

tioned by McLane Hamilton is another, and so on.

"Counter-Irritation" will again have to be evoked to explain some of these cures, and in some other instance the psychical influence of an "operation" is not to be lost sight of. The author just quoted says, very justly I think, that operators say a good deal about the procedure itself and recovery from it to the exclusion of exact descriptions of the pathological conditions present. What one would like to know is how the surgeon justified his treatment—what relation, in other words, he supposes to exist in the cases before him between the trephining and the disease.

*Case 12.* Dr. Spinelli gives the following history (42) of a boy, age 15, who had been epileptic almost since his birth. The attacks were in frequent—about five times a year. The doctor could think of no cause except that at his birth (the labor being prolonged and severe) he had received a contusion(!) on one of the parietal bones. A year before consulting Spinelli the boy received a blow from a stone which fractured the skull. It was decided to use the trephine at the junction of the parietal and occipital bones. An attempt was made to raise what looked like depressed bone, but in vain. The wound healed, and since then there has been no return of the disease. The author ascribes the cure to the enlarged space given by the operation to the growing brain.

When one remembers the reflex relations of the reproductive system it is not to be wondered at that interference with the organs of that system has been common enough in the attempt to find a satisfactory surgical cure for epilepsy. When the attacks are plainly connected with diseased ovaries, testes, etc., the duty of the surgeon is plain enough, but, as in the cases about to be referred to, it is difficult to imagine how the removal of a *normal* organ can bring about a cure of the disease. Yet that such has been the case there is an abundant evidence.

*Circumcision.*—Congenital phimosis had been noticed in eleven out of twenty-five consecutive cases (43) admitted into the

London Infirmary for epilepsy and paralysis. Collections of sebum underneath the prepuce may lead to balanitis and herpes. The irritation thus set up causes, in adolescents, sexual excitement, masturbation and reflex neuroses. W. Althaus thinks that if this does not actually cause epilepsy it may predispose to it, and if circumcision does cure the disease it often relieves it and is a rational adjunct to other treatment. That some cures have followed circumcision, I think, has been proved. A good article on this subject is Sayre's (L. A.) "Circumcision versus Epilepsy." (44) Gowers (45) thinks it should be adopted in all cases where there is reason to associate the disease with masturbation.

*Castration* has been performed for substantially the same reasons that circumcision is urged, and although condemned by most text-books, (46) it has its advocates and its list of cures. Rooker, (47) Ogle, (48) and Bacon, (49) are among the more modern defenders of the practice.

*Batley's Operation.*—The operation of "normal" ovariectomy has been performed extensively here and in England, but it is not generally known that one of its earliest advocates (50) argued, that if justifiable at all, its use should be restricted to the treatment of epilepsy. Batley reported among his earliest cases, one in which the operation was performed for the cure of that disease. Among three of Lawson Tait's (51) cases of "spaying," were three done for "menstrual epilepsy." How the excision of normal, or nearly normal ovaries, can cure idiopathic epilepsy, it is difficult to see unless the mental impression made upon the patient be the cause of the cure.

*Removal of the clitoris.*—It was for the

42. Translated into German by Urban from the Genoese journal *Il Fidiatore-Sebezio* for April, 1845.

43. London *Lancet*, Feb. 16, 1867. Nothing is said about the proportion of congenital phimosis in healthy people.

44. *Medical Record* (New York), 1870, p. 233.

45. *Loco. cit.* p. 233.

46. See, for example, Bristowe's *Practice of Medicine*, p. 1004, Robert's *Practice*, p. 923, etc.

47. Various numbers of *Cincinnati Lancet and Obs.*, 1861, '62 and '68.

48. *London Lancet*, 1859, i., 156.

49. *Journal of mental Science*, Oct., 1880.

50. Emmett (1).

51. *Manual of Gynecology*. Hart & Barbour. i., 203.