A somewhat nice distinction might be established between medical works, according as they are employed for reference or perusal. On the one hand are the text-books and systematic treatises, of which in our day it may be said that the demand is for those exhibiting the greatest conciseness with the fullest detail, and the utmost self-restraint of the author as regards the personal element in both its subjective and objective experiences. The result resembles the cabinet of a botanist, where the *Ranunculaceæ* and the *Asclepiadaceæ* appear upon the shelves in natural order, and where no one would dream of looking for a nosegay. On the other hand are the medical volumes admirably worthy of perusal both as to subject and style, which are well fitted for other shelves than those of the physician. These are, for the most part, compilations of clinical and other lectures, medical addresses, papers reprinted from scientific periodicals, and here and there a work in which the author seriously attempts a systematic review of a large field. In all these, a wider latitude is permitted the writer. An illustration from the personal experience of himself or his friends, a simile, even a metaphor, may serve him in his effort to make his thought more vivid and his deductions more useful. The difference between the two classes of books is as clear as that between the table-chat of a great man and his utterances *ex cathedra*.

Of the brilliant authors who have attained distinction in the second of the two classes described above, Trousseau in France was easily first in his day, and has been followed by few of his nationality. Watson in England, even though a systematic author, was

*ON DISORDERS OF DIGESTION, THEIR CONSEQUENCES AND TREATMENT. By T. Lauder Brunton, M.D., D.Sc., F.R.S., etc. New York: Macmillan & Company.

the founder of a noble school of writers, including in our day Sir James Paget, Mr. Hutchinson, and, by no means last in the honorable list, Dr. Lauder Brunton, the author of the treatise before us. They who have had access, for the past few years, to the always instructive issues of the London "Practitioner," of which our author has long been editor, will recognize in these pages some old friends,—as, for example, the paper on "Poisons formed from Blood," etc. (1885); "On the Action and Use of Diuretics" (1884); and a few others here reappearing in the goodly fellowship of the valuable Lettsomian lectures "On Disorders of Digestion." In consequence of these facts, the author has come to believe, as he sets forth in the preface, that "if anyone should attempt to read this book straight through, he will probably throw it aside in utter disgust." He is fearful lest his few repetitions should have this undesirable result; yet there is scarcely a page of the volume that will not deeply interest the general no less than the professional reader, in consequence of the value of the work accomplished by a thinking man who does not disdain to be taught himself by the best and most widely differing teachers.

Possibly a single illustration will convey an idea of the practical value of the author's labors. What physical distress is comparable with that associated with what we call "headache"? It is, in one sense, the greatest of all human ills, since it counts its victims among the thousands where one alone suffers from the gout, the small-pox, or a broken leg. And of the victims themselves, an hundred thousand suffer in silence, where one seeks relief from a physician and is thus enrolled on the dismal list of statistics of disease. The fate of empires has hung upon the indisposition it has worked in monarchs, statesmen, generals, and even their menials. Millions of the human family have groaned beneath its cruel darts, for one who has been able to declare it a total stranger to his bodily ease or to point with unerring finger to the means of its relief. What census of the earth's family shall ever declare the multitudes of men and women who have resorted to tobacco, alcohol, and the narcotico stimulants of every class, in search of a nepenthe from the recurring plague? A Ferrier may limit to the hippocampal convolution of one side of the brain the seat of all this misery; and a Du Bois-Raymond may exhibit the whip-cord condition of the temporal artery when the migraine is at its worst. But it is not to these that the sufferer flies.

Now in the chapter on "the pathology and treatment of some forms of headache," our author throws upon this important and interesting field all the light of modern investigation aided by his own studies and his sterling common-sense. He shows with homely precision the utter looseness with which the vague term "neuralgia" has been applied to this and several other ailments as little understood. By the aid of a few effective illustrations, he then indicates the several forms of headache, due to albuminuria, malaria, gout, rheumatism, engorged and inflamed tonsils, disorders of digestion, caries of the teeth, and such abnormal conditions of the eyes as astigmatism, myopia, and hypermetropia. As to the last-named connection, which Tweedy, Savage, Carter, and others, have previously pointed out, what a sad and suggestive lesson it teaches! Figures fail as we attempt an estimate of the number of unfortunates who, in a single century of enlightened progress, have actually put drugs into their stomachs for relief of an intolerable headache, due solely to a want of correspondence between the focal distances of their two lenses, and readily relieved by a pair of properly adjusted glasses! "In treating any case of headache, therefore," concludes our author, "the first thing to do is to see whether the teeth are sound and the eyes normal. If anything is found wrong with either the teeth or the eyes, the defect should be at once corrected. The throat, ears and nose should also be examined, to see if any source of irritation is present there, and the surface of the scalp tested by pressure for rheumatic or syphilitic inflammation. Percussion should be tried over the head in order to determine whether or not there is any intracranial tumor."

We have touched upon this single subject, as the connection between headache and the disorders of the teeth and eyes serves to illustrate well the eminently practical and scientific method pursued by our author in the treatment of his several themes. It also serves well as an illustration of the position to which the foremost medical men of our day are unquestionably directing their steps. The search of the heavens, the earth, and the waters under the earth, for a drug, a panacea, a something that will "cure" human ailments, is almost over for the thoughtful mind. The battle between the men who give drugs in one way or another, by this system or by that, is drifting into the limbo of the search for "the philosopher's stone," for "the elixir of youth," and for the mysterious and magical roads to health that are to-day such a caviare to the general. Relief for the physical ills of the race is to be satisfactorily sought only in the removal of the causes that produce them. These efficient causes are daily yielding to the efforts of scientific investigation; and they make us stand aghast, as they come out into the light, at the folly, the blindness, and the puerilities of our past. We shall not go to the expert of the future and ask him for a medicament that shall absolve us from our

physical error, as might the *pax vobiscum* of a priest. We shall say, instead, "I am suffering from a disorder; I pray you show me what I have done to produce it, that by removing the cause I may again recover my health."

Almost every page of this volume is instinct with suggestions of this character. One cannot study "the poisonous action of eggs," the effect of "mechanical and chemical splinters," of the "typhoid bacillus," of "physiological ashes," of "emotional dyspepsia," or of the lately recognized "ptomaines" in their toxic action, without feeling that he is merely making short excursions into a vast and well-nigh unexplored region. With every new device of the plumber, the adulterator of food, the cook, the artist in wall-papers, the dyer of clothing, and their industrious colleagues in every trade and occupation that nearly touches either the domestic or the business life, the liability to a new and wider group of accidents and diseases is enlarged. Prominent among them—and naturally enough—are the disorders of digestion. Well may an English author—one of a nation which even the artistic sense of a Hamerton recognized as least subject to these ailments—send his messages of warning across the Atlantic to his American colleagues. In all the excesses of mastication and incineration of tobacco, in all those associated with the intemperate use of alcoholic drinks, with the no less intemperate "bolting" of meals, with the crudest methods of preparing and cooking the food that lies at our hand in an abundance and superior quality not found elsewhere in the markets of the world, ("too many religions and but one sauce!"), we may well listen with respect and attention to the words that come to us from our author's lips. The style of his writing is exceedingly simple and natural—though at times he reminds us that Macaulay was in error when he said that "no Englishman misplaces his *will* and *shall*." The typography of the work is all that could be desired.

JAMES NEVINS HYDE.