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## Original Communications.

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### DISEASE AND THE EVOLUTION OF MEDICINE.\*

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The text of the following paper was suggested to my mind while taking dinner with some friends in the city of Toronto. The subject of drug medication came up in the course of our conversation. One of the ladies, a dentist's daughter who had just returned from an extended tour on the Continent, asked the question, Do you believe in faith cure? I replied I certainly did, but not in the sense that was popularly understood; not by any means. That the imagination plays some wonderful tricks with the body, no one who has paid the slightest attention to the subject of psychology can for one moment doubt.

But there is a very wide difference in the way in which this is effected. That diseases are cured by direct acts or special providences, I cannot conceive or believe, but that they are cured through the imagination acting in a powerful manner through the mind, I am perfectly willing to admit, as thousands of well authenticated cases too plainly testify. The educated physician knows that the phenomena connected with the nervous system are more wonderful and incomprehensible than any other observed in the animal organism, and but few of them are fully explained by the various theories concerning the nature of nervous substance, and the manner of the transmission of nervous impressions. If we will consider the brain and spinal marrow as batteries generating animal electricity; also the twelve cranial and thirty-one spinal nerves as so many conducting wires by which motion and sensation are respectively conveyed to and from every part of the body, and then consider the great sympathetic nerve, and its independent ganglia and various cords, as being the means of establishing nervous

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\*Read before the Eastern Ontario Dental Association.