

In anatomy the candidate is required to make a preparation of any part given him—and of any tissue.

The *Staats Examen* is eminently a practical one, and well fitted for a person about to enter practice. From beginning to end, is conducted by lottery. Candidate draws from among a number of others, a paper on which is written what is required of him. He draws in each branch separately.

Kirche Gasse, Berlin, February, 1853.

## REVIEWS AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

VIII.—*The Action of Medicines in the System.* By FREDERICK WILLIAM HEADLAND, B.A., M.R.C.S., &c. Pp. 560. Lindsay & Blakiston, Philadelphia. B. Dawson, Montreal.

The advantages which would result from an intimate acquaintance with the action of medicines, are so transparent, that their recital need not detain us here. Like other mysteries in which man forms and takes part, the pursuit has proved bewildering during its progress, and unprofitable at its termination. The adventurer, then, is entitled to admiration, who, undaunted by past failures, has sufficient curiosity and energy to pursue what has been to most of his predecessors a mere *ignis fatuus*. We must be understood to be speaking now, not of the knowledge of ultimate facts, for this comes of skill and observation, but of the why and the wherefore of such facts—the *secula seculorum*—which have not been revealed.

An inquiry into the action of medicines is beset with numerous difficulties, and unless these be removed, it will yield but little profit. The terms used in therapeutics are frequently vague; a single one has often several significations, and unless a clear comprehension exist of the sense in which it is used by a particular author, he will be read erroneously, and lead to egregious mistakes. Thus neurotic may mean either a medicine which ameliorates nervous disorders or one which has some entirely different curative tendency, but produces its effect by nervous agency; having dissimilar meanings, according as to whether the end attained or the course pursued be implied. The arrangement of medicines into classes, and the designation of these classes, is arbitrary, and although conventional, is far from being conclusive or appropriate. We say, so and so are antispasmodic, and the theorist might believe all others not included with them were without such virtue, while the truth is, that very many of the rejected, under peculiar exigencies, can produce