

**Facts and observations on the mesmeric and magnetic fluids / [John Ashburner].**

**Contributors**

Ashburner, John, 1793-1878.

**Publication/Creation**

[London] : [publisher not identified], [1848?]

**Persistent URL**

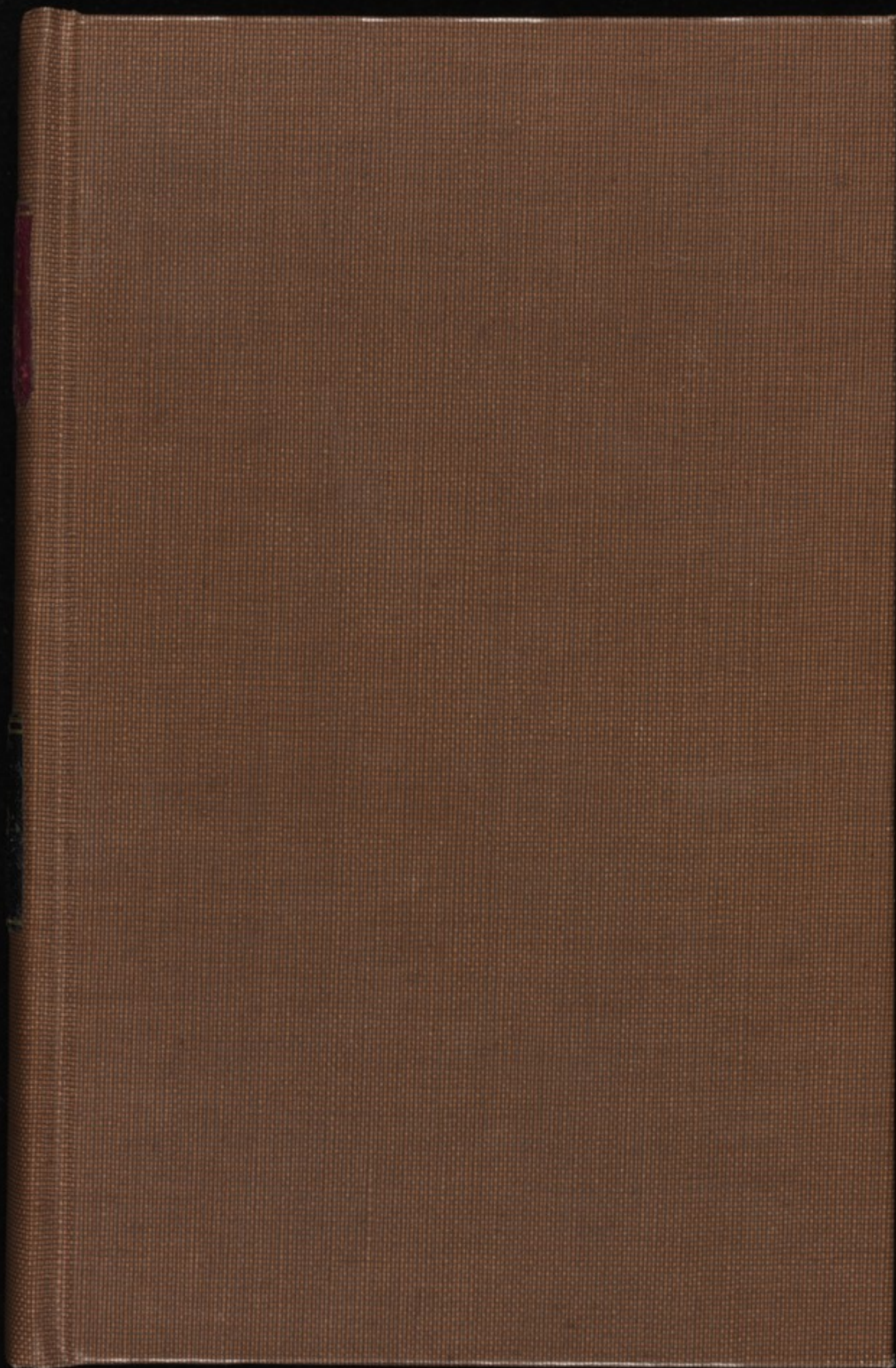
<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/ecwykhym>

**License and attribution**

You have permission to make copies of this work under a Creative Commons, Attribution, Non-commercial license.

Non-commercial use includes private study, academic research, teaching, and other activities that are not primarily intended for, or directed towards, commercial advantage or private monetary compensation. See the Legal Code for further information.

Image source should be attributed as specified in the full catalogue record. If no source is given the image should be attributed to Wellcome Collection.





FACTS AND OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

MESMERIC AND MAGNETIC FLUIDS,

BY

JOHN ASHBURNER, M.D.

SOME of the most interesting as well as most important among the facts which have come under the observation of the cultivators of mesmeric science, relate to the analogies between the mesmeric and magnetic fluids. That these exist is an assumption based upon the direction taken by certain currents of forces, and by the light emitted under certain circumstances when particular arrangements of matter are attended by its evolution. Abstractedly considered, there is no proof that magnetic matter exists, and its entity is granted only to account for numerous phenomena which require explanation and which can be accounted for only by a hypothetical reality. In the present state of our knowledge, the eagerness to carp at new facts, and the tendency to disputation, form the drag-chain to stay the rapidity of scientific progression; and it is only by such a cultivation of the mind of the masses as to permit the reception of new ideas, new trains of reasoning, the original thoughts of intellects wider than those of the common herd, that the vulgar opposition to truth can be overcome.

