

introduction of great improvements. The case of Inoculation, and more recently of Vaccine, may serve to shew the one; and the long neglect of Percussion as a means of diagnosis in diseases of the heart, the other. It was about the middle of last century (1761) that Aumbuzzer published his important discovery (unquestionably, says Dr. Forbes, one of the greatest improvements ever made in Pathology), and it was not till it was recommended by Corvisart, many years after the present had commenced (1808), that its value became generally known.

(c.) A third subject which may illustrate the variable condition of our doctrine, and shew the necessity of paying attention to it, is the nature of Fever—to which I shall allude chiefly to notice the apparent likelihood of the breaking down of what once seemed one of the best established distinctions among diseases, viz., that between common continued and eruptive Fevers. You are aware that it is now well known that in the progress of common continued as well as typhus Fevers, a rash appears at a certain period, having peculiar characters assimilating those fevers to the nature of an Exanthema, and consequently bringing all idiopathic fevers within the same category. I shall again stop to shew the difficulty there often is at one period in drawing attention to a subject which at a subsequent period is acknowledged as important, and becomes universally received. Years ago, about the latter third of the last century, Burserias pointed out the existence of this rash, and insisted that common Fever should be classed among Exanthema.

There is another point connected with Fever which I may remark upon. For years after I graduated, it was the received opinion that Continued Fever,

however diversified in appearance or intensity—whether mild or severe, synochus or typhus—was always the same disease, identical in cause and nature. In the works which are still principally referred to we find this opinion. Consult the Cyc. P. M.—Tweedie's Lib. of Med.—Watson's Lectures—and you find this doctrine promulgated. Yet now we have writers who assert the non-identity of different cases of continued Fever; and, under the names of typhus and typhoid Fevers, we are taught that there exists two diseases,—distinct in their origin, their symptoms, and their effects.

If time permitted, I might bring to your notice many more instances of important improvements, or, at any rate, important alterations, in medical doctrine, which have taken place within the last few years; among which the discovery of what is commonly called Bright's Disease is not the least important; but I shall only finally allude to the vast improvement introduced into practical medicine by the conjoined operations of Auscultation and Percussion.

It is now about thirty years since Laennec first announced his great discovery to the French Academy, and it is much less since the practice of Auscultation has become general. Like most other improvements, it met with opposition at its first introduction; but this has now quite disappeared, and its only obstacle is that which it shares with all other objects of pursuit, the labour necessary for acquiring expertness in its application.

It has not only given precision to our diagnosis of diseases of the chest: it has led to the discovery of others not before suspected.

I might extend this detail of improvements by referring you to the numerous means of combatting disease which have