ART. III.—*A Course of Practical Chemistry arranged for the use of Medical Students.* By W. ODLING, M.B., F.R.S. 2nd Edition, pp. 241. London: Longmans. 1865.

In noting a second edition of Dr. Odling's most useful 'Course of Practical Chemistry,' it is not necessary to do more than point out the improvements which the author has effected in the work.

The first chapter is new. One of the sections into which it is divided contains a highly condensed, yet clear, account of the meaning of the chemical terms—"atom," "equivalent," "symbol," "formula," "reaction," &c.; the other section is devoted to the explanation of the structure and use of the various pieces of apparatus employed in the course of analysis. Of this apparatus woodcuts are given; these engravings are generally intelligible, but they present no artistic excellences, unlike the clear and beautiful drawings with which French works on chemistry are usually adorned.

The second chapter of the book, relating to the course of qualitative analysis, has been rewritten and greatly improved. The processes of separation and identification of the different basic and acid constituents of salts have been rendered at once simpler and more exact. While analytical tables are given, the student is not left to go through the operations indicated without a word of explanation, but for each step a reason is assigned. This we consider to be a marked improvement upon the more usual plan.

The third and fourth chapters relate to toxicological and animal chemistry. Considering the scope of the work and the necessary limitation to its size, the particulars given concerning the detection of poisons in solid compounds, in solution, and in organic mixtures, are adequate for the purpose in view, and are arranged with care and skill. Not the least important feature of this part of the volume is the paragraph describing the impediments to satisfactory testing in each case. The woodcuts which illustrate this part of the work are more satisfactory than those occurring in the second chapter. Figures 53 (nitrate of urea) and 66 (mixed mulberry and fusible calculus) are good examples of these illustrations.

Save in a few tables of atomic weights and of important formulæ in an Appendix, this work is written in the older notation. But the nomenclature is that now adopted by the advocates of the unitary notation, while no change in the formulæ is generally requisite save the halving of the numbers below the symbols of the majority of the elements, thus— $\text{H}_2\text{S}_2\text{O}_8$ becomes

H₂SO₄, and is then correct, according to the new views. Till the examining boards recognise the unitary system, students must be content with the older and empirical method.

ART. IV.—*On the Use of Carbolic Acid.* From the 'Proceedings of the Odontological Society,' June 5th, 1865. By Mr. WOODHOUSE and Mr. GIBBONS.

FROM the statements made in this paper by the authors, illustrated by cases, it would appear that carbolic acid or phenole, is very useful in dental surgery, applied with caution, by means of cotton-wool, care being taken to avoid touching the lips, which it excoriates. It is described as relieving pain without occasioning inflammation; and that where suppuration has set in, it arrests that process. It is stated to be pre-eminently useful in cases of exposure of the pulp. For minute details and precautions as to the mode of employing it, we must refer to the paper itself.

ART. V.—*Report on the Causes of Death among the Assured in the Scottish Equitable Life Assurance Society from 1831 to 1864, being a period of thirty-three Years. Submitted to the Board of Directors.* By WILLIAM ROBERTSON, M.D.—*Edinburgh, 1865. Pp. 47.*

THIS well written report is deserving of the attention of actuaries and referees of Life Assurance companies. In it Dr. Robertson shows what little reliance is to be placed on the nomenclature of fatal diseases in relation to their causes as officially returned, *post-mortem* examinations being comparatively rarely made, and in so many instances the name given by the medical practitioner being oftener a matter of conjecture than of exact knowledge. This is strikingly exemplified in the tabular views of mortality inserted. Thus, in those of England and of five Scottish assurance offices for a period of seven years, the per centage of fatal disease of uncertain seat is for England as high as 19·776, and in those of the offices from 14·3515, the highest, to 5·9506, the lowest. Nor, indeed, so long as "old age," "atrophy," "debility," "scrofula," "syphilis," "malformations," "sudden deaths," are allowed to be used by returning officers in their certificates of deaths, is this class of diseases of uncertain seat likely to be less numerous.

The tables given of mortality-experience are deserving of the notice of the statistician. Our limits do not permit of our com-