

BOOK NOTICES.

Giles & Co., or Views and Interviews Concerning Civilization.
By ORPHEUS EVERTS, M. D. Indianapolis: Bowen, Stewart
& Co., 1878.

This little work is as the title would indicate, a collection of views and interviews concerning civilization. The author puts certain expressions in the mouths of his imaginary friends and makes them represent what "society" says concerning the topic under consideration. In his introduction he says: "It is not the purpose * * * to attempt an extensive, profound or learned discussion of the subject of civilization—nor to sketch the history thereof however briefly—proposing to himself only, the presentation of an intellectual *olla-podrida* for an evening's entertainment, the meats of which have been selected without especial discrimination, trusting and believing (otherwise he could not justify himself,) that his invited guests, whether few or many shall participate, will find therein, each one, somewhat that is agreeable to taste and not altogether wanting in nutritious qualities."

The opinions of the various speakers are given in many instances with an epigrammatic directness which is pleasing, and at the same time fixes the attention of the reader. We are unable through lack of space and opportunity to analyze the author's views, but give a few examples of his style of writing, and conclude with some remarks which he puts into the mouth of an imaginary Superintendent of an Insane Asylum concerning insanity, which may, doubtless, be taken to represent the ideas of Dr. Everts.

Among the interviewed is a Judge, who thus speaks concerning the topic, civilization: "Whether for better or

for worse," said the Judge, "civilization is not of man's designing. As a force it does not spring from, nor is it subject to man's will. As a result he but abides, suffers or enjoys it. It pertains to the inevitable, and I for one have ceased to question the merits of the providential, which can only be determined by a knowledge of the universal and eternal, content to hide with Moses in the cleft of a rock while God is passing by, and meanwhile sit in judgment on more limited affairs." I said "Giles, tells me, Judge, that the accumulation of wealth is limited by necessities and laws, to a few individuals, and their success is ever at the expense of the many whom he characterizes as 'unwilling contributors.' Does the same rule hold good in relation to other features of civilization, or to civilization as an aggregate?" "Such is the appearance," said the Judge, but it is an appearance only. While but a few of the great number of producers of wealth become individually wealthy and few only of civilized mankind reach the higher planes of civilization, the great mass of wealth producers are incalculably benefited by their own productions; and the great multitude of civilized people falling short of the highest attainment are yet wonderfully improved by the motions which they have made in progressing towards it; while but a few indeed fall below the level of their birth." The question of insanity as a result, perhaps we would more correctly say an accompaniment of civilization, is thus spoken of by Dr. Harris, one of the "interviewed."

"And what are the chief or most common exciting causes of this malady?" I asked.

"They may be classified under two general heads," said Dr. Harris: "'Deprivation' and 'Excess.'"

"Under the head 'Deprivation' should be classed *Ignorance*,—want of education—mental training or a systematic use of the thinking organs—and consequent general neglect of all hygienic

observances and appliances essential to the most perfect integrity of organization. *Insufficient nutriment*, or unwise selection, and unwholesome preparation of food, with reference to economy of material and its adaptability to organic needs.

“Under the head of ‘Excess’ should be classed: *Excessive physical labor*, protracted without sufficient intermediate rest—begun too early in life, and continued beyond the age of endurance, either from habit or necessity. *Excessive child-bearing*, under adverse circumstances. *Excessive venereal indulgence*, domestic and promiscuous. *Prostitution*, with its diseases. *Self-pollution*—and last, but not least, *excessive use of alcoholic drinks.*”

“And religion,” chimed in Dr. Dawson. “Religion drives more people mad than whisky does, according to my notion. And spiritualism—you have a great many spiritualists here haven’t you? In my opinion they are all insane; all of them, at least, who were not born idiots.”

Dr. Harris smiled at the earnestness of my old friend and said:

“I do not regard religion as a cause of insanity. The fact that an insane person talks about religion—prays or preaches—or thinks himself an apostle, or the Lord, even, is no indication that he was driven mad by religion. It is possible for the brain to receive such a shock or strain by suffering inordinate religious excitement, as to produce disease. So, too, the loss of sleep, incident to protracted religious meetings when attended by rustic people, whose habits are thus deranged—and loss of appetite, and consequent withholding from the brain for days or weeks of its accustomed and needed nutrition, incident to great anxiety, and what is called ‘conviction of sin’—together with unusual exposure of the body to variable temperatures—under such unfavorable conditions may, and often do provoke brain-disease and develop insanity. But more frequently pneumonia, pleurisy, rheumatism or catarrhal fever is the result, and it is quite as rational to say ‘religious fever’ or ‘religious rheumatism’ as to say ‘religious insanity.’ As for Spiritualism, I do not find that a greater proportion of believers in the pretenses—I can not say doctrines of modern spiritualists become inmates of insane hospitals, than is furnished by other believers in the supernatural, however interpreted, as affecting the opinions or conduct of men.

“Many insane persons manifest delusions of the special senses—and believe that they hear voices, see forms, hold conversations with spiritual personages—and feel sensations independent of contact with material substances, and all that; and much of the

incoherency and inanity of the written communications of insane persons bears a marked resemblance to much of the printed trash which has been uttered by so-called spiritual mediums as coming from the spiritual world—which indicates some relationship between the condition of the mediumistic brain at the time of such utterances and the brains of some insane persons;—and I am of the opinion that all persons who sincerely believe that they hear spirit-voices, see spirit-forms, or feel the touch of spiritual beings, are either imposed upon by the juggling of mediums, or are so seriously impaired themselves as to be in danger of insanity.”

Dr. Everts has succeeded in making a readable little book, and one which presents some matters for reflection in a new and pleasing form.

Report on the Corpus Luteum. By Prof. JOHN C. DALTON, M. D.
[Reprinted from the Transactions of the American Gynæcological Society, Session of 1877. Boston: Houghton, Osgood & Co., 1878.]

This is a pamphlet of some fifty pages, giving the result of an examination of the *corpus luteum* in thirty-two sets of ovaries, in which the date of the last menstruation or pregnancy was ascertainable.

The report is illustrated by twelve excellent colored lithographic drawings of the ovaries, showing the *corpora lutea* in different stages, and these add much to the value of the report. In this little monograph Prof. Dalton has made a valuable contribution to the literature of a subject, with which his name is already inseparably connected.

Practical Surgery; Including Surgical Dressings, Bandaging, Ligations and Amputations. By J. EWING MEARS, M. D., etc.
Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blackiston, 1878.

The author has given in this little work the fundamental features of practical surgery. Opening with a section upon surgical dressings, he very naturally passes to bandaging. Following these two sections, parts