

Any one who has read that strange but interesting work "Flagellations and the Flagellants," cannot but be impressed with the remarkable cures wrought by the dreadful scourgings and whippings that were so much in vogue during that benighted age. Dr. Campanella of Italy mentions the employment of flagellations as a remedy for the obstruction of the bowels, in the case of an Italian prince, who could not be relieved unless when beaten by a servant whom he kept specially for that purpose. The large amount of blood lost by the poor victims during and after their severe flagellations was often noticed to relieve many diseases, hence arose the extensive practice of phlebotomy or the use of that murderous little instrument, the lancet, now happily "relegated to the realms of innocuous desuetude," but which was once so much in requisition when people begged to be bled every spring for all sorts of imaginary complaints; those morbidly inclined and emotional patients, who take pleasure in their distresses, whom it would be cruel to cure; their pains and aches are their possessions, and any man wishing to make them well would be little better than a thief or robber; they are those whose chief felicity in this life consists in doctoring and being doctored, and to whom the removal of their bodily ills would be like the death of long-cherished friends.

Coming down to later times we read of the efficacy of the king's touch for the cure of king's evil. King George the Fourth is said to have touched over a hundred thousand persons during his reign, and the gold medals, called angels, issued to the afflicted in one year amounted to over ten thousand pounds. And in William the Third's reign (1689) a patient was brought to him and upon touching him, said, "God give thee better health and more sense," and yet history tells us that this patient was cured notwithstanding William's incredulity.

Let us look further at this doctrine of impressions. Here is the case of a gentleman riding home on horseback from the country; fatigued, weary, and with a severe headache, and so indisposed that he can only just keep his saddle, he is met in a lonely spot by a robber who seizes his bridle and presents a pistol, demanding "Your money or your life." The gentleman puts spurs to his horse, the crack of a shot adds to the confusion and excitement, he arrives home safe, dismounts and to his great surprise finds his headache all gone; the vital force is driven to the extremities, and his hands and feet are warm, he is entirely well! The supreme impression of his mind drove the electro-nervous fluid from his brain—the blood followed it. Now there is nothing strange in this. It is simply the curing of diseases by the doctrine of impressions. Medicines produce a physical impression on the system, but it is always the inherent operation of nature's own sanative principle that cures, the *Vis medicatrix naturæ*, and just here let me say