

## Osteopathic Campaign: The Claim

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The osteopathist can heal nobody. This may sound startling coming from the osteopathic profession itself, but—the osteopathist can heal nobody. It is not he that does the healing. Osteopathy is a complete system because it is nature that does the healing. The osteopathist does but restore to nature the opportunity that was denied her when disease set in. So far as he can do this, he can be sure of the cure, for the powers of nature never fail. Disease is not an antagonist, needing to be conquered and driven out, it is merely the failure of some necessary process within the body; which failure must be due to its being prevented.

This is the way of it. The body is not an organization of things, it is an organization of forces. In its structure it consists of things, yet these things only exist for the sake of the forces they embody and represent. When a piece of steel is made into a hair spring, without ceasing to be steel, it yet becomes much more than a hair spring—a force. So far as the purpose of the watch is concerned, it is known only as a force. So the organs and other parts of the body are forces, so far as life is concerned.

Now the peculiar thing in case of the body is that these forces built for themselves the things, the structures, that embody them. Suppose, then some part of the structure should be wrenched out of place; what would be the effect on the forces? They would of course be thrown out of harmony—would be deprived of the chance to work harmoniously, or perhaps to work at all disease is name we give to the resulting condition. But immediately these forces which built it would set to work to right it. Two things they would do. They would try to pull the disordered parts back into order; and they would begin to accommodate themselves to the new conditions. If they fail in the first they try to complete the second, but always leave a weakness and become drain on the strength. The first is called the tendency towards the normal; it is more, it is a strain towards the normal. The second might be called the attempt at compensation. These are the forces which the osteopathist endeavors to assist, working still and always upon and through the natural agencies. In assisting the first, he relies upon the natural tension of forces to find and maintain the correct position or shape, and himself merely uncatches what is caught and pushes it towards its goal.

In helping the second—but here some explanation is needed. Every body function can vary within rather wide limits, so as to adapt itself to external changes or to make compensation for

them. The range of its variation can be greatly increased by training. Thus, the calibre of the blood vessels varies every time a drink of water is absorbed; and in firemen, for instance, who are trained to stand easily the rapid changes from heat to cold, must be able to vary greatly. When a new condition arises internally, instead of externally, all the functions attempt to compensate for the change will JUST the same way. If the change be extreme, the compensation will take time, meanwhile often a condition of disease will obtain.

Indeed, so great is nature's power of adaptation and compensation that it is found to be dangerous to restore old lesions suddenly, for this may create a condition of disease Just as an original lesion may. If the forces have harmonized themselves, to this structure, they will be thrown out of harmony by a too sudden change. It is always best to restore the original condition, though slowly; because however well nature has made the compensation—there is yet necessarily a weakness.

This process the osteopathist helps by supplying the necessary stimulation at the proper points. The body, and particularly the nervous system, is a creature of habit; and often continued stimulation to a nerve will induce the habit in the nerve, which may be kept up without the stimulus. Thus the osteopathist may help the system to form new habits, suited to the new conditions.

In every particular, the osteopathist works on and through the power of nature. There is no question that the powers of nature are, taken together, complete. According to his skill in employing or liberating them, therefore, the osteopathist offers practically a complete system.

*Reference:*

Tucker, E. E. Osteopathic Campaign: The Claim, *The Journal of Osteopathy*, December 1901,  
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