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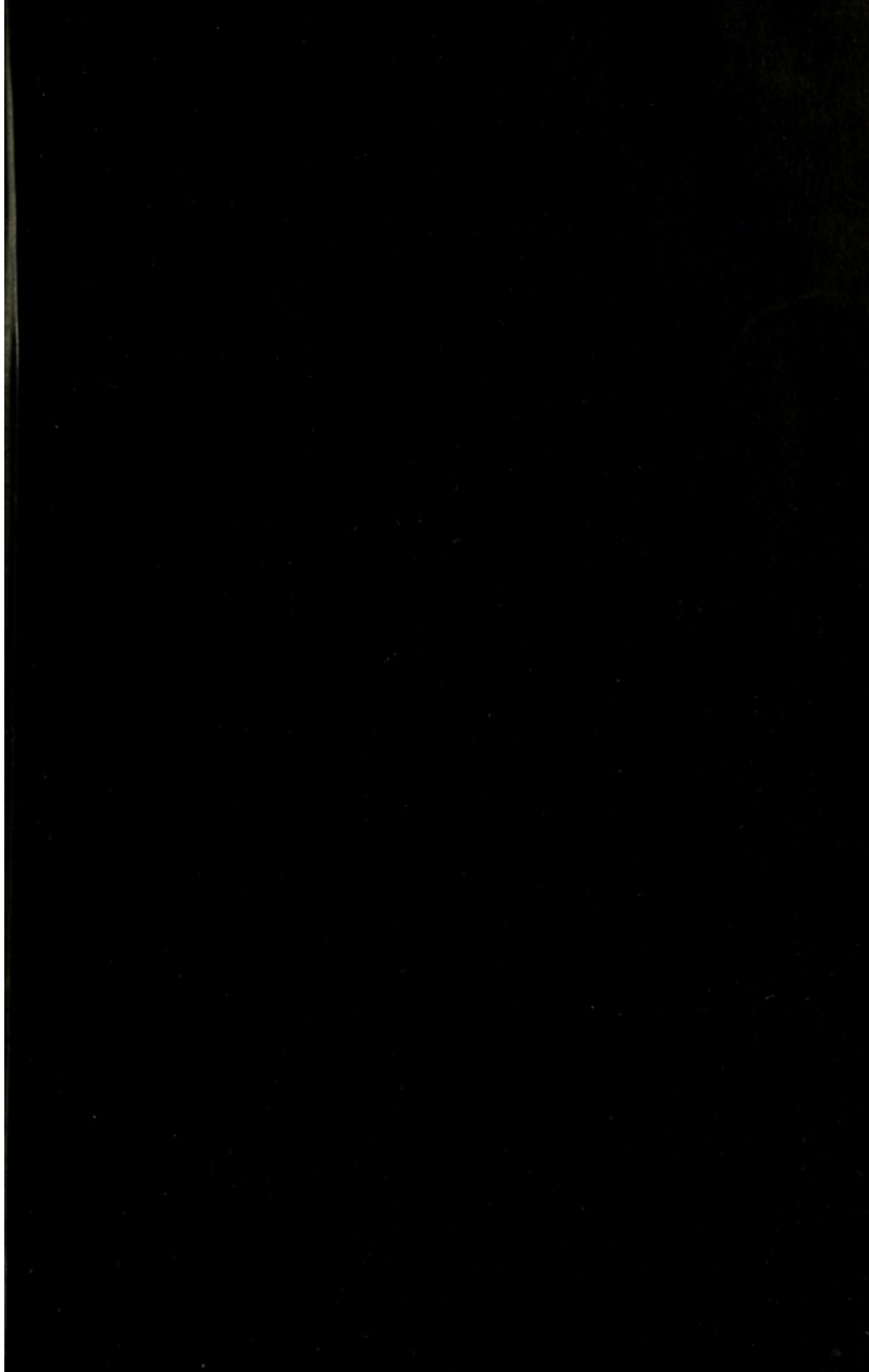
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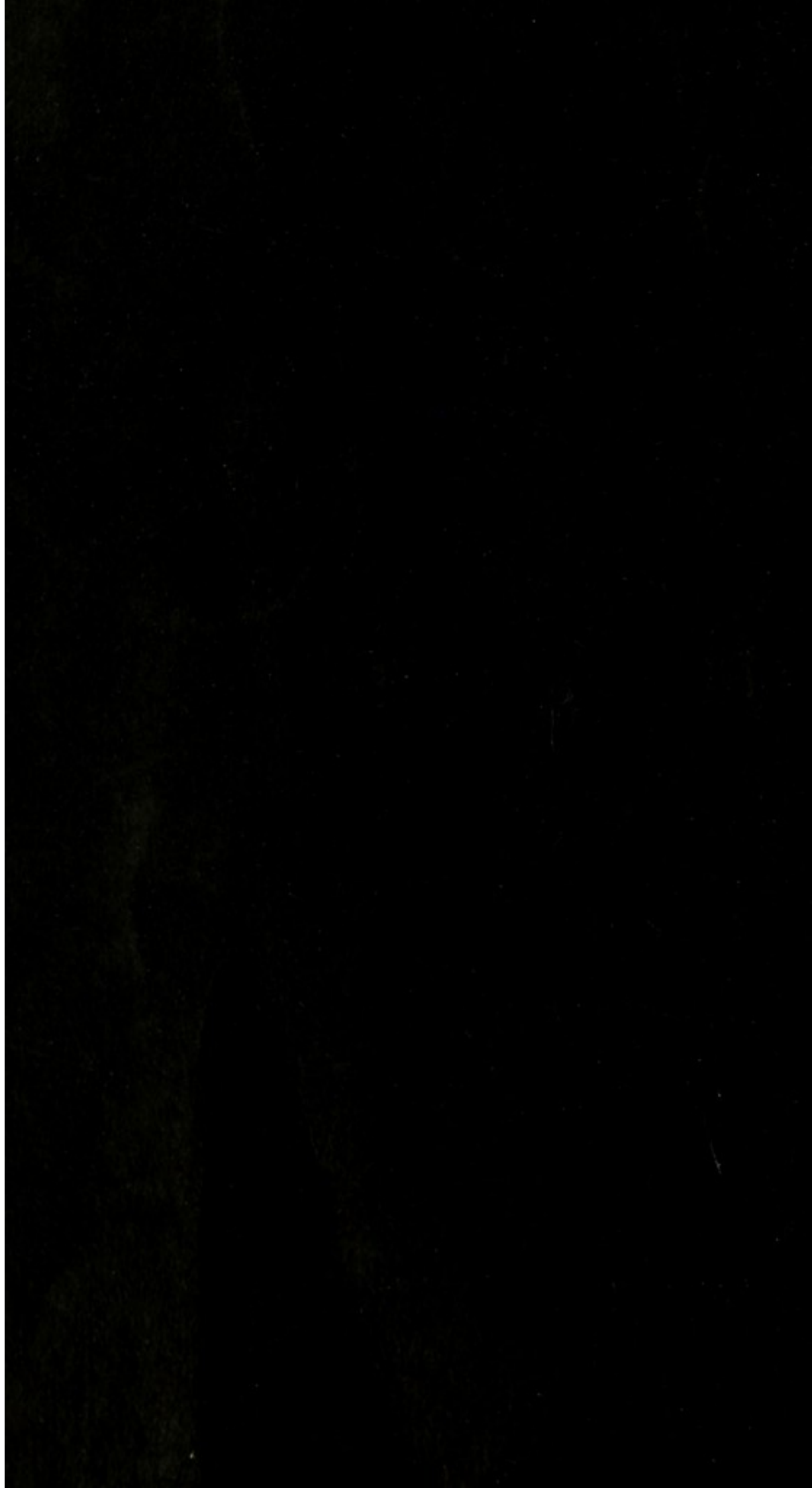
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ANIMAL MAGNETISM,

AND

HOMŒOPATHY.

BY

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AUTHOR OF A "TREATISE ON SOME NERVOUS DISORDERS;" THE
"WATERING PLACES AND MINERAL SPRINGS OF THE
CONTINENT," &c.

Second Edition, considerably Enlarged.

WITH NOTES ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE INFLUENCE
OF THE MIND ON THE BODY.

" such stuff

As dreams are made of."—TEMPEST.

LONDON:

WHITTAKER & CO., AVE-MARIA-LANE.

1838.

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Longman and Co. Price 7s. 6d.

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PREFACE.

MY attention having been more especially directed to the practical part of the profession, an account of Animal Magnetism and Homœopathy might have been more ably given by others who had devoted more of their time to their investigation. One could hardly, however, expect an impartial examination from the practisers of these methods, and those interested in upholding them; and as, in the course of my continental travels and attendance on the hospitals of various countries within the last seven or eight years, these subjects could not fail to be repeatedly brought under my notice, I considered that as they were beginning to attract the attention of the British public at the time when I published my "Observations on the Medical Institutions and Practice of France, Italy, and Germany," it would be doing a service to give a short exposition of them, which I accordingly appended to that work, and also published in a separate form for the advantage of non-professional persons who took an interest in the inquiry. The favourable manner in which this pamphlet was received,

and the increased interest that has been of late excited respecting Animal Magnetism, (on which no work has been written in English by a medical man in recent times,) have induced me to publish a second edition, in which, although more than twice the size of the original one, the matter has been condensed within a small compass; as it is my object, not to make a book by the accumulation of extraordinary cases, but in recording the investigations made by various scientific bodies, and in public institutions, to enable the public to form a correct estimate of Animal Magnetism and Homœopathy, instead of being led away by the partial statements of interested individuals, and by exhibitions which, however calculated to strike the majority of ordinary spectators with astonishment, would occasion but little surprise in those accustomed to witness the phenomena which frequently occur in the course of diseases, especially of a nervous character, who alone are capable of justly appreciating the experiments, and to whose judgment alone they would have been submitted, were they able to stand the test of examination.

London, May 1838.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

MANY persons talk about Animal Magnetism and Homœopathy, who know little or nothing about them, except that they are somewhat allied to the marvellous, and who are inclined, perhaps on that account, to place a reliance on their agency, which would be withheld, were it known on what foundations rest their claims to belief.

It is my intention, in the following pages, to present a brief exposition of these subjects, comprising some account of the experiments instituted by medical bodies and individuals, in order to exhibit to the public the manner in which the effects ascribed to these agents were produced; from which it will be seen that their mode of operation is very analogous,—their supposed action on the body being referable to the same origin, viz. the influence exerted through the medium of the imagination.

Although animal magnetism, which at one time attracted so large a share of attention, has been in great measure superseded by homœopathy, which, however, is also rapidly passing

into disuse, even in those German towns where it was most in request, and in Paris, since the recent opinion pronounced upon it by the Académie Royale de Médecine, yet the relation of the experiments and cases is interesting in a physiological point of view, as tending to show the manner in which some changes take place, which are often inexplicable to the physician, and which the vulgar are frequently apt to consider as effects of miraculous agency. Moreover, as attempts have been made to introduce homœopathy into this country, I have thought that some account of it, in connexion with animal magnetism, would form a not inappropriate Appendix to a work on continental medical practice, and would be acceptable to those who feel interested in the matter.

ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

VARIOUS definitions of the nature of animal magnetism have been proposed by those who have treated upon this subject. The best is, perhaps, that which considers it as depending upon a certain state of the nervous system, presenting phenomena which may be caused in some persons by the influence of another individual performing certain actions with the intention of producing this state. This influence of the nervous power of one individual over another, was supposed to bear some analogy with that of the magnet upon iron: hence the term. Animal magnetism was introduced into France from Germany, about the middle of the last century, by an individual of the name of Mesmer, (from whom the term 'mesmerism,' which has been

used synonymously with animal magnetism, is derived,) who practised the art differently from the magnetisers of more recent times. The persons to be magnetised were assembled in a room dimly lighted with tapers, and placed in a circle around a (supposed magnetic) covered vessel (*baquet*,) each person being connected with the rest by means of wires or cords.* The music of a harpsichord or piano was heard from an adjoining apartment, while various manœuvres were performed by assistants for the space of an hour or two, when Mesmer himself entered with grave aspect, clothed in a robe of light-coloured silk, and holding in his hand a rod, which he directed to different parts of the bodies of the magnetised, who did not fail to experience various slight symptoms, as heat, perspiration, muscular twitchings, &c., which terminated by producing in many of them a crisis, or convulsive attacks of an hysterical nature. These effects were, as may be supposed, most generally produced in females, and men of a nervous temperament. Where the convulsive actions were produced in

* “ De malades plus gais une docile troupe
De cordons entourés, et des fers sur le sein
En cercle environnoit le magique bassin.”

one, the others speedily became similarly affected. On many persons, however, the process produced no effect ; among these were the commissioners appointed by the Académie to report upon the proceedings.

This practice was, during several years, in high repute for the cure of various complaints, and its originator having realised a handsome fortune, was offered a large sum of money to induce him to remain in Paris.* After its examination, however, and condemnation in the report of the Académie des Sciences and the Académie Royale de Médecine, it lost much of the consideration it had previously enjoyed, and by degrees sank into comparative oblivion.

