

## **Mesmerism in 1845.**

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MESMERISM IN 1845.<sup>1</sup> by  
D. Ross Dietch

“ Our life is twofold: Sleep hath its own world,  
A boundary between the things misnamed  
Death and existence: Sleep hath its own world,  
And a wide dream of wild reality,  
And dreams—  
Pass like spirits of the past; they speak  
Like Sibyls of the future: they have power,  
The tyranny of pleasure and of pain,  
They make us what we were not,—what they will,  
And shake us with the vision that’s gone by  
The dread of vanished shadows,—ARE THEY SO?”—BYRON.

“ WE should lay aside all prejudice connected either with the origin, name, or injudicious exposition of MESMERISM, and try the subject wholly and impartially on its own merits.” So says the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend in his *Facts in Mesmerism*, the most able work, by far, of some fifteen or twenty which have appeared on the subject; and it is in the spirit which he inculcates, that we enter upon our present inquiry.

We are far from thinking, that because a vast mass of error has been proved to be connected with any subject, there must, on that account, necessarily be in it no truth. As medical men, whose science is on all sides surrounded by quackery and imposture, we will be the last to admit such a principle. On the contrary, we believe that the very existence of a great amount of error in connexion with a given subject is a proof that it possesses, to a greater or less extent, a substratum of reality and truth. Homœopathy can point to its dietetics, and to its avoidance of the too prevalent system of drugging: Hydropathy to the value of cleanliness, cold water, and perspirations; St John Long to the importance of counter-irritation; and Morrison’s pills to the advantage of occasional purgation,—as the basis of truth on which the huge masses of imposture and folly connected with these subjects have been reared. On the other hand, those sciences which are considered the most fixed and accurate, have passed through mysteries and absurdities as gross as any of those appertaining to mesmerism. Astrology and alchemy preceded astronomy and chemistry; intolerance and persecution were once considered the best supports to religion; and even in our own day, the suicidal system of exclusion and monopoly in commercial affairs is just giving way, before more correct views on the interests and intercourse of nations. Our whole social condition, especially in matters relating to criminal and hygienic subjects, is involved in as gross errors as any that are cherished by the ultra-mesmerists. Undismayed, therefore, by the exaggerations and absurdities of the mesmeric platform, and the mesmeric drawing-room, which have repelled so many of our brethren,—and in the hope that beneath all this error we shall discover some truth,—enter upon our task.

We agree with many of the writers on mesmerism, that the subject has lately become too important, to be put aside with a word or gesture of contempt.

<sup>1</sup> For a list of the works referred to, see the end of this Article.



The subject which Laplace and Cuvier treated with respect, demands the candid consideration of all men, and if, as the opponents of mesmerism assert, the science (?) received its death-blow from the French Academy in 1784,—the very fact that it is still, so long after suffering this *coup-de-grace*, alive and vigorous, shows that there must be a principle of vitality about it, difficult to be quenched. The Rev. Mr Townshend is a man of great eloquence and genius; Miss Martineau has been distinguished as a bold, acute, and logical reasoner; the repute of Dr Elliotson's works in Medical Science, and his high standing in the profession are undoubted. When such individuals are found actively advocating any doctrine, it cannot be stifled, and it ought not to be sneered down. Facts are stated in abundance, and illustrations of the mesmeric power innumerable are given by persons, whose known high moral character compels us to trust in their sincerity, relating to the curative influence of this agent. Under these circumstances we say that, as medical men, we are not justified in refusing to examine carefully into the subject, but that, however deterred by its tediousness or disgusted by the ~~total~~ imposture amid which it is enveloped, it is our duty to investigate its claims with diligence and candour.

We are accused, not only by writers on mesmerism, but by a large portion of the intelligent public, of improperly neglecting this investigation, and whether the charge be true or false, it is highly desirable for the preservation of that confidence between the public and the profession, which is necessary for the well-being of both, that the charge should cease to be heard. The public will not be satisfied with a blind bigoted denial of all the mesmeric assertions, nor will the cry "humbug and collusion" answer, except where "humbug and collusion" shall be proved to exist. A more intelligent opposition to mesmerism than this, if opposition be decided on, is now demanded from us by the public. It is true that the charges brought against our profession are not very consistently supported. Mr Townshend, for example, speaks in his second page of "the Galens of our days," who, "instead of wisely taking it under their own patronage and into their own hands, have treated it with a desperation of hostility, as if, were it allowed to flourish, their glory was tarnished, and their occupation gone." Yet the same author, in pages 32, 33, says "the discoverer of mesmerism was a physician, and its extraordinary curative powers have usually placed it in medical hands, so that of the *existing works upon it, there are few that are not written by members of the medical profession, and fewer still that do not bear immediate reference to the treatment of maladies.*" The writer further goes on, accounting for the narrow range of the popular interest on the subject of mesmerism, from the circumstance, that *medical men alone have written upon it.* "There is something also in medical details which is peculiarly quenching to the imagination, and consequently distasteful to the man of letters and refinement. It is not, then, extraordinary that mesmerism treated medically, should have been restricted to a narrow sphere; but is this the fault of mesmerism itself? Surely not. On no subject is it less permitted to

'Give up to party what's meant for mankind.'

The doors of the temple should be thrown widely open to the world," &c.

Whether consistently supported or not, however, the charge against medical men is very generally made by mesmeric writers, and so universally echoed by the public as to demand attention. That the subject has been much avoided by the profession in general, there can be little doubt; and any one who considers the trouble and annoyance consequent on its investigation will see sufficient reasons for this.

Those who have exhibited the mesmeric trance must be divided into the *true* and the *tricky*.

Of the true, the majority consists of persons of a highly sensitive nervous system, who have generally exhibited hysteria under one form or other. That some of them are really put into "the sleep," and exhibit convulsions, &c., is certain; that a small number may be somnambulists and ecstasies is highly



probable; and that a large proportion of delicate and hysteric girls, after straining their eyes into the eyes of a handsome man like La Fontaine, may on closing them believe they are dreaming, we have no doubt. The waking feelings of a hysteric girl in bad health are themselves dreams, and doubtless, many of them on closing their eyes, believe they are in some abnormal condition. These are the true.

But with respect to the rogues, who, doubtless, form the grand majority of those exhibited;—a Clairvoyant or Phreno-mesmeric subject is exhibited on a platform, or in a drawing-room, before twenty or thirty spectators; a medical man of the party sees and wishes to expose what he believes to be deceit: how is he met? By the indignation of the mesmeriser at the doubts insinuated of his honesty, supported by appeals to the audience in favour of the unconscious boy, or interesting young lady in “the sleep!” Should this not of itself be sufficient to place the critic *hors de combat*, the love of the marvellous, which, in all popular assemblies, predominates over the simple, the credible, the rational, is certain to ensure for him a shower of hisses. If, biding his time, he enquire into the real condition of those mesmerisees, whose manifestations were perfectly satisfactory to a large and respectable audience, he finds all kinds of difficulties beset his path. He is *morally* certain of the deceit of some or all of the parties,—but how obtain *legal* proof? If he subject the “cataleptic” or “sommambulistic” patient to the epileptic query of the thumb-nail, he is assailed with cries of “Savage!” or Miss Martineau characterizes his heart as “cold and hard indeed.” If he threaten the supposed tricky “clairvoyant” with justice, and thus attempt to wring a confession from him, he is accused of using unfair means to arrive at truth; he is decried as coarsely and “unphilosophically” interrogating “nature;” and his investigation and his evidence are at once set aside by the mesmerists. But in a case *where mesmeric trick exists*, we cannot see how it is to be discovered, except by one of these two methods, either by the trickster being frightened from his roguery by pain, or terrified out of it by fear of judicial punishment. Anatomical and physiological proofs afforded by the actions of the deceiver, are only cognisable by those informed in those sciences; Miss Martineau and the public, cannot estimate, and will not admit them. The crime is not like that of stealing a horse, or committing a forgery, in which evidence afforded by circumstances or individuals can be procured, so as to bring home conviction to the criminal; unless *he confess*, it is impossible to make his fraud clear to the world. Yet any one will see that the difficulty of inducing a knave of this kind to confess by any other means than coercion amounts to absolute impossibility; and that coercion itself, unless judiciously applied, must almost always fail. Hence flounders the cause of the mesmeric platform and drawing-room *séance*; and hence also, the unwillingness of medical men to enter into an investigation in which much, at least, of what they enquire into, they suspect to be trick. But granting that the mesmerisee is proved to be tricking, nay, that he confesses his roguery; even then it is difficult to bring before the world substantial legal proof of the fact. Mesmeric tricksters are a sly and wary set. It is very difficult to get them to a *séance*, if they suspect that there is to be any close investigation; and when there, ~~forsooth~~, if they see any suspicion, “*l’atmosphère d’incrédulité*” prevents the display of the “manifestations.” For all mesmeric authors assert, that the presence of a suspicious person prevents the operation of the mesmeric influence! ❧

