

Margaret P. Osgood.

FACTS AND FICTIONS

OF

MENTAL HEALING.

BY

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## PREFACE.



A LITTLE more than two years ago there was published a pamphlet entitled, "Bread Pills: A Study of Mind-Cure," the purpose of which was to direct attention to the subject presented, and lead thoughtful persons to perceive that psychical healing has a basis in reason. Perhaps the essay owes a wider circulation than its merits would seem to justify to the fact that it was written in popular instead of technical language, and was not pitched on too high a key. The writer of that pamphlet, though not himself engaged in the work, has enjoyed exceptional facilities for studying the operation of mental healing, and investigating a great number and variety of cases of alleged cure. He is convinced by the results of many careful tests, that if the mental treatment of disease be not all that its most sanguine advocates picture it, it is a powerful therapeutic agent when skilfully used, and based on a philosophy which has done the world incalculable good.

The first question asked about mind-cure is a material one. Are there any genuine cures? It

does not matter much what ails the patient who puts the psychological remedy to the test, so long as he is actually relieved of some kind of *dis-ease*. Make sure of that single point, and mental treatment is entitled to a respectable place beside the doctor's medicaments; and we may join hands with Rev. Dr. Denison of Williams College, and affirm that "the mind-cure is not a dabbling with the black art; it is simply experimenting . . . with a natural force. Something of an experiment, to be sure, for an invalid whose mind is not over-robust, but a clean and honorable business withal."

When the possibility of producing a mental cure is established, and the incredulous spectator has settled upon some theory of accounting for it, there will be time enough to put Macbeth's question:—

"Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd,  
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,  
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,  
And with some sweet oblivious antidote  
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff,  
Which weighs upon the heart?"

The hard-headed materialism of the day is apt to be suspicious of a new thing that lacks a basis of physical verity, on which common sense may plant its feet; but show that your phenomenon is produced by the operation of a natural force, and the objection is removed.



Believing that people are convinced by leading them to reason from what they already know to what we wish them to accept, the writer has tried to make it apparent that there is a sound physical reason why well-directed thought should help the sick as much as medicine does; that a mental cure is nothing mysterious, but a natural event, which could not but take place under favorable circumstances. In presenting the case, however, he has not sought to compel the reader's assent. On the contrary, it has been his aim to awaken thought, and deepen the reader's interest, by fairly stating the evidence both for and against mental healing, and leave him to decide for himself. There are facts that prove the possibility of such cures beyond a peradventure. There are fictions also, which must be abandoned if mental healing is to get and retain a hold upon the popular attention. It has a philosophy that will bear the intensest light that can be thrown upon it; and the subject needs only to be presented to educated, thoughtful persons in the right way, to appeal to their intelligence and convince their reason.

There is, too, a higher phase of the subject which the writer has not overlooked. When a man once perceives that there is a force residing in the mind, or operating through mind, powerful enough to control a sensation of pain or illness, he finds it an easy step to the larger truth of the supremacy

of spirit over matter. Thus mind-cure becomes to many the gate by which they pass out of the "weary kingdom of illusions" into a fuller spiritual life, into the world of realities, that transcends the world of the senses as true substance transcends mere shadows. These ideal aspects of the subject are considered in the final chapters of the book.

C. M. B.

Boston, May, 1887.

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MEMORANDUM

TO :

FROM :

SUBJECT :

DATE :

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information regarding the proposed changes to the existing policy on [illegible].

2. It is recommended that the proposed changes be approved, as they will result in a more efficient and effective process.

3. The proposed changes are as follows:

- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]

4. It is recommended that the proposed changes be implemented as soon as possible.

5. The proposed changes will be implemented on [illegible].

6. The proposed changes will be implemented by [illegible].

7. The proposed changes will be implemented in accordance with the following schedule:

- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]

8. The proposed changes will be implemented in accordance with the following budget:

- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]

9. The proposed changes will be implemented in accordance with the following risk assessment:

- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]

10. The proposed changes will be implemented in accordance with the following conclusion:

- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]

## I.

### INTRODUCTORY SURVEY.

HEALTH and length of days have ever been esteemed the greatest earthly boons. The quest of the Fountain of Youth in the fabulous Bimini, and the search of the alchemist for a drug that would

“ . . . Confer honor, love, respect, long life,  
Give safety, valor, yea, and victory,  
To whom it will ”

have never ceased. The fiction varies: now it is *Æsculapius* and *Hygeia*, now a well-spring of wondrous virtue, now the “flower of the sun”; but the wish is ever the same, and the hope of finding a way of escape from disease and death springs eternal in the human breast.

Just now the secret of compounding a true elixir of life is called Mental Healing. Avalon is rediscovered; Ponce de Leon has found the living fountain; the sick and halt have taken a new lease of life, and press on with what zeal they may, eager to quaff the cup of health.

The evolution of the modern phase of mental healing belongs to the last decade. New England



is its nursery, and its lineage is scarcely less obscure than Darwin's descent of man. With inauspicious beginnings and a scent of quackery clinging to their garments, advocates of the art found it hard to establish cordial relations with the public; and the chronic invalid, as full of disappointments as of aches, yet quick to clutch at a fresh straw of hope, felt loth to trust his case to those who rejected virtuous drugs that could be seen and handled, for impalpable thought that could not be verified. But, in spite of a start so unpromising, practitioners have met with marvellous success, and the art has spread with amazing rapidity to all parts of the country.

The newspaper press, that neglects nothing capable of being turned into merchantable news, has accounted mental healing a fit topic for derision and flouts. Rarely has a city daily made its claims or achievements the subject of friendly comment, or in any way indorsed the cause, except in the advertising columns. The religious and scientific journals have usually shown it a hostile front; and several leading sectarian organs have felt called upon to denounce the teaching and practice as immoral, and warn readers that they meddled with it at their peril. Monthlies have been quite as severe in criticising as the weeklies, and within a year *The Century Magazine* has exposed its "dangerous follies" in a lengthy article.

Far from being disheartened by the inimical temper of the public prints, the mind-curers long ago began to issue their own organs, and now have an extensive and diverse literature of the craft, comprising periodicals, pamphlets, and bound volumes. Besides using the press for the propagation of their doctrines and methods of treatment, they have established regular courses of instruction for the benefit of those who wish to study the art, and several of the leaders teach regularly in their own schools, and form classes in different parts of the country. These facts not only indicate the means at their command, but show modern healers to be aggressive in policy, while by a skilful use of documents, instruction, and the lecture platform, they multiply converts with surprising rapidity.

Another avenue of influence is the church. Mental healers, like the *chasîdîm* mentioned in the Talmud, regard their function an act of piety; and, like professors of the Protestant faith, they have organized religious sects, each founded on a distinctive creed. It is the religious element in mental healing that gives rise to the term "Christian science," and the doctrines peculiar to this sect or school are accepted by a large proportion, although not by all of the healers. And because the terms "spiritual healing," "prayer and faith cure," "metaphysical healing," "Christian science," "mind-cure" and their congeners are con-

fusing, it is proper to add that, in this work, "mental healing" is used as a generic name to include them all.

It cannot be denied that the mental healers deserve notice on the score of numbers, whether their alleged works be genuine or spurious. Macaulay's test of the really useful was that it adds to the comforts or alleviates the calamities of the human race; and when, as in this case, we find thousands of people, belonging to various grades of society in all parts of the country, engaged in a work that will bear this test, it behooves us to find out the truth about it, if possible. If they have indeed discovered a valuable secret of health, ought not the public to know it? And if, on the contrary, its students and patrons are the dupes of pretenders or abettors of a fraud, surely such a monumental hoax deserves to be exposed. The decision of these points involves an inquiry into the origin of the system of healing, and a knowledge of the character of the cures alleged to have been wrought by it.

The chronicles of psychical healing as a phenomenon are a fascinating study that may be pursued with both pleasure and profit, for the practice may easily be traced through the long epochs of authentic record, to the time when

"History and legend meeting with a kiss,"

lure the eager search into the myths and magic of remote antiquity. Medical books, as Salverte says, are filled with descriptions of un hoped for, "sudden, and prodigious cures," that would easily pass for miracles; the annals of prayer and faith cure abound with well-attested cases; such cures frequently occurred during the earlier years of many Christian sects, as the Waldenses, Moravians, Huguenots, Covenanters, Quakers, Baptists, and Methodists; Jesus and his apostles performed miracles of healing; the sacred writings of all nations refer to mental healing as a common practice; and mythology and folk-lore afford ground for a belief that, in prehistoric times, mankind may have been acquainted with no other mode of restoring the sick to health.

Accounting as mental those cures produced without the aid of medicine or surgery, we may safely consider recent modes of mental healing closely akin to the methods used by earlier healers, among whom the following were conspicuous:

Dr. Newton, who made his first appearance in Boston in 1859, became well known on account of his remarkable success in restoring health by the laying on of hands; and Mrs. Elizabeth Mix, an ignorant colored woman in the State of Connecticut, performed many genuine faith-cures.

At the trial of Dorothea Trudel, in 1861, for alleged malpractice, it appeared in evidence that



for years she had been in the habit of working remarkable cures of cases given over by physicians as utterly hopeless, and that these labors had been performed in connection with the home for invalids in the Swiss village of Mannedorf, on Lake Zurich. Many credible witnesses testified to the hundreds of desperate cases of disease she had cured, and not only was she acquitted of the charges brought against her by envious physicians, but her reputation was fully established, and she was allowed to pursue her life-work without further molestation. At her death the good work was taken up by Samuel Zeller, who continued to heal the sick by the same means his predecessor had used.

In 1858 Rev. Horace Bushnell, D.D., published his work on "Nature and the Supernatural," in which he describes the experience of a personal friend who had been healed by prayer, and who believed himself to possess the gift of healing. This friend was away from home, when one of his children, who was with him, was taken ill with scarlet fever. The passage quotes the father's words:—

"And now the question arose, What was to be done? The Lord had healed my own sickness, but would he heal my son? I conferred with a brother in the Lord, who, having no faith in Christ's healing power, urged me to send instantly for the doctor, and I despatched his groom on horseback to fetch him. Before the doctor arrived, my mind



was filled with revelation on the subject. I saw that I had fallen into a snare by turning away from the Lord's healing hand to lean on medical skill. I felt grievously condemned in my conscience; a fear also fell on me that if I persevered in my unbelieving course, my son would die, as his oldest brother had done. The symptoms in both cases were precisely similar. The doctor arrived. My son, he said, was suffering from scarlet fever, and medicine should be sent immediately. While he stood prescribing, I resolved to withdraw the child and cast him on the Lord. And when he was gone, I called the nurse and told her to take the child into the nursery and lay him on the bed. I then fell on my knees, confessing the sin I had committed against the Lord's healing power. I also prayed most earnestly that it would please my heavenly Father to forgive my sin, and show that he forgave it by causing the fever to be rebuked. I received a mighty conviction that my prayer was heard, and I arose and went to the nursery to see what the Lord had done; and on opening the door, to my astonishment, the boy was sitting up in the bed, and on seeing me, cried out, 'I am quite well and want my dinner.'

In 1820, Prince Hohenlohe, whose wonderful cures are known throughout the civilized world, learned the secret of healing from a peasant, and for many years applied it with wonderful success, as the subjoined certificate from the ex-king of Bavaria to Count von Sinsheim, attests:—

"MY DEAR COUNT: There are still miracles. The last ten days of the last month, the people of Würzburg might believe themselves living in the times of the Apostles. The deaf heard, the blind saw, the lame freely walked, not by

the aid of art, but by a few short prayers and by the invocation of the name of Jesus. . . . On the evening of the 28th, the number of persons cured, of both sexes and of every age, amounted to more than twenty. These were of all classes of people, from the humblest to a prince of the blood, who, without any exterior means, recovered, on the 27th, at noon, the hearing which he had lost from his infancy. This cure was effected by a prayer made for him during some minutes, by a priest who is scarcely more than twenty-seven years of age, — Prince Hohenlohe. Although I do not hear so well as the majority of the persons who are about me, there is no comparison between my actual state and that which it was before. Besides, I perceive daily that I hear more clearly. . . . My hearing at present is very sensitive. Last Friday, the music of the troop which defiled in the square in front of the palace struck my tympanum so strongly, that for the first time I was obliged to close the window of my cabinet. The inhabitants of Würzburg have testified, by the most lively and sincere acclamations, the pleasure which my cure has given them. You are at liberty to communicate my letter, and to allow any one who wishes to take a copy of it.

“LOUIS, *Prince Royal*.

“BRUCKENAU, July 3, 1822.”

Rev. W. E. Boardman, founder of the “Bethsan,” in the northern part of London, and Joseph Gassner, a Roman Catholic priest of Swabia, in the middle of the last century, were noted healers.

Valentine Greatrakes, an ignorant Irishman, who flourished near the end of the seventeenth century, cured multitudes of people by the stroke of his hand, and was indorsed by the celebrated Robert

Boyle, president of the Royal Society of London, in 1670.

Abbé Paris, the French Jansenist, died in 1727, and of him David Hume says: "There surely never was so great a number of miracles ascribed to one person as those which were lately said to have been wrought in France upon the tomb of the Abbé Paris. The curing of the sick, giving hearing to the deaf and sight to the blind were everywhere talked of as the effects of the holy sepulchre. But, what is more extraordinary, many of the miracles were proved upon the spot, before judges of unquestioned credit and distinction, in a learned age, and on the most eminent theatre that is now in the world, . . . nor were the Jesuits, though a learned body supported by the civil magistrates and determined enemies to the opinions of those in whose favor the miracles were said to have been wrought, ever able to distinctly refute or detect them."

A notable contemporary of Jesus of Nazareth, Apollonius, the prophet of Tyana, probably wrought a greater number of psychical cures than any man of his time except the Christ himself. He was born only four years before the beginning of the Christian era, and educated in Tarsus in Cilicia, where he must have begun his studies about the time when St. Paul was a little boy running about the streets of that city. He afterwards visited India, and learned the healing arts of the

Brahmans. He was at Rome in Nero's time, and was the spiritual adviser of the Vespasian dynasty.

To this evidence may be added that which the Bible furnishes of cures wrought during a long epoch of Hebrew history by many different persons, as well as that found in equally ancient Hindoo scriptures of healing wonders that parallel the Jewish miracles.

If at the present time people know how to procure help from nature at first hand, even more true was it

"Of those serene, dawn-rosy days,  
Ere microscopes had made us heirs  
Of large estates of doubts and snares."

Christian saints, Hindoo fakirs, Jewish cabalists, and Pagan theurgists alike, seem to have been able to exercise the power of mental healing, and no general reader of literature can overlook the frequent reference to this psychical power, made by writers who would not have mentioned it unless it were a matter of common experience.

Josephus says, "That skill which expels demons out of human bodies is a science useful and sanative." Count Zinzendorf, speaking of cases of healing, declared, "We have had undeniable proof thereof in the unequivocal discovery of things, persons, and circumstances which could not humanly have been discovered, in the healing of



maladies in themselves incurable, such as cancers, consumptions, when the patient was in the agonies of death." Scekendorf affirms that Martin Luther cast out demons, and raised the sick and dying to health; and Myconius has left this record concerning himself: "Raised up in the year 1541, by the mandates, prayers, and letter of the Reverend Father Luther, from death."

In the "Medicino Magnetico" of Maxwell, it is stated that "he who knows how to operate on men by the universal spirit can heal, and this at any distance he pleases." When John the Baptist sent messengers from his prison to learn from Jesus whether he was the true Messiah, they brought back report of the wonderful cures they had witnessed, wrought upon the deaf and blind, halt and leprous. The ancients believed in the power of music to cure certain diseases, and Kircher recommends it on the strength of his own experience of the good effects, and specifies the particular instruments to be employed in particular cases; this, too, must be regarded as testimony to mental cure, since the music could have no more to do with the result than the imposition of hands or the anointing of the sick with oil.

Mythology and legendary lore afford collateral support to the belief that the power of mental healing was an art well known to the men of antiquity. We need not insist on deriving veritable



history from such sources, but we may safely regard them as important avenues to the common thought that dominated the minds of men in the early twilight of the world. These stories of gods and demigods, of giants and heroes, do they not teach that the authors of them and the people who held them as traditions had a profound sense that the force behind nature is superior to physical laws, and may, at any time, be invoked to succor mankind in special emergencies? When a hero was charged with an important mission, some tutelary deity aided him in its execution, and in seasons of danger interfered for his protection; if safety required, he was wrapped in a cloud or changed into a form invisible to his enemies; in combat, he was armed with invincible weapons; magic was his obedient servant; and he could read the deepest riddles in nature's mysterious book. What is the obvious meaning of all this, unless it imply a belief of the primitive man that he could summon the powers of deity to help him in seasons of distress?

As to the character of alleged mental cures, they seem to have been very much alike in all ages and among all nations. Regarded simply as restorations from disease, they seem to have astonished those who witnessed them by the rapidity and thoroughness of their operation. So far as the subjects of healing were concerned, why may not

the following cures be referred to a common principle?

In 1884, a Boston gentleman, whose close confinement to the office and sedentary habits were not favorable to good digestion, was thoroughly cured of chronic dyspepsia by a "Christian scientist." He had suffered from one of the worst forms of the disease for many years, and had tried in vain to get relief by means of medicine, and, in fact, was much discouraged about his own case when the mental healer took him in charge. The "treatment" was administered absently for a period of about seven weeks before the result was obtained.

A few years ago, a New Hampshire lady who had been bed-ridden for a long while, and had abandoned all expectation of ever being able to walk again or resume her domestic cares, was suddenly cured by being made the victim of a harmless trick. During the pleasant summer weather, her grown-up sons were in the habit of lifting their mother tenderly into a carriage, and giving her the benefit of a ride. It was their opinion, however, that her case demanded heroic treatment, and they resolved to make the experiment. Near the house a brook crossed the road, through which they often drove instead of crossing by the bridge, in order to let the horse drink. The ford was usually safe and easy; but on a certain day,

the carriage was suddenly upset by some stones previously placed there by the boys, and the invalid was thrown into the middle of the stream, and must wade out or drown. She fathomed the well-meant plot and was very angry; but the remedy was effectual, and her lameness was cured on the spot.

In the town of Lourdes, in France, where Julius Cæsar planted a fortress in the time of the Gallic war, is the famous grotto of Massavielle, where, according to a Roman Catholic legend, the Virgin Mary revealed herself to a peasant girl, in 1858, and imparted healing virtue to the waters of a spring. Wonderful cures are said to result from visiting the grotto and bathing in the water, and several cripples, whose cases were given over by the surgeons, are reported to have been restored to soundness by its use.

*The British and Foreign Medical Review* for January, 1847, contains the following statement of a naval surgeon of veracity:—

“A very intelligent officer had suffered for some years from violent attacks of cramp in the stomach. He had tried almost all the remedies usually recommended for the relief of this distressing affection; and for a short period prior to coming under my care, the tris-nitrate of bismuth had been attended with the best results. The attacks came on about once in three weeks, or from that to a month, unless when an unusual exposure brought them on more frequently. As bismuth had been so successful, it was, of course, continued;

but notwithstanding that it was increased to the largest dose that its poisonous qualities would justify, it soon lost its effect. Sedatives were again resorted to; but the relief afforded by these was only partial, while their effect on the general system was evidently very prejudicial. On one occasion, while greatly suffering from the effects of some preparation of opium, given for the relief of these spasms, he was told that on the next attack he would be put under a medicine which was generally believed to be most effective, but which was rarely used, in consequence of its dangerous qualities, but that, notwithstanding these, it should be tried, provided he gave his consent. This he did willingly. Accordingly, on the first attack after this, a powder containing four grains of *ground biscuit* was administered every seven minutes, while the greatest anxiety was expressed (within the hearing of the party), lest too much should be given. The fourth dose caused an entire cessation of pain. Half-drachm doses of bismuth had never procured the same relief in less than three hours. For four successive times did the same kind of attack recur, and four times was it met by the same remedy, and with like success. After this my patient was ordered to join another ship on a different station."

In 1648, George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends, was imprisoned in Nottingham jail.

"After I was released," he says, in a written account of his labors, "I travelled, as before, in the work of the Lord. Coming to Mansfield-Woodhouse, there was a distracted woman under a doctor's hand, with her hair loose about her ears. He was about to bleed her, holding her by violence, but he could get no blood from her. I desired them to unbind her and let her alone, for they could not touch the spirit in her by which she was tormented. So they unbound her; and I was moved to speak to her, and in the name of the



Lord to bid her be quiet and still; and she was so. The Lord's power settled on her mind, and she mended; and afterwards she received the truth, and continued in it to her death."

In the Acts of the Apostles of Jesus is a record of the cure of a beggar who had been a poor cripple from his birth. Peter and John saw him crouching at the gate of the Temple as they passed in at the hour of prayer. They had no money to give him, but were moved to bestow on him a greater boon. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" commanded Peter; and the context informs us that he was instantly and thoroughly healed.

About 680 B.C., the Judean king, Hezekiah, "was sick unto death," and was visited by the prophet Isaiah, who said to him, "Thus saith the Lord, Set thy house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live." The king was greatly affected, and prayed earnestly to his God to spare his life. The prayer prevailed, and Isaiah was sent again to inform him that Jehovah had added fifteen years to his mortal existence.

In the Mosaic book of Numbers we read that while the Hebrew fugitives from Egyptian bondage wandered in the wilderness, they were attacked by venomous serpents, which bit many of them so that they died. At the command of the Lord, Moses made a serpent of brass, which he placed upon a



pole and raised in sight of the people. It had a magic power to stay the fatal poison, for every person who had been bitten, by simply looking at it, was healed.

These eight remarkable cures occurred at different times during a period of three thousand years, and in localities far apart. In neither case do the apparent means and mode of healing seem adequate to produce such an effect, and so far as any inherent therapeutic virtue is concerned, we would as soon choose one as the other. Taking the cases in the order given, the apparent agents were: (1) a silent mental influence; (2) a sudden fright and plunge into the water; (3) spring-water blessed by the Virgin; (4) a little powdered biscuit; (5) the command of a pious person in the name of the Lord; (6) the command of an Apostle in the name of Jesus; (7) the prayer of the patient; (8) a talisman.

It would be plainly absurd to insist that such means have any power *per se* to cure disease. These were not the cause, but only the occasions, of recovery, — something that arrested and fastened the attention of the patient, and in a manner not yet fully explained set in motion the mechanism of thought by which he was affected; or, shall we rather say, these agencies removed some obstacle that was preventing Mother Nature, that best of nurses, who never deserts the sick, from accomplishing her mission?

It may be stated in general terms that, whatever startles the sick person or otherwise arouses and changes the direction of thought produces an effect on the bodily condition. An invalid lady in a Boston suburb, while pondering the sayings of Jesus, was so impressed with the thought that his truth could heal the world of sickness as well as sin, that the new thought awakened in her was the means of her recovery. A dyspeptic journalist, while travelling on a Western railroad train, and thinking what a discomfort and hindrance the complaint had been to him for years, was suddenly seized with the idea that he might be well if he only thought so, and in fact he could be well from that very hour. To his joy and surprise the indigestion disappeared, and he was a new man. An officer of the English army stationed in India was confined to his bed by asthma, and could only breathe in an erect posture; but a party of Mahrattas broke into the camp, and fearing certain death unless he fought for his life, he sprang up, mounted his horse, and used his sword with good execution, although a little while before he had felt too weak to draw it from the scabbard.

It is often objected to the various forms of mental healing that there is no positive evidence that the cures are what they are claimed to be. Most of them, it is said, are performed by persons unskilled in the science of pathology, and not quali-

fied to judge whether the subjects of their treatment really suffer from the alleged disease, or, if actually sick, are fully cured. That there is good cause for such incredulity no candid observer will deny. It is well known to the medical profession that there are many counterfeit forms of disease, presenting symptoms that frequently deceive even the doctors themselves. In certain morbid conditions of the nervous system the symptoms may be very misleading to the unpractised examiner, who, failing to detect their true character, errs in his diagnosis of the case.

The best answer, perhaps, that mental healers can make to the charge here noticed is that, whether right or wrong in their judgments of what ails their patients, they act precisely as any sensible physician would under like circumstances, and try to relieve the disease. Another point in their favor is, that they sometimes take cases where the disease has been defined by competent medical authority and pronounced incurable, and succeed in restoring the patient to health. Strictly speaking, the danger of a wrong diagnosis, while it renders the psychopaths liable to overrate their powers, is no valid proof that their work is not genuine. They maintain, as they have a perfect right to do, that it is not necessary for them to know the name or even the physical nature of the diseases they treat. If the patient feels that he is

not well, and the mental treatment induces health, what more is there to be desired?

The fact that real diseases are cured by psychical means rests on no doubtful authority, but is sustained by the knowledge and indorsement of those whose testimony on that point is reliable. The London *Lancet*, referring to the reality of faith-cures, says: "There is no question that they are wrought. There is no miracle in faith healing, but it would be a miracle if faith healing did not occur under favorable conditions." Dr. O. W. Holmes admits that "we cannot doubt that there is such a thing as simple faith-cure, quite distinct from any scientific, divine, or miraculous interposition." Rev. J. M. Buckley, D.D., of New York City, contributed to *The Century Magazine*, for June, 1886, a long article on "Faith Healing and Kindred Phenomena," in which he subjects the historic evidence to a searching analysis, and superadds testimony drawn from his own experience. He is no convert to mind-cure, and deems it "a pitiable superstition, dangerous in its final effects"; yet he is forced to record this confession: "But after all deductions have been made, the fact that most extraordinary recoveries have been produced, some of them instantaneously, from disease in some cases generally considered to be incurable by ordinary treatment, in others known to be curable in the ordinary process of medicine and



in surgery only by slow degrees, must be admitted." Rev. John H. Denison, D.D., professor in Williams College, who has personally tested the curative virtues of mental healing, says that "the human mind is a mighty agent whose curative and dynamic powers have been grossly underestimated, and that great things may be expected of it when, with a recognition of its limitations, it is made to take its place among physical agencies as a correlated force, — this at least appears to be true"; and his recent article on "The Mind-Cure: Its Philosophy and Limitations," published in the *Andover Review* is, when taken as a whole, a strong testimonial to the value and importance of psychopathy.

## II.

### THE CREED OF MENTAL HEALERS.

THE fact of mental healing being well established, it will be interesting to know what theories the modern Asas hold concerning disease and its remedy. It is well understood that those who practise mind-cure as a calling deny that their work partakes of the nature of miracle, and claim that it is truly scientific and based on a correct philosophy of being. They adopt and teach peculiar views concerning the cause and effect of disease, combined with a theology different from that commonly received as Christian. They make great account of the Bible as an authority, especially the sayings of Jesus, and inculcate a high degree of spirituality as indispensable to success.

The body of doctrines that constitutes the creed of the different schools or sects of healers relates to Deity, to man, and to matter and its phenomena. A considerable part of the lessons given those who study the subject consists of the presentation of these doctrines, and no one is considered a genuine "scientist" who does not accept them. The significant motto of mental healing is, "The under-

standing of man's relations to the Infinite is the secret of health," and in accordance with this primary formula it proceeds to construct a theology. And what is the Infinite of this creed?

God, Infinite Principle and not a person, is the sole life and power in the universe. God is Spirit, and the real Substance of all the material world. God is absolute Good; is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. This seems to comprise the essence of all that is positively affirmed of the supreme Creator and Governor of the universe. Negatively this definition excludes all other life, power, and substance from the world, by referring everything of which it is possible to conceive to one source, and making God, as Schelling expresses it, the All in All.

This, it will be readily perceived, is not the notion of Deity that prevails throughout Christendom. Cudworth says, "The true and genuine idea of God in general is this, — a perfect conscious understanding being (or mind), existing of itself from eternity, and the cause of all other things." Christian thought conceives of the existence of the Infinite as a personal supreme Spirit, in whose dominion other dependent beings may exist. To the mental healer the omnipresence of Deity is exclusive, to the Christian it is pervasive. The former regards God as the life of all things, while the latter thinks of him as the creator and preserver of

life. To quote from one of the text-books of mental healing: "God is wisdom, and there is no other wisdom in the world. . . . The statement that God is all-powerful means more than an acknowledgment that the Supreme Being possesses boundless might; for it denies power to every other being or organism, and affirms God to be the power that moves whatever acts, and produces force wherever it is felt. . . . Again, if God be everywhere present, everything else must be excluded, because when he fills all, there is not room for anything else."

With some teachers of these doctrines of the divine existence, Spirit is the favorite appellation by which the Infinite is designated; with others, Mind; and the use of these two synonyms sanctions the expressions, "Every form of life in God's vast universe is Spirit"; "All is Mind, there is no matter."

It is easy to foresee the conclusions to which the student and believer of such a theology must be driven when he turns his gaze from the Infinite reality to the world, which is his physical abode. If God be all, what are the varied forms which greet the eye? and what means the restless activity all around him? Is man dwelling in a kingdom of illusion? He can scarcely repress the questions of Carlyle: "Or what is nature? Ha! why do I not name thee God? Art thou not the 'Living Garment of God'? O Heavens, is it, in very deed,



He then that ever speaks through thee ; that lives and loves in thee, that lives and loves in me ? ”

In respect to nature or the external world, different schools of mental healers carry the doctrine of idealism to various lengths, although few of them appear to be familiar with the teachings of philosophy on this subject. They never attempt to maintain their position by any process of subtle reasoning ; but keeping in view the chief point to be established, namely, the supremacy of spirit over all material phenomena, part confidently assert that there is no such thing as matter, and that our senses wholly deceive us, while others do not deny that nature is what it seems to be to human senses, but assert that it is phenomenal, and spirit is the only reality. It is possible, also, that there may be a few “ metaphysical ” healers who do not trouble themselves about the existence of matter any more than “ prayer and faith ” healers do. It is not for its own sake, of course, that the disciples of psychopathy meddle with this abstruse question, on which the world of thinkers has always been divided. What they really seek is to reinforce from this quarter their own cardinal doctrine, that what is called sickness is an illusion which may be dispelled.

A just balance between the extremes of belief on this subject would probably be struck by saying that the essential doctrine of the healers concern-

ing matter is: the visible universe, that in respect to itself appears real, is mere nullity to Spirit. The mind perceives certain sensations, which convey to it impressions of the qualities ascribed to objects. Whether or not there exist any tangible things outside the mind corresponding to the sensations, it is unnecessary to decide; accordingly the students of mental healing assume material objects to be phenomena produced by the mind.

Just here the school that asserts the non-existence of matter most boldly, finds itself in a psychological dilemma. It starts with the enthymeme, "All is Mind." But sensations are facts that cannot be destroyed. Outward objects being unreal, sensations being unreal, it cannot be Mind that perceives what the senses report; for "Mind or Spirit is the only reality." To extricate the "science" taught by this wing of healers, the name "mortal mind" is invented and given to the indefinable consciousness that perceives sensations. The convenience of this term may be readily appreciated; for, if it be asked, what within us is aware of the existence of the animate and inanimate life around us, the reply is "mortal mind." On the other hand, if, while considering the "only reality" it should chance to be asked what is mortal mind, the ready answer is "nothing."

A different way of disposing of this troublesome subject is proposed by another school of

instruction, in the course of lessons concerning man. Assuming omnipotence to be constantly creating, advocates of this phase of belief say that man is an expression of infinite intelligence. But as the twigs of a tree cannot be unlike the tree that puts them forth, so man, the expression of Spirit (Divine Intelligence) cannot be essentially different from the source from which he springs. God is Spirit; consequently, man, the real man, is also spirit. By this is implied not the common idea that each man is a spirit housed in a body. This view of the case does not recognize personality or separate identity as belonging to the real man. There is a principle or intelligent force in the world to which the name Spirit is given by common consent. One manifestation of Spirit is what these mental healers recognize as the real or spiritual man. Another mode of expressing the same thing is to say that man is the idea or thought of God, meaning, of course, the noetic idea.

