

certainty of death, as would speedily reduce their numbers. I believe that the present cost of disposing of criminals would be reduced far more than fifty per cent., and that the supply of subjects for experiment would soon fall far short of the demand.

Far be it from us, in the present transitory nature of all earthly things, to say that Mr. Rusden's proposals are extravagant, but the last quotation, in the quiet gravity with which it is urged, puts us very much in mind of Swift's modest proposal for preventing the children of poor people in Ireland from being a burden to their parents and country, and for making them beneficial to the public, in which he proposes to eat a certain per centage of them up. We are not the less deterred from criticising Mr. Rusden's pamphlet, because in the edition of Swift before us, we see an ominous editorial note to the title of the "Modest Proposal,"—"A foreign author is said actually to have regarded the 'Proposal' as serious, and to have quoted it as an instance of the extremity under which Ireland laboured."

R. W. B. W.

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*The Physiology of Man. Nervous System.* By AUSTIN FLINT, Jr. M.D. Appleton and Co., New York, 1872.

The present volume was written as one of the series of volumes which are, when completed, to constitute a complete "Physiology of Man." The publishers having, however, lately issued a Treatise on Nervous Diseases by Professor Hammond, were desirous of presenting a complete work on the "Physiology and Pathology of the Nervous System." The two volumes are intended to fulfil this purpose. Dr. Flint has endeavoured to make his work a satisfactory representation of the present state of knowledge with regard to the anatomy and physiology of the nervous system. What strikes us at the outset as not a little extraordinary is, that in a volume which is presented as a work on the Physiology of the Nervous System, the anatomy and physiology of the special senses should be entirely omitted. This is almost as bad as the play of Hamlet, with the part of Hamlet left out. However, for some reason, satisfactory doubtless to publishers or author, the consideration of the special senses has been deferred to another volume.

To one who looked at the present volume simply on its

merits as a treatise on the physiology of the nervous system, it might appear to be somewhat wanting in fullness of information, and in thoroughness of execution, but if it be looked at as what it is—a particular section extracted from a treatise on physiology—it would be unfair to make such a complaint. In some respects we think the author might properly have been less general in his statements. Thus he takes from Sir Charles Bell the credit, which has generally been accorded to him, of having discovered the different functions of the anterior and posterior roots of the spinal nerves, and unhesitatingly assigns the discovery to Majendie. In this he may be correct, but it would have been satisfactory to have had a more explicit statement of the facts upon which he bases his opinion. In the same way he denies to Marshall Hall—rightly, as we think—the merit which he claimed of having been the first to discover the reflex function of the spinal cord, but the perfunctory way in which he disposes of the question is not, perhaps, the best calculated to produce conviction. Moreover, there are some passages in the book which may well make persons who are not connected with the Bellevue Medical College, of New York, distrust his judgment. While Sir Charles Bell, Marshall Hall, and other lights of the same magnitude, are dismissed with somewhat scant courtesy, Dr. Flint bows down in the profoundest admiration before the author of “the companion-treatise to this volume,” in which “the chapter not only contains a full historical account of the disease, but is enriched by numerous original observations of the most striking character. The profound acquirements of Dr. Hammond as a physiologist, and his skill as an original investigator in this department, lend additional weight to his deductions,” &c. Now, we are not going to find fault with Dr. Hammond’s Treatise, which we noticed on a former occasion, but we must say that it is very far from being what, in these days of exact scientific observation, we have a right to look for in a scientific treatise on Nervous Diseases. If Dr. Flint really feels the enthusiasm which he expresses, we can only hope that his qualifications for writing a treatise on physiology are greater than his qualifications for judging the worth of a treatise on pathology.

Having said so much by way of criticism, we have only to add that the present volume fairly fulfils its aim. The style is clear and forcible, and the concise description of the func-

tions of the different parts of the nervous system, embodies most of the most recent additions to our knowledge of complex and difficult subjects regarding which knowledge is constantly changing.

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*Parliamentary Blue Book. Judicial Statistics of England and Wales, for 1871.*

The first part of the last issue of the Judicial Statistics deals with the Police, Criminal Proceedings, and Prisons. We find that in the year 1871 our persons and our property in England and Wales had for their protection a force of police and constabulary numbering 27,425. Comparing the increase of the police and constabulary for the previous ten years with that of the population for the same period, the former is found to exceed the latter by 15 per cent.

It is undoubtedly satisfactory to find that the total number of the criminal classes for 1870-71, as compared with that for 1869-70, had decreased by 2843, or 5·3 per cent.; more especially as this follows a decrease of 1,262 or 2·3 per cent. in the total for 1869-70, as compared with 1868-69. The criminal classes are reckoned up under the three heads of known thieves and depredators, receivers of stolen goods, and suspected persons; the rule being to exclude from the list individuals known to have been living honestly for one year at least subsequently to their discharge after any conviction. The total number of the criminal classes for 1870-71 was 50,144, of whom 6,788 were under 16 years of age, and 11,228 were females. This total does not include criminals confined in prisons and reformatories, who numbered for the year 31,071—so that the grand total of criminals and the criminal classes reaches 81,215.

The proportion of police to those of the criminal classes at large, taken on these figures, would be as 5 to 9; and with this relation between the two, we find that the apprehensions in 1870-71 were in the proportion of 52·9 per cent. to the number of crimes committed; the highest proportion in any year having been 58·2 per cent. in 1862-63.

The total number of indictable offences shows a decrease of 6,823, or 13·1 per cent. as compared with the previous year. The following condensed table shows the numbers of the more interesting crimes for three successive years:—