

derived from the administrations of the doctor, on the contrary, I am sure there is no one so badly qualified by nature and education to practice, who does not sometimes, perhaps often, afford relief to his patients; at the same time I cannot repress the conviction that in many cases the doctor who has successfully treated one case, will with his next patient, by the injudicious use of drugs, or by interference of some kind, arrest, or retard the work of Nature. Do not misunderstand me. I am not here to condemn the profession, but to point out what appears to me to be defects, in order that they may be removed. It is a noble and inspiring thought that one has saved life, allayed pain, and abbreviated distress, and I would that this feeling should not be marred by the thought that, perhaps, if such and such a thing had not been done, the patient would have suffered less, or have recovered, whereas, he died. Such unhappy reflections will now and then obtrude themselves in our every-day practice, unless the practitioner is animated by a sublime egotism. However, we are not called upon unnecessarily to write bitter things of ourselves; at the same time it is unquestionably our duty to be as certain as we can that we are not running counter to nature in our course of treatment. Mistakes will, no doubt, occur even with the most efficient and conscientious; but with the constant acquisition of knowledge in relation to our profession, there ought to be commensurate improvement in the treatment of cases, and advantage to the sick. That very much has been gained in the direction I am advocating there can be no doubt; but I urge the plea that Nature should be trusted more than she is. It was one of the first things I learned from my first teacher that, "meddlesome midwifery is bad." Experience has fully established the truthfulness of the statement. But I am just as well convinced that meddlesome surgery is bad, and meddlesome medicine is bad. What is it that has given success so frequently to the Homœopathic physician, who faithfully treated his patients with infinitesimal doses? Was it not due to the fact that Nature was left untrammelled to work her cure, sustained at the same time, by faith operating through the mind upon the nervous system? I have now and again had patients who, having failed to improve under the use of drugs, at once began to mend when discontinued; and I have had medical friends make the same statement. While I write there come to us from England the information that a religious sect, known as "The Peculiar People" and who do not believe

at all in medical treatment, have opened an hospital for the sick, into which the disciples of Esculapius shall never enter. Now, I shall not be surprised to learn that the mortality and duration of disease at this institution are no greater than in the best appointed hospitals of London. And there is no doubt these peculiar people, who, although zealously religious, do not seem to be fools, have, by observation, convinced themselves that their prayers accomplish as much as is done by the regularly qualified medical man. From the position I assume the fallacy contained in Professor Tyndall's proposition to test the efficacy of prayer in healing the sick is at once apparent.

The well-known Dr. Todd, in speaking of *Erysipelas* divided cases into three classes; one class consists of those who will get well without treatment; perhaps I may add, in spite of bad treatment; another class will die, notwithstanding the most judicious treatment; the third-class, which may not be large, is composed of those who will live or die, according as the treatment is proper or improper. So then, so far as the effects of treatment upon life goes, we may take it for granted that the cases are comparatively few where the balance is turned, one way or the other, by any treatment. But the important fact remains that the medical man's duty is not limited to treating extreme cases. It is an important part of his function to allay suffering and prolong life; therefore, it is incumbent upon him to possess that knowledge of nature's laws, which we find exhibited in man's physical system,—that he may be fully equipped for the path he has to tread.

The knowledge requisite is not only to enable him to do what is necessary, but to avoid that which is unnecessary. The medical man is almost daily tempted to do something when he knows that nothing is really required. In fact, it is often necessary to do something to satisfy the patient or his friends. The do-nothing course is rarely satisfactory to the world, with its present limited education respecting the laws which govern life and disease. And it is not unfrequently a question of some importance to the medical man "how not to do it." The administration of bread pills and tinctured water is one of the clumsy ways of solving the question. But, apart from this morbid desire on the part of the public, and the expectations that medicine will be given, does not the doctor sometimes magnify his office by unnecessary service? The result is not only that prescriptions are written generally in a style of