The logical outcome of this doctrine is rather startling to those who consider the true man or *ego* as an immortal soul incarnated in this life, but destined to become a bodiless ghost in a future state of existence. There is no place in this ontology for a human soul; for the real man is a mode in which Deity expresses itself, and so inseparable are the original and its expression, that it

is not possible to tell "where God the cause ceases, and man the effect begins." "The spiritual man stands related to God," says the text-book, "as human thought stands related to mind. When mind acts, we say man thinks. When Intelligence expresses itself, we intuitively perceive the idea as the spiritual man. God is the intelligence of the spiritual man." The same doctrine is conveyed by Emerson, when he says: "One mode of the divine teaching is the incarnation of spirit in a form,—in forms like my own."

There is a necessary corollary to the theory herein explained which the thoughtful reader already anticipates. If mankind are the manifold organisms through which God expresses himself, the visible garments in which the eternal energy of the universe is veiled, then spirit is one and common to all men. It is an influx of intelligence and life to which each individual being is an inlet. This is precisely what mental healers mean when they say, "there is *one* mind or intelligence."

Having thus dealt with all that they conceive to be real in the being known as man, a majority of those who accept the faith are content to end the discussion with the remark that "mind is the only reality and the body a belief."

But there is little in this world of which people are more fully conscious than of the body and its belongings. If they seek the mental healers it is



in the hope of getting physical help. They are not content, therefore, to have the body and its claims thus abruptly dismissed, as though it were of no consequence. To meet this demand of students and patients, some of the more thoughtful "scientists," as they are fond of calling themselves, have pushed their inquiries farther, and extended their theory into the realm of matter.

Man, they say, is Spirit. So intimate is the relation between him and his creator, that Empedocles did not over-state the case when he exclaimed, "I am God!" Another view shows man to be God manifest in the flesh. He is the spiritual or real man, as already explained — an idea of God. Now, what of his powers and functions?

The ambiguous term Mind, which some of their co-workers use as synonymous with Spirit, these more careful healers apply only to the collection of faculties or functions that constitute the laboratory of thought. Perceptions of every kind they call effects; thinking is not an exercise of the real man, but cerebration; thought itself is the language of self-communion, by which the mind is enabled to consider the ideas or intuitions communicated to the spiritual man. They liken the brain to a factory or work-shop for the production of conclusions or facts, just as a loom is a mechanism for weaving cloth. It might please them to call the mind, as Lowell has done, "the loom of thought."

The argument adduced in support of this peculiar theory of mind is interesting. Taking the common meanings of the verb *think*, given in the dictionary, such as consider, meditate, contemplate, commune with one's self, ponder, cogitate, muse, and the like, they observe that each of these processes implies by definition an effort of the mind, that, if too severe or protracted, fatigues the brain. Observing these mental operations closely, they notice that the thinking process is carried on by the use of silent language, just as conversation is carried on by the use of audible speech; so that a man employs language in two ways, silently when he communes with himself, audibly when he addresses a hearer. This, too, is an acquired power, exhausting to the vital energies, and capable of being indefinitely increased by practice.

Now, turning once more to the spiritual or real man, previously defined as a manifestation of spirit, the healer reasons that the toilsome effort by which thought evolves its facts is due to finite conditions, and does not comport with our notions of omnipotence. "How absurd," he exclaims, "to predicate thought of spirit!" "Does the infinite power that creates worlds by a simple fiat toil, and become exhausted in efforts to discover a fact? Does Omniscience need to argue and ponder in order to grasp knowledge? The very conception forbids that we should tax God with such limita-

tion and weakness, or impute a like defect to his own image and emanation, the spiritual man."

The upshot of this reasoning, if reason it be, is that absolute knowledge is one of the divine perfections inevitably associated with Deity. God is the infinite source of knowledge and truth. The spiritual man, being a true expression of Deity, shares this unlimited knowledge. The prerogative of the *real* man is to know. It follows, therefore, that thought, which implies a searching after truth, is finite and an effect. Intuitive ideas constitute the knowledge of the real man; the contemplation of these ideas, and the evolution of facts belong to the brain. The reader, to whom this theory of mind is novel, may hesitate to accept it; but it is one step in the solution of the problem of matter.

The healers emphatically reject what Fichte called "the dirt-philosophy," which explains all mental phenomena by the single fact of sensation. Equally at variance are they with Leibnitz's definition of force, as a continual tendency to activity, originally communicated by the Creator to all substances, whether material or spiritual. They deny that force is inherent in matter. Matter is inert and destitute of life. Self-activity is not a property of the brain; a tree has no power of itself to grow; a planet does not move of its own accord. All this is consistent with the doctrine

previously announced, that Spirit is the only life in the universe.

But one way remains of accounting for physical activity, and this the healers adopt. Spirit, the real man, uses the mental faculties, as Emerson would say, as hands and feet. That eternal energy puts forth the branches and leaves of the tree, and drives the heavenly orbs in their courses. The being known to us as a corporeal presence is no real man, but simply a wonderful mechanism *through* which (not in or upon which) psychic force acts. The great advantage gained by taking this position is, that it enables the healer to assert boldly that physical defects and diseases are not conditions belonging to the real man.

The subsequent steps of this mind-cure ontology are less difficult to follow. All matter being inert *per se*, it may be easily granted that whatever form it assumes is a phenomenon that appears real only to the senses. Concisely stated, the law of activity reads: "Intelligence descends into the spiritual man as ideas; ideas descend into the mind, provoking thought; thought is reflected as matter and its phenomena."

There is something in the mind about which thought busies itself, and that something corresponds to an idea known to the spiritual man. The idea cannot be reduced to thought or become the direct object of thought, for thought is finite



and ideas are infinite; but that something in the mind which corresponds to the idea may be a direct object of thought. For example, let that something be the conception of a table. That conception can be fully grasped by the finite faculties; but the idea to which it corresponds is perfectly incomprehensible to the finite mind, and is known to the infinite alone. Again, external objects are reflections, more or less perfect, of these mental concepts; that is, the artist first conceives his picture in his mental studio, where it remains a perfect correspondence to the idea that put it forth. When he executes the picture on canvas the result may not equal the mental concept, falls short of being an exact reflection or copy, just as human achievements usually fall short of the ideal standard. The cabinet-maker tries to represent his concept of a table in wood, and the product is a better or worse reflection of the model in his thought.

Here then we have a chain of emanations: ideas emanate from Spirit, concepts emanate from ideas, external objects emanate from concepts. The human form is first a concept or assemblage of concepts, corresponding to eternal idea; the concept or concepts are reflected, and the reflection appears to the senses as the material body. But this body is not the *real* being, and whatever belongs to it is mere appearance.

Thus is completed a theory of the origin of nature and of man, and his relations to the Infinite, which, however novel or faulty it may appear to the reader, satisfies the demands of mental healers, and contains, in their opinion, the true philosophical basis upon which their art is founded. It is broad enough to cover all that they claim to hold and teach, while it probably contains much more than a majority of them are able to comprehend. It now remains to discover, if we can, what use they make of the theory in dealing with disease.

The psychopathy thus far explained applies to mankind in a normal or healthy condition, but the grand aim of the doctrines is to solve the problem of human evil. Like Buddha, the mental healers have been touched with a profound sense of the misery of existence; but unlike him, they have found their remedy with less outlay of time, thought, and self-abnegation.

Modern healers teach that there was a period in the history of the race when the "man of the senses" was a perfect expression of the generating spiritual idea. Then all mental concepts exactly corresponded to ideas, thought was harmonious and potential, and external nature was a true reflection of the original models in the mind. Under those primitive conditions man was colossal and a giant. His authority was creative, and matter was fluid and mobile in his power. All-gifted Pandora

had not opened her box, and work now achieved with wearisome toil was wrought by the swift fiat of celestial magic.

Why curiosity warped the judgment of Pandora and Eve, and by one fatal act

“Brought death into the world, and all our woe,”

the healers cannot tell any better than theologians can. Granting the original premise, they can reason about the fact and progress of evil as wisely, perhaps, if not as learnedly, as the fathers of divinity; but they have never been able to find the germ. Neither of the three answers to the question of the origin of evil meets the case as they understand it. If it be said that we are suffering in this life the punishments or expiations of moral delinquencies in a former state of existence, they do not believe in antemundane existence. If the doctrine of the Manicheans be urged, their cardinal tenet of the one universal life forbids the hypothesis of two co-eternal agencies, one the author of good, and the other the author of evil. The creed of optimism is equally repugnant, for it is not consistent with our notions of infinite wisdom and goodness to admit that evil as evil is a necessary factor in the system devised by Almighty power for the discipline of his creatures.

Among the mind-cure schools there appear to be two modes of dealing with the arch-enemy of

human peace. Teachers of one mode stoutly deny that there is any such thing as evil; teachers of the other, reach practically the same conclusion by a more circuitous route. The former declare that "a personal God, a personal man, a personal devil, and evil and good spirits, are theological mythoplasm." "All is mind, there is no matter; all is harmony, there is no discord; all is life, there is no death; all is good, there is no evil; all is God and his idea." Thus easily is evil swept from the world with the besom of "science"; but at the same time what men call reason goes along with it. Such a summary way of blotting all moral wrong out of existence is surely the best, if it be effectual; but when the student of "Christian science" is about to begin the work for which the instruction is supposed to fit him, will not the question arise, if there is no evil, and, consequently, no disease, what service is it possible for me to render my fellow-men in the capacity of a healer?

According to the fable, the wind could not rend the traveller's cloak from his back, and only caused him to hug it the closer; but the sun with genial smile and a soft touch quickly caused him to part with it. One school having failed to rid the world of evil by brandishing a windy besom; another, without ignoring the hard fact, melts and dissolves it in the soft but intense heat of the lamp of truth.



As a man thinketh, so is he. The senses of man perceive on every hand the evidences of imperfection. There are defects in the operation and results of the mind, the human body, and nature in general. Man kept not his first estate, but has fallen, and it is the business of the healer to locate the seat of the trouble, and try to remove it. This attitude seems reasonable and meets with universal favor; if the healers, practically recognizing the facts, are able to devise means to either prevent or cure the ills of life, the world is eager to listen to them.

The theory of the more thoughtful mental healers is in substance this: The real man, by definition, is spiritual, and consequently knows nothing of evil in any form. "It is only the finite that has wrought and suffered, the infinite lies stretched in smiling repose." Good is the only positive force, and truth the only law. Consequently they deny all belief in Satan and dæmon-olepsy. Evil is merely the lack of knowledge. For some reason the lamp of truth or spiritual knowledge does not shine through the laboratory of thought, and light every dark corner; consequently the reflection of the mental concepts is not strong and clear. To drop the trope, the concept may still be correct, but the logic of thinking, though plausible, is false, and the conclusions wrong.

Disease, lack of ease, is the sensation consequent on lack of light, absence of full knowledge or truth. By whatever names different forms of disease are known to physicians, they all fall under the same class when psychologically considered. Sickness of any kind is a phenomenon of matter; and so far as its effects are felt or seen in the body, it is a reflection or register of defective thinking. The clearest view of the healers is expressed in the following quotation from a text-book:—

“But though the primal man did not separate himself in thought from God, the metaphysician holds that he did at length come to think that intelligence was his own, to have and to use. Not that the spiritual or real man changed, and appropriated what did not belong to him; but thought, which was very powerful so long as it corresponded to idea, assumed itself to be an independent power, and asserted authority over the senses. *This was inverted thought. . . .*

“As soon, therefore, as the man of thought or the senses began to think he was something of himself, mind was no longer a pure emanation of spirit, a medium of intelligence; but lack of knowledge, limitation, led man to think as of himself. Out of this sprang the belief in personality, and the reflection of his thought became fixed, and crystallized into material form.

“This inverted thinking once established, man soon forgot that he was godlike, and made the discovery that he was no longer protected in his uprightness, but was exposed to dangers, seen and unseen, and liable to be hurt. This was the origin of fear, *and fear is the parent of all the ills that flesh is heir to.* The spiritual man knows nothing of fear, because he is superior to all, and recognizes no other power. *The man of the senses creates his own enemies.*”

It is in its doctrine of causes that psychopathy claims a great advantage over every other mode of healing. Chaucer, in his masterful prologue to the "Canterbury Tales," describes a "Doctour of Phisik," and tells us that

"He knew the cause of every maladye,  
Were it of hoot or cold, or moyst or drye,  
And where engendered, and of what humour;  
For he was a verrey parfight practisour."

But the healers surpass the physicians in ætiology, because they go behind the physical occasion of disease, and locate the real cause in the mind. The skilful medical man does the same thing to some extent, it is true; but the nature of his professional studies leads him to watch the effect of bodily conditions on the mind, rather than the effect of mental states on the body.

The subject of mental influence upon the body, in producing health or disease is of vital importance, and will be more fully considered in the proper place; but in this statement of what mental healers teach their students, it will be sufficient to add, that they disregard bodily symptoms as far as possible, and direct their attention wholly to the mental condition of their patients. When they affirm that the cause of all disease is in the mind, it is but fair that we endeavor to comprehend their true meaning. Not stopping to consider how absurd it might sound to ears unused

to their forms of speech, indiscreet healers have, without doubt, often made remarks that subjected them to ridicule and the charge of being "cranks." Others may have used what seemed to be words without sense on account of their own meagre knowledge of the subject; for it is not to be denied that many who call themselves healers, and have a certain amount of success as such, are grossly ignorant of the philosophy as well as history of their art, and have merely had the good fortune to stumble upon the secret of applying it in special cases.

It would not be putting the case too strongly to say that the theory carried to the highest point, traces every form of disease as well as sin to mental causes, which may be removed and the effects destroyed. Even death itself they hold to be an illusion, that may be dispelled by a full reception of the truth and consequent right thinking. Thought creates a world for each one of us; thought makes the body; and all physical phenomena, whether of disease or health, are due to thought.

If utterances like these seem extravagant, it should not be forgotten that a new truth—and every truth we grasp is new to *us*, though old to all the world beside—is apt to intoxicate its possessor, and become to his infatuated sense the universal solvent of the enigmas of life. Time



and experience may safely be left to adjust the value of these claims; but, meanwhile, it is not the mark of wisdom to fear or ridicule them. There is no occasion for alarm, as though we did not dare to trust

“The Rock of Ages to their chemic tests,  
Lest some day the all-sustaining base divine  
Should fail from under us, dissolved in gas.”

In some quarters both pulpit and press have felt called upon to sound a note of warning against the moral dangers of mind-cure. One writer says:—

“It has been his [Satan’s] steady policy either to parody Christianity by inventing spurious imitations, or to adulterate it with such heathen mixtures as to ‘turn the truth of God into a lie.’ The literature of ‘Christian science’ presents clearly enough such a Pagan adulteration of the religion of Christ; and we greatly fear that ‘the prince of the power of the air’ may be appropriating and re-inforcing whatever occult principle of healing there may be in this system, and using it to accredit his own gospel.”

Another warning voice, weighted with the authority of *Divinitatis Doctor*, says:—

“Its tendency is to produce an effeminate type of character which shrinks from any pain, and to concentrate attention upon self and its sensations. It sets up false grounds for determining whether a person is or is not in the favor of God. It opens the door to every superstition, such as attaching importance to dreams, signs, opening the Bible at random, expecting the Lord to make it open so that they can gather his will from the first passage they see, ‘impressions,’ ‘assurances,’ etc. Practically it gives great support

to other delusions which claim a supernatural element. It greatly injures Christianity by subjecting it to a test which it cannot endure. It directs attention from the moral and spiritual transformation which Christianity professes to work, a transformation which, wherever made, manifests its divinity, so that none who behold it need any other proof that it is of God. It destroys the ascendancy of reason in the soul, and thus, like similar delusions, it is self-perpetuating; and its natural, and in some minds, its irresistible tendency is to mental derangement."

Nor have these practitioners, denounced by divines as "subverters of the truth," and by certain medical writers as "quacks and arrant knaves," escaped being a shining mark for the shafts of derision, satire, and jest. One objector said, the mind-cure nonsense reminded him of the famous discussion between Erasmus and Sir Thomas More about the Real Presence, and had the same practical outcome. He then rehearsed the following anecdote:—

"The two friends met at the house of the great English wit, when the latter endeavored to convert his guest to the Roman Catholic dogma, assuring him that, if he would only believe in transubstantiation, he would be satisfied of its truth by unquestionable evidence. Erasmus saw the humor of the thing but was not convinced, and on departing, borrowed More's pony, but instead of returning it sent the following explanation:—

' Quod mihi dixisti  
De corpore Christi,  
Crede quod edis, et edis;

Sic tibi rescribo,  
De tuo palfrido,  
Crede quod habes, et habes.'"<sup>1</sup>

The animus of the following stanzas is unmistakable:—

“If all disease is but a dream  
And all the world illusion,  
Then what we are and what we seem  
Cause intricate confusion.

“If matter be extended mind,  
And mind be—well—no matter,  
It must be very hard to find  
The former or the latter.

“If there be really no disease  
And bodies are a fiction,  
Why is it worth such costly fees  
To cure a slight affliction?

“If spirit be the only fact,  
And sense the truth reverses,  
Why do the modern healers act  
So glad to fill their purses?”

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<sup>1</sup> Remember, you told me,  
Believe and you'll see;  
Believe 'tis a body,  
And a body 'twill be.

So should you tire walking,  
This hot summer-tide,  
Believe your staff's Dobbin,  
And straightway you'll ride.

— *Translation in Macmillan's Magazine.*

### III.

#### ESSENTIALS AND NON-ESSENTIALS.

It is a beautiful idea to publish authors' calendars, for the thoughts thus brought together are a well-spring of inspiration to those who use them. To associate with the advent of each new day some noble sentiment of a gifted mind provokes fresh thought, keeps the moral sense alert, and prevents the pilgrim bound to the Mount Zion of wisdom from falling asleep by the wayside. Such quotations are a constant spur to endeavor, and suggest the wholesome lesson that progress is the only safe watchword, and the moving panorama of truth, so to speak, is to be seen *en passant*. Most natures crave the repose of a stable faith. But God says: "A creed is not a home, but a bivouac; gird up your loins and go forward." Emerson was wont to picture truth as an on-rushing stream. "If anything could stand still," he tells us, "it would be crushed and dissipated by the torrent it resisted, and if it were mind, would be crazed; as insane persons are those who hold fast to one thought, and do not flow with the course of nature."



Rest is death. Whatever in the vast universe is alive is in constant motion. In this restless flux of thought lie both hope and despair for reformers: hope in the possibility of changing the old order of things; despair if they aspire to be the popes of new opinions. The truths that are revealed to men are not treasures to be locked up in a safe and used for a private advantage. They are seminal germs, to be flung broadcast, that they may find a kindly soil in which to spring up and bear the fruit of universal blessing.

Mental healers of the present day have too keen a sense of property interest in the truth of which they assume to be the custodians. They glory in their "discoveries," and hug their treasure with a fond conceit that is likely to prove fatal. It would be cruel to rob them of any credit that justly belongs to them; but it would do them good to find out that the rapid stream of thought has not met the ocean at their feet, but grows broader as it descends to the valleys beyond them. They have rendered an important service by giving new emphasis to the doctrine of the supremacy of mind over matter, in a land where material thought is all-engrossing, and by re-announcing the saying of Maurice, that "the God whom we serve is a God of health, the enemy of sickness and death." But the real value of such truth to mankind depends on its being made public, and freely available to

all who need it. Their attitude has been: "We have made a discovery of inestimable value to the world, and have secured our right in it by patent. It contains the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. It is ours by right, to hold and enjoy for our private advantage; but we will sell you some of it at our price, and it will pay you to invest." But before closing with the tempting offer, it may be well to use what light we have to investigate the merits of the new "science," not in a captious spirit, but as those who know that precious gems hide within a rough exterior.

No doubt, mental healers are sincere in thinking that the understanding of their doctrines is the sole condition on which the gift of healing is ever bestowed. They are not conversant with the history of psychical cures, and their own experience tends to confirm such an opinion, for the theories constitute a working capital, so to speak, that may be readily turned to good account. How far their lives conform to the high moral standard they proclaim, or how far it simply governs the language of their public utterances, may be left an open question. The business of the present inquiry is to determine if possible what vital connection the theories have with the cures, and then to consider further their value as a moral of force.

Students are taught that, to succeed as mental healers, they must accept without reserve, and

firmly hold the dogmas of the "science," namely: That Spirit is one and the only life, invested with every perfection of God; that man is a manifestation of common spirit, without personality; that matter (including the human body) is a reflection of thought and has no reality; that disease, sin, and death are facts to the physical senses alone, of which the *real* man knows nothing; that a man who has been truly healed cannot be sick again, cannot sin any more, and is exempt from death. These cardinal doctrines must be absolutely believed in, and the healer must attain a lofty moral altitude and abide therein.

That one who held such a creed and lived in accordance therewith would have great power to help suffering humanity admits of no question. His presence would be a constant benediction, and virtue would go out from him to all who came within the circle of his influence. He would bear Ithuriel's spear, and vice would shrink away at his approach. Disease would have no terrors for him, and his very touch would be curative. But the point now at issue is not to consider what would be likely to occur under certain conditions, but to find the indispensable conditions under which a given result takes place.

If bodily cures, except those ascribed to medicine and surgery, were wrought by persons holding such doctrines and by them alone, there might

be strong reason to believe the heaven-appointed means of health to be the application of the mental-healing creed. So long as Mesmer continued to relieve pain by raking the parts affected with metallic tractors, and nobody could prove that the same thing had ever been done in any other way, his claim was undisputed. But as soon as it became known that wooden tractors or no tractors at all would answer just as well, his mistake was discovered.

Modern spiritualists, so called, believe in many spirits, each having a distinct personality in this world and the next. They hold that God employs different spirits as his agents; and yet they work mental cures with great success. The Roman Catholic Church has always believed in a personal God and a personal human soul, and yet its records abound with notable cases of psychical cures. How then can it be shown that any particular belief about the existence of spirit is essential to the mental furnishings of healers?

Dr. Cullis, Rev. A. B. Simpson, Mrs. Elizabeth Mix, George O. Barnes, the "mountain evangelist," Dorothea Trudel, Joseph Benson, George Fox, the Quaker, Hohenlohe, the Hungarian prelate, Joseph Gassner, priest of Swabia, Martin Luther, and Augustine, were all believers in the personality of man both spiritually and corporeally; and yet the evidence of the genuineness of their



cures is as reliable as any offered by "Christian scientists." How then can one's theory of man be of any great account in healing? Beyond question these same parties were realists; and yet their theory of matter did not prevent them from working cures, although they held disease to be a reality and its cure a miracle.

The belief that he who is once truly healed will never relapse, and will thenceforth live exempt from sickness, sin, and death, is certainly a pleasant one to hold, but is not exemplified even by the healers themselves. About three years ago a well-known citizen of Boston was thoroughly cured, to all appearance, of a distressing chronic malady, and embraced the doctrines advocated by his healer, a "Christian scientist." He also became a very successful healer of others, and was so confident in his own ability to resist disease, that he frequently declared it was impossible for him ever to be sick. Yet within a twelve-month this same man, who sincerely thought he had risen superior to all finite ills, was hurried to his grave by hemorrhage of the lungs. During the past year four active mental healers have succumbed to the fell destroyer of mortal life; and only last summer one of the great lights of "Christian science" was prostrated with nervous exhaustion, and obliged to seek medical aid.

Running through this theory of psychopathy we

may observe an implied belief that Spirit, or whatever the force that cures may be called, is specially enlisted on the side of man's physical health. This event it assumes to be of supreme importance, as though the Intelligence of nature would do more for man's well being than for the welfare of all the rest of creation. But the very laws they claim, when rightly understood, demand that man should not be treated as a pet, or have his private choice consulted. Nature works not for particular ends but for universal. So long as truth has need of man as an organ, he is preserved; when no longer wanted as such a vehicle, he perishes from the earth. "To accomplish anything excellent," says Emerson, "the will must work for catholic and universal ends." "Spirit, the only life" cannot grant special help to a sick man in order to gratify his love of life. The messenger of health does not come or go at the beck of a mind-curer; if one be kept alive and well, it is because the universe has need of him, not because he or any one else desires to have him live.

Perhaps, of all the singular views to which the study of this subject introduces one, the strangest is what is taught concerning death. We wonder at the hardihood that, in the very face of the long record of human mortality, can boldly assert that it has power to rob the grave of its victims. For, be it observed, what the mental healers mean,

when they deny that there is such an event as death awaiting all men, is not the doctrine of eternal life announced by Jesus, or what Longfellow meant in the verse,

“There is no Death! What seems so is transition.”

What they hold is that one who comes fully into a knowledge of “the science of being” as they teach it, will never part with his physical body, but will either remain on the earth for ever, or will be translated and take his body away with him. To their credit be it said, that this extreme and absurd view is restricted to a certain class of mental healers, while there are those who would hesitate to assert a like belief.

This theory of bodily immortality reminds one of the curious vagaries of John Asgill, a member of the English House of Commons, in 1707. Being educated as a lawyer, he may be presumed to have understood the logic of experience; and yet he caused a great sensation by publishing a pamphlet containing “An Argument proving that Men may be translated to Heaven without dying.” He attributed death to the power of custom and to the fear of it, rather than to necessity. The House of Commons condemned his book as blasphemous and expelled the author, who, having lived his allotted fourscore years, shuffled off the mortal coil as other men had done before him.

The fact is too plain to be denied that much, if not all that students are taught as indispensable to mental healing, may be rejected without forfeiting the healing power; indeed, a majority of the cures of this character have been wrought by persons utterly ignorant of, or disbelievers in, the doctrines of modern psychopathy. The full weight of evidence goes to show that it is not a particular theory and belief or the lack of these that produces conditions favorable to a patient's recovery. Whatever acts upon the patient in such a way as to persuade him to yield himself to the therapeutic force constantly operative in nature, is a means of healing; it may be a physician's drug, mental "treatment," the prayer of a saint, imposition of hands, mesmeric passes, the touch of a relic, visiting a sacred shrine, an amulet, incantations, a cabalistic symbol, a bread pill, or even sudden fright.

A case of lockjaw of three or four days' standing, which the physicians had given up, was cured in fifty minutes by the use of wooden tractors. Rev. J. M. Buckley, of New York, says: "The application of a silver dollar wrapped in silk to ulcerated teeth, when the patient had been suffering for many hours, and in some instances for days, relieved the pain, the patient supposing it was an infallible remedy." He also describes the case of a woman who had suffered with inflamma-



tory rheumatism, so that one of her hands was fearfully swollen, the fingers being "as large very nearly as the wrist of an ordinary child three years of age," and the fist clenched. For her to open the hand voluntarily was plainly impossible, and to move the fingers caused intense pain. Dr. Buckley made passes over the fingers with a pair of knitting needles, and instantly the joints became flexible and the digits straightened out without causing the least pain. There was a time when the simple peasants of Europe believed that the touch of a king's hand would cure scrofulous humors, and a trial of that remedy usually produced the expected result. In Scotland the Leepenny was for a long time considered a sovereign remedy for disease, and Quintus Serenus Samonicus wrote the script cabal ABRACADABRA in the form of a triangle on parchment, and many sick people were cured by wearing this suspended by a string around the neck. A man, who had suffered from a lameness in his feet that obliged him to depend on crutches for many years, was cured by hearing a sermon preached by Rev. Hosea Ballou. Another man severely afflicted with rheumatism was on board a railroad train when a collision occurred and the passengers were roughly shaken up. He escaped unhurt, but found his lameness and pain had left him. Richard Baxter, the eminent English noncon-

formist divine, testifies to the removal of a troublesome tumor in his throat in answer to prayer. Seckendorf affirms that Martin Luther restored Philip Melancthon to health and strength, when the latter was apparently so near death that his eyes were set, speech and hearing gone, and scarcely any consciousness left.

A lady who had what physicians pronounced an incurable spinal affection, and had been bed-ridden for years, applied to Dr. Newton, well known a few years ago as a wonder-worker. She was borne into his presence in a helpless state and laid on a lounge. The doctor placed one end of a long tube against the spinal column, and, with the other in his mouth, blew into it. The lady instantly experienced what she described to be a tingling sensation through all the nerves of her body, and a sensible influx of new life. The doctor then told her she was cured, and ordered her to rise and go to her husband, who was awaiting the result in an adjoining room. The thing seemed impossible at first, but on making an effort, she easily gained her feet and felt so well that she walked a distance of three miles that very evening, and found in after years that the disease did not return.

“The first wealth is health.” When lost, it may be restored, as we have seen, by various means, some of them not always deemed appro-

appropriate or philosophical according to the orthodox way of thinking. The diverse conditions under which cures take place tend to confirm the opinion once expressed by Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, that "the great proportion of cases of sickness tend to get well, sooner or later, with good nursing and little or no medicine." Nor is it to be wondered at that the multitude of "miracles" and other cases of healing wrought in the name of religion have led people to regard healing as an act of piety. But of this we cannot be certain, because so many cures have occurred under other conditions. Realizing the influence of thought upon the bodily organs, we might not go very far astray to infer that in all cases healing is essentially a mental process so far as the subject of it is concerned; while we may safely take the ground that, apart from the medicinal treatment of disease, there is such a thing as purely mental or psychological treatment, equally powerful, and often more efficacious.

What mental healers term their "science," whether essential or not, surely includes the secret of making the gift of healing available. But the vital question is, If one wishes to make a special business of psychopathy, what, with the present knowledge of the subject, would seem to be most useful for him to study as a preparation for the work? The question is purely one of education,

the choice of means best adapted to secure a specific end. The best course of study for this purpose should be determined by the same rules which enable teachers to decide how one may best acquire a knowledge of mathematics, drawing, or any other useful art.

A reputable medical school, like that connected with Harvard University, does not base its course of instruction on the crude knowledge of empiricists and charlatans, but upon the most approved principles and facts of rational medicine. It claims with good reason, that, in order to practise with success, the physician must understand the mechanism and functions of the wonderful body with which he is to deal, must be able to classify diseases, detect their causes by being able to distinguish the true symptoms, and then know what remedies to apply. Should not those who wish to produce by mental means the same results that medicine aims to reach by physical means have an adequate knowledge of the more delicate mechanism with which they claim to deal?

It may be said with truth that the gift of healing is not acquired by study, but is an endowment bestowed on a few persons who have a special aptitude for exercising it, regardless of their intellectual attainments. No scientific or other particular knowledge is necessary for the occasional exercise of this power, which is not a vocation, but



like any other kindly help, something to be proffered in a case of emergency. But it is now proposed to fit a class of students to devote themselves exclusively to the healing art. They are to assume the same grave responsibilities that physicians do, and hold the life of their patients in their hands, as the phrase goes. It is one thing to exert curative thought now and then for the benefit of a friend or neighbor, as a magnetic person might relieve a headache by passes on the temples; it is quite another thing to take a stand before the world as a professional healer.

The proprietors of mental healing schools assure us that they provide all the instruction requisite for the use of their therapeutics. The advertisement of one of these institutions says: "Students thoroughly and practically taught the science of spiritual and Christian healing." Another reads: "For the purpose of imparting a knowledge of the science of Spirit (God), of the creation of the spiritual universe and the action of spirit upon it, and of the origin and phenomena of matter and the soul's action upon the body; thus making manifest the relation between God and the soul, and between the soul and the body, and bridging the hitherto 'impassable gulf' between dead and living matter, and promoting man's moral and physical health." The curriculum of a third has even a wider scope: "It gives ample in-

struction in every scientific method of medicine. It meets the demand of the age for something higher than physic or drugging to restore to the race hope and health. Mental healing is taught on a purely practical basis, to aid the development of human mind, and to impart a thorough understanding of the divine power and presence to promote and restore health."

