

type, and is bound as Lea Bros. & Co. always bind their works, with an eye to durability as well as to external appearance. It seems to us that this work will be in much demand.

A. J. H.

*Degeneration: Its Causes, Signs and Results.* By EUGENE S. TALBOT, M.D., D.D.S. London: Walter Scott. Contemporary Science Series. 6s.

To medical science the subject of degeneration, in its legitimate sense, is of quite as much, if not of more importance, than evolution. Though the scientific study of degeneration is of comparatively recent date, the idea is itself a very old one. Hesiod suggested the notion in his *Theogonia*: and from that day to this such expressions as "These degenerate days," and "*O tempora, O mores!*" have been of common currency in the conversation of all races. The genus homo excels in dulness, and would sooner imagine itself fallen from a high estate than risen from a low one. The attitude is especially marked in servant girls and the elderly vendors of lead pencils. Hence the ready acceptance given to the pessimistic theory of degeneration, and the un-couth antagonism with which Darwin was at first warded off.

To Cesare Lombroso, of Turin, may be accorded the honor of having examined the phenomena of degeneration in the modern scientific spirit. He has been followed, unfortunately, by certain other writers, who, in an altogether different spirit, have adopted the term as an insolent catchword for scurrilous personal attacks upon political and literary enemies. The rather clever, but altogether unjustifiable lampoon of Nordau may be taken as a case in point. At present it would seem that there was some danger of the term being wrested from the hands of science, and relegated to the use of charlatans and unscrupulous journalists.

In the work before us, wherein an outline of the subject is attempted, the personal element is lacking, however, and the writer (who is a dentist) pays considerable attention to the degenerative stigmata of the teeth. In the past the ears, and nose, and jaw, have come in for an undue share in this respect; but now that Bertillon has covered himself with glory at the trial at Rennes, some new departure in the stigmatic repertoire will prove timely.

The temptation which writers on degeneration must feel to lay down general axioms seems to have been always very strong. They have all yielded to it. According to the criteria of the writer before us, Mr. Gladstone and Robert Louis Stevenson would both, though somewhat unlike in character, be degenerates in common. And there are other complications. Death itself is an uncontrovertable sign of pre-existing degeneration. Indeed, the study, as at present pursued, seems to have no bounds or limits of any sort. Every natural instinct or appetite is a pathological result of some "nerve storm," and the lack of the same, a form of dementia. Writers upon degeneration will soon have to be licensed by a sane medical board before they can write. From degeneration there is escape, it seems, for none but the authors themselves; and on the tower of Babel which they are building, even they may yet come to grief in a chaos of words.

E. H. S.

*The Practice of Dental Medicine.* By GEORGE F. EAMES, M.D., D.D.S., Professor of Pathology and Therapeutics in Boston Dental College. Member of the Massachusetts Medical Society, and the American Medical Association; ex-President of the Massachusetts Dental Society; Member of the American Academy of Dental Science; Honorary Member of the Maine Dental Society, etc. Containing thirty-eight illustrations, and three colored plates. Philadelphia: The S. S. White Dental Manufacturing Co.; London, Eng.: Claudius Ash & Sons, Ltd. 1899.

It is surprising the amount of ignorance manifested by the general medical profession in medico-dental subjects, and the practise of dental medicine, though written, perhaps, more especially for the dental student, and the dentist himself should find a place also in the library of every progressive physician.