Some of Mesmer's disciples continued, how-

* “ The very mystery in which Mesmer enveloped his treatment, tended to excite curiosity, while it withdrew the attention from the active principle, and thus caused him to be regarded, individually, as an extraordinary personage, full of the old Egyptian wisdom, and conversant with all the secret influences of nature. This, while it extended his reputation, seemed to flatter the vanity and mystical disposition of the man. His house became crowded with patients of all ranks, and from every quarter: and such was the extent and success of his practice, that in the course of a short time he is said to have amassed a large fortune.”—*Isis Revelata, an Inquiry into Animal Magnetism*, by J. C. Colquhoun, Esq.

ever, to use the magnetic *baquets* and trees; they also employed magnetised baths, recommended the drinking magnetised water, the carrying magnetised plates of glass on the stomach, and in general their treatment was calculated to produce strong crises or convulsive actions, which they considered as a remedial process of nature, and accordingly used their endeavours to bring them on by artificial means. Certain rooms called *chambres des crises* were fitted up for the purpose; the walls and floors being covered with mattresses and cushions, to prevent the patients, while in convulsions, from injuring themselves.

An establishment was also formed at Strasburg, under the auspices of M. de Puysegur, one of the most zealous advocates of magnetism, which was called the *Société Harmonique des Amis Réunis*. The *chambres des crises* were abolished, and in consequence of the more gentle treatment, the violent crises seldom occurred, a state of partial sleep, or approaching to somnambulism, which was unknown to Mesmer, being the most frequent effects of this mode of magnetising; hence the persons affected have been since termed somnambulists.

About twenty years ago, public attention was

again drawn to the subject; several works were published, some physicians of professional and scientific attainments declared themselves believers in the powers of animal magnetism, and numerous experiments were made relating to the state of sleep or somnambulism, the phenomenon most frequently observed. 'This state is said to be induced in susceptible individuals by certain movements of the magnetiser's hands, termed "*passes*," which are made in the following manner; the spectators present being required to maintain the strictest silence. The magnetiser, seated or standing before the person to be magnetised, places his hands for a minute or two on the hands of the person—then on the shoulders, whence he brings them down, slightly touching the arms, to the fingers; this is repeated a few times. He then brings his hands from the head, an inch or two distant from the person's body, down to the stomach, or lower, occasionally placing a hand on the vertex, or on the epigastrium. In many cases, however, the gradual movements of the hand before the face are sufficient; these or similar movements are continued during the greater part of the sitting, and are sometimes varied by transverse "*passes*" made across the face and breasts at the distance of an inch or two, with greater or less rapidity.

In the magnetic somnambulism the individuals are said (as in natural somnambulism) to be insensible to external stimuli, as noises of all kinds, pungent substances applied to the nostrils, pinching, pricking, or other mechanical irritation of the skin; but at the same time to be able to hear when spoken to by the magnetiser, or by persons placed by him in connexion (*en rapport*) with them, to answer his questions and to perform various actions ordered by him. These are, however, according to the magnetisers, merely the more common effects, and the precursors of much more wonderful phenomena, as transference of the senses, *clairvoyance*, or mental vision, in which, though the eyes be closed and bandaged, objects are seen by the somnambulist, either when held before his face or when placed in contact with the epigastrium, occiput, or other parts; the power of predicting events; of ascertaining the nature of diseases, and prescribing their appropriate remedies; of knowing what is taking place at the moment in distant parts of the world, &c.

One magnetiser, speaking of the wonders of magnetism before the Académie, says in reference to the absolute power of the magnetiser over the somnambulist—"If cold, you can warm him, if warm, cool him; you blow away his pains, and

his pains vanish ; you change his tears to laughter, his sorrows to joy. Are his country, his friends absent ? you cause him to see them without seeing them yourself. You can blunt his sensibility if he have to undergo any cruel operation. You transform water into any liquid he desires, or which you deem useful to him—you present an empty glass, he drinks, the movements of deglutition are performed and thirst is appeased—with nothing I have calmed his hunger, with nothing I have served him up splendid dinners,” &c. &c.*

At length, in 1825, M. Foissac, a magnetiser, proposed to the Académie de Médecine, to produce before it a somnambulist, in whom the members of that body should witness the extraordinary phenomena caused by animal magnetism. The proposition gave rise to violent debates, which terminated in the appointment of a committee which was required to give its opinion as to whether the Académie ought or ought not to take cognisance of the subject. The committee decided in the affirmative on the following grounds :—first, that the judgment pronounced by the Académie in 1784 was not founded upon reasons sufficiently conclusive ; and secondly,

* Dict. de Médecine et Chirurgie pratique. Art. Magnetisme.

that the magnetism now proposed for examination, differed from the Mesmerian magnetism, inasmuch as its effects were produced without actual contact between the magnetiser and the magnetised, and without using metallic rods, magnetic chairs, and other similar means.

After strong opposition a commission was appointed, composed of twelve members of the Académie, to examine into, and report upon, the experiments to be instituted. The commission pursued its investigation until 1831, when it presented a report to the Académie, containing an exposition of its labours, with the inferences deduced from them, arranged under the following heads.

1. The effects of magnetism are null in persons in health, and in some invalids.
2. They are but little apparent in others.
3. They are often produced by ennui, monotony, and the power of the imagination.
4. Lastly, they are developed independently of these causes, very probably by the effect of magnetism alone.

Thus after six years of inquiry, the commissioners pronounced no decisive opinion in their report, which, however, was not signed by three of the most influential among them, MM. Laennec, Double, and Magendie. The infer-

ences under the three first heads, would have put down altogether the pretensions of the magnetisers ; but in consequence of the statement under the fourth head, and as the commissioners declared that every precaution had been taken to prevent errors and deception, magnetism acquired in some measure the appearance of being under the sanction of the Académie. An account of the cases which were the subjects of the experiments, was published by M. Foissac ; in looking over these it will be seen that the cases which come under the fourth head are extremely few : and in these instances, so far from every precaution having been taken, it appears that the commissioners trusted greatly to the honesty and good faith of the magnetisers and the magnetised, between whom there is the strongest evidence of the existence of a previous understanding.

The "*passes*," or movements above described, are what the commissioners saw made on most of the individuals subjected to the experiments, and without further proof immediately accepted them as the causes of the phenomena they afterwards witnessed, and as the means by which the magnetic action was transmitted ; but as M. Dubois, who was present at several of the experiments, remarks in his criti-

cal examination of the report, "there is no doubt the commissioners saw the phenomena they have described, but there is an enormous difference between the facts observed and the conclusions drawn from them. They believed the absurd, the miraculous, the wonderful; yet the circumstances as they occurred, explain themselves rationally, either by very ordinary physiological phenomena, or by well-known pathological laws, and sometimes by trickery (*supercherie*.)"

During the long period the commissioners were engaged in investigating the experiments on the subject, though the more wonderful phenomena had been talked of by the magnetisers as of frequent occurrence, not more than two or three exhibitions of the kind were made before them, and even these failed, notwithstanding the instructions the somnambulists must have previously received, as will be seen in the sequel.

The somnambulist proposed to be presented to the Académie by M. Foissac, who, he stated, would remove all doubt as to the power of magnetism, was the first person subjected to its operation before the commission. It appears, however, that no effect was produced in this instance, for in the report the commissioners say, "We must confess our inexperience, our impatience,

our mistrust, too strongly manifested perhaps, did not permit us to observe any of the phenomena of somnambulism."

Some cases are adduced in illustration of the second and third heads, in the report, in which the effects produced were attributable to ennui, the power of the imagination, &c., it being sufficient to place the persons in situations in which they believed themselves magnetised. This will, however, readily be credited without my bringing forward instances in proof, I shall therefore merely insert one or two of the shortest among them.

Mademoiselle L. was magnetised eleven times at the Hôtel Dieu, within the period of a month. At the fourth sitting, somnolency, convulsive movements of the neck and face, with other symptoms. At the eleventh sitting her magnetiser placed himself behind her without making any signs, and without the intention of magnetising, yet she experienced more decided effects than on the preceding trials.

An hysterical girl was magnetised several times: at each time there occurred somnolency with strong convulsive actions. Being placed one day in the same chair, in the same place, at the same hour, and in presence of the same persons, the accustomed phenomena presented

themselves, though her magnetiser was absent. A like experiment was made on an epileptic patient and produced a similar result.

According to the magnetisers, the action of *passes* is not always necessary to produce magnetic effects, which may frequently be induced by the sole will of the magnetiser, even if he be in a room separate from the individual on whom the experiment is made. This supposed influence of the will on the magnetised, was, however, never produced at the first sittings, but only after the person had been repeatedly magnetised in the ordinary manner. The symptoms which then took place may consequently be attributed, as in the cases above stated, merely to the effect of habit in individuals on whom the same circumstances of position, time, locality, &c. had repeatedly operated.

The following are some of the cases from which the commissioners inferred that the phenomena were produced by the action of magnetism alone.

A girl aged sixteen magnetised eight times. Somnambulism is induced at the first sitting. When spoken to, she does not answer, and the noise of a heavy shutter falling does not awaken her. At the second sitting, she answers by affirmative and negative signs. At the third sitting,

she signifies that she will speak presently : she does not feel when the skin is pinched, and does not appear to be affected by a phial of ammonia held to the nostrils.

The next case does not answer the expectation of the magnetisers.

In a Madame C., *living in the same house as the magnetiser*, it was proposed to exhibit the mental power possessed by the magnetiser over the magnetised, as also the communication of thoughts between them, without the intervention of speech or gesture ; the proposal was accepted by the commissioners, who repaired to the house, and on somnambulism being produced, gave directions in writing to the magnetiser, indicating the actions they desired to see performed, which were to be signified mentally to the somnambulist. Thus, she is first ordered to go and sit on a stool before the piano ; she rises and looks at the clock ; on being apprised of her mistake, she goes into another room, and on being again informed of her error she sits down on her former seat. She is next requested to raise her hand at the same time as her magnetiser, and to lower it at the same time ; the two hands are raised simultaneously, but that of Madame C. is lowered in a few minutes. The back of a watch is presented to her ; she mistakes the hour, and

the number of the hands; she is told to rub her forehead, but she merely extends her hand.

The result of this, and some other cases, rendered the commissioners doubtful of the effect of animal magnetism, and not without suspicion of a previous understanding between the magnetisers and the somnambulists. A M. Dupotet* offered to solve their doubts, and engaged to produce at will, out of the sight of the somnambulist, convulsive movements in any part of the body, by the mere action of pointing towards the part in which the commissioners should desire to witness these effects. A man who had already been magnetised several times was somnambulised, and after some trials on his obedience, M. Dupotet announced that the commissioners might produce in him any effects that they pleased.

* It is not unusual for persons who are liable to be confounded with others of the same name, to subjoin by way of distinction, that of their native town or village, as Beclard (d'Angers.) M. Dupotet's name is by no means a common one, and therefore any such distinction is needless, unless knowing the importance attached by the English to high sounding names, he preferred, on arriving in London, instead of announcing himself as M. Dupotet from Sennevoy, the more aristocratic appellation of the Baron Dupotet de ennevoy.

M. Marc, one of the commissioners, accordingly placed himself behind the somnambulist, and made sign to M. Dupotet to produce movements in the forefinger of his right hand, and afterwards in the toes; the somnambulist made some movements, but not in the parts indicated; similar movements subsequently occurred without magnetisation, and the experiment was declared inconclusive.

The next experiment which I shall relate, was made to exhibit before the commissioners the faculty of mental vision, or sight with closed eyelids, on a M. Petit, in whom the results of previous trials had been very satisfactory to the magnetisers. Somnambulism having been induced, M. Petit was requested to select a piece of money from others held in the hand of the magnetiser; this was done, the coin was marked and mixed with twelve others, and the somnambulist was desired to point out the one he had selected; he however took the wrong one. A watch was presented to him, he mistook the hour. Other objects were also presented, but he could never discover immediately what they were; he took them in his hands, felt and turned them over, brought them near his eyes, and after all, generally guessed wrong; he was able to read a few lines, while the commissioners watched that his

eyelids were closed. There is no doubt, however, that the eyes were partially opened, as he could not distinguish anything, when a bandage was placed before them. Although *clairvoyance* had been talked of by the magnetisers as a very common phenomenon of magnetism, it was only exhibited two or three times before the commissioners during a period of six years, and the results were similar to those above-mentioned.

The following cases are given, as cures performed by magnetism.

A law student, labouring under a paralytic affection of the limbs, was treated by the usual means at La Charité, and at the expiration of five months was so far recovered as to be able to get about on crutches. In this state he was magnetised by M. Foissac. In the ninth sitting complete somnambulism was induced; he answered questions, spoke of his disease, announced that in a month he should be able to walk about without crutches, and prescribed for himself *nux vomica*, *ssinapisms*, and baths of Barèges water; these being the remedies from which he had already derived advantage. On the day he had named, the commission repaired to La Charité, anxious to see whether his prediction would be fulfilled. On being somnambulised, the patient declared that when he

awoke he should return to his bed without crutches or other support. When awakened, he asked for his crutches, but was answered that he did not require them: he arose, traversed the courts, walked up stairs, and from that day he has never used the crutches. In subsequent trials he presented the phenomena of *clairvoyance* as completely as M. Petit.