Either of these courses surely implies a wide and varied range of study, which if satisfactorily pursued, would enable the student to share with his Creator many secrets not revealed to ordinary mortals; and what is more remarkable, the entire course of instruction is comprised in twelve talks given the students by a single teacher. What is taught in these schools has already been shown. It has, doubtless, a certain ethical value, but contains very little information absolutely indispensable to mental healing.

It does not follow from what has been said that the mental practitioner requires to be versed in anatomy and physiology, or needs to be skilled in the pathology that leads to the use of medicine. The doctor studies bodily symptoms and relies for success on the physical effects of drugs, and his preparatory study has reference to his future work. The mental healer regards every disease as having its cause and seat in the mind; consequently he gives no attention to the bodily aspects of the

case, but addresses remedies directly to thought. In this the facts of anatomy and the laws of hygiene would be of no service; but it would directly help him to be acquainted with all that can be known of mind, both in normal and morbid conditions, to understand the laws of thought, particularly of imagination and emotion, and by a persistent study of cases to become expert in psychopathy. Because certain remarkable cures have followed prayer, it would not be wise for him to rashly conclude that the best mental medicine is religious fervor. If any persons have had apparent success in healing by silently combating the "error of sickness" with the "truth of being" he need not abandon his common sense and decide that twelve lectures on "Christian-science" lore will prove as serviceable as a well-directed course of appropriate study.

And shall this branch of the healing art be dignified as a science? What it may become, when time shall have subdued its extravagances and educated thought shall have turned the light of reason upon it, cannot now be predicted; it surely is not entitled to be called science yet. A day is coming when all intelligent people, physicians included, will acknowledge the true cause of human defect and illness to be in thought, and agree with sturdy old John Hunter, that "as the state of the mind is capable of producing disease,

another state of it may effect a cure." Meanwhile, any one who will give it his serious attention may learn enough of psychopathy to make its practice of great service to himself and others.



## IV.

### MENTAL CAUSES OF DISEASE.

THE chief corner-stone of psychopathy or mental healing is its doctrine of causes. Herein rests its highest claim to consideration and a sufficient answer to the assaults of scoffers and skeptics. Once firmly planted on this foundation, its advocates might maintain "truth against the world." Rightly understood, it is not only the key to all proper mental treatment, but to the philosophy of the action of mind on the body. Nor is the logic of causes on which it insists hard to accept or unsupported by abundant facts of common observation. Men habitually apply this doctrine to account for one familiar class of facts the world over.

What is the face but an index of the mind? and what its ever-changing expression but the effect of thought? Every one is in some degree a master of the art of "discovering the *interior* of man," as Levater says, "from the *exterior*." A mere child finds his judgment of others on the truth that mind causes the movements seen on the facial dial, and on the veracity of this testimony decides whether to give or withhold his confidence. Every

stranger we meet either draws or repels us, for he wears his character in his face as did Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Abel," every line of whose features seemed graven with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond. What is to be inferred concerning this doctrine from descriptions like the following?

"I see the wealthy miller yet,  
 His double chin, his portly size,  
 And who that knows him could forget  
 The busy wrinkles round his eyes?  
 The slow, wise smile that round about  
 His dusty forehead dryly curled,  
 Seemed half-within and half-without,  
 And full of dealings with the world.  
 In yonder chair I see him sit,  
 Three fingers round the old silver cup—  
 I see his gray eyes twinkle yet  
 At his own jest—gray eyes lit up  
 With summer lightnings of a soul  
 So full of summer warmth, so glad,  
 So healthy, sound, and clear, and whole,  
 His memory scarce can make me sad."

"His face, that infallible index of the mind, presented a vast expanse, unfurrowed by any of those lines and angles which disfigure the human countenance with what is termed expression. Two small gray eyes twinkled feebly in the midst, like two stars of lesser magnitude in the hazy firmament; and his full-fed cheeks, which seemed to have taken toll of everything that went into his mouth, were curiously mottled and streaked with dusky red, like a spitzenberg apple."

Eyes not down-dropt nor over-bright, but fed  
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,  
Clear without heat, undying, tended by  
Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent fane  
Of her still spirit; locks not wide dispread,  
Madonna-wise on either side her head;  
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign  
The summer calm of golden charity,  
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,  
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,  
The stately flower of female fortitude,  
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihead."

"A damsel of high lineage, and a brow  
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-blossoms,  
Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender nose  
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower."

Every feature of the human visage denotes the man within; eyes, ears, nose, mouth; brow, cheek, chin; smile, frown, blush, scowl, and every lineament. Does thought, then, make the face; or does that compound of lines and angles, light and shade,—the transient, fitful impress of our changing mood,—create thought? The contour of one man's auricular organs apprises you that he is selfish and penurious. Would you say on that account, that he is stingy because he has tight little ears? Another man's eye tells you he is deceitful and not to be trusted. Would you decide it to be his crafty look that makes him treacherous? Here is a girl whose perfect mouth

and soft, delicately tinted lips assure you before she speaks that she is amiable and sweet. Is it fair to conclude, therefore, that the quality of the labial muscles determines the disposition? Nobody pretends that the source and cause of facial expression is anything else than the complex mind of the man within; for, as Shakespeare puts it:—

“There’s no art

To find the mind’s construction in the face.”

• Gall, Spurzheim, and Combe based their systems of phrenology on the idea that the intellectual action and development of the brain stamped a distinct impress of the habitual modes of thought, termed mental faculties, on the bony substance of the cranium. One skilled in palmistry reads in the lineaments of the hand the indelible scripture of thought.

History, too, is a record of the products of the mind, a glass in which are reflected the events which took place in the inner man. For as Taine observes: “The words which enter your ears, the gestures, the motions of the head, the clothes he (man) wears, visible acts and deeds of every kind, are *expressions* merely; somewhat is revealed beneath them, and that is a soul. An inner man is concealed beneath the outer man; the second does but reveal the first. . . . All externals are but avenues conveying to a centre; you enter them simply to reach that centre; and that centre



is the genuine man, I mean that mass of faculties and feelings which *are produced by the inner man.*"

Poetry and fiction also recognize the propriety of the law by virtue of which the soul makes the body. Every great writer perceives that to be loyal to truth, he must create for each personage in his book a fitting body, that is, such a body as his cast of thought would naturally produce. We are told that, before writing "Iphigenia," Goethe employed day after day in designing the most finished statues, in order to have his eyes so accustomed to the noblest ideals of form, and his mind so filled with the loveliness of antique life, that he might succeed in reproducing the very type of female form that ancient Greek thought would be likely to evolve. Can we imagine Shakespeare investing the melancholy Hamlet with a body like Sir John Falstaff's, or giving to Lord and Lady Macbeth the airy limbs and lissome motions of the fairy Oberon and Titania?

Was it not an inevitable law of creative thought that led Dickens to make Quilp a hideous dwarf, the Cheeryble Brothers, fat and benevolent, and Mrs. Gradgrind, "a thin, white, pink-eyed bundle of shawls, of surpassing feebleness"? Was it simply by chance that the queenly Guinevere had an "imperial-moulded form and beauty such as never woman wore," or that the saintly Evangeline was the "fairest of all maids"?

If mind expresses itself so strongly in every form and feature, whether of living men, the actors of a historic past, or the creatures of literary genius, so that we readily admit thought to be the direct and necessary cause of such expression, how can we reasonably refuse to believe that bodily deformity and disease have their cause also in thought? Is it more credible that the entire galaxy of human emotions should print their unmistakable language on the face, than that unbridled passion and appetite should be reflected in physical disorder and pain?

In trying to account for the powerful influence exerted by thought upon the bodily functions, it may be well to glance at an established physiological fact, that for this purpose may be stated in general terms as follows: The brain, which is scientifically conceded to be the organ of thought, is the grand central station of the nervous system. From it the entire net-work of nerves take their origin and radiate to every part of the body. Again, the cranial cavity may not inaptly be called the laboratory in which mind works; the brain itself is the apparatus, and thinking the process of analyzing the concepts presented to the mind. The nerves constitute an extension of the brain or thought organ to every other organ, so that the mind has a direct means of communication from its central station to every point covered by its nerve telegraph.

There is then no physical obstacle to the theory of a mental cause of disease; and Swedenborg probably uttered the literal truth when he said: "Nor can anything be turned over *in the mind* that, if it please, may not be portrayed *in the extremes*, by means of the fibres; for instance, in action by the muscles. Nay, the very minds and inclinations or affections that excite the principles, shine out upon the face of actions, and gleam through, however they may be concealed, showing that *the fibre is the cerebrum extended*."

It makes no difference with our deductions from the fact that the nervous system is an extension of the organ or laboratory of thought to all the other organs of the body, whether the source of mental concepts be sensations or noetic ideas. The operator, whoever he be, works the entire system and produces all bodily motion from the central station of the brain.

This physiological theory is very clearly set forth in a comment on the speculations of Descartes to be found in Professor Huxley's Belfast Address. He said:—

"I think I need only premise that what we call the nervous system in one of the higher animals consists of a central apparatus, composed of the brain, which is lodged in the skull, and of a cord proceeding from it, which is termed the spinal marrow, and which is lodged in the vertebral column or spine, and from these soft white masses—for such they are—there proceed cords which are termed

nerves, some of which end in the muscles, while others end in the organs of sensation. . . . The first proposition that you find definitely and clearly stated by Descartes is one which will sound very familiar to you at the present day. It is the view, which he was the first, so far as I know, to state not only definitely but upon sufficient grounds, that the brain is the organ of sensation, of thought, and of emotion — using the word ‘organ’ in this sense, that certain changes which take place in the matter of the brain are the essential antecedents of those states of consciousness which are termed sensation, thought, and emotion. . . . In the second, Descartes lays down the proposition that all the movements of the animal bodies are affected by the change of form of a certain part of the matter of their bodies, to which he applies the general term of muscle. . . . That is a proposition which is now placed beyond all doubt whatever. . . . The essential condition of this change, says Descartes, is the motion of the matter contained within the nerves which go from the central apparatus to the muscle. . . . Next, Descartes says that, under ordinary circumstances, this change in the contents of a nerve, which gives rise to the contraction of a muscle, is produced by a change in the central nervous apparatus, as, for example, the brain. We say at the present time exactly the same thing. Descartes said that the animal spirits were stored up in the brain, and flowed out from the motor nerve. We say that a molecular change takes place in the brain that is propagated along the motor nerve.”

Just what originally causes the primary motion in brain is a question on which the learned differ ; but it does not concern the present discussion to introduce or answer it. We need not even attempt here to discover the force which thinks and



plies the "loom of thought," or decide whether it originate in external sensation, or have its "unsearchable roots in a cosmical life" which it is beyond our finite ability to explore. In the fact adduced lies the possibility that a man may think himself sick, or that there is in the atmosphere of thought in which he moves and from which he cannot escape, energy enough to derange his bodily functions if directed to that end. To go a step further, it is as easy to conceive the potency of mind a curative as a destructive agent; and so the theory of the mental healers is reached at last, that the bodily states of health and disease simply register or reflect thought.

To illustrate the point three cases come to mind. A few years ago occurred one of those terrible steamboat collisions on Long Island Sound, in which many passengers from New York lost their lives. When the news reached shore in the early morning, and was spread rapidly over the country, one man who heard it thought his own wife and children must have been on board the fated boat. His distress of mind was painful to witness. All day long he hovered around the telegraph and railroad stations, hoping that wire or train would bring the message he longed yet dreaded to hear; but nothing came. Although in robust health, the sickening agony of suspense brought on a raging headache, and by nightfall his

vigorous strength gave way, and he was prostrated. No one arrived from the scene of disaster who could tell anything about the fate of his loved ones, and he could get no message over the crowded wires. Friends pitied but could not cheer him, and he passed a wretched night. With the dawn of the next day came a telegram that his family had been detained in New York and were safe. The suspense was broken, the haggard features relaxed, and the lost strength slowly returned.

The teacher of a public school in New England, who had a mother and invalid sister partially dependent upon her for support, was so worried by her straitened financial condition that her stomach became deranged, indigestion ensued, and she was down sick. In her trouble she sent for a mental healer. The mind-curer could not relieve her pecuniary embarrassment, but did remove her fear that any harm would come to either herself or her family in consequence of it, and the teacher recovered.

Not many months ago a lady from the country visited the office of a Boston dentist to have a number of teeth extracted to make way for the insertion of an artificial set. She felt unable to bear the painful operation, and the dentist for prudential reasons declined to administer an anæsthetic. In this emergency the lady bethought

herself of a friend in the city who practised the mind-cure, sent for her, and while under the influence of a "treatment," had six teeth removed without pain.

In the first of these cases it is plain enough that an intense mental disturbance was reflected in the organs of the body; in the second the same phenomenon may be observed, with the additional one that a change of thought caused the bodily disturbance to subside; in the third it is shown that thought may prevent pain even under conditions when it would seem to be unavoidable.

The foremost writer on the influence on mental states upon bodily conditions is Dr. Daniel Hack Tuke, an eminent English physician, and the psychological child of Unzer and John Hunter. In 1873, he published a work entitled "Illustrations of the Influence of the Mind upon the Body, in Health and Disease." In the preface to this work, which represents a vast amount of patient, scholarly research, he tells us that one object that induced him to prepare it was "to show the power and extent of this influence, not only in health in causing disorders of sensation, motion, and the organic functions, but also its importance as a practical remedy in disease." He hopes, he says, to induce medical men "to employ psycho-therapeutics in a more methodical way than heretofore, and thus copy nature in those interesting instances,

occasionally occurring, of sudden recovery, from the spontaneous action of some powerful moral cause, by employing the same force designedly, instead of leaving it to mere chance. The force is there, acting irregularly and capriciously. The question is whether it cannot be applied and guided with skill and wisdom by the physician."

This work has nothing in common with the contents of modern text-books on mental healing, but is a product of educated thought, written by a man thoroughly versed in medical lore. It cites four hundred and thirty authentic cases illustrating the action of mind upon the body, which are carefully analyzed and divided into three classes, as those due to the action of (1) Intellect, (2) Emotion, (3) Volition. Cases falling under the first class are grouped under the sub-heads: Excess of study or mental strain, Voluntary attention and contemplation, Involuntary attention, Recollection and memory, Imagination and expectation, Imitation and sympathy; in the second class the cases are grouped under the sub-heads: Joy and its various forms, Grief and its various forms, Hope and faith, Despair, Self-esteem, Humility, Courage, Fear and its congeners, Calmness, Anger, Love and benevolence, Hate and malevolence, General emotional excitement; in the third class, which includes various movements and kindred phenomena, there are no sub-heads.



Excessive study or other mental strain Dr. Tuke finds to be a cause of epilepsy, diabetes, nervous headache, the not uncommon form of palsy called hemiplegia, and jaundice. A fit of epilepsy may be induced by mental application by no means severe. Marshall Hall describes a case of an epileptic girl who experienced an attack whenever she tried to undo a difficult knot in her work, which was tapestry; and Galen mentions a young man, a grammarian, who had epileptic fits whenever he studied hard.

The same distressing convulsions may be brought on by deep emotions, such as grief and fright. Romberg states that, among forty-four cases of epilepsy the causes of which were examined by Cazauvieilh, he found that in thirty-one the cause was unquestionably emotional disturbances of this nature. A boy of eleven lost his mother, and the bereavement made so deep an impression upon him that he was seized with convulsions. Trousseau says of this case, that the attacks continued, and when the boy was seventeen he was placed under treatment at the hospital, and it was found that on the accession of every fit, the painful circumstance of his mother's death came to his mind. "I am seized through my thoughts," he used to say, and he explained to his medical attendants that his thoughts were always the same and had constant reference to his loss. The

same medical authority mentions the case of a man aged thirty-six, "who was under his care for epilepsy five years previously." The cause of his fits was that he had been suddenly awakened and frightened in the night by "horrible shrieks from his wife."

In the *Medical Times and Gazette*, of April 24, 1869, Dr. Althaus reports a case which Dr. Tuke refers to as follows: A girl, aged sixteen, "had her first fit after a fright, some other children having played at ghost with her in the cellar. This was when she was five years old. Some years afterwards she had another fright, by a woman coming up to her while she was playing in the street, and swearing at her. Since this time she has never been quite free from fits." Dr. Althaus also speaks of another case that came under his care, in which the disorder was attributed by the patient to a great deal of trouble and anxiety, and was also preceded by a great fright, when he was awakened by an alarm and found the house on fire.

In sixty-seven cases of epilepsy, the causes of which were carefully traced by Leuret, it was found that in no less than thirty-five the first symptoms were preceded by fright.

Dr. Arthur Mitchell, in his "Morisonian Lectures on Insanity," records a melancholy example of the influence of fear in producing convulsions

and subsequent idiocy, which would almost convince one that the legend of the changeling is a reality:—

“A healthy, well-nourished boy, nearly two years old, was lying in his cradle when a cock perched on the hood. The boy was at first amused and delighted, and made vain efforts to reach the bird with his hands. These signs of delight, however, began to grow less evident, the child ceased to smile, but his attention continued to be intently fixed on the animal, which, in its turn, appeared to become interested in the child. Up to this point the little fellow gave no sign of terror; but there was something like it, though still unexpressed, when the cock, stretching his neck, put his head down and looked closely in the boy's face; and when, raising his head again, he flapped his great wings and uttered a shrill cry, the child gave one sharp cry of pain, and instantly convulsed. Three or four fits occurred during that and the next day, but never again. The boy, however, grew up an idiot.”

The influence of study and prolonged mental strain in causing diabetes will not be questioned, and was illustrated in the experience of a noted Boston educator some twenty-five years ago. Dr. Dickinson, a prominent English surgeon, who made post-mortem examinations of many cases of this disorder, concludes that it “is primarily and essentially a nervous disease.” And in this connection it is worth noticing that the ancients seemed to be aware that the renal organs were very responsive to mental conditions. In Hebrew and in Greek the word for kidneys is frequently

used in a metaphoric sense, and in the Bible such expressions as these are frequent: "I was pricked in my reins," "I will try the reins," "My reins shall rejoice," "I am he that searcheth the reins."

"Why should a man whose blood is warm within,  
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?  
Sleep when he wakes? and creep into the jaundice  
By being peevish?"

wrote Shakespeare, and there are many instances on record, that Dr. Tuke has cited to illustrate the conclusion of many physicians that icteric symptoms are produced by mental states. Dr. Watson says that fits of anger, fear, or alarm have been presently followed by jaundice, and Dr. North tells of a young medical friend of his, who had a severe attack of intense jaundice, which could be traced to nothing else than his great and needless anxiety about an approaching examination before the Censors' Board at the College of Physicians. The influence of sudden fright in checking the secretion of bile, and so occasioning jaundice, is adduced by Bichat as a striking proof of the connection of mental states and the secreting organs. Dr. Anthony Todd Thompson states that "a young man in Paris had a musket pointed at his breast; he suddenly became deeply jaundiced, for which he was taken to a hospital, where he died."

If abundance of well-attested cases of the action



of mind in producing and in curing disease could convince the skeptical, a careful examination of the array cited by Dr. Tuke would be all sufficient. Besides those already referred to, there are in his book authentic descriptions of twelve cases caused by "voluntary attention and contemplation," six caused by "recollection and memory," one hundred and two caused by "imagination and expectation," eighteen caused by "joy and its various forms," twenty-five caused by "grief and its various forms," thirteen cures caused by "hope and faith," one hundred and fifty-three cases of disease or cure caused by "fear, fright, terror, anxiety," and the like, eighteen caused by "anger," and thirty-three caused by the action of "the will."

It must not be supposed that the vast amount of labor involved in collecting and classifying so many cases was undertaken in order to establish any of the theories of modern mind-cure. Dr. Tuke was a highly educated physician of a very orthodox type, who was devoting the best energies of his useful life to the scientific study of insanity. On this very account, however, the testimony he presents in proof of the power of thought to create disease has an additional value, and is so strong and conclusive, that it is difficult to see how even the most material skeptic can refuse to admit its force. The remaining cases selected for special

notice here are those in which a cure was plainly produced by a mental influence; but before considering them, one case of the action of will upon the bodily functions shall be quoted. The doctor says: —

“The desperate effort to awake from partial sleep which we are at times conscious of making, might seem to be, when successful, an instance of the influence of the will over the vessels of the brain; but what happens? The will acts in two ways: First, the very effort to arouse one’s self from sleep excites the inhibitory action of the brain upon the sympathetic ganglia, which, uncontrolled, cause the contraction of the cerebral vessels; secondly, the voluntary muscles are gradually excited to action. But if the brain be in the peculiar condition present in trance, there may be consciousness and the strong desire to awake, without the power. In other cases the fearful struggle may at last end in cerebro-spinal victory, and an escape from the grip of the sympathetic. Crichton gives such a case, that of a young lady who, in this state, was laid in a coffin. ‘On the day of her funeral several hymns were sung before the door. She was conscious of all that happened around her, and heard her friends lamenting her death. She felt them put on the dead-clothes, and lay her in the coffin, which produced an indescribable mental anxiety. She tried to cry, but her mind was without power, and could not act on the body. It was equally impossible for her to stretch out her arms, or to open her eyes, as to cry, although she continually endeavored to do so. The internal anguish of her mind was, however, at its utmost height when the funeral hymns began to be sung, and when the lid of the coffin was about to be nailed on. The thought that she was to be buried alive was the first one that gave activity to her mind, and caused it to

operate on her corporeal frame. Just as the people were about to nail on the lid, a kind of perspiration was observed to appear on the surface of the body. It grew greater every moment, and at last a kind of convulsive motion was observed in the hands and feet of the corpse. A few minutes after, during which fresh signs of returning life appeared, she at once opened her eyes, and uttered a pitiable shriek.' ”

This case, which so vividly suggests a terrible thought of what might have happened except for the astonishing power of mind over matter, is a most valuable one for mental healers to study, because it shows so clearly how thought may even burst the bonds of apparent death. “She tried to cry, but her mind was without power, and could not act on the body,” says the account. Does not this statement afford some basis for the theory that the force that imparts physical life and motion is independent of the body and not a part of it?

“The thought that she was to be buried alive was the first one which gave activity to her mind.” It was no physical sensation or dread that aroused the sleeper; it was thought, and thought alone, that disturbed the lethargic trance on the brink of the grave. Those who have experienced the sensation of awaking from the nightmare, or have had the bodily vitality reduced, until it seemed easier and more desirable to give up the struggle for life than to rally, will comprehend in some degree this case of trance.

When we think, as sometimes we must, that the creature we call a man is a delicate central mechanism, the brain, controlling an assemblage of interdependent organs by means of nerves that distribute the power generated in the brain, can we help wondering whether the intelligent force we call spirit has the option to use this bodily structure or abandon it to pleasure? A lady who had suffered from temporary derangement, alluding to her experience while in that condition, said: "I felt that I was outside my body, and was debating with myself whether to return to it again, or leave it a wreck. I knew that it was my only means of retaining a hold on my friends, and apart from it I was cut off from intercourse with every human being." Whether in the event called death the force that has propelled the body *voluntarily* deserts it, who knows? But that it is able to keep that intricate mechanism in healthful motion so long as it chooses to do so, who can deny?



## V.

### THE EFFECT OF THOUGHT ON DISEASE.

It is evident that while Dr. Tuke makes out a very strong case in favor of psychical cures, he is cautious about ascribing such results to the mental efforts of healers; he prefers to cite cases where the cure was apparently effected by some other agency than the intervention of human thought. Even when considering alleged psychical cures performed by mesmerists, he leans to the notion that they may not be due to a force proceeding from the healer to the healed, but are more likely a result of the particular mental state of the healed excited by the healer. He says:—

“It is obvious that in those cases in which the individual’s own emotion (*e.g.*, fear) causes changes in the body, there can be no influence derived from the hypothetical disease-healing emanation of another person; and if the cures are as frequent and as complete under these conditions, there is no occasion to assume that any other principle is at work in those cases in which the cure is preceded by some particular action on the part of another. If, on the other hand, it is found that, although certain emotions, as fear, exert a marked effect in removing morbid conditions of the system, the presence or contact of some individuals possesses a still greater influence, or if while an ordinary mortal can act upon

a patient's disease beneficially by designedly exciting his imagination, his will, or his hope, a Valentine Greatrakes can, by the touch of his hand, exert entire and instant influence, which takes effect in a larger number of instances, — an effect which is more powerful in its operation, which is asserted to be an accidentally discovered gift, and is practised without any regard to the supposed action of the imagination, — then a different principle may be suggested, but it is not proved by these circumstances; for the question still arises whether B's fear of, or faith in, A does not even then constitute the real explanation of the effects produced."

It is clear that the learned doctor, with all his fairness and liberality, entirely misses the theory held by modern healers. His observations of cases of apparent cure wrought by Greatrakes and others start two questions in his mind, namely: Are the effects due to the mental state of the healed excited by the healer? or does a special curative power emanate from certain persons that may be exerted for the benefit of others? He finds so many cases of psychical disease and cure apparently due to the mental state of the patient (imagination, emotion, or will) excited by some accident, as fright, that he inclines to adopt for all cases the explanation suggested by the first question.

Mental healers, that is, intelligent ones, do indeed insist that all healing is self-healing, consequently that a cure results from "the mental state of the healed excited by the healer"; and they stoutly deny that healing is a gift or power enjoyed

by certain persons only. At the same time they affirm that, while cures may result from their operation, imagination, emotion, and will, are not the means by which true psychical cures are produced. The healers admit that the mesmerist employs such means and appeals to these faculties in his patient, but they do not. The "treatment" they administer is totally different and distinct from the mental agencies suggested by Dr. Tuke, as will appear in the subsequent description of their mode of cure. But because many of the modern schools of healers utterly repudiate what may be called accidental cures, it is worth while to examine some of those recorded by Dr. Tuke, and see what light they shed on the grand problem of healing. Those selected are substantially as follows:—

A singular instance of the influence of the imagination upon sciatica, may be found in a practice said to have been once common in Devonshire, [England], related in "The Anatomie of the Elder," of Dr. Martin Blockwick, and cited in Brand's "Popular Antiquities." The Boneshave, a word perhaps nowhere used or understood in Devonshire, but in the neighborhood of Exmoor, means the sciatica; and the Exmorians, when affected therewith, use the following charm to be freed from it. The patient must lie upon his back on the bank of a river or brook of water, with a straight staff by his side, between him and the

water; and must have the following words repeated over him, viz.: —

“Boneshave right,  
Boneshave straight,  
As the water runs by the stave,  
Good for the Boneshave.”

They are not to be persuaded but that this ridiculous form of words seldom fails to give them a perfect cure.

“Many years ago,” says Dr. Skey, “when I was less familiar with hysteric affections, I attended the case of a young lady of nineteen (suffering from a painful affection of the knee) in conjunction with Mr. Stanley. We both deemed the disease to belong to the class of inflammation, and conjointly adopted the usual remedies so indiscriminately resorted to in all painful affections of the joints. Many weeks elapsed without improvement, and I remember that we discussed with some anxiety the probable issue in abscess, destruction of ligaments, absorption of cartilage, and ultimate amputation of the limb. One day my patient informed me that her sister was going to be married, and that, cost what it might, she had made up her mind to attend the wedding. At this proposal I shuddered. Having expatiated to no purpose on the probable consequences of so rash an act, with all the force of language I could command, I determined to give stability to the joint for the occasion, and I strapped it up firmly with adhesive plaster. On the following day I visited her. She told me she had stood throughout the whole ceremony, had joined the party at the breakfast, and had returned home without pain or discomfort to the joint. Within a week her recovery may be said to have been complete.”



It may be well to pause here and notice an objection invariably urged against such cases as the one just cited, when introduced as proof of the power of psychical remedies. "It is not a case of real disease," say the skeptics, "but only a sham." If hysteria be not a disease, pray, what is it? True, the attending physicians were wrong in their judgment of what ailed the lady's knee; but she was suffering from a disease as *real* as any disease can be, and Mother Nature cured her, though the doctors couldn't. If I think there is something the trouble with me, the result causes *dis-ease* to me, whether anybody else thinks so or not, and whatever removes that impression from my mind produces a *real cure of a real disease*. Symptoms may deceive the best practitioner, as they did in the case of the late President Garfield; but anything that robs a patient of ease is a disease.

A case of colic is mentioned by Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh. He ordered a laboring man some medicine, and giving him the prescription, said: "Take *that* and come back in a fortnight, and you will be well." As he returned at that time hearty and well, free from the colic and sinking at the stomach, of which he had complained, and with a clean tongue, and cool hand, and happy face. Dr. Brown was very proud of the wonders his prescription had effected, and said, "Let me see what I gave you." "Oh," said he, "I took it." "Yes," said

the doctor, "but the prescription!" "I took it, as you bade me. I swallowed it, the paper, you know."

Every practitioner is familiar with hysterical contraction of the fingers. A young woman's fingers are firmly flexed upon the palm, and obstinately resist any attempt to extend them. All the orthodox pharmaceutical means may be employed and fail, even if, its true nature being recognized, it is not confounded with the effects of inflammation of the tendons or their thecæ, or of organic cerebral disease; and yet a cure may be performed in a few moments by what is ordinarily understood to be the imagination, by a sudden thrill of hope or faith which masters the tonic spasm, and sets the fingers free. Dr. Bertrand knew a woman whose hand, for thirty-eight years, had been closed as firmly as the fist of a boxer, and could only be opened by considerable force; yet her hand, to his knowledge, opened in response to the appeal of Madame de St. Amour. Whether it relapsed eventually into its former condition is not stated, but for three days, at least, it remained relaxed, and serviceable as the other.

Dr. Bouchut states that in 1849 a little girl, Louise Parguin, whom excessive fear had rendered dumb, and paralytic in all her limbs, was brought to him. For two months everything had been done by the physicians, but to no purpose. In despair, her father went with his child to Paris.

The girl, who had heard the great city, its great physicians, and the Hôtel Dieu spoken of only in the most extravagant way, arrived full of faith that she should be cured. In the evening Dr. Bouchut saw her, dumb and paralytic; and, displeased at finding such a patient in the hospital, made no prescription. She was in the same state the next morning, and he put off all treatment during the day. During the day she began to speak, the day after to move her limbs, and on the third day she walked about the halls completely cured. Her faith had saved her.

Dr. Abercrombie relates that a woman, mentioned by Diemerbroeck, who had been many years paralytic, recovered the use of her limbs when she was very much terrified during a thunder-storm, and was making violent efforts to escape from a chamber in which she had been left alone. A man affected in the same manner recovered as suddenly when his house was on fire; and another, who had been ill for six years, recovered the use of his paralytic limbs during a violent paroxysm of anger.

Sir Humphry Davy's well-known case of cure of paralysis was due to aroused hope and expectation. He placed a thermometer under the tongue, simply to ascertain the temperature. As the patient at once experienced some relief, the treatment was continued for a fortnight, when it ceased

to be required, for the patient was well. This case is of interest from the fact of the application not having been made to the part affected; local excitation was not an element in the treatment; and the attention was directed rather from than to the paralyzed limb.

“Even tumors,” says Hunter, “have yielded to the stroke of a dead man’s hand.” A curious illustration of this superstition is given in Brand’s “Popular Antiquities,” from a newspaper published in 1777: After Dr. Dodd, an executed murderer, had hung about ten minutes, a very decently dressed young woman went up to the gallows in order to have a wen in her face stroked by the doctor’s hand; it being a received opinion among the vulgar that it is a certain cure for such a disorder. The executioner, having untied the doctor’s hand, stroked the part affected several times therewith.

