

## **Psychic-therapy / by J. Holcomb Burch.**

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### **Publication/Creation**

[New York] : [publisher not identified], [1903]

### **Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/sbxh8j2s>

### **Provider**

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BY J. BOLD

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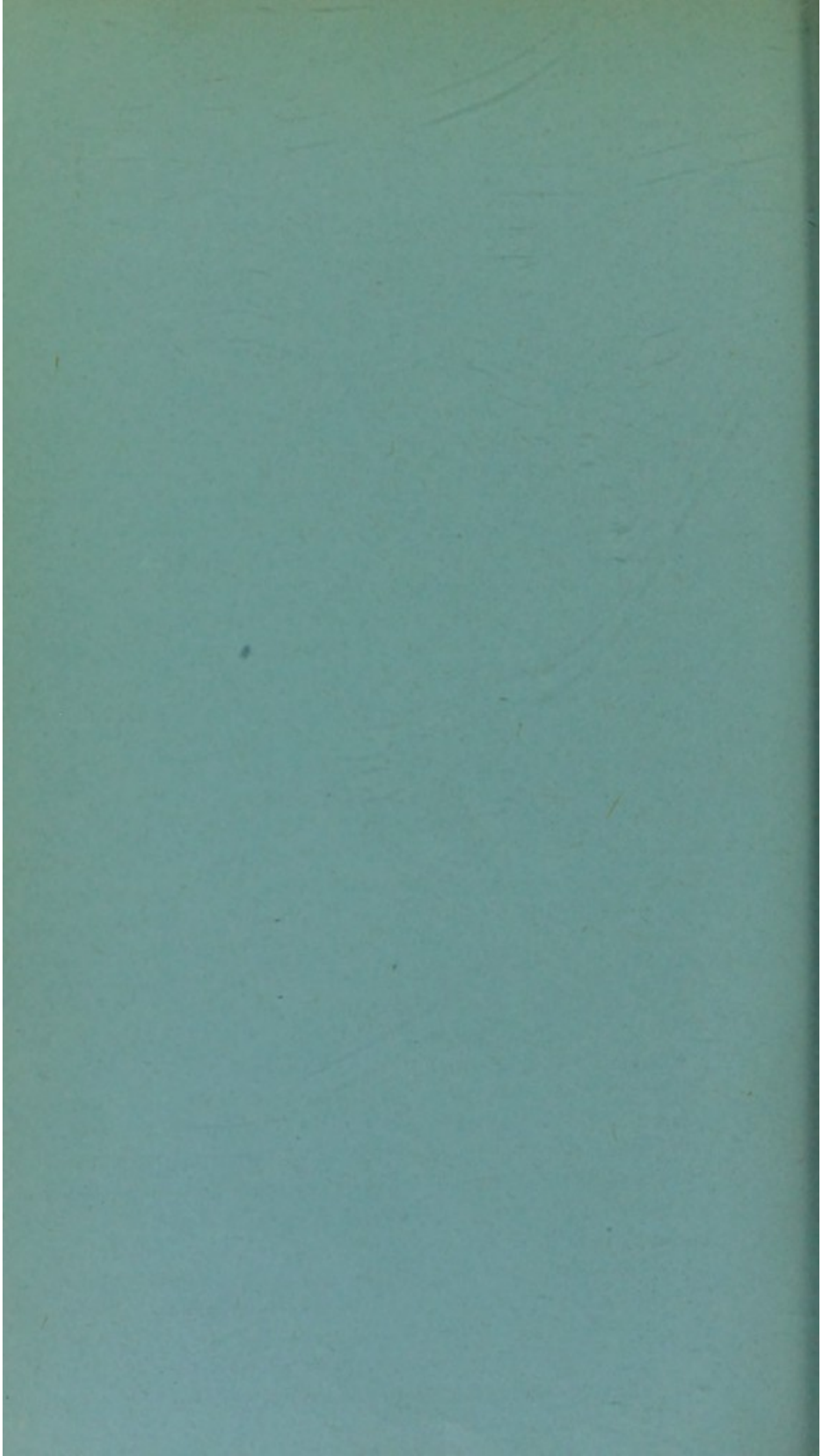
PSYCHIC-THERAPY.

