

which, as in cases of hydrarthrosis, one tapping may prove permanently curative, because the original source of irritation and hypersecretion has already disappeared.

Under the head of "Reflex Action," the author includes the "reaction of traumatism," as well as the effects of revulsion and counter-irritation.

Verneuil has long since shown that very slight traumatism sometimes excites in the entire economy a general perturbation, and sometimes, by selection of the weak point, sudden aggravation of lesions that are only slight or have slumbered. This same excitement, usually prejudicial, may occasionally be curative. In the case of spinal surgery above detailed, Dr. White believes that the local shock of the operation was promptly followed by a corresponding reaction, in which the vitality of the tissues was raised sufficiently high to determine a return to the normal state. In this relation the reciprocal influence of one portion of the body on another is briefly discussed.

In considering abdominal tumors, attention is called to the possibility of the spontaneous disappearance of such tumors, the relation of this disappearance to the operation being coincidental; cases are cited in point. As to the cure or amelioration of growths thought to be malignant by merely exploratory operation, a long search through the literature of the subject has met with but little success.

The cure of tuberculosis of the peritoneum, as the result of exploratory incision, is explained on the ground that the removal of ascitic fluid allows the peritoneal surfaces to fall together and to acquire adhesions. The tubercles are then shut in between the coils of intestine, the omentum, and the abdominal wall. They are thus surrounded by tissues in a high degree of activity, which can now throw around them the limiting zone of young cells and eventually fibrous tissue, which, if the tuberculous process is not too far advanced, may effectually resist it and may cause it to retrograde, the process being analogous to that which we see imperfectly going on around a cancerous growth.

As a result of a study of the subject, the author believes the following conditions are warranted:

1. There are large numbers of cases of differ-

ent grades of severity and varying character which seem to be benefited by operation alone; some of them by almost any operation.

2. These cases include chiefly epilepsy, certain abdominal tumors, and peritoneal effusions and tubercle, though the improvement in the latter is, perhaps, to be explained on general principles.

3. Of the possible factors which, by reason of their constancy, must be considered, anæsthesia seems least likely to have been effective. The other three, viz., psychical influence, relief of tension, and reflex action, may enter in varying degrees into the therapeutics of these cases; and taken together, serve to render the occurrence of occasional cures less mysterious.

4. The theory of accident or coincidence scarcely explains the facts satisfactorily.—*Abstract by Dr. George D. Morton.*

SYMPTOMATIC CURE OF A UTERINE FIBROID BY ELECTRICITY PREVIOUS TO ITS REMOVAL BY THE KNIFE.

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As it is well known and so widely heralded that about 80 per cent. of the cases of fibroid tumors treated by electricity are "symptomatic cures," I feel called upon to relate the following case. Before doing so I may premise by a statement that may not appear modest though true. I have been fortunately thrown much in contact with men, both at home and abroad, who have done much abdominal surgery. I have had hospital and dispensary clinics under my care for some time. I have thus examined many hundreds of women with and without an anæsthetic. If tumor is present in the pelvis, I always examine under an anæsthetic. Time and time again I have proved my diagnosis to be correct by abdominal section, and time and time again I have failed to make a correct diagnosis after exhausting the clues from carefully taken histories and the senses of sight and touch. But in the present case there could be no doubt. I had felt so many fibroid tumors that I surely knew a fibroid when I felt it. Any amateur could have diagnosed this case. The patient was only seventeen, pale and anæmic.