

the head of another child into the pelvis with the breach of the first, or from enlargement of the liver or kidneys. A careful external and internal examination will always explain the case, if we remember these facts, and do not allow the consideration of negative possibilities to remove our attention from what is actually present. If the enlargement is produced by a single organ, we find the abdomen more tense and firm than in dropsy; the abdominal walls resist pressure, and we meet with a solid body. This will point out the situation of the enlarged organ; and, if it be the kidneys, the abdomen is distended laterally. Even when there is fluid in the peritoneal cavity, a careful exploration will enable us to feel the enlarged organs. The diagnosis will be difficult if, as in Billard's case, labour is impeded from enlargement of the urinary bladder. The swelling is here more circumscribed than in ascites." (pp. 305-8.)

In the treatment of such cases, Dr. Hohl believes that much may often be done by careful manipulation of the body, without having recourse to instruments. But he allows that, in some cases, instrumental interference is absolutely necessary.

DEAD CHILDREN. This is a well written and instructive chapter, but our space prevents us from making extracts.

The quotations which we have given from Dr. Hohl's work will sufficiently shew the amount of labour which he has bestowed on the subject; and the interesting and instructive method in which he has arranged his information. Without any pretensions to profound pathological reasoning, the treatise is highly practical; and every one engaged in obstetric practice, to whom it is accessible, must feel interested by the numerous cases with which it is interspersed, and receive valuable information on the treatment of a class of accidents attendant on parturition, which, though their occurrence be more or less rare, ought to be understood by the accoucheur.

EPIDEMICS EXAMINED AND EXPLAINED, OR LIVING GERMS PROVED BY ANALOGY TO BE A SOURCE OF DISEASE. By JOHN GROVE, M.R.C.S.L. Lond: 1850. 8vo., pp. 192.

The object of this handsome little volume, written in an agreeable style, and displaying no inconsiderable amount of multifarious reading, is sufficiently indicated by its title. The work consists of four chapters; the first being devoted to establish the Probability of Epidemic, Endemic, and Infectious Diseases depending upon Vital Germs for their Manifestations; the second to the Number and Value of Facts to support the proposition; the third to the Reasonableness of the Application of the Facts to the Inference; and the fourth to Results in Proof of the Tenableness of the Proposition.

Mr. GROVE, almost at the outset, reasonably enough expresses a doubt whether we are much further advanced in the knowledge of the cause of pestilences, than the Jews in the time of Moses; and he subsequently adds, that all previous writers have signally failed to furnish us with any practical information. Impressed with a very natural conviction of the difficulty of the subject, the author, therefore, has applied himself, as he tells us, solely to the groundwork as the primary proceeding for a solid superstructure. But even with this limited direction of his labour, grave doubts are likely to be suggested by a careful examination of the arguments which he brings forward, whether he has, to any extent, succeeded in *proving* the dogma, somewhat prematurely laid down in the title which he has selected for his work. To our apprehension he has scarcely, in any appreciable degree, succeeded in lifting the veil of obscurity, or, we should rather say, of Cimmerian darkness, which rests on the origin of epidemic diseases, the subject remaining pretty much as he found it: all is dim, shadowy, and uncertain, as before.