BY J. HOLCOMB BURCH, M. D.

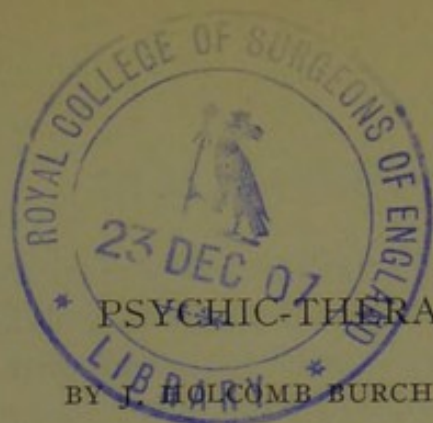
Baldwinsville, N. Y.



Reprinted from THE JOURNAL OF ADVANCED THERAPEUTICS,  
August, 1903







PSYCHIC-THERAPY.  
BY J. HOLCOMB BURCH, M. D.

Baldwinsville, N. Y.

That buried beneath the active consciousness there exists a subtle power capable of alleviating human suffering by purely psychic means there seems to remain but little doubt. From the earliest æons of human history, we find reports of most marvelous cures having been effected by various mental means. In the earlier ages, the healing of disease was supposed to be a power derived directly from God, and we find various priests and religious devotees practicing their own peculiar forms of ceremonies and incantations for the alleviation of human ailments. In fact, the healing of disease seems to have played a very import rôle in the history of all religious sects.

The Grecian and Egyptian priests caused the sick to lie in their temples where the God of health revealed in dreams the remedial agencies that they were to employ to restore their health. The religions of the East taught the subservience of matter to mind, using methods similar to those of the modern schools of hypnotism. The Christian religion contains innumerable examples of mental healing. Elijah is reported to have healed the dead child by stretching himself upon the body and calling upon the name of the Lord. Moses transmitted his power to Joshua by the laying on of hands. The New Testament contains most marvelous examples of psychic-therapy. In fact, the most wonderful of all psychic cures were wrought by Christ. He taught that the secret *lies in the faith to wield the innate power* that he proclaimed all men possessed. His disciples were taught to heal; and the history of the Church is replete with records of mental healing. Thus, St. Patrick is reported to have healed the blind by laying on of hands. St. Bernard restored, it is said, eleven blind and eighteen lame persons in one day at Constance. At Cologne, he healed twelve lame and caused three dumb persons to speak. When he himself was sick, St. Lawrence appeared to him and cured him by touching the hand to the affected part. St. Cecilia cured a leper that was shunned by all men, by embracing him. During the Middle Ages, the Church was



forced to divide the so-called miraculous gifts to heal with the various monarchs. The kings of England and France cured diseases of the throat by touching the affected part. The Prince of Hasburgh is said to have cured stammering by a kiss! The more advanced thinkers of the time began to investigate the methods employed by these workers of miracles and found that they likewise had the power to produce them, thus divesting them of their miraculous origin. In the 16th century, Paracelsus, a thinker much in advance of his time, taught and demonstrated that man possessed the potentialities within himself to cure disease. As the human mind ever seeks to explain that which it cannot understand by the theory that appeals most rationally to the investigator, so each experimenter unfolded his own peculiar hypothesis of the nature of that attribute of mind that could be utilized in the cure of disease.

Not wishing to burden the reader with a detailed account of the theories advanced by the various schools and sects of mental healers, we will briefly consider the six most prominent methods now in vogue.

(1) *Prayer and Religious Faith*, as exemplified in modern times by the cures effected at Lourdes and other shrines. To this class belong what are known in this country as the Faith Cure and the Prayer Cure.

(2) *The Mind Cure*.—A method that assumes that all diseases of the body are due to abnormal conditions of the mind; therefore, that all bodily infirmities may be cured by the direct action of the patient's mind directed toward the establishment of health; or, by the mind of a healer who by verbal or telepathic suggestion has the power to dispel disease.