But if it be difficult to get the guilty parties assembled, it is quite as difficult to induce individuals of respectability, (except medical men, whose evidence again is always considered by the public as tainted,) to be present. It is astonishing how unwilling clergymen, and generally, all men of standing and character are to be present at any mesmeric exhibition, where they may be called on to witness the discovery of imposture. We have known the same parties, who would willingly go to gape and wonder at the exhibition of a mesmeric rogue, excuse themselves from being present when that rogue was to be exposed. They “did not like to commit themselves.” Thus the unhappy wight who entered upon his attempt at exposing imposture, finds himself foiled, either from the wariness of the deceiver or from lack of evidence. Though



mesmerisers are content with very little evidence to prove that a blockhead of a boy can read through a nine-inch wall, or converse in Italian though he cannot read his mother-tongue, it is wonderful what an array of evidence they require in order to believe that the same boy is tricking them; for, even though he confess the whole, they will not yield him credit. To say, as they do say, that the convicted trickster is such a liar, that he cannot be believed even when he confesses his guilt, is a species of reasoning that none but a Phreno-mesmerist would adopt. When a felon pleads guilty at the bar of an offence with which he is charged, and accompanies that plea with a circumstantial detail of his motives for committing the crime, and of the manner in which it was perpetrated,—the judge and jury accept the plea, and banish or imprison him accordingly. It does not in the minds of the legal authorities invalidate the truth of this plea, that the prisoner has been a notorious knave during his whole life; neither, when a rogue confesses his crime on being arrested, is it thought that he does this from fear of the policeman. But the common rules which apply to common guilt, are not to be admitted in the case of mesmeric rogues; they are not to be believed, however clear their confession, or however circumstantial its details: their plea of “guilty,” however it may blacken their character, or injure their interests, is to be ascribed to “wilful falsehood,” or “fear of the police,”—they are, to save the feelings of those who have been their dupes or accomplices, to be *convicted of innocence*, however strenuously they insist on their guilt! This is Phreno-mesmeric logic and candour. But the sensible portion of the public cannot be deceived by such drivelling absurdity as this. They will, from all this, be a thousand fold more convinced of the weakness of those mesmerisers who can reason thus,—of their utter unfitness to investigate *any* truth, or estimate *any* evidence, and, consequently, to believe their doctrine to be erroneous, than they would be by the detection of a thousand cases of imposture. The truth is, those advocates of mesmerism who have pinned their faith on such cases, are very naturally and heartily ashamed of themselves, their pride suffers an intolerable wound, and they strive by every means which ingenuity can devise to extricate themselves from the net that has been drawn around them. For this we can scarcely blame, while we sincerely pity them; but when they add want of common candour to those means by which they struggle to escape from the derision which is showered upon them,—then, we must cease to pity, and be content to despise.

When we consider the difficulty of obtaining proof of mesmeric roguery, and how unpleasant, as well as unprofitable, the inquiry must be, and when we recollect, moreover, that a large proportion of the mesmerised are admitted to be impostors, we can understand why medical men stand aloof from investigations so often vexatious and degrading.

If the difficulty of bringing home proof to the guilty did not deter, the insolent taunts of many of the mesmerists themselves are sufficient to disgust, those medical men who would enter on the topic. If a member of our profession insist on his right to doubt or disbelieve without further evidence, he is instantly assailed out of Gall's preface with all the instances of mistaken condemnation of sciences and scientific men, winding up generally with Harvey and Galileo, for those who know no other instances, at least know these. We wonder they do not quote the more modern instances of Jeffrey's contempt of Lord Byron as a poet, and Lardner's assertion, that it would be impossible to cross the Atlantic by steam, a statement, we believe, he proved to be a mistake in his own personal experience. Perhaps the medical man's own patients and friends oppose him. But though the above remarks suggest very strong reasons for the dislike of medical men to the investigation, we repeat that it is, in our opinion, nevertheless, necessary to enter on the inquiry.

If the subject be too important for us to put it aside with a contemptuous phrase, neither are we to be scared from the investigation by a set of objectors who take for granted that the marvels of mesmerism are true, but assure us, that they are effected by “Satanic agency.” Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, a writer known in the religious world, believes devoutly that Miss Martineau, during her mesmeric education and cure, has been coquetting with the devil



from beginning to end. She states "three propositions" as being inevitably true, either that Miss M. is not speaking the truth, or that "J." their servant, the "clairvoyant" girl, lies, and that she, Miss M., lies under a mistake, or that the whole matter is supernatural, and "if supernatural, then most assuredly diabolical." Fully acquitting Miss M. and "J." of falsehood, this excellent lady comes by the above admirable logic to the conclusion, that the old enemy in person presided over Miss M.'s *séances*; and then goes on at considerable length to lecture her on the enormity of which she has been guilty. Charlotte Elizabeth couples Miss M. with a French author who asserted that he proved by mesmerism the soul of man to be a material substance, calls upon her to shrink from a system that treads so near upon the awful verge of "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost," thinks it would be strange indeed if there were "anything which the supernaturally gifted author of mesmerism, a fallen angel, could not easily accomplish," and roundly asserts, that "J.," when in the mesmeric sleep, is possessed by a spirit of divination, "as was the damsel who followed the apostles." These seem awful charges, but we have no doubt Miss M—— will smile at the simplicity of the good lady who makes them. She will say to her, "My dear Madam, the faith with which you read your Bible is a very simple faith indeed;" and then turning to her readers with an earnestness and a simplicity equal to that of Charlotte Elizabeth, she will insist on the necessity of a "simple faith" in the reception of new facts, in all who would study mesmerism with candour and success. Miss M—— is, we believe, like many of her excellent relatives and connections, a Unitarian. We mention this in no unbecoming spirit, simply because the circumstance furnishes an apt illustration of our meaning. Charlotte Elizabeth seems not to be aware of the fact, or no doubt she would the more easily be convinced that the author of evil was at Miss M——'s elbow during all this mesmeric *furor*. What would Miss M—— answer to Charlotte Elizabeth's demand for a sincere, simple, and child-like faith in the doctrine of the Trinity? She would reject it with disdain, and declare that she reads her Bible by the light of her reason. But how inconsistent is it of Miss M——, while thus on this awful topic, claiming her right of scepticism, to refuse the same right to those who reject clairvoyance and phreno-mesmerism, systems totally at variance with all previously-observed phenomena, and to demand from them that "simple faith," which she refuses to the established belief of the great majority of Christians? But if we can look with a smile upon the ladies thus pulling caps, it is with a burning blush of shame that we hear of an eminent divine of the Church of England viewing the matter in the same light, attempting to terrify his congregation from going to see M. Lafontaine's mesmeric exhibitions, (which naturally had the effect, we are informed, of getting him three-fold audiences), and desecrating the pulpit and his sacred office by medical anecdotes, which his hearers could not appreciate, and by dissertations which, we will be bold to say, neither his hearers nor himself could understand. Throughout Mr M'Neile's far-famed discourse, one absurdity is more prominent if possible than all others—it is the way in which he reiterates his demand for "the laws" of mesmerism, asserting that all the sciences have fixed laws, and that, therefore, this of mesmerism must also possess them. The absurdity of calling for the *laws* of a science which only pretended to be beginning to collect and count its elementary *facts*, is too obvious for comment. Apples fell to the ground before Newton's time; but where was the law of gravitation? Men felt and moved before the laws—such as we have them—of the nervous system were received, and our blood circulated, and our lungs respired, before the laws of respiration and circulation were at all known. It must be recollected that while Mr M'Neile is on the one hand calling for the laws of mesmerism in order to have it placed in the ranks of other earthly common-place and recognised sciences, he is, on the other hand, ascribing the phenomena of mesmerism to the devil. He is incessantly calling for the laws, and as emphatically insisting on Satanic agency, presenting very much the vacillating picture of the drawer, in Henry IV., who is always calling to some distant customer, "Coming, coming, Sir," but is always detained by the wicked prince. Mr M'Neile seems to have discovered a curious



similarity between mesmerism and "compressed steam!" He mentions the simile more than once. But his great argument for the author of evil being the author of mesmerism is drawn from the supposed support it affords to Popery. "And now what leads me to suspect that this *pretended* science—I must call it so till its laws are published—what leads me to suspect that this is of the devil, is this; it is precisely the thing which is pleaded now in defence of falsehood; it is precisely the thing which my Lord Shrewsbury has put forth, to prove that Popery is the true version of Christianity. What is his *Ecstatica* that he has written such a book about? You have heard of the *Ecstatica* and *Addolorata*, the two young women whom he saw on the Continent; *they were mesmerized.*" We need scarcely stop to say, that the girls spoken of by Lord Shrewsbury were in all probability in a state not unknown to those who have seen much of hysteria. But Mr M'Neile, as credulous as any clairvoyance-monger, at once believes them to be mesmerised. Why? Because thus mesmerism supports Popery, which is of the devil, and, therefore, mesmerism is also of the devil. Q. E. D. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ!* We must, however, dismiss his famous sermon, and the famous objection of Satanic agency—well answered by the Rev. Mr Sandby, in his book on mesmerism—by giving one quotation. "If this be a science, let us have the laws on which these properties of matter act. When the *science of compressed steam* was set forth, many of its laws of acting were given; and its power always bears the same proportion to the pressure, as to the compression. It is the same in every science, and every physical science is subject to a rigid examination, and the laws of it can be stated, and the uniformity of its action. So, the shock of the battery is always proportioned to the charge. *Let us have the laws of the science, if it be a science; and if it be not a science, then what is it?*"

Once, in the House of Commons, a member who wished to display his importance, but did not understand the subject of debate, rose and said, "Mr Speaker, have we laws, or have we not laws? If we have laws, and these laws be not attended to, for what purpose are these laws made?" A sarcastic member, on the opposition side, instantly rose and said, "Mr Speaker, did the hon. gentleman who spoke last speak to the purpose, or did he not speak to the purpose? If he did not speak to the purpose, to what purpose did he speak?"