Dr. Rush gives an account of one case of gout, in which the cure effected by fright eradicated the disease from the system so completely as ever afterwards to prevent its return. Peter Fether, the person cured, was alive at the time Dr. Rush wrote, a householder in Reading, seventy-three years of age, a native of Germany, and a very hearty man. The first fit of the gout he ever had was about the year 1773; and from that time till 1785, he had a regular attack in the spring of



every year. His feet, hands, and elbows were much swollen and inflamed; the fits lasted long and were excruciating. In particular, the last fit in 1785 was so severe as to induce an apprehension that it would inevitably carry him off, when he was suddenly relieved by the following accident: As he lay in a small back room adjoining the yard, it happened that one of his sons, in turning a wagon and horses, drove the tongue of the wagon with such force against the window, near which the old man lay stretched on a bed, as to beat in the sash of the window and scatter the pieces of broken glass all about him. To such a degree was the invalid alarmed by the noise and violence, that he instantly leaped out of bed, forgot that he had ever used crutches, and eagerly inquired what was the matter. His wife, hearing the uproar, ran into the room, where, to her astonishment, she found her husband on his feet, bawling against the author of the mischief with the most passionate vehemence. From that moment he continued to be entirely exempt from the gout, and enjoyed perfect health, had a good appetite, and was never heartier in his life.

This case recalls to mind a story recently told by a Baptist clergyman in good standing, which, though a digression, may be readable, and is in substance as follows: A certain divine, well known in the denomination as a successful solicitor of

funds in aid of charitable objects, was on a "begging" tour, and at a summer resort met the daughter of a wealthy Pennsylvania farmer. On learning the object for which the clergyman was laboring, she told him that her father, though not a pious man, might probably be induced to contribute, and invited the solicitor to visit him at his rural home. The invitation was accepted, and the solicitor spent several days as a guest at the house of his new-made acquaintance. The family consisted of the farmer, a hearty man just past middle life, who was on the best of terms with himself; the mother, who had been bedridden for many years, and unable to rise or walk without help, and who occupied a bedroom adjoining the dining-room, in order that when the family were gathered at the table she might listen to their conversation through the open door; there were also two or three grown-up daughters.

The host treated his reverend guest with cordiality, and on the morning after his arrival showed him about his thrifty farm, in which he evidently took an honest pride,

"Seeing therein only his own thrift and gain."

"Your farm seems to be one of the best in this section," observed the guest.

"Yes, it is, sir," answered the host, with a beaming face; "and what is more, it's all paid for."

Presently they entered the farmer's stables, and the divine remarked the sleek appearance of a fine yoke of oxen, that stood chewing their cuds in quiet contentment.

"Yes, sir, and they're all paid for," rejoined their proud owner.

"Your barns are the most complete and convenient I ever examined," the visitor said, as the twain emerged from the huge open doors.

"Well, sir, it cost consid'ble to put 'em up; but I have one thing to think of: they're all paid for."

The clergyman did not fail to notice the farmer's pride of ownership and its significance; and when they sat down to dinner, and he was courteously asked to say grace, his expressions of gratitude began thus:—

"O Lord, we thank thee for the abundance now spread before us; we thank thee that it is all paid for—"

Here he was suddenly interrupted by the invalid occupant of the adjoining bedroom, who, on hearing her husband's pet phrase quoted in such an unusual connection, burst into a paroxysm of uncontrollable laughter. Entirely forgetting her condition, she shook all over with violent emotion, sprang out of bed, and stood holding her sides and giving vent to her over-charged mirth, when the family rushed in and found her. That solemn joke cured her, leaving nothing to be paid for.

“There is a legend,” continues Dr. Tuke, “that in the ninth century the daughter of an Irish king (Dymphna) fled from her father’s persecution, on account of her having become a Christian. He followed her to Gheel, and, having discovered her retreat, beheaded her. Several lunatics who happened to witness the execution were cured on the spot. Admitting the fact, the cures at this stage of the history may be referred to a powerful and painful emotion. The cures were of course regarded as miracles, and Dymphna was duly canonized. The number who subsequently flocked to her tomb was so great that, in course of time, a colony sprung up, and a sane population became accustomed to take charge of the insane in their humble cottages. . . . In 1862, when I visited the ‘City of the Simple,’ I saw the room where the lunatic is lodged, when the evil spirit with which he or she is possessed is exorcised. (Here it is orthodox to regard madness as identical with possession.) Six months previously a lady had occupied it. The priest came to her every day with a relic and performed the customary incantations. The result was perfect recovery within nine days. . . . The cures, I was informed, have been numerous. . . . I visited the church of St. Dymphna, where her [the daughter’s] acts are recorded in oak, from the day of her birth to that of her death. Here her relics are preserved, and are still occasionally employed to minister to minds diseased.”

When the records of medical practice abound with examples of the action of mind in promoting as well as in removing conditions of bodily disease, it ought not to be very difficult to admit to ourselves that the theory of causation held by mental healers is entitled to consideration. But



something more explicit should be said of the manner in which believers apply it to different cases. They take the ground that the cause of each and every disease is a thought; or, in other words, all real disease is mental, and the physical appearance or outward manifestation is only the register of the mental condition. Such extreme views seem to be absurd, and because mental healers insist on them, they are charged with being "cranks"; yet, when their meaning is rightly understood it may not appear unreasonable.

The apparent facts urged against this doctrine of causation are: (1) that people are frequently attacked with disease without premonition, (2) that infants do not think of or expect the diseases from which they suffer, (3) that the origin of every disease implies a first case that nobody could have expected. Persons may be suddenly prostrated with contagious diseases, it is said, without even suspecting that they have been exposed; they may be poisoned through mistakes, or by the bites of reptiles and insects; or they may be severely injured by accidents which they could not have foreseen. All such cases apparently refute the theory advanced by mental healers.

To meet these objections the healers further maintain that to establish a mental cause it is not necessary to assume in every case that the disease

from which a patient is suffering originated in his own conscious thought; it may have its cause in the thought of some other person, or even in what they term "the common thought." The anxious thought of parents may be reflected in the very disease they fear their child will have. The terror and dread that pervades the common thought in a community smitten with a pestilence accounts for the case of one who takes it without knowing that he is exposed.

It is in the common thought that exposure to a current of air will bring on a "cold," that exposure to contagion is very likely to be followed by an attack of disease, that the bite of certain creatures is poisonous, and that contact with certain plants produces the same result. We dwell in an atmosphere surcharged with the thought that nearly everything with which we have to do, may, under certain conditions, become a means of harm to us; and the power of that common thought produces the effects observed in particular cases.

Just what is meant by common thought or belief may be made clear by illustration. In the after part of a bright summer day in the country a fringe of dense cumulus cloud slowly creeps athwart the deep blue of the western horizon. Here and there an irregular peak is pushed out like a promontory from a ledge. The outlines

change more rapidly as the mass gathers blackness, and rolls on like an aerial tide-wave. The wind freshens as the inky shadow moves apace, and the heedful farmers hastily rake together the fields of hay that have been lying in the sun, while their wives at home shut the doors and windows in every exposed part of the house. A stranger to such scenes might ask with curious interest what was the occasion of this unwonted activity, and why all the hay-makers in the neighborhood, who a few moments ago were idly chafing in the shade of trees and buildings, are now hurrying with such anxious speed. It is the effect of the common thought that the signs in the sky betoken immediate rain, unless, as rustics say, "the cloud shifts and goes round them." The expectation of a shower amounts to a practical certainty, and the movements observed are a consequence of the common belief. It is not on the strength of his personal knowledge that the farmer acts, but in harmony with the thought stirring in every mind in the village.

Adolescence, the prime of manhood, and senile dotage mark the epochs of every human life. But these inevitable changes are not facts to the child when he sets out on the road of experience; he learns them as he goes on; and if his untutored mind should start the inquiry, What evidence is there that such changes will befall me? his elders

soon make him sensible that mortal growth and decay are facts deeply rooted in the common belief of mankind, and so mighty is the power of this universal thought, that no one would hesitate to assure the young questioner that he cannot escape the common lot of his race.

The recurrence of certain forms of disease whenever the conditions with which they are associated occur, is as much a matter of common thought or belief as is either of the physical events just referred to. Common people may have no philosophy about the matter, or try to find the logical cause of the visible effect. The sight of an ominous rain-cloud is followed by the lively motion of rakes in the hay-field, and the lad who "springs to the work" because the others do, but does not know of his own knowledge how close the storm is, acts under the impulse of common thought. And if, in the succeeding winter, the same lad has symptoms of a "hard cold" in connection with a certain appearance of the cuticle, the common thought gives him the measles.

To fully analyze and illustrate the power of common or universal thought would require the space of an entire volume; for it is a complicated agency, and far-reaching in its action and results. It includes, of course, heredity, expectation, habit, with all their subdivisions, none of which can be even hinted at in this brief treatment of the sub-



ject. But enough has been said to show any considerate reader that we are not warranted in pronouncing any particular case of sickness an exception to the rule that the cause of all disease is mental. We cannot trace the ancestry and history of our own thought on any one of the most familiar topics of the day; how then are we able to unfold the generation of another person's thought of a disease which has been known to the common mind of perhaps a million of different people during the lapse of several centuries?

## VI.

### TREATING THE SICK.

IT is easier to grasp a theory of mental healing than to put it in practice. By investigating a variety of cases of cure one may persuade himself that he has discovered the secret by which they were wrought, and can refer all such phenomena to a common principle; but the next case that comes to his knowledge may upset his hypothesis. Rev. Dr. Buckley, in an article on "Faith-Healing and Kindred Phenomena," published in *The Century Magazine*, June, 1886, gives the results of his examination of cases, and claims the essential conditions of all so-called psychical cures are concentrated attention, reverence for the healing agency, whatever that may be, and confident expectancy. But would this "formula," which he so easily "constructed out of the elements of the human mind," account for a cure resulting from a sudden accidental shock? Would it enable him to heal a sick infant or an insane person?

Even the mental healers themselves are not agreed about the application of what they term the

“science of health,” and the best teaching of the schools and text-books on this subject is vague and unsatisfactory. Some of them assume that it is by virtue of a knowledge of “scientific Christianity” or “Christian science” that they work cures, just as faith-healers claim to do the same thing by the power of prayer; but when pressed to explain how they “treat” a case, they seem unable to tell. In the department of practice, where the student would naturally look for very full and explicit directions how to proceed, he gets very little definite help from the teachers of the art, and is apt to come to the conclusion that the way to apply the remedy is something one finds out for himself by actual doing.

It is not fair, however, to assume that the uniform reticence of healers when questioned about “treating” denotes a wish on their part to keep it secret. The writer is convinced after much careful inquiry, that they do not understand it themselves, and consequently cannot explain it to any one else. They may tell you that they have been instructed, when treating, to mentally repeat certain formulas, but that after having had experience they found no set mode of thinking essential. And the very fact that, while treating, the practitioner may dispense with all set formulas, and have a mental experience inexplicable to himself, affords strong reason for thinking that the effect produced

on the subject of treatment does not depend on the healer's ontology.

When asked to tell what passes in their minds during an interval of treating, the healers give various answers, of which the following are samples. One says: "I think of my patient as a perfect spiritual being. He is the image and likeness of God, and, therefore, cannot be sick; and I hold him in my mind as being well. This destroys the delusion or dream of sickness, and he is healed." Another says: "I was taught that all disease is error, a wrong belief of 'mortal' mind, and I treat it as such. I hold a silent argument with my patient, and when 'mortal' mind says he is sick, I declare that he is not and cannot be sick; and the belief in disease, which is an error of 'mortal' mind, is destroyed by the 'truth of being.'" A third says: "I begin my treatment by silently repeating the Lord's prayer. Then I try to fix it clearly in my mind that there is no life but spirit; man is spirit and not matter; spirit cannot suffer pain; it is only the senses that say 'I am sick.' If I am able to shut out from my mind all impression that anything ails my patient and think of him as perfectly well, and if I can hold that thought in mind long enough, it will destroy his belief in the evidence of his senses, and he will get well." A fourth says: "When I treat I try to concentrate my whole thought in all its intensity on the



part where the patient thinks his disease is located, until I drive out that disease, and convince him that he is well." A fifth says: "I cannot explain my mental experience while treating. I do not direct my thought to the patient's disease at all; in fact I am usually unconscious of the presence of his body, and think of him, if at all, as a real or spiritual being. Am I in a trance? No, I should not call it that; and yet, at times I seem to lose all consciousness of what is passing around me, and even of my own body; all that is material vanishes, and I see as with spiritual eyes only what is real. But, strange as it may seem, I have had some of the best results when I have simply lapsed into a passive state of mind, and tried to think of nothing." A sixth says: "When I wish to help a patient, I do not treat him at all, I treat myself, I prefer to deal with cases absently, for then my mind is not distracted with any thought of the bodily presence or appearance of the patient. I treat all diseases alike, and do not care to know what the patient thinks is the matter with him. 'Treating' as I understood it, is coming into such a state of mind that you *know* that there is no such thing as disease, and that, consequently, the patient is not sick. When you actually know this to be true, an influence emanates from you that heals your patient."

With such an array of testimony before him,

coming from mental healers who are most successful and have been longest in practice, how is a student to learn how to treat? It does not appear that one mode of thought has any special advantage over another, so far as the effect on the patient goes, and some practitioners even question whether formal treating might not be dispensed with, and the results be equally satisfactory. Indeed, there are some mental healers who enjoy the reputation of treating large numbers of patients in a short space of time, who operate upon them in a body, either present or absent, by merely directing to them a "healing" touch or word. Valentine Greatrakes and Prince Hohenlohe often practised in this way, the famous Dr. Newton did so when crowded with patients, and "Christian scientists" who attend to fifty cases in the space of five consecutive hours, must have to work on a similar plan.

Until mental healers have attained considerable proficiency in the practice of their art it is not unlikely that their treating may be simply an exercise of volition commonly called mesmerism. It is frequently affirmed that their method of healing consists of the action of a strong will upon a weaker, and there is some reason to think that a low form of animal magnetism is the only power that some of the healers have at command. As a class, of course, they stoutly deny that their

methods have anything in common with those used by the magnetic school. On the grosser forms they surely do not rely; whether the practice involves the higher and more subtle forms of animal magnetism is a question not yet settled; for the term, when employed in a comprehensive and strictly philosophical sense, is referred to the influence of mind over the body, and secludes the mental impression produced by living beings upon each other, in accordance with the universal law of mutual impression.

But the use of animal magnetism, as the founder of mesmerism and his adherents employed it, involves a conscious exertion of the human will, that demands great mental concentration to make it effective, that when long continued exhausts the operator. The experience of a person when subjected to mesmeric treatment also differs essentially from that encountered during treatment by a mental healer. One of the best, and for this purpose most valuable, descriptions of the psychophysical phenomenon of mesmerism is given by the late Professor Agassiz, under date, "Neufchatel, February 22, 1839," and is as follows:—

"Desirous to know what to think of Mesmerism, I long sought for an opportunity of making some experiments in regard to it upon myself, so as to avoid the doubts which might arise on the nature of the sensations which we have heard described by mesmerized persons.

“M. Desor and Mr. Townshend (Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend, A.M.) arrived here in the ‘Evening Courier,’ and at 10 P.M. Mr. Townshend commenced operating on me. While we sat opposite to one another, he, in the first place, only took hold of my hands and looked at me fixedly. I was firmly resolved to arrive at a knowledge of the truth, whatever it might be; and therefore, the moment I saw him endeavor to exert an action upon me, I silently addressed the Author of all things, beseeching him to give me the power to resist the influence, and to be conscientious in regard to myself as well as in regard to the fact.

“I then fixed my eyes upon Mr. Townshend, attentive to whatever passed. I was in very suitable circumstances; the hour being early, and one in which I was in the habit of studying, was far from disposing me to sleep. I was sufficiently master of myself to experience no emotion, and to repress all flights of imagination, even if I had been less calm; accordingly, it was a long time before I felt any effect from the presence of Mr. Townshend opposite me. However, after at least a quarter of an hour, I felt a sensation of a current through all my limbs, and from that moment my eyelids grew heavier. I then saw Mr. Townshend extend his hands before my eyes, as if he were about to plunge his fingers into them; and then he made different circular movements around my eyes, which caused my eyelids to become still heavier. I had the idea that he was endeavoring to make me close my eyes, and yet it was not as if some one had threatened my eyes, and in the waking state, I had closed them to prevent him; it was an irresistible heaviness of the lids which compelled me to shut them; and by degrees I found I had no longer the power of keeping them open, but did not the less retain my consciousness of what was going on around me, so that I heard M. Desor speak to Mr. Townshend, understood what they said, and heard what



questions they asked me, just as if I had been awake, but I had not the power of answering. I endeavored in vain, several times, to do so, and when I succeeded, I perceived that I was passing out of the state of torpor in which I had been, and which was rather agreeable than painful.

“In this state I heard the watchman cry ten o'clock; then I heard it strike a quarter past; but afterwards I fell into a deeper sleep, although I never entirely lost my consciousness. It appeared to me that Mr. Townshend was endeavoring to put me into a sound sleep; my movements seemed under his control, for I wished several times to change the position of my arms, but had not sufficient power to do it, or even really to will it; while I felt my head carried to the right or left shoulder, and backwards or forwards, without wishing it, and, indeed, in spite of the resistance which I endeavored to oppose; and this happened several times.

“I experienced at the same time a feeling of great pleasure in giving way to the attraction which dragged me sometimes to one side, sometimes to the other, then a kind of surprise on feeling my head fall into Mr. Townshend's hand, who appeared to me for the first time to be the centre of attraction. To his inquiry if I were well, and what I felt, I found I could not answer, but I smiled; I felt that my features expanded in spite of my resistance; I was inwardly confused at experiencing pleasure from an influence which was mysterious to me. From this movement I wished to wake, and was less at ease, and yet, on Mr. Townshend asking me whether I wished to be awakened, I made a hesitating movement with my shoulders. Mr. Townshend then repeated some frictions, which increased my sleep; yet I was always conscious of what was passing around me. He then asked me if I wished to become lucid, at the same time continuing, as I felt, the frictions from the face to the arms. I then experienced an indescribable sensation of delight, and

for an instant saw before me rays of dazzling light which instantly disappeared. I was then inwardly sorrowful at this state being prolonged; it appeared to me that enough had been done with me; I wished to awake, but could not. Yet when Mr. Townshend and M. Desor spoke I heard them. I also heard the clock, and the watchman cry, but I did not know what hour he cried. Mr. Townshend then presented his watch to me, and asked if I could see the time, and if I could see him, but I could distinguish nothing; I heard the clock strike the quarter, but could not get out of my sleepy state. Mr. Townshend then woke me with some rapid transverse movements from the middle of the face outwards, which instantly caused my eyes to open, and at the same time I got up, saying to him, 'I thank you.' It was a quarter past eleven (about an hour having elapsed since I passed into the mesmeric state). He then told me, and M. Desor repeated the same thing, that the only fact which had satisfied them that I was in a state of mesmeric sleep, was the facility with which my head followed all the movements of his hand, although he did not touch me, and the pleasure which I appeared to feel at the moment, when, after several repetitions of friction, he thus moved my head at pleasure in all directions."

In this case there can be no doubt that Professor Agassiz made a strong effort to resist the magnetic influence to which he was subjected, and that his iron will was captured and in a large measure controlled by the will of the operator. And this is what happens in every case of general mesmerism, as ordinarily understood. But how different is all this from the experience of one who subjects himself to the influence of a mental treatment as

given by the healers. Except in rare cases the patient does not feel inclined to go to sleep; he is conscious that no control is exerted over his personal will or any other faculty; he can move and speak freely; and can think on any subject he pleases. Indeed, during a series of successful and powerful treatments, he may not discover that any impression is made upon himself while the operation is in progress, and there may be nothing in his experience to remind him that he is under the spell of an unusual influence, except the fact that his ailment is relieved. There have been some cases, it is true, where the treatment has made the subject of it sleepy, and a few in which the patient claimed to have experienced a peculiar thrill of the nervous system, as though a very soft, agreeable electrical current were passing through the body; but these are exceptional, and not frequent enough to constitute a rule.

Another important fact to be remarked in cases of mental treatment is that the operator does not find it necessary to concentrate his thought upon the case in any way, and is perfectly conscious that while treating in a satisfactory manner he exerts no volition at all, nor do his thoughts take the form of wilful self-assertion. Instead of making an effort to produce the desired effect, he is conscious of being in a passive state, in which a force outside himself seems to be using his mind

as a medium. Let those who have never given or received it say what they choose, a true mental treatment is something radically different from any form of mesmerism or hypnotism, both in its operation and effect.

For the guidance of students who are preparing to practice mental healing, text-books abound with directions like the following, which are culled from the two leading authorities:—

“In order to heal yourself and others, it is not enough to be intellectually convinced that the theory of mental science is correct; there must be power to do as well as to see.”

“Remember that the conditions of effective treating concern yourself first and chiefly.”

“You must vividly realize that Spirit is the only healing power. . . . Realize also the oneness of Spirit, as the absolute life of the universe. Realize that man is the image and likeness of God, and is therefore Spirit. You are spirit, your patient is spirit, and there is no other being; for the real man is Spirit.”

“Commence your treatment always by allaying fear. Argue mentally to the patient, you have no disease, you are not in danger, you have nothing to fear and are perfectly well; then watch the result of this simple science, and you will find it soothes the symptoms of every disease.”

“Make it the strong point of your argument that God governs man; he is not governed by material law, and is not suffering from its infringement. Say to the patient mentally, *You are not sick*, and hold your ground with the skill of a lawyer. Argue down the witnesses against your plea, and you will destroy these witnesses, and the disease will disappear.”



“Here is a phenomenon. We will state it just as we discovered it: if you call not the disease by name, as you argue against it, the body will not respond by recovery more than a person replies whose name is not spoken.”

“The truth of being destroying error sometimes causes chemicalization, as when opposites meet, and one must destroy the other to form a higher basis.”

“Remember that metaphysical logic is based upon truth, a divine principle, and governed by the simple rules of Mind that governs all things.”

“Affirm to yourself that the real man is spiritual, and consequently has intelligence, life, and power.”

“The tendency of holding clear and correct views of truth yourself will be to diffuse around you an atmosphere of health. What you really know to be true, that will you affirm and declare to your patient, and nothing else. You may tell him the truth; that is well. You may think the truth about him; that is better. But you (the spiritual man) must *know* the truth; that heals him.”

“Your right thinking will change his [the patient's] wrong thinking, so that he will know, as you do, that he is not sick.”

“If it becomes necessary to startle mortal mind to break its dream of suffering, tell your patient he must awaken, and turn his gaze from the evidence of the senses, to the facts of soul and immortal being. . . . If ever it becomes necessary to startle the mind to remove its fears, afterwards make known your motive, showing the patient it was to facilitate his recovery.”

“If the mental malpractitioners or mesmerizers are trying to produce a relapse, and becoming dangerous to your patients, remove this obstacle on the same basis of truth destroying error.”

“While all treating is one and the same, whether the

alleged disease be one thing or another, there are certain conditions that, in the present state of the art, it is well to take into the account when attempting to treat patients. . . . It must not be forgotten that effective treatment does not consist in or depend upon any set form or process."

"Keep ever before you that your business is not to medicate the symptoms, but to break the spell that wrong or inverted thought has cast upon the patient."

"The effect of a treatment depends, not on its length, but on the condition of the healer who exercises it, and the dynamic power of the thought exerted."

"In the act of treating, you are not to make an effort to impress your patient; you are not to combat him."

"If the case to be treated is a consumption, begin your argument by taking up the leading points that this disease includes, according to belief, showing it is not inherited, that inflammation, tubercles, hemorrhage, and decomposition are but thoughts, beliefs, mental images before mortal mind, not the immortal Mind; hence they are not the truth of man, and should be treated as error, put out of mind, and then they will disappear from the body."

"To prevent a fever, or to cure it, you must find the type, get the name, and commence your mental plea against the physical."

That those who attempt to practise such vague, conflicting precepts should meet with many sad failures is no cause for wonder. How can the teachers be very definite or minute, when some of their working rules flatly contradict the dogmas on which the science purports to be founded?

It is safe to affirm that the best method of making the power that heals available to those who

seek to be cured has not yet been discovered. Since the days of the first mental healers who dwelt on the banks of the Nile or the Ganges, no man has been able to declare that he has sounded the depths of Nature's infinite law, or felt the full force of the energy which operates through nature and constitutes all life. Psychopathy deals, not with a force of which it is master, but with a force that masters it. Its field of action is finite, while the unscrutable power on which it depends flows from behind a veil it can never penetrate. The healer at best is only an instrument or medium used by the unsearchable force, for specific and finite ends. When he, the instrument, announces a "science" by which he will interpret the arcana of the infinite and compel all power to do his bidding, is he not in need of the rebuke conveyed in the last four chapters of the Book of Job?

Science is knowing. But what new revelation concerning Spirit and Infinite Law have any mental healers to announce? Do they claim in the name of Christ to have pierced the veil? From the wise lips of the Master echoes the far cry, "No man hath seen God at any time!" The very assertion that "all is mind, and mind is one," mocks the name of science, which deals with finite things alone. Mental healers have surely grasped "a side of" a great truth, and what they term "treat-

ment" is one application of a truth they do not comprehend, and which transcends the utmost reach of finite powers to conceive. Science encounters it as the Unknowable, and religion admits it to be past finding out. To know is an infinite prerogative: to obey is a finite duty.



## VII.

### THE PHILOSOPHY OF MENTAL CURES.

IN the autumn of 1884, the late Austin Flint, M.D., professor of principles and practice of medicine in Bellevue Hospital Medical College, New York, gave an address at the first annual meeting of the New York State Medical Association. He began some important remarks on *non-medicinal therapeutics*, by saying: "Several years ago my friend, Professor Alfred Stillé, visited with me my wards at Bellevue Hospital. I pointed out a patient who had recovered from pneumonia, the disease having passed through its course in the most favorable manner. As we were leaving the patient, he exclaimed, in a tone of much irritation, 'No thanks for my getting well; I have not had a particle of medicine since I came into the hospital.' The case had been left to nature, and nature had effected the recovery as quickly and as completely as possible; yet the patient was much aggrieved, and felt that he had been neglected." The eminent speaker then went on to say that in the popular idea of the science of medicine, it is identified with the employment of drugs, and that

the physician, who for any reason however cogent withholds them, incurs the risk of having such a disuse attributed to want of knowledge of the disease for which he is called to prescribe, or lack of interest in the case. In spite of this prejudice, he tells his hearers that "to withhold drugs in the treatment of disease is as important an exercise of professional judgment as to employ them."

The chief reason for introducing these remarks is to show the drift of present medical opinion in regard to the value and use of drugs and the healing power. Dr. Flint stood at the head of the profession in this country, and was esteemed by the doctors a reliable authority. He held firmly to the conservative maxim that in the golden mean lies the greatest safety, yet he had no confidence in any system of practice which assumes that recovery from disease is always due wholly to medicinal agencies. This is what he said to the assembled doctors of the Empire State:—

"The time will come when the physician will not be regarded as solely a therapist, but as a medical counsellor, whose functions embrace the preservation of health, and the prevention, not less the treatment, of diseases. Patients will then congratulate themselves, and be congratulated by their friends, whenever it is decided by the physician that potential drugs are not called for; but, as it should be added, drugs will then never be withheld if, in the judgment of the physician, they are indicated. This reformation, if I may so

call it, is to be brought about by a change in popular ideas respecting the practice of medicine. Let the public understand that drugs are not to be employed as a matter of course, whenever a physician is consulted or is in attendance. Let *placebos* be seldom, if ever, required for a moral effect. Let it be understood that, as modern clinical studies have demonstrated, many diseases end in recovery from an intrinsic tendency and self-limitation. *Let it be popularly known that most medicinal agents are curative, not directly but indirectly, by the removal of obstacles in the way of recovery; that nature is always the efficient curative agent, and, therefore, that the physician is nature's servant, not her master."*

Mental healing, when intelligently understood, simply emphasizes the highest doctrines of the medical schools, as announced by Dr. Flint and other contemporary authority. It takes the ground that, if drugs do not "cure directly," but simply prepare the way for nature to work, thought will do that much more deftly, and medicine may be dispensed with. Moreover, for the purpose of "removing obstacles to recovery," thought has a signal advantage over drugs, because no bad effect can follow its use. Opiates may conquer pain, but their after effect is bad; thought will do the same thing in less time, and leave no poison in the system. In the second place, the doctors do not always agree as to what the potential cause of healing is; they say Nature cures, but do not tell what Nature is. Mental Healers are very clear on this point, and declare Spirit to be the

force, and the only force, that can make a man well and keep him so.

Extremes are always dangerous; but upon the wide middle ground, between the bigoted "pharmacomaniac" on the one side, and the "cranky" wonder-worker on the other, the power of thought to cause and to cure disease may be studied with safety and profit. "As by wicked incredulity many men are hurt," says Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy," quoting Wierns, "we find, in our experience, by the same means many are relieved."

In the light of all that can be learned from the history and practice of mental healing, and after a careful study of its successes and failures, what benefit may mankind reasonably expect to derive from it? and what are the indispensable conditions of application? A satisfactory answer to these questions implies a knowledge of what disease and cure are psychologically considered, and a clear understanding of the relations between the power that heals, the healer, and the healed.

It is a well established law of cause and effect that the action of thought upon the brain is expressed and registered in the bodily conditions. The body is, therefore, the physical index of the mind. Health is a condition of perfect mental and bodily ease. A disturbance of the health denotes that the mental equipose is unbalanced.



In dealing with disease on a psychological plan, we transfer our inquiries from the realm of sensation to the realm of thought. Mental perturbation, whether it take the form of fear, passion, or any other discordant element, whether it arise spontaneously in the individual mind, or have its source in something external to that mind, constitutes the disease to which our attention must be directed.

It may be possible in some cases to determine the nature of the mental disturbance from the bodily symptoms; as for example, when a business man is worried by financial troubles his unbalanced thought is registered in nervous headache and brain exhaustion. But whether students of this subject will ever construct an exact science of correspondences between mental and physical states is an unsolved problem. Our present knowledge, although very limited, is sufficient to assure us that the true disease is in thought, and that it is not necessary to analyze a patient's mental unrest before his distress can be relieved.

Having decided what we will agree to call disease, the next inquiry is, What is it that cures? No intelligent physician or mental healer claims that the healing power is in the medicine given or the treatment bestowed; nor would he take the credit to himself. Dr. Flint says that "Nature is always the efficient curative agent." Believers in

miraculous cures regard them as events that cannot be accounted for by natural laws, but imply the operation of casual energy superior to the action of such laws, and consequently ascribe them directly to the will of God. Mental healers refer the cure to Spirit, Mind, Truth, etc. The only question is whether, so far as the source of healing is concerned, these terms mean the same thing.

“Woe unto him who swears allegiance to a word,” said a German writer; and when we compare the names by which men prefer to designate the force behind nature and all life which eludes our finite search and is past finding out, may it not be that one comes as far short of expressing the ineffable fact as another? Strive as we will to bring the concept of this unknowable within the grasp of thought, we cannot penetrate the veil that hides the vision, and human strength utterly fails before our eager feet reach the outmost gate of the immortals. He who for the sake of truth will lowly listen and obey, may learn enough to convince him that all life and motion of which he has any knowledge has its source in an inscrutable infinite energy. “Of this pure nature every man is at times sensible,” but he has no property in it; he cannot use it if he would. On the contrary, it controls and uses him. And since human conceptions of God and spirit change from age to age, and even with each man’s intellectual progress, it

is wise to adopt some expression for the power that heals, that will not conflict with any one's theology, and is sanctioned by the soundest thinkers of the world.

