, recognized with the highest honors at home and abroad, but also because the immense experience of the superintendence of the *Index Medicus* has afforded a special preparation for this work. The judiciousness of his selection of collaborators is shown by the general excellence of the definitions given throughout the two volumes.

The extensive tables at the beginning of Vol. I., while not necessary to a medical dictionary, add much to its usefulness, as they contain matter a considerable part of which can hardly be found elsewhere, except as scattered through a number of different publications. They include a Table of Doses, of Antidotes for Poisons, of Inch and Metre Numbers for Spectacle Glasses, of Thermometric Scales, of Average Dimensions of the Fœtus at Different Ages, Average Dimensions and Weights of Parts and Organs of the Human Body, Nutritive Ingredients, etc., of Foods, Dietaries, and Expectation of Life at Different Ages. Not all of these very elaborate tables are merely compilations. Especially important in their original data are those of Professor Atwater on foods, dietaries, etc., as they give the results of many American as well as European observations and experiments.

Dr. Billings, in his Preface, tells us that "errors of commission and of omission in this work are to be charged to the editor-in-chief," and he will be greatly obliged to those who will point out to him the various mistakes they discover. Accepting this generous challenge, although it is not expected that any one—even a reviewer—will *read through* a dictionary, we have looked over it with considerable care. Having expressed our approval and admiration of the work as a whole, it may

be permissible to be almost hypercritical in regard to some particulars, especially as little more than verbal criticism is practicable of a book whose subject is the meaning and use of words.

Cardinal virtues in a dictionary are clearness and sufficient fulness, without redundancy. Generally the definitions in this work are clear, but sometimes lucidity is sacrificed to brevity; there is occasionally an extreme parsimony of space. Of this the acme is reached in the following definition: "*Cor* (F.) corn." A dictionary being meant especially for the least informed, we can imagine a student having to look in his French dictionary to make sure that *cor* is not the equivalent of *blé* or *maïs*, but is medically used for a corn on the foot. Again, *Sims's position* is simply defined "*latero-abdominal position*." This will not much help a learner. "*Knee-elbow position*," given in its own place, might have been omitted, as it explains itself. It is said, correctly enough, to be "*genu-pectoral position*." A few other unnecessary definitions appear, as of *Voice*, *Gumboil* (gingival abscess), *Hernia-knife*, *Nostrils*, *Cough*. Omission of these would have left some lines of space available to make more entirely clear the account of some less familiar terms. There has been, on the principle of extreme brevity, too great an avoidance of repeated definitions. Thus *calomel* is simply defined "*mercurous chloride*." An unlearned reader must then go to the other volume of the dictionary for these terms. *Tachometer*, in Vol. II., has mentioned as its equivalent *Hæmadromometer*; for this reference must be made to Vol. I. *Apozème* is said to be "*a magistral preparation*," etc. In this and a few other instances there is apparent a presumption of ready knowledge which is not apt to be possessed by those who have the most need of a dictionary.

With nearly 85,000 words to be attended to, some may, of course, be easily overlooked. We have missed in this work only ten: *Bivalent*, *dextrose*, *hydrometer*, *lanthanum*, *niobium*, *picronitric acid*, *quadri-valent*, *rubidium*, *sensori-motor*, *thallium*.

Proportion has been, almost throughout, well preserved in this dictionary; it does not, as some others have done, show a constant ambition to grow into a cyclopædia. It is, it is true, with some surprise, that we find *Bright's disease* (to which *Dunglison* gives nearly half a page) having but seven lines; *yellow fever* the same; and *cancer* but six lines as an English word, with ten more for French names of its varieties; while under *hog-cholera* there is half a column, and under *swine-plague* seventeen lines. For *bacillus* and *micrococcus*, to give the former more than four pages and the latter a page and a half, belongs to the present era of pathogenic biology. Some future edition may call for revision, if not abridgment, of these pages.

But the nearest approach to cyclopædic *hypertrophy* in the present work is in the departments of psychophysiology and physiological optics. Thus we have *articles* on *Corresponding Points*, *Depth-feeling*, *Fundamental-formel*, *Height-feeling*, *Horopter*, *Lines of Regard*, *Lines of Demarcation*, *Lines of Direction*, *Prevalence of Contours*, and *Psychophysical Methods*. Some of these would be accounted short articles in a cyclopædia, but they are all long—several of them clearly too long—for a dictionary, especially as those terms are very unlikely to be met with except in writings in which, being purely technical, they are immediately and fully explained.

Very few of Dr. Billings's definitions have authority against them.

One or two seem to us to be at least of doubtful validity. *Infection* is properly said to be understood to refer to things rather than to persons; implying the presence of a virus or of bacteria. But under *Infectious* we read that "A disease is said to be infectious when it can be communicated to another person." This shuts out the idea, which is very important, of *local* infection. Yellow fever and dengue are both defined, in the work before us, as infectious. In the sense of personal contagiousness, this is contradicted by a large preponderance of evidence.

Lichen is defined as characterized by umbilicated papules. The word umbilicated might certainly be left out with advantage.

