

## REVIEW DEPARTMENT.

ART. XLVIII.—*A treatise on Fever, or selections from a course of Lectures on Fever.* By ROBERT D. LYONS, K.C.C., M.B.T.C.D., Professor of Practical Medicine and Pathology, &c. Philadelphia: Blanchard and Lea; Montreal: B. Dawson & Son, 1861.

The author of this treatise not only received his professional education in Ireland where the common forms of continued fever have long prevailed both sporadically and epidemically, but also had an opportunity of investigating their pathology and pathological anatomy minutely and extensively in his capacity of Pathologist-in-chief to the British army in the Crimea. From such a man, no mere compilation would be tolerable, and it is but fair to acknowledge at once that his treatise contains not only his confirmation or denial of previous opinions upon many topics, but numerous original observations, the results of his own labours and the proofs of his ability and earnestness in the cause of science.

The first chapter embodies some "general observations" upon fever, amongst which Prof. Virchow's late opinions upon the essence of fever are glanced at and approved of by the author. Galen's definition of fever—"calor præter naturam"—is admitted to constitute the one essential and pathognomonic symptom of fever; and to be present and appreciable by the thermometer even during the rigors that precede the hot skin; and it is contended that while frequency of pulse, thirst, scanty urine, &c. are frequently absent in fever, præternatural heat never is. The source of the elevation of temperature in fever, it is alleged by Virchow, is the increased consumption of tissue over that average normal quantity whose metamorphosis maintains the physiological temperature of the body. Although our author adopts this opinion of Prof. Virchow, the German Pathologist, we are surprised that he makes no allusion to the facts adduced by Dr. Parkes in support of it. Why is this? The eminent pathologist just named has shown that in fever the *excreta* are more abundant than in health, the amount of food taken being the same in both; that the temperature and the amount of the excretions are closely related to each other; and that the patient's loss of weight is in all cases proportionate to the amount of the excretions and to the temperature; a series of facts establishing the correctness of Prof. Virchow's thesis. The almost fatal objection to this view, viz., that in some fevers the excreta are *lessened* not increased, has been ably met by Dr. Parkes, who has shown that in such cases the products of metamorphosis are not diminished, but instead of being *eliminated* as excreta, are retained. And further he has rendered it probable, not to say demonstrated, that this retention in the system of the products of the increased metamorphosis of tissue is a common cause of the secondary inflammations that arise in fever; and to him belongs the merit of at last affording an explanation of the nature of *crisis*, and so-called *critical* evacuations—these being nothing more than sudden eliminations from the system of retained excretions through the skin, or kidneys, or bowels, with coincident improvement in the other symptoms. No allusion to these important results of Dr. Parkes' investigations is made by our author. His name is not even mentioned in connection with the subject under discussion.