But seriously, the argument on the religiousness or irreligiousness of mesmerism seems scarcely worthy of grave consideration. It is surprising that such a man as Mr M'Neile could have been so far carried away by his Protestant Reformation Society impulses, as to advocate such a view of the matter. Science has no irreligious truths. All true science is in harmony with all true religion. If mesmerism in all its details could be proved to be true, it would speedily be found to be in harmony with the general scheme of benevolence which creation in all its parts displays. Geology was, not long ago, asserted to be at variance with the Scriptures; ~~but~~ it is now familiarly employed as furnishing illustrations of their truth. Had such writers as Charlotte Elizabeth and Mr M'Neile been listened to, we should never have possessed the sciences of chemistry or geology. It is melancholy to observe how near we still seem to be to the era, when witches were burnt at the stake for collusion with Satan. By such judges as the writers above quoted, the mesmerists are condemned already for the crime. Were the punishment the same as two hundred and fifty years ago, we should have Miss Martineau exhibited in the front street of Tynemouth with a tar barrel, probably set on fire by "J." as Queen's evidence, and Charlotte Elizabeth, and the Rev. Mr M'Neile looking up to heaven for an approval of the deed. Writers like these, whose religion is of a nature to keep them standing shivering on the brink of a new science, recoiling at every billow, that, to use the exquisite simile of Newton, breaks at their feet, throwing up the shells and pebbles of truth; and whose fanaticism conjures up out of the obscurity that gathers over the heaving waters, shapes of dread and diabolic agents,—such writers as these would do well to leave knowledge to struggle forward by itself, without encumbering it with their help.

It has been customary with writers on mesmerism, to commence with the simpler phenomena, and gradually to rise from the comprehensible to the mys-



terious,—from the simple induction of sleep, to the prophetic power and “instinct of remedies.” “The author,” says the writer of an excellent article in *Blackwood's Magazine* for Feb. 1845, speaking of Rev. Mr Townshend, “leads the reader up a gentle slope, from facts abnormal, it is true, but not contradictory, to received notions, to others deviating a little more from ordinary experience, and thence, by a course of calm narrative, to still more anomalous incidents, until, at length, almost unconsciously, the incredible seems credible, impossibilities and possibilities are confounded, and miracles are no longer miraculous.” As, however, we do not see that this mode of approaching the subject is at all likely to improve our chance of forming a just estimate of it,—but is, on the contrary, calculated to mystify and mislead those who are not prepared by previous habits of scientific investigation,—as, in short, this method is merely arbitrary, and not founded on any systematic principles worthy of attention,—we shall venture respectfully to deviate from the beaten track of our contemporaries. For our object is neither to teach the art or science, nor systematically to inquire into its rise and progress,—but rather to take it up as it presents itself to us to-day, to examine it as it is forced upon our notice as a whole, and gradually working our way through the marvels which envelope it, to the more simple and credible statements on which it is based, to discover, if possible, what is error, and what truth, in the entire system. This is the method, we believe, in which most men, who have not *been brought up to it*, have approached the subject; they have been attracted at first by its mysteries, and then, if not repelled by the trickery and credulity of its followers, have gradually found their way through the errors of the system, to the facts on which it is based.

Our readers are, doubtless, familiar with the asserted phenomena of mesmerism. The sleep or coma induced by the agency of the mesmeriser, and generally asserted to be produced by the transmission of a “magnetic fluid” from the operator to the operee, is the first and most universal phenomenon. It is in this sleep that the other manifestations are displayed, somnambulism—or sleep-waking, in which certain faculties become torpid, while others are rendered more acute and sensitive;—community of sensation with the mesmeriser;—phreno-magnetism, or the development of the faculties of the patient on the corresponding phrenological organs being touched, rubbed, or even pointed at by the magnetiser;—catalepsy, partial or complete;—clairvoyance, or the power of seeing without the aid of the eye, and of perceiving objects beyond the range of vision, as, for example, the condition of the viscera in a body still living;—the prophetic power;—and the instinct of remedies, or faculty of discerning and curing diseases.

We have set down the mesmeric symptoms as they occurred to our mind, without any of the usual order or system, because the various manifestations have in reality no essential dependence on each other, but are each (after the sleep) *per se* independent phenomena. Though the sequence in which the mesmeric manifestations have been presented to the world by writers on the subject, does not seem calculated to favour our search into truth on the subject, there is a mode of arrangement which is forced upon the attention of every reader of these works, and which will, we think, assist us in our investigations. It is a division of the phenomena into those which are similar to appearances found in the human body, in various states of health and disease, and those which not only have never been before observed, but which are at variance with all experience, and which shock every deduction of calm reason. In the first rank may be placed the sleep, the muscular spasm, the impaired sensibility, the sleep-waking, or torpor of certain faculties while others are correspondingly exalted;—these phenomena, similar to what we are tolerably familiar with, especially among hysteric patients, may be classed among the credible, or, at least, possible mesmeric manifestations,—while the community of taste, the clairvoyance, the phreno-mesmeric phenomena, and the instinct of remedies, not being similar to any thing observed before, and some of them being at variance with all reason and experience, may be classed among the marvels of the “science,” to establish which, of course, demands a more



complete and unassailable body of evidence than will be considered sufficient to establish our belief in the simpler phenomena. It is reasonable that we should expect more rigorous proof of a marvel, than of a circumstance of common occurrence; let us see whether this acknowledged axiom, in matters of evidence, is followed by the mesmerists in their narratives. Take Mr Townshend's first case of simple sleep, in which every precaution was apparently used to prevent imposture; which had all his own family and some other persons for witnesses, and in which the mesmerisee, after awaking, corroborated the fact of her having been in a strange somnolent state; and contrast this with a case of unconscious mesmerization, wherein by the mere effort of his will, when travelling in a stage coach, he mesmerized a fellow-traveller. As the cases are as suitable to be quoted as any in the whole range of mesmeric literature, we give them at length in Mr Townshend's own words, p. 56. "In the course of a residence at Antwerp, a valued friend detailed to me some extraordinary results of mesmerism, to which he had been an eye-witness. I could not altogether discredit the evidence of one whom I knew to be both observant, and incapable of falsehood; but I took refuge in the supposition that he had been ingeniously deceived. Reflecting, however, that to condemn before I had examined, was as unjust to others as unsatisfactory to myself, I accepted readily the proposition of my friend to introduce me to an acquaintance in Antwerp, who had learned the practice of the mesmeric art from a German physician. We waited together on Mr K., the mesmeriser, an agreeable and well-informed person, and stated to him that the object of our visit was to prevail on him to exhibit to us a specimen of his mysterious talent. To this he at first replied that he was rather seeking to abjure a renown that had become troublesome,—half the world viewing him as a conjurer, and the other half as a getter up of strange comedies; "but," he kindly added, "if you will promise me a strictly private meeting, I will this evening do all in my power to convince you that mesmerism is no delusion. This being agreed upon, together with a stipulation that the members of my own family should be present on the occasion, I, to remove all doubt of complicity from every mind, proposed that Mr K. should mesmerise a person who should be a perfect stranger to him. To this he readily acceded; and now the only difficulty was, to find a subject for our experiment. At length we thought of a young person in the middling class of life, who had often done fine work for the ladies of our family, and of whose character we had the most favourable knowledge. Her mother was Irish; her father, who had been dead some time, had been a Belgian, and she spoke English, Flemish, and French, with perfect facility. Her widowed parent was chiefly supported by her industry, and, in the midst of trying circumstances, her temper was gay and cheerful, and her health excellent. That she had never seen Mr K. we were sure; and of her probity and incapability of feigning, we had every reason to be convinced. With our request, conveyed to her through one of the ladies of our family, for whom she had conceived a warm affection, she complied without hesitation. Not being of a nervous, though of an excitable temperament, she had no fears whatever about what she was to undergo. On the contrary, she had rather a desire to know what the sensation of being mesmerised might be. Of the phenomena which were to be developed in the mesmeric state she knew absolutely nothing. Thus, all deceptive imitation of them on her part was rendered impossible. About 9 o'clock in the evening, our party assembled for what in foreign phrase is called "*une séance magnétique.*" Anna M., our mesmerisee, was already with us. Mr K. arrived soon after, and was introduced to his young patient, whose name we had purposely avoided mentioning to him in the morning, not that we feared imposition on either hand, but that we were determined, by every precaution, to prevent any one from alleging that imposition had been practised. Utterly unknown as the parties were to each other, a game played by two confederates was entirely out of the question. Almost immediately after the entrance of Mr K., we proceeded to the business of the evening. By his directions, Mademoiselle M. placed herself in an arm-chair at one end of the apartment, while he occupied a seat directly facing hers. He then took each of her hands in one of his, and sat in