Assuming that electric and that magnetic currents exist, we may infer that a fluid in many particulars analogous to magnetism may be proved. We may be led to infer from numerous observations made at different times by numerous persons, that certain effects are produced by the operation of an influence from one living human being upon another. An endeavour will be made to shew that this influence, indebted for its existence perhaps to psychological causes, operates by

the agency of a supposed fluid, which, producing physiological phenomena similar to those produced by the magnetic fluid, may be inferred to be analogous to it. Striking facts may be adduced, too, which may tend to the conclusion that the *exercise* of the faculties of the human mind, and particularly that of the will, is attended by the emanation of a fluid from the brain, from the fingers, seats of the functional extremities of nerves, or from some part of the person who may be exercising the mental faculties. I propose to shew that the same series of events may be produced in individuals of a certain nervous diathesis by the impingement of a fluid evolved by the will of another; or by manipulations attended by the emanation of the same fluid; or by certain emanations from magnets, or from some metallic wires through which currents of electricity are passed; or from the direct application of certain metals. I do not attempt to establish the identity of these fluids, for the facts daily developing themselves tend to shew that the distinctive properties of these fluids are as various as the substances from which they emanate, and it may be that the great power antecedent to all consequents may ordain the simplicity and unity of one electric, and gravitating with centrifugal force, evolving an infinite complication and variety of magnetic cohesive and repulsive agencies; the entire system emerging from the *volonté directing* "*La Grande Formule!*"

An attempt to satisfy stiff and superficial thinkers by demonstrations to which they cannot yield their inflexible and gnarled habits of trained reflection, is but an idle occupation. To apprehend ideas that are out of the ordinary trains of men's habitual thoughts, there must be a flexibility of mind. The child's facile uptake of its alphabet, and quick apprehension of facts, its joyous perception of novelties, contrasts strongly with the stolidity of the hinde who has passed his life in the sameness of low agricultural drudgery. Let any one try what years ago it was my lot to essay,—to teach poor children and their adult parents, in a remote agricultural district, the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic, and this observation will not long want his assent. Let the same person study with an open mind the phenomena connected with the nervous system, and seek for the interesting facts poured in great abundance on the world of late years by the students of animal magnetism; and if he see no reason to deplore the inflexibility of mind and the illogical trains of thought which characterize the great majority of would-be philosophers, he must himself belong to their stupid phalanx.

I shall not pretend to labour for the sake of conversion or for the love of controversy. I have only to state facts which may be proved by testimony as good as any that ordinarily directs the force of conviction; facts that, for the most part, may be observed by any one who will exercise the requisite patience and perseverance in watching for them.

It is a common observation that, for the most part, those persons who are by mesmeric treatment put into a state of somnambulism, exhibit sincerity and truthfulness. The manners become easy, familiar, and confiding. With them rank has no existence. Equality of station is established, and nature is supreme until the progress of magnetic development places the individual in relation to external objects in a condition to exercise all the cerebral organs in the same manner as in ordinary vigilance. Even then when the sleep-waker has returned to a knowledge of this artificial world, and tastes of the fraudulent practices which govern mankind in their daily intercourse, the exceptions to a love of candour and sincerity seem to be dependent upon the existence of an unusually large size of those cerebral organs which in the wide-awake state determine the habit of loving falsehood better than truth. It would be useless to enlarge upon this point to experienced mesmerists, and the objection that deceit has frequently been met with in sleep-wakers would apply with far greater force, if statistics could be resorted to, against a large majority of persons wide awake.

Human testimony is, or is not, credible according to the circumstances under which it is elicited. If the individual stating certain matters be in a sane condition of mind, and of character habitually sincere and truthful, there is no reason to doubt the veracity of that individual. If that person be supported in testimony by another equally above suspicion, the facts stated have an additional value. If corroborations to stated facts be afforded by a number of persons unconnected with each other,—some unknown to each other,—these give additional value to the testimony; and supposing the facts to have been witnessed at different periods of time, —in different places and by different persons, who had not only no cognizance of each other, but who could have no idea that similar events to those in course of observation had been witnessed by others,—these suppositions would tend very far to complete the reliance to be placed upon the matters testified. Although it might occasionally happen that some of the witnesses to a fact might not fulfil every one condition required by a sceptic, yet there is such abundant evidence on which to rest the truth of the chain of facts I shall adduce, that I willingly leave it to find its way.

