PART SECOND.

Bibliographical Record.

ART. I.—*A Manual of the Pathology and Treatment of Ulcers and Cutaneous Diseases of the Lower Limbs.* By JOHN KENT SPENDER, Surgeon to the Mineral Water Hospital, and to the Eastern Dispensary, Bath. London, 1868. Pp. 89.

THIS short and simple treatise on a subject eminently suited to the position and opportunities of its author will well repay the time necessary to peruse it, and to master its details. The doctrines which Mr. Spender desires to teach are not very recondite, perhaps it may be said not very novel; but every day's experience will teach any one who chooses to open his eyes that they are very free from being generally acted upon. They are shortly summed up in the following extract from Mr. Spender's preface, which we give with the more pleasure as illustrating the literary honesty and the engaging candour and modesty with which the work is written.

"Filial piety and literary justice dictate that my earliest acknowledgments should be made to a work written and published by my father in 1835, entitled 'The Pathology and Treatment of Ulcers of the Leg.' This work is, in part, the basis of the book which I now offer to the profession; and the portions which I have specially made use of and endorsed are two in number.

"Firstly, the argument that ulceration of the leg does not come from a natural imperfection in the limb, but from a fault or weakness to which its vascular structures are liable. This argument was originally developed with singular logical force and perspicuity. I have not attempted to add to the completeness of the exposition, but I have rewritten the language in which it is conveyed. Secondly, the proposal to treat the ulceration by imitating the natural process of healing by scabbing, which can be done by using a particular form of ointment; and I have attempted to explain and illustrate this proposal by reference to the surgical pathology of our own day."

The connection of the great majority of ulcers with a varicose condition of the veins, the means of best relieving this condition

by judicious support given by bandages applied *secundum artem*, the imitation of the natural process of union under a scab by a peculiar form of ointment, in which Mr. Spender has found reason to place peculiar reliance—such are the main topics which the reader will find dwelt on in this volume. The pathology of ulcers is plainly and well stated, not so fully as in some formal treatises, but perhaps sufficiently for ordinary practice, special prominence being given to the great prevalence of the varicose variety. In treating of this condition, Mr. Spender calls attention to a circumstance which has often attracted our attention, and which has been noticed by Mr. Hilton, but to which less weight is usually given than it deserves—we mean the pigmentary degeneration which so often occurs in the skin of elderly persons, a little above the inner ankle. On this subject the following extract may be worth our readers' notice (p. 15).

“But there is a nerve-element in the case which must not be disparaged or ignored. The pigmentary discoloration spoken of by Mr. Hilton represents a neurose derangement, leading, not to an exaltation of nutrition but to a degradation of it. It is a local index of diminished physiological force. It is a sign of loss and waste in a circumscribed area of tissue, denoting early embarrassment and distress in the blood-changes; the cuticular epithelium is fed with a lower quality of hæmatine, and textural metamorphosis is less free. And this deviation from a normal state arises very much from a want of power in the vaso-motor nerves of the part affected; more or less they cease to preside over its nutrition, and they are engaged in the same troubles which cause the stasis in the blood-vessels.

“The form and extent of this patch of tegumentary pigment are worth attention. Most often it is, I think, seen as an ovoid mark extending from the inner malleolus at its lower edge, and having its long axis in a perpendicular direction three or four inches up the inside of the leg. Not unfrequently the pigmentary stain extends on the back of the leg in the line of the ‘tendo Achillis,’ and to a higher extent than on the inside. Now and then it surrounds the whole of the leg below the calf as a broad band of pale tint, and only very little darker than the neighbouring skin. As a rule, the smaller the patch the darker it is. It is seldom seen before middle life; and though usually a sign and note of varicose veins, it is sometimes present without any superficial varix being visible.

“Moreover, this cuticular pigment has its practical interest. If at all intense, it leads to the suspicion of varicose veins, and ought to induce us to search for them. At the very least, it betrays a low organisation of the skin-structure; very often there is a shedding of white, dry, thick scales, which may even conceal a partial ulceration of the cutis, further masked, perhaps, by overhanging borders of hardened connective tissue. We are obliged to predict a tardy cure of any varicose ulcer which is complicated with this condition.”

