

DISEASES OF THE EAR, AND THEIR TREATMENT. By ARTHUR HARTMANN, M.D. (Berlin); translated from the third German edition by JAMES ERSKINE, M.B. 8vo. pp. xiv. 283. Edinburgh: Young J. Pentland. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1887.

In the translator's preface we find that "this translation has been undertaken with the view of placing in the hands of English practitioners and students a book specially suited to their requirements." If it had been said that the task was undertaken in order to place before English readers one of the best German works on otology, we should not have demurred. We must, however, enter our protest against the suggestion contained in the above sentence, that there are not many excellent works written by English and American authors in their mother tongue. The names of many such will at once present themselves to the reader if he is interested in aural surgery.

Dr. Hartmann's work is, however, excellent, and as a book of reference most valuable. At the same time, we venture to doubt whether it is sufficiently elementary for the student or young practitioner who has not had the advantage of clinical instruction in otology.

We are glad to see that in discussing "*otitis externa diffusa*," the view is expressed that this affection is commonly either secondary to inflammation of the middle ear, or due to irritants—chemical, thermal, or mechanical.

With reference to exostoses of the meatus it seems to us that the author contradicts himself in the following sentences, which have been verified by consulting the German work: "This [*i. e.*, treatment] is limited to removal of obstructing matter so long as the contraction is not very great, and the dulness of hearing is only caused by temporary obstruction of the space which exists." . . . "As a rule, the exostosis should be removed as early as possible, especially if still growing, as the operation is more easily performed the less the meatus is occluded."

The advice given on page 145 is perhaps not quite in accordance with the views of English and American aurists, many of whom regard the use of bougies for the Eustachian tube with suspicion if not distrust.

In the section on "Chronic Inflammation of the Middle Ear without Exudation," we find the various methods of treatment discussed; we would, however, take exception to the statement that "vapor of chloride of ammonium, which has been in use for a long time, is now rarely employed." We think that one of the forms of chloride of ammonium inhalers now in common use, is likely in such cases—provided always the case is or has been of catarrhal origin—to be of great service after thorough patency of the Eustachian tubes has been secured. At the conclusion of the same chapter the author says: "If no benefit can be obtained by the above modes of treatment, operations must be resorted to." This is dangerous advice, doubly dangerous when it appears in a work written for students. The operations, afterward referred to, are some of them perilous, and most of them commonly useless—*e. g.*, paracentesis by the galvanic cautery, tenotomy of the tensor tympani, and excision of the membrana tympani and ossicles. We believe that this last-named proceeding may have a future before it, but we maintain that the time has not come when it can safely be recommended in an

elementary work; neither do we yet know how to diagnosticate cases with sufficient accuracy to enable us conscientiously to recommend it.

Notwithstanding these few strictures we have felt obliged to make, we say again, as we said before, that Hartmann's work is, on the whole, most excellent and trustworthy.

The English edition reflects great credit on the publisher, paper, illustrations, and type being all equally praiseworthy. We are sorry to say that the translator might have done his work better. In not a few places the sense is not the same in the English as in the German work. Thus, on page 114 (English edition) the following sentence occurs: "Usually in cases of perforation [*i. e.*, of the membrana tympani, Rev.], with a knitting-needle, the consequent pain, tinnitus, dulness of hearing, and perhaps fainting occur only at intervals." The error here lies in the fact that in translating the words "*nur vorübergehend*," the writer has used as their English equivalent "only at intervals," whereas the sentence should run "only transient . . . occur." We have no doubt that if a second English edition should be required the translator will correct this and other similar mistakes (of which we regret to say there are not a few). We would also suggest that more attention should be paid to English composition. The following may be a literal translation, but it retains too much of the German idiom (not unmixed with a Scottish element) to be altogether acceptable to the taste of an English reader: "Therefore ought we always to open the antrum freely along with the neighboring cells" (p. 190).