The next case was at the time matter of great astonishment, as illustrating the extraordinary power of magnetism.

A lady laboured under a nervous disease, which had resisted all the efforts directed against it; she at length became impressed with the idea that magnetism alone could cure her, and was accordingly magnetised by M. Chapelain. "One day she went to M. Chapelain, supporting herself with difficulty on crutches; it was pitiable to see her suffer. Armed with a benevolent will, M. Chapelain by magnetism dispersed the pains in the limbs, the sighings and gloomy thoughts with which she was affected, and restored tranquillity to this person, so cruelly agitated an instant before. 'Are you well?' he inquired. 'O yes, sir, I thank you.' She slept for about two hours, and on awaking walked away, carrying the crutches which had supported her on her arrival!"

In the first of these cases it is pretty evident that the patient was already convalescent at the time the magnetic trials were made, and could most probably have walked without crutches, had he so chosen, as well at the expiration of a week as of a month. The second is one of those cases which frequently puzzles the practitioner,—of the nature of which I have offered an explanation in my work on nervous disorders, requiring for their cure an exertion of the faculty of volition, which is frequently induced by strong moral impressions. I have related one or two analogous cases suddenly cured in this way, and capable of rational explanation, without the intervention of magnetism or supernatural agency.

I subjoin one more of the cases brought forward in proof of magnetic influence.

A journeyman carpenter, aged twenty, subject to epileptic attacks, was magnetised at the hospital of La Charité. Somnambulism was not, however, induced till after several sittings. The patient at length announced, that on a certain day, at a certain hour, he would have an attack. It accordingly took place at the time he had specified. When interrogated, while in somnambulism, respecting his disease, he declared that at the end of a year the attacks

would cease; he also mentioned the exact time at which the two following attacks would take place. These occurred at the time he predicted, and the fact of his cure only remained to be proved; but before the expiration of the year, he was run over by a cabriolet and killed; a circumstance which magnetism did not enable him to foresee.

The profession will not form any very exalted opinion of the intelligence of the commissioners from the relation of these cases as illustrations of the effects produced solely by the power of magnetism. Those who have seen much of nervous diseases, are well aware analogous cases to that of the lady above-mentioned often spontaneously recover, especially after the occurrence of any circumstance which forcibly strikes their imagination; and the fits of epilepsy are also frequently produced or suspended by a similar influence: this is also one of the diseases most easily feigned; hence there would be no difficulty in predicting the period of an attack. But had the individuals been able to foretel the occurrence of diseases which cannot be simulated, or which are less influenced by the mind—as intermittents or inflammatory affections—the commissioners might with reason have adduced such instances in proof of the magnetic

power. I shall here insert the conclusions with which the report of the commissioners terminates, in juxtaposition with the conclusions of M. Dubois, in his critical exposition of the report.

Conclusions of the Report.

1. Contact of thumbs and movements, termed *passes*, are the means of relationship employed to transmit magnetic action from the magnetiser to the magnetised.

2. Magnetism acts on persons of different age and sex.

3. Many effects appear to depend on magnetism alone, and are not re-produced without it.

4. The effects produced by magnetism are varied: it agitates some, calms others; it generally causes acceleration of the pulse and respiration, slight convulsive movements, somnolency, and, in a few cases, what is called somnambulism.

Rational Conclusions.

1. The *passes* are means employed to transmit a pretended action to the magnetised.

2. Magnetism does not act on any persons, whatever be the age or sex.

3. We have not seen any effects that could be attributed to magnetism: the phenomena observed depend on other causes.

4. There is no proof that the agitation or calmness of the individuals, any more than the other circumstances, are produced by magnetism.

Conclusions of the Report.

5. The existence of peculiar characters, proper to recognise in all cases the reality of a state of somnambulism, has not been proved.

6. It may, however, be inferred with certainty that this state exists when it gives rise to the developement of new faculties, as *clairvoyance* and intuitive foresight: or when it produces great changes in the physiological condition of the individual, as insensibility, sudden increase of strength; as this effect cannot be attributed to any other cause.

7. When the effects of magnetism have been produced, there is no occasion, on subsequent trials, to have recourse to the *passes*. The look of the magnetiser, his will alone, have the same influence.

8. Changes, more or less remarkable, are effected in the perceptions and faculties of persons in whom somnambulism has been induced.

Rational Conclusions.

5. Ditto, ditto.

6. It has been impossible for us to come to the conclusion that this state was real; even when it gave rise to the above-mentioned phenomena, and produced insensibility and other physiological changes, inasmuch as these effects may be referred to other causes.

7. It has not been demonstrated that *passes* have really produced any phenomena, still less that the look or will of the magnetiser has had this influence.

8. These changes in the perceptions and faculties, which appeared to be effected in somnambulists, may be referred to other causes than magnetism.

Conclusions of the Report.

9. We have seen two somnambulists distinguish, with closed eyes, objects placed before them. They have read words, estimated the difference of colours, the points on cards, &c.

10. In two somnambulists, we have met with the faculty of foreseeing acts of the organism to take place at periods more or less distinct. One announced the day, hour, and minute of the invasion and recurrence of an epileptic attack: the other foresaw the period of his cure. Their anticipations were realised.

11. We have only seen in one instance a somnambulist, who has described the symptoms of the diseases in three individuals presented to her.

Rutional Conclusions.

9. We have seen two somnambulists, capable, as it was said, of reading, &c. with closed eyes, but it has not been proved to our satisfaction that the edges of the eyelids were at all times in immediate contact.

10. We have seen two somnambulists capable, as it was said, of foreseeing acts of the organism; but one predicted attacks of a disease that may be simulated; the other announced the period of his cure when already in full convalescence.

11. We have seen a somnambulist endowed, it was said, with the faculty of ascertaining the disease under which persons presented to her laboured; but in the first case, she only mentioned insignificant symptoms: in the other two cases, all the circumstances show that she had received her information beforehand.

Conclusions of the Report.

12. In order to establish justly the relations of magnetism with therapeutics, one must have observed the effects on a number of individuals, and have made many experiments on sick persons. This not having been done, the commissioners can only say, they have seen too few cases to enable them to give a decisive opinion.

13. Considered as an agent of physiological phenomena, or of therapeutics, magnetism should find a place in the circle of medical science, and, consequently, should be either practised, or its employment superintended by a physician.

14. The commission could not verify, because it had not opportunities, the existence of any other faculties in somnambulists; but it communicates, in its report, facts sufficiently important to state, that in its opinion, the Académie ought

Rational Conclusions.

12. There are no relations to be established between magnetism and therapeutics, because the pretended magnetic effects have been absolutely null: and it is not from the small number of cases, but on account of their nullity, that the commissioners cannot determine.

13. Magnetism cannot be considered as an agent of physiological phenomena, still less as a therapeutic measure: it, consequently, ought not to have a place in the circle of medical knowledge, and, far from recommending its employment, physicians ought to oppose themselves to the charlatanism which seeks to spread it abroad.

14. The commission could not perceive, because it had no opportunity, so many other faculties said to exist in somnambulists; but it communicates facts, important enough to determine the Académie to abstain from encouraging re-

Conclusions of the Report.

to encourage researches on animal magnetism as a curious branch of psychology and natural history.

Rational Conclusions.

searches on magnetism, as it could not constitute, as some believe, a curious branch of psychology and natural history.

Thus it appears, that while the commissioners admit that the higher order of phenomena, as *clairvoyance*, intuitive foresight, &c., may be the occasional results of magnetic somnambulism, M. Dubois, on the other hand, not only denies that any such effects are produced—in which he is borne out by the examination of the cases on which the commissioners formed their opinions, and also by the subsequent discovery of trickery on the part of the magnetisers or of the magnetised—but also that the state approaching to partial or total sleep, or somnambulism, depends upon any influence transmitted from the magnetiser. That the somnolency, or perfect sleep, which is the effect most frequently observed on individuals affected by the magnetisation, is, in the first instance, dependent upon the process, is pretty evident; but whether it results from the ennui of continued monotonous actions and other similar causes, is a point upon which the opinion of those who have given their attention to the subject are divided. From the length of

time generally required at the first sitting to produce sleep, and from this state occurring on subsequent occasions, in the same persons, without magnetisation, but on whom the circumstances of similar time, place, and supposed magnetisation have operated, it would appear, that the above-mentioned causes are sufficient to account for its occurrence in the majority of instances. In some cases, however, the difference between this condition and ordinary sleep, is somewhat too marked to admit of its being ascribed exclusively to them. With respect to the *rapport* said to exist between the somnambulist and the magnetiser, by which the former can answer questions and perform actions ordered by him, there is no doubt that in many of the cases, there has been a previous understanding between the parties, as I shall have to show further on; that in others the somnambulist has been in the state of partial sleep, which is not uncommon in nervous and hysterical cases, in which the patients, although unaffected by loud noises, can yet answer questions relating to matters on which their thoughts have been much occupied. That a person in this state should be insensible to common sounds, pinching, and other external stimulants, is not to be wondered at, when we consider that the same thing is con-

stantly seen in reverie, abstraction of mind, or when the attention is strongly pre-occupied. Cabanis says, in allusion to this subject, "We know with certainty, that the attention directly modifies the local condition of organs, as without it the most serious lesions frequently occasion neither the pain nor the inflammation proper to them ; and that, on the other hand, minute observation of the most transient impressions may give them an important character, or may even sometimes occasion actual impressions without any real external cause."* Everybody must have felt the truth of this in their own persons ; but it is not generally noticed, that even when the attention is not pre-occupied, most parts of the body will bear to be pinched with considerable force without occasioning pain ; thus we may understand why magnetisers, in their public experiments, should allow their somnambulists to be pinched by the by-standers, in order to prove the magnetic

* Rapport du Physique et du Moral de l'homme.

Our great poet also says,

" When the mind's free
The body's delicate. The tempest in my mind
Doth *from my senses take all feeling else*
Save what beats there."

King Lear.

insensibility to external impressions. The skin is also occasionally pricked with a needle for the same purpose, the magnetiser generally taking care that the needle does not penetrate beyond the skin, an operation attended with but trifling inconvenience, even when the person is only simulating somnambulism.

One of the most complete cases of insensibility which has been repeatedly adduced in proof of the magnetic influence, is that of the female on whom M. Cloquet performed the operation of amputating a cancerous breast while she was in somnambulism. To an inquiry during the operation as to whether she experienced pain, she answered in the negative, and only complained of being tickled when the sponge was applied to the bleeding surface. Insensibility to this extent is not unfrequently met with in various states of the nervous system—as ecstasy, mental aberration, epilepsy, &c., in which the persons have received serious wounds without appearing to feel pain. It occasionally happens, after an injury of the head, while the patient lies in a state of coma, that he is able to answer questions, but appears insensible to the operation of trepanning the skull, or dividing the scalp. Pinel, in his *Nosographie Philosophique*, mentions the case of a priest, who in a fit of mental

absence, was insensible to the pain of burning. Mr. Wardrop extirpated a tumour from the head of a young woman while she was in a state of syncope from the abstraction of blood. She was carried to her bed, and would not believe the operation had been performed till a looking-glass enabled her to verify the circumstance. I might adduce many other instances to show that the above case is not so singular as it would at first sight appear, especially to non-professional persons.

About sixteen months ago, another case of diminution of sensibility during an operation, was stated to the Académie de Médecine. M. Oudet, a dentist and member of the Académie, was called upon by a magnetiser to accompany him to the house of a lady said to be in somnambulism. On arriving at the house, the magnetiser pricked the lady several times, and held her finger in the flame of a taper for a few seconds, to ascertain whether her sensibility was diminished; after which M. Oudet took out his instrument and extracted a large molar tooth from the lady, who at the moment drew back her head and uttered a slight cry.

The relation of this case occasioned very animated discussions on animal magnetism; and a Dr. Berna who had been giving lectures on

the subject, sent a proposition to the Académie, offering to convince the members by their personal experience, of the powers of magnetism. The proposition was accepted, and a commission was appointed from the members of the Académie, composed both of advocates and opponents of animal magnetism, as a guarantee of impartiality in judging of the experiments to be made. But notwithstanding the different opinions entertained by the commissioners respecting the theoretical value of magnetism, they unanimously agreed in the value of the facts presented to them on the present occasion, and all signed the report which they made to the Académie.

The first meeting of the commissioners to witness the experiments took place on the 3rd of March, 1837, at the house of M. Roux, their president, where M. Berna met them, and shortly after went away in order to bring a somnambulist who waited for him in the neighbourhood. In a few minutes he returned, introducing a young girl seventeen or eighteen years of age, of a rather delicate and nervous appearance, but whose manner was unembarrassed and resolved.

The number of experiments for the evening amounted to eight; viz. 1st. Somnambulisa-

tion. 2nd. Ascertaining the existence of insensibility to pricking and tickling. 3rd. Restoration of the sensibility by the will of the magnetiser mentally expressed. 4th. Obedience to the order mentally expressed, to stop in the middle of a conversation; and, 5th, again to answer on the mental order of the magnetiser. 6th. Repetition of the same experiment, the magnetiser being separated from the somnambulist by a door. 7th. Awakening from somnambulism. 8th. In obedience to the mental order signified during somnambulism, persistence of insensibility when awakened, as also persistence of the faculty of losing or recovering sensibility, at the will of the magnetiser.