Roseola is said, "when distinctly contagious, to be roetheln." Nosologists generally, we believe, will agree that roetheln is entirely a separate disease from anything properly to be called roseola.

Steno's duct is asserted to be an error for Stenson's duct. Against this we have at least the very respectable authority of *Lippincott's Biographical Dictionary*, which credits the discovery to Steno. It is quite possible, of course, for Dr. Billings or his collaborators to have ferreted out the truth of this matter, as such credits are often inaccurate or doubtful.

Talipes valgus is defined as "flat-foot." More commonly it is understood to be the opposite of talipes varus; the knees approaching each other, and the feet being turned outward. Flat-foot is, by some, called talipes equino-valgus.

Contra-stimulant we would define as not causing "depression of vital power," but only of vascular excitement—quite a different thing. Objection may be brought, also, to the definition, in this work, of the zymotic theory; that it is "the theory that specific diseases are caused by ferments or low organisms." Liebig's theory of pathogenic zymosis was distinctly not a "germ-theory." It was chemico-vital. He held that a virus acts on the fluids of the human body in a manner analogous, but not similar, to that of ferments upon other materials; no real fermentation taking place, but a change involving a multiplication of the virus in the system. Whether the character of the virus depended or not upon the presence of a minute living organism, was a question apart with Liebig and those who have held with him, from that of the truth or falsity of the zymotic theory.

With very little exception indeed, the pronunciation and orthography of medical terms in this Dictionary are beyond question. It will be well if, in the matter of pronunciation, it shall promote the correction of a number of common, at least colloquial, errors among physicians. It is true that usage, the best usage, constitutes the ultimate authority in spelling and pronunciation. But who is to determine what is the best usage? We believe that a dictionary, when prepared by competent hands, is rightly an important factor in *making*, or influencing, usage; sometimes in the direction of rational improvement. Thus we should have been glad if Dr. Billings had given for all the alkaloids and other proximate principles the termination *in*, without the final *e*, as he has done with caffèin, digitalin, fibrin, glycerin, paraffin, and others. Also, the English spelling, meter, now much in use, might have been recognized as correct; and the diphthong might have given way in such words as diarrhœa, dysmenorrhœa, etc., and in hæmorrhage, hæmorrhoids, etc. Webster, at least, allows diarrhea, and both Worcester and Webster give hemorrhage and hemorrhoids as alone right. Words in

general, not exclusively of medical, use, ought to follow the best authorities, sanctioning general usage. For this reason especially, we regret that the dictionary before us gives the pronunciation *kwe-neen* for quinine. Dunglison and Thomas both agree with prevailing (at least American) usage, in preferring the long sound (as in *mine*) of the second syllable of that word. It is to be wished that Dr. Billings, like Dr. Joseph Thomas in his excellent *Medical Dictionary*, had indicated the sound of *g* at the beginning of words. He might thus have aided in rectifying the now frequent mispronunciation of gynecology; which ought to have, in its first syllable, the sound of *gy* as in gymnastics; not, as we often hear it, like the sound of *gui* in guide.

Other notes of suggestion might be added, but there is not space for them here. We could render no higher compliment to such a work than to give it a minute, if it even seem a hypercritical, examination. It is well worthy of it; as it is also of a place near the elbow of every medical student, and on a low-down shelf in the office of every practitioner.

The typography of these volumes is only too elegant; they have almost the character of an *édition de luxe*. Some impecunious students would rather have had a single volume, with the clear, small type of Dunglison: the possible increase of cumbrousness thus caused being compensated for by a reduction in its price. But it is worth its cost as it is, and is sure to go through many future editions, as a standard, if not the standard, medical dictionary.

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DU SANG ET DE SES ALTÉRATIONS ANATOMIQUES. Par GEORGES HAYEM, Professeur à la Faculté de Médecine de Paris; Membre de l'Académie de Médecine; Médecin de l'Hôpital Saint-Antoine. Avec 126 figures dans le texte, noires et en couleur. 8vo., pp. xxvi, 1035. Paris: G. Masson, 1889.

THE BLOOD AND ITS ANATOMICAL ALTERATIONS. By GEORGE HAYEM, Professor in the Medical Faculty of Paris, etc.

IF any proof were needed that hæmatology is a distinct specialty, it is furnished by this superb volume which is the crowning work of one who is everywhere recognized as an authority on the subject of which it treats. A work such as this can be nothing else than the fruit of many diligent years of research, a fact made patent by the list of the author's previous publications on the blood—ninety-two in number—which immediately precedes the first chapter.

It is manifestly impossible in reviewing this book to do more than touch upon certain salient points of general interest and fundamental importance. Before beginning this congenial task, however, we must point out that the title is defective, inasmuch as it does not indicate fully the scope of the book. The disappointment, if one may use such an expression, experienced in turning over the pages of this volume, is most agreeable, for, besides the blood and its anatomical alterations, it treats of chlorosis, chloro-anæmia, progressive pernicious anæmia, post-hemorrhagic anæmia—in short, of all the diseases which have their seat in the blood or find their fullest expression in that fluid.

The work is divided into six parts, of which the first treats of the