

system. Beyond the duality of muscle-element and nerve-element there is another term in triple unity of function and material, which our author, for the better understanding of myalgia, must at every instant consider. Through its life-blood only can the living flesh be known. Hitherto our author has but dallied with Pain and the Muscle. It is somewhat amusing to watch the bold swimmer who should be furthest from the shore still hesitating on the brink of depths into which he should be the first to plunge. He shrinks and shivers, and calls to us in witness of his trouble. He knows he cannot stay where he is. Let him take a "header," and strike out. He will find others—few only—there before him. Better to be tossed and buffeted on the open seas of myalgia in its widest, deepest sense, than to stumble in the shallows, and sink entangled in the superficial profundities of the so-called "Nervous System."

REVIEW VIII.

Lives of Eminent American Physicians and Surgeons of the Nineteenth Century. Edited by SAMUEL D. GROSS, M.D., Professor of Surgery in the Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia.—*Philadelphia and London.* 1861. pp. 836.

WHEN the editor of this book acknowledges a "lamentable deficiency" in native medical biography, it can hardly be necessary for us to apologise for an ignorance of American literature of a special kind, as great as and more excusable than his own. Not that we mean to imply that he has really anything in the way of ignorance of which to be excused, for he has availed himself fully of the materials at his command, and epitomized the narratives of many physicians and surgeons who have flourished during the present century. With this period only does he profess to deal. If we seek to retrace our steps farther, we find that the chief work on American medical biography is from the pen of Dr. Thacher, of whom there is a brief and insignificant memoir in the volume now under our notice. This treatise was published in 1828, and was followed by a similar undertaking in 1845, from the pen of Dr. Stephen Williams, of Deerfield, Massachusetts. It is obvious that these works cannot be of a very extended retrospective character, inasmuch as the historical antecedents of the United States are of necessity limited by their political duration. There are many travellers who have spent years in three quarters of the globe, without having the least desire to visit the fourth, because the latter has comparatively no records, and does not present itself to us shrouded in the splendid vestments of immemorial greatness. In treating of even the most comprehensive Western biography, we should find ourselves much in the position of those classic travellers. If we pass the period of the Union now in process of disruption, our horizon would at least be bounded by Bunker's Hill.

Dr. Gross (as we have before hinted) professes only to deal with those who have "flourished" during the present century: that is to

say, with those whose lives have extended from the eighteenth into the nineteenth century, or have been entirely a portion of the latter period. To us "Britishers," the most interesting portions of these very unequal memoirs are unquestionably those which connect the subjects of them with the mother-country. We cannot fail, for instance, to read with pleasure how most of those who make up this hydra-headed biography were educated in Edinburgh and London, and initiated their special studies under the guidance of Cullen, the Monros, Ferguson, Gregory, Fothergill, John Hunter, Home, and others of equal celebrity. Of the former physician, Dr. Samuel Bard speaks as "that accurate professor;" of his manner as a lecturer he writes: "I own I think nothing can exceed it; being so entertaining as well as instructive that I could listen to him with pleasure for three hours instead of one." (p. 173.) How different from the stricture which the celebrated Robert Hall was compelled to pass upon the preachers of his own day: "the best passage in many a sermon is the passage from the pulpit to the vestry!" This Dr. Bard, by the way, seems to have been a man of very considerable observation and singularly independent mind.

"New names (he writes with an appositeness which makes the observation a part of later times) are always deceiving; new theories are mostly false or useless; and new remedies for a time are dangerous. This rage for novelty pervades our profession, especially in this country. Hence our extended catalogue of new fevers, and hasty adoption of new remedies; hence the unlimited and unwarranted application of mercury without weight, and brandy without measure, and the lancet without discrimination; and hence, I am afraid I may say, the sacrifice of many lives which might have been preserved, had they been left to water-gruel and good nursing." (pp. 191-2.)