In the month of August, 1842, I first magnetized Jane Love, a young woman then about 23 years age, of tall stature, ample frame, with dark hair and eyes, neuro-sanguineo temperament. She had been my patient at the Middlesex Hospital for some months previously for a painful tumor in the right hypogastrium, which I considered to be ovarian. She had undergone much medical treatment without the slightest alleviation of her symptoms, and had latterly been losing flesh. Her mother told me that several doctors in the country and in London had prognosticated a progressive emaciation of the body and an enlargement of the tumor, until a period should arrive when the young woman would die of dropsy. Her complexion was half waxy, half sodden, of a green hue, insomuch that at the hospital she was compared to green "wax-work." Having undergone the routine treatment in our establishment,—purgatives, alteratives, depuratives, emmenagogues, narcotics, having been unintentionally salivated, all without the slightest benefit, I determined to try the experiment of mesmerising her. I effected my object by pointing at her eyes with two fingers, and she went to sleep in less than an hour. The relief obtained was so striking that I made her attend at my house for three hours every morning to have the benefits of the magnetic sleep. At first it was necessary to bring her to me in a cab, for she was not able to walk the distance of two miles from her own residence to my house. On the fourth morning, she dispensed with the vehicle, but she was much exhausted on her arrival, and the agony of the tumor was very great. It was attended with nausea, retching, and sense of bearing down, with pain between the scapulæ. I mesmerised her and she had a most refreshing sleep of three hours. The passes down the back and the arms made her rigid. The eyeballs on examination were found to be turned upwards. The pulse, first at 120, fell to 84, was full and soft. The improvement in her condition was very gratifying. She had come into the house extremely ill, and suffering much; she went out perfectly relieved and walked home with ease and with cheerful spirits. On the eleventh day, this young woman, who had not been able for two years to mount a flight of stairs, responded to the mesmeric beckoning, and followed me in her sleep up twenty-four steps to my drawing rooms, where she walked in and out among the furniture, and after sitting down for five minutes in a deep sleep, again followed me, descending the stairs and returning to her seat in the library. I did not perform the phrenological experiments upon her head until I had given her the advantages of

deep and placid sleep with occasional passes to produce the rigidity, which these patients find so refreshing, for a space of three weeks. She had repeatedly broken out into fits of laughter, and had spoken a few sentences during this time, but as the effort to make her converse caused confusion in her head, I allowed the phenomena scope for development before any number of experiments were tried. When at last I excited Mirth by placing my fingers on the organ of gaiety, she laughed most joyously. I found that by exciting the organ of Tune, she sang; by exciting Imitativeness, she mimicked. I pursued the experiments, and had reason to conclude that though some organs responded very well, yet that the range in her head was limited. Language, Weight, Size, Individuality, Tune, Gaiety, Imitation, Benevolence, Veneration, Self-esteem, Adhesiveness, Acquisitiveness, Secretiveness, Alimentiveness, are all that I have been able to excite to clear manifestation. The excitation of Destructiveness and Combativeness produce discomfort, but do not manifest the usual phenomena. It is remarkable that in her sister's head the excitation of these organs is attended by very violent effects. In Jane, the sympathies of taste and sensation with the mesmeriser are very remarkably exhibited. I come now to the point for which I adduce this case an illustration. Not until Jane had been daily mesmerised for five weeks did she exhibit the curious phenomenon of the perception of a light from the upper part of her forehead. On the first morning that this attracted my attention, I saw her sitting very quietly sleeping with her head slightly bent forward. She was not so joyous as usual, and appeared absorbed in attention. Presently she said, "O how lovely—how beautiful." I asked what was so lovely and beautiful. "Oh, that charming blue light, how bright! It's like the sky! It's like violets! Oh! the room is all sunshine. Now it's all the colours of the rainbow: now it's all clear bright light: now it's beautiful sky-blue. I would like to have a gown of that colour." Upon being asked how she saw this light, she said that it was from this part, placing her hands above her forehead, and shutting and opening them as if she were desirous of catching something. She had repeatedly drunk mesmerised water, and had taken it always for a mixture of brandy and soda water. Up to this time she had always taken me for her sister Harriet. Nothing could induce her to believe that I was not Harriet, and some comic scenes had been exhibited with a coloured horse-blanket, which although she was sitting or standing, she would take for her bed covering, and when I pulled it away from her, she

would insist on the unfairness of Harriet's taking a larger share of the bed and the coverings than she was entitled to. If she were asked where she was, she would stoutly aver that she was lying down in her bed, although she was perfectly erect and made to walk about the room. When the development of light reached her, however, she no longer took me for her sister; she knew me for the doctor. Previously she heard only her mesmeriser, now she saw and heard every body in the room, and distinguished the colour and other peculiarities of dress of every individual. Now when I mesmerised water by darting my fingers upon its surface, she described "beautiful blue sparks" as going from the tips of my fingers into the water; sometimes they were like large spangles. The operation of mesmerising water always rivetted her attention, and she eagerly drank the water as soon as she could get it. One morning I gave her six tumblers full of mesmerised water, which she swallowed with voracity and very evident satisfaction. I said, "So much brandy and soda water will disagree with you." "What nonsense," she replied, "it's not brandy and soda water,—it's *mesmerised water*." From that time she never entertained the hallucination which had previously possessed her, nor was she conscious that she had ever held mesmerised water to be aught but what it was. Finding now that when I beckoned her or exerted tractive movements, she could see what I did, I tried the experiment of silently willing her to come to me when I sat at several yards from her. I had heard of Mr. H. Thompson's experiments with the will long before I had the pleasure of his acquaintance, and I tried the force of the will in this case, but in her state of sleep-waking, and I succeeded so far as to make her get up from her sleep and walk up to me. She always fell into the profound unconscious sleep after I had made this experiment. She described a rope of blue light proceeding from my eyes to her head whenever I willed her. She said it pulled her so hard she could not resist it; she was obliged to come up to me. I have repeatedly asked her about the size of this rope of light, and her answer was always that it was in strings, all in lines together as thick as her arm, most frequently blue, but sometimes all the colours of the rainbow.