The young girl was received by the commissioners with great kindness and affability; and, with a view to ascertain before magnetisation to what degree she was sensible to pricking in the ordinary state, her hand and neck were pricked with needles procured by M. Berna; to the inquiries of some of the commissioners, if she felt the pricking, she answered positively, that she felt nothing, nor did her face express any sign of pain. It must be remembered that she was perfectly awake, even to the acknowledgment of the magnetiser, who had not begun any part of his process. This did not

agree with the proposition, as the insensibility was only to be manifested in the state of somnambulism, and subsequent to the mental injunction of the magnetiser; the commissioners were therefore somewhat surprised at this singular commencement. On further questioning, however, she admitted that she felt a little pain. After these preliminaries, M. Berna caused the somnambulist to sit near him, and appeared to contemplate her in silence, without making any of the movements termed passes. At the expiration of a minute or two, he announced that she was in somnambulism. Her eyes were then covered with a bandage, and after having again contemplated her, the magnetiser stated that she was struck with general insensibility.

The proofs of insensibility are of two kinds: one kind rests upon the mere assertion of the individuals, upon which it is evident no reliance can be placed when there exists any motive for deceiving: the second kind are deduced from the absence of those movements or actions usually caused by painful impressions: but here must be considered both the degree of pain produced, and the firmness of the persons on whom the experiment is made. In the present case the amount of pain was not to exceed a certain point rigorously fixed by M. Berna.

Some of the commissioners pricked the girl with needles: she did not complain of any pain, nor did her face (the upper half of which was partly covered by the bandage) show any indication of suffering. One of the commissioners, however, having pricked her under the chin more forcibly than the rest, she performed with vivacity the action of swallowing. M. Berna, who perceived it, complained of the needle having been introduced into the chin deeper than was allowed. He then informed the commissioners that he was about to paralyse, by the tacit intervention of his will, either the sensibility or the motion of any part of the somnambulist's body that was required; he, however, restricted the parts to be acted upon—1st, to the two legs; 2ndly, to the two arms; 3rdly, an arm and leg; 4thly, one arm or one leg; 5thly, to the neck, turning to the right or to the left; and 6thly, to the tongue, as far as motion was concerned; and either the whole or a part of the body as regarded sensation.

Here, according to the injunctions of the magnetiser, the only orders that could be given to the somnambulist were—"Raise the arm"—"Raise the leg"—"Turn the head to the right or to the left"—or, "Speak." Thus, if when one of

the commissioners said, "Raise the left arm," the arm were not raised, M. Berna wished it to be considered as proved that the arm was paralysed—that it was so paralysed of his tacit will, and that this was the result of animal magnetism. He also desired the commissioners, if they should not at first succeed, not to be discouraged, but to continue till they obtained the requisite effect, viz. paralysis of the part desired.

At a second sitting, having, as he stated, placed the young girl in a state of somnambulism, M. Bouillaud required M. Berna, in writing, to paralyse the motion of the somnambulist's right arm only, and when it was done, to inform him, by closing his eyes. M. Berna, after a short period, made the sign agreed upon, which implied that his tacit will had been powerful enough to paralyse the right arm of the somnambulist. M. Bouillaud proceeded to verify the fact, and requested the girl to move such or such limbs. When he requested her to move the right leg, she answered that she could neither move the right leg nor the right arm. Thus, although, according to the arrangement previously agreed upon, one limb only was to be paralysed, it appeared that two limbs were deprived of motion. The experiment was therefore considered to have failed, as the com-

missioners were not so simple as to repeat the trials till they succeeded.

In the next experiment on the same person M. Berna proposed to the commissioners to repeat the series of experiments, viz., abolition or restitution of sensibility, either partial or total; privation or restitution of movements; the faculty of hearing or not hearing a person speaking, &c. After the girl was said to be in a state of somnambulism, M. Bouillaud requested M. Berna, by writing, to deprive the somnambulist of the power of hearing him, and to touch the shoulder of another commissioner, as a sign that he had done so. He then began to converse with the somnambulist, but before the magnetiser had made the sign agreed upon, she appeared not to hear him; but when the signal was given, she answered M. Bouillaud's questions, which was just the reverse of what ought to have happened. But the magnetiser had spoken to the commissioners about the wonderful facts of vision without the assistance of the eyes—of the famous transposition of the senses so much talked of in the annals of magnetism; they were therefore naturally desirous to witness facts of this nature, and on the next occasion repaired to the house of M. Berna, whom they found in company with a woman about thirty

years of age. After their arrival he covered her eyes with a bandage, and then stated that she was in somnambulism, and began to converse with her. It was agreed, that in this sitting there were to be two kinds of facts by which magnetism was to be tested, viz., 1st, facts, the solution of which were to be proposed to the woman said to be in somnambulism, but known to M. Berna; and 2ndly, facts, of which the solution was also to be proposed to the subject of the experiment, but of which facts M. Berna should be ignorant. Thus, as an example of the first kind, M. Berna began by asking the woman how many persons were present. "Several," she replied, "at least five." This was a fact known to M. Berna, as well as to the commissioners, and also to the somnambulist herself, as her eyes were not bandaged till after their arrival. One of the commissioners was then requested by the magnetiser to write one or more words on a card. (A pack of white cards and a pack of playing cards lay on a table in the room.) The commissioner wrote on one of the white cards the word *Pantagruel*, in letters perfectly distinct, and going behind the somnambulist, placed this card against her occiput: the magnetiser was seated in front of the somnambulist, and was ignorant of the word

written; this was consequently a fact of the second kind; that is to say, decisive in itself. The somnambulist, interrogated by the magnetiser as to what was placed at the back of her head, answered with some hesitation, that it was something white, like a visiting card. So far there was nothing surprising. M. Bernad had, in a loud voice, requested the commissioner to take a card and write something upon it; but she was further asked if she did not see anything upon the card, to which she resolutely replied, "Yes, there is writing."—"Is the writing large or small?"—"Pretty large," she replied. "What has been written?"—"Wait a moment, I do not distinguish well; there is first an M. Yes, it is a word beginning with an M." Such were the first answers of the somnambulist. A plain white card was then passed to the commissioner unknown to the magnetiser; this was substituted for the card on which the word Pantagruel was written. The somnambulist persisted, notwithstanding, in saying that she saw a word beginning with an M. She subsequently added, that she saw two lines of writing, though she could not tell what they were.

The reporter was taking notes close to the somnambulist. The point of the pen was dis-

tinctly heard on the paper: the somnambulist turned her head to that side: the magnetiser asked her if she saw that gentleman. "Yes," she said, "he holds in his hand something white and long." He then ceased writing, and passed behind the somnambulist, holding the pen in his mouth. "Do you see the gentleman behind?" inquired the magnetiser. "Yes," she replied. "Do you see his mouth?" "Not very well; he has in it something white and long." The magnetiser on this glanced with satisfaction to the commissioners, and enjoined the reporter not to forget to note the circumstance. After some other experiments of writing on cards, at which the somnambulist was as much at fault as in the first instance, M. Berna, in a loud tone, requested a commissioner to take a playing card and place it to the occiput of the somnambulist. "A court card?" inquired the commissioner. "As you please," replied M. Berna. The commissioner, however, instead of selecting a playing card, took a plain white one of the same size, unknown to M. Berna, and of course to the somnambulist. He then placed this card to her occiput. M. Berna, seated in front as before, interrogated her. She hesitated, and at last answered that she saw a card. On being further interrogated, she again hesitated,

and then said that there was black and red on the card. After some further efforts to induce the somnambulist to be more explicit, the magnetiser, little satisfied with the result of the transposition of sight to the occiput, requested the commissioner to pass the card in front of the somnambulist, close to the bandage which covered her eyes, which was, in fact, a renunciation of the transposition of the senses, for *clairvoyance* through a bandage. The card was quickly passed, as desired, so that M. Berna seeing the white surface of the card, supposed that its back was turned towards himself, and the coloured parts towards the bandage of the somnambulist. On being again questioned, she said she now saw the card better, and then added, that she distinguished something like a figure. M. Berna continued to question her; the somnambulist appearing to make great efforts, declared that she saw a knave. "But which knave? there are four knaves." She replied, "There is black by the side of the knave."—"Still there are two knaves that have black on their side." She was again solicited by the magnetiser, and appeared to make great efforts; at last she hit upon it—"The knave of clubs." M. Berna, to terminate the experiment, took the card out of the

commissioner's hand, and perceived that it was perfectly white.

I need not relate any more cases from the report of the commissioners, as the results were similar to the above, but will give an abstract of the conclusions at which the commissioners arrived.

1st. It results from all the facts witnessed, that no proof has been afforded of the existence of a peculiar state, termed magnetic somnambulism, and there is only the magnetiser's assertions to trust to, that the individuals were in this state at each meeting.

2ndly. The second experiment was to determine the insensibility of the person submitted to the experiment. It was not allowed, however, to try this by pinching, pulling, the contact of a body in a state of ignition, or of an elevated temperature, but merely by the pricking the skin with needles, introduced no deeper than half a line, which could only produce a very moderate degree of pain; and considering the face and eyes, where painful impressions are mostly shown, were covered, even perfect immobility could not be regarded as a proof of the abolition of sensibility.

3rdly. The magnetiser was to prove, that by the sole intervention of his will he had the

power of restoring sensibility to the somnambulist; but as he could not prove experimentally that the young girl had ever been deprived of sensibility, it would have been impossible for him to have proved its restoration. Besides, all the trials made with respect to this part of the experiment completely failed.

4thly. The above remark will also apply to the pretended abolition and restoration of the power of motion, not the slightest proof of which was afforded. When the girl assured the commissioners that she could not move her leg, it was no proof to them that this limb was magnetically paralysed, and even then her assertions were not in accordance with the pretensions of the magnetiser.

5thly. Obedience to the will of the magnetiser was to be proved by the somnambulist ceasing to hold a conversation with a person indicated. Instead of this result being produced, quite the contrary effects were manifested; the somnambulist appeared not to hear before the magnetiser wished it, and heard and answered questions when he desired that she might not hear; so that according to the assertions of the somnambulist, the faculty of hearing or not hearing was completely in opposition to the will of the magnetiser. The commis-

sioners, however, did not see in the circumstance an opposition any more than a submission to the will of the magnetiser, but only a natural and complete independence of it.

6thly. The proving the transposition of the sense of sight failed entirely. The only things correctly stated by the somnambulist were what she might naturally infer from the circumstances; as, hearing the magnetiser request a person to take a card and write upon it, she professed to be able to see the card and writing, but was quite wrong when interrogated respecting the word written; and from the circumstance of her guessing that the commissioner, whom she knew had been writing and had ceased to write, held his pen in his mouth when she was asked if she saw his mouth, the commissioners could only conclude that this somnambulist was more sharp than the preceding one, and was better able to draw probable conclusions.

7thly.—To prove *clairvoyance*. The circumstances which occurred carry with them their own inference, viz. that the faculty of distinguishing through a bandage, objects presented to the somnambulist, cannot be caused by the magnetiser. But here a serious reflection presents itself. Even in admitting for a moment the hypothesis, very convenient for the

magnetisers, that under many circumstances the best somnambulists may lose their lucidity, and that, like the generality of mortals, they cannot see by the occiput, the stomach, or even through a bandage when under these circumstances ;—even admitting all this, what must be thought with respect to this woman, who could distinguish a knave of clubs on a perfectly blank card—who in a medal of the Académie could see a gold watch with white face and black letters—and who, if she had been further pressed, would probably have mentioned the hour indicated on this watch.

Lastly. As a general conclusion from all the experiments, the commissioners aver that M. Berna doubtless deceived himself when he made sure of proving to the Académie, by conclusive facts, the truth of magnetism, and the elucidation by them of points of physiology and therapeutics. These facts are now known, and they are opposed to conclusions in favour of magnetism itself, and consequently they can have nothing in common, either with physiology or therapeutics.

The commissioners will not attempt to decide whether they would have found anything more conclusive, in more numerous and varied cases furnished by other magnetisers: but one thing

is certain, that if there are other magnetisers, they have not dared to come forward—they have not dared to put magnetism to the test of academical sanction or condemnation.

In the course of the discussions on the subject in the Académie several instances of deception were brought forward, which at the time had passed current as proofs of magnetic power. M. Velpeau, in alluding to a young man who had been able to predict the periods of his epileptic attacks, and who was also said to be able to read with his eyes bandaged, says, “I thought of looking under the bandage, which was loosely applied, and my surprise ceased. The performer of these miracles was a young law student, who had quarrelled with his friends, had no means of existence, and who entered an hospital under the pretext that he was paralytic, which was an invention. I was in the secret, and did not betray him, as it would have lost him; although the surgeon of the hospital thought it really a paralysis, prescribed accordingly, and after uselessly trying other remedies, spoke of applying the moxa:* from that period the remedies which had been

* Moxa is a cylinder of ignited cotton, or other substance, applied to the skin, and, by the slow action of the heat, produces an ulcer.

hitherto inactive performed wonders. From this hospital he went to that of La Charité, to subject himself to the experiments of magnetism.

