

*The Transactions of the American Medical Association, instituted 1847.—Vol. 2, Philadelphia, 1849. 8vo, pp. 956.*

This valuable volume, comprising the proceedings of the last meeting of the Association, with the reports of the Standing Committees, has been on our table for some time. The standing committees relate 1stly, to the Medical Sciences generally; 2dly, Practical Medicine; 3dly, Surgery; 4thly, Obstetrics; 5thly, Medical Education; 6thly, Medical Literature; 7thly, Publication; 8thly, Public Hygiene; 9thly, Adulterated Drugs, and 10thly, Indigenous Medical Botany. Comprised in the reports of these several Committees are a large number of truly valuable documents, reflecting the highest credit upon their authors. Passing from the purely medical and surgical department of the work, to that of a semi-medical character, we have perused the reports of the Committees on Medical Education, Medical Literature, and Public Hygiene with especial gratification. The hygienic reports for Concord, N.H., Portland, Me., New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Lowell, Baltimore, Charleston, S.C., New Orleans, Louisville, Ky., and Cincinnati, have attracted especial attention; but of all, those of Boston and Lowell are marked for their precision and the labour bestowed upon them by their authors or author, Dr. Curtis. We notice that this association meets this year in the month of May, at Cincinnati—it has our best wishes for its prosperity. We hope that the time is not far distant when a *British American Association*, with similar objects in view, will be holding its annual meetings, and with an influence, on public opinion equal with that, which there can be no question, its elder sister is now producing.

*Researches on the Natural History of Death, by BENNET DOWLER, M.D.—New Orleans, 1850. Pamphlet, pp. 22.*

In 1837, Professor Manni, of the University of Rome, offered, through the intervention of the French Academy, a prize of 1500 francs, for the best work on the signs of apparent death. This prize was lately awarded to M. Bouchut, who assigned in his paper the following as the *immediate* and *remote* signs. The *immediate* consist in—1st, The prolonged cessation of the heart sounds. 2d, The simultaneous relaxation of the sphincters. 3d, The sinking of the globe of the eye, with loss of transparency of the cornea. The *remote* consist in—1st, Cadaveric rigidity. 2d, Absence of muscular contractility under the influence of galvanism; and 3d, Putrefaction. Dr. Dowler exhibits forcibly the inconclusiveness of all the signs regarded by M. Bouchut as *immediate*, and forthwith proceeds to point out one not noticed by previous writers, viz., the thermometrical test. On this point, we will let our author speak for himself:—

“I propose the thermometer as a means of testing death, possessing as it does, superior certainty over the stethoscope. The latter method takes for granted, that in apparent death, the heart’s action continues; that it cannot be for a time suspended, and that its action can always be heard! The very analogies of apparent or temporary death seem to oppose or contradict these assumptions. The analogies and the positive facts known of animal temperature, teach that, during life, the body is not heated and cooled like inert matter. Place two or three thermometers in the armpits—in the bend of the arm, (the forearm being flexed,)—in the mouth and within the sphincters, to ascertain the heat of the surface, and of the centres, (the rectum is the best, and most accessible centre.) The application of the thermometer requires no skill, and is open to the inspection of all, and is a test for all the warm blooded animals—