such a manner as that the knees and feet of both should be in contact. In this position he remained for some time motionless, attentively regarding her with eyes as unwinking as the lidless orbs which Coleridge has attributed to the genius of destruction. We had been told previously to keep utter silence, and none of our circle—composed of some five or six persons—felt inclined to transgress the order. To me, novice as I was at that time in such matters, *it was a moment of absorbing interest.* That which I had heard mocked at as foolishness—that which I myself had doubted as a dream, was perhaps about to be brought home to my conviction, and established for ever in my mind as a reality. Should the present trial prove successful, how much of my past experience must be remodelled and reversed! Convinced as I have since been to what valuable conclusions the phenomena of mesmerism may conduct the enquirer, never perhaps have I been more impressed with the importance of its pretensions, than at that moment, when my doubts of their validity were either to be strengthened or removed. Concentrating my attention upon the motionless pair, I observed that Mademoiselle M. seemed at her ease, and occasionally smiled or glanced at the assembled party; but her eyes, as if by a charm, always reverted to those of her mesmeriser, and, at length, seemed unable to turn away from them; then a heaviness, as of sleep, seemed to weigh down her eyelids, and to pervade the expression of her countenance; her head drooped on one side; her breathing became regular; at length her eyes closed entirely, and, to all appearance, she was calmly asleep in just seven minutes from the time when Mr K. first commenced his operations. I should have observed that, as soon as the first symptom of drowsiness was manifested, the mesmeriser had withdrawn his hands from those of Mademoiselle M., and had commenced what are called the “mesmeric passes,” conducting his fingers slowly downward, without contact, along the arms of the patient. For about five minutes, Mademoiselle M. continued to repose tranquilly, when, suddenly, she began to heave deep sighs, and to turn and toss in her chair. She then called out, ‘*Je me trouve malade! Je m’étouffe!*’ and rising in a wild manner, she continued to repeat, ‘*Je m’étouffe!*’ Upon this, Mr K. again operated with his hands, but in a different set of movements, and, taking his handkerchief, agitated the air around the patient, who forthwith opened her eyes, and stared about the room like a person awaking from sleep. No traces of her indisposition, however, appeared to remain, and, soon shaking off all drowsiness, she was able to converse and laugh cheerfully as usual. On being asked, what she remembered of her sensations? she said that she had only a general idea of having felt unwell and oppressed; that she had wished to open her eyes, but could not; they felt as if lead were on them; of having walked to the table she had no recollection. Notwithstanding her having suffered, she was desirous of being again mesmerised, and sat down fearlessly to make a second trial. This time it was longer before her eyes closed, and she never seemed to be reduced to more than a state of half-unconsciousness. When the mesmeriser asked her, if she slept? she answered, ‘*Je dors, et je ne dors pas.*’ This lasted some time, when Mr K. declared that he was afraid of fatiguing his patient, (and probably his spectators too) and that he should disperse the mesmeric fluid. To do so, however, seemed not so easy a matter as the first time, when he awoke the sleep-waker. With difficulty she appeared to rouse herself, and even after having spoken a few words to us, and risen from the chair, she suddenly relapsed into a state of torpor, and fell prostrate to the ground, as if perfectly insensible. Mr K., entreating us not to be alarmed, raised her up, placed her in a chair, and supported her head with his hand. It was then that I distinctly recognised one of the asserted phenomena of mesmerism. The head of Mademoiselle M. followed every where, with unerring certainty, the hand of her mesmeriser, and seemed irresistibly attracted to it as iron to the loadstone. At length, Mr K. succeeded in thoroughly awakening his patient, who, on being interrogated respecting her past sensations, said, that she retained a recollection of her state of semi-consciousness, during which she much wished to have been able to sleep wholly; but of her having fallen to the ground, or of what had passed subsequently, she remembered



nothing whatever. To other inquiries, she replied that the drowsy sensation which first stole over her, was rather of an agreeable nature, and that it was succeeded by a slight tingling, which ran down her arms in the direction of the fingers of her mesmeriser. Moreover, she assured us that the oppression she had at one time felt was not fanciful, but real—not mental, but bodily—and was accompanied by a peculiar pain in the region of the heart, which, however, ceased immediately on the dispersion of the mesmeric sleep. These statements were the rather to be relied upon, inasmuch as the girl's character was neither timid nor imaginative."

We pause for a moment to show, what was Mr Townshend's state of mind after beholding this comparatively simple case; "To sum up my intentions, *I desired to show* that man, through external human influence, is capable of a species of sleep-waking differing from the common, not only inasmuch as it is otherwise produced, but as it displays quite other characteristics when produced." Who does not recognise in this "*desire to show*" that mesmerism is true after such slender proof,—the "simple faith," the resolute and enthusiastic credulity,—the prejudice in favour of the yet unexamined system, which is the key to all the marvellous mistakes of mesmerisers? But to return. Now let the above narrative, to which hysteria presents many points of similarity, and which is therefore received without much difficulty, be compared with the following case of mesmerisation produced by the mere exercise of the will upon a patient unconscious of the power exercised over him. P. 452, "On another occasion, I was convinced in a manner the most odd, and even comic, how great is the *influence of the will* in directing the impulses of the mesmeric medium. I should hesitate about relating the story, were it not that, in a new science, every thing has its importance, and the least studied effects are often the most valuable and sure. Travelling in a stage coach in England, with three other inside passengers, (one of them a Cambridge friend, to whom I can appeal for the truth of the relation) I fell into the following train of thought. If mesmeric effects occur only through certain contact and gestures, why is it that men never mesmerise each other unawares? At a public meeting, in a church, in a theatre, in all places where human beings congregate, there is plenty of the mesmeric influence going about unappropriated. Why is it that this does not take effect, and that no one should sleep in such circumstances, unless the orators are prosy, and the play stupid enough to act as a soporific? Surely this is because the influence requires a will to concentrate it and to give it a particular direction, before it can individually operate. Now, here am I, in a most favourable position for mesmerising the person opposite to me. His knees and feet are in contact with mine—in the true mesmeric position. At present he does not look sleepy in the least, and up to the present moment, the idea of mesmerising him has not entered my head. Let me see if this want of the idea is the true cause why I have not hitherto affected him. If, by a silent exertion of my will, I can now, from wide awake, bring him fast asleep in a very short period, the relation between cause and effect will be, I think, pretty well established. 'Sur ces entrefaites,' as the French say, I began mentally to exert my volition, and to fix my attention on my unconscious patient. From time to time I looked at him mesmerically, but watched my opportunity, when his own attention, being turned elsewhere, permitted me to stare at him, without the fear of being challenged. In about ten minutes the charm began to operate. My victim's eyes kept reverting unconsciously, as it were, to my face, which, however, I turned away whenever I saw him looking at me, and, at length, he began to shut them with that slow and peculiar motion which is indicative of mesmerisation. They did not, however, close, but remained more than half open, becoming perfectly fixed, and, as it were, dead, displaying the whites in a manner which by no means contributed to embellish a physiognomy naturally none of the handsomest. Behold, then, my man asleep; so soundly, indeed, that the coach stopped, and horses were changed, without his being in any way disturbed from his mesmeric nap. When we were again in motion, I began to be agitated by some strange doubts, whether my will would



be found as effectual to end, as it had been to create, the spell which held the slumberer, who always remained in the same position as at first, with his eyes more dead than ever. As I had soon to quit the coach, I really feared that my sleeper, *unawakened, might follow me, attached by mesmeric attraction, to my side.* The question of the will's supremacy was now to be tried to the utmost. First, without any effort of volition directed to the end of awakening my patient, I stirred about, spoke loud, and let down the window next me with a rattle: my fellow-passenger did not awake. I then, concentrating my will on the one idea of dissipating the mesmeric influence, leant forward with something of that motion of my hands which, in usual circumstances, accompanied the idea. Immediately my patient began to stir, move his eyes, and rub them, staring still rather wildly, and in a confused manner muttering that he really thought he must have been asleep!"