In expressing this opinion, however, we utterly disclaim any intention of disparaging either the ability or acquirements of the author; on the contrary, we think he has succeeded as well as most writers, who may be tempted to essay the same task with no better materials. The truth is, that facts are entirely wanting, to afford any stable support for the hypothesis which he has espoused, and necessarily *ex nihilo nihil fit*. Indeed, in the existing state of our information, we look on a successful attempt to prove the doctrine referred to, not only as difficult, but simply impossible; nor is it within the compass even of the highest talent, to give permanency to any medical hypothesis, the groundwork of which has no better foundation than plausible conjectures, and analogical inferences. It is no doubt true, that a theory, if soundly based on an accurate observation of facts, may receive even strong corroboration from analogy; but to rely principally on the latter mode of reasoning, is to reverse the natural order of things, and appears to resemble somewhat too closely the architectural device of that ingenious people, described by the witty Dean of St. Patrick, whose custom it was to commence their buildings at the roof, and to finish them at the foundation. But to examine the subject a little more closely, suppose it were conceded (and this is perhaps going quite as far as the premises warrant,) that a certain degree of probability attaches to the causation of epidemic and infectious diseases by vegetable germs, cells, or sporidia, surely something more than analogical arguments, however plausible, will be required to win general assent to a doctrine so obscure and difficult. When we ask for facts, it will not surely be alleged that the so-called fungoid cells, seen by Mr. Spooner in variolovaccine lymph, or the microscopic discoveries of Brittan, Swayne, and Budd in the rejectamenta of choleraic patients, afford any solid foundation to this vegetable theory. Yet utterly insufficient for the purpose, as recent demonstrations have shown the alleged facts to be, the doctrine, we believe, has little else to repose on; and, as far as relates to cholera, it was unanswerably refuted almost as soon as it saw the light. To future advocates of the same hypothesis, it may therefore be reasonably suggested, as an indispensable preliminary to success, to demonstrate, in the first place, that vegetable germs, or spores of a definite character, are invariably present in epidemic diseases; and in the second place, that they are not present in other forms of disease, or in the ordinary conditions of health. This point once firmly established, it will be soon enough to speculate regarding their exact relationship to various maladies, to inquire how far they may be an effect and not the cause of disease, what it is that determines their periods of activity and of long abeyance, their capricious and uncertain movements, and in what manner they operate on the solids and fluids of the animal frame. But, supposing all this to be satisfactorily determined, even then so much would still remain to be elucidated, before we could derive from our investigation of the subject any practically useful knowledge, that we scarcely hope to see this mode of accounting for the causation of disease, transferred from the rank of a mere hypothesis, to the position of an established doctrine in science. At the same time, however, we believe, with the author, that the chemical and animalcular theories of disease are, in the present state of our knowledge, equally untenable; but it by no means follows, that if the views of Liebig, Kopp, and Simon, and of Henle, Holland, and Mitchell be erroneous, that his adopted theory is true. On the whole, we are constrained in candour to say that Mr. Grove has entirely failed to satisfy us that the origin of epidemics is to be found in living vegetable germs; nor shall we probably be the only exemplification of the statement with which he sets out, that "it is one thing for a man to convince himself, but a very different thing to be able to convince others".

But although Mr. Grove has failed to satisfy us as to the origin of epidemic diseases, we have much pleasure in stating that we have found a large fund of very agreeable and interesting information in his treatise. We had

marked several passages for transference to our pages, but we must content ourselves with one specimen, which the author quotes from Dr. Lindley's *Vegetable Botany*. Should the reader agree with us in thinking it very curious, we can with the more confidence refer him to Mr. Grove's volume for the further gratification of his taste.

“One of the most poisonous of our fungi is the *Amanita Muscaria*, so called from its power of killing flies, when steeped in milk. Even this is eaten in Kamschatka, with no other than intoxicating effects, according to the following account by Langsdorf, as translated by Greville. This variety of *Amanita Muscaria* is used by the inhabitants of the north-eastern parts of Asia, in the same manner as wine, brandy, arrack, opium, etc. is by other nations: ‘The most singular effect of the *Amanita* is the influence it possesses over the urine. It is said, that from time immemorial, the inhabitants have known that the fungus imparts an intoxicating quality to that secretion, which continues for a considerable time after taking it. For instance, a man moderately intoxicated to-day, will by the next morning have slept himself sober, but (as is the custom) by taking a teacup of his urine, he will be more powerfully intoxicated than he was the preceding day. It is, therefore, not uncommon for confirmed drunkards to preserve their urine, as a precious liquor against a scarcity of the fungus. The intoxicating property of the urine is capable of being propagated; for every one who partakes of it has his urine similarly affected. Thus, with a very few *Amanite*, a party of drunkards may keep up their debauch for a week.’” (P. 167.)