I have occasionally sat reading while this patient has been sleeping in a chair near me; but invariably, whenever my attention has been rivetted to the subject, she has got up with her hands to her head and approached me, begging me to lay down the book, for my head was covered with a blue cloud which affected her very disagreeably. If I persisted



in reading, she became vexed, and said that her head would split.

By those who have not studied the facts resulting from mesmeric events, I may be, as I have been, charged with great credulity. The habits of education have modified the brains of these people who so accuse me. They have not apprehended the philosophy of Gall. Perhaps the habit of resting on foregone conclusions has so obtunded their perceptions, that certain kinds of facts do not find admission into their minds, and they pity my credulity; while I deeply regret that they cannot participate in the delight which I experience in bringing out new trains of ideas, founded on fresh developments of truth, which are destined to enlighten mankind on the most sublime subjects that can arrest the attention of philosophers.

These details shew that magnetic sleep is induced by the pointing of two of my fingers to the eyes of this young woman. I have often produced the same kind of sleep by passing my hands alternately, at the distance of half an inch from the surface of her head and face, down from the crown of the head to the pit of the stomach; by darting my fingers at her face; by darting them at the nape of her neck; by standing before her and willing her to go to sleep; by standing at some distance behind her and willing her to go to sleep: often even when she was unconscious that I was doing it, as I shewed before an audience at the Polytechnic Institution, on an occasion when the Directors were kind enough to permit me to make use of some of their splendid apparatus for my experiments; and as I have shewn to hundreds besides. I have a right to infer that these effects are produced by the emanation of a fluid from my person, which has been seen by this person herself when I have mesmerised water, when I have mesmerised other persons, when I have willed her to sleep, or when I have willed her to get up and to walk across a long room. The blue streams of light, the blue sparks from my fingers, have been seen not by Jane only, but by other persons in a state of magnetic sleep; and by other persons as well as by herself in the ordinary condition of waking or vigilance. That the exercise of thought is accompanied by some emanation from the brain, is manifest from Jane's repeated observation of a blue cloud of light over my head, whenever I concentrated my mind in reading. Other patients have told me the same thing. Except upon the idea of an emanation of fluid or influence from one person to another, how is the following fact to be accounted for? The Prince de ——— could speak only a few words of English. He agreed with me, in another room, before the *séance* one morn-

ing, that he was to think intently of a wish to kiss Jane, when she should be seated in a state of somnambulism. We went into the library, and Jane having been put to sleep, the Prince approached her and did just as he proposed. The young woman started, put up her hands repelling him, and declaring that "she should do no such thing." The Prince then spoke his wish in Italian, and with the same repulsive gesture as before she said, "I won't suffer it—you shan't do it."

How, except upon the existence of a magnetic light emanating from one person to another, and passing through a thick opaque bookcase full of books and a wall dividing the rooms, could be accounted for the fact repeatedly observed and testified by Mr. Marsh, the bookseller, of Old Cavendish Street, and by others, of Jane's seeing and stating, while in my library, what I was about in my breakfast-room? She has described my burning my lips with hot tea; my handing my cup for more sugar; my cutting slices of ham; my buttering dry toast and cutting it into strips; all which things I had done, not suspecting that Jane was a spectator of my actions. One morning, in her sleep, the Brazilian minister and his lady being present, she suddenly cast her attention to a distance of two miles, and described an arrival of which it was clear that she could have previously known nothing. She went on to state a series of events which were occurring there while she was in my house, and I went over and fully ascertained the accuracy of her narrative. How can this be accounted for except upon the admission of the existence of a magnetic light or fluid travelling to or from her brain, rendering her cognizant of the events which were occurring?

I have a letter from a lady of noble birth, and of unimpeachable veracity, in which is given a detail of a number of circumstances described by Jane Love while she was in mesmeric sleep fifty miles in the country, relating to events in the interior of a house in Eaton Square, into which the young woman had never set her foot. The facts are incontrovertible.

I have endeavoured to shew that a fluid passes in these cases as in the exercise of the will, and that opaque walls and distance form no obstacle to the passage of this magnetic fluid, any more than to the magnetic fluid which reaches the needle of the compass from the North Pole, and directs the mariner in his course aright. Mr. Kiste told me that he had repeatedly induced sleep in a child by will at the distance of several miles when he was in the neighbourhood of Plymouth, and that the fact was known to hundreds of witnesses. Mr. Thompson, of Fairfield Lodge, York, has exercised the will at several miles' distance with striking effects. There are various

results produced by the fluid of the will by different persons. Mr. Thompson can will certain individuals to perform certain actions while they continue awake. If I try the same experiment on the same individuals, I produce deep sleep. In mesmerising a gentleman who is very refined in his perception of the differences of influence between different mesmerisers, Mr. Thompson's influence was said to be clear and light, while mine was dull, harsh, and heavy: Mr. Thompson's was very agreeable,—mine was overpowering, and produced the deep sleep: Mr. Thompson's was compared to the passage of a mail-coach wheel,—mine to a broad heavy waggon wheel. These striking differences are but specimens of the vast variety of character to be observed in the mesmeric influences of different persons. They are probably as numerous as the individuals of mankind.

