life, before he is to be considered as a fitting object for public commiseration, is fraught with mischief, which, in a time of general distress, will recoil on those who are the contrivers of it. Destitution on the great scale, whether mediately through its depressing influence on the mind, or immediately by its direct agency in debilitating the powers of the body, is invariably followed by pestilence, which, while it devastates the poor man's dwelling, rarely allows the habitation of the rich to pass unscathed. A heavy responsibility, therefore, attaches to those who, in their plans of economy, and professing zeal for saving the public purse, are the advocates of measures which make absolute destitution the only plea for relief.

MR. HUNTER'S LECTURES.

WE feel much pleasure in announcing that we shall commence, in our next number, a complete series of Mr. John Hunter's lectures on Physiology and Surgery, which were taken with extreme care, and apparent accuracy, by the late Dr. Thomas Shute of Bristol.

ROYAL MEDICAL AND CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY.

Tuesday, April 13, 1841.

Dr. WILLIAMS, President.

READ, CASES OF PARALYSIS AND SPASM OF VOLUNTARY MUSCLES FROM SYMPATHETIC AFFECTIONS AND ACTIONS OF THE BRAIN AND SPINAL CORD, BY P. N. KINGSTON, M.D., PHYSICIAN TO THE ST. JAMES'S AND ST. GEORGE'S DISPENSARY.

AFTER some general observations on the influence of the brain and spinal cord, on the motor nerves, partly through the medium of volition and emotion, partly through centripetal nerves conveying impressions to the nervous centres, and producing involuntary movements, the author observes, that although the existence of certain secondary affections and morbid actions of the brain and spinal cord is admitted, their general history has, as yet, been little developed. Our ignorance, he observes, till lately, that in those transient affections of the voluntary muscles, which seem to be excited by impressions on remote organs, and which have been termed sympathetic, the nervous centres with their centripetal and centrifugal nerves always intervene as immediate agents, precluded our referring such affections of the motor nerves to their real source. And in instances of more palpable affection of the brain and spinal cord, the relation between it and any co-existing affection of a remote organ is, most frequently, so obscure, that it is still difficult to meet with cases, in which the dependence of the former upon nervous impressions communicated by the latter can be unequivocally proved. In order to illustrate this subject, the author adduces a series of cases witnessed and conducted by himself. He con-

ceives that they may exhibit the share which the impressions arising from disease in other organs may have in the production of cerebral and spinal affections; and the effects which these again may have in suspending the control of volition over voluntary muscles, and even exciting in them involuntary movements. In this view, he presumes, that the remote morbid impressions have not been alone adequate to the production of involuntary movements.

The cases are grouped by the author under two heads; according as there was, or was not, actual disease of the nervous centres.

The first case, under the first of these heads, is one of general paralysis under mucous irritation from the presence of tenia. The second case is one of general paralysis, under the irritation of psoriasis. In regard to these cases, and many other carefully-detailed cases, the author expresses his objection to the opinion of those, who should contend that the observed phenomena arise from a direct sympathy, without the intervention of the cerebro-spinal centre. And he notices the opinion to this effect, expressed by M. Cruveilhier, in 1829, respecting the tonic contraction of the painful abdomen.

After proceeding, under his second head, through a careful series of cases, in which the predisposition to sympathetic affection may be attributed to an actual lesion of the brain or spinal cord, the author concludes with expressing his hope that the knowledge obtained from such sources may direct us to new indications of cure, and help us to a discriminating use of *known* remedies, which had previously been employed empirically.

A discussion of some length followed, chiefly on the best mode of treating that partial paralysis occurring in children, in whom there is no obvious spinal disease, and accompanied frequently by intestinal irritation. The president had frequently found these cases cured by small doses of calomel. Dr. Addison had found them relieved by electricity, when the paralysis was confined to one leg: when both legs were affected, there was less chance of relief. Mr. Cæsar Hawkins had found no remedy at all satisfactorily useful; and Dr. Mayo related a case, probably of arachnites of the spinal column, in which there was complete loss of power over the extremities, and which all applied means failed to remove. Dr. Merriman had found electricity the most useful of all agents in the cases of children referred to.

FOREIGN MEDICAL LITERATURE.

EPIDEMIC DISEASES.

THE French Government, influenced by that care for the public health which has always distinguished it, employs a commission for the purpose of reporting on the various epidemic diseases prevalent, from time to time, in France. From that report, which has been drawn up by M. Briche-teau, we extract the following particulars:—All the facts which we have been enabled to collect, tend to prove that the severity of epidemic diseases diminishes with the progress of civilization. We have no longer to fear the murderous exhalations from the prisons of Oxford, or the miasmata of vast burying-grounds, like that of the Innocents or of Dijon. In addition to this, science has pro-