Every serious student of philosophy finds himself compelled to admit that organic life, even in its simplest forms, cannot be accounted for except by referring it to a first cause absolutely incomprehensible to him. Werke says: "The consideration of the harmony in the organic brings at once with it the feeling of a higher something which has established this harmony." It is observed, too, that this force differs from all other so-called forces in nature in the fact that, when once it has forsaken a body, it never takes possession of that body again. Electricity and magnetism, for example, are sometimes present and sometimes absent, so far as their influence on the bodies they control is sensibly felt; others, as gravity and chemical quality, never depart from a body. But the vital force never returns to an organism it has once abandoned.

"The denial of the vital force is absurd," says Schopenhauer. "Were there not a peculiar force in nature, to which it is as essential to *act in conformity with aim* as it is essential to gravity to draw bodies toward each other; did it not move, guide, regulate the whole complicated mechanism of organism, life would be an illusion, an imposi-

tion, and we should have a mere automaton, a plaything of mechanical, physical, and chemical forces."

Even Professor Tyndall, who with his contemporary, Professor Huxley, has been accused of reducing man to a mere automaton, hastens to modify his extreme materialism with a concession to the ineffable energy behind the visible universe. While in one place he says: —

"I prolong the vision backwards across the boundary of the experimental evidence, and discern in that Matter, which we in our ignorance, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium, *the promise and potency of every form and quality of life.*" Directly after he confesses: "Our states of consciousness are mere symbols of an outside entity which produces them and determines the order of their succession, but the real nature of which we can never know. In fact, the whole process of evolution is the manifestation of a power absolutely inscrutable to the intellect of man. As little in our day as in the days of Job can man by searching find this power out. Considered fundamentally, it is by the operation of an insoluble mystery that life is evolved, species differentiated, and mind unfolded from their prepotent elements in the immeasurable past."

With the highest scientific opinions as our authority, we may safely assume that it is Vital Force that heals disease, and leave it to those who choose so to do to define that force as they please; not forgetting the caution of Emerson: "Of that ineffable essence which we call Spirit, he that thinks most will say least."



Having referred all life to the operation of a single force or law, — an easy thing to do, perchance, — how shall we deal with the metaphysical problem so sure to arise, about the antagonism of good and evil? Does Vital Force produce both disease and health? We are confronted at the outset with that “conflict of ages” in which so much prowess has been expended in vain, and which Tennyson voices thus: —

“Are God and Nature then at strife,  
That Nature lends such evil dreams?  
So careful of the type she seems,  
So careless of a single life.

“‘So careful of the type’? But no.  
From scarpéd cliff and quarried stone  
She cries, ‘A thousand types are gone,  
I care for nothing, all shall go.

“‘Thou makest thine appeal to me:  
I bring to life, I bring to death:  
The spirit does not mean the breath:  
I know no more.’ And he, shall he,

“Man, her last work, who seemed so fair,  
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
Who rolled the psalm of wintry skies,  
Who built his fanes of fruitless prayer,

“Who trusted God was love indeed,  
And love Creation’s final law —  
Though Nature, red in tooth and claw  
With ravine, shrieked against his creed —

“ Who loved, who suffered countless ills,  
Who battled for the True, the Just,  
Be blown about the desert dust,  
Or sealed within the iron hills?”

No writer on the subject has been able to account for the origin of what men call evil, nor does mental healing throw any new light upon the problem. But taking things as we find them, there may be a way to explain the seeming wrong, without being driven to admit the existence of a power opposed to good. Hobbes put a good deal of *human nature* into the remark that “every man calleth that which pleaseth, and is delightful to himself, good; and that evil which displeaseth him”; and doubtless very much that bears the opprobrious name in this world is a matter of personal likes and dislikes.

But having reduced the ills of life to those universally accounted to be such, are we obliged to admit that they proceed from a principle of evil? and that they “seem to be necessary as the contrast and heightener of pleasure”? Mental healers say “no,” and adopt the view of Leibnitz, that “evil does not proceed from a principle of evil. Cold does not proceed from a principle of coldness, nor darkness from a principle of darkness. *Evil is mere privation.*” “Metaphysical evil consists simply in imperfection.” “Evil is not a generation, but a *degeneration*; and as

Augustine often expresses it, it has not an efficient, but a deficient cause."

Whether such a view of the case be theologically sound or not, the mental healer will find it very helpful to regard what is termed evil as the lack or defect of powers and capacities, and the consequent want of the higher enjoyment which might have flowed from the full and perfect possession of them. Applied to disease, as a mental defect, it would accord with this definition to say that his limited knowledge prevents the sick man from enjoying the full influx or influence of the Vital Force that promotes health wherever it is allowed to have its way. But why an invalid is unable to avail himself of the benefit of that infinite energy without extraneous medicinal or psychical help we cannot tell. We simply know that such is the fact, and that medicine and psychical treatment do remove the apparent obstacles. The healing act restores the mental equipoise of the patient, and the healer affords him just the aid required to enable him to cease resisting and let the vital force have way.

In the present state of knowledge, the best explanation of healing phenomena seems to be this: The healer has come into a condition where he is a good medium or conductor of the healing force, so that it acts powerfully through his mind. By virtue of the thought atmosphere common to

all intelligent beings, the healer can put himself mentally *en rapport* with his patient; and when this relation is established, the healing power passing through his mind or brain calms the disturbed thoughts of the patient, and restores his mental balance.

Careful investigation shows that the most marked results of treating ensue when the operator makes no mental effort, but is conscious of an influx of healing potency from without, which he simply directs, so far as his own thought goes, upon the patient. At the same time it would be presumption to claim that any one has hit upon the best mode of treating; for the most experienced healers are by no means certain of their ground, but work tentatively, often fail, and are often surprised if they succeed.

It is proper in this connection to point out two obvious discrepancies between the teachings and practice of "Christian scientists." In the first place, they teach that all disease consists in a lack of mental harmony, and at the same time they direct students to address treatment to the effect rather than the cause. In the second place, while declaring that there is no personality, they counsel the healer to personally combat the physical evidences of disease in the patient. They label their practice "*Christian healing*"; but surely the spirit and method of Jesus has nothing in common



with a scheme of healing that directs the operator to institute a formal court, and try the case of "Disease *vs.* Health" before judge and jury.

In many instances of cure, no doubt something is to be attributed to imagination and expectation, which may be brought powerfully into play during treatment. But while the healer takes advantage of these conditions where they exist and profits thereby, it is certain that these influences alone are not sufficient to account for all the results of mental treatment, and would utterly fail if the patient were insensible or insane, or was not aware that he was the subject of treatment.

If the art of mental healing is capable of being reduced to a formula so brief and simple, it would seem to be very easy to learn; but before any one hastily concludes so, let him try to realize the conditions even for a single hour. When the senses, popular opinion, and science unite in pronouncing languor and pain bodily phenomena, is it an easy thing, think you, to free the mind from the tyranny of this powerful belief, and become fully persuaded that all disease is mental? Have you the self-reliance and vigor to confront opposition and prejudice with a serene faith in thought healing, knowing that you are right? Can you exercise that complete self-surrender that will enable you to give up all personal and wilful effort, and thus become a transparent medium through which the

life-giving force may flow without obstruction? Do you realize that the conditions of successful healing are implicit trust in the one great law of the universe, and absolute abandon of all other hope?

Because the ignorant and undisciplined chance now and then, by some happy accident, to touch the mainspring of healthy mental activity, it does not prove their skill, or that one who makes healing a profession should trust to experiment or good luck. Psychopathy, if its laws can be understood and its power made available, has an advantage over medicine which cannot be successfully denied. On this account it is important that so good a thing be rescued from the control of unskilled practitioners, and committed to the care of those best fitted to put it to a wise use. And who so competent to apply psychical as well as material remedies as the educated physician, would he but lay aside his prejudice and honestly investigate the facts?

The day is not far distant, let us hope, when a reputable doctor may elect to employ mental treatment instead of prescribing a drug, and not lose caste. Indeed, there is a marked tendency in some quarters to recognize the power of thought in producing disease; and here and there a physician in good standing is found hovering on the very borders of the ground which the mental healers now claim as their exclusive domain.

## VIII.

### A SURGEON'S TESTIMONY.

AT a meeting of the Section of Biology of the New York Academy of Sciences, held Jan. 27, 1879, Dr. Charles Fayette Taylor, whose reputation is well known to medical men, read an interesting paper on "Bodily Conditions as Related to Mental States," in which he boldly asserted that "strictly speaking, there are no bodily sensations, for all sensation is mental — there is and can be no other." His discussion of illustrative cases cited from the records of his own practice, is very valuable in this connection.

The first was that of a young man of sixteen, from a Western city who had been treated unsuccessfully by three surgeons for ununited fracture of the left thigh-bone. The patient first presented himself at Dr. Taylor's office, in October, 1876. Two years prior to that date he had broken this thigh-bone just above the middle; but a perfect union of the fracture ensued, and the young man was able to walk again; but a year later he fell and, as he said, broke the same bone a second time about four inches below the seat of the first

fracture. A careful examination of the limb revealed the fact that the femur had not been broken a second time, consequently, there was no ununited fracture, as the patient and the three surgeons who had treated him supposed. That such was the case was proved by the fact that three days after Dr. Taylor first saw him, the patient was walking on that leg. The explanation given was this: He *thought* he had fractured his femur at the second accident. This impression caused him instinctively and quite unconsciously to withhold muscular action in that limb — that is, he did what he ought to have done if the limb had been fractured. . . . Of course, the trouble was purely mental. But it was not a condition of mind of which he was in the slightest degree conscious. He held the limb in a mental vice of such force and persistency that its nutrition was interfered with, and it was wasted to the last degree.

It was no easy task to break the spell of that young man's delusion, and the doctor resorted to mechanical means to convince him of the truth. In explanation of this mental phenomena the author of the paper carried his reasoning to the very point where, as a mental healer would perceive at once, psychopathy might have been employed with the happiest results. He says: "In this, as in all such cases, accepting by the patient of the opinion that the power exists, is not suffi-



cient to restore the member to use"; and the reason assigned is, that "simply to know and understand the mental nature of the case is not enough to establish control, because it is not intelligence principally that is at fault, but there is a modification of what may be called mental *timbre*, coloring the thoughts and all mental operations, which, in my estimation, is the quality with which we have to deal in this class of phenomena."

The French word *timbre*, which he borrows from the vocabulary of musical terms, and uses to denote "a certain quality of mind as a whole," might well be construed to mean a condition of mind in which the action of Vital Force is suspended, so that the thought is controlled by hallucination and not by a true mental concept. The mental healer claims that precisely the same mental difficulty arises in every case of disease — it is the obstacle to be removed, before the healing energy will flow through the patient's mind. It is just this needful impulse — inexplicable with our present knowledge — that mental treatment is able to supply, as nothing else can. It was just this mental impulse that Dr. Taylor saw to be required in the case just described, and in the others that he mentions; and for the lack of which, he was obliged to resort to clumsy mechanical devices to free the patient from the delusion by which he was enthralled. In fact, after describing several cases exemplifying the condition of

which he was treating, the doctor observes that "mental influence over bodily functions is in itself a constant and therefore a *normal* condition of existence." But one of the results of civilization is that the mind "takes on, with *abnormal* facility, a *timbre* of which it is not itself conscious, but which tends to modify biological relations" in the way he has described.

Why an intelligent being does give more heed to the reports of the senses concerning his bodily condition, than to the whispers of the eternal source of life in which he "lives, and moves, and has his being," we cannot tell. Neither are we able to explain why it is that, having constituted disease a power and submitted to its galling yoke, a man cannot ordinarily break from his bondage without extraneous help. As Professor J. H. Bridges puts it in the *Fortnightly Review*, "I would draw attention specially to the two ways in which health is affected by civilization, namely: first, that the body is acted upon by a more active, more excitable, and more complicated brain; secondly, that there is a more complicated and more stimulating social environment. . . . Where the adjustment of these interactions goes on *harmoniously and without shock*, there is health." Medical science no less than the voice of common experience certifies that "thoughts, energies, and feeling" act powerfully upon bodily health; con-

sequently the most valuable help that can be brought to the sick is that which releases the mind from its *timbre*, so that the Vital Force may exert its normal control.

Dr. Taylor described with great minuteness of detail, eight other cases illustrating the important facts he wished to enforce, all of which were those of female patients, and may be summarized thus: The first had lost the use of one limb eighteen months prior to coming under Dr. Taylor's treatment, and was obliged to use crutches. Recognizing the "mental character of the affection," he contrived by manipulations to convince himself and the patient that natural movements of the limb were possible, but still she could not voluntarily make the slightest motion with it. She *could not*, he said, because, "though there was power in the muscles, there was *no consciousness of power*, and thus there could be no volition." Here again was a case where mental treatment, as the healers administer it, might have supplied the "consciousness of power" which the patient lacked. In the second case, the patient had suffered from a "supposed" partial paralysis of the left foot and ankle, for three years. The only reason she could assign for her belief in paralysis, was "the alleged slipping of the tendon of the peroneus longus muscle which passes under the outer ankle-bone." This caused her to drop the toes when walking,

so that she was obliged to lift the limb very high when it was advanced, to prevent stumbling. The doctor was right again in considering this a *mental* disease, and the defect was relieved in the course of ten days by mechanical means. A case very much like this was successfully treated by a "Christian scientist" in Boston, a little more than three years ago, and was as follows:—

The patient was a middle-aged gentleman, who when a boy had had the metatarsal bones and tendons of his right foot severely injured by being trodden upon by an ox. He had lost the power of elevating the toes, and, for the most part, the motion of the ankle; the arch of the foot was broken down, and in locomotion the toe of his boot inclined to plow into the ground. The spot where the calk of the animal's shoe had rested on the foot was extremely sensitive, and the patient frequently suffered excruciating pain, perhaps for an entire day or night, not only in the injured foot but the entire limb. After a few treatments, the whole trouble disappeared, and the restoration has proved to be permanent.

Dr. Taylor's third case was a lame shoulder, which was "drawn forcibly upward, firmly fixed in that position, and very sensitive to handling." The lady explained that, several years before he saw her, while reaching up to turn the slat of the shutters, she had felt a sharp pain in the



shoulder, and since that time had been unable to move it. In this case, the doctor said, "I did not understand the true moral character of the difficulty, and the consequence was that I got into a great deal of trouble before I got through with it. But it was all the more instructive on account of my ignorance, as will be seen in its relation; so I give the case more in detail than is necessary in most of these illustrations." He went on to say: —

"... Supposing that it might be a spasm, and not wishing to treat such cases, I recommended her to apply to the late Dr. E. R. Peaslee, which she did. One year from the first visit she reappeared in a very sad plight indeed. I found the shoulder drawn up still higher than before, and so firmly fixed that the elbow could not be removed from the side of the body more than three or four inches. She looked haggard and worn out, and she reported her sufferings as having been and being very intense. The history intervening between the two visits was that Dr. Peaslee had given her some liniments, and, after a while, seeing that she did not regain the use of her arm, he sent her to a professional 'rubber,' who had used a great deal of disagreeable, violent, and painful manipulation... I immediately sought Dr. Peaslee, and together we made an examination. We found the large pectoral muscle shortened and enlarged to twice its natural size, and the arm so firmly bound down that it was with difficulty she got her clothing on."

The two surgeons etherized the patient and made an unsuccessful attempt to stretch the contracted muscle by mechanical force. The lady was

so prostrated by the operation that she was obliged to remain in bed for over a month. Then a consultation was held at her house in Brooklyn, and when the physicians explained what they had come for, "she got up, when, to our utter astonishment, we found the muscles completely relaxed, and the arm perfectly free to move in any direction." Three years later the patient's other arm became affected in the same way, and Dr. Taylor, supposing the cure in the first case to have resulted from the mechanical stretching, repeated the operation in this case, and the same results followed as in the first instance. The case was accordingly dismissed as cured; but a month later the doctor was requested to visit her, and found that no permanent benefit had been received, and the muscles and shoulder had relapsed into the same condition as before. He once more took the case in charge, and for weeks "was vainly striving to find remedies for a state of things which I could not comprehend, and to locate a disease which had no existence." At last he resolved to try another operation of *force brisée*, and for that purpose administered laughing-gas. "This was administered twice," he said, "with an interval of four days, when the muscles relaxed, motion was restored to the shoulder joint, and there has been no recurrence of the condition described during the intervening thirteen years."

The fourth case the doctor mentioned as "precisely similar" to the third, and for several months he made it a subject of much fruitless experiment. But at length it dawned upon him that "the whole difficulty was mental and only mental." Then he proceeded with it as he had done in the case of the young man who had the delusion of a broken thigh, and, in a week there was a satisfactory recovery. Once on the right track, Dr. Taylor had no difficulty in seeing wherein the treatment in the third case had been so disastrous, for he continued:—

"It is easy to see that the only influence of the respective operations of *force brisée*, in these cases, was *on the patient's mind*. In the first case, while she was lying weak and prostrate from the effects of the anæsthetic, *she forgot her shoulder and simply let go of it*. That was all. In the next operation, three years afterwards, on the other shoulder, there was less novelty calculated to engage and keep her attention, and the rupturing of the adhesions, which had sprung up in consequence of prolonged loss of motion, was sufficient to maintain her interest in the joint, so that her attention failed to be diverted. But the circumstances attending the operation with the laughing-gas were again calculated to absorb the attention in other directions, and thus divert it from the shoulder. The result was immediate relaxation of the muscles involved in maintaining the shoulder in a fixed position."

In the fifth case there was the loss of ability to use one foot, which dated from the reception of some slight injury, which in the doctor's opinion

was inadequate to account for the condition of the foot. "It was therefore the mind rather than the foot and ankle which ought to be treated," he said, "and it was the mind which I did treat with success."

The next was the case of a little girl, three years old, who simulated disease of the hip joint. A celebrated "joint doctor" who was consulted had pronounced it a genuine case of hip-disease, and applied a weight and pulley to draw the contracted limb into a natural position. In three months a cure seemed to have ensued, the limb could be straightened out without causing the patient any pain, and the doctor, elated with his apparent success, invited several brother physicians to see the child put on to her feet, and attest the remarkable cure. The bandages were removed in their presence and she was told to walk across the room. "You can imagine my surprise and disgust," said the joint doctor, "to see her go across the room with the leg drawn up precisely as it was before, and without any change whatever in the amount of deformity or her manner of walking." Of this case Dr. Taylor said: "This child has been brought to me from time to time during the past twelve years, but I have always refused to accept the case as one of disease of the hip joint." He did not intimate that he had ever tried to cure the case, but added: "This child was so young when the



affection first appeared, that it was never made out what were the particular sensations which influenced the volition in the way they did." The circumstances were that at the age of three she saw a lame girl on the street, and on returning home was found to be lame. There would be no difficulty, however, in accounting for the phenomenon on the theory of mind herein explained.

The seventh was a case of inveterate constipation relieved by mental means, the particulars of which need not be rehearsed. The last was that of a daughter of a physician, who lost the use of one limb soon after a slight attack of sore throat, which was followed some time after by the same disability in the other. There was no physical reason, so far as could be determined, why she could not walk; she simply thought so, and the limbs responded to the thought by becoming impotent. The disease was wholly in the mind.

It should be added, before leaving this subject, that Dr. Taylor assured his hearers that each case he had cited "represents a class of cases, and not simply an isolated and phenomenal instance of a curious manifestation. *Many cases of lameness of the ankle joint are produced by, or, strictly speaking, exist only in, the mind.*"

To be entirely fair towards the mind-curers, it must be admitted that they have to contend with much besides ignorance and prejudice. When they

work a cure, see what a weight of wrong thought must first be lifted, so to speak! If the pressure of the air upon the surface of the body be fifteen pounds to the square inch, we might say that the pressure of diseased mental atmosphere upon every human being is a thousand times as great.

To make the meaning plain we will suppose the healer is called to treat a child who is suffering with an ulcerated tooth. He finds the child groaning with excruciating pain; his cheek is inflamed and swollen; he is nervous from loss of sleep; the dentist has examined the tooth and pronounced it a clear case of ulceration, which to him means that, if the tooth were extracted, as very likely it must be, there would be found at the root ocular evidence of an ulcer. The parents of the child and other members of the household, sympathizing friends, the neighbors who know about the case, the entire community in which the patient lives, all the world, in fact, firmly believe that child to be suffering a real, local pain in a particular tooth. While it is known that certain applications tend to alleviate the distress for the time being, the common belief founded on wide experience is, that no permanent cure can be effected except by the removal of the offending member. The common belief is sensibly strengthened by the fact that local pain in general does not abate until the supposed cause of local irritation is removed. The

patient is thoroughly grounded in his belief by inherited bias and education, and so are his parents, grandparents, and all other people around him.

Now against this tremendous pressure of mental atmosphere, and their manifold beliefs, the healer single-handed must oppose his own simple belief that, strictly speaking, there is no pain or disease in the child's tooth; and by means of that one fact known only to him, believed in by him alone, that terrible weight of wrong thought must be lifted from the patient before the eternal energy of the universe will flow through that enslaved mind carrying healing in its current.

Is it easier, then, to cure some cases than others? Speaking after the manner of men, it is. Take, for example, a case of acute rheumatism. In treating this the mental healer has an advantage, for many people know of cases that have been relieved by other means than a regular medicinal prescription, and they are not absolutely sure that some quack would not succeed, if he had a strong will. They may be acquainted with a man who was cured by carrying in his pocket a horse-chestnut wrapped in chamois skin, another who was helped by a mesmerist, a third who got well after being operated on with an electric battery, a fourth who tried "salvation oil" with good results. Such knowledge enables some members of the community to admit the possibility of the proposed

cure, and makes it apparently easier for the healer to operate.

Only a word need be said about the attitude of persons who seek the benefit of mental healing. If they use their utmost endeavors to resist the influence, as Professor Agassiz did that of the mesmerist, they may in a measure hinder or retard their own recovery. On the contrary, by assuming an attitude favorable to the desired result, they will doubtless hasten it. But to say that faith in the healer or the method of treatment is essential to cure is not true; for instances of the most thorough healing are on record, in which the patient was a radical disbeliever, and submitted to treatment merely out of courtesy to a friend.

The theory of the mental healers that every psychical cure is instantaneous is plausible, when it is understood that disease, as they understand it, is in the thought. The operator may not succeed in effecting a radical change or conversion of the thought by one treatment or even two or three; but when that conversion takes place the mental cure is instantaneous. Whether the disappearance of the bodily evidence of that disease will be rapid or gradual depends on conditions not yet well understood. In so-called miracles of healing, the immediate bodily cure is assigned as the proof of genuine work; but under the power of modern psychopathy, days, weeks, and months



often elapse after the patient feels convinced that a mental cure has taken place, before the external symptoms are gone. The same thing happens in medical practice, the only difference being that a physician pronounces the cure a bodily restoration and not a mental.

But the tendency is for physical recovery to be more rapid under psychical than under medical treatment. Patients suffering with diseases which, according to the doctors, must "have their run," get well more quickly. For instance, a child very ill with pneumonia was under the care of a physician, who prescribed plenty of nourishment but no potential medicine. Meanwhile the parents had the child treated by a mental healer without the physician's knowledge. This seemed to accelerate recovery, for at each subsequent examination made by the doctor, he expressed surprise that the child gained so rapidly, and declared that he could not account for it. Having fortified his own opinion of the case by counselling with an eminent consulting physician, who also examined the patient and pronounced the case very critical, he assured the anxious parents that with the best of nursing the disease might reach a crisis and take a favorable turn in a week or more. He was greatly puzzled, therefore, to find the child sitting up and inclined to be playful on the third day after the consultation.

On reading the theory of disease and healing herein submitted, a thoughtful person will be very likely to ask how medicine cures. If the disease is mental and the bodily symptoms will not disappear until the mental cause is removed, how can a drug which effects the physical system alone, produce recovery? The ready answer to this question is that it is the *thought*, of which the drug is the symbol, that cures.

Old Ben Jonson, writing in praise of Shakespeare, says:—

“His learning savors not of school-like gloss  
That most consists in echoing words and terms,  
And soonest wins a man an empty name,  
But of a poesy *all rammed with life.*”

In the same sense James Russell Lowell said in a recent address that the literature enshrined in classic Greek and Latin “is *rammed with life* as perhaps no other writing except Shakespeare’s ever was or will be.”

In the same sense medicine may be said to be *rammed with life*. The drugs employed as antidotes have been chosen because it has been found that, in certain diseases, they are the best known pharmaceutical means of removing obstacles in the way of Nature. The doctors who prescribe these drugs, the professors who lecture and write about them, the students of *materia medica*, the pharmacists who compound them, the nurses who admin-

ister them, and, in many cases, the patients who take them, expend earnest, and sometimes very anxious thought upon them as a means, perhaps the only means of producing a cure. When the appropriate specific for a particular disease is prescribed and administered, there is associated with it the thought, nay, the confident expectation that, "with the blessing of heaven," it will restore the patient to health. If certain combinations of words are so freighted with essential thought as to have power to stir the minds of readers ages after they were written, can we doubt that the curative thought concentrated in "potential" drugs is a powerful mental stimulus?

## IX.

### THOUGHT ATMOSPHERE.

TACIT reference has been made to the weight of the traditional thought that environs every human being. Carlyle calls it "the finer nervous circulation, by which all things . . . minutely influence all men, and the very look of his [man's] face blesses or curses whomso it lights on, and so generates ever new blessing or new cursing."

Modes of thought are despotic. They hold us to the rule of habit with the grip of destiny. This undeviating persistence in particular ways of thinking is the burden of history, and the chief corner-stone of the theory of evolution. It constitutes a law that not only links us to a fatal past, but affords a clew by which to predict the future.

In a figurative sense man is oppressed on every side with a superincumbent weight of thought, just as in a literal sense he dwells under the brooding pressure of the earth's atmosphere. It is an inheritance which he cannot disown or ignore, and is at once a source of safety and of



danger as long as he lives. In its practical aspects the sum total of thought is not a boundless ocean of knowledge, but an onswEEPing torrent, bearing in its resistless current with wanton indifference bad as well as good. It heeds no impediments, but river-like, wears for itself an ever-widening channel, and during the vast epochs of time its course has scarcely been checked at all by the occasional "fresh heaven-derived forces" of reform. It obeys its own law of motion, consequently man cannot direct it, but must be borne along with it, or crushed and left a wreck behind.

Health is not exempt from the law of traditional thought. The "dirt philosophy," which insists on the sovereignty of matter, has made of disease an evil demon, never to be vanquished, whose stealthy inroads will be a perpetual menace to the race. According to the germ-theory of the modern physicist, the tendency to disease keeps pace with the progress of civilization, in spite of sanitary vigilance, and the very public works, without which life in large cities would be intolerable, each constitutes a nidus of pestilence. Toxic germs breed not only in aqueduct and sewer, but in food, and clothing, and in the very air we breathe. Guard the approaches with what zeal you may, the enemy that threatens your life can assume any one of a thousand mi-

croscopic forms, and make his way to your hearthstone unseen.

Every good seems armed with a poisoned sting, every element in nature may become a messenger of harm; and the dull, sluggish forces of ignorance, prejudice, and indifference may help them in their death-dealing work. A town draws its water-supply from a reservoir far away in the country, where rustics may unwittingly freight it with poison; the city pours its refuse products into a distant stream, to breed malaria along the banks. Travel rushes with the speed of steam, and news on lightning wings; but a broken rail or axle sends a car-ful of people to torture and death in a moment, and the telegraph wire slays the operator with a dart drawn from a distant cloud. The same ship that brings the tourist back to the bosom of his family imports the scourge of contagion into a populous city. The plow that stirs the soil of the vast Western grain fields liberates the miasma that kills the planter. Thus civilization, while creating material environments to promote the welfare of man, awakens to destructive activity the agents that prey upon his health and life; and the very means used to prolong and protect physical existence tend to multiply its perils.

Viewed from the material standpoint, there seems in all this nought but despair, "a fierce

defiance and mockery of inevitable fate." It makes one complain with the Hebrew pessimist: "Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me; for all is vanity and vexation of spirit." "Also they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets." "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

With grotesque though wonderful precision Holbein has represented the misery that haunts man's steps from the cradle to the grave, in the "grim satire" of his thirty-seven woodcuts, entitled the "Dance of Death." In each scene of human activity appears the chattering skeleton, "sometimes playing on a guitar or lute, sometimes carrying a drum, bagpipes, a dulcimer, or a fiddle, now appearing with mitre on head and crozier in hand to summon the Abbot; then marching before the parson with bell, book, and candle; again crowned with ivy, when he seizes the Duke, claims his partners, beginning with the Pope, going down impartially through emperor, king, nobleman, advocate, physician, ploughman, countess, old woman, little child, and the rest, and leading each unwilling or willing victim to the terrible dance."

But the real danger of disease lies not so much in its sensible ubiquity, as in the more subtle form of boding thought that constitutes its essence, and cannot be made amenable to any code of sanitary laws. The true disease-bearing germs and occasion of alarm are not disaster but the liability thereto, not the presence of micro-organisms but the fear of infection therefrom. The chronic public ailment is a nervous solicitude about health that is hostile to the very conditions upon which we enjoy it, namely, to be wholly unconscious of it.

“ In every cry of every man,  
In every infant's cry of fear,  
In every voice, in every ban,  
The *mind-forged* manacles I hear.”

The fear induced by undue attention to the sensible evidences of disease begets a morbid enthrallment to hygienic rules, and is liable to take the acute form of fright, or the intenser forms of terror and horror; or it may manifest itself in anxiety and worry, which are apt to become chronic. Instead of considering health as their proper birth-right and expecting to be well, people are led by such a public sentiment to count on sickness as part of their inevitable lot. They firmly believe in hereditary diseases which it is almost useless to try to ward off or escape. They believe that “children's” diseases are as necessary a factor of



juvenile experience as the shedding of milk teeth and a change of voice. Most potently do they believe in periodic "colds" and contagion, and the propriety of contributing each his part to spread the epidemic.

It will be recollected that a few years ago the newspapers had a great deal to say about the appearance of malaria in many parts of New England which had always been reputed extremely healthful. The following dialogue, written at the time, and subsequently published in a book of dialogues for schools, not only illustrates the effect of that panic, but shows better than anything else the pernicious tendency of a senseless fear of disease. The characters who take part are a wealthy widow lady, her daughter nine years of age, and the hostess of a summer boarding-house, in which the lady and daughter have just become guests. The lady being alone in her private sitting-room soliloquizes.

*Lady.* I hope there is nothing wrong about this house. (*Sniffs the air and looks around with a troubled expression.*) But I can't help thinking I smell something not just right. (*Takes up a bottle of disinfectant, shakes it, sniffs again, and pours some of the liquid into a shallow dish.*) Oh! I hope we are not going to have sewer-gas here, but I believe I smell it. (*Some one knocks.*)—Come. (*Enter hostess.*)

*Hostess.* Is there anything you need for your comfort, madam? I hope you like your rooms.

*Lady.* Oh, they are quite comfortable, thank you, only I wish to be sure they are all right.

*Hostess.* All right! Why, what do you find wrong about them?

*Lady.* Oh, nothing, nothing — if —

*Hostess.* If what, madam? Nobody has ever complained of these rooms.

*Lady.* Do not misunderstand me, I beg you. I was only thinking that I want to be sure — perfectly sure, you know, that there is no malaria on the premises.

*Hostess.* Malaria, madam! I never heard of such a thing here. Folks have it out West, I s'pose, but we never do.

