

MEDICAL CHRONICLE.

Vol. V.]

MARCH, 1858.

[No. 10.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

ARTICLE XXVII.—*Mental Depression: a Cause of Death.* By Wm. H. HINGSTON, M.D., L.R.C.S., Edin., &c. &c.

If "a low sensual reader shall, from mere love of the animal life, find himself drawn in, surprised and betrayed into, some curiosity concerning the intellectual," how much more should the mind of the physician be impressed with the importance of earnestly considering that subtle and obscure link which binds the nervous system (of which he knows so little) with the grosser body, (of which he knows much more.) He, above all others, has daily opportunities afforded him of studying the ever-varying peculiarities of those with whom he associates, and on whom he is necessarily most dependent. "It seems to me," says Sir Benjamin Brodie, "that medical practitioners, if they knew how to avail themselves of it, have an advantage over most other professions; partly because they have to deal with every order in society, from the high-born patrician and prosperous millionaire down to the poor man in the hospital, seeing them as they really are, under those circumstances of trial, which, more than anything else, level all artificial distinctions; but, more especially, because they are necessarily led to contemplate the mind, not simply in the abstract, as is the case with the mere metaphysician, but in connection with the physical structure with which it is associated."

It being the duty of the physician to study the influence of the mind upon the body, and of the body upon the mind—not merely as an abstract study, but in order often to trace effects to their causes,—it appears