I adduce a case to illustrate further some of the points we have been considering.

In the month of June, 1844, Miss C—— came to consult me. Her health had been very seriously affected for two years. She had a slight figure with a large head. The temperament was nervous; the hair and eyes black; complexion sallow. Her brain was of a high order, and her mind had been well cultivated. She had so happy a proportion between the moral and intellectual qualities, that her case could not fail in phreno-mesmerism to be one of deep interest. Her features were admirably formed, and her beauty rendered the physiognomy of her feelings very charming. She was cured, under my care, by mesmerism, of a complaint that had simulated some of the forms of organic malignant disease. It was at first very difficult to affect her, and she at no time lost her primary or vigilant consciousness during her mesmeric sleep. She responded to the excitation of the phrenological organs, and felt obliged to obey the will of the mesmeriser up to the point of following him about the room; but if she were commanded to do anything very repulsive to her feelings, she became awake instantly and suddenly. To witness the grace of this beautiful female in the state of mesmeric sleep-waking—the delicacy of her poses, and the the physiognomy resulting from her refined feelings, was very high enjoyment. I introduce this case for the purpose of stating a fact I witnessed myself. I proposed one morning to exercise the will in silently commanding this young lady to come to me at the distance of twenty-four feet. Her mother was present, and there was a playful recommendation to resist the power of my will. I was determined that she should obey, and I spoke out my determination, which put

the young lady upon her mettle, and she was at first equally resolute that she would not obey. I continued to will for about six minutes, concentrating all my ideas on the resolution. At last, I saw her covered with a violet coloured halo. She burst into tears, and very unwillingly yielded her obedience, not without continuing to resist at every step she took in advancing towards me.

The case which follows further illustrates the facts relating to the existence of the blue fluid in mesmerism.

Mrs. A——, a young married lady, was cured by mesmerism of an extremely painful neuralgic affection of the bladder. After she had been magnetized about a fortnight, having up to that time exhibited only heavy sleep, she responded to a large proportion of the cerebral organs. She took me always for her mother up to a certain day, nearly six weeks from the first time I put her to sleep. Then she knew me quite well, and I could no longer will the water I mesmerised and gave her to drink to be anything but mesmerised water. Before that time, I could make her believe it was camomile tea, coffee, Port wine. I failed if I wished it to be Sherry or Madeira, but always succeeded if I wished it to be lemonade. When this lady had lucidity enough to see me and to know me for myself, she could see me dart blue sparks into a glass of water whenever I mesmerised it; and if I passed my hand over any other person, that individual became quite clear to her; and she said that in such cases she always perceived blue streams of light from my finger-ends. If I willed, she saw blue streams of light issuing from my eyes. If I made passes rapidly down her own person or down that of any other individual, she said she saw a blue light in streaks, which resembled a beautiful striped satin ribbon. Several of my patients in lucid mesmeric sleep-waking have compared the appearance presented on my making rapid passes to very brilliantly coloured blue satin striped ribbons.

The next case is interesting, and continues my train of evidence.

Sophia Jones, 32 years of age, dark brown hair, grey eyes, short stature, pale complexion, a dress-maker, was for two years subject to copious discharges of blood from the bowels. Sometimes the quantity amounted to a pint; occasionally there was mixed with the blood an amount of pus. There was a sense of constriction across the abdomen, and a soreness and pain increased on pressure in the right hypochondrium. This patient knew when she was to expect a loss of blood by an unusual tightness of the integuments of the

head, and sometimes on these occasions her sight would fail her. She complained of great thirst and want of appetite. Her bowels were relaxed, the motions were very dark; the catamenia regular, but scanty in quantity and lasting only one day. She was much emaciated; coughed and expectorated matter, sometimes tinged with blood. She had a small thready pulse of 120. The sounds on percussion and auscultation were not insisted upon, because there was difference of opinion upon the subject, more especially when it was announced that this patient was to be mesmerised. She had been for eleven months an in-patient of the Middlesex Hospital, under the care of Dr. Wilson, and very nearly two years under various treatment at that establishment. The first time I saw her was on an occasion of my accompanying Dr. Wilson from the wards through the hospital passages, when he asked her how she was. She looked very cadaverous, and was much exhausted from the blood she had lost on that day. From the striking effects which mesmerism had produced in menorrhagia, I felt much disposed to try its efficacy in this case. Dr. Wilson was desirous too of the trial, and I appointed the next day at my own house for the experiment.

