

and method of the operation are the same as in the present case. As a rule the Vydians run away at midnight to another centre before the patients feel the melancholy results of their operation. The apparently astonishing immediate effect, and the positive assurances of the operator have in many cases within my knowledge drawn even the educated classes to them. It is therefore no wonder that the uneducated classes have still recourse to these Vydians. But I am glad to note that even in the villages their methods are being discredited and their fame is gradually dying out, for they leave behind in almost every village many cases of abominable pain in the eye and head after operation. Another point worthy of note is the careful way in which the fact of instrumentation is concealed from the patient, who is made to believe all the time that there is only medicine application. While working in the Government Ophthalmic Hospital, Madras, as an assistant under Major R. H. Elliot, I.M.S., and Captain H. Kirkpatrick, I.M.S., I had often seen patients meddled by couchers even swearing that the Mahomedan Vydian only put medicine and used no instrument whatever. I now see the reason for their assertion and these poor simpletons are not to blame. Some of these Vydians even confessed to me that the operation is sometimes performed under cover, *i.e.*, by spreading a cloth over the head of the patient and operator, as is done at the Brahmin thread investing ceremony when the *Guru* initiates the disciple in the mystery of the sacred *gayatri*.

I am extremely pleased with their way of distinguishing mature from immature cataracts. They generally touch only mature cataracts. It is particularly interesting to note that they very carefully avoid cases where pupils, contracted or dilated, do not well react to light. I had once a patient for cataract extraction and had dilated his pupil with atropine a day previously to know the character of the lens and the amount of the dilatation of the pupil. I showed this case to one of the batches, but they declined to take it up on the ground that the pupil did not react to light.

The Vydians further told me that this art of "litting the eye" is practised in this very same way from time immemorial, that there are somewhere some old texts written on palmyra leaves, laying down the method. He quoted the words in Tamil. They mean "removing the lancet after making a puncture, insert the copper probe and, holding it with three fingers, depress the lens with the three-sided edge." They further told me that the Kannadiputhur families have relations living in the districts of Salem, Tanjore, Trichy and Madura, who practise the same method without any variation whatever.

REMARKS BY MAJOR R. H. ELLIOT, I.M.S.,
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This paper presents several features of very great interest, to which I desire to draw attention.

(1) It is, so far as I am aware, the first eye-witness's description of the coucher's operation, written by one who practises the usual Western operation, and who has been trained to observe in an European hospital.

(2) The method of attacking the cataract from behind, observed by Mr. Ekamabram, has never, so far as I know, been described before. We have always believed that Eastern "couching" was performed from in front, and I am still inclined to think that the front method of working is used by some of the S. Indian couchers, as we find wounds in some of the recent cases which indicate that this is the method employed. Moreover, lay observers have described to us the operation as performed from in front.

(3) The avoidance of ciliary region and of the long ciliary arteries in the preliminary incision is probably more than accidental.

(4) The probe-like instrument with its crude cotton stop reminds us of Bowman's stop needle.

(5) With the above instrument the coucher apparently endeavours to tear through the suspensory ligament of the lens; this would appear to be another intimation that he is not as ignorant of anatomy as one might have thought. It is more than possible, however, that though these men act on well-defined anatomical principles, they are not really themselves aware of the anatomical basis of their knowledge, but act empirically on rules handed down to them through many generations.

(6) The ignorance they display of the dangers of sepsis is appalling and explains the large percentage of eyes lost through septic infection after their operations. This percentage is probably over 40 per cent. (*vide* statistics given by myself in a paper on "couching" in this Journal for August 1906).

(7) They would appear to have glimmerings of a diagnostic sense, as shown by their testing the pupil reaction, and yet they sometimes make bad mistakes, for we see couched eyes which bear clear evidence of antecedent glaucoma or optic atrophy.

(8) The use of the fowl's blood to hide the bleeding from the sclerotic wound is ingenious and cunning. It is well worthy of the tradition of native medicine in India.

Reviews.

The Transactions of the Bombay Medical Congress, 1909—By MESSRS. BENNETT COLEMAN & Co., The Times Press, Bombay. Edited by W. E. JENNINGS, M.D., D.P.H., Lt.-Col., I.M.S.

WE have already referred more than once in our editorials and elsewhere to the Bombay Medical Congress, and commented on the marked success of the meeting and on the numerous

valuable papers presented. A very large share of the credit of the Congress belongs to Lieutenant-Colonel Jennings, I.M.S. The same officer has placed the medical profession of India, and indeed of the whole English-speaking world, under a still greater debt of gratitude by the masterly manner in which he has edited the transactions of the Congress.

