

days, I have always found soothing and grateful to the patient. After that the tampon was discontinued, and a weak solution of menthol in albolene used by atomizer instead. It is a matter of importance to prevent that dry incrustation which is apt to take place up to the period of perfect healing, and nothing seems to promote that end so effectually as mild oleaginous fluids atomized. In removing cartilaginous spurs I have followed Zedziak's plan of applying the galvano-cautery, and in many instances it has done all that could be desired—the application of a 15 per cent. solution of cocaine removing all tenderness during the period of operation.

In closing, I would like to say one word about the marvellous efficacy of cocaine when used for nasal operations upon children. In March last, R.R., a timid little fellow of seven years, sat perfectly still in the operating chair, with his eyes wide open, while I sawed out a crest filling the left nasal cavity. He did not utter a sound or offer the slightest resistance. During the whole time, also, I had a perfect view of the field of operation—much better than I could have had if compelled to follow the old plan of administering chloroform.

THE SUPPOSED CURATIVE EFFECT OF OPERATIONS, *PER SE*.

BY PROF. J. WILLIAM WHITE, PHILADELPHIA.

Under this title, Prof. J. William White, of Philadelphia, contributes a paper to the *Annals of Surgery* for August, 1891, which, not only from its subject, but from the great number of authorities quoted, and from the peculiarly rich experience of the writer, makes an article of unusual interest and importance to both surgeon and physician. The author's attention was first directed to this subject by reason of his experience with the operation of trephining for so-called traumatic epilepsy.

During the past five years, with Dr. D. Hayes Agnew, he has trephined in fifteen cases of supposed traumatic epilepsy. All but one recovered from the operation. The patient, who perished, was an imbecile and a confirmed drunkard as well as an epileptic. Death occurred from suppression of urine, probably secondary to etherization.

In one case a bullet was found embedded in the

brain substance; in another an irregular portion of the internal table was dissected out from beneath the dura mater, to which it was attached by cicatricial adhesions. In another there were projecting spicules of bone on the internal surface of the button removed and the adjacent portions of the skull. In two marked sclerosis and thickening of the cranium were observed about the field of operation. In the remaining cases nothing abnormal was seen. Although this was the case, they were, without exception, markedly improved by trephining; in two instances, even to the point of apparent cure, no return of the symptoms having been observed for eighteen months, and for two years after the operation. In the other seven the results were strikingly favorable, convulsions disappearing for weeks or months, although previously of more than daily occurrence.

The author has, in so far as this is possible, classified the cases in which operation *per se* seemed to be the main factor in bringing about a cure. These cases are divided into three groups, in accordance with the anatomical seat of the symptoms or of the supposed disease. This brings them under the following heads:

1. Operations for the relief of nervous phenomena, as epilepsy, insanity, paralysis, etc.
2. Operations for abdominal and pelvic disorders, as peritonitis, tumors, etc.
3. Miscellaneous operations.

This classification is further carried out by grouping together (a) those cases in which nothing whatever was found explanatory of the symptoms; (b) those in which some departure from normal conditions were observed, but was so slight as to be apparently inadequate to explain the symptoms; (c) those cases in which an apparently grave and irremediable condition was disclosed by an exploratory operation, but notably improved or altogether disappeared after mere inspection or handling, no further surgical interference having been thought justifiable.

Under the heading of "Operations for the Relief of Nervous Phenomena," Dr. White has tabulated, including his own service, 154 cases. Many of them are given in detail, and coming, as they do, from recognized authorities, are of exceeding great interest.

In fifty-six cases of trephining for epilepsy, nothing abnormal was found to account for the