

Nowhere is it affirmed that physicians are the lords of life, the masters of all natural forces, nor of such magic as to overcome the operations of cause and effect. It is manifestly impossible from present data, to discuss upon a purely rational basis, a disease of unknown origin, becoming universal so suddenly, and stealing a march on everybody, like a thief in the night.

In the times when diseases were laid upon men by supernatural powers, the remedy was likewise looked for from occult or mysterious sources. Assuaging angry gods and expelling evil spirits who had taken their abode in the human body were feats to be achieved only by a peculiar class of men endowed with superhuman powers.

The mediæval doctor was an imposing personage, who was stared at with wonderment and awe. He was supposed to know all the secrets of creation, and, indeed was greatly concerned about alchemy, astrology, the search after the elixir of life, the philosopher's stone, etc. Demons were not excluded from his atiology; he respected the devil, and the devil respected him. His professional acts were held to spring from divine inspiration, which by no means precluded their successful coping, in point of absurdity, with the frantic performances of an Indian medicine man.

Speaking in the name of a grand and noble profession, Medical Classics replies to unmerited sneers and taunts. The medical man of to-day claims to be, *simply a man; a self-sacrificing* alleviator of human suffering, and, a searcher for *simple truth*. We claim no occult powers—we are *simply* human, and, there is a power in the *simple truth* which no verbal gloss or exaggeration can enhance. Moral rectitude is the essential attribute of a good citizen and moral rectitude is the guiding star of the medical profession of our day.

"Who does the best his circumstances allow;  
Does well, acts nobly: angels can do no more."

True Science, like true Philosophy, always gives more than she takes; and with the same breath that she tells us worlds may cease to palpitate, she tells us,

also, that the forces which gave them all their vitality can never be crushed into nothingness except by the hand of Him from whom they emanated.

"Truth is truth  
To the end of reckoning"

Brethren, of a divine calling, what of the day? Diligent you have been in that calling—by gods appointed, according to Paré, and some of you have already fallen by the wayside, stricken down by the nineteenth-century plague, in the performance of arduous professional duties, that have been a fearful mental strain. The heroism of the medical profession is what it always has been—grand, sublime and worthy of all admiration. "Honor the physician with the honor due him," says Jesus, the son of Sirach, whom Paré considered the wisest among the Jews, "for the most High has created him because of necessity; and of the Lord cometh the gift of healing."

Each century in succession has contributed something to the store of general knowledge, and it would be strange and depressing indeed, if those who have the good fortune to be born in the later ages should not be richer in the possession of truth than those born in the earlier times. Had Aristotle lived in the time of Bruno, he would most certainly have made fewer false statements. And Bruno's teaching in its turn falls before that of Darwin and other philosophers of our day.

Epidemic influenza has been laughed at, made light of, and the butt of jests, both sorry and merry, as being but an exaggerated form of an ordinary cold in the head.

On the principle that he laughs best who laughs last, no one laughs now, and doctors and laymen alike have ceased to regard it as "something simply benign."

Its "benignity" is strikingly exemplified not only in the fact that it has greatly swollen the mortality from pneumonia and other lung troubles, but in the augmented death rate from heart disease. It upsets the whole nervous system of its victim, and it has hurried to their graves many already suffering from valvular and other diseases of the heart.