

The Physician's Library.

BOOK REVIEWS.

Pulmonary Consumption, Pneumonia and Allied Diseases of the Lungs: Their Etiology, Pathology and Treatment, with a chapter on Physical Diagnosis. By THOMAS J. MAXS, A.M., M.D., Professor of Diseases of the Chest in the Philadelphia Polyclinic; Visiting Physician to Rush Hospital for Consumption. Illustrated. New York: E. B. Treat & Co., 241-243 West 23rd Street. 1901. Price, \$3.00.

This book bears the distinct individuality of a courageous thinker, and though opposed to present day medical ideas on the origin of phthisis, is well worthy of careful study. The author states in the preface that the fundamental concepts of the work may be formulated in the following propositions: (1) That pulmonary phthisis in the large majority of cases is primarily a neurosis, and that the pulmonary disintegration is secondary; (2) that any agent, influence or condition, which undermines the integrity of the nervous system, will engender pulmonary phthisis or some other form of pulmonary disorder; (3) that the only remedies of value in the treatment of pulmonary phthisis are those which appeal to and act through the nervous system; (4) that of special value in the treatment of phthisis is the counter-irritant action of silver nitrate, introduced hypodermically over the vagi in the neck; and (5) that acute pneumonia and other forms of acute pulmonary disease are closely affiliated with disorders of the nervous system.

These various propositions are supported with great learning and eloquence. The ninth chapter, which contains extracts from the sanitary laws passed in Naples, Venice and other Italian States, during the eighteenth century, "concerning the disinfection of the rooms in which consumptives died and the clothes which they had worn," is very instructive. The author thinks that if the death-rate from consumption (one-fourth of the whole mortality) was the same in Naples at the time when these laws were abolished, as it was in other cities in which segregation was never practised, the practical value of such measures was entirely negative. Probably had the shrewd Italian legislators of the eighteenth century been as well informed as their successors of the present day, they would have paid scant attention to the clothes and other effects belonging to a consumptive, but would have passed regulations enforcing the use of the spit-cup and the destruction of all tubercular sputa. It is just another proof that sanitary laws interfering with liberty should not be passed until science has said her last word. The book is well printed and is a credit to the publishers.

J. J. C.

Encyclopedia Medica. Under the general editorship of CHALMERS WATSON, M.B., M.R.C.P. (Edin.) Vol. V. Herpes to Jaws. 536 pp. Edinburgh: William Green & Sons. 1900.

While the contributions to this volume are, generally speaking, good, some of them merit special notice as giving evidence of thorough and careful preparation by the authors. Among these are those on Hysteria, of which there are