

not in a miraculous, but in a natural form ; not in faith cures practised by ignorant and credulous pietists, but in the more real and satisfactory cures of science ; in wonders of healing effected in our hospitals, which a quarter of a century ago would have been deemed impossible ; in the more accurate knowledge acquired by both methods of study, and in the tender ministries of the more favored classes to the poor helpless victims of disease. And just as Christ Himself did not win His triumphs over disease and death by the mere exercise of a nominal faith costing Him nothing, so we cannot triumph over our modern diseases by spells of faith, expecting to win, by a mere presumptuous effort, costing us nothing, what usually requires years of thought and hard labor and sympathy to acquire. If, like Moses, in the application of the desert tree to the bitter Marah, we regard the operation of God's hand in the use of the healing means, we are exercising faith while we are taking advantage of the resources which science has placed in our power ; and we have a far greater assurance that by the use of such means our faith will effect a cure, than if we presumptuously and lazily depended upon our faith alone.

It is to our Christian religion that we owe our care for the sick and the disabled. It is the cross of Christ that has taught us to sweeten the bitter Marah of disease. In the natural world the creature that is hurt is set upon by its fellows and is done to death or devoured, as it leaves the unheeding herd and seeks the loneliest spot to die. In the human world, where the race is to the swift and the battle to the strong, those who are worsted and wounded in the struggle of life are left to perish with little sympathy. And there is a hard philosophy among us which asserts that efforts to remove sickness and disease are hindering the operation of a beneficent law which weeds out the sickly specimens of the human race that the fittest may survive. But we have not so learned Christ. He manifested a special concern for the weak and the wretched. To His heart the very presence of trouble was a dumb appeal for help. The poor, the sick, the desolate, the outcast—these ever found in Him a tender Healer. He brought in the law of grace, the higher law of love, by which the strong are selected, not to extinguish the weak, but to help the bruised reeds of humanity to flourish again. And He has given to us the greatest and sweetest motive of all, in laying Himself alongside of our humanity, afflicted in all our afflictions, identifying Himself so closely with the case of the most abject sufferer, that what we do for that sufferer we do for Him. "I was sick, and ye visited Me."

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