

But let us not imagine the air clear yet ; the fog is only getting thinner. In other times the sun has attempted to shine through. Five hundred years before Christ, Hippocrates broke away from the old traditions of healing, the supernatural methods, and laid the foundations of medical science on experience, observation and reasoning. Later his teaching influenced the school of Alexandria, where positive knowledge was developed by the adoption of anatomic studies ; and centuries later, under Moslem patronage, the medical sciences reached their highest development in the Middle Ages. But Europe was less fortunate under Christian influences. There was a return to the belief in the supernatural origin of disease, and in the practice of supernatural methods to combat it. Retrogression prevailed over progression. Still believing in demoniacal possession, the various phases of exorcism were practised, even combined with such practical methods as the following : " To disgust the demon with the body he was tormenting, the patient was made to swallow or apply to himself unspeakable ordures, with such medicines as the livers of toads, the blood of frogs and rats, fibres of the hangman's rope, and ointment made from the body of gibbeted criminals." For myself I would prefer the simpler methods of the British Columbia Medicine-man. Cures effected by relics, by pilgrimages and sacred observances obscured the horizon, while even the Divine Right of Kings gave the world the blessings of the Royal touch for King's Evil. All these practices were injurious to the development of medical science, for " why should men seek to build up scientific medicine and surgery when relics, pilgrimages and sacred observances, according to an overwhelming mass of concurrent testimony, had cured hosts of sick folk in all parts of Europe ? " But finally the tide turns. The discoveries of Galileo, Kepler and Newton had their reflex on the sister science of medicine, and investigators made bold to pry into the secrets of life and learn her vital processes, to seek the true causes of disease and endeavor to find the cure. Relapses have occurred. As fanatics opposed the introduction of the fanning-mill because in infringing upon the divine prerogative, which furnished the wind to winnow the wheat from the chaff, similarly, opposition arose to the introduction of inoculation, vaccination and the use of anesthetics. And as supernatural agencies were invoked to cure diseases supposed to be of supernatural origin, so to-day we have the various sects of faith-healers, magnetic healers and what not.

But, as Carlyle says, " Only what is true will persist. Out of the merciless fire of modern criticism truth, like asbestos, will come forth purified ; but vain theories, gaseous, will be dissipated among the waste winds forever."