

aid of the saints and to seek their help, which one of us under these circumstances, living to-day in or near Rome, if a dear child were sick unto death, would not send for the Santo Bambino, the Holy Doll of the Church of Ara Coeli? Has it not been working miracles these four hundred years? The votive offerings of gold and of gems from the happy parents cover it completely, and about it are grateful letters from its patients in all parts of the world. No doll so famous, no doll so precious! No wonder it goes upon its ministry of healing in a carriage and pair, and with it two priests as companions. Precious perquisite of the race, as it has been called, with all its dark and terrible record, credulity has perhaps the credit balance on its side in the consolation afforded the pious souls of all ages and of all climes, who have let down anchors of faith into the vast sea of superstition. We drink it in with our mother's milk, and that is indeed an even balanced soul which is without some tincture. We must acknowledge its potency to-day as effective among the most civilized people, the people with whom education is the most widely spread, yet who absorb with wholesale credulity delusions as childish as any that have ever enslaved the mind of man.

Having recently had to look over a large literature on the subject of mental healing, ancient and modern, for the new edition of my textbook, just issued, I have tried to put the matter as succinctly as possible; in all ages and in all climes the prayer of faith has saved a certain number of the sick. The essentials are, first, a strong and hopeful belief in a dominant personality, who has varied naturally in different countries and in different ages. Buddha in India and in Japan, where there are cults to match every recent vagary; Æsculapius in ancient Greece and Rome; our Saviour and a host of Saints in Christian communities; and lastly, an ordinary doctor has served the purpose of common humanity very well. Faith is the most precious asset in our stock in trade. Once lost, how long does a doctor keep his clientèle? Secondly, certain accessories—a shrine, a grotto, a church, a temple, a hospital, a sanitarium—surroundings that will impress favourably the imagination of the patient. Thirdly, suggestion in one of its varied forms—whether the negation of disease and pain, the simple trust in Christ of the peculiar people, or the sweet reasonableness of the psycho-therapist. But there must be the will-to-believe attitude of mind, the mental receptiveness, in a word, the faith which has made bread pills famous in the history of medicine. We must, however, recognize the limitations of mental healing. Potent as is the influence of the mind on the body and many as are the miracle-like cures which may be worked, all are in functional disorders, and we know only too well that now-a-days the prayer of faith neither sets a broken thigh nor checks an epidemic of typhoid fever.