Now every one would expect, that the latter narration, being so much more extraordinary and incredible than the former, would have been supported by more rigorous proof, and a more irresistible body of evidence. In the former case, however, we have a great number of witnesses, whose belief is corroborated by the mesmerisee herself; in the latter, we have only Mr Townshend's belief that he had mesmerised his fellow-traveller, and the story is told so simply, that every one in reading it, will recognise in the mesmerised man one of those nodding "insides" with whom we have all travelled in more than half the journeys we have taken. A worthy friend of ours is mesmerised in the same way every Sunday forenoon in church, presenting even more decided "manifestations" than Mr Townshend's fellow-traveller. And we remember an anecdote of a whole congregation, except one poor idiot lad, being "unconsciously" mesmerised by a rather dull discourse. Seeing the whole nodding, the reverend mesmeriser, in his vexation, called out from the pulpit, "What, are you all asleep, but this poor idiot?" "Aye," replied the other, "and if I had not been an idiot I would have been asleep too!" The uneasiness of Mr Townshend lest he should not be able to break the spell which bound his fellow-traveller, is sufficiently *naïve* and ludicrous. We quote the above,—not only as fair average cases of the kind narrated by mesmeric writers,—but also as displaying the nature of the evidence in general given,—which, after a careful perusal of many of the best authors on the subject,—seems to us always to be weak and inconclusive in an inverse ratio to the marvellous and incredible nature of the statements. We find that in multitudes of cases, in which mesmerisers have asserted that they could put their patients to sleep, without the latter being conscious of the manifestations,—for example, from another room, or another house, or at a distance of miles, by letter,—when brought to the test, failure has, in this country, uniformly been the result. Not by any means, that the mesmerisers had in every case been deceiving, but simply that the necessary precautions had not been taken previously to the rigorous examination of some cool-headed sceptic. It ought to be stated, however, that many mesmerists still assert their capability of influencing patients at a distance, and that in Husson's report of the committee appointed by the Royal Academy of Medicine at Paris, the following paragraphs occur:—"We can not only act upon the magnetised person, (by volition alone) but even place him in a complete state of somnambulism, and bring him out of it without his knowledge, out of his sight, at a certain distance, and with doors intervening." "Magnetism is as intense, and as speedily felt at a distance of six feet, as of six inches, and the phenomena developed, are the same in both cases." In the words of the writer in *Blackwood*, however, "The advocates of it challenge inquiry in print, but they shrink from, or sink under, experiment."

It would seem, indeed, that unprofessional mesmerists, as soon as they have been convinced of the reality of the spasmodic motions of the eye and the sleep, find these phenomena so incomprehensible and so much out of the range of their previous knowledge, that they at once abandon reason and experience as guides in their further investigations, and, thenceforward, as is usual in similar cases, the more marvellous the narrative, the more easily is it



gulped down. In mesmerism, especially "Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute." We hope to be able to show, however, that some of the phenomena of mesmerism are not at variance with medical experience, and, as after having believed in the sleep-waking, we do not feel ourselves abandoned by the usual guides of our lives—reason and our senses—we hope to be able to form a tolerably correct estimate of the alleged phenomena.

The very simplest and most natural symptoms seem converted into mysteries and marvels by the mesmerists who have thus abandoned reason and experience. Almost all mesmerists, for example, talk of the extraordinary effect upon the eye in passing into the mesmeric slumber. We have seen four or five patients *who were all afterwards proved to be impostors*, in each of whose cases experienced mesmerisers were deceived, and who especially dwelt on the peculiar appearance of the eyes as proof of their really being in the sleep, previous to their awakening and confession. We are perfectly aware that any amount of imposture, or credulity, will not invalidate a single real fact; but when we find so many cases recorded, which have previously been considered by the apostles of the science as its main pillars, turn out, on scrutiny, to be merely deceptions, no one can blame us for doubting the reality of the rest. We may mention the Okeys, Alexis, Petronille,<sup>1</sup> &c., all of which, and many others previously considered the very best illustrations of the truth of the science, were discovered to be impostures on the one part, and mistakes on the other. Their falsehood having been made manifest, they now furnish as good evidence of the fallacy of the supposed science, as they before were asserted to be proofs of its truth. But let us see what eye-symptoms Mr Townshend mentions as being peculiar to the mesmeric trance. In a lady whom he mesmerised at Rome, there was increasing weight on the eyelids,—an inclination to close the eyes,—a vapour stealing between herself and the object regarded,—then a tingling of the arms, and a feeling as of currents of air. Mr Townshend mentions also the case of G—A—, "who enjoyed such a high degree of mesmerism," who spoke of a vapour rising before his eyes in mesmerization. This he declared to proceed from Mr Townshend, said that it penetrated and pervaded his frame, and "*was the effectual cause of the mesmeric sleep.*" He mentions particularly also, that "one of the first tokens a person gives in passing into mesmeric sleep-waking,

<sup>1</sup> Among the somnambulists who flourished in Paris about the time of the second Commission of the Academy of Medicine, (1826,) few, if any, distinguished themselves more than a young woman named Pétronille. The marvels which she performed were recorded at length at the time, and contributed powerfully to stagger the disbelief of many, and among others, of the learned Georget. This woman died at the Salpêtrière, under the care of a talented physician, Dr Perrochaud, who is now practising at Boulogne-sur-Mér, and was at that time "interne" in the above hospital. The following is an extract from a letter very recently received from Dr Perrochaud, in answer to some inquiries respecting Pétronille:—"It is quite true that the famous Pétronille, who was at one time considered an extraordinary somnambulist, confessed to me, some days before her death, that she had constantly deceived the good faith of those who performed magnetic experiments on her. She gave me, at the time, many details respecting the tricks which she resorted to, in order to abuse the learned and conscientious persons who afterwards, on these experiments, founded memoirs and reports extremely favourable to magnetism. Pétronille was endowed with a remarkable degree of perspicuity and shrewdness; she possessed that spirit of audacity and trickery, mingled with effrontery, which is so often observed in the "*gamin de Paris*," whose sister she might be considered: she used to take advantage of the slightest indication. I was very often wrong, she said, but when I approached the truth, or had guessed nearly right, all present clapped their hands, and exclaimed that it was a miracle, and this made up for my mistakes and gropings (*tâtonnemens*.) She died in the year 1833, in the Salle de Marthe, at the Salpêtrière, of consumption, the origin of which was rather singular. One of the physicians of the Salpêtrière, in order to cure the nervous attacks under which she laboured, (epileptic,) administered a sudden cold bath. The fits did not return, but she was attacked with slow consumption, which at last carried her off." *Ab uno disce omnes.*



is a look of stupor in the eyes, and apparent want of power in the eyelids to perform the usual office of nictation." Now every physiologist knows well that all these symptoms would in almost every person arise from earnestly fixing an unwinking gaze on any elevated object. The orbiculares palpebrarum, and superior recti muscles, become temporarily paralyzed, by being kept long in action, and the stretching of, and pressure upon, the optic nerve, and its expansion by the twisted position of the eyeball, are sufficient to account for the disturbance of vision. Any one who will look fixedly at a small object placed immediately above his eyebrows, or in a line with them, may prove the correctness of the above statement. What effect the exhaustion of the nervous energy caused by the long unintermitted gaze, and what also the peculiar fixed position of the head, which obstructs the return of the blood to the heart, and of itself in most persons produces a feeling of pressure at the base of the brain,—what effect these may have in inducing or influencing the coma, it is difficult to say; but that they are more likely to produce the somnolency, than any magnetic influence transmitted from the operator, seems to us at least highly probable. The writer in *Blackwood*, to whom we have formerly alluded, seems to think that there is more in the mesmeric coma than can be accounted for by the physical effects of the stare alone, and thinks the human eye has some specific influence in producing the result. He mentions the tendency a person has to feel embarrassed and painful if long stared at, and alludes to the school-boy trick of staring out of countenance, as "not so bad a test of moral power as it would at first sight seem to be." We think, however, with deference to him, that the embarrassed feeling on being stared at long, arises from no mystical or mesmeric influence, but simply from our not liking to be criticised, and from our self-love taking the alarm if we are scrutinizingly watched. Or, our uneasiness arises in other cases from a rising disposition to punish the author of the insolent stare. A demirep of quality will out-stare the strongest ploughman; yet surely the former, according to mesmeric theories, is not likely to possess the superior amount of "magnetic power." Moreover, if a young officer happen to be bashful, however broad his shoulders or vast his mesmeric power, the critical glance of a fashionable girl will cause him to feel more of this "embarrassment" than the stare of his whole troop of grenadiers. As to the school-boy trick, it is generally the least sensitive eye, and not the noblest soul, that holds the longest out. The author alluded to further says, "Let any one gaze steadily at a dog half dozing at the fire-side, the animal will, after a short time, become restless; and if the stare be continued, will quit his resting place, and either shrink into a corner, or come forward and caress the person staring." We have tried the experiment a hundred times, and always found, that if by leaning forward, and directing our whole attention to the dog, so that he *evidently knew he was noticed*, he would notice his master in return; but if in reading a book, for example, the volume was lowered only so as to see the dog, we might stare as long or as hard as we chose, without his paying the least attention. In the first instance, the dog knew he was noticed by the gesture and full face directed to him; he of course acknowledged this notice; but in the latter, not seeing the usual signs of attention being directed to him, he lay still in spite of the magnetic glance. M. Deleuze, in his *Instruction Pratique sur le Magnétisme Animal*, speaks also on canine mesmerism, p. 263, "J'ai vu des chiens en bonne santé donner des signes de leur sensibilité au magnétisme, et quelquefois même paraître inquiétés de son influence," &c. "A scientific man," says Mr Townshend, "accustomed to investigation, being in the state, (of the sleep), assured me, that he experienced a gradual paralysis of the nerves connected with the eye, and with the motive powers of the eyelid, and that at length his utmost efforts of volition were insufficient to make the orbicular muscles obey him as usual." Undoubtedly; and the same phenomena, with many others, will occur with any one who will look steadily for a length of time at an object placed above his eyebrow. The contraction followed by the dilatation of the pupil is insisted on as another extraordinary condition induced by the mesmeric influence. But physiologists know that as the contraction of the iris, at the commencement of the "magnetic" stare, arises from the irritation of the