(3) *Christian Science*.—This method of cure declares the unreality of matter—that our bodies are unreal, consisting of what they call "mortal mind," likewise devoid of matter. They teach that disease has no existence; yet, notwithstanding this assumption, they pretend, and in many cases really do, cure that which they admit cannot exist. This, without doubt, is the most irrational and absurd of all methods of mental healing; yet its converts are numerous, representing many of the more cultured and refined members of society. As Paracelsus said: "Whether the object of your faith be true or false, you will nevertheless obtain the same effects."

(4) *Spiritism*.—This is a system of healing based upon the



assumption that the spirits of the dead operating either directly or indirectly through a medium, have the power to communicate such suggestions and remedial measures as may cure disease.

(5) *Mesmerism*.—This includes all of the various systems that are founded upon the belief that there exists in man and pervading all space, a fluid that may be projected, by the will of an operator, with the effect of curing disease by the specific virtues of the all-prevailing fluid.

(6) *Suggestive Hypnotism*.—This method of healing rests upon the law that persons in the hypnotic condition are constantly controllable by the power of suggestion; that by this means pain is suppressed, function modified, fever calmed, secretion and excretion encouraged, and Nature, the true healer, is permitted to do the work of restoration. (Hudson.)

These are the main divisions of the various systems of psychic therapy recognized at the present time. Each of these systems is divided into various sects differing but slightly from the several principal divisions.

From an examination of the above methods, it will be made apparent that each of these six systems pretends to and really do cure disease by purely psychic means, yet each system is diametrically opposed, both in theory and principle, to the others. It must, therefore, become evident that underlying these various mental methods of healing there must exist a living principle or law of universal application.

Recognizing the fact that we are surrounded by and almost daily encountering strange and unaccountable phenomenon inexplicable by our modern methods of investigations, there was organized in England in the year 1883, the Society of Pyschical Research, a body of the most learned and scientific men of our age, whose object it was to investigate in a most critical and impartial manner the phenomenon of spiritism, mind healing, hypnotism, thought transference, and such other subjects as seemed to pass beyond the borderland of the known. During the past twenty years this society has constantly labored with the result that many hidden psychological labyrinths of the human mind have been explored. That there still remain many mysterious phenomena unexplained, is very true, but let us be thankful that the work done by these self-sacrificing men has helped us to grasp the two strands of the tangled knot of



consciousness, that we may know something of the attributes of our objective and subjective minds.

The investigations of Myers and Hudson have established the fact by experiments upon hypnotized subjects, that man possesses two planes of consciousness. Therefore, to facilitate the study of mental healing, we will divide the mind into two distinct entities. The one, our active waking consciousness, we will designate as our *objective mind*, while the other, that sleeping consciousness that seldom passes beyond the threshold of our waking existence, except at rare intervals, we will call our *subjective mind*. The objective or waking mind possesses the faculty to reason from cause to effect, thereby deducing logical conclusions. It is susceptible to education and culture and is the seat of that attribute of mentality known as *will*. It may, therefore, be classified as our guiding or directing consciousness. The subjective mind is that plane of consciousness that presides over the mysterious processes of life. It is that subtle energy that holds each organ, structure cell, molecule, and atom of our body in that perfect physiological balance which we call health. Unlike our objective mind, it has not the power to reason and deduce logical conclusions, but on the contrary, accepts whatsoever suggestion it may receive. This has many times been proved by hypnotic experiments. Hypnotism is a state in which the objective mind is held in abeyance, thereby permitting the subjective mind to receive and accept the suggestions of the hypnotizer. By this means, it is possible to make a hypnotized subject believe the most absurd and irrational ideas and perform grotesque actions as the will of the operator may direct. If, for example, John Smith is told during hypnosis that he is a dog, he immediately accepts the belief that he is a member of the Canine family. He walks upon his hands and feet, barks and really feels for the time that he is a dog. But the subjective mind not only accepts suggestions of states of being, but also directs such bodily states and activities as it is suggested to perform. As proof of the power of the subjective mind under the influence of suggestion to direct the functions and activities of the body, we will cite the following experiments. Dr. Bernheim, of Nancy, hypnotized a subject, after which he placed a postage stamp upon one arm and a fly blister upon the other. He then suggested that at the end of twelve hours, when the two were to be removed,



the skin beneath the blister should remain perfectly normal while beneath the postage stamp there should form, in the meantime, a blister filled with serum. At the end of the appointed time, the two were removed, demonstrating the fact that the suggestion had been fulfilled, as beneath the stamp was found a well-filled blister.

