

modes of election ;" "Your redemption and distress in which you have fallen depends on yourself, and in no wise on the government or its mode of election." Although not one of the ten got it perfectly accurately, yet many were very near it; and they all show how much more the wear and tear on the sentence is in passing through ten mouths than through one. By the other process one accumulates the combined inaccuracies of all, and one pupil with a very poor receptive organ in the middle of the ten prevents the circulation of a good repetition after him. After this the sentence was passed through the ten pupils arranged in order of grade, and issued as, "Your redemption from the distress into which you have fallen depends entirely upon yourself, and by no means upon the forms of government or helps from education." The sentence here selected is quite a difficult one, but an easier one from Emerson was hardly more successful. The sentence was, "All things are double, one against another, — tit for tat, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, blood for blood, measure for measure, love for love," — and the result, "All things are good for one another." Although the test, as thus applied, is too complex to allow valid inferences to be drawn from it, it at any rate shows how difficult it is to repeat accurately what has been heard, as well as how little confidence is to be placed in the declarations of persons reporting the very words of a conversation held weeks or months before; it illustrates, too, in a simple form, the process by which a simple tale becomes an elaborately embellished narrative by passing through several hands; and perhaps it indicates that the powers of careful attention and retention need more systematic training than is devoted to them in the ordinary school-work.

HEALTH MATTERS.

SEA-SICKNESS. — Dr. W. H. Gardner, U.S.A., in a letter to the *New York Medical Record*, reports having treated many cases of sea-sickness with oxalate of cerium, in ten, fifteen, or twenty grain doses, every two or three hours. He believes that seventy-five per cent of all cases that occur will be cured by this remedy. As many of our readers are about to leave the United States for a summer's jaunt in Europe, an admirable opportunity presents itself for testing Dr. Gardner's remedy. As oxalate of cerium is a recognized drug to be administered in cases of nausea and vomiting, we see no reason why it should not be efficacious in sea-sickness.

FUNCTION OF THE BILE. — Among the many mooted questions in physiology is the function of the bile, and every new fact bearing upon this important subject is of great value. Dr. Dastre, as reported in *Le Progrès Médical*, recently communicated his observations to the Société de Biologie of Paris. He said that he had previously proven that the presence of bile in the stomach during different periods of digestion did not take from the gastric juice its digestive power: consequently it could not be the cause of vomiting or of severe gastric troubles. At the present time, owing to the success of two operations for cholecysto-intestinal fistula, he thought himself in a position to conclude that the bile contributed, as well as the pancreatic juice, to the digestion of the fats, — an opinion which is counter to that expressed by Claude Bernard. In fact, the two animals being in good condition four months after the establishment of the fistula, they had been given a meal of fat and milk, and then slaughtered during full digestion. The examination showed with absolute clearness that the lacteals were transparent between the stomach and fistula, and, on the contrary, entirely white and milky below the fistula; that is to say, where the bile had been able to get: consequently, if observation on the rabbit shows us that the bile alone is unable to emulsify the fats, the preceding experience shows us that the pancreatic juice alone is also powerless. They must be mingled, in order to act well. In other words, bile, as well as the pancreatic juice, takes part in the digestion of fats.

A NEW HYPNOTIC. — In the *New York Medical Record*, Dr. E. C. Wendt describes sulfonal, a new hypnotic. Chemically this substance enjoys the euphonious designation of 'diethylsulfondimethylmethan.' It occurs in the form of large, flat, colorless crystals, which are tasteless, and devoid of smell. Sulfonal is soluble

in eighteen to twenty parts of boiling water. In tepid water the solubility is only about one to one hundred. The crystals dissolve more readily in alcohol and alcohol mixed with ether. Acids and alkalies do not affect the composition of the body, which appears to possess considerable chemical stability. The crystals melt at a temperature of 275° to 260° F. According to Professor Kast of Freiburg, sulfonal is an hypnotic pure and simple. It does not compel sleep through a paralytic effect on the nerve-centres, nor through a profound impression produced upon the vascular system. From numerous experiments on animals, and many clinical observations on man, the action of this new remedy would appear to consist merely in the intensification of those factors that lead to natural sleep in the physiological sense, or in supplying the periodical desire for sleep in those cases where it is wanting. It is for this reason, probably, that the range of applicability of sulfonal is a more limited one than that of some other drugs employed as hypnotics. But sulfonal has none of the disadvantages inherent in the deadly narcotics, and it is much more reliable than any of the bromides. This new body does not disturb digestion, it is not constipating, it has no unpleasant after-effects, it is perfectly harmless, it does not invite the formation of 'a habit,' and, finally, it does not appear to lose its efficacy even when employed for a long period.

SMOKERS' VERTIGO. — Dr. Decaisne is reported in the *New York Medical Record* as having recently investigated a number of cases of vertigo in smokers. Out of sixty-three patients, forty-nine were between fifty and sixty-six years of age. More than half of them suffered, in addition, from digestive troubles, with constipation alternating with diarrhœa, insomnia, palpitations, dyspnœa, and diuresis. In a third of the number there was marked intermittence of the pulse, and granular pharyngitis, while others suffered from aphthæ, amblyopia, etc. Thirty-seven were persons who smoked habitually on an empty stomach; and these suffered from vertigo, principally in the morning. The vertigo generally coincided with suppression of perspiration and diminished excretion of urine. The treatment consisted mainly in regulating or suppressing the cause, but thirty-three out of thirty-seven patients ceased to suffer on merely refraining from smoking on an empty stomach.

A LEPER INVASION OF THE UNITED STATES. — It is reported that many lepers are leaving the Sandwich Islands, as soon as the disease manifests itself, in order to prevent being banished to the island of Molokai. Mr. Putnam, consul-general at Honolulu, believes the number of these emigrants to be considerable, and many if not most of them flee to the United States.

RACE AND INSANITY. — In an article entitled 'Race and Insanity,' published in the *American Journal of Insanity*, Drs. Bannister and Hektoen, physicians of the Illinois Eastern Hospital for the Insane, express the opinion that there is little doubt but that insanity is influenced by race. From the statistics of three institutions in which insane persons are treated they draw the following conclusions: 1. That in the white race the depressive types of mental disease are most frequent in the Germanic and Scandinavian peoples, and least so in the Celts: the reverse of this appears to be the case as to the exalted or maniacal types. 2. That general paralysis is not a disorder to which any race is immune, but one that depends upon causes independent of racial or national peculiarities. 3. That the well-known fact that insanity is much more common amongst the foreign-born than amongst natives in this country, is not to any great extent explainable by the shipment of the defective classes of Europe to America. The 'cranks' and epileptics and other neurotic individuals do not appear to be represented, in due proportion even, amongst the foreigners in our asylums. The cause of the excess of foreign-born insane in this country is, it seems probable, to be looked for mainly in the fact, that, supposing the immigration to include only its proportion of persons below the average of mental strength and flexibility, the change of scene and associations, the difficulties of beginning life among them, disappointments, homesickness, and all the other accidents and trials that befall the new-comers, together contribute to break down mentally a vast number who under other circumstances would have escaped, and largely contribute to the mass of insanity in this country.