As the editor of the work before us distinctly affirms in his preface that the respective contributors are alone answerable for what they have written, and that he has merely exercised a general supervision, we shall not be guilty of that uncharitableness which has characterized a recent attack by a famous Review upon a theological work of no common interest, and fasten upon Dr. Gross a responsibility which he repudiates at the very outset. In the language of a celebrated French writer: "He does but furnish the thread which binds together the flowers culled by other hands." Three of those flowers, indeed, are from his own garden; and it must be admitted that they have a modesty and a grace which do not belong to many of the flaunty and scentless ones with which they are grouped. To drop our metaphor—Dr. Gross has much too good taste to resort to such language as "the most accomplished editorial villain this country has ever known;" nor does he speak of men "perishing by their malignant ingratitude." (p. 38.) His memoir of Dr. John Syng Dorsey is one of the most interesting in the book. This gentleman was a pupil at St. George's Hospital in London, under Mr. (afterwards Sir Everard) Home, and was treated by his preceptor with great kindness and indulgence. He was taken to Sir Joseph Banks's *conversazioni*, and to Mr. (afterwards Sir Humphrey) Davy's lectures on chemistry at the Royal Institution.

Attending a *soirée* of the famous Quaker, Dr. Lettsom, where five hundred were assembled, and "the strawberries provided for the occasion, but then out of season, cost about ninepence a-piece," he records: "The chattering of the ladies pleased me much better than a lecture of an hour on an eclipse, an Ægyptian mummy, a rusty medal, or the horizontal parallax." (p. 145.) Young Dorsey, however, had not at this time acquired much knowledge of social life; nor did he know the polished manners and habits of the town. He goes to the theatre without his cocked hat, sports nankeen instead of black, and asks the "etiquettical" Mrs. Home for sole instead of turbot. These mistakes were fine sources of amusement to the great surgeon, who "enjoys laughing more than anybody I know." Shall we tell the present accomplished surgical staff of St. George's Hospital what was done by their predecessors in the way of operative surgery?

"This morning Mr. G——, one of the surgeons of St. George's, trepanned a woman at Dr. P——'s request. She had been some time in the hospital, with most obstinate headache. He sawed away till he got through the skull and dura mater; they both came out together, and the chances are ten to one that the woman will die. Is not this licensed murder? But one learns from other people's blunders." (pp. 143-4.)

Another subject of the editor's own pen, Dr. Ephraim McDowell, is distinguished as having been the first surgeon who performed ovariectomy, in 1809. He subsequently achieved this operation thirteen times; but his later were not so successful as his earlier cases.

St. George's Hospital claims likewise as one of her pupils a man of no mean reputation in America. Dr. Philip Syng Physic, "the father of American surgery," was a pupil of John Hunter. If he had been remarkable for nothing else, he would at least have been entitled to standing room among his country's heroes as "having survived (in 1797) a second attack of yellow fever, during which he was bled to the amount of 176 ounces!" (p. 385,) and as having left some very eccentric testamentary directions for the disposal of his body after death. He enjoyed an enormous practice in Philadelphia. "His professional labours," as we are told by Dr. Horner, "sometimes produced twenty thousand dollars a year, and his method in this respect finally yielded more than half a million of dollars." (p. 439.) The memoir of Dr. Physic, by Dr. John Bell of Philadelphia, is the most comprehensive, though not the most modestly executed, biography in this collection. It is not our intention to particularize any other of these sketches, inasmuch as they have rather a local than a general interest. We have no desire to underrate the professional merits or the private worth of the individuals here treated of; but, with few exceptions, their reputations are not European, and the memoirs abound with such a profusion of domestic details, and such an amount of indiscriminate laudation, as to make them quite unsuited to the taste of the generality of English readers. It may, however, interest some of the curious in social economy to know that "Dr. John Warren became engaged to Miss Collins, and soon after his settlement in Boston he went to Newport to claim his bride (p. 97); as also that Dr. Caspar

Wistar was first "united in matrimony to Miss Isabella Marshall," and afterwards married Miss Elizabeth Mifflin. (p. 135.) Others will not fail to appreciate the intelligence that Dr. Amariah Brigham weighed one hundred and thirty pounds, and that "his gait was naturally slow, and by no means graceful, while his voice was soft, low, and quite melodious." (p. 542.) The record, too, must not escape us that Dr. John D. Godman was "taught his alphabet upon the knee of his grandmother" (p. 248), and that, being of the unctuously divine school, a special interposition by "the Great Ruler of events" first prevented his studying medicine; but afterwards he reverted to his first love, by the "friendly interposition of Dr. Davidge." (p. 254.)

