

Sunday Reading.

A Heavenly Visitant.

Come, O thou traveler unknown,
Whom still I hold, but cannot see
My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with thee!
With thee all night I mean to stay
And wrestle till the break of day!

I need not tell thee who I am,
Thy mystery or sin declare;
Thyself hast called me by my name;
Look on my hands and read it there!
But who, I ask thee, who art thou?
Tell me Thy name, and tell me now.

Yield to me now, for I am weak,
But confident in self-despair;
Speak to my heart, in blessings speak;
Be conquered by my constant prayer,
Speak or thou never hence shalt move,
And tell me if Thy name is Love.

My prayer hath power with God; the
grace
Unspeakable I now receive;
Through faith I see Thee face to face—
I see Thee face to face and live;
In vain I have not wept and strove;
Thy nature and Thy name is Love.

Lame as I am, I take the prey;
Hell, earth, and sin with ease
o'ercome;
I leap for joy, pursue my way.
And as a bounding hart fly home;
Through all eternity to prove
Thy nature and Thy name is Love.

Power of Suggestion in Healing.

By Robert H. Gault.

When you ask what means the physician can use in dispensing mental influence for the cure of disease one immediately thinks of suggestion—the shibboleth of the psychotherapist. You suggest to yourself or another suggests to you simply by directing your attention and awakening anticipation, either pleasant or unpleasant.

Thus some one intimates to you that you have a pug nose. It had never occurred to you before. This evil genius suggested it, and now the idea, the image, the thought of a pug nose, and especially of such a protuberance on your so-thought defectless face, plagues you day after day. Your idea has gained force and vividness and through no other means than your attention. Consequently this much heralded suggestion has nothing supernatural about it. It is just as natural as attention.

Now, when any mental experience has been aroused either by suggestion or otherwise, its physiological expression comes with it—that is, a particular form of excitation of the nervous system. This in turn brings about a peculiar distribution of the blood supply, and hence nutritional processes. It follows, therefore, that the appropriate mental process will induce whatever modification of nutrition any given pathological case may require. Here is the theory of psychotherapy in a nutshell. It is very beautiful. Forgive me now for putting the brakes upon your imagination before I go on to explain what we really can expect of suggestion.

It is a panacea with decided limitations, and hence not a panacea. Suggestion will never make a pug nose out of your finely chiseled Grecian model. Before the shrine of St. Anne de Beaupre in the village of Beaupre, near Quebec, are pyramids of crutches and canes which have been thrown away by the lame and halt who have been relieved from their afflictions by the ministrations of the good St. Anne. However that may be, I am sure it is utterly beyond the power of suggestion to lengthen abbreviated limbs. Indeed, I believe it is not within its ability directly to remove or to produce even so much as a wart.

If the disease to be cured involves the wasting away, decay, or modification of

tissue in any form whatever, foolhardy is too weak an adjective to use in describing the sufferer who depends upon suggestion alone for relief, and the pow-wow who administers nothing else in such cases is a—well, he is a pow-wow. I must guard myself here, however. For even in the case of the most severe surgical treatment suggestion is efficient in as far as it supplants fear by confidence.

It is the oil on the spindle which makes the machinery run more smoothly than it otherwise could do. It therefore saves many a jolt and many a hot box. It spares a deal of vital energy which can be poured into the channel that needs it most. It checkmates the tearing down processes of fear and fretting.

But is there any kind of case in which suggestion can be employed as a more direct curative agent? Yes, especially among those afflicted with hysteria in its diverse forms. For instance, many a hysterical patient is insensitive to touch over a part of the body. This is the effect of a mental disorder. The patient needs a hard jolt to bring the impressions that she normally gets from that part of the bodily surface into attention. She is suffering from a narrowing of consciousness.

She neglects some normally observed impressions and fixes attention upon others which she thinks are of greater practical value, like impressions of sight and hearing. We normally neglect the pressure of our shoes upon our feet and attend to something else. It is the same sort of thing. Some one with an air of unquestionable authority should tell such an individual that this part of her bodily surface is in just as good condition as ever it was, and that if she does

not recover normal sensitivity now some dreadful consequences (whatever the operator pleases) are likely to follow at any moment. If the case is skillfully handled good may be done. There are often cases of partial paralysis due to mental causes which can be handled in the same way.

But one must be sure of the case. Not every Tom, Dick, and Harry can be sure. Hence not every Harry, Dick and Tom should be countenanced in his attempt to practice mental therapeutics. No one should be permitted to follow the profession of psychotherapy who cannot do two things that are absolutely essential to safe and sane practice—first, make an accurate physical diagnosis after the manner of a skilled medical practitioner. Secondly, make just as trustworthy a mental diagnosis after the manner of a skilled psychologist.

This third qualification, furthermore, I consider equally important: Our new doctor must not be so opinionated as to be unable to weigh the results of his two diagnoses. He must be able to let these results determine whether he shall employ quinine and blisters or not.

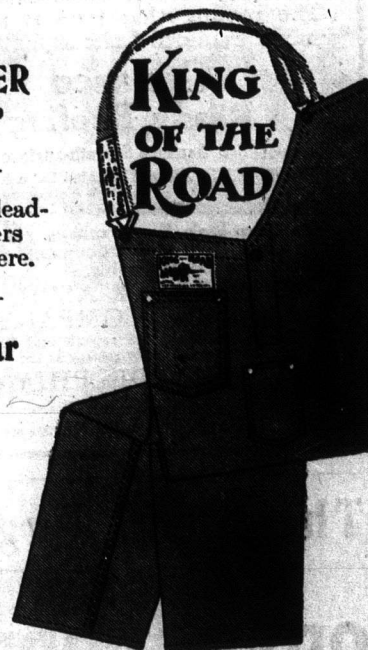
I suppose that about one-tenth of one per cent. of those who are devoting themselves exclusively to dealing out mental influence in the treatment of disease are able to meet these requirements. As for me, therefore, I shall continue to take pills from a reliable M. D.'s satchel when he says I need them. I shall hope that he will help me to compose my mind if I cannot do it myself. It is probable that all in all he will be partly right. The other fellow is too likely to be altogether wrong. He doesn't appeal to me.

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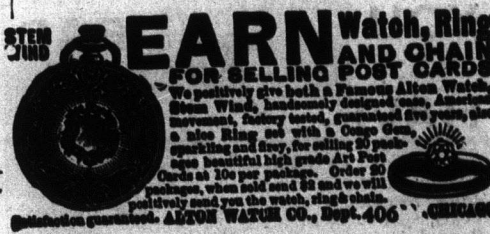
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