

mystery which originated in the dark ages, and which was employed by imposters; but the surgeon proceeds to probe a wound with no possible benefit to the patient; he introduces a suture unnecessarily, to produce an impression, perhaps to gain an extra fee, a fractured limb is manipulated, whereby the limbs, it may be the life is placed in jeopardy. Of course, the patient may not be so willing to pay a proper fee when no medicine is given, or when you bring fragments of a broken bone into position so gently that he fails to detect just when the bone is set. But is it not a duty we owe to science, and to the dignity of our office, to endeavour to educate the public to a proper appreciation of the true function of the medical man. Now, with regard to this point, so far as the physician is concerned, I hold that he should be superseded in a great measure at least, by the Sanitarian. I believe the time will come when our profession will be most frequently employed to prevent disease, when preventable; not by the administration of drugs, but by the application of those sanitary laws which science reveals. It cannot be expected that disease will be entirely prevented, so that we will have to continue to act as physicians. Certainly, injuries of various kinds will continue to befall man which no surgeon can foresee or prevent.

Many obstacles to the reform I have referred to might be mentioned, one is the strong conservative feeling which causes the profession to retain, with much tenacity, the forms of prescription which originated in ante-civilization times. I have often thought that the use of Latin in writing prescriptions was a pedantic sham. Some of the signs employed are convenient, and words in the abbreviated form can be quickly penned; but this is all that can be said in favour of continuing what is really a relic of barbarism, when an educated few took advantage of the ignorant and credulous mass. But it may be asked what has this to do with *Nature's Power to Heal*? I reply it has much to do with it. If we wish our profession to attain that position which it legitimately should possess, we must discard everything bearing the appearance of mystery or secrecy. Prescriptions must be written in plain language, and if the patient desires to know what you are giving him let him know; and then will follow this important advantage: the druggists will not commit mistakes in their efforts to interpret prescriptions. This emancipation will materially tend to foster a dependence upon Nature, rather than drugs.

Coming to the subject of Surgery, more especially, it is hardly necessary for me to mention the various

ways in which are manifested Nature's power to heal—to restore parts. Mostly every medical man is familiar with the writings of Paget and Billroth. These investigators, as well as others, have demonstrated that in all the multiform lesions met with in the human system resulting from injuries and disease—in every tissue of the body, Nature ever stands ready to undertake the work of repair; and if the system be in a healthy state and Nature be not interfered with in her action, the power to restore parts is often striking and marvellous. In a large number of cases, all that the patient requires is rest: It is at such times that the meddling surgeon may work mischief. Many years ago I read with much care a course of lectures by Mr. Hilton, of London, upon the subject of rest—mechanical rest and physiological rest; and the benefit I thus derived I cannot over-estimate. Rest is, in fact, the principal, the great pre-requisite to enable nature to accomplish her work of healing. Rest of body and mind. Pain, so common an attendant of disease and lesions, indicates a state incompatible with healing. The pain may result from the absence of rest, or it may be Nature's cry for assistance: and, it is a part of the surgeon's duty to respond to this cry. He should distinguish between these two causes of pain, and endeavor to remove them. But it is his first duty to try to prevent pain; and he should see to it that he never is the cause of pain. The surgeon's art will often furnish to nature essential aid whereby she may more promptly and efficiently accomplish her task. Failing to receive any assistance from Art we often find Nature, nothing daunted, resorting to other means to effect a cure—taking further and more complicated steps, often marvellous and beautiful. For the sake of illustration we will take a broken bone, a simple fracture. Union between the fragments would rapidly take place if the limb were kept in a state of rest; but in consequence of neglect of the surgeon, or wilfulness of the patient, or some other cause, motion is permitted. The result is the arrest of the healing process—of the ossific union of the pieces. The motion has caused pain, the pain has led to congestion, congestion produces fibrinous effusion, and this results in the formation of more extensive provisional callus, or "en-sheathing." By this means the ends of the bones are retained in a fixed position, rest is secured; and after this—after these successive and wise steps by Nature, the work of repair between the fragments will proceed. Thus we learn that the designation of Nature's Splints to the ensheathing callus is well