

scientific research has revealed its prevalence and supplied us with means for its detection, we consider that poisoning, whether with Paris green or with a Paris chancre, should be adjudged a capital crime, and be punished in extreme cases with the utmost severity. J. G. R.

ART. XXV.—*The Disposal of the Dead. A Plea for Cremation.* By EDWARD J. BERMINGHAM, M.D., Fellow of the American and New York Academies of Medicine, etc. etc. pp. 89. New York, 1881.

THIS thin and loosely-printed volume has for its "mission" an exposition of the evils of inhumation, the removal of the prejudice against cremation, and the securing of new advocates for this system of disposing of the dead. Dr. Bermingham first reviews the various methods of treating human corpses among the ancients, and among savage nations, including burial in the earth or in natural caves, suspension in the air or in trees, immersion in the sea, mummification, etc. He next considers the dangers which arise from ordinary burial, stating that the diseases prevalent in and near graveyards are notably diarrhœa, dysentery, throat affections, and fevers, and quoting the observations of Darwin in regard to the agency of earth-worms in bringing quantities of earth which may be loaded with septic organisms from considerable depths to the surface of the ground, and the direct experiments of Pasteur, who proved that soil covering the carcass of an animal which had died two years before of splenic fever still contained the deadly bacteridium of Charbon.

Our author argues in favour of the cremation of dead animals, and of that bugbear of Boards of Health—refuse garbage; meets the religious objection that cremation would interfere with the resurrection of the body, with Lord Shaftesbury's pertinent inquiry, "In that case what would become of the holy Christian martyrs who were burned at the stake?" and concludes that the one real obstacle to cremation, that it would promote the concealment of the crime of murder, could be overcome by suitable legislation respecting its practice.

Dr. Bermingham's style is disfigured by some obviously laboured bursts of artificial eloquence, but he has nevertheless given us a useful and instructive essay upon the great sanitary reform which constitutes the subject of his work. J. G. R.

ART. XXVI.—*Lectures on Syphilis, delivered at the Harveian Society, December, 1876.* By JAMES R. LANE, F.R.C.S., etc. Second edition. London: J. & A. Churchill, 1881. 8vo. pp. 95.

THE author, in a short preface, explains the object of these lectures to be to trace the progress of investigation in regard to venereal diseases during recent years, to indicate the points of general agreement, as well as those of difference, and to express impartially his own views. This purpose he has carried out in a very happy manner, writing from the standpoint of a "unicist," who holds that the "soft, suppurating sore" is sometimes followed by general manifestations of syphilis. The ground