

RETROSPECT OF CURRENT LITERATURE.

Medicine.

On the Differential Diagnosis of Systolic Heart Murmurs.

LEUBE. "Zur Diagnose der Systolischen Herzgeräusche."—*Deutsche Archiv für Klinische Medizin*, Band 57, 3 und 4 Heft, 1896.

Whoever has carefully examined the chests of a very large number of patients, will have been impressed with the astonishing frequency of systolic cardiac murmurs where no other evidence whatever of heart disease is present. Under certain circumstances a diagnosis of the actual condition is well nigh impossible, and one must of necessity be non-committal when consulted. This question as to the presence of a true endocarditis or merely of a hæmic murmur or one due to myocardial disease of the papillary muscles, &c., may be readily differentiated in typical cases, but for a very large proportion of cases one can make no positive diagnosis, inasmuch as the condition present often seems one midway between organic and functional disease. Time and again one hears systolic cardiac murmurs which are induced by no discernible pathological lesion as examined at the autopsy. The importance of this is obviously great to all practitioners, both for diagnosis and prognosis; to none more so than to the examiner for life insurance. Realizing himself the frequent doubts which have arisen in the differential determination of a certain proportion of systolic cardiac murmurs, Prof. Leube, of Würzburg, discusses the subject in a short article, dealing with the main features to be observed and the means whereby a diagnosis may be most easily reached.

Systolic murmurs of this doubtful nature are usually due to one of three conditions, viz.: 1. An ordinary anæmia; 2. A mitral endocarditis with insufficiency; and 3. A myocarditis associated with anæmia or intoxication, and inducing a relative mitral insufficiency.

Firstly. An ordinary anæmia will induce a systolic murmur because of changes in the region of the pulmonary artery—either that the