five years, with not a single case of phthisis amongst them. In England this immunity is ascribed to the extreme care with which the animal food of Jews is selected, and the copious use of oil in cooking, especially with fish.

Mr Thomson's views on the pathology of phthisis may be learned from the following excerpt:—

“It is no way contradictory of anything hitherto said on the subject to assign a plurality of antecedents for the varied forms of phthisis. On the contrary, it would seem more exact to ascribe each variety to some specialty of causation. It may possibly yet be found that different forms of the disease, or seats of the morbid deposits, and variations of complications, have their allied initial lesions. That there are various kinds of tubercle, and many phases of phthisis, it is not necessary to repeat; but whether they are always merely different stages or degrees of one common process, merging one into the other, is still a moot point; and it would seem venturesome even to hazard such a conjecture—not being permitted in these distant climes the privilege of thinking, but being limited to a respectful following of great leaders of inquiry. . . . And it may not improbably be that different varieties are primarily produced by distinct morbid actions, depraved nutrition, retrograde morphology, embolism, and so on. If so, one form would result from errors of diet, regimen, or habits; another from the peculiar action of cold and damp; others from reabsorption of caseous matters.”

Mr Thomson strengthens his several positions by a supplement to this book.

In dismissing the subject, we have just to remark that we highly commend for perusal this essay on phthisis. It bears the impress of being written for truth's sake. The writing is admirable, the deductions logical, and the various tables display a vast amount of painstaking and research. We have no hesitation in saying that Mr Thomson's book is perhaps the ablest recent work on climatology.

III—ON SOME DISORDERS OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM IN CHILDHOOD. *By*
CHAS. WEST, M.D. London · Longmans, Green & Co. 1871.

THE reading of these three lectures has afforded us much pleasure, and we are very glad to call attention to them in the pages of this Journal. The only drawback to our satisfaction is, that the book is so small, while the subject is so large, and that the form of lectures precludes the author from entering into the subjects in such detail as might sometimes be desired. The form of a lecture, however, shows the graceful language of Dr West at its best, and it is no small pleasure (although we must confess that it is rather a rare one,) to see medical questions handled by one

who is not only such a master of his subject, but also such a master of English.

Dr West regrets that he has been made to a great degree a specialist against his will, and that his culture of the field of medicine has been limited to a small part of it. That such limitation is very apt to be injurious to the mind is no doubt true; but limitations imposed by the age of the patients are in many respects less injurious than those imposed by the conditions leading to other specialties; the range of disease presented to one engaged in such practice is so varied as to prevent him from taking any very narrow or one sided views of the science of medicine. How little Dr West has suffered in this respect these lectures themselves can tell. Any such loss, moreover, seems amply repaid by the rich stores of experience thus acquired, from which he can dispense to his professional brethren information and guidance, with regard to a class of cases constituting so large a proportion of every day practice.

That which strikes us most in these lectures is the attitude of mind in which Dr West approaches his subject. It is essentially, almost exclusively, clinical. Not that he is ignorant of pathological anatomy, or that he despises its assistance, but he evidently feels that in childhood the physician has often to deal with forms of disease on which the morbid anatomist could throw but little light. Thus in narrating a fatal case, in which a sudden shock from grief seemed to disarrange the balance of the nervous system in a child previously free from any important ailment, he adds, "A little fluid in the ventricles of the brain, a little congestion of its vessels, was all that the anatomist could find. I suppose his mother was right, she said his heart was broken." Not only is Dr West's method essentially clinical, but his vast experience, and careful observation have enabled him to look through the body to the mental and moral peculiarities of his young patients. The greater part of what seems to us most valuable in these lectures, consists of such glimpses into a realm so completely hidden from the vision of so many of us. Yet, of its vast, and frequently overwhelming importance we are perfectly satisfied. The medical treatment of the young often depends on the proper recognition of it, and the success of nursing almost always does so. Dr West teaches that the child lives in the *present*. This cuts off many troubles with regard to the past and the future, which harass the adult patient, and which complicate his case. It equally urges on us the importance of attention

to details and trifles, which, while they make the passing moment agreeable, might otherwise seem too trivial to deserve our notice. It invests toys, pictures, and the cheerful small talk of the nurse with as much therapeutical dignity, as if they occupied places in the pharmacopœia. It makes it important to study diligently how these august pharmacopœial preparations themselves may be administered in the most pleasant or, at any rate, in the least unpleasant way. It accounts, as Dr West points out, for the air of quiet happiness which strikes all visitors to a children's hospital. But we will allow the author to speak: he says,—

