

"Professional men have written rather with a view to display their own ingenuity and learning than to benefit those engaged in the treatment of disease. They have consequently said many things not absolutely true, and represented others in false colours; they have treated of doubtful matters as if they were matters of certainty, and of difficult things as if they were easy; they have often spoken of useless remedies and valuable ones in the same tone of praise; and where no medicine was to be relied on, they have not had the candour to avow it."—p. vii.

Of Dr. Harrison's candour in expressing so complimentary an opinion of his *confrères* there cannot be a doubt, whatever there may be of his assurance. The work in which it is contained, we are informed, "is written with no view to cater to public prejudices, nor in any way intended to encourage domestic practice." We trust that the destiny of Dr. Harrison's production will not be otherwise than may correspond with the wishes which have attended its entrance into the world, or as a book of domestic medicine it must play sad havoc with the dependance which anxious mothers are wont to place upon the opinion of their medical advisers.

Horse Warranty: a Plain and Comprehensive Guide to the various Points to be Noted, showing which are Essential and which are Unimportant. By PETER HOWDEN. pp. 160. London: Hardwicke. 1862.

HORSES, pictures, wine, and Venus, are the Scylla and Charybdis of more than half the "men of the world." They seduce us more readily, enchain us more persistently, bewilder us more easily, and ruin us more quickly, than all other vanities and vexations of spirit put together. Yet these are the very objects upon which most men pride themselves as being particularly knowing, and as least likely to be taken in by. Alas, poor human nature! To be so easily deceived is thy proper birthright. So far as horses are concerned, however, could Mr. Howden have his way, we should be wronged no longer. He here presents us with a simple explanation of what constitute soundness and unsoundness in the horse, and adorns his specific details with such literary trimmings as to put the reader in the happiest state of mind as to how much he has easily learnt "about horses." Medical practitioners have plenty to do with the noble and serviceable animal in question; and medical men, we presume, like all other men, too often think they are capital judges of horse-flesh, and get wofully deceived accordingly. Those who are about to make a new purchase should master Mr. Howden's hints upon warranty. They may save themselves both expense and worry.

The Tropical World: a Popular Scientific Account of the Natural History of the Animal and Vegetable Kingdoms in the Equatorial Regions. By Dr. G. HARTWIG, Author of "The Sea and its Living Wonders." With 8 Chromoxylographic Plates and numerous Woodcuts. Longman & Co.

THE great success of "The Sea and its Living Wonders," by Dr. Hartwig, has induced him to publish this work. Written in an easy and pleasant style, and profusely illustrated, "The Tropical World" cannot fail to be extensively read by all lovers of natural history. There are several chapters in it of peculiar interest to the medical philosopher.

Of Anagrams: a Monogram treating of their History from the Earliest Ages to the Present Time; with numerous Specimens of Macaronic Poetry, Punning Mottoes, &c. &c. By H. B. WHEATLEY. Williams and Norgate.

A MOST interesting and curious work. The learned author has given copious illustrations of the freaks and fancies of scholars of various nations and ages in twisting words and sentences into forms at once surprising and appropriate. Mr. Wheatley's little volume is as amusing as a novel, with the advantage of being full of suggestive information.

CASES OF VARIOLA, TREATED WITH SARRACENIA PURPUREA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The admission into the pages of your journal of the following cases will, perhaps, prove interesting at the present moment:—

L—, aged fourteen years; never vaccinated. When first seen (Nov. 15th) the eruption of variola was in the papular stage, thickly spread over the face and extremities, promising confluence; less thickly over the trunk. Previous pyrexia, headache, and bilious vomiting severe. Ordered, decoction of sarracenia purpurea as prescribed by Mr. Miles in THE LANCET, October 18th, 1862. The patient was seen daily up to the 21st, the eruption displaying the regular stages without unusual change, and becoming confluent upon the face. The secondary fever was severe, and attended with delirium; but desiccation of the eruption thereafter proceeded favourably. There was no diuresis; diarrhoea was present from the fourth to the sixth day of the eruption, and was succeeded by constipation, for the relief of which castor oil was ultimately ordered. By Nov. 26th the boy was convalescent. The diet was of diluted milk and farinaceous food throughout.

B—, aged three years; never vaccinated. Was first seen on October 28th, when the eruption was papular, just forming in the skin. A diaphoretic mixture had been ordered, which was continued till the morning of the 30th, when the eruption had reached the vesicular stage, the vesicles being full and prominent. The eruption was so thickly spread and universal, and presented such an evident tendency to confluence, that it appeared a good case to test the sarracenia, which was accordingly at once supplied, and given in tablespoonful doses.

Oct. 31st.—Considerable febrile disturbance; vesicles becoming pustular; *has had the bowels freely moved, and passed a good deal of urine.*

Nov. 1st.—Child exceedingly restless; cannot be prevented from rubbing its face and denuding the pustules of their coverings; parts of the face so rubbed are quite raw; those portions which are untouched, *as the forehead, and the pustules upon the neck and chest, are much flatter than usual, and the skin around them has lost its previous inflammatory blush and become pale.* Considering, therefore, the statement in page 430 of THE LANCET (Oct. 18th), under the head *Observations*, that "after the second or third dose, given at intervals of from four to six hours, the pustules apparently lose their vitality;" and again, "the pustules appear simply to lose their vitality, they desiccate and fall away;" and further, considering that among the alleged salutary effects of the sarracenia "rapid diuretic action and power of evacuating the large intestine" are cited,—it was believed, notwithstanding the restlessness, that the results of the trial were so far confirmatory of the good effects of the new remedy.

2nd.—On visiting the residence of the patient, the child was found to have died late on the previous night.

Query.—To what were the flattening of the pustules and the disappearance of the inflammatory areolæ due?—to retrocession or the sarracenia? The latter got the dangerous and delusive credit assigned it till it was too late to pour in stimuli to rouse the sinking vital powers. The mother of this child asserted that from the moment the first dose of the new medicine was given the child began to change for the worse.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

BRADFORD, Dec. 1862. DAVID GOYDER, M.D.,
Assistant to Samuel Brown, M.D.

THE COURT PHYSICIAN IN MADAGASCAR.—One of the members of the Protestant Mission to Madagascar is Dr. A. Davidson, who, in a letter to Dr. Burnes Thomson, mentions a fact which may be taken as a practical confutation of the flaming accounts of French-Popish influence in the Court of Radama II.:—"I reached the capital (Antananarivo) after twelve days' journeying in a palanquin. My patients at present are at the rate of 5,000 to 6,000 per annum. Though the French doctors have come here and done their best to introduce themselves to the Court, I have been chosen Court physician, and have received from the king the medal of the Order of Radama for my successful treatment of his son. I conduct my dispensary upon the very same principle as the Cowgate (Edinburgh); open with prayer and reading of the Bible at seven o'clock every morning, see the patients until nine and give medicines, then visit the sick in their own homes. I have at present six young men under training."