“ M. Georget became a zealous partisan of magnetism, after having been its opponent, and admitted its truth in his work on the nervous system : he had performed experiments, and believed them incontrovertible. M. Londe assisted at these experiments. Well, Georget carried with him to the tomb his belief in magnetism, but M. Londe has outlived him, and you have heard him declare in this assembly, that Georget and himself had been deceived, that they had been duped by some miserable creatures who have since boasted of the circumstance. However, the work exists, and its author is no longer here to rectify the errors it contains. In conclusion I say, that whenever the facts stated by the magnetisers to have occurred, have been inquired into, the wonderful has disappeared.”

The following case of *clairvoyance* was a great deal talked about at the time, and has been inserted as a fact by Mr. Colquhoun in his work. “ Petronilla Leclerc, at twenty-six, admitted into the hospital of La Charité, in 1830, under the care of Dr. Fouquier, was

afflicted with a cerebro-spasmodic epileptiform complaint. M. Sebire, who had the care of her, magnetised her several times, and some remarkable phenomena were manifested. In the first sitting the somnambulist gave several marks of lucidity: some objects were presented to her, as a bottle filled with vinegar, sugar, bread, &c. which she recognised perfectly well without seeing them, as she had a bandage over her eyes. When answering the questions put to her, she turned to the opposite side and plunged her face in the pillow; without being asked, she said to the person who was holding her hand, 'You have got a head-ache,' which was true; but to try her, M. Sebire answered, that she was mistaken. 'That is singular,' replied she; 'I touched some person who had a head-ache, for I felt it.' She distinguished several persons who were present by some peculiarities in their dress.

"The following was one of the most remarkable circumstances that occurred. The magnetiser had retired, after promising to return at half-past five o'clock, in order to awaken her. He arrived before the appointed time. The somnambulist observed, that it was not yet half-past five, to which he answered, that he had just received a letter, which obliged him to

return sooner. 'O yes,' she immediately replied; 'it is that letter which you have in your pocket-book, between a blue card and a yellow one.' The fact was strictly true. M. Sebire, without saying anything, placed a watch behind her occiput, and asked her what it was o'clock by the watch? She answered, 'Six minutes past four,' and she was right."

All this sounds very marvellous, and no doubt appeared conclusive to the bystanders, of the truth and miraculous powers of magnetism; but unfortunately for the magnetisers Petronilla died of phthisis, in the Salpêtrière, in 1833, and repeatedly declared in the latter part of her life, to the *internes* of the hospital, that she had never experienced the least degree of somnambulism, and that she used to laugh in her sleeve at Georget and the others who were present at the experiments. She affirmed that she had passed with Brouillard (another somnambulist) more than one delicious evening in recounting the *mystifications* of the day, and in preparing those for the morrow. These persons also allowed themselves to be pricked and pinched without evincing pain. I am acquainted with the gentlemen to whom these avowals were made, and one of them assured me of the correctness of the above statement.

In a lecture recently reported in the *Lancet*, Dr. Sigmond, the lecturer, observes, "The person in somnambulism heard no sound which I occasioned, but the moment I placed myself in communication with him he has heard it. Thus, if I touch a note of the piano, it produces no effect until I touch the person; he then starts: and this is the same with regard to speaking. If any part of my body is in immediate communication, an attempt to answer is generally made, sometimes replies are given; but this is not the case, however loudly I might call, if a communication is not kept up." For this and similar cases is it not most probable that the touching or shaking the individual would have the effect of exciting his attention to the sounds produced or to the questions made, as is frequently seen in states of partial sleep, mental abstraction, &c.? It is well known, that the sensitive faculties are not all "steeped in forgetfulness" at the same time, or in the same degree. The sight and taste appear to be the first suspended when a person goes to sleep; after these, the smell; then hearing; and lastly, touch. How often does it occur, that persons to all appearance asleep, have heard what was said around them; or, when incapable of hearing, have been partly roused up by

slight impressions on the skin, as a fly settling on the face, the hand being touched, &c.; and even when external impressions are no longer felt, volition appears to be in some degree awake, as seen in the efforts made to preserve an equilibrium when the person is in a sitting posture. How many times after the head drops forward is it not again elevated, before the person is perfectly asleep? Men accustomed to sleep in the sitting position can often preserve their equilibrium without support of the sides or back, and while in motion, as is the case with coachmen on the box, who still continue when asleep to hold the whip and reins. Mr. Macnish mentions, in his "Philosophy of Sleep," that during the retreat of Sir John Moore, many of the soldiers fell asleep, yet continued to march along with their comrades.

From what has been said we may conclude,
1st, That the production of convulsive crises, and other states, by the practice of Mesmer and his followers, was but the effect most likely to ensue in impressionable individuals, from the influence of an excited imagination and of imitation, similar results being constantly seen in the ordinary practice of medicine.

2ndly. That the instances of intuitive foresight, transposition of the senses, clairvoyance, &c., have been disproved in every case that has been impartially inquired into, and that in many of them there have been gross attempts at deception, by the magnetiser, or the magnetised, or both.

3rdly. That there has also been frequent deception on the part of individuals with respect to the state termed magnetic somnambulism: that no proof has been given that any such state is produced by magnetism: though states of partial torpor not unfrequently occur in nervous persons, especially after moral impressions; and that when in these states, the individuals are to a certain extent insensible to mechanical stimulants, though, at the same time, they can occasionally give brief answers to questions, particularly if the questions have reference to the subject uppermost in their thoughts.

4thly. That a state of partial or total sleep is produced in many persons by the action of the *passes*, and in some others convulsive movements or other slight effects: but inasmuch as similar effects are also producible without magnetisation— if the person supposes that the process is continued—there is every probability that

they arise in all cases, either from the impression produced upon the individual in imagination, or from the ennui and sedative influence produced by all monotonous impressions on the senses, when persisted in for a certain period.

NOTE.—From some recent experiments made in London, it would appear probable, that the effects stated under the fourth head may result, in some instances, entirely from the influence transmitted from the magnetiser to the magnetised; but it has been proved that like effects may ensue in persons on whom they had already repeatedly occurred, without their being magnetised afresh, *provided they were led to believe that the process was carried on as usual, and that they were under its influence*, as will be seen to have been the case on referring to some of the experiments made before the commissioners of the Académie Royale de Médecine. What I have seen of these experiments leaves little doubt on my mind that the phenomena observed are independent of any magnetic influence, and might be reproduced without magnetisation; always provided the individuals were placed in circumstances which would lead them to suppose themselves magnetised. Thus, at M. Dupotet's, none of the higher phenomena of magnetism are even alluded to, and the convulsive movements and other effects follow actions made in front of the individuals; or if the magnetiser be behind them, they are aware that he is performing the *passes* upon them. One female, after being seated, is always seized with a slight rotatory motion of the head, which was increased by actions directed

by the magnetiser towards her, but it also became increased, without her being specially magnetised, and when the magnetiser was in another room. The motion was arrested for a brief period, by the magnetiser placing his thumb or finger on the person's forehead. On my touching her forehead, without any intention of magnetising, a like effect was produced.

Another somnambulist, a Frenchwoman, and servant of M. Dupotet's, who is occasionally introduced at the close of the exhibition, rose repeatedly from her chair, and struggled with and even threatened to strike persons who attempted to restrain her, but was always tranquillised, and fell back into her seat, on the magnetiser taking hold of her and touching her forehead. On one occasion, when she rose from her seat, and the magnetiser was in the adjoining apartment, I took hold of her wrist as he had done, and, on touching her forehead, she fell back tranquillised in her chair, as on former occasions. The same person's hands were taken by the magnetiser, who repeated several times, "*Ouvrez les yeux, Julie,*" which Julie, after apparently making some efforts, accordingly did. But this affords no proof that she could not open her eyes whenever she pleased, and that she did so in consequence of magnetic influence. The magnetiser declined attempting a similar result on his other somnambulists. One of these he drew from her chair towards himself by some movements of the hand, (he being seated at a little distance before her,) and she remained in a position of cataleptic rigidity till replaced in the chair; he declined, however, repeating the experiment behind

the somnambulist, when she would not be aware that he was acting upon her ; though, if the effect resulted from magnetic power, it must have been equally apparent.

With respect to Rebecca and the little girl, the other capital somnambulists of the exhibition, I have no doubt that the effects observed were independent of magnetic influence, and that like effects might have been equally obtained without magnetisation. Although such cases excite a great degree of wonder in the generality of persons, and are well calculated to make converts, yet medical men, especially those who have seen much of nervous complaints, are well aware of the curious phenomena which occasionally occur in females ; particularly when made objects of interest to an assembled multitude. Every medical man knows hysterical affections are aggravated, and are obstinate in proportion to the degree of attention they excite, and of sympathy manifested by relations or bystanders. Magnetisers assert that individuals, when in somnambulism, are insensible to external stimuli, and will only answer the questions of the magnetiser, or of persons placed *en rapport* with them ; but this young woman called out on her ear being moderately pinched, and answered any of the questions that were proposed to her by the visitors. It is evident she had anticipated a more than usually interesting *séance*, as she repeated two or three times, " Lord Stanhope is to be here to-day." No effects were produced on the men subjected to magnetisation, except occasional muscular twitchings in one individual.

HOMŒOPATHY.

“Quand l'absurde est outré on, lui fait trop d'honneur,
De vouloir, par raison, combattre son erreur.”

LA FONTAINE.

THIS doctrine was first promulgated about thirty years ago, though it did not attract much attention till within the last few years. It originated with Dr. Hahnemann, a native of Saxony, who, after having resided in various parts of Germany, at length took up his abode in Leipsic, and instituted experiments on the action of medicinal substances upon himself and others.* Having in

* “About the year 1800, Hahnemann advertised a new salt, of which he claimed the discovery, and which he sold at the modest price of a *louis d'or* per ounce. The Society for the Promotion of Natural Sciences, desirous of becoming acquainted with this new substance, had it analysed by some of the most experienced chemists, who pronounced it to be nothing but common borax. He shortly afterwards advertised

1790 taken some bark, which produced, as he states, paroxysms of intermittent fever, he was struck with the circumstance that the substance employed for the cure of intermittents should occasion a similar disease in a healthy person. This led to the inference that substances which produce certain symptoms in healthy individuals can remove these symptoms when induced by other causes ; hence a fundamental point of the doctrine, that diseases are cured only by medicines which have the power of causing similar diseases in healthy persons : *Similia similibus curentur*.

Homœopathists consequently do not consider a knowledge of anatomy, physiology, or pathology, as contributing to the cure of disease, but restrict themselves to noting the different groups of symptoms in diseases, and to ascertaining the appropriate remedy, without regard to the organic changes, or other circumstances, by which the symptoms are caused, or whether they affect the nervous, vascular, or other systems. For example, in following the rules of homœopathy,

“ an infallible preventive of scarlet fever ;” but being disappointed by its sale, he afterwards confessed it to be nothing but a few grains of extract of belladonna dissolved in water.”—Remarks on the Abracadabra of the nineteenth century, by Dr. Leo Wolf.

if a person have headache, whether arising from exhaustion, inflammation, or stomach derangement, the same remedy should be had recourse to, and that remedy must be a substance capable of causing headache in a healthy individual.

Medical doctrines are divided by Hahnemann into the allopathic, or method in general use, of curing diseases by remedies of an opposite nature—*contraria contrariis*,—the antipathic, or palliative method, and the homœopathic, the only true method; the principles of which are contained in his *Exposition de la Doctrine Médicale homœopathique*. This work contains an abundance of absurd reasoning, of extravagant and unfounded assertions; of some truisms, from which erroneous conclusions are drawn; of exceptions to general principles; and isolated examples, extracted from various authors, and adduced as the principles themselves, in order to corroborate the positions laid down by the author. Thus, to prove that many of the cures hitherto effected have been so by the chance employment of homœopathic means, several instances are brought forward, among which are, that rose-water cures ophthalmy, only because it has the power of causing a kind of ophthalmy. In like manner bark cures intermittents, because it occasions these diseases; ipecacuanha arrests

fluxions of blood, only because it possesses the faculty of exciting hæmorrhage; generous wines, in small doses, cure homœopathically inflammatory fever; hyoscyamus could not cure spasms resembling epilepsy, if it had not the power of exciting convulsions; the same remedy could not have cured a case of mania from jealousy, if it did not occasion mania and jealousy in healthy individuals.

Again, the popular customs of using snow to frost-bitten parts, of putting a scalded hand near the fire, are adduced to prove the homœopathic nature of the remedies to these accidents; vaccine is considered to act homœopathically in preventing small-pox, &c. These examples will suffice to show that the style of argument adopted is opposed to established truths; for who ever heard of rose-water causing ophthalmy, of bark causing intermittents, of ipecacuanha exciting hæmorrhage, or being employed to arrest it, of generous wines curing inflammatory fever, of hyoscyamus determining convulsions, mania, and jealousy? If snow is used to frost-bitten parts, it is used with friction, in order, as is well known, to bring the parts gradually to their natural state; whereas, if used on homœopathic principles, it would be kept constantly applied; and, as may be imagined, with a cer-

tainty of aggravating the evil. So also with respect to the application of heat to scalded parts; and to prove vaccine a homœopathic agent, it should be shown that it has the power to cure small-pox when already existing; which indeed it is asserted it would do, were it not surpassed by the small-pox in intensity.

