

they are intended to relieve may be; and that they are largely composed of some particular drug, combination of herbs, or patent compound, which can generally be procured only from the prescriber or from certain indicated agents; suggesting the idea of much profit either directly to the prescriber, or indirectly in the shape of commission. On examining these prescriptions, which by the way are generally written in an execrable jargon of Latin and English, we find that they are as a rule composed of drugs having a general tonic or alterative effect, which, to say the least, if they did no good, would hardly do much harm, and might possibly *hit some nail on the head*.

Not long ago, a lady consulted one of these professors of the healing art, and was informed she was suffering from some disease peculiar to females; on receiving her prescription, feeling some misgivings about blindly using it, she asked a medical friend what he thought of it. A few days after, the same doctor, while conversing with some friends, was approached by a gentleman, a member of Parliament, who, in like manner and for the same reason, handed him a prescription given him by the same person, whom he had also consulted. Both prescriptions were identical. The joke was too good to be lost; and amid shouts of laughter, the unfortunate man was informed that he must have *uterine* disease, as the same treatment had been recommended for a lady suffering from that complaint.

The effect of the imagination, in inducing and simulating disease, is strong and well understood; but not more so than its power of so buoying up the system, by infusing hope and confidence, that the old saw, "Conceit can kill, and conceit can cure," has become proverbial, and plays by far the largest part in the vaunted cures made by those persons. And when, in addition, we consider the blind spirit of credulity which must possess those who submit themselves to the tender mercies of these harpies, we cannot be surprised if occasionally even an evil tree, by chance, appears to bring forth good fruit.

The ways of Providence are inscrutable. The Almighty, in His wisdom, may see fit to delegate authority and power to those who, to us, in our blindness and ignorance, may appear obscure and unfitted for the purpose. But it will hardly be credited, that some persons of refinement and education, who might