retina, which instantly calls upon the iris to shut out a portion of the light, so the relaxation, and in the end the immobile dilated state of the iris which follows, is the result of the exhaustion of the retina, caused by the long-continued unwinking gaze. The retina is the incident excitor of the motor nerve of the iris, and the temporary paralysis of the former leads to the inaction of the latter nerve, and the consequent repose of the muscle which it supplies. Yet these are mentioned as curious *mesmeric* phenomena. The eye of any one fixed in a steady upward stare soon becomes dim; the cornea not being wiped by the eyelids is speedily covered with a film, objects often recede and advance; for example, the walls of the room appear and disappear with curious alternations of light and gloom; the conjunctiva in many cases become gorged with blood, and the eye has a ghastly appearance. All this is matter of daily experience; but these very symptoms are magnified by mesmeric writers into mysterious "manifestations," developed only by the power of animal magnetism!

The effects said to be produced on the other senses are community of taste, and incapability of hearing any sounds but those of the mesmeriser, unless placed *en rapport* with a third party through communication with the operator. Of the first of these there are many instances given in books and on platforms, but in every case in which there has been any strict and rigorous investigation, proof has failed. It is unnecessary to quote instances of this,—they are to be found in every account given of examinations into the merits of mesmerism, from that of the French Academy downwards. We shall say nothing about the effects upon the hearing, because it is stated, that some do hear and some do not without being placed *en rapport*, and because there is not one case of a really trustworthy kind upon record.

In treating of the effects on the senses, indeed, the contradictory statements of the mesmerists are so common, that there is scarcely a book on the subject, in which one part does not refute another. Thus, some insist that in order that the mesmerisee may hear, he or she must be placed *en rapport* with the operator; others that the sleep-wakers answer all present indifferently,—some find community of taste in almost every case; whereas others never observed the phenomenon;—some assert the *will* to be every thing, others say it is of no consequence;—some say illness prevents the influence acting, others, that persons in ill health are most susceptible,—while it seems generally agreed by the magnetists, that whether *en rapport* with an unbeliever or not—"l'atmosphère d'incrédulité" around him is amply sufficient to arrest the whole mesmeric agencies! The singular power said to be possessed by the mesmerised, of knowing different persons, their handkerchiefs, snuff-boxes, &c., though all the time their eyes are bandaged, may by some be referred to a highly exalted sense of touch and smell; others, however, refer them to the clair-voyant faculty, and we shall therefore pass on to it, as that which is one of the most characteristic marvels of mesmerism, and which, in the eyes of the public, constitutes its grand feature.

#### CLAIR-VOYANCE.

Bourdin, in 1837, considering clair-voyance the only undoubted test of mesmeric somnambulism, offered a prize of 3000 francs to any one who should read without the use of his eyes or touch. The money was deposited with a notary, and a committee of seven members appointed to conduct the examinations,—two years being allowed for candidates to appear. Dr Biermann of Hanover, M. Ricard of Bordeaux, M. Pigeaire of Montpellier, and finally, Dr Hublier of Provence, all made application,—but all, from one cause or other, shrunk from the examination. The last named magnetiser, Dr Hublier, notwithstanding his apparent confidence that his somnambule, Mademoiselle Emelie, would gain the prize, under one cause or other, allowed two years to elapse without bringing her forward. We quote the result from the first of an excellent series of articles in the *Lancet*, by Dr Charles Radclyffe Hall, (*Number for February 1.*)

"In October 1837, Dr Hublier of Provence writes in behalf of Made-



moiselle Emelie; but notwithstanding the glowing terms in which he mentions the clairvoyance of this lady, and her wish to obtain the Bourdin prize, for one reason or another, the allotted two years were allowed to expire without her appearing to prove her powers before the committee. To afford every chance, M. Bourdin then extended the term for another year, and altered the original conditions to the following:—‘Bring me any person, magnetised or not magnetised, asleep or awake, who can read in broad daylight, through an opaque body, whether cotton, horse-hair, or silk, placed six inches from the person, who can read even through a simple fold of paper, and that person shall have three thousand francs.’ Still Dr Hublier hesitated, sometimes because his ‘excellente somnambule’ was *practising* to attain the requisite perfection, sometimes because she was indisposed, and so on. As the time of grace drew near its close, Hublier craved another year’s delay. This being refused, he sent his protégée to M. Frappart for a preparatory trial.

“On the first occasion of testing her clairvoyance, after a futile attempt for two hours, Emelie declared she was too much fatigued by her journey. On the second, she complained that headach and oppression at the stomach retarded her lucidity. On the third, after two hours of study, she said she could read the word “phrenology;” the word was “phthisis.” On the fourth, she read “Œuvres de Cicéron;” the words were “L’Histoire d’Angleterre.” She explained these mistakes by stating, that she was confused by *seeing all the books in the library*, and that she *mistook one for another*. To obviate this inconvenience, the next (fifth) trial was made in another room. As soon as Mademoiselle told M. Frappart that she was asleep, he placed a book on a chair, four feet behind her, said he was obliged to leave her, but as soon as she had *satisfied herself that she was clairvoyant*, she must ring the bell. On his return, she described the size of the book, the colour of the binding, and letter by letter spelt out its title correctly. On the sixth trial, Frappart enters when Emelie rings. She succeeds as well as on the previous occasion, and, moreover, repeats a line correctly from a page to which *she directs* Monsieur to refer.

“M. Frappart now writes to ask Hublier to be present at the next experiment. MM. Londe, Teste, Amédée, Latour, Douillet, Böhler and Carpentier, Hublier and Frappart, accordingly are present. The others being concealed, so that they could watch through small holes made in the doors of the apartment, Frappart enters; and reminding Emelie that this is her last trial, desires her to ring the bell, when she is in the state of lucid somnambulism. In about five minutes the bell sounds; Mademoiselle says she sleeps; a book is placed as usual, and Frappart retires. Six times was this clairvoyant seen to walk to the book, and carefully examine it, and also to make pencil notes of what she read. At length she rings the bell. Messieurs enter, all except M. Londe, who retains his post of concealment in front of Emelie. Mademoiselle describes the book, recites certain passages from it, and is seen by M. Londe to look at her notes. Hublier writes an acknowledgment that for four years he had been deceived by ‘une maitresse femme.’”

Many other cases of clairvoyance have been publicly examined and tested, all which have been proved to be false. Mr Wakley’s exposure of the Okeys, Dr Elliotson’s patients, is well known; and Dr Forbes’ proof of the knavery of Alexis and M. Marcillet, will be fresh in the memory of our readers. The boy “Jack” of Mr Hawes of Greenwich, who, it was said, could, like one of Mr Townshend’s patients, read through his forehead, after deceiving his master for a great length of time, was at length at Manchester shown to be an impostor, when Mr Hawes refunded the money paid for admission by the spectators. A very recent case of a precisely similar kind has occurred to a friend of our own. Nevertheless authors continue to assert, and the assertions of Messrs Townshend, Miss Martineau, &c. remain, that they have clairvoyant patients, and that the above deceptions by no means prove that all is deceit. This is, doubtless, undeniable. It is strange, however, that every case which has publicly been carefully tested should have turned out imposture; and though of course we cannot deny the possibility of clairvoyance, nor even prove that Mr