Medicines, then, are not considered by the homœopathists as direct remedies, but to act by giving rise to morbid symptoms, surpassing in intensity those of the disease against which they are employed, on the principle that two similar diseases cannot co-exist in the same individual: the original disease consequently yields, being overpowered by the artificial disease caused by the remedies; and this, on the discontinuance of the medicines, is in its turn speedily overcome by the powers of the constitution.

This proposition also contradicts itself, for, as Dr. Wolf observes, "How can it be reconciled with common sense, that the vital powers are too weak and insufficient to remove any natural disease or its symptoms, be they ever so trifling, without the aid of a homœopathic drug, but are nevertheless powerful enough to remove the drug-sickness which is left after the natural disease is extinguished? Can any one comprehend that a power should be capable of over-

coming a large obstacle, and should be incapable of removing at the same time a similar and comparatively much smaller one?"

The particular symptoms to which each medicinal substance gives rise, and against which it is to be employed, are to be ascertained by experiments made by the homœopathist upon himself or other healthy persons.

But it must not be supposed that these surprising effects are produced by the ounce, drachm, or grain doses employed by ordinary practitioners. According to Hahnemann, the effects of medicinal substances are two-fold, viz. primitive, as the violent action produced by large quantities of certain drugs; purgation, sweating, &c.; and secondary, or homœopathic, in which the action is determined towards the diseased part; the active properties becoming more developed in proportion to the minuteness of the dose: in fact, homœopathists are cautioned against too minute a subdivision of the medicine, lest it should become so energetic as to give rise to dangerous symptoms. I cannot, however, do better than extract one or two passages from the Exposition, in order to illustrate this position.

"Besides, the homœopathic medicament acquires, at each division or dilution, an extraor-

dinary degree of power by the friction or the shock imparted to it, as means of developing the inherent virtues of medicines unknown before me, and which is so energetic, that, of late, experience has obliged me to shake only twice, whereas formerly I prescribed ten shakes to each dilution."

"Gold, silver, platina, charcoal, are without action on man in their ordinary state, but from the continued trituration of a grain of gold with an hundred grains of powdered sugar, there results a preparation which has already great medicinal virtue. If a grain of this mixture be taken and triturated with another hundred grains of sugar, and if this process be continued until each grain of the ultimate preparation contains a quadrillionth part of the grain of gold, we shall then have a medicament in which the medicinal virtue of the gold is so much developed, that it will be sufficient to take a grain, place it in a phial, and cause the air from it to be breathed for a few instants by a melancholy individual, in whom the disgust of life is carried so far as to incline to suicide, in order that, an hour afterwards, this person be delivered from his evil demon, and restored to his taste for life."

Hahnemann also says, speaking of silex or flint, "This earth being reduced to a millionth

degree of attenuation, a grain of the powder is reduced to the decillionth dilution. In fact, dilutions to the billionth or trillionth degree produce effects much too violent ; that of the sextillionth degree only may be commenced with, but this only suits robust persons ; in irritable subjects it is prudent to use only the decillionth dilution."

Of kitchen salt he says, "A grain of salt is reduced to the millionth degree of attenuation ; this powder is dissolved in diluted alcohol, and the division extended to the decillionth degree : carried to this degree of dilution, sea-salt is a powerful and heroical medicament, which can only be administered to patients with the greatest caution."

The action of imponderable agents, as light, electricity, &c., has been adduced by some homœopathists to prove the action of infinitesimal doses of medicines ; but it is evident that no similar comparison can be instituted ; and in order for the analogy to be maintained it should have been proved by the homœopathists, that persons can see better in proportion to the small quantity of light, and that they are more affected by heat or electricity in proportion to the smallness of the quantity of these agents applied.

Hahnemann says, "Let mathematicians explain to them how true it is, that if a substance be divided into any number of parts, its smallest particle will always contain something of this substance, and therefore it can never become a nonentity." On which Dr. Wolf remarks, "If this be admitted in a strict sense, does it follow, therefore, that the effect of these substances on the human body in any imaginable small quantity, must not only be perceptible, but still greater than when in quantities many million times larger? The thick fibres of a piece of meat are divisible into those which are so small as to be imperceptible by the best microscope. Does it follow from this, that the decoction of such a microscopic fibre will afford the patient as much or even more nourishment after a homœopathic manipulation, than a strong broth made allopathically from some pounds of meat?"

Homœopathic remedies may therefore be considered analogous with the *médecine expectante*, with this difference, that in the latter the patients know that the physician employs no remedies, but trusts entirely to the efforts of nature for their cure; whereas the imagination of patients treated homœopathically is acted upon, from their being led to consider the remedies employed to be of an energetic nature, as will

be seen in the sequel. The cures so pompously announced by the homœopathists will in almost all cases be found to be simple recoveries by the efforts of nature after a longer or shorter period, as in the following, published by a homœopathic physician.

“ Madame C. V., aged thirty-six, affected with chronic gastro-enteritis, produced by grief and abuse of coffee ; she had been treated by several physicians, and had been kept three months on a milk-diet ; she had headaches, and menstruation had been suppressed seven months ; she was prescribed pulsatilla, nux vomica, &c. ; menstruation appeared in twenty-seven days, and in *three months* she was cured.”

“ Mademoiselle R. did not menstruate at her accustomed period, and was affected with a catarrh ; she was prescribed pulsatilla, and menstruation occurred in the following month, and the catarrh was cured without any other medicament.”

The only division of diseases by Hahnemann is into acute and chronic ; of the former but little is said in the Exposition ; although they may arise from exterior causes, as cold, excesses, &c., yet in many cases they depend upon a psoric affection, and almost all chronic diseases originate from sycosis, syphilis, or psora (*vulgo* itch.)

This latter especially is the cause of innumerable diseases, which great truth it took Hahnemann twelve years to find out. In mentioning some of the evils produced by this miasm, I quote his own words: "This is the only fundamental and exciting cause of all the morbid forms which, under the names of nervous weakness, hysteria, hypochondriasis, mania, melancholia, epilepsy, spasms of all kinds, rickets, caries, cancer, gout, hæmorrhoids, jaundice, dropsy, amenorrhœa, hæmoptysis, asthma, and suppuration of the lungs, sterility, deafness, cataract and amaurosis, gravel, palsy, pains of all kinds, &c., figure in pathology as so many separate diseases, distinct and independent one from the other."

The modifications this miasm has undergone in its passage through millions of human constitutions, during several hundred generations, explain how it can assume so many forms.

In the treatment of cases, the precaution has been taken by the homœopathists of regulating with extreme care the diet of their patients. Abstinence from everything of a stimulating nature, as condiments, coffee, &c., is recommended; even the smelling of delicate perfumes is prohibited, although the smoking of tobacco is allowed; which, considering Germany is the

country whence homœopathy originated, is an extremely politic measure.

The absurdity of a doctrine equally opposed to reason and every-day experience could not fail to be immediately apparent to the medical profession, as well as the injurious effects that might arise from its professors being allowed to practise on the credulity of the public, ever ready to be attracted by novelty, especially if it be clothed in the garb of unintelligibility and mystery. In order, therefore, to show the value of the pretensions of homœopathy, the experiment was made in Germany, Russia, France, and Italy, of treating a certain number of patients in public institutions by homœopathic means, and an equal number by the usual methods: the results are such as might have been anticipated.

A German homœopathist, practising in Russia, was invested by the Grand Duke Michael with full powers to prove, if possible, by a comparison of facts, the advantages of homœopathic measures over the ordinary modes of treatment; and a certain number of patients in the wards of a military hospital were entrusted to his care. At the expiration of two months, however, he was not permitted to proceed further; for, in comparing results, it was seen that within

this period, of four hundred and fifty-seven patients treated by the ordinary means, three hundred and sixty-four, or three-fourths, were cured, and none died ; whereas, by the homœopathic method, tried on one hundred and twenty-eight patients, one-half only were cured, and five had died.

In order to ascertain and give publicity to the results, the Russian government caused a certain number of patients to be treated homœopathically in one hospital, while in another an equal number of patients were merely subjected to low diet and appropriate regimen, without the exhibition of any medicine. The results were very similar in both instances, and the medical council appointed to superintend the experiments thus gives its official opinion :

“ The medical council, after having attentively weighed the results of the experiments made according to the homœopathic method, and compared them with those made according to the principles of the *médecine expectante*, finds that they greatly resemble the latter, and are probably based only on the *vis medicatrix naturæ* ; for the infinitely minute doses can produce no effect on the human body. The medical council is therefore of opinion, that the homœopathic practice should be prohibited in sanatory esta-

blishments dependent on government, for the following reasons :

“ 1. Acute diseases require energetic means of treatment, which are not to be expected from homœopathy.

“ 2. The homœopathic treatment of external lesions and surgical diseases is altogether out of the question.

“ 3. Some slight affections get well while under homœopathic treatment, but similar affections disappear equally well, without any medical treatment, by the adoption of an appropriate regimen, good air, and cleanliness.”

The homœopathist who introduced the practice at Naples, was, as stated by Dr. Wolf, “an ignorant Bohemian barber, who enjoyed the patronage of the Austrian general, to whom he was particularly recommended by Hahne-mann. The public, as well as some talented young physicians who adopted homœopathy, awoke from their illusive credulity, but not until the general, with many other persons of distinguished rank, had died or were injured by this all-curing art.”

At the time homœopathy was in vogue at Naples, a commission was appointed, by royal order, to superintend the treatment of a certain number of patients during forty days ; the pa-

tients were selected by the physicians, and a separate ward in the hospital appropriated to them.

It was first determined by the commission to ascertain whether some of the patients would not get well without the employment of any remedy; ten were consequently set apart, and all recovered. One of them had a gastric fever: the homœopathic physician wished to give him a drop of the tincture of St. Ignatius' bean, at the twelfth dilution, representing a quadrillionth part of the original drop. He protested against expectation, saying, that the delay might compromise the life of the patient. The physicians re-assured him; they reckoned upon a crisis occurring, which accordingly did take place in the night, and the patient was well in two days. Had the homœopathic dose been taken, the cure would most assuredly have been attributed to it.

Several slight affections were treated homœopathically and recovered, without the commission being able to ascribe any of the recoveries to homœopathy, as they would in all probability have recovered as soon by simple attention to diet. A third set of cases of a more serious nature, and requiring the assistance of medicine, were also treated by the homœopathic

method, which was found altogether powerless, none of them obtaining any advantage; the cases were longer under treatment than usual, and several of the patients became worse, requiring the employment of ordinary measures for their cure.

In a fourth series of experiments of homœopathic remedies on healthy persons, no effects resulted from their administration. From these the commissioners deduced the following inferences; 1st, That the homœopathic treatment produced no effect; and, 2ndly, that it had the serious inconvenience, in several of the patients, of preventing the employment of remedies by which they might be cured.

On account of the statement of a Dr. Luz, a veterinary surgeon at Leipsic, that he had performed several surprising cures by the homœopathic method on horses and dogs, trials were instituted on these animals in the veterinary school and hospital at Berlin. The experiments were conducted with the utmost exactitude, and in the presence of many students and homœopaths; and though the cases were similar to those described by Dr. Luz, not one was cured; not one confirmed his statements even in the slightest degree.

The experiments made in Paris to show how

far homœopathy had claims to public confidence, also tend to prove that where any effects are produced, they are to be ascribed to the influence of the imagination.

1. Several medical students at the Hôtel Dieu, chosen by a homœopathic physician, were subjected to the homœopathic regimen, and took at first one, then two, then ten, and at last eighty globules at a dose, of the most active medicines prepared by the only homœopathic chemist in Paris. In not one instance was the slightest effect produced.

2. A number of pills, made with inert substances, as flour, gum arabic, and starch, were given to patients who believed them to be homœopathic remedies. I subjoin two or three of the results obtained.

Aphonia, of six weeks' duration, cured in a few hours by starch pills *given homœopathically*. A girl, aged twenty, was admitted on the 14th January with complete loss of voice, which had existed since the middle of November. She had experienced a similar attack in the preceding year, but had recovered in fifteen days. Menstruation was regularly performed; a few days' rest, and the usual hospital regimen, produced no effect; she was consequently placed in the department where the homœopathic ex-

periments were made, and was ordered two starch pills; the first to be taken in the presence of the physician, the next when four hours had elapsed. A few minutes after the first pill had been swallowed, the following symptoms manifested themselves—anxiety, pain and uneasiness in the region of the heart and thorax, perspiration, with heat and eruption on the skin. The second pill appeared to aggravate these symptoms, with the addition of hic-cough. She afterwards fell asleep, and, on awaking, was astonished to find she could talk in a loud tone. The complaint did not recur, and she soon quitted the hospital. This case is of a similar nature with that which I related a few pages back, where the patient so speedily recovered the use of her limbs after having been magnetised.

