

The Physician's Library.

Spinal Curves. By NOBLE SMITH. Second edition. London: Smith, Elder & Co. 1897.

In this book Mr. Smith lays the profession under obligation. Nowhere else is so much clinical and pathological material available as in London; and the author lays many hospitals and museums under tribute to furnish descriptions of cases and specimens that he may lay a good foundation for his conclusions. The book is a veritable arsenal from which any of us may draw, and few can be so favored as the author in having access to such stores of material. The book is discursive rather than dictatorial; and while this will be appreciated by the specialist, the man who is busy with general practice will find it tedious and will miss the definiteness and conciseness of instruction which are for him most helpful. On page 18 the author goes out of his way to say a word against the treatment of weak spines and commencing lateral curvatures by exercises. A more legitimate criticism which the author might have made is that cases are admitted into the gymnasium for treatment in whom spinal curvatures exist, and in which cases this diagnosis should have been made and the patient consequently have been fitted with a brace and kept at rest. While, in the main, the remarks concerning mechanical support are highly valuable and are marked by appropriate criticisms of methods employed, yet his unqualified recommendation of the "adaptable metal splint" (of Chanee) as modified by the author is calculated to produce a dangerous confidence in those not familiar with spinal braces. All such as are constructed on the principle of that recommended are defective in two points: (1) because the shoulders are so movable on the trunk as to afford an imperfect anchorage for the brace above, and (2) a narrow band about the pelvis forms a much less stable base of support than that which grasps the pelvis when a properly fitting plaster of paris corset is employed. The advice given to trust this "adaptable metal splint" for fixation, without any head support when the disease is as high as the third or fourth dorsal, or in some cases the first dorsal vertebra, is certainly not in accord with the observations of American surgeons (p. 81). The author's remark that the Sayre's jury-mast is a very ineffective machine is not too strong. No one should be encouraged to rely upon a means so inefficient to obtain rest for the upper vertebrae. The author's plan of securing rest for the cervical spine by a head band, attached and supported as he has described it, is certainly one of the best. Out of the richness of his experience and the fulness of his opportunities, the author gives us a book which no surgeon can afford to be without, but whose recommendations in some instances must be guardedly adopted.

B. E. M.

A Text-book of the Practice of Medicine. By JAMES M. ANDERS, M.D., Ph.D., LL.D., Professor of the Practice of Medicine and of Clinical Medicine in the Medico-Chirurgical College, Philadelphia; Attending Physician to the Medico-Chirurgical and Samaritan Hospitals, Philadelphia, etc. One volume. Illustrated. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders & Co.; 1898.

This is a neat, compact volume of 1,259 pages. It is a good clear type, and has several good illustrations. The historical development of the subject