At nine in the morning of the 20th of June, 1844, Sophia Jones first came to me. Under the operation of the fingers pointed to her eyes and of slow passes, she fell asleep in three minutes, and continued in a calm deep slumber for an hour and a quarter. The next day, three minutes sufficed to put her again into a very tranquil sleep, which lasted upwards of two hours. She felt much disposed to lie down, and chose the hearth rug as the most convenient place for her repose. Here she soon began to chuckle and laugh, talked, and got up to walk about the room. I gave her a glass of mesmerised water, and while I was mesmerising it, she exclaimed, "What beautiful bright-coloured spangles!" "Of what colour are they, and whence do they proceed?" she was asked. Her reply was, that "they were all the colours of the rainbow, and proceeded from my finger-ends to the surface of the water, which shone with a beautiful light. Oh, how delightful!" "Tell me," I said, "what colours do you distinguish?" "There are red and yellow spangles among them, but most of them are blue and violet." She drank the water, and was evidently much exhilarated by it. I made long passes from her head to her feet and she became very quiet, said that the room was so full of light she could not see anybody, she was so dazzled by the light. Shortly she put herself down on the hearth rug, and with the excep-

tion of a little fit of laughter now and then, continued the rest of her time in a calm sleep. In the course of a week, sleeping daily on her favorite rug and covered over with a horse blanket, her head resting on a cushion while I attended to other matters, her health was strikingly improved; and at the same time, she exhibited symptoms of a progress in clairvoyance. She referred the light to the upper part of her forehead; sometimes said "it was of a beautiful sky-blue colour,—sometimes all the colours of the rainbow." With the blanket covering her head, her face being turned to the wall, she has not unfrequently described the dress of persons both male and female who have entered the room, even an hour after she has been lying down in the position stated,—her back being towards the parties. If under these circumstances I threw some sparks at her, she spoke of their influence being very agreeable, and was delighted in describing their colours, so brilliant and yellow and blue. Sometimes she has spoken of occurrences in the streets; then she would revert to me, and if I went into the dining room to breakfast, she would describe to persons remaining in the library, occurrences taking place in the room in which I happened to be. She has gone to sleep at eight in the morning in the library, the servant has taken up the breakfast things at nine into the dining room, she has described to me what he has been doing, the colour and pattern of the plates, the urn, the tea-pot, the pattern of the damask table cloth. One morning she was puzzled about the contents of an oval dish, which she described very accurately as being placed upon a side table with a knife and fork in front of it,—the gilt rim of the dish and a colored landscape in its centre. She could not make out the remains of a ham, which she spoke of as having four large red knobs. I went into the room and found a large ham bone which she had very accurately described. There was very little meat upon it, and when I returned and told her what it was, she apprehended at once the real thing, and observed that it should not appear again, for it was too shabby to put upon table. It must be remembered that she was on the floor, her head and body covered with a blanket, and a bookcase full of books besides a wall interposed between her and the objects which she beheld and clearly described. Here was another instance of transmission of light through opaque masses of matter from or to her cerebral organs.

Sophia Jones had been mesmerised for more than three months daily; had, upon an average, slept for two hours each time. She lost her cough and expectoration; was very

seldom troubled with discharges of blood from the bowels, and when the occurrence did take place it resulted in consequence of some error in diet, and was insignificant in quantity. She gained flesh, had colour in her cheeks, and was more cheerful in her spirits. I took her one day into my bath room, where I mesmerised a glass of water for her to drink before she went away. She exclaimed, "What beautiful blue sparks of light I see from your fingers' ends going into the water, I never saw such a thing before." On this occasion she was wide awake. This patient, of so susceptible a nervous character, responded to a very limited range of phrenological organs. Mirth, Imitation, Benevolence, Melody, and Adhesiveness were the most remarkable. From the first occasion of her sleep she never mistook me for any other person.

Maria M ———, aged 26, black eyes, black hair, very slight figure, well made, but of short stature; head rather large. Occupation,—straw plaiter. Married. This patient has been afflicted for six years and a half with a burning pain in the epigastrium, and the pain increased upon pressure in the left hypochondrium, extending to the hip on the same side. Appetite bad. Spirits always very low. Catamenia scanty; regular in their period, but lasting only a day and a half. Takes care that by the aid of medicine her bowels are regular. Pulse weak, irritable; 90 in a minute. Has applied to several physicians successively; has found no relief. I magnetized her seven times for three-quarters of an hour each time, before I succeeded in inducing sleep. Afterwards she slept soundly about two hours daily.

On the 23rd of June, 1844, I have this note,—“Maria M ——— has slept nearly four hours. She takes me for her husband and is very cross. Upon Adhesiveness and Benevolence being excited she becomes very amiable; but she does not respond strikingly to many of the phrenological organs. When awake she is much attached to her husband who comes to walk home with her.” This patient had been with me daily for fifteen days. It was three weeks more before she saw light from the upper part of her forehead, and in nine days more she recognized me as the doctor. She relished mesmerised water at all times. Now she saw me when I threw “beautiful blue sparks into it.” Her health was completely re-established without an atom of medicine, and she acquired the habit of daily visiting the closet without her former physic.

Lady ——— was repeatedly magnetized by me during several months. She saw during her waking state blue globules of light along the internal surface of my hand and

fingers, and issuing from the fingers' ends, before her eyes were closed.