But we were wrong in saying that we would not any more particularize. There is a playful and poetical physician who taps us on the shoulder, and claims at our hands a passing tribute. He shall have it. How can we refuse one of whom it is said, "Nature was the altar at which he worshipped," and whose chief delight was to "preside over a gooseberry society?" Dr. Samuel Latham Mitchell had "a mind of vast and multifarious knowledge and of poetic imagery." In his 'Epistles to his Lady Love,' he "gave utterance of his emotions in tuneful numbers, and likened his condition unto that of the dove, with trepidation seeking safety in the ark." (p. 271.) Anything, in fact, says Dr. Mitchell's biographer, "might be eliminated from his mental alembic." He had the key of all mysteries, but condescended, with a humility for which all infantine posterity will be grateful, to rectify the inaccuracies of our nursery rhymes, and reprobate the sacrifice of truth to effect. "You are acquainted," says he, "with the nursery rhymes of 'Four-and-twenty blackbirds?' They abound with errors, and the infantile mind is led astray by the acquisition of such verses. I have thus altered them this morning: 'When the pie was opened, the birds they were songless; was not that a pretty dish to set before the Congress?' I thus correct," added the Doctor, "the error that might be imbibed in infancy of the musical functions of cooked birds; and while I discard the King of Great Britain, with whom we have nothing to do, I give them some knowledge of our general government, by specifying our Congress." We are overpowered by the intensity of this Americanism; but we know not whether most to admire the poetic talent of the biographer or the biographee. The former (Dr. Francis) mounts into the highest regions, without the disfiguring obtrusion of such incongruous rhymes as "songless" and "Congress," when he writes: "In the morning he (Dr. Mitchell) might be found composing songs for the nursery; at noon dietetically experimenting and writing on fishes, or unfolding to admiration a new theory on terrene formations; and at evening addressing his fair readers on the healthy influence of the alkalies, and the depurating virtues of whitewashing." (p. 273.) It would not be fair to conceal from our readers the important geographic discoveries made by this illustrious physician, "that the American continent was the Old World, and that the Garden of Eden might have originally been located in Onondaga Hollow." (p. 275.) Such is all the space we can spare

for one whose "hymnology was extensive," whose "calm spirit was awakened by the martial strains of Toplady," and who "seems to have practised Christianity without knowing he was a Christian." (p. 287.) Even when this scientific Nestor was buried, the sexton was overpowered by the greatness of the occasion, and when asked by a stranger for whom he had just performed the last mortal rites, replied: "One who knew all things on earth and in the waters of the great deep!" We are astounded to think that America can have so long survived the loss of so great a son.

Beyond the geographical discovery just alluded to in connexion with the "primeval pair," the volume which Dr. Gross has edited contains little or no information of a really scientific character. The contagion of yellow fever is not determined, nor its treatment either. One thinks one thing, and one another. But we are taught (and we are thankful for the instruction) that primitive Christianity is not quite extinct; for Dr. Benjamin Rush "probably followed the advice of St. Paul—was very angry, but sinned not." (p. 42.) Something akin to despair, however, afterwards seizes us when we are informed that Dr. Nathaniel Chapman was a man who,

"Take him for all in all,
We shall not look upon his like again."

We should like to transfer the quotation from the man to the book. We are sorry not to hear of another Dr. Chapman; but we shall be equally sorry if it is our lot again to meet with an 'American Medical Biography.'

REVIEW IX.

1. *Die Gesetze der Ernährung des Fleischfressers durch neue Untersuchungen festgestellt.* Von Dr. TH. L. W. BISCHOFF, Professor der Anatomie und Physiologie, und Dr. CARL VOIT, Assistent an dem physiologischen Institut und Privatdocent in München.—*Leipzig und Heidelberg.* Wintersche Verlagshandlung 1860. pp. 304.
- The Laws of Nutrition in Flesh-feeders, based on New Researches.* By Dr. TH. L. W. BISCHOFF and Dr. CARL VOIT, at Munich.
2. *De la Nutrition chez l'Homme et les Animaux.* Par le Dr. T. L. G. BISCHOFF. ('Archiv. Gén. de Méd.' Août, 1860. pp. 129-148.)
- On Nutrition in Man and Animals.* By Dr. T. L. G. BISCHOFF.

THE "laws of nutrition," as established by Bischoff and Voit, are based on experiments performed on a single dog. The fact that only one species of flesh-feeders has been submitted to examination, and of this species only a single individual, may, in the opinion of many, detract something from the value of these researches: but the great number of experiments, and the careful and scientific manner in which they have been performed; the long space of time over which they are spread, comprising almost two years; the widely varying condition of the animal during the different series of experiments; the repetition