MM. Bourru and Burot of Rochfort, hypnotized a young man after which he was given the following suggestion. By Dr. Bourru: "At four o'clock this afternoon you will come to my office, sit down in the armchair, cross your arms upon your breast, after which your nose will bleed." At the appointed time, the subject came, sat in the chair as was suggested, crossed his arms, when blood was seen to be dripping from the nose.

Dr. Forel rubbed the arm of a nurse whom he hypnotized, with a blunt instrument. He suggested that at the end of several hours, blood should issue from the part thus stroked. At the appointed hour, blood did issue from minute points along that part of the arm acted upon.

It will thus be seen that the subjective mind has more or less complete control over bodily functions. It is not alone during hypnosis that this plane of consciousness controls the life processes taking place within our bodies, but it operates at all times. It is our ever vigilant guardian that directs the mysterious enigma of life.

Neither is it necessary that the hypnotic state should be induced that we may study its manifold manifestations. During our waking existence, the subjective mind is forced by the more dominant objective state, behind the portals of consciousness; it is ever operative, and man after all, is but the creature of suggestion. Herein lies the key that unlocks the mystery of mental healing and makes man a slave to disease. There is no person living that is not in some degree susceptible to suggestion. Somewhere in his mental armor there exists a cleavage through which this subtle power may find entrance, thereby changing many times the whole fabric of his mental, yea, and even his physical being. In ordinary life we call this *persuasion*. How often are we persuaded, even against our better judgment, to do that which we may know entails danger to ourselves. A. is persuaded by B., who is skilled in the art of suggestion, to invest his money in a hazardous speculation. His good common



sense tells him that it is unwise to do so. Yet B. finds his mental foible, which he uses to skillfully apply the suggestion that finally leads A. to not only invest his money, but really to believe in the undertaking. This not only applies to the affairs of ordinary life, but to disease as well. We are, to a great extent, protected from adverse suggestion by means of our objective mind as it in a great measure guards the portals of our subjective consciousness. But when that state of perfect physiological balance which we designate as health becomes in any way disturbed, our objective mind participates in and is in like proportion disabled, thereby opening avenues of communication to all manner of suggestion to the subjective mind. What untold harm is often caused by these untoward suggestions! How often have I seen a poor sufferer stricken with disease, weakened in both body and mind, tortured by this power of adverse suggestion! One friend comes to see him and says: "You are not looking as well to-day; you seem weaker. I fear that you are not doing as well as you should." This suggestion falls like an avalanche upon this poor patient. His subjective mind accepts it in like proportion to the extent that the enfeebled objective mind can combat it, and the poor sufferer is bound to be made worse. Another friend comes in. She says: "You are certainly not improving. If I were you I should try Dr. Cureall. He cured Mr. Tryall, who was much worse than you are." The patient before had faith in his physician; now he begins to doubt and wonder if it would not be best after all to try Dr. Cureall. Thus friend after friend comes, each giving the patient an adverse suggestion. The patient is not only made to believe that he is worse, but his condition is actually aggravated and many times he passes beyond the control of the more skillful physician as the result of these adverse suggestions. Contrast this picture with that of a Christian Scientist. Although the philosophy of this sect is the most illogical and irrational mass of nonsense that was ever imposed upon the credulity of man, yet those who practice it have unconsciously hit upon the marvelous power of suggestion as a factor in the cure of disease. They have learned the potent power of cheerfulness upon the sick. They confidently assert that there is no disease; that what we think is disease, is but a mental illusion; that we have but to have faith in the teachings of the founder of this sect to be made well.