Mrs. K., aged 27, light hair, grey eyes, tall stature, large head, is very susceptible of being magnetically influenced. After I had magnetized her seven times, she could in her state of ordinary wakefulness see the sparks emitted from the ends of my fingers when I mesmerised water, or when I threw them by passes upon any other person. She cannot see the light from my eyes during the operation of willing while she is awake, but if I put her to sleep, she sees the light immediately, and she describes it as passing in blue streaks from my eyes to the person or object willed. If I will the back of a chair to be magnetized, she cannot put her hand upon it without her hand being spasmodically closed and rigidly grasped upon the chair-back.

Four other patients besides these have seen blue sparks from my fingers when I mesmerised water. These persons were severally in their ordinary wakeful state—in primary consciousness. Several of the patients having described to me during their sleep the issuing of a light blue or grey cloud of light from my electro-magnetic coils, I was induced to make experiments upon them with various electric and magnetic apparatus. On placing Jane Love in communication with the prime conductor of a small cylindrical electrifying machine, I produced such a fearful state of convulsions with temporary paralysis of the whole left side of her body, that I was not eager to try the experiment again. Mr. W. was placed on a large insulating stool at the Polytechnic Institution, and in connexion with the prime conductor of the magnificent plate machine. The discomfort produced in him lasted for several days. When these patients were submitted to the influence of the electro-magnetic apparatus, having been previously mesmerised to sleep, it invariably deepened the sleep. I tried this experiment with eight other cases, and found that the results were similar. In two cases of extreme nervous susceptibility, there was very deep coma with stertor.

Finding that in some I observed deepened sleep from the application of the electro-magnetic apparatus, and that in others there was superadded great rigidity of the whole muscular system, I constructed a helix of wire, of such a size as would enable me to cover any person seated in a chair. It was of an oval form, 8 feet in circumference, made of iron wire, a quarter of an inch in diameter, which was coiled fifty-six times in a height of thirty-three inches. With this apparatus I have been able to make some curious observations. On the 4th of December, 1845, I put a man, aged 45, of strong



nerve, within this coil, and then passed a current of electricity through the wire by means of a large pair of Smee's galvanic plates. He sat for two hours apparently quite unaffected by the magnetic influence. The next morning he went in again, and in less than twenty-five minutes complained of great giddiness and sickness. I removed the apparatus, and desired the man to lie down. He said that he felt as if he had been recovering from drunkenness. He walked home, and on his way through the streets as well as for several days afterwards, at intervals, he felt as if he was enveloped in a *light grey smoke*. By daily mesmerising this person for three-quarters of an hour, at eight o'clock every morning, for three months, I have produced the magnetic sleep.

Mrs. Cottrell, who often saw blue fluid proceeding from me when I willed any one to do my silent bidding, has repeatedly, during her magnetic sleep, observed that there was a cloud of greyish-blue light about this magnetic helix. She has said of a strong boy, who has been submitted to this apparatus for two hours four times a week during three months, and who is very somnolent while he sits in it, that there are a heap of greyish-blue sparks going up to him from the wires. If I make her touch the wires, she instantly sleeps heavily and becomes quite rigid and insensible.

Mrs. H——, the wife of a well-known surgeon, cannot stay in the room while the current is passing through the wire. In her primary waking state, she sees a light coming from my large horse-shoe magnet, and cannot remain in the same room with it without going to sleep very heavily.

Mrs. K——, when she is wide awake, sees bright sparks from the wires of my helix when the apparatus is in action, a grey cloud issuing from it, and a heavy sleep results if she stands too near it.

Mrs. H——, a lady of highly nervous temperament, at first sees nothing emanating from the apparatus. If she stands near the wires or touches them, the sensation is very agreeable; she sees light, feels lifted up from the ground, and falls back in sleep, quite rigid and insensible.

