

the influence of the moon; and he himself had seen unfortunate epileptics so saturated with this drug that it had become deposited under their skins and blackened by the light as on a photographic plate, so that their complexions were turned a dull, slaty gray.

Gold was always a great favorite because, being the king of metals, it imparted some of its royal qualities to the body that absorbed it, and enabled it to resist the attack of disease as the noble metal itself resisted the bite of even the strongest acids. Upon this fond delusion of the popular mind was based the famous "Gold Cure" of only a decade or two ago.

From such a seething welter of ignorance and superstition, from such a witch's caldron of absurdities, have sprung the majority of our remedies in use to-day. This is chiefly due to the extraordinary and incredible ancientness of drugs. Opium, for instance, is older than bread; and iron was first used as a medicine, because it was *new* and hence hateful to the old gods, in the Bronze Age at the latest.

Is it any wonder that the struggle to rationalize medicine, to bring order out of chaos, has been so tremendous and that progress in the fight against superstition and error has been so discouragingly slow?

One of the greatest obstacles to progress, the gravest difficulty in sifting the helpful from the worthless, has been, and is yet, that, inasmuch as some eighty-five per cent of all illnesses get well of their own accord no matter what may be done or not done for them, *any drug which is used with sufficient constancy and indiscriminateness in any disease will score eighty-*