

How many have got well with thoughts that alone could cure! The better angel that lurks in every breast is a healing medium. By one who had served in our civil war, I was told of sick soldiers who, in their despair, voluntarily turned their faces to the wall and died, because they wanted, and *had made up their mind*, to die. If to those poor boys, who had marched out from houses and churches with flowers in the muzzles of their guns, as they now lay moaning on their beds, had come some token of affection, a word of assurance, a letter from home; if the step of some Miss Gilson, Dorothy Dix, or Florence Nightingale, had been heard in the corridor; if a bird had flown by the window, or alighted and sung in the branches of a tree; had any good message arrived, they would have opened their eyes, stretched their limbs, astonished the surgeons, and lived! A grain, a hair: the twentieth part of a scruple, in delicate conditions and a tremulous suspense, determines the scale; and the balance hangs for us all to put the atom into, so intimate is the relation between the body and the mind. We decide each other's fate every day. The skeptic laughs at such a superstition as the apostle's, that the prayer of faith shall heal the sick. But such praying is no liturgical collect, repetition by rote or mumbled phrase, but a struggle with God, as when Luther said to Him, *Thou must hear me!* When we so give the breath of our being, which is prayer to the sufferer, we save him from doom. Had we been willing, he should go with a Japanese happy dispatch, no physic would have been of any avail. We smile at the idea of demoniacal possession, as if our vindictiveness or aversion were aught but that. The matter with you, said one of the mind-curers to her patients, is vipers: envy, malice, jealousy, suspicion. Is it not as fine a miracle to cast out these as to expel unclean spirits in the country of the Gadarenes? Was Christ's prediction false of the greater works His disciples should do? Do we not infest one another's flesh with our malign and

sensual passions? When vice ails us, shall we have a diagnosis and consultation of doctors for a pretence?

"With science poorly mask our heart,
And vex the gods with question pert,
Immensely curious whether you
Still are rulers, or mildew."

Life is thus a masquerade, and death the unmasking. Solid and splendid is the archway at Mount Auburn, Greenwood Cemetery and Forest Hills. But who thinks of the entrance to those grave-yards from unhappy homes? All the paths—Laurel, Willow, Acacia, and the rest—lead from such! Balzac tells us of a mother who suddenly expires after one more of her unnatural daughter's hard words; and he adds that the slaughter by savages of those too old to continue on the march is philanthropy in the comparison. But what he relates happens every day in France and the United States. A gentle remembrance from one—it may be not of our flesh and blood—a note, a flower, a book, a hand-grasp, to assure us our days of usefulness are not over, enables us to live and labor still. Who or what is this that comes and sits down in my heart; or that I go to as a sanctuary; or cling to as the Hebrew fugitives clung to the horns of the altar? It may be a man, more likely a woman. It is my physician, whom I need not send for! These are immaterial forces, and none beside. The supernatural acts through the natural. Let us make the connection and be all of us well. Be its fault or defect what it may, I greet, therefore, the new departure which lays the stress on the mind. The attenuation of medicine, which has worked so well, may end in its annihilation. There will be, in the innovating modes, doubtless, much groping, misdirection, contradiction of views, and folly mixed with faith. Let us winnow the heap, and not make of the past a chair, but a goad; nor, with cast-iron prejudice, reject whatever agrees not with our prepossessions. When one surgeon refused to believe in an operation without pain, though on the patient's oath, who was a poor sailor; and said he could