In a most excellent editor's preface, Colonel Jennings gives a short account of origin of the idea of a Congress, for which His Excellency the Governor of Bombay deserves the full credit. He enumerates briefly some of the principal lessons which are to be learned from the deliberations: these comprise the latest information on Cholera, Dysentery, Enteric Fever, Hill Diarrhoea, Tropical Diarrhoeas, Maternal and Infantile Mortality in India, Malaria, Black-water Fever, Plague, Kala Azar, Sleeping Sickness, Snake Venoms, Beri-Beri and Epidemic Dropsy, Leprosy, Indian Sanitation, Tropical Surgery and Ophthalmic Surgery, in which the Smith school was largely represented. This volume is one that should be in every tropical practitioner's library. The amount of information that is to be obtained on almost every form of tropical disease is unique; as a record of good work done by the medical profession in India no better testimony can be asked for.

We offer the editor our heartiest congratulations on the splendid volume he has been able to bring out, and on the skill and ability he has displayed from the inauguration of the conception of a Congress up to the publication of this valuable record of medical progress. The publishers have done their part of the work in a manner worthy of great praise.

A System of Clinical Medicines.—By THOMAS DIXON SAVILL, M.D. (Lond.). Second Edition, revised by the Author, assisted by F. S. Langmead, M.D., and AGNES T. SAVILL, M.A., M.D. London: Edward Arnold; India: Longmans, Green & Co.

THE present edition of Savill's well-known Clinical Medicine appears in one volume instead of two. The amount of material remains however practically the same, new matter replacing old. One very useful change has been made in the printing—the smallest of the types has been replaced by the medium-sized type. This work is so well known and the former edition was so favourably received that a long discussion of its merits is not necessary. Suffice it to say that the present edition has been brought thoroughly up to date and that the original plan and arrangement of the text have been maintained. The volume will be found of the greatest value to practitioners and senior students, and we have no hesitation in recommending it to the profession in India. There are over 170 illustrations which are distinctly good and will be found of great service to the reader. The publisher deserves a special word of praise for the hand-

some volume he has succeeded in producing and for the clear and readable type made use of. The illustrations and coloured plates are beautifully executed.

A Text-book of Nervous Diseases.—By W. A. TURNER, M.D., F.R.C.P.; and T. G. STEWART, M.B., M.R.C.P. Messrs. J. & A. Churchill.

THIS is a work that merits the careful attention of the profession. It gives in a short and practical form an account of the diseases of the nervous system. Special attention has been given to the clinical description of the conditions met with; but the etiology, pathology and treatment have received full consideration. The book is divided into XIX parts, each dealing with separate conditions. A short summary of the anatomy and physiology opens the list: there is then a very useful account of the examination of the nervous system for disease, in which many useful hints and methods will be found. The remaining parts take up the different disorders under a classification based on practical experience, and one, which the authors have found useful in the teaching of students. A special feature of the book is the wealth of illustrations—there are close on 200 of these and there is no doubt they increase the value of the volume immensely. Most of these illustrations are from photographs of the actual conditions as observed. We consider this volume to be one of the best on the market and is of special value on account of the profuse illustrations. As might be expected, the publishers have done their share of the production in such a manner that an exceedingly handsome volume is the result.

Materia Medica, Pharmacy, Pharmacology and Therapeutics.—By W. HALE WHITE, M.D. (Lond.), Senior Physician and Lecturer on Medicine at Guy's Hospital. Eleventh Edition. 1909. Pp. 695. J. & A. Churchill, London. Price 6s. 6d. nett

THIS work is so well known for its general excellence that it is not necessary for us to say much about it. A perusal of this, the eleventh edition, shows numerous alterations and additions, necessitated by recent advances in the knowledge of therapeutics, the result of which is to bring the book thoroughly up to date. It is an excellent text-book for students, and may be read with equal advantage by practitioners anxious to keep themselves abreast with modern views and methods.

Scientific Memoirs No. 36. Observations on Rabies.—By Major G. LAMB, I.M.S., and Capt. A. G. MCKENDRICK, I.M.S. Government of India.

THIS memoir deals more particularly with an atrophic form of rabies occurring in animals. It has been generally understood that the passage of rabies virus through rabbits exalted the virulence, and that it was probably that in nature the virus had to pass through some animal that had the power of increasing the virulence in order to retain its powers. It