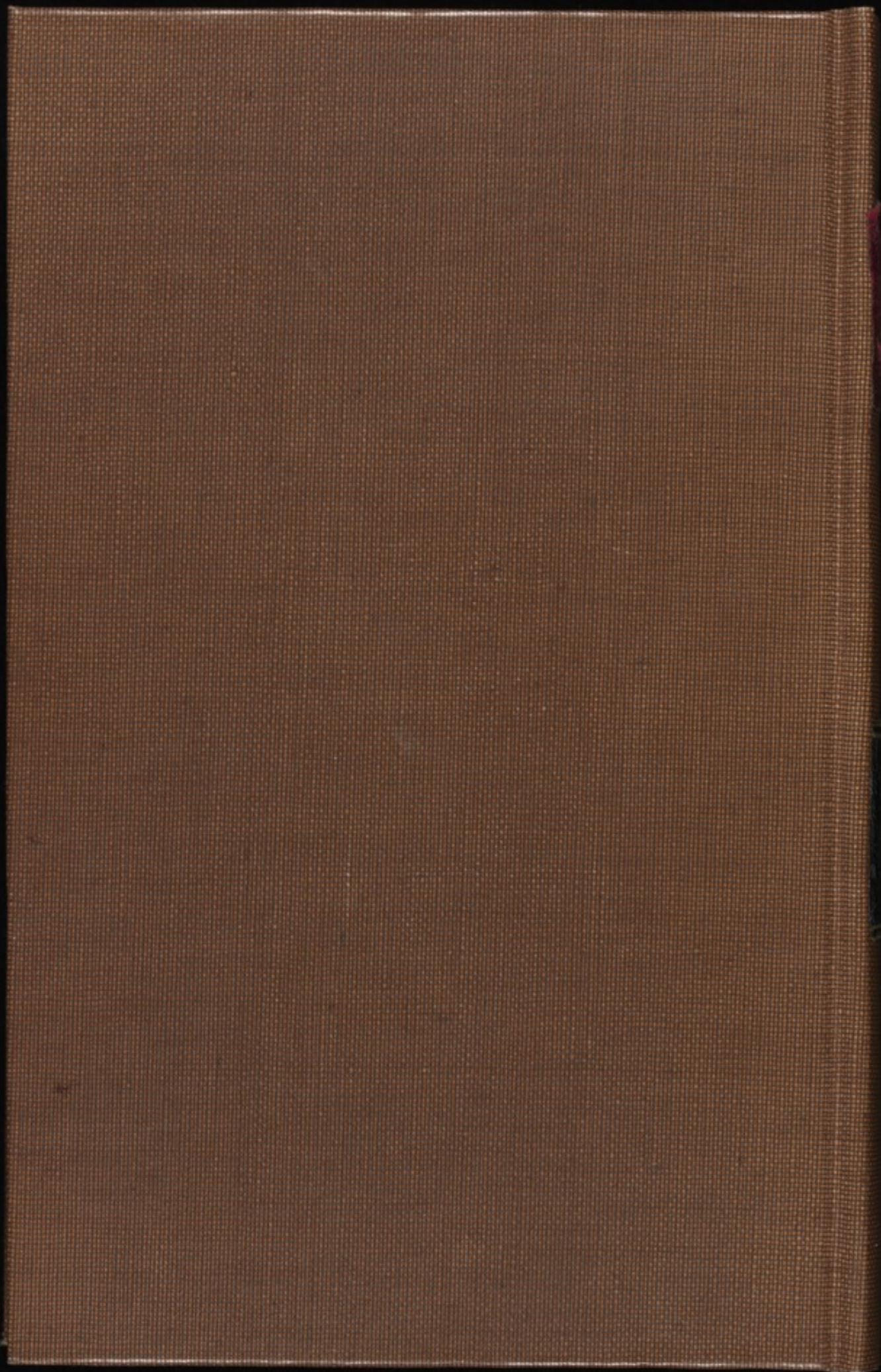
Harriet P—— is similarly affected; sees blue light within the apparatus and red without. But the most striking results are seen in the case of Mary Ann Douglas, who sees the blue sparks within the coil and the red light without, in a few seconds falls asleep, and becomes extremely rigid. Unmagnetized iron applied to the back of the neck relaxes the tonic spasm in these patients, and speedily wakens them.

In six of these patients, sleep and rigidity of the muscles are produced by the application of gold to the back of the

head, between the insertion of the trapezii muscles. In Jane Love's and Mary Ann Douglas's cases, this metal and platinum produce a sense of burning, and leave the painful sensation for sometimes forty-eight hours.

I forbear to state the result of my further experiments with the metals, in the hope that Dr. Elliotson will one day publish his original experiments with these substances upon the girls Okey: mine are but repetitions and corroborations of what he has established, except in the case of mercury. A very curious fact presents itself with regard to this metal when applied to the palm of the hand in the sleep-waking state. In all cases of high nervous susceptibility in which I have yet tried the experiment, immediate rigidity of the side occurs; the patient exclaims with pain before the coma comes on, the access of which is very rapid; and on recovering a little, great pain is felt on the side of the face. A burning sensation all down the same side of the body, and the next day a painful mercurial sore mouth on one side of the face—that on which the application has been made to the hand—has supervened, and has been accompanied by the foeter of the breath: an influence peculiar to the metal mercury has been communicated to the system. The sleep and rigidity are results common to some other metals and to magnetic iron, and to the mesmeric passes and to the exercise of the human will. Do not these facts tend to establish something like the existence of an influence?—let it be blue fluid or grey. Let future observers find their patients' relation of the colour to be some other belonging to the prismatic spectrum. I have put down facts enough to excite further enquiry, which seems to have been more or less at rest from April, 1786, when Tardy de Montravel published his *Journal du Traitement Magnétique de la Demoiselle N.*, in which he speaks of this fluid, p. 56, until within a few years. I knew nothing of Tardy's work until it was brought to my notice more than a year ago by my friend, Mr. Ashurst Majendie; and I have been unable to procure a copy of it until within a few months. This is mentioned only to shew that the same facts had been observed in 1786, and bears out the remark that they have been noticed by different persons who could have no cognizance of each other, and at different times.

Having full reliance myself on the truth of all these statements, it remains only to hope that they will force the attention of the reflective part of the community to this branch of the very remarkable and interesting study of mesmerism.



MEDICAL  
TRACTS

223



The Wellcome Library