A man, aged forty, was admitted about the same time as the preceding patient, complaining of a sense of oppression on the chest. He had experienced an attack of hemoptysis a year before, and was exceedingly hypochondriacal. During the first few days no treatment was adopted, and he continued in the same state. Four starch pills, which he supposed to be homœopathic remedies, were then prescribed; one to be taken regularly every six hours. Half an

hour after swallowing each pill, the patient experienced anxiety, sense of oppression, spitting of blood. The pills were discontinued, and resumed on alternate days during a fortnight. Each time they were taken, they were followed by oppression, headache, acceleration of pulse, diuresis, and pains in all the limbs.

A girl, aged twenty-three, labouring under cough with hectic fever, and insomnia, was also treated by these inert pills, which she imagined to be homœopathic. Each time after taking a pill, the fever diminished, the cough was less fatiguing, and she slept better; she suffered more when she did not take it, and always requested to have her "calming pill."

The following case occurred to a physician at St. Petersburg. "A lady, aged forty-eight, phthisical, had been treated by the homœopathic method during two years, when I became her physician; and as my efforts were unsuccessful, she requested me to treat her homœopathically. I consented, and gave her two grains of sugar, assuring her she would experience the effects of this powerful medicine for six days. The following day she received me with an ironical smile, saying, "One may easily see, doctor, that you are not accustomed to handle homœopathic remedies: that which you

gave me was too energetic ; it caused so much disturbance, that I did not expect to outlive the night ; however, its action is in the end salutary, for I have not felt myself so well for a long time as I feel to-day."

3. Two physicians attached to an hospital experimented upon the *infirmiers*, or male attendants in their wards. One physician desired his *infirmiers* to note down every half hour the sensations they experienced, after taking what they supposed to be a homœopathic agent. They all experienced various sensations, of which the following is a specimen :

A young man in perfect health took eight pills, containing a minute portion of charcoal, and at the expiration of half an hour had noted the following symptoms: headache, confusion, imperfect vision, flushing of the face. On repeating the same dose, the symptoms recurred, with violent perspiration.

4. The other physician conducted his experiments differently: he took every morning six homœopathic pills, and at the end of a certain period asked his *infirmiers* if they were willing to do the same ; they consented, and did not experience the slightest effect.

Thus, in the first experiment, the individuals expecting to experience extraordinary sensa-

tions, from being required to note them down, do not fail to feel some, as would be the case with most persons under similar circumstances. On the other hand, those who saw no effect produced on their superior by the pills, also take them, and not expecting any particular sensations, do not experience any.

I might adduce various other examples, but being desirous not to extend this article, I shall content myself with briefly alluding to the experiments of M. Andral at La Pitié.

A hundred and thirty individuals were treated by homœopathic remedies in the presence of numerous witnesses. The regimen recommended by Hahnemann was strictly adhered to, and the prescriptions prepared by a homœopathic chemist. The experiments were of two kinds; first, to ascertain whether symptoms can be produced in healthy persons by medicines which cure similar symptoms when arising from other causes. Bark was one of the first substances chosen, and its various preparations were taken by M. Andral and ten other persons at first in homœopathic doses, which produced no effect; then in ordinary doses, which were gradually increased up to from six to twenty-four grains of sulphate of quinine per day. None of these persons experienced the least symptom of

an attack of intermittent fever ; the only effects produced by these large doses were slight indisposition and headache, in some whose stomachs were not so strong as the rest.

Aconitum, which, according to the homœopathists, is of superior efficacy to blood-letting in febrile diseases, was tried, and produced no effect. Sulphur was also tried by several persons, without any eruption being produced on the skin.

Thus the statement that remedies cause diseases resembling those which they cure, is an assertion utterly groundless.

The second kind of experiments was made to ascertain whether homœopathic remedies would in any case affect the progress of disease.

Several cases of intermittent fever were treated homœopathically. Some got well at the end of a certain period, which would in all probability have been the case, had no remedies been employed : in other cases no effect was produced, and, on the usual method of treatment being adopted, the patients got rapidly well. Similar results were obtained in treating febrile diseases and several chronic complaints, except that in some cases the patients got worse while under the homœopathic system.

The homœopathists in Paris having peti-

tioned the Minister of the Interior to permit the establishment of dispensaries for the treatment of patients by the homœopathic method, the minister requested the opinion of the Académie de Médecine on the subject. The reply of that body is made in the following terms :—

“ MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,

“ Homœopathy, which presents itself to you at the present time as a novelty, is not a new thing. For more than twenty-five years this doctrine has wandered here and there ;—first in Germany, then in Prussia, afterwards in Italy, and now in France ; seeking everywhere, though in vain, to introduce itself as a branch of medicine.

“ The time of the Académie has been repeatedly taken up with the subject, and, moreover, there are but few of its members who have not sought to ascertain its basis, and its effects.

“ With us, as elsewhere, homœopathy has been subjected, in the first place, to logical examination, which has exhibited in it a formal opposition to the best-established truths, a great number of striking contradictions, and many of those palpable absurdities which inevitably ruin all false systems in the opinion of enlightened

persons, but which are not always a sufficient obstacle to the credulity of the multitude.

“ With us, as elsewhere, homœopathy has also been subjected to the trial of facts, and put to the test of experience. Observation, faithfully interrogated, has furnished the most categorical answers; for if it be admitted that some examples of cure have occurred while under the homœopathic treatment, it has been ascertained that the success is justly attributable to the bias of a weak imagination on the one hand, and to the remedial powers of the constitution on the other. Observation has also shown the great danger of homœopathy in frequent and serious cases of disease, where the physician may do as much harm, and cause no less injury, by inactive measures, as by those which are directly prejudicial.

“ Reason and experience are consequently united to repel a similar doctrine, and counsel that it should be left to itself and its own resources.

“ If the precedent were once established, application would be made for dispensaries for Mesmerism, animal magnetism, Brownism, and other conceptions of a heated imagination.

“ From these considerations and motives, the

Académie opines that government should refuse to entertain the petition which has been addressed to it in favour of homœopathy."

Having heard of the existence of a homœopathic hospital at Leipzic, the head-quarters of the doctrine, I had the curiosity to visit it during my brief sojourn in that city last July, and was directed to a small house in one of the suburbs, with an inscription on the outside denoting its destination. I had no difficulty in obtaining admission, and was accompanied through the house by the assistant homœopathist, the principal being in the country.

From what I had previously heard, I expected to see at least from thirty to forty beds occupied by patients, and was somewhat surprised to find that the house only contained eight, of which but one was occupied by a phthisical patient, who had been there several months without any amelioration. There were, however, five other patients able to get about, viz. a case of chronic swelling of the foot; one of delirium tremens, which had also been a long time under treatment by arnica and hyoscyamus, in doses of the decillionth part of a grain, which I was gravely assured produced sound sleep; a young girl, with no other complaint than deranged menstrua-

tion, who had also been some months in the house; a case of necrosis of the tibia treated by the internal exhibition of homœopathic remedies; and a woman with a cutaneous disease, of a syphilitic nature, who had been treated with sulphur, carbon, gold, and other homœopathic remedies, since the month of February, but with little advantage, as the disease appeared to me likely to be interminable under a similar system.

During my visit two or three out-patients presented themselves. One of these was a healthy boy, with tinea capitis, for which he had been taking homœopathic globules since February, the hair having been allowed to grow, and no external application having been used. The appearance of the patient's head did not afford any favourable evidence of the good effects of the treatment, and I should imagine the disease was much in the same state as when he first applied for relief.*

* Some of the homœopathists of the present day have abandoned several of the more absurd propositions of Hahnemann as untenable. The principles of their practice are, however, the same; viz. expectation, and the influencing the patients' imagination by leading them to suppose they are taking some extraordinary remedies. In all the cases which are bruited about, and published as recoveries by the homœopathic method, the advantage derived may be ascribed to the

above causes, assisted by a more strict attention to modes of living and regimen ; and in many instances is only temporary, as in the case of a noble individual, who has been repeatedly said in the papers to be cured, or greatly relieved, by different modes of treatment. It is the nature of several complaints, especially of a nervous character, to be better or worse at different times or seasons, and to offer complete intermissions during a longer or shorter period, and in these cases the amelioration is generally attributed to the remedy the patient happens to be taking at the time.

NOTES

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE
MIND ON THE BODY.

THE great influence exerted by the imaginative and other mental faculties, on the exercise of the corporeal functions, and in the production and removal of disease, has not received from medical practitioners the degree of consideration to which its importance entitles it, notwithstanding the effects of this influence are daily seen in the practice of medicine, and the subject has occupied the pens of several eminent individuals, both in ancient and more recent times. It is not my intention to enter at any length into the consideration of this subject, which would alone suffice to fill a volume ; but I purpose adding, as a pendant to the remarks already made, a few illustrations, by which it will be seen, that this influence has not been over estimated in the preceding pages.

The faculty which enhances enjoyment by

anticipation, and to which the civilised world owes so large a share of its happiness,

“ Whose might
Can make the desert heavenly fair,
And fill with forms divinely bright
The dreary vacancy of air,”

is also unfortunately instrumental in the production of much of the misery that exists, by the gloomy foreboding of anticipated evils, or by the ideal aggravation of present misfortunes. The direful consequences of this instrumentality are strongly exhibited during the prevalence of some epidemic diseases, which are known to affect individuals, and to be fatal in proportion to the degree of apprehension that prevails; whereas medical men and others, who under these circumstances are less liable to be influenced by the terrors of an excited imagination, are much less liable to be attacked by the disease; or if attacked, the termination is favourable in a large proportion of cases. The happy effects of a well-grounded confidence are daily brought under the observation of the practitioner in the recovery of patients under the most unfavourable circumstances; on the other hand, in many instances, and especially after accidents and operations, though the circumstances appear to be most favourable for recovery, yet if the *morale* of the patients be so influenced as to make them apprehend an un-

favourable termination, how frequently does it not occur, that their prognostications are verified by the result? In like manner, predictions of the occurrence of disease or death at a certain period, by the hold they obtain on the person's imagination, occasionally bring about their own fulfilment. It is mentioned in Mr. Colquhoun's work, previously quoted, that Hearne, in his journey, states, "Such is the confidence of the North American Indians in professors of the magic art, that they appear capable of curing the most serious diseases, without resorting to any physical means; and the fear of their malignity plunges individuals into diseases which often terminate fatally. One of these Indians, Matonabbi by name, conceiving that Hearne was in possession of supernatural powers, requested him to kill by magic a man against whom he entertained a deadly hatred. To oblige him, Hearne, without dreading any bad consequence, drew some figures upon a piece of paper and gave it to Matonabbi, advising him to make it as public as possible. Matonabbi's enemy, who enjoyed perfectly good health, had scarcely heard of the paper, when he became melancholy, drooped, refused food, and died in a few days."

The author of the "Anatomy of Melancholy"

thus expresses himself on this subject : “ Sometimes a strong conceit or apprehension will take away diseases, in both kinds it will produce real effects. Men, if they see but another man tremble, giddy, or sick of some disease, their apprehension and fear is so strong in this kind, that they will have the same disease; or if by some soothsayer, wise man, fortune-teller, or physician, they be told they will have such a disease, they will so seriously apprehend it, that they will instantly labour of it. If it be told them they shall be sick on such a day, when that day comes they will surely be sick, and will be so terribly afflicted, that sometimes they die upon it.”

Again, “As some are so molested by phantasie, so some again by fancy alone, and a good conceit, are as easily cured. We see commonly the toothache, gout, falling-sickness, and many such diseases, cured by spells, words, characters, and charms. All the world knows there is no virtue in such charms, but a strong conceit and opinion alone.”

I need scarcely allude to the more common effects of the imagination and moral impressions known to every one, as illustrated in the production of blushing, paleness, fainting, privation of appetite, disturbance of digestion, and other

functions;* but it is too often overlooked, that similar impressions are very frequently instrumental in the production and keeping up of a large proportion of chronic diseases; hence, a cause of the intractableness of many of them under a treatment exclusively medicinal.

A great many of the disorders of the digestive apparatus met with in a metropolis like London are induced and kept up by anxiety, the worry of particular avocations, and the annoyances and perplexities to which the professional, mercantile, and trading classes of the community are especially subjected. Such complaints may persist, or be constantly recurring for an indefinite period, deriving but temporary alleviation from medicine; but they not unfrequently cease spontaneously, if any circumstance occur to counteract the influence of the above-mentioned causes; as partial change of habits, a short residence in the country; the undertaking of a journey of pleasure, &c. The same may be said of the class of nervous disorders, many of which are occasioned and kept up solely by causes of a moral nature, as seen in the occurrence of some convulsive affections, viz. hysteria from mental emotion or antipathy, epilepsy

* "Unquiet meals make ill digestions."