*Lady.* You must excuse my solicitude. I have been an invalid for more than eight years in consequence of that terrible disease; it made me a widow; and, now, you can't wonder that I am in constant fear that it will make me childless, too.

*Hostess.* Indeed, madam. But I don't think you have any reason to fear here.

*Lady.* You never had malaria, then?

*Hostess.* No, never!

*Lady.* How thankful you ought to be.

*Hostess.* Yes, I suppose so.

*Lady.* We were boarding at Greenbush when my husband died of it.

*Hostess.* I have always heard Greenbush called a healthy place.

*Lady.* Part of it is so, but we were near a meadow.

*Hostess.* I lived near a meadow ten years, and wasn't sick at all.

*Lady.* Just after my husband died, I read in a medical journal that meadows were apt to be infested with malaria.

*Hostess.* I never should have thought of it.

*Lady.* It was so. I worried and worried about it, and in the fall I came down with the fever myself.

*Hostess.* Perhaps you worried yourself into a fever; don't you think you did?

*Lady.* No, no. Worry doesn't cause malaria, but defective drainage and bad air do. I left that place as soon as I was able to be moved, and haven't stayed over three months in any one place since.

*Hostess.* It must be very hard for you to move about so often.

*Lady.* I'm completely worn out with it; but a mother will make any sacrifices for her child, you know.

*Hostess.* Very true, madam.

*Lady.* I'm so afraid that Mollie will have the malaria, that as soon as I hear of a case in the neighborhood I move. (*The daughter enters.*) And here is my darling child, now. I never see her come in but I think how her poor father looked when he was sick.

(*Mollie seats herself in back part of the room and begins to read a book.*)

*Lady.* (*Looks at her watch.*) Oh, Mollie dear, did you shut the bedroom window? It is nearly half-past three.

*Mollie.* Yes, ma.

*Lady.* I have read that bedroom windows must be closed before sundown; the air is malarious after that time.

*Hostess.* But the sun doesn't set these three hours.

*Lady.* It is best to be in good season.—You think the water here is pure, do you?

*Hostess.* I never had a doubt of it.

*Lady.* We boarded in one place where pond water was used, and I read that malaria is caused by pond water, so we had to move.

*Hostess.* I never heard of that.

*Lady.* At our next place they used well water; but I am told that well water becomes contaminated, and so we left.

*Hostess.* How foolish some people are! I've drunk well water all my life.

*Lady.* They used rain water at the next house we occu-

pied; but so much was said in the newspapers about rain water being impure, that we stayed there only a few weeks.

*Hostess.* It must be a great tax on you to change so often. It would kill me.

*Lady.* I do it for my child. I'm so afraid she will have malaria.

*Hostess.* She looks healthy.

*Lady.* Last summer we went to Newport.

*Hostess.* That is a delightful place.

*Lady.* Anything but delightful! I heard of nothing but malaria, bad drainage, and sewer-gas all the time we were there.

*Hostess.* How strange! None of my boarders who went there spoke of it.

*Lady.* And now I've just come from the mountains, and everybody is having it there. It is all over the country, my good woman!

*Hostess.* Why, two of my gentlemen boarders have just come from the mountains, but I haven't heard them speak of it.

*Lady.* I've been told that this town is really free from malaria.

*Hostess.* To be sure it is.

*Lady.* You never heard of a case here?

*Hostess.* Never!

*Lady.* And you are sure this house has good drainage?  
(*Involuntarily sniffs the air.*)

*Hostess.* I know it has.

*Lady.* You think the cellar is all right?

*Hostess.* Why, certainly.

*Lady.* (*Sniffing.*) Dear me! don't you smell a disagreeable odor here?

*Hostess* (*curtly*). No, I don't. (*Lady goes to the table and pours more disinfectant into the dish.*)

*Lady.* Oh, I hope everything is right. (*Walks about,*



*sniffing.*) You don't think any bad smell can come from the sink, do you?

*Hostess.* No, ma'am; I don't allow such things in my house.

*Lady.* You can't wonder I'm nervous about this matter; but it seems as if I detected something like sewer-gas. (*Sniffs several times. Takes the bottle and sprinkles the window-seat.*)

*Hostess.* That stuff won't spot the paint, will it?

*Lady.* No, indeed. It is the best disinfectant. — (*Turns suddenly.*) Why, Mollie, what ails you? You feel dreadfully, don't you, dear?

*Mollie* (*who has closed the book and sits listening to the talk, answers with a pathetic drawl with which she has learned to respond to her mother's anxious questions.*) Yes, ma.

*Lady.* There, I was afraid of it. Your throat is sore, isn't it, Mollie?

*Mollie.* Yes, ma.

*Lady.* And you feel bad all over, don't you, Mollie?

*Mollie.* Yes, ma.

*Lady* (*goes and places her hand on Mollie's head.*) You feel as though you would strangle every minute, don't you?

*Mollie.* Yes, ma.

*Lady* (*to hostess.*) This child is coming down with the malaria. I know she is, and I shall go wild!

*Hostess* (*soothingly.*) Oh, no, I guess not.

*Lady.* You feel cold chills all over you, don't you, dear?

*Mollie.* Yes, ma.

*Lady.* That is it, I know the symptoms. (*Looks distressed.*) That is just as her poor father was at first. Oh, dear!

*Hostess.* I hardly think the child will be sick, madam; she may be a little over-tired.

*Lady.* I shall go wild! I shall go frantic! What shall I do?

*Hostess.* (*Takes a large orange from her pocket.*) Perhaps Mollie would like this?

*Mollie.* (*Springs up.*) Oh, yes'm! (*Runs for the fruit.*)

*Lady.* Oh, Mollie, Mollie, you mustn't touch it!

*Hostess.* An orange won't hurt her, madam.

*Lady.* Mollie, darling, give that orange to me this minute! You are too sick to eat it.

*Mollie.* I'm better now, ma. (*Runs with the orange out of the room.*)

*Lady.* Oh, madam, don't you think Mollie is sure to be sick?

*Hostess.* No, unless you make her so by worriting.

*Lady.* I make her so! What do you mean?

*Hostess.* Why, you are so nervous—

*Lady.* Yes, just as nervous as I can be.

*Hostess* (*going to window*). Mollie is all right; she's playing with my kitten and eating her orange. You needn't fear about her.

*Lady* (*relieved*). Oh, I shall be so glad if the darling is better!

*Hostess.* Now, I must be going, madam. If you want anything—

*Lady.* And you are quite sure there is no malaria in this place?

*Hostess.* Not a bit of it. (*Goes out and shuts the door with a little slam.*)

It is a curious fact that the church, in accepting the dogma that evil is man's heaven-appointed lot, came to regard invalidism and pain as afflictions sent upon his earthly children by the Infinite Father, for the purpose of chastening and purifying them. They construed the prayer, "Thy will be done," to mean, "Grant me grace to bear the

trials thou hast sent upon me." Cowper voiced this strange conception of God in the hymn beginning:—

"O Lord, my best desire fulfil,  
And help me to resign  
Life, health, and comfort to thy will,  
And make thy pleasure mine."

A knowledge of the views held and taught by mental healers, while it does not alter the conditions of human existence or set at defiance any physical law, makes its possessor superior to the fear of material calamity, and promotes an habitual tranquillity that is the very best safeguard to health. It enables him to see that what people dread is the physical evidence of disease and not the real cause; that there is no heredity except in thought; that the *bacteria* revealed by the microscope have no power to infect the body unless the mind consent; that the danger from an epidemic is not in contagion, but in the thought that vivifies it. More than this, he realizes that thought, right thought, is superior to all sensible phenomena, because it has Vital Force, the absolute power of the universe, at its back.

It is said that in the far East there are adepts in magic, who have power to compress *akasa*, or the mysterious life-fluid, about their persons, so as to form an elastic, invisible envelope that no physical object can penetrate. Thus armed they are in-

vulnerable to the attacks of their enemies, and may expose themselves to peril with impunity. The heroic faith in the protection of an infinite force, which a correct knowledge of health is fitted to inspire is the true *akasa*, a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. It engages all the power in the world on the side of man, and shows matter to be in complete subjection to a higher law than human hopes and fears. It assures every man that, so long as he is attending to his proper duty, all nature protects him, and nothing in the universe can do him harm.

“The mind that is parallel with the laws of nature,” says Emerson, “will be in the current of events, and strong with their strength.” And that law is defined in the Hindoo Scriptures to be “that which is without name, or color, or hands, or feet; which is the smallest of the least, and largest of the large: all, and knowing all things; which hears without ears, sees without eyes, moves without feet, and seizes without hands.”



## X.

### THE LIFE THAT NOW IS.

ALTHOUGH the theories of Deity, man, and matter held by mental healers are not proved to be essential to the practice of psychopathy, it does not follow that they are of no intrinsic value; for it is natural to suppose that those who have discovered the cause of disease to be disturbed thought will seek to prevent as well as cure it by preserving the mental equipose. Is not their theology, then, an attempt on the part of the healers to provide a moral prophylactic? In so doing they are surely sanctioned by analogy, for have not the doctors of medicine devised a code of sanitary rules for the promotion of health?

It is true that, in their efforts to solve the great problems of being, the modern healers display ignorance of the canons of philosophy announced by the ideal school to which they adhere. They do not appear to be aware that the topics they handle so clumsily are ably and accurately treated in the works of the great thinkers of the world. And yet, what they aim to express but do not reach is a truth of the highest importance.

Psychopathy, as taught, speculates about matter, and labors to show that it is unreal and simply the reflection of thought. For popular use such a statement may answer very well, even if the eyes of critical scholars should pronounce it crude. But so vague and unscientific is the treatment of the subject, that the "Christian scientists" have been repeatedly charged with teaching a gross form of pantheism, which virtually blots God out of existence, and sides with the Stoics in making the physical universe a being animated by a principle which gives to it motion, form, and life; a view which supposes the absorption of God in nature and destroys personal responsibility. Nor can it be denied that, in accenting as they do the *oneness* of being, which implies that men's souls are only modifications of the Divine substance, they lay themselves liable to be accused of atheism.

The theory which denies in words a personality that cannot be ignored in practice is a grotesque feature of the doctrines of mental healing that, in the sense attached to it, lacks confirmation. It deprives man of individuality and the pleasure of regarding himself as a living soul, a self-conscious being and free moral agent, capable of intelligent choice and self-determination; and it robs God of the only mode of existence that makes a finite conception of Deity possible. To say "God is Principle or Mind and not person," or that "man

is Spirit and not person," confuses if it does not shock the orthodox Christian thinker.

Of course the mental-healing theory totally annihilates the human soul, which, in the Christian belief, is the true man, and the immortal *ego* destined to attain eternal life. But we need not be alarmed, for in this field of windy speculation there is no opinion either plausible or absurd that has not already been announced by philosophers. If Drossbach thought the human soul a gas; if Fischer pronounced it a mere exaltation of the vital force of plants; if Weisse called it an educt of matter; why need any one feel hurt if the "Christian scientists" respectfully ignore it?

What mental healers teach concerning God is nothing new to the student of theology. Their view resembles that of the ancient people of Iceland, who, Mallet tells us, attributed to the Supreme Deity an infinite power, a boundless knowledge, an incorruptible justice, and forbade worshippers to represent him under any corporeal form. "They regarded God as the active principle, which, by uniting with the earth or passive principle, had produced men, animals, plants, and all visible beings; they believed that he was the only agent in nature, who preserves the several beings, and disposes of all events."

They are theists according to the criterion of Cudworth, for they affirm that a perfectly con-

scious, understanding force, or mind, existing from eternity, was the cause of all things. Their conception would agree pretty closely with Spinoza's definition of God: "The absolute, universal substance; the real cause of all and every existence; the alone, actual, unconditional being — not only cause of all being, but itself all being, of which every special existence is only a modification."

Historically the theology of mental healers is a modification of the doctrine of *anima mundi* held by Stahl. It is closely allied to that embodied for many centuries in the Hindoo religion. A hymn of the Rig-Veda, as rendered by Monier Williams, reads:—

"The embodied spirit has a thousand heads,  
A thousand eyes, a thousand feet; around,  
On every side, enveloping the earth;  
Yet filling space no larger than a span,  
He is himself this very universe;  
He is whatever is, has been, shall be;  
He is the Lord of Immortality."

Somewhere between this ancient idea of the Brahmans and the modern view of Emerson, which may be inferred from the subjoined quotations, are included all shades of the mind-cure belief.

"The nature of the Great Spirit is single, though its forms be manifold, arising from the consequences of acts."

"The mind that made the world is not one mind, but *the*



mind. Every man is an inlet to the same, and to all of the same."

"That which, intellectually considered, we call Reason, considered in relation to nature, we call Spirit. Spirit is the Creator."

"The world proceeds from the same spirit as the body of man. It is a remoter and inferior incarnation of God, a projection of God in the unconscious."

A serious objection to these doctrines is raised by many devout people on the score of immorality. It is said that such teachings destroy all sense of personal responsibility and infect the minds of unsuspecting students with the subtle poison of infidelity. Expert theologians discern therein the roots of the doctrines of Pantheism and atheism, "so artfully entwined with devout and reverent expressions of Scripture as to deceive the very elect." As they put the case, "scores of young ladies are drawn into the system under the impression that they are getting some finer quality of Christianity, only in the end to be lured into fatal misbelief." "If the body is only a phantom," says a clergyman, "and the flesh only a shadow, it is logically certain that by and by some very practical sinners will take refuge under this system, and insist that the sins of the body and the transgressions of the flesh are harmless, since they are only the phantom of a phantom, and the shadow of a shadow."

If such objections are valid, when urged against the system and not against its teachers, surely no person who values sound morality should meddle with them, and the guardians of virtue ought to do all in their power to "pluck the vicious quitch wholly out" of the community. But do facts sustain the charge? During the last ten years thousands of people have attended courses of instruction in the theory and practice of mental healing, as set forth in these pages. Among them were representatives of every respectable grade of society, and a large proportion were members of Protestant churches. If the tendency of the teaching be as represented, destructive of morality, most of these people would by this time begin to exhibit some of the fruits of the error thus imbibed. On the contrary, their standing in the communities where they dwell and the churches to which they belong has not perceptibly changed. If they held an evangelical creed before they took the course of lessons they retain it still; if they were of the liberal faith they are so now; if they were good and valued members of society when they entered upon the study they have been so since. The reason is obvious: When people are seeking for theories or facts that will be of temporal help to themselves or their friends (and that is what folks study mind-cure for) the metaphysical concomitants of the subject studied make but

a faint impression on the mind that is otherwise absorbed. If the offensive dogmas of this creed were sharply defined and carefully studied for their own sake the effect might be different. It should be noticed that it is not theology, but *pathology* that the learners are after, and in a rapid glance of a dozen extemporaneous talks there is not time to instil much of the poison of false theology, even were the teachers so disposed. The fact is that very few intelligent people would be able to carry away from such a class-room anything that would really conflict with their own theological and moral convictions. Another view of the theology and philosophy associated with psychopathy prompts the inquiry, What good will it do us to hold such doctrines? If they do not directly promote bodily health, are they of any value? It will repay us to consider briefly this question.

A habit of viewing life from the godward side tends to establish just relations between the spiritual and temporal, and makes us sensible that the moral disease of the times is materialism. The transient phenomena of sensation are mistaken for permanent realities. The animal nature is imperious and bodily wants absorb the chief attention. The struggle of life is for that which the spiritual nature does not require. Earth is the battle-field of ambition, appetite, and greed. The

material, not the ethical, end determines all movements in business, politics, society, and — one might almost say — religion.

In the domain of human affairs a hard law of fatal necessity usurps the place of the sweet spiritual laws that enact themselves. Men fume, and fret, and groan under the burdens and tasks of life. There is no elastic joy in their faces, no glad spring in their steps. They join in the struggle because they must, and dare not end it, though life seem scarcely worth living, a weary journey ending too often in despair.

“We look before and after,  
And pine for what is not,  
E'en our sincerest laughter  
With some pain is fraught.”

The prevailing thought of world-worn men and women is pessimistic. Poetry, the true gauge of public sentiment, complains and moans, and wit and laughter have an under-tone of deepest sadness. If, now and then, while sweating under his yoke, there steal upon his thought some memory of the state of freedom from which he has fallen, it seems so unearthly and strange, that the man declares he has been spoken to by a voice from heaven, a far-off heaven. For a moment he pauses, as a sense of his misery and poverty comes over him, and cries out with anguish: —



“O Father, touch the east, and light  
The light that shone when Hope was born!”

Have we sounded the note on too low a key to suit the selfish spirit of the times? Scan the columns of the trade journals, and tell what thought is stirring in the mart, the factory, and the exchange. Read the campaign records, and mark what policy governs the games of office seekers. Join the gay worldlings when the social season is at its height, and watch imperious fashion queen it at the banquet and dance. Nay, answer the summons of any one of a hundred city church bells whose liquid peal invites to rest and prayer, and observe how the lordly sexton parcels worshippers by their dress, and pulpit and choir impress it upon your notice that even sanctuary privileges are bought with a price.

In these theatres of human life what spirit rules? What king is lord? Is the chain of material thought ever broken, so that eternal realities rise to the ascendant? If asked to choose a single word to denote the motive and key to all this moving scene, could we find a better one than *money*? All too soon the novice in the ways of the world learns that a man is rated by wealth. While he lives his estate rather than his character determines his standing, and “plucks the slavish hat from the villager’s head.” And when he is

dead the first question is not What was his worth? but What was he worth? If he leave a good name behind him, that is well; if he leave a handsome property, he is accounted to have lived to some purpose. To have something he works early and late, taxes his physical and mental powers to the utmost, eats the bread of carefulness, and shortens life; and to show that he has something he builds a great house, fills it with costly furniture, wears rich attire, and lavishes money on display.

Seeing that success, as the world goes, depends on what one has and not on what one is, a young man chooses his vocation, not as a means of becoming a wise, good, and useful citizen of the town and state; but in order that he may buy and sell, and lay up money. Or, if his ambition take a literary or political turn, it is not his aim to make the most of himself through his profession, but to use that as a means of attaining the highest place in the shortest time.

It goes without saying that, when *quid pro quo*, and a material equivalent at that, is the doctrine sanctioned at home, taught in schools, and practised everywhere, life yields a wild and bitter fruit. So poor and sordid is it that the best of men have been wont to regard it as a vale of tears, full of evil and sin, and no fit home for the immortal soul.

It is natural for children to suppose that this fair

world in which they find themselves is a congenial abode adapted to promote their well being, that it is their destiny to be happy and enjoy using the powers of mind and body with which they find themselves endowed. What else should they think? But how soon they learn that the times are out of joint, life is all wrong, —

“This world’s a dreary wilderness,  
This world is not their home,”

but they stay here and endure a while on probation, in order to be fitted for another life hereafter. Nothing on earth is meant to be enjoyed for its own sake, but our lot is cast in the midst of alluring delights merely to tempt us, when we ought to despise and reject them. They find out that existence here is essentially selfish, a struggle for the survival of the fittest to cope with the legion of enemies that lie in wait to hurt and destroy. Apparently life yields more wrong than right, more hate than love, more folly than wisdom, more error than truth, more ugliness than beauty, more failure than success, more discord than harmony, more fear than hope, more pain than pleasure, more disease than health, more death than life.

Realizing that this discordant state of things has its origin in the thought of men and is not of divine creation, that earth might be fair enough

except for sin, the theologians have hit upon a curious solution of the enigmas of life. Innocence has been banished to a primeval garden from which men are perpetually excluded by a flaming sword. As the fruit of ancestral disobedience the race is dowered with radical depravity and chooses evil rather than good. And this is called a *natural* condition. "The natural heart is at enmity against God." Taking an extreme view, the Calvinist sees men to be utterly vile, —

"Their hearts by nature all unclean,  
And all their actions guilt;"

and even the most tolerant humanitarian, who feels that "men are too good to be damned," deals in pale negations and is forced to acknowledge the native weakness and ignorance of a race that displays at best only a negative goodness.

Finally, man sees no way of escaping the calamities of what appears to him a wicked world. The conditions are fixed, and he has no alternative but to endure and no hope but in struggling with them. The conditions proceed out of his own corrupt nature; but he has no power to alter them, and must, if he would be victor in the inevitable conflict, trample the world under foot, and seek for a better country, as Christian did in the story of Pilgrim's Progress. He works with material agencies upon a world of brute matter;



the conflict is finite and the battle-ground a land of weakness and temptation.

This picture of human life, that would strike us as monstrous were it not so familiar, represents unquestionably the world of thought. And it follows "as the night the day," that centuries of such thinking have been the prolific source of the turmoil that rages in men's minds, causing disease; nay, it constitutes the moral disease with which the world is afflicted.

It affects different men in different ways. To those who act but do not meditate the world may not seem very bad. Busy with doing, they have no time to consider why they do or for what end they strive. Work is their synonym for virtue and their panacea for trouble. They are smart. All their faculties are strung up to the high pitch of ceaseless endeavor. The end of life is activity, and if they take rest it is only to recruit from actual fatigue. If they investigate and reflect, it is simply to devise means of doing what they undertake. Charged with exhaustless vitality, they cannot rest, they cannot waste time in dreaming, for life to them means labor, and this world is a place for work.

There is another class of men to whom life wears no very serious aspect. They are those of whom Baron Houghton says:—

“Happy the many to whom Life displays  
Only the flaunting of its Tulip-flower;  
Whose minds have never bent to scrutinize  
Into the maddening riddle of the Root,—  
Shell within shell, dream folded over dream.”

These are the men on whose superficial natures life impresses more than it expresses. They never trim themselves to the storm of time, but seek out the sheltered nooks and let it pass; the rude winds of fortune ruffle only the surface, as the gusts of March fret the surface of a land-locked lake. Let those sound life's deeper mysteries who will, their policy and pleasure consist in forgetting misery by being gay, and shunning all contact with the hard realities of life.

There are others who cannot shut out the stern facts of existence though they try never so hard to do it. They love the material world, and are eager to grapple with the rugged problem of getting a living as the reward of being diligent in business. They have no fine sentiment about life. The chief end of man, as it appears to them, is to be industrious and shrewd, carry his points, acquire a competence of this world's goods, and then to “make his peace with his Maker,” and stipulate for a seat in Heaven on what terms he may. From a habit of considering all good available for cash, such men presume to buy eternal felicity with money, by endowing an institution or leaving a

handsome bequest for the use of the church. These are the men at whom Dan Chaucer aimed a shaft in his satire on the begging friar who measured the sorrow of penitents by the liberality of their offerings:

“For if he gaf,<sup>1</sup> he dorste make avaunt,  
He wiste that a man was repentaunt.  
For many a man so hard is of his herte,  
He may not wepe although him sore smerte.  
Therefore in stede of wepyng and preyeres,  
Men moot give silver to the poure freres.”

Then there are the men who suspect life to be a different thing from what it appears on its face; men whose thought is cast in a spiritual mold, and who ponder with real concern the meaning of existence. The faculty of contemplation with which they are gifted is a constant source of pleasure or of pain, according as it is linked with a cheerful or a melancholy temperament. When it leads them to take the world as they find it and develops faith and trust in an infinite providence, they cast anchor in the calm harbor of a congenial creed, and believe where they cannot know. When it leads them through the devious mazes of doubt and blots out faith with question marks, they spend life in vainly trying to read its riddle, and find it “one long note” of sadness, because —

“This world can never give  
The bliss for which we sigh.”

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<sup>1</sup> Give.

It is the province of religion to help men to bear the moral diseases entailed upon the race, and to medicate the symptoms as far as possible. No regular school of physicians of the soul has ever claimed that a thorough cure could be wrought in this world. Partial relief may be hoped for, but emancipation comes by death alone. Grace and endurance are the standard medicaments of the church; the warfare must last through life, and the laurels of victory are *post mortem*.

The early fathers and apologists conceived Christianity to be a preparation for a coming age and another world, not a means of bettering their own. Because its founder had said that his kingdom was not of this world, they assumed that his doctrines were not intended to enhance the enjoyment of mankind *in* this world, but on condition of their practical withdrawal from it. To enjoy the natural or social delights of the present life was to jeopardize their chances in the life to come. Even moral virtues were to be distrusted, for they might be splendid sins. Acceptance with God depended on faith, not conduct, and whatever tended to mortify the flesh and render life intolerable was to be gloried in as evidence of an assured passport to eternal felicity.

“Unhappily, the theory on which the church proceeds is calculated rather to impede than to promote man’s happiness and well-being in this world. It assumes that this



world is a fallen world, and man's position in it merely a state of preparation for another and better state of existence; that man's happiness here is a matter of comparatively little moment, and that his main business on earth is to qualify himself for happiness in that future state. . . .

"To employ the faculties that God has given us in endeavoring to discover his laws as displayed in his works, and to do his will by devoting all our energies to improve the condition of mankind and to alleviate the misery so prevalent in the world, and which mainly arises from ignorance or neglect of those laws; to endeavor by honest labor to raise ourselves in the scale of society; this, it is said, although it may be conducive to man's happiness and well-being here, is not the way to prepare for a future life. We are to renounce this world, to lay up no treasures here. Riches are the root of evil; the elements of progress and civilization are matters of secondary moment. Our task here is to endeavor, by patience, humility, repentance, faith in the Redeemer, and through the efficacy of the sacraments of the church, to secure eternal happiness in Heaven. . . .

"It may perhaps be said, that though this is the theory of the church, yet, in practice, it does not discourage a reasonable attention to the affairs of this world; and it is true that there is a great deal of inconsistency between the theory and the practice of the church. The clergy do not themselves practice, nor do they expect their hearers to practice, all that the theory of the church requires them to profess. There is a great deal of conventional insincerity; but this very insincerity is one of the serious evils arising out of the artificial system with which the church is encumbered. It goes far to explain the discredit into which the church has fallen with the working classes especially, and the powerlessness of the clergy to make any impression by their teaching."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The Problems of the World and the Church," by a Septuagenarian.

It will very likely be urged that this picture of Christian teaching and policy, if true in the early centuries of the era, does not represent the attitude of the church at the present time. It is a praiseworthy fact that by means of various charitable organizations, religious denominations are now doing a mighty work for the melioration of the calamities and promotion of the temporal welfare of mankind. But while religion has taken up this objective work, is it doing any more subjectively for its votaries? Does it afford any new help to the church militant, when —

“ Her heart is sick with thinking  
Of the misery of her kind ” ?

Is it not true now as it ever has been that religion simply medicates the symptoms of moral disease in this world, and is content to hold out a hope in the next?

The grand objection raised by critics against religion is that it cannot make it for a man's highest interest to enjoy the life that now is, or justify the ways of God to him. It cannot cure, much less prevent, the evil it deplors; while, by awakening the conscience to unwonted activity, it accents rather than calms the conflict between Sense and Soul. If in any instance it is known to yield a sweeter fruit, such a case is the rare exception that determines not disputes the rule.

“And though we wear out life, alas!  
Distracted as a homeless wind,  
In beating where we may not pass,  
In seeking what we shall not find;

“Yet shall we one day gain, life past,  
Clear vision o'er our Being's whole,—  
Shall see ourselves, and learn at last  
Our true affinities of Soul.”

This is truth, but not the whole truth, or the highest truth. Let us hasten to draw a brighter picture.

## XI.

### SEEKING THE LIGHT.

THIS chapter may be fitly introduced with some quotations from a recent sermon on "The Safety and Helpfulness of Faith," preached by Rev. Phillips Brooks, D.D., of Boston. The text suggests the theme of bodily cures, and is one of those from which faith healers take great encouragement. It is this: "They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not harm them. They shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover."

After premising that these were the last recorded utterances of Jesus, before his final disappearance from the eyes of his disciples, and that those who believed in him must have turned back from the scene of the ascension with eyes full of the expectation of miracle, the speaker proceeded to unfold the spiritual instead of the material significance of the Master's words.

It is well known that Dr. Brooks is a leading Episcopal clergyman, who represents the high-water mark of all that is progressive in what is termed Evangelical faith, in distinction from that



of the Liberals. It is a far cry from the gloomy valley of primitive Calvinism to the sunny mountain top from which he proclaims the glad gospel of good will to men, and we may expect to find in his teachings whatever vitality of the apostolic religion still survives. Standing as he does midway between the extremes of creed-bound bigotry on the one hand, and creedless latitudinarianism on the other, Dr. Brooks would be of all eminent preachers most likely to apprise us of whatever the Christian religion can do to prevent or cure the moral diseases which make human life in its best aspects so sad a mystery. If the helpful faith he preaches fail to offer an adequate remedy, what else have we to expect?

The mental healers who seek in this sermon a warrant for debasing spiritual truth to material ends will be disappointed. It gives no countenance, expressed or implied, to their methods of curing or the tenets of their "science." In fact, so much higher and broader is the plain on which Dr. Brooks discussed the theme of the text, that we could count on the fingers of a single hand the modern healers who have attained, spiritually or even intellectually, to the moral altitude from which he spoke. They for the most part have grossly material conceptions of spiritual things; Dr. Brooks's loftier presentation lifts the thought above sensual things, even though it misses,

after all, the moral prophylactic of which the world stands in perishing need.

The parting words of Jesus at first encouraged the disciples to expect immunity from danger, and to be endued with power to work miracles of healing. The Bible testifies to the cures wrought by the Apostles, and Gibbon says in his history of the Roman Empire: "The Christian church, from the time of the apostles and their first disciples, has claimed an uninterrupted succession of miraculous powers, the gift of tongues, of vision, and of prophecy, the power of expelling dæmons, of healing the sick, and of raising the dead." But Dr. Brooks does not appear to coincide with Rev. A. J. Gordon, D.D., a Baptist clergyman of the same city, who published a book some years ago, to prove that the gift of miraculous healing is still in the possession of Christian believers. The rector said:—

“. . . Can it be that the power of Christ's promise is exhausted? Has his gift a limit, so that it has lost its virtue? But as they [the disciples] asked that question, gradually they must have become aware of a more profound fulfilment of the promise. No longer over outer and material things, but now over the inner and spiritual life, the power of faith began to show itself. No longer over the danger of the serpents which the hands could handle, or of the sicknesses which flushed the cheek with fever or crippled the tortured limbs, did their belief prove itself mighty. *The serpents of the soul, the sicknesses of the heart and mind, they learned to see that these were more dangerous enemies, and that their faith*

came to its supreme test when it grappled with and tried to conquer these. The conviction grew with the deepening spiritual life of Christianity, until at last the words changed their tone, and now it is a promise of *spiritual victory over spiritual difficulties*, when the disciple hears his Lord declare, You shall take up serpents, and if you touch any deadly thing it shall not harm you. You shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

Although this book does not indorse the inference of the sermon that the power of physical healing exercised by Jesus and his immediate followers is now withheld from men, it is well to break the chain by which mere healers of bodily diseases quote the loftiest sayings of the great Master in sanction of their practice, and in his divinest name declare their work a function of ecstatic piety. There are plenty of remedies for the disorders of the flesh, what the world needs is a radical cure for the deeper *canker of the mind*, that no physical drug or theological dogma is able to reach. The curative prescribed by true religion, according to Dr. Brooks, is Faith, "that old think, Faith"; but it is faith of a different type from that commonly enjoyed by professors of church creeds. This is what the preacher defined it: —

"Faith, then, personal faith, is this: the power by which one being's vitality, through love and obedience, becomes the vitality of another being. Simple enough that is, I am sure, for any man who will think. I believe in you, my friend;

and your vitality, your character, your energy, the more I love and obey you, passes over into me. . . . Now faith in Christ, what is it? Just in the same way, it is that power by which the vitality of Christ, through our love and obedience to him, becomes our vitality."