Hopeful and cheerful suggestions are directed to the subjective mind of the patient. In the silent treatment that follows, the mind, cheered by hopefulness, is lulled into that borderland state of semi-consciousness—a condition of partial hypnosis, in which the subjective state accepts the suggestion of health and well-being, and, after a time, also—the absurd doctrines of this system of healing.

The principle underlying all systems of mental therapy is the same. Two elements are essential to the fulfillment of a cure by psychic means, viz., *faith* and the *skillful application* of suggestion. To this we should also add a third. A *passive* and *receptive* condition of the patient whereby the subjective mind is allowed to receive and accept the suggestion.

Why faith is an important element in mental healing, we do not know, and perhaps never shall. But throughout all the ages, all systems of psychic therapy have insisted upon it. Even Christ, the greatest of all healers, declared it as absolutely essential and continually upbraided his disciples for their lack of this important element. It is the essential element of all systems of healing, and happy, indeed, should be he who has the faith in his physician's ability to cure his ills and the faith in himself to resist them.

The subjective mind not only receives and accepts suggestions from others, but its greatest and most marvelous gift is its power to accept and carry out the dictates of the objective mind of the individual. This is called auto-suggestion, and what a vast amount of misery and suffering might be obviated were man to understand and develop this great power and privilege? We have shown that the subjective mind governs and directs the bodily functions. We have likewise shown that it is itself governed and directed largely by the objective mind. Therefore, each thought and logical conclusion of the objective consciousness becomes imbedded and accepted by these lower strata of consciousness, thereby influencing our lives and actions. As the sculptor gradually unfolds the lineaments of his model upon the inert mass of clay before him, so our thoughts, which are the suggestions that we give to our subjective mind, slowly engrave upon our features the landmarks of our individuality. We are that which our thoughts make us, and have the power by the law of auto-suggestion, to completely change and remodel our bodily tenement. We are bound to



become that of which we think. He who thinks of money at the expense of all else, becomes a miser whose whole personality becomes permeated by the greed for gold. All else becomes subservient to this passion. The conscience becomes seared, the higher sensibilities paralyzed, and the body diseased by this continual auto-suggestion of wealth. There are thousands of invalids to-day demonstrating the power of auto-suggestion. In health, our organs functionate so perfectly that their sensations are never brought to the surface of our objectivity. But should there be from any cause a disturbance of this physiological equilibrium, we suffer pain or discomfort and become conscious of the organ or part affected. The normally healthy individual soon reacts from these slight disturbances of function. But with those born of lessened powers of resistance as the result of vicious heredity, it is very different. Abnormal bodily conditions do not tend to regain their wonted equilibrium. Pain and discomfort persist and the consciousness of the sufferer becomes more and more centered upon the affected part. The objective mind becomes imbued with the idea of pain and bodily discomfort and likewise continually suggests the same to the subjective mind, which in turn not only accepts the suggestion, but continues to direct the bodily functions over which it has control, in an abnormal manner. Thus a vicious circle becomes established. The adverse auto-suggestion produces disease, and disease produces sensations that call forth auto-suggestion. The invalid goes on from bad to worse until at last the whole consciousness becomes centered upon abnormal bodily sensations and the patient drifts into a state of chronic invalidism in which he thinks, talks, and even dreams of naught except his bodily infirmities. Were such unfortunate people to know of and develop the power of auto-suggestion, how much suffering would thus be prevented? Were such patients to concentrate their consciousness upon health rather than disease; were they to think of the misery of others rather than their own; were they to develop their will power to healthfully direct life's forces, there would be by far less disease and suffering and a much happier state of existence. We would then possess the potentialities by which many ills could be prevented and cured and mankind would also be protected from that vast army of charlatans who pretend to heal disease by means of mental power the fundamental principles of which they understand no more than they comprehend the elements of anatomy, physiology, pathology, and the natural history and diagnosis of disease, all of which must certainly appear as necessary to those who would intelligently hope to cure it.



