

XIII.—*A practical Treatise on the Diseases of Children.* By J. F. MEIGS, M.D. Second edition. 8vo., pp. 711. Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston. Montreal: B. Dawson.

This is an excellent work on the subject of which it treats. The first edition has had an extensive disposal, and we predict the same for the second; which, besides the merits of the original, possesses additional inducements to recommend it to patronage. It is eminently practical, and may be safely selected as a counsellor from whom sound and profitable information can be procured. From its pages the student may learn a simple and faithful account of the diseases peculiar to childhood.

In our examination of it, some particular objects have struck us as worthy of special notice.

Much confusion has existed concerning intracranial effusions in children. By common consent they have been resolved into acute and chronic. The first was, after the time of Whyte, considered to result from an acute inflammation, and more recently French pathologists, by their labors, have found it to be of a tubercular character. This conclusion, however, seems to be rather too exclusive, and we think Dr. Meigs has very correctly distinguished the acute effusions into tubercular meningitis, and acute hydrocephalus, each of which is discussed apart, and evidently with practical advantage.

We regret that in his description of diarrhoea scarcely anything is said about the character of the evacuations, to which so much importance is usually attached. Dewees, Eberle, and Trousseau classified diarrhoea according to the evacuations; the division of the latter is into—1, bilious; 2, mucons; 3, lenteric; and 4, cholericform; to which might properly have been added feculent and chylous. The green colored stools so common in infants, and so characteristic of their complaints, receives merely a bare mention. Our author might have usefully followed the example of his father, Dr. C. D. Meigs, who, in his lectures on certain of the diseases of young children, devotes considerable space to this symptom. He holds that it arises from the action of an acid in the stomach or intestines, or on bile secreted in large quantity by the liver, believing, with the majority of physicians, in its bilious nature, notwithstanding that Dr. G. Bird, eight years ago, showed analytically that it did not contain more than an ordinary amount of bile, and depended upon the presence of modified blood. This is the more important, as the kind of treatment practised will accord with the view held. The prevalence and fatality of bowel affections in Canada among infants, especially during summer, will explain our anxiety to be informed on this topic.

Our author has given a lengthened detail of cholera infantum. The chapter, however we find to be word for word with the similar one in the first edition, and only differs in the change of a few numerical state-