Townshend and others have been deceived, it is but reasonable that we should feel convinced without better evidence to the contrary, that these cases also have been delusion or deceit. But there are none of the recorded cases of clairvoyance more characteristic of "the science" than that of Miss Martineau's attendant "J." It possesses every quality which can belong to a mesmeric narrative calculated to win attention. No platform or drawing-room *éclat* here—no tricky itinerant lecturer, or money-loving mesmerisee; the usual sources of delusion and deceit seem altogether absent. Of an acute mind, accustomed in political, moral, and religious, if not in scientific matters, to estimate evidence and investigate truth,—bold and candid,—of a veracity, notwithstanding her marvellous statements, never questioned,—possessed of a character of the highest moral elevation,—Miss Martineau gives to her subject all the dignity and weight which talent and truth can bestow. It is in vain to quote a number of cases,—none can be more favourable for mesmerism than hers, and if hers can be proved to be erroneous,—if even she, with all her truthfulness and acumen, can be shown to be manifestly weak in her conclusions, and credulous in her views, the inference will be necessarily drawn, that other cases are probably utterly unworthy of credit. Miss Martineau's revelations may, like most other cases of mesmerism, be divided into two parts—the credible (which again ought to be divided into the probable and the possible) and the marvellous (which may be also divided into the incredible and the impossible.) The more simple phenomena relate to herself—the marvels to her servant. So great is our faith in Miss M.'s veracity and candour, that had *she* shown some of the phenomena of somnambulism displayed by her servants, we should have believed them,—but in the whole range of mesmeric patients, it is curious, that not one person of high character has ever afforded any but the simpler, nay the simplest, mesmeric manifestations. Let us premise, that on June 22, Miss M. was first mesmerised. On October 1st, upwards of three months afterwards, during which period Miss M. had been daily mesmerised—at first by her own maid, and then, when that was not found to answer so well on account of the "subordination being in the wrong party," by "the widow of a clergyman." On October 1, "I was mesmerised by the other maid"—Miss M.'s friend's maid. We cannot but remark how fortunate these ladies were in their maids—both of whom, as well as their mistresses, were expert mesmerisers, and who seem not to have let their talent rust for want of use. But is it not strange, after being aware of these facts, to read the following sentence of Miss M.'s:—"There was in her case certainly no 'imagination' to begin with; for she was wholly ignorant of mesmerism, and had no more conception of the phenomena she was about to manifest, than she has consciousness of them at this moment." No doubt of it. We believe, and every one who reads the narrative, will believe that her knowledge then, and her consciousness afterwards, were on a par. Miss M., however, has no double meaning, she believes that "J.," after three months' gossip with the two mesmerising maids, knew nothing of the phenomena,—Mr Spencer Hall being about that time itinerating in the neighbourhood, and half the boys in Tynemouth and Shields being thumbed by mesmerisers! Now this we mention as an instance of the extreme credulity which seems to fix at once on all the votaries of mesmerism—immediately they yield up their faith to its marvels,—a credulity so simple that it must be observed to be believed; but at the same time, a credulity so universal, that every reader not pre-occupied with "the science," perceives it in every book on the subject. It is this which vitiates the evidence of the most sincere disciples of mesmerism, and makes their convictions of no more value than those of the Irvingites, or Johanna Southcotians in their respective delusions. "To preserve this unconsciousness as long as possible," continues Miss M., "*we shut out our maids at once.*" Barbarous! both the maids mesmerisers too!—but mesmeric science has its aristocrats, and exclusives, as well as mere vulgar fashion. "We shut out our maids at once, and we two have been the constant witnesses, with a visitor now and then, to the number of about twelve in the whole." Of course, as the mistresses were careful to shut the maids out, they would be also care-



ful of the kind of visitors they let in ; and we may be pretty sure that these would all be of the *right* way of thinking,—not persons to disturb the “unconsciousness of J.,” nor likely to carry away any but favourable reports of the marvels exhibited. Before this well packed jury, the cause of clairvoyance was to be tried.

“The next evening (Monday, October 14,) J. did not come up as usual to our *séance*. There was affliction in the household. An aunt (by marriage) of J.’s, Mrs A., a good woman I have long known, lives in a cottage at the bottom of our garden. Mrs A.’s son, J.’s cousin, was one of the crew of a vessel which was this evening reported to have been wrecked near Hull. This was all that was known, except that the owner had gone to Hull to see about it. J. was about to walk to Shields, with a companion, to inquire, but the night was so tempestuous, and it was so evident that no news could be obtained, that she was persuaded not to go. But she was too much disturbed to think of being mesmerised. Next morning there was no news. All day there were flying reports,—that all hands were lost—that all were saved—but nothing like what afterwards proved to be the truth. In the afternoon, no tidings having arrived, we went for a long drive, and took J. with us. She was with us, in another direction, till tea-time; and then, on our return, there were still no tidings; but Mrs A. had gone to Shields to inquire, and if letters had come, she would bring the news in the evening. *J. went out on an errand, while we were at tea,—no person in the place having then any means of knowing about the wreck; and on her return, she came straight up to us for her séance.*<sup>1</sup> Two gentlemen were with us that evening, one from America, the other from the neighbourhood. I may say here, that we noted down at the moment what J. said; and that on this evening there was the additional security of my American friend repeating to me, on the instant, (on account of my deafness), every word as it fell.

“J. was presently asleep, and her mesmerist, knowing the advantage of introducing subjects on which the mind had previously been excited, and how the inspiration follows the course of the affections, asked, as soon as the sleep was deep enough, ‘Can you tell us about the wreck?’ J. tranquilly replied, ‘Oh! yes, they’re all safe; but the ship is all to pieces.’—‘Were they saved in their boat?’ ‘No; that’s all to pieces.’—‘How, then?’ ‘A queer boat took them off; not their boat.’—‘Are you sure they are all safe?’ ‘Yes; all that were on board: but there *was* a boy killed. But I don’t think it is my cousin.’—‘At the time of the wreck?’ ‘No, before the storm.’—‘How did it happen?’ ‘By a fall.’—‘Down the hatchways, or how?’ ‘No; he fell through the rigging, from the mast.’ She presently observed, ‘My aunt is below, telling them all about it, and I shall hear it when I go down.’<sup>2</sup>

“My rooms being a selection from two houses, this ‘below’ meant two stories lower in the next house.

“She continued talking of other things for an hour longer, and before she awoke the gentlemen were gone. After inquiring whether she was refreshed by her sleep, and whether she had dreamed, (‘No’) we desired her to let us know if she heard news of the wreck; and she promised, in all simplicity, that she would. In another quarter of an hour, up she came, *all animation*, to tell us that her cousin and all the crew were safe, her aunt having returned from Shields with the news. The wreck had occurred between Elsinore and Gotten.

<sup>1</sup> “*J. went out on an errand.*” Any one who knows with what rapidity news about missing ships flies among the population of a sea-port, will be aware, that immediately as the information had been brought to Shields, it would be carried to Tynemouth, only a mile distant. While “J.’s” aunt was down at Shields, we have no doubt whatever that the news had reached Tynemouth, and that “J.,” when out on her errand, procured it. The fact that she went “straight up to the *séance*” when she came back, although she was previously “too much disturbed to think of being mesmerised,” is, we think, a strong proof of this. Miss Martineau, with Dr Hublier, has, we think, been deceived by “une maitresse femme.”

<sup>2</sup> Mr Braid, Manchester, suggests that the increased susceptibility in the ear might account for this.



berg, and the crew had been taken off by a fishing-boat, after twenty-four hours spent on the wreck, their own boat having gone to pieces. She was turning away to leave the room, when she was asked, 'So all are saved—all who left the port?' 'No, ma'am,' said she, 'all who were on board at the time: but they had had an accident before,—a boy fell from the mast, and was killed on the deck.'

"Besides having no doubt of the rectitude of the girl, we knew that she had not seen her aunt,—the only person from whom tidings could have been obtained. But, to make all sure, I made an errand to the cottage the next morning, well knowing that the relieved mother would pour out her whole tale. My friend and I encouraged her; and she told us how she got the news, and when she brought it to Tynemouth,—just as we knew before. 'How glad they must have been to see you at ours!' said I. 'O yes, ma'am:' and she declared my landlady's delight. 'And J.?' said I. '*Ma'am, I did not see J.*'<sup>1</sup> said she, simply, and rapidly, in her eagerness to tell. Then, presently,—'They told me, ma'am, that J. was up stairs with you.'"

