

were common to all, or nearly all, of them. These were:

1. Anæsthesia.
2. Psychical influence, or so-called mental impressions.
3. Relief of tension.
4. Reflex action, or the "reaction of traumatism."

The first is briefly dismissed from the fact that it was tried experimentally on numerous cases with negative results.

In considering the second influence—that of psychical influence or mental impression—the author pertinently asks—"Is it possible, through influences acting upon the emotional or intellectual nature, to effect the organic processes of secretion, nutrition, etc., and, if so, is it conceivable that through the same influences pathological changes may be arrested and reparative or curative action established?" The reply he gives is in the affirmative. But its application as a complete and satisfactory explanation, in the present instance, is to some extent insufficient from the fact that it is impossible to make it—i.e., psychical influence, account for the curative effect of operations *per se* on imbeciles; that healthy-brained people should be influenced by operations is only reasonable to assume, as there is abundant evidence to show that they are effected by numerous other influences. In these purely psychical effects, then, there can be but little difference between the internal agencies brought into play to produce a cure, on the one hand, by a surgical operation, or, on the other, by the subjective influence of hypnotism; and any explanation which can be found to throw light on the one must similarly elucidate the mode of action of the other.

The third condition—relief of tension—can only be said to exist in certain of the recorded cases. Where tension has by operation been unquestionably relieved, it is quite reasonable to assume—as the author does—that such relief must be accompanied by other changes in the surrounding parts, and that these changes may result in a return of the parts to a normal condition. The only question which may fairly be asked here is—whether it is right to include such cases in the category of those especially under consideration? To relieve tension is a most common and important surgical procedure; and, where such relief entails a cure, the operation, however simple, must be considered in the light of any other well directed surgical measure. This theory, then, while it reasonably explains many apparently mysterious results, cannot be said to throw any light on the epileptic cures by trephining. Gowers appears to think that the good result obtained in these cases is due to the escape of pent-serum; but the escape of serum is but a rare concomitant, and if a cure result where no such obvious cause of re-

duction of tension exists, it can hardly be accepted as a likely explanation. A more reasonable, although it must be confessed a by no means clear, explanation is possibly to be found in the fourth condition which the author describes—that of reflex action. Under this head is included the "reaction of traumatism," as well as the effects of revulsion and counter-irritation. This theory is based on the reciprocal influence which is frequently seen of one portion of the body on another in both health and disease. Thus the inexplicable relationship between mumps and orchitis—between a burn and a duodenal ulcer. The one condition is not unfrequently associated with the other, but what constitutes the connecting link is an unsolved problem. So it seems reasonable to suppose that the influence of an operation on one part may so influence the pathological condition of another as to bring about a curative result. To produce an injury to cure an injury forcibly suggests to one's mind the homeopathic dictum, *Similia similibus curantur*. In further support of such an explanation, that certain unknown influences can bring about curative changes, the author adduces cases reported by Drs. Gairdner and Coats and Sir James Paget at the London Pathological Society, in April, 1879. These were cases of the disappearance of tumors, in some instances of an undoubted cancerous nature.

While thus endeavoring to offer some explanation for the otherwise inexplicable good results of an operation *per se*, Professor White concludes with a caution regarding the possible danger of considering as mysterious what really can be accounted for by the operation itself. Thus, in many abdominal operations, what is called a simple laparotomy may unknowingly comprise in its performance manipulations which may break down some slight adhesion or empty a pyo-salpinx into the uterus, etc. But, with all precautions to exclude such class of cases, there still remains a very large residuum which must be relegated for the present to the realm of mystery.

Professor White has had an arduous task in collecting the material which he has made such good use of; but the interest, not to speak of the intrinsic value, which attaches to the subject must have rendered it no unpleasant duty, and the result will be highly appreciated by all who read his valuable paper.—Ernest Maylard, B.S., in *Glasgow Med. Jour.*

SORE THROAT.—For a sore or raw throat without much inflammation an excellent, soothing, emollient application is vaseline. A mass size of a hazlenut should be taken into the mouth, and as it melts, which it does almost instantly, it should be allowed to trickle slowly back and down the throat.—*Exchange.*