SHAKSPEARE.

from fright, &c. Deep sorrow, disappointment, and other analogous causes, are but too often the latent occasion of complaints which long resist the efforts of medicine, for the intractableness of which no obvious reasons can be assigned, and by their depressing influence on the vital powers, especially of the nervous system, are frequently productive of some of the most distressing organic diseases to which humanity is subject. The complaint termed nostalgia, or home-sickness, is a striking example.—In these cases the individual, torn away from his country to fight or labour in distant lands, droops and pines away without exhibiting the symptoms of disease of any particular organ, and ultimately dies, unless a hope be held out of his speedy return, when the cure will sometimes be effected as if by enchantment.* With how much greater ease and lightness are all the bodily functions performed, when the mind is at ease and we are in good

* One of our most justly esteemed poets has thus alluded to this malady :

“ The intrepid Swiss who guards a foreign shore,
Condemn'd to climb his mountain cliffs no more,
If chance he hear the song so sweetly wild,
Which on those cliffs his infant hours beguil'd,
Melts at the long-lost scenes which round him rise,
And sinks a martyr to repentant sighs.”

Pleasures of Memory.

spirits? How languid, on the contrary, is the flow of the "nimble spirits in the arteries" when we are "besieged with sable-coloured melancholy!" and how much more liable are we under these circumstances to be affected by deleterious agencies of a physical nature? In an advancing army, flushed with conquest, disease rarely appears; if, however, the same body of men be dispirited by defeat and on a retreat, disease to a great extent will not fail to manifest itself, should they be exposed to any of its more common causes. The British troops in Walcheren continued tolerably healthy, notwithstanding the deleterious influence of the climate, till circumstances occurred to depress their *morale*. The same effects were seen on a larger scale on the retreat of the French from Moscow, as there is no doubt, that had the army been advancing with a prospect of good quarters, instead of being in retreat and undisciplined, they would have supported the privations consequent on the rigour of the season and scantiness of food, with the loss of a comparatively small number of men.

This power of the imagination and of faith is constantly exemplified in the action of remedies, especially in diseases of a nervous character. Thus we see that many patients, and more especially nervous and hypochondriacal

ones, often find themselves much better after first consulting a new medical attendant. Fresh remedies, when first tried, are often attended with a remarkable amelioration, and not unfrequently arrest the attacks of epilepsy, or mitigate their severity; particularly if the patient had been led to expect great advantage from their administration. In these cases, however, as the novelty subsides, and the patient becomes more accustomed to the remedy, its good effects frequently cease to be manifest.*

Patients who entertain an idea that they require a course of mercury, will often derive great benefit, and will actually feel a soreness of the mouth, accompanied with an increased

* Delille, in alluding to the effects of Mesmerism says—

“ Tous se felicitoient de leurs metamorphoses,
 La vielle Eglé croyoit voir renaître ses roses,
 Le viellard decrepit se ranimant peu-à-peu
 D'un retour de santé menaçoit son neveu ;
 Le jeune homme a vingt ans, ridé par la molesse,
 Se promettoit encore quelques jours de jeunesse.

Mesmer courut ailleurs porter où art aimable
 Chaque malade au fond de son appartement
 Tout seul avec ses maux s'enterra tristement,
 Et des remedes vains implorant la puissance,
 Il perdit le plus doux en perdant l'esperance.”

L'IMAGINATION.

flow of saliva, on taking pills composed of bread or other inert substances, provided they believe themselves to be taking mercury. It is stated in the "Dictionnaire des Sciences Médicales," that a physician gave a peasant a prescription for a purgative, saying, "Take this." The man, on his return home, actually swallowed the paper, which produced a similar effect to what would have resulted, had he taken the drug prescribed. He returned in a day or two to the physician, to say that the purgative had quite cured him. At the period of Corvisart's lecturing on the diseases of the heart, many of the students became affected with palpitation and other symptoms of these diseases, and it is well known that when medical students and non-professional persons read descriptions of diseases, they often become affected with some of the symptoms; or, if they had previously any of the symptoms about which they had been reading, these are almost constantly aggravated from their attention being more strongly directed towards them. The power of the imagination and mental impressions in producing hysteria is well known. Analogous influences, and an exertion of the will, also frequently prevent the recurrence of attacks of this disease. On the same

principle are easily explicable the cures which have been performed from persons being placed on the tombs of saints, by touching holy relics ; by pilgrimages to particular places ; as in those affected with St. Vitus's dance, who were cured in the sixteenth century by a pilgrimage to a chapel dedicated to this saint near Ulm. I have given, in my work on nervous disorders, several cases of partial or total paralysis, in which the persons have continued helpless for years, and have ultimately recovered either spontaneously or after some strong moral impression ; but as it would be somewhat out of place to cite here detailed medical cases, I prefer illustrating the remarks made by a quotation or two from a recent work in general circulation :—

“ A large body of sailors resorted to Sadler's Wells theatre one night, and amongst them a man who was deaf and dumb, and had been so for many years. This man was placed by his shipmates in the front row in the gallery. Grimaldi was in great force that night, and although the audience were in one roar of laughter, nobody appeared to enjoy the fun and humour more than this poor fellow. As the scene progressed, Grimaldi's tricks and jokes became still more irresistible, and at length, after a violent peal of laughter and

applause, which quite shook the theatre, in which the dumb man joined most heartily, he suddenly turned to his mate who sat next him, and cried out with much glee—‘What a d—d funny fellow!’—‘Why, Jack,’ shouted the other, starting back with surprise, ‘can you speak?’—‘Speak,’ returned the other, ‘ay, that I can, and hear too.’ The man, who appeared an intelligent and well-behaved fellow, said, that in the earlier part of his life he could both speak and hear very well, and that he attributed his deprivation of the two senses to the intense heat of the sun in the quarter of the world from which he had recently returned. He added, that he had for a long time felt a powerful anxiety to express his delight at what was passing on the stage, and that after some feat of Grimaldi’s, which struck him as particularly amusing, he had made a strong effort to deliver his thoughts, in which, to his own great astonishment, no less than that of his comrades, he succeeded.”

When Grimaldi, worn out by premature old age, was almost deprived of the use of his limbs, so as to be scarcely able to stand or walk, he was visited by a friend, and when, with much difficulty, he had descended from his bed-room to the parlour, his friend informed him, with

great care and delicacy, that his son was dead.

“In one instant every feeling of decrepitude and bodily weakness left him, his limbs recovered their original vigour, all his lassitude and debility vanished, a difficulty of breathing, under which he had long laboured, disappeared, and, starting from his seat, he rushed to his wife’s chamber, tearing, without the smallest difficulty, up a flight of stairs, which a quarter of an hour before it had taken him ten minutes to climb. He hurried to her bedside, told her that her son was dead, heard her first passionate exclamation of grief, and, falling into a chair, was once again an enfeebled and crippled old man.”*

The following case recently appeared in the papers, and was headed

“MIRACLE IN RIVER OUSE. — Charlotte Beeby, late of Elstow, aged twenty-five, an inhabitant of Biddenham, has for the last five years been a cripple, with an affection of the back, the lower limbs being perfectly paralysed. The affection had resisted the treatment of many practitioners. Being acquainted with the episcopalian church doctrines, taught by the Rev. Mr. Matthews of this town, she conceived that if she were baptized by that gentleman she

* Memoirs of Joseph Grimaldi.

would recover. Accordingly, the reverend gentleman, at half-past ten at night, in the presence of a hundred spectators, converts to his doctrines, proceeded to the river Biddenham, whither the diseased person was removed in a cart, as usual when moved about. Mr. Matthews, going into the river to support her, immersed her in the water, when she immediately said, 'Leave me go, I can walk,' and walked out of the water, and ran some distance up a hill, till she was exhausted, but she has retained the use of her limbs ever since."

Analogous cases to the above, occurring principally in females, appear from time to time in the public papers, and are not unfrequently considered by the ignorant as evidences of the special interposition of a supernatural agency. I might adduce other examples from my own observation, but think it sufficient to refer to the case of paralysis which I have related as cured after animal magnetisation; the patient having, as in the above instance, a strong conviction that the process would cure her. The paralytic patients cured by being placed on the tomb of the Abbé Paris, laboured under a similar affection, which I have elsewhere explained as depending upon a debility of the faculty of volition, not unfrequently continuing

for months or years, and in many cases ultimately yielding to time or to the occurrence of circumstances of a moral nature, which excite this faculty to action. The case of loss of voice above related, as well as that under the head of homœopathy, cured by starch pills, which the patient supposed to be homœopathic remedies, are of a similar nature, the muscles concerned in the formation of the voice being deprived of their power for a longer or shorter period.

Imitation and habit influence in a remarkable manner the actions of the economy in health and disease. How frequently do we see one person imitating the gestures of another, without being aware of the circumstance,* Children, in whom the imitative faculty is most strong, readily adopt the gestures and even the tone of voice of their parents or other persons with whom they are associated. The action of yawning when we see others yawn is a familiar example of the power of imitation. Muscular twitching of parts, squinting and stammering, are not unfrequently acquired by imitation, and are subsequently kept up by habit for an

* “It is certain that wise bearing or ignorant carriage is caught, as men take diseases one of another; therefore let men take heed of their company.”—
HENRY IV., Part 2.

indefinite period. St. Vitus's dance occurs in some children in consequence of their associating with others affected with this complaint, which is in many cases kept up for a long time by habit alone. The same may be said of epilepsy, hysteria, and other nervous affections. It is a matter of common observation, that if one female have an hysterical attack, in a place where several are congregated, as in the ward of an hospital, or in any public assembly, others frequently become similarly affected. The mode adopted by Boerhaave of arresting an epidemic of a convulsive nature, has been repeatedly quoted by medical writers, as illustrating the power of imitation and of moral impression over these disorders. A female labouring under attacks of an epileptic nature was placed in the ward of a public institution, with other females, who all became affected in a similar manner, and the complaint continued to prevail epidemically, till Boerhaave assembled all the patients together, and heating before their eyes a number of iron rods, expressed his determination to apply a red-hot rod on the face of the first person who should have an attack. None of them had any recurrence, and the epidemic ceased as if by magic. Epidemics of a somewhat similar kind have at

different times been propagated by imitation over a considerable extent of country; as in the case of the dancing mania, which extended so widely in the sixteenth century. Laughter is also frequently excited by imitation, and sometimes under circumstances but little likely to occasion merriment. Wesley relates, that paroxysms of uncontrollable laughter occurred at some of his prayer-meetings. He himself, and some of his most zealous followers, could not resist the infection, but laughed as loudly as the rest. He accounts for the circumstance by ascribing it to the influence of Satan.

The power of habit is further seen in the facility with which persons, under certain circumstances, accustom themselves to bear with but little inconvenience extremes of temperature; to digest with facility articles of food which would cause an attack of illness to those less accustomed to their use; to require but a small quantity of sleep. By this power the eye becomes enabled to discern minute objects in comparative obscurity. The ear of a North American Indian applied to the ground, can hear advancing footsteps at a distance that appears incredible to Europeans. After the loss of one sense the other senses become, by the habit of cultivation, extremely susceptible to impressions made on

their organs. When a person is deprived of his hands, the sense of touch may become surprisingly developed in other parts of the body, as the feet. Many diseases are greatly under the influence of habit, especially epilepsy, hysteria, and others which occur at periodical intervals. The paroxysms of an intermittent fever are sometimes kept up by habit. Abortion is liable to recur at a similar period of pregnancy from this influence. In these cases the disorders are often kept up until some circumstance occurs which tends to break the chain of habitual recurrence. Moral impressions have frequently this effect, as seen in the cases related in the preceding pages. Change of scene and mode of living also have a beneficial effect in many instances. Some remedies, which produce an energetic action, and other means in which the patient is led to place great confidence, produce an advantageous result in some cases, while, in others which have resisted various remedial measures, time alone effects the cure.

Those individuals in whom the faculty of volition is strong are but little liable to many slight ailments which affect others, and are frequently enabled to overcome obstacles from which less enterprising persons would shrink with alarm. Most of those who have risen from obscurity,

and have retained high command, have been distinguished for energy of this faculty; as Mahomet, Cromwell, Napoleon, who, inspiring others with a portion of their own enthusiasm by

“ Le pouvoir qu’un esprit vaste et ferme en ses desseins
Tient sur l’esprit grossier des vulgaires humains,”

were enabled to carry their vast projects of ambition into execution. The power of the will is sometimes sufficient to overcome disease. I have already adduced some instances: attacks of hysteria are well known to be in great measure under the control of the will, and, by the patient exerting this faculty, their occurrence may often be prevented. Colonel Townsend is said to have been able at will to suspend his respiration, circulation, and sensation, throwing himself into a state of trance, from which he could recover himself. Many slight complaints occurring in those who “have not leisure to be sick” speedily disappear, which in other persons would have become aggravated by their giving way, and allowing their attention to dwell upon them.*

* Northumberland, after Hotspur’s defeat, is made to say—

. “ Even so my limbs,
Weakened with grief, being now enraged with grief,

I think it unnecessary to lengthen this work by any further examples of the influence exerted by the mind on the body, enough having been said to enable those who have perused it to form some estimate of the power of this influence, as also of the value to be set upon Animal Magnetism and Homœopathy.

Are thrice themselves; hence therefore thou nice crutch
A scaly gauntlet now, with joints of steel
Must glove this hand : and hence thou sickly quoif,
Thou art a guard too wanton for the head,
Which princes flush'd with conquest aim to hit."

HENRY IV., Part 2.

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