If this be true, it is the intent and mission of the Christian religion to established "a distinct relation between soul and soul" that shall make possible the transmission of "one being's" helpful vitality to others. Its essence is helpfulness and safety, not in any ideal or miraculous sense, but a practical service to men in the common ways and perplexities of life. Concerning the results of such faith as he described, the preacher continued:—

"'If they drink any deadly thing it shall not harm them, and they shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover.' Is that a prize? Is it wages which is offered for a certain meritorious act which is called faith? Not so, surely! It is a consequence. It is a necessity. Safety and helpfulness. These come out of the full life of Christ in the soul of man as the inevitable fruits. Safety, so that what hurts other men shall not hurt him. Helpfulness, so that his brethren about him shall live by his life. These are the utterances of the vitality of him who is thoroughly alive. . . ."

"'He shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.' Safety and helpfulness. He shall be safe and he shall save others, too. . . . No man can really save another unless he saves himself. It is the good man by his good deeds that gives life to the world. . . . Full of that life [of Christ], he gives it everywhere he goes. *The sick in soul touch his soul and are well again.*"



In this last-quoted sentiment the reverend author almost joins hands with Emerson in saying: "Be you only whole and sufficient, and I shall feel you in every part of my life and fortune, and I can as easily dodge the gravitation of the globe as escape your influence." But the nearness is only accidental, for the preacher's Faith and the sage's Wholeness are distinct states of mind, that may be as wide apart as are the moral medicaments of the Roman Catholic Church and absolute *vital force* that heals and prevents the return of that deep-seated mental disease which has infected every member of the human race.

The prime defect in the moral remedy proposed by the church lies in the fact that it is *faith*, which when pitted against the material facts that men claim to *know* because they can be verified, suffers by the comparison. The invisible things of faith never take hold of a man steeped in sensuous thought like the "frozen facts" represented by dollars and cents. There is a sublime, uplifting tone to the sermon from which these passages are taken that makes one braver and stronger for the reading. It carries the doctrine up as far as that type of belief will ever carry it; but it only reaches the remote effects of the disease and stimulates the sufferer to a braver endurance. It is *help*, not *cure*. Here is a quotation from another sermon, pitched in the same key, and given to the world in 1849:—

“We have but *faith*: we cannot *know*,  
For knowledge is of things we see,  
And yet we trust it comes from the  
A beam in darkness: let it grow.”

The way to escape the evils of life proposed by Christianity is better than that of Buddhism, and to-day the methods of the church are far more helpful to mankind in this present life than they were centuries ago. The tone of such sermons as that from which the preceding passages are taken suggests the possibility of reaching still higher truth. Have any of the mental healers caught a glimpse of something beyond? or is the truth they are blindly feeling after, but have not grasped in its fullness, an adequate solution of the vexed problem?

When we consider what other religions that may be called in any proper sense contemporaneous with that of Jesus have done for man, the vast superiority of Christianity becomes apparent. Buddhism is, perhaps, the best of these, and yet it suffers by contrast. Gautama, the founder, being profoundly touched at sight of the misery of human life, sought to attain a higher religious life for the same reason that attracts devout persons to it to-day. After years of withdrawal from the world and close self-communion, he announced a door of escape by renunciation. His fundamental principles were: *There is sorrow; Every living*

*creature feels it; Deliverance is desirable; Pure knowledge makes escape possible.* Thus did that devout thinker formulate the truth he saw six centuries before the advent of Christ.

The primary cause of trouble as it appeared to Buddha lay in a selfish clinging to existence. Life being a series of ills, sorrow cannot be avoided so long as it endures. But, as Alger explains:—

“This cleaving to existence is itself the result of ignorance. In consequence of ignorance, there is an accumulation of merit and demerit; in consequence of merit and demerit, consciousness is produced; in consequence of consciousness, the mental faculties and the body are produced; in consequence of the mind and the body, sensations are produced; in consequence of sensations, desire is produced; in consequence of desire, attachment is produced; in consequence of attachment, birth is produced; in consequence of birth, grief, discontent, vexation, decay, and death are produced. Thus originates the complete catenation of evils. Whenever one of these constituents ceases to be, the next in the series ceases to be, and the whole combination of sorrows ends.”

“The method of Buddha proposed for destroying the cleaving to existence was by removing the ignorance which caused it. This ignorance he would remove by destroying the self-love, the personal desires, the enslaving attachments, which bind men to the two truths *that all finite being is essentially evil*, a painful turmoil of changes, and *that eternal deliverance from it is the absolute good*. This fatal love of self, this profound clinging to things, he would overcome primarily, by revealing to man the phenomenal nature of the soul, that he is only a brief and complicated process of states, the new individual to whom his Karma is to be transferred being

an utterly separate person, with no remembrance of him whatever; and secondarily, by the most persevering emphasis and contemplation of all the disgusts and horrors of experience. In this manner he aimed to detach man from false delights, wean him from the folly of selfish affection, lead him to lose himself in an infinite surrender and repose, cause him in disinterested sympathy for others to labor to break the unhappy series of existences, dissolve the dark combination of woes, and unpeople the worlds by peopling Nirwána."

Contrary as all this is to our way of thinking, it constitutes a method of exemption devoutly to be wished for, by every pious Buddhist who is weary of the struggle of life, and seeks that negative peace, where

"The aching craze to live ends, and life glides —  
Lifeless — to nameless quiet, nameless joy,  
Blesséd Nirvâna — sinless, stirless rest —  
That change which never changes."

This system, as wrought out by Sakya-Muni, its founder, is the deification of the human soul, saved by the knowledge of the laws of nature. Buddhism makes morality consist in progress, by obedience to natural law as revealed by Buddha. Such is the comprehensive definition given by Rev. Dr. James Freeman Clarke. It is not a moral struggle for right against wrong, which forms the essence of practical Christianity, today; it is the attainment of the highest possible destiny of man, through renunciation of self. There is in it the basis of the belief in which



Harriet Martineau died, a condition of mind easily desirable to the Oriental, but quite unsuited to the demands of Western thought.

There are certain remarkable analogies, or affinities, between Buddhism and Christianity, and Sakya-Muni, like Jesus, opposed priestly assumptions, taught in a land of caste the equality and brotherhood of man, and sent forth disciples to preach his doctrines and spread the religion among the people. He opposed the Brahmans, as Jesus opposed the Pharisees. He taught orally, and left no writings behind him. These notable affinities are thus spoken of in an article in *The North American Review*, in 1883:—

“... The ceremonies, ritual, and rights of the Buddhists strikingly resemble those of the Roman Catholic Church. The Buddhist priests are monks. They take the same three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, which are binding on those of the Roman Church. They are mendicants, like the mendicant orders of St. Francis and St. Dominic. They are tonsured; use strings of beads, like the rosary, with which to count their prayers; have incense and candles in their worship; use fasts, processions, litanies, and holy water. They have something akin to the adoration of saints; repeat prayers in an unknown tongue; have a chanted psalmody with a double choir; and suspend the censer from five chains. In China, some Buddhists worship the image of a virgin, called the Queen of Heaven, having an infant in her arms, and holding a cross. In Thibet, the Grand Lamas wear a mitre, dalmatica, and cope, and pronounce a benediction on the laity by extending the right hand over their heads.

The Dalai-Lama resembles the Pope, and is regarded as the head of the Church. The worship of relics is very ancient among the Buddhists, and so are pilgrimages to sacred places.

“Besides these resemblances in outward ceremonies, more important ones appear in the inner life and history of the two religions. Both belong to those systems which derive their character from a human founder, and not from a national tendency; to the class which contains the religions of Moses, Zoroaster, Confucius, and Mohammed, and not to that in which the Brahmanical, Egyptian, Scandinavian, Greek, and Roman religions are found. Both Buddhism and Christianity are catholic, and not ethnic; that is, not confined to a single race or nation, but, by their missionary spirit, passing beyond these boundaries, and making converts among many races. Christianity began among the Jews as a Semitic religion, but, being rejected by the Jewish nation, established itself among the Aryan races of Europe. In the same way Buddhism, beginning among the Aryan people — the Hindoos — was expelled from Hindostan, and established itself among the Mongol races of Eastern Asia. Besides its resemblances to the Catholic side of Christianity, Buddhism has still closer analogies with the Protestant Church. Like Protestantism, it is a reform, which rejects a hierarchal system and does away with a priestly caste. Like Protestantism, it has emphasized the purely humane side of life, and is a religion of humanity rather than of piety. Both the Christian and the Buddhist Churches teach a divine incarnation, and they worship a God-man.”

One object of digressing to notice specifically the characteristics of Buddhism is to show that the theology of the mental healers differs quite as widely from this Oriental faith as from the na-

tional religion of their own country. The "Christian scientists," who were the first to teach peculiar religious doctrines in connection with the practice of psychopathy, have been accused of introducing among their students a modified form of Indian Buddhism. The same ignorance of what they teach has led their critics into the error of declaring modern healing to be a phase of occult theosophy formed on Paracelsus, that it contains a dangerous esoteric element of which all wise and good people should beware. Neither of these charges is well founded, and the religious dogmas of the curative "science," whatever else they may be, have no affinity with those uttered by the "Light of Asia."

There is, however, one truth common to all intelligent religions, and which the Buddhist especially accents, of which mental healers make great account; but it is not a dogma, but a universal principle. They hold that the prime root of all the evil of this earthly existence is the strong desire for personal gratification. Believing his soul and body alike to exist by virtue of desires in themselves selfish and productive of evil, desires which will continue his being through a succession of lives so long as they are indulged, the follower of Buddha seeks to end the prolonged struggle, and feels

"That to be saved is only this,—  
Salvation from our selfishness."

Returning once more to consider Christianity: if we look at it as a system of religion, which, however catholic, has never embodied the spirit and teachings of its founder in their fulness and purity, we cannot deny that there is a want in human nature that it does not meet. As defined by its best expounders of every sect, it is a militant religion, recognizing a positive power of evil in the world, against which it must keep up a perpetual offensive and defensive warfare. It teaches that man is an independent personal being, blindly exercising his own will and pleasure under the general guidance of the Supreme Ruler of the world. If man elect to fight on the side of truth, he may depend on celestial help in seasons of trial and distress; but he is still left to struggle with superior forces opposed to good. It makes suffering God's disciplinary instrument, with which to correct and chasten his human children. It declares that, through indulgent mercy and grace, man lives by faith in a world of probation, hoping for the fruition of knowledge and happiness in a life to come. It holds that material things are realities of which man is a custodian, bound to use them for the glory of God.

So long as we believe that the Almighty in his inscrutable wisdom permits evil, no complete harmony of life is possible for us, even though we



feel assured that it is meant for our good, and that the divine grace is sufficient for us. Conflict between the forces of good and evil must inevitably produce discord, and discord is the essence of the canker of the mind that robs life of true serenity. It may be granted that, with a just cause and a worthy end to strive for, a man may endure hardness as a good soldier, consoled by the consciousness of doing his duty, and cheered by the hope of a blessed immortality hereafter. But that in its highest aspects is heroic endurance, not triumph or exemption from pain. It is not a fullness of life that leaves nothing to be desired.

It does not alter the fact to assume that the continual antagonism incident to our earthly experience is the heaven-appointed means of promoting spiritual progress in the individual and the race. Familiar indeed is the confident assertion that it would not conserve man's best interests to live in a world of unalloyed delight; that the toil by which success is achieved is a universal blessing; that pain is discipline, and life is designed to be unsatisfying. We are born into a world which seems to be conducted on this plan, and must accept what we find, if it be inevitable. The whole experience of life is summed up in the following three lines from Chaucer, which for intensity of meaning it would be hard to match:

“The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne,  
Thassay so sharp, so hard the conquerynge,  
The dredful joye alway that flit so yerne.”

To put these antiquated lines into modern phrase: the sweet poet voices with a tender, ineffable sorrow in his tone, the universal complaint that the art of learning how to live is so difficult, that life is all too short for the lesson; that the trials are so sharp, and success so hard to achieve, that the cup of pleasure is so volatile, so quickly drained, that it is in danger of being dissipated even while we are quaffing it.

Very likely it denotes a lack of mental soundness to hint at such a thing; but has it never occurred to any one to question the grounds on which antagonism and suffering are assumed to be the only possible means of spiritual development? That it seems so to us may be because we have had no opportunity to test anything else. But is it so very wild, forsooth, to doubt whether the loving Father of us all desires his earthly children to wage perpetual warfare, in order to show forth his blessed gospel of peace? Theologians tell us there is no other way known under the moral government of God to subdue the evil inherent in human nature, and cause the peaceable fruits of righteousness to abound; but is it true?

There is a helpful suggestion in the recorded answer of Jesus to the inquiry of Pilate concern-

ing his claim as a king. When Jesus had been arraigned in the judgment hall, the Roman governor asked him: "Art thou the King of the Jews?" "Sayest thou this of thyself," replied the prisoner, "or did others tell it thee of me?" Pilate answered: "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?"

And this was the memorable reply of him whom the Christian world extols as the Prince of Peace, while in his name they declare life one incessant conflict:—

"My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Reader, put your own construction on this passage, no matter what it may be; but honestly collate it with the uniform spirit and tenor of his utterances, and then decide if he who spake as never man spake originated the theory of moral antagonism adopted by the church that bears his name. What cruel mockery to say to his sorrowing disciples on the eve of parting, "*My peace I leave with you,*" if he had not ended the struggle within, or if he meant nothing deeper than the

customary salutation, "Peace be with you." Was it not an assurance that his diviner insight discerned a possible immunity from conflict for them?

An affirmative answer does not compel us to accept the non-resistant doctrine that wrong should never be resisted by force, and that a man ought supinely to take every insult offered him and then invite further abuse by literally turning the other cheek. Force is absolutely indispensable; executive power is its appropriate symbol, and no life or progress would be possible without it. The error is, not that force is forever opposed to wrong, but that men constitute themselves the champions and warriors who are to grasp truth (some truth) as a weapon, and attack error therewith. By so doing they usurp the *prerogative of truth*, when it is for them to be simply the *mediums of truth*.

Truth, which is another name for Vital Force, flows *through* us, if we are good mediums, and enlightens the dark places of the world. But Truth, the active power of God, does not ride forth as a knight-errant to meet foes in combat. Truth is *infinite*; what men name evil is *finite*. The eternal energy that creates by a word, that spake, and the cosmic laws executed themselves, acts through the magic of infinite harmony.



## XII.

### HELP FROM IND.

THE problems we most wish to solve perplexed the thinkers of remote antiquity. They had the same spiritual and material limitations, the same tendencies to evil, the same longing after fullness of life. Nor do we seem to be more successful than they in our search after truth. We are girt about by finite walls, and when we try to penetrate the realm of spirit are baffled on every side and make no progress. Know God we cannot; yet always when we reflect most earnestly on the problem of the infinite, there come whispers to our inmost soul that God knows us, and that we derive our life from a source that is incomprehensible to us.

It was thus that the idea of God possessed the thought of the prayerful Hindoo on the banks of the sacred Ganges, perhaps thirty or forty centuries ago. It is difficult to realize the religious life and philosophic thought of a people so far removed by longitude and time. Scarcely are we able after earnest study to feel with our own Puritan ancestors, or make ourselves at home in thought

with colonial life as it existed in New England two hundred and fifty years ago. But our sincere thanks are due to the indefatigable scholars whose life-long labors now make it possible for us to acquire a tolerably accurate conception of the faith held in its virgin purity, according to Dr. Martin Haug, a high authority, from twelve hundred to twenty-four hundred years before the Christian era.

Brahmanism, that subsequently became corrupted, was then, Dr. Clarke<sup>1</sup> tells us, faith in pure spirit. Its worship was contemplation and adoration; its hymns and prayers, its epics, its philosophy, were all intensely spiritual. No one knows how far back it reaches, or whence and when it took its rise. Whether its germs were nursed among the Aryan race on the Caspian plains, long before that pastoral people dispersed and a remnant of them found a new home in India; or, whether it sprung up later among the Hindoos, history does not show. Those who have studied the subject most thoroughly agree that this ancient and wonderful religion can be traced to no individual as its founder or restorer. It was not named for a Confucius, a Zoroaster, a Christ, or a Mohammed. There was no personality about it; but it lay open on the spiritual side to infinite celestial deeps.

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<sup>1</sup> "Ten Great Religions." By James Freeman Clarke, D.D.

It should be said at the outset that, in order to be just to the primitive religion of the Hindoos, we must admit, with Dr. Clarke, that the caste system, idolatry, the Indian Triad, the incarnations of Vishnu, and the subsequent polytheism, are *not essential* to Brahmanism, but are the fruit of a corruption of the original type. "It is not difficult," says Schlegel, "to mark the progress by which the primitive doctrine, deviating from its original simplicity, came to degenerate into poetical polytheisms, which, resting on an imperfect or misconstrued sidereal basis, became the source of heathen mythology stamped with a common impress among people the most remote from each other in time and place." And on this point it is enough to add the further remark of Dr. Clarke, that, "when we succeed in grasping and holding the radical motive of each system of belief, we are able to see that much historically connected with it is an adventitious accretion. Such phenomena are either not to be found in the religion in its origin [a statement true of Brahmanism]; or else have not continued to belong to it during its subsequent development. . . . They do not belong to the type, but are corruptions or unessential additions to it."

Brahmanism in its purity, was the religion of an Oriental people whose "profound wisdom and beauty of thought" are the admiration of scholars,

and whose very language was Sanskrit, that is, perfect and finished. Vêda, a word whose derivative meaning is *to know*, is the name of the sacred books or scriptures of the Brahmans, supposed to have been compiled by Vyasa, the celebrated Hindoo sage, and to contain the fountain and sum of all essential knowledge. The Vêdanta philosophy, which aims to be the "end or scope of all knowledge," is, according to Dr. Thomas, an ideal system, which was derived or developed from portions of the Vêdas, called the Upanishads; and this is also a Sanskrit term, denoting what is most essential in the religious writings of the Hindoos.

Those competent to read them tell us that these sacred books are of great antiquity, some of the oldest hymns, in the opinion of Dr. Haug, being composed four thousand years ago. They contain no history, chronology, or annals, but are rich in literary thought and metaphysical lore. They contain a philosophy at once acute and profound, and a cosmical theory and belief in spirit, as ideal as that of Hegel.

Brahm, a Sanskrit word, signifying originally earnest, intense prayer, was adopted as the name of the eternal, self-existent Being and one only life. Para-Brahm, as scholars say, by way of distinction, is the unknowable Vital Force, whose attributes and powers alone any finite conception of God can embody. It is the only Substance; above



all things, through all things, and the reality of all things. Its image is the outer universe, it knows no persons, and the life or soul of human beings is part and particle of Para-Brahm.

This is Deity which in the sacred books is made to say: "I am the great Brahma, eternal, pure, free, one, constant, happy, existing without end." In the "Institutes of Manu," Brahm is spoken of as, "He whom the mind alone can perceive, whose essence eludes the external organs, who has no visible parts, who exists from eternity,—even he, the soul of all things, whom no being can comprehend."

The Vêdanta philosophy teaches that everything proceeds from a single eternal, uncreated Principle; it declares that there is only *one* being in the universe. That one unchangeable Being is Para-Brahm, who unfolds into the universe as Creator and Created. Para-Brahm stands for Absolute Being.

Moar says: "Of that infinite, incomprehensible, self-existent Spirit no representation is made; to his direct and immediate honor no temples rise; nor dare a Hindoo address to him the effusions of his soul otherwise than by mediation of a personified attribute, or though the intervention of a priest." We are told that, though the modern Hindoos have many idols, they have no image of Brahm; but the pious Brahmans meditate in pro-

found and silent awe upon his unspeakable attributes.

A translation from the Upanishads reads : "How can one teach concerning Brahma?<sup>1</sup> He is neither the known nor the unknown. That which cannot be expressed in words, but through which all expression comes, this I know to be Brahma. That which cannot be thought by the mind, but by which all thinking comes, this I know is Brahma. That which cannot be seen by the eye, but by which the eye sees, is Brahma. If thou thinkest thou canst know it, then in truth thou knowest it very little. To whom it is unknown, he knows it ; but to whom it is known, he knows it not."

The creation of the visible world was accomplished as a particular manifestation of Deity, called Brahma, the Creator, in distinction from Para-Brahm, absolute being. Not that the Creator is in any way a being different from or other than the eternal One ; but it accommodates the finite conception to distinguish Brahm creating as Brahma. The oldest and most graphic account of creation is contained in the eleventh chapter of the tenth book of the Rig-Vêda. Its many resemblances to the Hebrew account of the same event, as recorded in the Mosaic book of Genesis, are striking ; and the translation reads as follows : —

"Then there was no entity nor non-entity ; no world, no sky, nor aught above it ; nothing anywhere, involving or involved ; nor water deep and dangerous. Death was not, and therefore no immortality, nor distinction of day or night.

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<sup>1</sup> More properly Para-Brahm.

But THAT ONE breathed calmly alone with Nature, her who is sustained within Him. Other than Him, nothing existed [which] since [has been]. Darkness there was; [for] this universe was enveloped with darkness, and was undistinguishable waters; but that mass, which was covered by the husk, was [at length] produced by the power of contemplation. First desire was formed in his mind; and that became the original productive seed; which the wise, recognizing it by the intellect in their hearts, distinguish as the bond of non-entity with entity.

“Did the luminous ray of these [creative acts] expand in the middle, or above, or below? That productive energy became providence [or sentient souls], and matter [or the elements]; Nature, who is sustained within, was inferior; and he who sustains was above.

“Who knows exactly, and who shall in this world declare, whence and why this creation took place? The gods are subsequent to the creation of this world: then who can know whence it proceeded, or whence this varied world arose, or whether it upholds [itself] or not? He who in the highest heaven is the ruler of the universe, — he knows, or does not know.”

The Brahmanic cosmos is *Maya*, a world of illusion. “The world,” says Sankara, “is Not-Being. It is appearance without reality, a delusive show.” The Vêdanta says: “From the highest state of Brahma to the lowest condition of a straw, all is illusion.” “The soul itself has no actual being,” adds Sankara.

The invisible, sensible universe is all an illusion, not a reality. Though real as phenomena, it is unreal as being. “It is not true, because it has

no essence; but it is not false, because its existence, even as illusion, is from God."

The doctrine of Emanation, says Dr. Thomas, may be said to form the basis of the Brahmanical system. According to this system, Brahm is the source and centre of all existence, and the various creatures of the universe are nothing more than emanations from Him; in other words, they are so many parts or members of the Universal Being, as the bays and creeks on the sea-coast are parts or members of the ocean. And as Brahm is the source whence all things have proceeded or been evolved, so all things will at last return to Him and be absorbed into his essence.

The canons of the Vêdanta expound the earliest known form of Idealism which finds for the most part an unkindly soil in the mental philosophy of the Occident. Those who formulated those sublime doctrines of Spirit and creation have had many imitators in the long centuries since they were first promulgated, who, grasping them more or less clearly, have given them new settings, and refashioned them in the mold of their own age and thought. They seem mysterious and false to the materialistic thought of the present day, and modern theologians are apt to condemn them as unsound on account of the corruptions of Brahmanism which have prevailed in India in later periods of its history. But as the



gross immoralities and wickedness committed in the name of Christianity find no sanction in the gospel of its founder, so the idolatries and sensualism of the later Brahmans are simply departures from the pure spirit and letter of the sacred Vêdas.

The entire literature of the ancient Vêdic Scriptures is pervaded with a flavor of lofty adoration, like that observed in much of the writings belonging to the Hebrew Scriptures as we have them. There is nothing pagan to the Christian mind in their tone or thought; on the contrary they are reverent and exalted in the highest degree. The following quotation from the Rig-Vêda suggests the style and spirit of the Psalms of David:—

“ In the beginning there arose the Source of golden light. He was the only born Lord of all that is. He established the earth, and this sky. Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice ?

“ He who gives life. He who gives strength ; whose blessing all the bright gods desire ; whose shadow is immortality, whose shadow is death. Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice ?

“ He who through his power is the only king of the breathing and awakening world. He who governs all, man and beast. Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice ?

“ He whose power these snowy mountains, whose power the sea proclaims, with the distant river. He whose these regions are, as it were, his two arms. Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice ?

“He through whom the sky is bright and the earth firm. He through whom heaven was stablished; nay, the highest heaven. He who measured out the light in the air. Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?”

“He to whom heaven and earth, standing firm by his will, look up, trembling inwardly. He over whom the rising sun shines forth. Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?”

“Wherever the mighty water-clouds went, where they placed the seed and lit the fire, thence arose he who is the only life of the bright gods. Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?”

“He who by his might looked even over the water-clouds, the clouds which gave strength and lit the sacrifice; *he who is God above all gods*. Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?”

“May he not destroy us, — he the the creator of the earth, — or he, the righteous, who created heaven; he who also created the bright and mighty waters. Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?”

There is very little in the records of this strangely spiritual religion to aid us in judging of its practical effect on the conduct of its votaries, while it was believed and practised in its purity. What it was subsequently is readily determined, but just what sort of fruit such a faith would naturally produce can be only conjectured; for no history of that ancient people has been preserved. That they believed evil to spring from contact with the world of the senses, if considered as reality, there can be no doubt. Safety and hap-

piness lay in holding fast to the supremacy of spirit as the only true being. In their creed, material beliefs bred selfishness, and selfishness implied personality, a conception of being utterly at variance with the Brahmanic cosmos. They do not seem to have denied that the external world and the human form are realities to the senses; but seen by spirit, the only intelligence, they are *maya*. Some faint light, however, is thrown on this question, by the following passages from the "Laws of Manu," concerning the education of the priesthood: —

"Self-love is no laudable motive, yet an exemption from self-love is not found in this world: on self-love is grounded the study of Scripture, and the practice of actions recommended in it.

"Eager desire to act has its root in expectation of some advantage; and with such expectation are sacrifices performed; the rules of religious austerity and abstinence from sins are all known to arise from hope of remuneration.

"Not a single act here below appears ever to be done by a man free from self-love; whatever he perform, it is wrought from his desire of a reward.

"He, indeed, who should persist in discharging these duties without any view to their fruit, would attain hereafter the state of the immortals, and even in this life would enjoy all the virtuous gratifications that his fancy could suggest."

Two passages from the book relating to devotion read: —

“Let him [a Brahman] not wish for death. Let him not wish for life. Let him expect his appointed time, as the hired servant expects his wages.”

“Meditating on the Supreme Spirit, without any earthly desire, with no companion but his own soul, let him live in this world seeking the bliss of the next.”

How to attain to the most exalted spirituality and the loftiest perception of truth is intimated by the following clauses of the ancient code:—

“Let every Brahman, with fixed attention, consider all nature as existing in the Divine Spirit; all worlds as seated in him; he alone as the whole assemblage of gods; and he the divine nature.”

“Let him consider the supreme omnipresent intelligence as the sovereign lord of the universe, by whom alone it exists, an incomprehensible spirit; pervading all beings in five elemental forms, and causing them to pass through birth, growth, and decay, and so revolve like the wheels of a car.”

“Thus man who perceives in his own soul the supreme soul present in all creatures, acquires equanimity toward them all, and shall be absorbed at last in the highest essence, even that of the Almighty himself.”

It has been charged by some commentators that the Vêdas represent Para-Brahm as Deity devoid of qualities; a God destitute of attributes, and supremely inactive. It is inferred from the doctrine of illusion that, since there is nothing real but spirit, spirit neither creates, nor sustains the world, consequently exerts no influence whatever. “Brahm cannot act,” say they, “because,



all being *maya*, there is nothing on which power can be exerted."

To this charge it may be replied that the same conditions would be reached by applying ultra-idealism to the conception of the Christian God, or that of any other divinity. Hegelianism amounts to the same thing when strictly construed. But the objection rests on a gratuitous assumption that troubles no one but a metaphysician, bent on making idealism appear absurd. The very commentator who urges the point knows that he thinks. He is aware that there flow into his mind, as intuitions, ideas in the consideration of which he employs thought. He is conscious that those noetic ideas are emanations of spirit, the spirit which he calls God. Now, that emanation, proceeding from Deity and setting in motion the machinery of thought within his brain, is a force, whether he be an idealist or a materialist; it is action of spirit, whether he regard his body real or an illusion; and this his own consciousness decides.

Call the world an illusion, if you please, and your own consciousness a dream, — that it is so to you proves that some active agency has impressed such a thought on your own consciousness, else it would not be there; and every thought you entertain is the direct effect of the constant activity of spirit. True, you cannot analyze the mode of spiritual activity, as a physiologist does his material theory of

mental activity. He tells you that, when you look at an object, by the law of molecular action, a sensation passes to your eye on the rays of light, thence to your brain on the optic nerve; and there a molecular change in the tissue of the organ of thought certifies you that the object you look at exists and has certain visible qualities and position. But now, supposing that object to be a painting of a world-famous artist, whence comes that sense of beauty in you that invests that piece of canvas with those subtler qualities which cannot be represented with pigments, but which the artist strove to suggest? Why do you see in that picture what the housemaid who dusts it never discovered? Are not those very qualities of beauty with which you invest the painting an *illusion* to the physical senses? But, at the same time, are they not the most real of realities to the soul? You understand Sanskrit, and, as you read the sacred Vêdas, their intense spiritualism fills you with rapture: what is that ecstasy of joy but an illusion to the senses? I examine the same writing and its characters make the same impression on my eyes that they do on yours. But the intense spirituality I do not perceive, the rapture I do not share, even though it be an influx of spirit. The whole truth is not apprehended until we see, with Emerson, that nature is not fixed, but fluid, and that spirit is constantly molding it into new forms, penetrated with its own life.

This fragmentary glance (taken for a special purpose) at the primitive religion of Ind, may be appropriately closed with some thoughts expressed in the pages of Dr. Clarke.

“Brahmanism teaches the truth of the reality of spirit, and that spirit is infinite, absolute, perfect, one; that it is the substance underlying all existence. Brahmanism glows through and through with this spirituality. Its literature, no less than its theology, teaches it. It is in the dramas of Calidasa, as well as in the sublime strains of the Bhagavat-gita. Something divine is present in all nature and all life, —

‘Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air.’

“Now, with this Christianity is in fullest agreement. We have such passages in the Scriptures as these: ‘God is Spirit;’ ‘God is love; whoso dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him;’ ‘In him we live, and move, and have our being;’ ‘He is above all, and through all, and in us all.’ But beside these texts, which strike the key-note of the music which was to come after, there are divine strains of spiritualism, of God all in all, which come through a long chain of teachers of the Church, sounding on in the Confessions of Augustine, the prayers of Thomas Aquinas, Anselm, Bonaventum, St. Bernard, through the Latin hymns of the Middle Ages, and develop themselves at last in what is called romantic art and romantic song. A Gothic cathedral like Antwerp or Strasburg, — what is it but a striving upward of the soul to lose itself in God? A symphony of Beethoven, — what is it but the same unbounded longing and striving toward the Infinite and Eternal? The poetry of Wordsworth, of Goethe, Schiller, Dante, Byron, Victor Hugo, Manzoni, all partakes of the same element. It is opposed to

classic art and classic poetry in this, that instead of limits, it seeks the unlimited; that is, it believes in spirit, which alone is unlimited; the *infinite*, that which *is*, not that which appears; the *essence* of things, not their *existence* or outwardness."



### XIII.

#### EMERSON'S IDEALISM.

WHAT shines as a far-off light of the most ancient Ind was reënforced by Jesus, and translated into the language of modern American thought in the writings of Emerson. It is this element in them that differentiates the literary works he has left from those of other authors of his time. It is at once a stumbling-block to readers, and the key to his meaning. Leave out this element, or fail to understand it, and his books comprise a series of beautiful, instructive essays and poems, but have lost their chief value. For his theory of writing was that the highest ground from which Genius can speak is that of devotion to pure truth, *for the sake of truth*; literary talent, culture, self, must all be surrendered to the moral sentiment which seeks the highest unity.

