

Dr. DAVID RIESMAN read a paper on

MERYCISMUS OR RUMINATION, AND PRESENTED A CASE (see page 359).

DISCUSSION.

Dr. WHARTON SINKLER.—There is no question that rumination is much more common than is generally believed, and if we look into the matter more we shall find a greater number of instances of the disorder. I have met with a few cases, but none so typical as those detailed by Dr. Riesman. The cases which I have seen have been those of regurgitation of food without effort after meals. All the cases which came under my notice have occurred in thoroughly neuræsthenic women or men, and I cannot help coming to the conclusion that the affection is a neurosis and connected with a condition of profound neuræsthenia. I have no doubt that the influence of the will largely affect the act of rumination. One young lady who was under my care had been in the habit for years, whenever she felt inclined, of emptying the stomach, but she never had any inclination to ruminate in the manner of cattle.

Trephining has been suggested and even practiced for the relief of this condition.

The PRESIDENT.—When on duty at the Institute for Feeble-minded Children at Elwyn, I learned there of a number of cases that had the habit of merycism. In the case of one of the children the habit was peculiarly disgusting. He not only regurgitated his food, but disgorged, and then took it in his hand and replaced it in his mouth and re-chewed it. That, I think, is not usual in cases of merycism. Cases seen in idiots I think are rather of this character.

I have no doubt whatever that these cases are allied to the neurotic or neuræsthenic temperament. Dr. Sachs, in discussing this matter, has referred to a German physician, a personal friend, who had reported his own case. He overcame it by a persistent effort of the will.

If trephining ever cured a case of merycism it was merely by mental impression, or suggestion; but I do not think that it is necessary to cut a hole in a man's skull in order to put a suggestion into his mind.