

exalted may be his idea of the strength and variety of that power, has an adequate conception of its magnitude within the bounds which I will mention." Again he remarks, "The cure of any illness which does not consist in a disorganization of the tissues can be accomplished when the person thinks it can be done. If we physicians, who treat patients every day, had the power to make them believe that they are to be cured, we certainly would obtain less fees than we do. There is no doubt at all that if we could give to patients the idea that they are to be cured, they would often be cured, especially if we could name the time for it, which is a great element in our success." I have succeeded in this way, and I may say that I succeed more now than formerly, because I have the faith that I can in giving faith obtain a cure."

Such are the opinions and experience of a close philosophical observer, one who has devoted great ability and ceaseless energy to the solution of nervous phenomena.

This is an aspect of our profession which demands our consideration; for though it has been well determined that the mind is often seriously affected by the condition of the body, it is questionable whether the body is not as much influenced by the mind, and that changes may thus be brought about even in the tissues themselves. If this is so, it will give one solution why recoveries occur under the same or varying systems of treatment, when the *vis medicatrix* cannot be regarded as the cause. This is a class of cases which gives efficacy to, and confirms each peculiar system of treatment in the estimation of its followers; and it will be futile to reason with any one as to the merits of his system, if he is *conscious* that he has been relieved when using it. We can only do so by going behind the system and showing that there is a cause which is operative though not generally acknowledged; a *cause* capable of producing results of a wondrous character, and when recognised sufficient to reconcile to sound philosophy what now appears a mass of contradictions.

I do not say that this class of persons on whom the mind is capable of producing such results is very numerous; but it is numerous enough to make the results a disturbing element in our medical progress, indeed to such an extent as seriously to affect the laity in

their belief, and the profession itself in its certainty.

There are sufficient reasons to make us suspect that under anomalous conditions not only can the functions of organs be affected, as was demonstrated by Mr. Braid, of Manchester, but that changes in the tissues may be the result of disturbance in the nervous force; that this latter can assume various phases, being transmuted into heat or electricity, or manifesting itself in chemical power or motion. Be this as it may, Brown Sequard gives one among many instances in which nerve force caused physical changes of a remarkable character. He says: "A mother was looking at her child who was standing at a window with its fingers on the border of the window under the lifted sash. She saw the sash come down with great force and crush the fingers of the poor child. The mother remained unable to move, feeling immediately a pain in the three fingers at the very place where the child had been injured. The fingers swelled, an effusion of blood took place, ulceration followed, and she was a long time being cured." How this physical change was brought about, by what modifying power, it is difficult to determine. We cannot admit that the imagination *per se* could have been the efficient agent however important the rôle it played in the occurrence. But come from what condition of the mind, or tendencies of the nervous system it might, this, and phenomena similar in character exist as facts, and it will be wise if the profession give them due attention. They may be very few among the many, yet the principle involved in their production may supply a rationale for the instances which are adduced by empirics as proofs of the efficacy of their nostrums, and prevent the regular physician from being himself misled, or misleading others. A decided benefit will thus be gained. We will wrest from the ignorant their apparent success. We will make amenable to the laws of philosophical induction what has been vague and indefinite. For however subtle the principles which are operative, they will be mastered by a rigid system of investigation, and as soon as the phenomena become tangible they will not long escape the penetrating power of the medical mind.

Facts, no matter how incompatible with our previous experience and theories, will have to