The difficulty which students of Emerson encounter in his works is not with the literary style, but with his philosophy, which seems to them unintelligible and misty; and it certainly is so, when judged by the standard of intellectual culture and material thought. It was not his aim to become

a bright light among authors and men of letters, though he might easily have won such a distinction. He was eminently what Matthew Arnold has happily styled him, "*the aider of those who would live in the spirit.*" The transcendental following he had during life, and the Concord School of Philosophy, so called, may or may not have had a true insight of his spiritual teachings, or been in hearty sympathy with them; but he who interprets them by his own intuitions will find them a Mimer's well of spiritual wisdom.

One reason why so many find Emerson's meaning hard to grasp is because he did not present his views on each theological subject he treated under a single collective head. A luminous passage concerning his doctrines of spirit, soul, or matter, for example, is likely to occur in an essay where the reader would least expect to find it; so that an adequate explanation of them is not to be gathered by reading a particular essay, but must be sought in various passages collated by careful research. One cannot determine what he means by "spirit" by reading "Spiritual Laws;" and needs to read much else in order to interpret "The Over-Soul" aright. "Nature" is methodically unfolded in a series of eight consecutive chapters; but many helpful comments on the subject are to be found scattered through the other works. But, once in possession of the true key,

one may open almost anywhere, and find his writing permeated with the dominant thought of his philosophy.

A wag said that when Emerson was in Egypt, the Sphinx said to him, "You're another!" The grand unifying idea of his system of philosophy is that of God, a supreme, omnipresent, intelligent Force, forever putting forth creative life through mind and nature. He considers the Universe to be composed of Nature and the Soul. He is a thoroughgoing Idealist, and his doctrines are those of primitive Brahmanism, modified by being passed through the crucible of Western thought. The novelty of his position is that, in constructing a theory of life, he takes his departure from the godward side, and not from the side of the senses.

To assume to understand a man "whom all, or almost all, agree upon as one of the great lights of the New World, and whom very many regard as an unpredicted Messiah," would be the height of arrogance, while the more modest and less difficult task of seeking in his pages a door of escape from the antagonism of life may not be altogether fruitless. And yet, whoever attempts it will be forced to confess with his recent biographer, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, that "the wide range of thought which belonged to the subject of the Memoir, the occasional mysticism and the frequent tendency toward it, the sweep of imagination and the sparkle

of wit which kept his reader's mind on the stretch, the union of prevailing good sense with exceptional extravagances, the modest audacity of a nature that showed itself in its naked truthfulness and was not ashamed, the feeling that I was in the company of a sibylline intelligence which was discounting the promises of the remote future long before they were due, — all this made the task a grave one."

It is quite proper to consider also another factor of the problem pointed out by his accomplished biographer, before taking up the book to search for the hidden truth: he tells us that he found himself "amid the vortices of uncounted, various, bewildering judgment, Catholic and Protestant, orthodox and liberal, scholarly from under the tree of knowledge and sensible from over the potato-hill; the passionate enthusiasm of young adorers and the cool, if not cynical, estimate of hardened critics, all intersecting each other as they whirled, each around its own centre," — complications that made it indeed very difficult to keep the faculties clear and the judgment unbiased.

Thus warned of the difficulties and perils to be encountered, let us attempt the easier task already proposed, by allowing the sibylline author to speak to us in his own way of the wonderful truths of which he had a seer's insight. To do this in such a way as to be sure of our ground, let



us collect the different statements of the same or related truths, scattered here and there through his books, and bring them together in connected sentences, as an Eastern merchant in the stories of the Arabian Nights might have gathered up a string of scattered pearls. In this way quotation marks may be largely dispensed with, by crediting the source with the result *in toto*, and considering the poor string on which the pearls of thought are hung worthless save for what it serves to hold together.

To say a man is an Idealist does not define very closely either his theology or his philosophy. He may belong to the absolute, æsthetic, theological, skeptical, critical, or mystic school and still be an idealist. Idealism, broadly defined, is the doctrine that, in external perceptions, the objects immediately known are ideas, and is opposed to Realism which considers the sensible objects outside of ourselves *real things*. In his History of Philosophy Lewes thus illustrates some phases of German idealism: "I see a tree. The common psychologists tell me that there are three things implied in this one act of vision, viz.: a tree, an image of that tree, and a mind which apprehends that image. Fichte tells me that it is I alone who exist. The tree and the image of it are one thing, and that is a modification of my mind. This is *subjective idealism*. Schelling

tells me that both the tree and my *ego* (or self) are existencies equally real or ideal; but they are nothing less than manifestations of the absolute, the infinite, or unconditional. This is *objective idealism*. But Hegel tells me that all these explanations are false. The only thing really existing (in this one fact of vision) is the idea, the relation. The *ego* and the tree are but two terms of the relation, and owe their relation to it. This is *absolute idealism*.

Now, if the statement that Emerson is an idealist suggests such metaphysical hair-splitting as that in which the astute Teutons disputed the less attenuated logic of Bishop Berkeley, the false impression should be at once and forever abandoned. Emerson was in search of truth, and cared not for fine-spun theories, which have little interest for a man in dead earnest to find the way of salvation. Whether nature enjoy a substantial existence without, or is only in the apocalypse of the mind, it was alike useful and venerable to him. "Be it what it may," says he, "it is *ideal* to me, so long as I cannot try the accuracy of my senses."

He admits that the modes of thinking adopted by idealists on the one hand, and materialists on the other, are both natural; but the idealist contends that his way of thinking is in higher nature. He concedes all that the materialist affirms, admits the impressions of sense, admits their coherency,

their use and beauty, and then asks him for his *grounds of assurance that things are as his senses represent them*. He who holds that the objects in nature are real things is liable to be deceived by illusions, and must at last fall back on mind to determine the truth of what his senses affirm. But what the idealist calls facts are not affected by the illusions of the senses; they are thoughts and ideas, which can be relied on as real, because they are of the same nature as the faculty that reports them. To the senses and the unrenewed understanding belongs a sort of instinctive belief in the absolute existence of nature; things are ultimates, and there seems to be nothing higher or more real. But when the eye of Reason opens, there arises in the mind a serious doubt whether nature outwardly exists.

It is a sufficient account of that Appearance we call the World, that God will teach a human mind, and so makes it the receiver of a certain number of congruent sensations, which we call sun and moon, man and woman, house and trade. In my utter impotency to test the authenticity of the report of my senses, to know whether the impressions they make on me correspond with outlying objects, what difference does it make, whether Orion is up there in heaven, or is only an image painted on the firmament of the soul? If material things were of chief importance, it might be worth

our while to settle this vexed question; but since man, the real man, in the course of an eternal existence, must be mainly employed with spiritual concerns, he can well afford to let all minor interests go.

The deductions of idealism proceed on the faith that a law determines all phenomena, which law being known, the phenomena can be predicted. That law, when in the mind, is what philosophers call an idea.

If the question be raised why it is necessary to meddle with this abstruse question, Emerson has a ready answer. The contemplation of the world from the godward side tends to wean the individual from his absorbing devotion to material things. It fastens the attention upon immortal necessary uncreated natures, that is, upon Ideas; and in their presence we feel the outward circumstance is a dream and a shade. "These are they who were set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When he prepared the heavens, they were there; when he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep. Then they were by him, as one brought up with him. Of them took he counsel."

Finally, idealism sees the world in God. It beholds the whole circle of persons and things, of actions and events, of country and religion, not as painfully accumulated, atom after atom, act after



act, in an aged creeping Past, but as one vast picture, which God paints on the instant eternity, for the contemplation of the soul.

When he considers that incalculable force behind all life, whose effects are everywhere seen in the visible universe and in the realm of mind, Emerson designates it by many different names. He calls it God, the Father, Spirit, Supreme Being, Soul, and Over-Soul, often using the terms interchangeably, but sometimes distinguishing between them.

How the idea of God revealed itself to Emerson's mind may be inferred from various passages. For he says we can foresee God in the phenomena of matter; but when we try to define and describe himself, both language and thought desert us, and we are as helpless as fools and savages. That essence refuses to be recorded in propositions. Essence, or God, is not a relation, or a part, but the whole; Being, in the vast affirmative, excluding negation, self-balanced, and swallowing up all relations, parts, and times within itself. God is the all-fair, Pure Mind, the Supreme Cause, whose attribute is self-existence.

The Maker of all things and all persons stands behind us, and casts his dread omniscience through us over things. The true doctrine of omnipresence is, that God reappears with all his parts in every moss and cobweb. The value of the universe contrives to throw itself into every point. Thus is the

universe alive, and all things are moral. Nature, truth, virtue, are an influx from Deity. We learn that God is, that he is in us, and that all things are shadows of him.

The relations of the soul to the divine spirit are so pure, that it is profane to seek to interpose helps in our efforts to realize them. When we have broken with our god of tradition, and ceased from our god of rhetoric, then may God fire the heart with his presence. That is, the true God, the Absolute, whom no finite being can know, but who knows us, is not what the commonly received descriptions make him; and so long as we cling to these, he cannot fully possess us with his presence, and make us wholly his.

Our intuition rather than our reason tells us that God exists. There is a Soul at the center of nature, and over the will of every man. From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things, and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all. If a man have found his center and home in God, the Deity will shine through him, through all the disguises of ignorance, of ungenial temperament, of unfavorable circumstance. As there is no screen or ceiling between our heads and the infinite heavens, so there is no bar or wall in the soul where man, the effect, ceases, and God, the cause, begins. The walls are taken away. We lie open on one side

to the deeps of spiritual nature, to the attributes of God. We perceive justice, love, freedom, power; but they are above us, they flow into us. Truth and virtue are divine attributes also; and vice is the absence of the same.

All goes to show that God, the Universal Soul, is not an organ, but animates and exercises all the organs; is not a function like the power of memory, of calculation, of comparison, but uses these as hands and feet; is not a faculty, but a light; is not the intellect or the will, but the master of the intellect and the will; is the background of our being; in which they lie,—an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed. Of this pure nature every man is at some time sensible. Language cannot paint it with his colors. It is too subtle. It is undefinable, unmeasurable; but we know that it pervades and contains us. Para-Brahm says:—

“The strong gods pine for my abode,  
And pine for me the sacred Seven;  
But thou, meek lover of the good,  
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.”

Emerson's development of the idea of God includes more than has yet been expressed. Man, he says, is conscious of a universal soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in a firmament, shine the attributes with which his con-

ception invests Deity. Considered with reference to nature the universal soul is Spirit, which is the alone creator. And what he means by *soul*, which occurs so frequently throughout his writings, is often very perplexing to the student. The two words "soul" (universal) and "spirit" are used synonymously, except in specific applications which readily explain themselves. But it will be helpful to consider separately the various passages that define these words.

Intellectually considered the universal soul is Reason, the word being used in its philosophic sense of pure reason. "Pure reason or intuition," says Morell, in the "Philosophy of Religion," "holds a similar relation to the understanding that perception holds to sensation. As sensation reveals only subjective facts, while perception involves a direct intuition of the objective world around us; so with regard to higher truths and laws, the understanding furnishes merely the subjective forms in which they may be logically stated, while intuition brings us face to face with the actual matter, or reality of truth itself." Cousin says Reason is the faculty by which we have knowledge of the *infinite* and *absolute*. "It is impersonal in its nature, it is not we who make it. . . . It is to *reason* that we owe the knowledge of the universal and necessary truths, of principles which we all obey and cannot but



obey. . . . It descends from God and approaches man; it makes its appearance in the consciousness as a guest who brings intelligence of an unknown world, of which it presents at once the idea [*not image*] and awakens the want. If *reason* were personal it would have no value, no authority beyond the limits of the individual subject. . . . *Reason* is a revelation, a necessary and universal revelation which is wanting to no man, and which enlightens every man on his coming into the world."

This careful definition of the French eclectic will help us to understand what Emerson means by saying of Reason, it is not mine or thine, or his, but we are its; we are its property and men. The intuition of the moral sentiment is an insight of the perfection of the laws of the soul.

One of Emerson's favorite methods of dealing with this subject is to consider the acting of the universal soul as a law; the soul which within us is a sentiment, outside of us is a law. Such is the view presented in the essay on "The Sovereignty of Ethics." It is the very essence of these laws that they execute themselves. They are out of time, out of space, and not subject to circumstance. For example, in the soul of man there is a justice [*not a sense of justice, but of law*] whose retributions are instant and entire. He who does a good deed is instantly ennobled. He who does a mean deed is by the action itself instantly con-

tracted. If a man is at heart just, then in so far is he God; the safety of God, the immortality of God, the majesty of God, do enter into that man with justice. If a man dissemble and deceive, he deceives himself, and goes out of acquaintance with his own true being. This is the sort of justice which every man feels to be right, but not what is commonly described as such. It is the justice involved in the sentiment of the passage; Every man takes care that his neighbor shall not cheat him. *But a day comes when he begins to care that he does not cheat his neighbor.*

What is the universal sense of want and ignorance, asks Emerson, but the fine innuendo by which the soul makes its enormous claim? The philosophy of six thousand years has not searched the chambers and magazines of the soul. Our being is descending into us from we know not whence. I am constrained every moment to acknowledge a higher origin for events than the will I call mine. A breath of will blows eternally through the universe of soul in the direction of Right and Necessity. There is a deeper fact in the soul than a compensation, to wit, its own nature. The soul is not a compensation, but a life. The soul strives amain to live and work through all things. It would be the only fact.

“There is no great and no small  
To the Soul that knoweth all:

And where it cometh, all things are,  
And it cometh everywhere."

In all conversation between two persons, tacit reference is made, as to a third party, to a *common nature*. That third party or common nature is not social; it is impersonal; it is God. And so in groups where debate is earnest, and especially on high questions, the company become aware that the thought rises to an equal level in all bosoms, — that all have a spiritual property in what is said, as well as the sayer. They become wiser than they were. It arches over them like a temple, this unity of thought, in which every heart beats with nobler sense of power and duty, and thinks and acts with unusual solemnity.

While Emerson clearly recognizes an individual soul belonging to each and every man, he strongly accents the statement that God, the universal soul, is the common nature in all men. The universal is the spiritual atmosphere in which all rest, the common life, source of a common inspiration; and the *individual* soul, which he calls such only relatively, is merely the common soul flowing through the particular channel of a man's thought, as the tide of the ocean rises in some particular bay or river-mouth along the shore. The incomprehensible force which he names God in the highest, is, as we conceive of it, a constant flowing or emanation of spiritual life and truth into man and nature,

that ultimately appears as the phenomena of the visible world. It accommodates our finite way of thinking to consider the different modes of divine manifestation as attributes. But the true conception is that of one only life force, which includes all, is all. Emerson, not less than the primitive Brahman, declares that God is all, and besides him there is naught else. And it is on this hypothesis alone, that we are able to find any unity in his teachings.

The radical difference between his view of life and moral duty and those advanced by contemporary theologians consists in this: he begins with God the all-in-all, as the basis of all theories, while they begin with the visible world, the most remote result, and try therefrom to reason up to God. He says: The great distinction between teachers sacred or literary, — between poets like Herbert, and poets like Pope, — between philosophers like Spinoza, Kant, and Coleridge, and philosophers like Locke, Paley, Mackintosh, and Stewart, — between men of the world, who are reckoned accomplished talkers, and here and there a fervent mystic, prophesying, half insane under the infinitude of his thought, — is that one class speak *from within*, or from experience, as parties and possessors of the fact; and the other class *from without*, as spectators merely, or perhaps as acquainted with the fact on the evidence of third persons. It is of no



use to preach to me from without. I can do that too easily myself. Jesus speaks always from within, and in a degree that transcends all others.

This eternal energy, by which God manifests himself in the flesh, does not descend into individual life on any other condition than entire possession. It comes to the lowly and simple; it comes to whomsoever will put off what is foreign and proud; it comes as insight; it comes as serenity and grandeur. When we see those whom it inhabits, we are apprised of new degrees of greatness. From that inspiration the man comes back with a changed tone. He does not talk with men with an eye to their opinion. He tries them. It requires of us to be plain and true, to *be* and not *seem*. The vain traveller attempts to embellish his life by quoting my lord, and the prince, and the countess, who thus said and did to *him*. The ambitious vulgar show you their spoons, and brooches, and rings, and preserve their cards and compliments. The more cultivated, in their account of their own experience, cull out the pleasing poetic circumstance,—the visit to Rome, the man of genius they saw, the brilliant friend they knew; still further on, perhaps, the gorgeous landscape, the mountain lights, the mountain thoughts, they enjoyed yesterday,—and so seek to throw a romantic color over their life. But the soul that ascends to worship the great God is plain and true; has

no rose-color, no fine friends, no chivalry, no adventures; does not want admiration; dwells in the hour that now is, in the earnest experience of the common day, — by reason of the present moment and the mere trifle having become porous to thought, and bibulous of the sea of light. Souls like these make us feel that sincerity is more excellent than flattery.

Ineffable is the union of man and God in every act of the soul. The simplest person, who in his integrity worships God, becomes God: yet for ever and ever the influx of this better and universal self is new and unsearchable. It inspires awe and astonishment. Great is the soul, and plain. It is no flatterer, it is no follower; it never appeals from itself. The soul is a light; where it is, is day; where it was, is night. The soul gives itself, alone, original, and pure, to the Lonely, Original, and Pure, who, on that condition, gladly inhabits, leads, and speaks through it.

It will be seen that Spirit is only another term for the relations and attributes ascribed to Soul. And yet certain peculiar uses of the word culled here and there from the pages of Emerson help to make his whole meaning clear. He says the spiritual is that which is its own evidence. That which intellectually considered, we call reason, considered in relation to nature, we call Spirit. Spirit hath life in itself; it is the Creator; and

man in all ages and countries embodies it in his language as the Father. With special reference to man, spirit is the organ through which the universal soul speaks to the individual, and strives to lead back the individual to it.

In our definitions, we grope after the spiritual by describing it as invisible; but the true meaning of spiritual is *real*; that law which executes itself, which works without means, and which cannot be conceived of as not existing. Spirit is the positive, the event is the negative. Into every intelligence there is a door which is never closed, through which the Creator passes. The intellect, seeker of absolute truth, or the heart, lover of absolute good, intervenes for our succor, and at one whisper of these high powers, *we awake from ineffectual struggles with the nightmare of earthly antagonism.*

Spirit, that is, the Supreme Being, passes into appearance; its unity tends to the variety of the outer world. The Universe is the externization of this creative power. Wherever the spiritual life is, that bursts into appearance around us. The earth and the heavenly bodies, physics and chemistry, we treat sensually, as if they were self-existent; but these are the visible retinue of the universal spirit. Spirit, the Supreme Being, does not build up nature around us, but puts it forth through us, as the life of a tree puts forth new

branches and leaves through the pores of the old. As a plant upon the earth, so a man rests on the bosom of God; he is nourished by unfailing fountains, and draws, at his need, inexhaustible power. This truth, once understood, teaches us that man has access to the entire mind of the Creator, is himself the creator in the finite.

The world proceeds from the same spirit as the body of man. It is a remoter and inferior incarnation of God, a projection of God in the unconscious. But it differs from the body in one important respect. It is not, like that, now subjected to the human will. Its serene order is inviolable by us. This passage, which fairly sets forth Emerson's belief concerning the presence of divinity in nature, exempts him from the charge often preferred by critics, that he advocated gross pantheism, and regarded the objects of the outer world collectively as God. He represents God as incarnated in nature as he is in man, as putting forth life force through vegetation as he does through animal forms. Nature is not God; it is the garment of God.

Pantheism has different forms, and has been defined by the school-men thus: Material Pantheism, according to which the mere matter of the universe, with its forces, including life and thought, as the result of organism, constitute the One All, which may be called God; Organic or



Vital Pantheism, according to which all nature has life, and an impersonal power is substituted for a personal God; One-Substance Pantheism, according to which there is but one substance. This substance is infinite in part, and finite in part, and man is a fine part of the divine substance; Ideal Pantheism, according to which God and the universe are creations of the mind of man. Here are the four phases of Pantheism as the doctrine has been held in ancient and modern times; and the reader can readily decide for himself whether Emerson, who held that God, the Supreme Spirit, puts forth life through the organisms of the animal and vegetable world, was a Pantheist. A fact, he says, is the end or last issue of spirit, therefore visible nature must have a spiritual and moral side.

Having thus laid the foundations of his theory of being in God, Emerson applies these vital principles in numberless ways to the processes of thought and the conduct of life. He shows us, not new facts, but a new use of the old facts, and helps us to look at the world with new eyes. The prevalent attitude of moral people on the questions of life reminds one of the disciples of Jesus who, after he had been withdrawn from their sight at the ascension, stood vacantly gazing upwards after a vanished life. Life is an ever-present reality. The incarnation of Deity is not a past event, but a

perennial influx of life, creating for man a new world each moment of his existence. The view taught by Emerson liberates the mind from bondage to certain fixed material facts, which man in his short-sighted philosophy has assumed to be more permanent than spiritual laws.

His doctrine is that nature is not fixed, but fluid. Spirit alters, moulds, makes it. The immobility or bruteness of nature is the absence of spirit; to pure spirit it is fluid, it is volatile, it is obedient. Know then, *that the world exists for you. What you are, that only can you see.* You create your own world, in which you dwell alone, and in the nature of the case, can have no companionship. As it is a law of vision that two persons standing side by side looking at an object, do not see the same thing, but different things, so it is in regard to all that constitutes the world to every man. There is no world but the world he sees, and he is its sole inhabitant.

This view, startling as it is to our ordinary modes of thought, leads Emerson to enjoin upon the reader a duty yet more startling: *Build, therefore, your own world.* As fast as you conform your life to the pure *idea* in your mind, that will unfold its great proportions. *A corresponding revolution in things will attend the influx of spirit.* So fast will disagreeable appearances, the sordor and filths of nature vanish; they are temporary and shall be no

more seen. As when the summer comes from the south, the snow-banks melt, and the face of the earth becomes green before it, so shall the advancing spirit create its ornaments along its path, and carry with it the beauty it visits, and the song which enchants it; it shall draw beautiful faces, warm hearts, wise discourse, and heroic acts, around its way, until evil is no more seen. The kingdom of man over nature, which cometh not with observation, — a dominion such as now is beyond his dream of God, — he shall enter without more wonder than the blind man feels who is gradually restored to perfect sight.

## XIV.

### THE REAL LIFE.

HISTORICALLY considered, Brahmanism in its pristine purity included a moral philosophy deep enough to solve the problem of existence and harmonize its jarring elements. For ages it seems to have been lost to the world, until it was reannounced by Jesus. Now, on the hither side of the Christian era, a third voice has spoken in the same language, calling mankind back to the home of eternal joy. The knowledge that everything is God liberates man from selfishness and the dominion of evil, says the Brahman.—If the Truth make you free, you shall overcome the world, and be free indeed, says Jesus.—If a man will obey the Highest Law and see how it stands in God, he shall know the particular thing, and everything; the Deity will shine through him, and he shall lead a serene life, says Emerson. The three voices blend in sweet music like the parts of a trio, the first and last sustaining the aria caught from Heaven, and sung in Palestine.

What each of these great teachers insists on is a life, upon which all who choose may enter and



find it the way of pleasantness and peace. It has no dogmas or cant. It is not a peculiar system of religion, but the simple abandonment of self to the guidance of the intuitions that come to every man who will listen to them. It reverses the common view of life, which is defined by Rev. T. T. Munger to be this: "The wise have always conceived of life as a struggle between the good and evil forces. It is the condition of the highest virtue; it is the aspect that every earnest life takes on. It is a conflict that existence begins in Eden, it is a victory that crowns it in the new Jerusalem. . . . Life continues, it develops, it may reach a harmony, *but these are not now its main-aspects.*"

As an offset to this sad confession, let us read the following paragraph from "Spiritual Laws"; "The lesson is forcibly taught by these observations, that our life might be much easier and simpler than we make it; that the world might be a happier place than it now is; that there is no need of struggle, convulsions, and despairs, of the wringing of the hands and the gnashing of the teeth; that we miscreate our own evils. We interfere with the optimism of nature; for, whenever we get this vantage-ground of the past, or of a wiser mind in the present, we are able to discern that we are begirt with laws which execute themselves."

How true the remark, yet how seldom heeded, that "a little consideration of what takes place around us every day would show us that a higher law than that of our will regulates events; that our painful labors are unnecessary and fruitless; that only in our easy, simply spontaneous action are we strong, and by contenting ourselves with obedience we become divine." How often we plot and plan, and exhaust ourselves with efforts to accomplish a given end; and after our anxious labors have miscarried, the end, if a good one, is reached in a way so easy that it puts us to shame.

Why then, do we not fall in with the method of nature? And what is this method? It may be thus set forth: God is the One Being and life of the world. Vital Force is the constant emanation of God. The entire universe is the manifestation or expression of this power, and there is no other force or power at work in the world. Life implies a perpetual motion of whatever it pervades, for there can be no life apart from motion; therefore, vital force is a constant flowing through the visible organisms of nature. By whatever names we call it,—creative power, animal or vegetable activity, the elemental powers of nature,—it is *one*, and a continual flux from the highest to the lowest and most remote. It flows through the realm of mind, as Idea, Reason, and Thought; it flows through the realm of

matter, creating the manifold, ever-changing forms of the external world.

The course of this on-streaming force, this self-executing law, is absolutely resistless. If we gladly place ourselves in the stream, we are borne on to our good; if we try to interfere with our petty will, we suffer. "The mind that is parallel with the laws of nature will be in the current of events, and strong with their strength." What men call evil is merely a human attempt to stop this mighty current, or convert the power it generates to a selfish use, an impertinence of thought which invariably gets the meddler into trouble; if the point of arrest be in the body the consequence is, to our thinking, a disease; if it be in outer nature, we call it an accident. For example: One channel of this eternal emanation is the circulation of the blood; tie up an artery, and shortly a sensation of pain informs you that the law would have way. Defy the law where it acts as gravitation, and broken bones is the penalty. Not that you can actually stop the onflow; for the impeded stream seeks another channel, and leaves you to struggle with your mechanical interferences.

"All power is of one kind, a sharing of the nature of the world." It is the same identical force that rolls a star in space, decks a landscape in vernal foliage, destroys a thousand human beings with an earthquake, and indites a bible for

the race. Much of our moral and metaphysical perplexity comes of assuming that there are various forces at work in the world which are conflicting. The mightiest demonstration of power comes not with observation, but is the invisible action of laws that work without means. That which cannot be expressed in words, but through which all expression comes; that which cannot be thought by the mind, but by which all thinking comes; that which cannot be seen by the eye, but by which the eye sees, is Brahm, and is the one supreme law of the universe of mind and matter.

If what has been said be true, it is plain that each person's world is precisely what he thinks it is. When it is harmonious and joyful, his thought makes it so; when it is full of struggle and turmoil, it is a faithful reflection of his own inward state. Our selfish and private ends are contrary to the laws of nature; when therefore we consult our personal will instead of the intuitive voice that speaks to the soul, the result is antagonism; for we place obstacles in our own pathway, and the wounds and pain that it costs us to set up our own will seem to our disturbed thought to be evils. But the suggestions of evil and the consequent desire to combat it are not the whispers of truth, for the soul knows no evil and no pain. Truth is an influx of divine life, and all that is false is merely the resistance of a personal will.



The conflict we wage with supposed evil has no merit, and we derive no advantage thereby. Experience shows that the enemy of our peace is never vanquished in this way, and a little thought convinces us that such resistance is as selfish as it is ineffectual. Truth is a necessity, it is the life of the world; we cannot retard its steady progress by our petty interference, nor can we hasten the influx by our struggles. Jesus never taught the doctrine of antagonism so loudly proclaimed in his name; and no man who deals honestly with his own soul, and will diligently seek to know how the case "stands in God," will find any authority for it. Conflict and discord are of the material world; the gospel of spirit is love, joy, peace and good will to men.

Whenever man interposes his personal will in order to carry a point in the interest of truth, he is impotent; but when he lets God speak through him, the self-assertion is silenced, and he acts from the soul. We are often exhorted to pray for grace and strength to resist temptation, as though there were any virtue in so doing. But the loan we seek, if it could be granted, would only reinforce our personal will, and enable self to prolong the fight with self, on the battle-ground of individual thought. This is not the method of nature. Abandon selfhood; listen earnestly for the whispers of truth in the soul; obey your deep intui-

tion; and lo, the universal soul shines through you, and what you thought was a tempter vanishes like a shadow before the risen sun.

There is a mischievous fallacy implied in the metaphor that represents a good man as an armed warrior fighting the battles of Truth against Error; and under an implied sanction of the Most High have been carried on all the bitter polemics, persecutions, and holy wars that disgrace the annals of religion. It is assumed that men are the custodians rather than mediums of truth, commissioned to execute rather than obey the great law of the universe. Portraying life as a moral battle is an old and favorite custom of both ecclesiastics and poets. Edmund Spenser, one of the sweetest bards of England, in his great work, "The Faerie Queene," describes the bloody encounters of Virtue with Vice, in an allegory of a Knight of the Red Cross, armed and mounted like St. George when he fought the dragon, going forth on a quest in the service of his queen.

"The Patrone of true Holinesse  
Foule Errour doth defeate;  
Hypocrisie, him to entrappe,  
Doth to his home entreate."

"Upon a great adventure he was bond,  
That greatest Gloriana to him gave,  
The greatest glorious queene of Faerie lond,  
To winne him worshippe, and her grace to have,  
Which of all earthly thinges he most did crave :

And ever, as he rode, his hart did earne<sup>1</sup>  
To prove his puissance in battell brave  
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne ;  
Upon his foe, a Dragon horrible and stearne."

A fitter emblem of true life is the Sun advancing in regal triumph toward the summer solstice. How silent the motion of the solar car, how soft the flow of genial light, how impalpable the means by which he effects his mighty purpose. Without haste, without rest, without struggle, without toil, the gentle but resistless magic of his breath invades the strong kingdom of the frost giants. At his word the tiniest root and stem plow their way through the hardest soil and push aside the very stones that obstruct their growth. The annual product of the vegetable kingdom implies the exercise of a force incomparably greater than any mechanical contrivance can generate. And yet, philosophically, what is it? A mild flux of light, a gentle reflection of heat, that a girl may interrupt with her parasol. But in its smile is life and joy, while its withdrawal is night and death. True visible symbol of the spiritual emanation which is the light and life of the world, dispelling mental darkness, awaking man from his nightmare of evil, destroying fear, clothing him with the everlasting affirmative of reality, flooding his present life with restful joy.

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<sup>1</sup> Yearn.

The normal tendency of accepting the view of life herein set forth is to withdraw attention from the limitations of sense, and fasten it on universal truth; to make one indifferent to material things, while living from the soul; to divest life of its hardship and care; to dry up its sources of pain; to clear the mental vision of the spectral figments that haunt a disordered brain; to assure man that so long as he keeps the law and moves with the current of events, all the force in the universe is centered in him, and nothing is opposed to him. By this truth is he certified of his right to be, for the fact that he is here proves that spirit has need of such a medium on the earth. By it is the pugnacious, greedy tyrant of selfhood destroyed within him, and he is freed from the dominion of opinion and fear. By it he finds his home in God, is filled with serene trust and the knowledge that eternal law protects him, so that no calamity can befall him. Thus is life made harmonious and whole; all things come into just relations to it, and the longing after something better is dissipated in the fruition of the everlasting NOW.



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
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
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
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