“I dwell on this truth because it is of great practical moment that we should bear in mind to how large an extent the child lives only in the present; because it follows from it that to keep the sick child happy, to remove from it all avoidable causes of alarm, of suffering, of discomfort, to modify our treatment so as to escape a possible struggle with its waywardness, and even, if death seems likely to occur, to look at it from a child's point of view—not from that which our larger understanding of good and evil suggests to our minds—are duties of the gravest kind, which weigh on the physician, on the parent, on the nurse, and which it behoves us none the less to remember because they are not dwelt on in the lecture-room or in the medical treatise.” p. 118.

Dr West also insists on the vividness of the child's perceptions—“Not merely is the mind of the child feebler in all respects than that of the adult, but in proportion there is an exaggerated activity of his perceptive faculties, a vividness of his imagination.” This seems to account for the vivid dreams, the ocular spectra, and the imaginary sounds perceived by some children, and by enabling us to sympathise better with them, may guide us in our treatment of such illusions when they are excessive or become exaggerated by disease.

To us the charm of these lectures consists, as we have said, in the familiarity which the lecturer displays with the mental and moral nature of the child, and in the application which he makes of this knowledge to the study and treatment of nervous disease. But there are many other points brought forward of general medical interest.

Dr West submits the result of an analysis of his observations on chorea as a contribution to the pathology of this disease. His clinical experience leads him to look with but little favour on the idea of embolism being the common cause of this affection. He admits that there is undoubtedly a connection between the state of constitution which predisposes to chorea and that which predisposes to rheumatism, but he evidently regards the nature of this relation-

ship as very imperfectly ascertained. He thinks that emotional causes do not really come so much into play in its production as is commonly supposed. With respect to the treatment of this affection, Dr West seems to have little or no confidence in the various specifics so much vaunted, with the exception of sulphate of zinc, which he sometimes has used in very high doses: 10, 15, or 20 grains four times daily have, he says, been frequently borne with perfect impunity. He reiterates his opinion of the value of large doses of tartar emetic in cases of acute chorea. In moderate degrees of severity he highly approves of the moral treatment—calling the child's will into play by regulated movements and gymnastics. In cases of very violent twitchings he regards splints as useful, as saving the child present distress and subsequent exhaustion.

The portion of the concluding lecture on loss of speech in childhood is a very valuable contribution to a subject which, from its interest and importance, has of late attracted much attention.

The great excellence of the matter brought forward makes us regret that Dr West was limited to three short lectures.

IV.—THE USE OF THE LARYNGOSCOPE IN DISEASES OF THE THROAT, WITH AN APPENDIX ON RHINOSCOPY. *By* MORELL M'KENZIE, M.D., &c. Third Edition, pp. 174. London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1871.

THE author of this treatise is well known as a specialist and as a writer. As both he has succeeded rapidly, for it was only in 1859, he tells us, that, visiting Professor Czermack at Pesth, he became acquainted with laryngoscopy in its cradle. In 1863 he gained the Jacksonian prize for an essay on diseases of the throat, and two years later the first edition of the present work, founded on the former one, made its appearance, and has already run through two editions.

This great and rapid success renders criticism in one sense unnecessary, inasmuch as the public have already stamped the book with their approbation, but in another and very important sense it is more than ever called for, since the work now bears the reputation of an authority in the specialty of which it treats. Indeed, the author himself claims for his work this high position. He "trusts that his treatise will show that his labour has not been altogether in vain;" and again he tells us that "the only other systematic text-book on the laryngoscope published in this country is based on his own," &c., &c. Even in the very dedi-