

Prominent among the marks of the curse that rests upon heathenism and paganism is this, that the most absurd, pernicious, and even cruel notions obtain as to the nature and consequent treatment of disease. Bodily ailments are held to be the result of malignant spiritual agencies, witchcraft, etc. Hence the medicine man, with his absurd methods of detecting the source of the malign influence, and removing or antidoting it. In Africa the suspected witch must swallow the poison draught. If it operates on the one hand as an emetic, or on the other as a cathartic, it is a sign of innocence or of guilt, as the case may be; and as the medicine man knows that the result of its administration depends on the strength and quantity of the dose, he can dispose of the suspected party as he pleases. There is an amusing story told in a book on the Congo, of a hydraulic press introduced into the country for manufacturing purposes, which the natives suspected of being endowed with supernatural powers, and which they wished to test by the *tangena* draught; but, as it had neither stomach nor bowels, it was difficult to see how either vomiting or purging could be secured, and the test had to be abandoned.

This may amuse. But the whole subject is fraught with painful interest. The sufferings of the people in the Lao's country from the native "physicians" and their methods of treatment, cannot be believed except upon the most reliable testimony. When I heard the first statement from a Medical Missionary of what he had seen himself, I said such facts should be "written in blood and registered in hell." Decoctions of the most repulsive sort, operations the most cruel and torturing, remedies the most absurdly unnatural, all calculated to increase, if not engender disease, abound even among tribes that might be supposed to be comparatively intelligent and civilized. And where there might be no spiritual results to be hoped for, as a mere matter of *humanity* it would be worth while to undertake to introduce a rational and scientific treatment by medicine and surgery, if only to diminish in some measure the *temporal* suffering of poor, deluded human beings.

But, as I have hinted, greater results are attained. God puts scientific medicine into our hands as the key to unlock closed doors to the unevangelized nations. Now, many a man has gone into a hitherto closed village or community by the simple process of vaccination, or by a successful interposition in cases of epidemic diseases, like scarlet fever, measles, etc. We have known a simple operation for the removal of a cataract to open up a whole town to the influence of a Christian surgeon. The fact is now universally known that Korea was unlocked and its hermit seclusion broken by Dr. Allen's successful treatment of wounds received in the civil war of Seoul. The nephew of the reigning monarch, Ming Yong Ik, chanced to be among the wounded. Dr. Allen found the native