

Diseases by Suggestion.

AN eminent doctor is fixedly of the opinion that sickness is frequently caused by imagination.

The mere thought of a sickness or an infirmity, he says, is often sufficient to cause distress similar to that arising from the ailment itself. An instance of this was furnished by a man who was present at an operation upon his brother. The patient's leg required forcible straightening, and at the crunching sound attending the operation the brother looking on experienced a sharp pain in the leg, and was not able to rid himself of it for more than a year; while the man who had undergone the operation under the influence of ether felt no pain at all, either at the time of the operation or afterwards.

Even when the imagination is purposely aroused by, say, an author, he may, while writing a description of an ailment, become so deeply absorbed that the reins of reason are slipped, and, presto! the whole range of that particular disease are forthwith felt by him. It is said that this actually occurred to Flaubert when he was writing his novel "Madame Bovary." While depicting with technical accuracy the suicide of the heroine by arsenic, the author suffered all the symptoms of arsenious poisoning.

Since auto-suggestion can cause disease, so suggestion can also heal. A physician prescribed harmless bread-and-sugar pills for an insane woman who suffered from insomnia.

They produced the desired effect; but several days later, the patient, believing the pills to contain morphine, swallowed the entire boxful with suicidal intent. The result was in every respect like that produced by morphine poisoning; and the coma into which the woman fell was so profound that it was with the utmost difficulty that her life was saved.

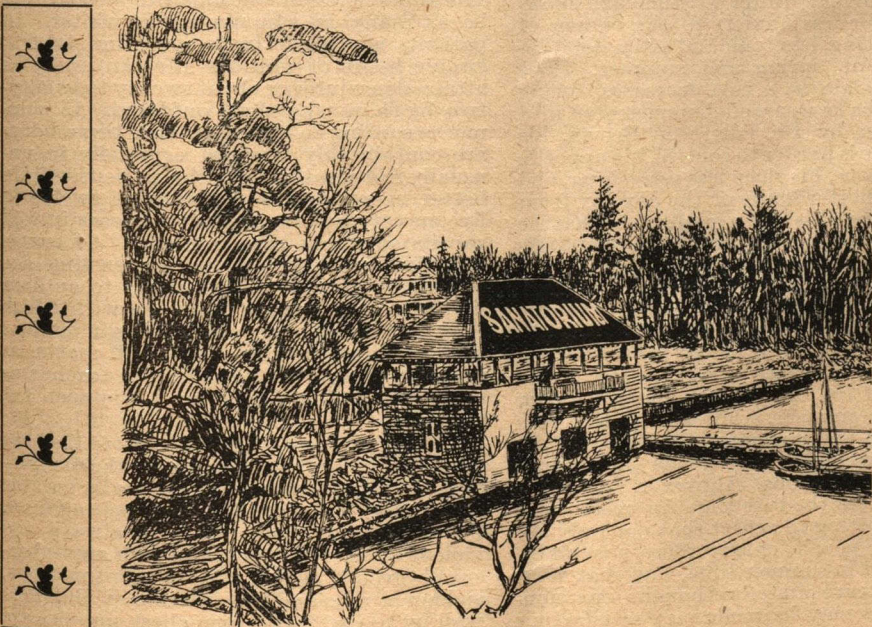
Another scarcely less striking case was that of a clergyman who said he was suffering from insomnia.

He was a man of most exemplary habits and extremely methodical, and for a while I was puzzled to account for his condition, until he mentioned casually that his sleeplessness dated from a time when he transplanted a large number of flowers from one set of pots to another.

"And I should not be surprised," he added, "if the red color of the pots had something to do with my nervousness, for red has a most depressing effect upon me."

I reasoned with him for several days, and finally, a week or so after the first visit, he came to me, and, taking from his pocket a fiery red banflana, said:—

"You were right about the part the imagination played in regard to the colour. I came to that conclusion yesterday, and as a result slept soundly last night—the first time in many weeks. Red has no longer any terrors for me."



MUSKOKA COTTAGE SANATORIUM AS SEEN FROM THE WATER.