The plan which Mr. Spender advises for ordinary ulcers is very careful bandaging from the toes upwards, with a "domette" flannel bandage, and forming an artificial crust over the ulcer, with the following dressing:

"An ointment containing a very large quantity of prepared chalk forms the best artificial crust. The earthy matter must be in a much greater proportion than enters into any ointment in the 'Pharmacopœia,' consisting of about three pounds of chalk to three pounds of lard. The best way of preparing this application is not by rubbing the chalk down with the lard; but, having previously reduced the chalk to a very fine powder, melt the lard in any convenient vessel over a slow fire, and then add gradually the chalk to the liquefied lard. This should be stirred and thoroughly mixed until nearly cold, and it is then ready for use. A much more homogeneous compound is thus obtained than could possibly be procured by simple admixture or trituration; the materials are more intimately blended together."

Rest in bed Mr. Spender is inclined to regard as generally superfluous, and therefore deleterious, and as far as ordinary cases go, we are prepared to agree with him, and greatly deprecate that absurd addition to the specialistic hospitals which was started a few years ago in the form of a hospital for ulcers. Still there can be no doubt of the rapidity with which the healing process proceeds in some cases on confinement to bed; but we cannot here spare the space to point out the appropriate cases.

If such details appear to our readers unnecessary, or too universally known to be worth writing, we beg to assure them that it is not so. A very moderate experience of hospital or dispensary practice is sufficient to teach any one that an unknown amount of suffering, loss of activity, and consequent loss of the means of livelihood is caused to our poorer patients, in large towns especially (but in the country, perhaps, even more in proportion to the smaller number effected), by the fact that almost all such cases are either shovelled off on the pupil or assistant, or are treated in the most cursory manner, and usually by telling the patient to apply water-dressing. The trifling expenditure of time and money required for the application of a proper bandage, and proper permanent dressings to the ulcer is grudged, and the consequence is, that an easily curable disease is allowed to persist for an indefinite length of time. To tell a poor ignorant man to apply water-dressing is a mere absurdity. The least attention to the case would show the surgeon that the ulcer is for about five sixths of the twenty-four hours covered and irritated by a dry, dirty piece of rag. To allow a man to go about without a bandage is equally negligent, since, if the

surgeon would look at the leg he would see that after an hour or two all the parts around the ulcer are thickened and turgid with congestion. To remedy this state of gross neglect it is not necessary to found more private hospitals, but merely to treat these somewhat troublesome cases with a little more care and more humanity—to give, in fact, to the ailments of the poor a similar attention as to those of the rich. Mr. Spender's method seems to us an excellent one; but the great essentials—cleanliness, equability of temperature and moisture, and constant equable support—may, no doubt, be attained by means of different methods. The great merit of his book is that it recalls the attention of the profession to a subject, humble, perhaps, but very important, and one which is too much neglected in favour of more brilliant and alluring themes. We wish the volume every success.

ART. II.—*Lectures on Inflammation: being the first Course delivered before the College of Physicians of Philadelphia under the bequest of Dr. Mütter.* By JOHN H. PACKARD, M.D., Secretary to the College of Physicians, &c. Philadelphia. Pp. 276.

WE are happy to learn from the author's preface, that our transatlantic brethren are following the example which has long been given in this country in the founding of lectureships, designed by the individuals to whom we are indebted for them, to elicit information, and more especially to incite inquiry on special subjects,—lectureships, which amongst us have been found so eminently useful; for instance, those of the Royal Society, of the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Surgeons,—and that they will prove equally prolific of good in the United States who can have any doubt, seeing the wonderful progress its people have made in all things requiring the exercise of mind?

The College of Physicians of Philadelphia has, we think, been peculiarly happy in the choice it has made of the gentleman to inaugurate the undertaking, and Dr. Packard not less so in the subject which he has selected to begin with. These lectures, comprising a history of inflammation, are, in our opinion, highly creditable to their author, and to the American medical school, which has already done so much for medical science: we can strongly recommend them, as affording a good example of inquiry in accordance with the best modes of scientific research. One of their peculiarities—we should say,