Dr Bierman declares to the Royal Society of Medicine of France, that he knew a little girl, who, when in the highest state of clairvoyance, ("au moment du plus grand reveil de l'âme,") could read many languages in manuscript, although in her natural state she only understood her mother tongue, German. Kluge asserts, that the secrets of the past, the present, and the future, are now no longer concealed from the somnambulist. He states what Mr Townshend and other writers more or less strenuously insist upon, that the clairvoyant becomes elevated and purified, and is incapable of insincerity,—is enabled (however ignorant naturally) to discourse on divinity, astronomy, chemistry, languages, according as the operator is distinguished in any of those branches of human knowledge. Miss M. also says, p. 24, "It is almost an established opinion among some of the wisest students of mesmerism, that the mind of the somnambule mirrors that of the mesmerist; *one naturally wishes to find it true*, as it disposes of much that, with the hasty, passes for revelations of other unseen things than those which lie in another person's mind. *It is certainly true to a considerable extent, and is pretty clearly proved when an ignorant child—ignorant especially of the Bible, discourses of the Scriptures and divinity when mesmerised by a clergyman, (see Townshend), and of the nebulae, when mesmerised by an astronomer.*" But statements and opinions like these speak for themselves. Had we not already seen the amazing amount of credulity displayed by the mesmerists in giving mystical interpretations to circumstances capable of easy explanation on common principles, we should not have believed it possible that any of them of sane mind would have gravely given utterance to such phantasies;—having discovered that credulity, we can no longer examine or criticise, we can only smile. In concluding our observations on clairvoyance, we cannot help remarking on the discordance between the confident assertions of writers as to its existence, and the fact, that not one has ever gone through a close scrutiny. At the very time that Mr Townshend had two clairvoyants, one of whom could read through his forehead with great facility, there was a prize of 3000 francs open to any candidate who could be shown to do this. Mr Townshend, indeed, says, that he was training one of these patients for the prize; but if Mr Townshend was convinced of the truth of the statements he has given of the youth's power, no training could be needed. All other cases which have been carefully examined hitherto, in this country, at least, have failed. Another singular circumstance is, that NO MAN OR WOMAN OF STANDING AND CHARACTER HAS EVER EXHIBITED THE HIGHER PHENOMENA OF MESMERISM. Miss Martineau, certain members of the French Academy, Professor Agassiz, Dr Elliotson, and others of mark and likelihood, all exhibited only the sleep, or some modifications of it; while clairvoyance, phreno-mesmerism, community of taste, transposition of the senses, the prophetic power, the instinct

<sup>1</sup> Why this eagerness, Mrs A.? It sounds like the "*Thou canst not say I did it*" of conscience. (Since the above was written, it has been shown that "J." had seen her aunt, and that the whole was what it looks like, a trick.)



of remedies, &c., are all reserved for the boys of itinerant lecturers, servant girls, and hysterical young ladies. This of itself is sufficient to drive us to unbelief. Surely among the innumerable persons experimented on, some intelligent man or woman of known worth and character would have exhibited the marvellous manifestations alluded to. But where is there in all the records of mesmerism one individual of this stamp? An echo answers,—“Where?” When we hear of any one person of plain good sense and high moral character displaying any of these higher manifestations, we shall still be glad to inquire and to learn; until then, we think, we are fully entitled, from the facts above stated, to refuse the smallest credence to any of these phenomena. True, lucidity has some supporters of a most respectable kind,—a few persons of genius, many of high character and talent have vouched for the facts. Shall we therefore believe them? The love of the marvellous is not confined to vulgar minds; and there are mysteries and superstitions to which men of high mental endowments—especially if their imaginative faculty predominates—seem more disposed to give faith than even the common vulgar. And having once taken up the error heartily—the wider the range of their acquirements, and the more ardent and enthusiastic their genius—they are the better enabled to illustrate and enforce their opinions, “to make the worse appear the better reason,” and to impose at once upon their hearers and themselves. Not to mention the superstitions of the wisest men among the Greeks and Romans, the credulities of Napoleon, Byron, and Dr Johnson equalled any of those displayed by the ultra-mesmerists. We do not, then, admit the convictions of men of genius or talent to be infallible, or even the best evidence of what is true, on a disputed subject like this, into which the marvellous so largely enters; the evidence of calm-minded, sensible men of science, acquainted with the laws of vital action in health and disease, and accustomed cautiously to investigate truth, is the most valuable, and of this species of evidence there is lamentably little in mesmeric literature.

Let us now say a few words on the

#### INSTINCT OF REMEDIES.

Miss Martineau, still speaking of “J.,” says, “It soon became evident that one of her strongest powers was the discernment of disease, its condition, and remedies.” She cleared up her own case first. The difficulty in the subject of the instinct of remedies is to get authors to relate cases of disease with the treatment of the clair-voyant. They almost always, in vague general terms, state that the disease was discovered, and the treatment successful, assertions which medical men too frequently hear repeated on the most absurd grounds, to consider worthy of the least attention. But Miss Martineau fortunately condescends to facts: let us see how “J. clears up her own case.” “She herself,” says Miss Martineau, “assigns in the trance a structural defect as the cause of her ailments, which will prevent their ever being entirely removed.” Now, as the narrator states that this girl had, during six years, been under the treatment of several doctors, and was at one time a patient in the Eye Infirmary of Newcastle, it is easy to see the source whence “J.” had derived her knowledge of the “structural defect.” If none of the other doctors had informed her, certainly, Mr Greenhow or Sir John Fife, the surgeons to the above excellent institution, would explain it to her. But Miss M. prefers believing that “J.” obtained her knowledge in the mesmeric, rather than in the obvious and simple manner pointed out. “J.,” however, discovers her “strong powers” in discerning and curing disease, in the case of Miss Martineau, thus entirely throwing into the shade Mr Greenhow, a most intelligent and skilful medical man,—Miss Martineau’s brother-in-law and medical attendant. Let us examine this other instance of “J.’s” skill; and it is really quite as good as any which mesmeric literature affords on the subject of the “instinct of remedies.”

“Soon after she was first mesmerised, I was undergoing my final severance from opiates—a serious matter to one who had depended so long and so desperately upon them. As I have said, I got through the day pretty well; but the nights were intolerable, from pain and nervous irritations, which made it im-



possible to rest for two minutes together.<sup>1</sup> After four such nights, I believe my mesmerist's fortitude and my own would have given way together, and we should have brought the laudanum bottle to light again, but for the bright idea, 'Let us ask J.!' She said at once what my sufferings had been, and declared that I should sleep more and more by degrees, if I took—(what was as contrary to her own ordinary ideas of what is right and rational as to mine)—ale at dinner, and half a wine-glass full of brandy in water at night. I refused the prescription till reminded—'Remember she has never been wrong.' I obeyed; the fact being kept secret between *us two*, in order to try, every evening, J.'s knowledge and opinion. She always spoke and advised, in a confident familiarity with incidents known only to *us two*,<sup>2</sup> and carried me steadily through the struggle. I lost my miseries, and recovered my sleep, night by night, till, at the end of the week, I was quite well, without stimulant or sedative. Nothing can be more remote from J.'s ordinary knowledge and thought than the structure of the human body, and the remedies for disease; and, though I was well aware how common the exercise of this kind of insight is in somnambules—how it is used abroad as an auxiliary to medical treatment—I was not the less surprised by the readiness and peremptoriness with which a person, in J.'s position, declared, and gave directions about things which she is wholly ignorant of an hour after, and was during the whole of her life before."

So that the sum total of the results of "J.'s" remedial instinct is that she advises a little ale and brandy for the "sinking" and "distress" caused by the want of the well-known opiates! It seems incredible, but is, nevertheless, the simple fact. The girl's power in curing diseases, is, in general terms,—just as in Teste's, Townshend's, and all other cases,—asserted to be great,—but this prescription of the "ale and brandy" is positively the grandest effort of her skill related. It is at once ludicrous and pitiable to see a noble intellect so warped and obfuscated, as to place so puerile a statement before the public. If the ale and brandy had not been suggested by Mr Greenhow himself, or Mrs Arrow-smith, at the foot of the garden, or the mesmerising maid, or the clergyman's widow, it would at any rate occur to the girl herself. The use of both ale and brandy is well known in the Front Street of Tynemouth, and we can only hope that the ale was Bartleman's double stout, and the brandy Crichton's pale. We would suggest the application of mesmeric names to these liquors for the future, and perhaps, "Miss Martineau's sleeping draught," and the "Clairvoyant Cognac," may become popular on the banks of the Tyne. Our readers will agree, that in this case,

"To be grave exceeds all power of face,"

and that we can only meet the mesmeric statements as to the "instinct of remedies," with a smile. Mr Greenhow, in his excellent account of Miss Martineau's case, in which, without at all attacking mesmerism, by a simple statement of the course of the malady, he demolishes the whole of the mystical structure which the patient has reared,—Mr G. we say, dismisses the "ale and brandy" very cavalierly. "Last night she slept well, having taken a small quantity of brandy and water." Our readers are aware that the disease under which the distinguished authoress labours, is retroversion of the uterus, caused by enlargement of its body. Truly glad should we be to learn, that by means of any treatment, she was restored to health and strength. It is painful to us to know, that however much hope and fancy, acting in connection with the mesmeric passes, have improved her general health, the disease itself has not yet been removed to an extent, such as her letters on mesmerism would lead us to suppose. As her complaint is one which, according to the experience of Sir Charles Clarke, has been known to "subside," we trust she will "hope on, hope ever," and we devoutly pray, that her hopes may be

<sup>1</sup> In October, then, Miss Martineau's "nights were intolerable;" yet a few pages back she declares, that from the first (*viz.* June 22) "she went on well,—that she had been spared all the weaknesses of convalescence," &c.

<sup>2</sup> "Nos duo turba sumus."—*Ovid.*



realised. Meantime, in illustration of the subject before us, we quote the following paragraph, which describes the state of the disease at the latest period to which the report extends.

“December 6.—Again I made a careful examination into the state of Miss M. The fundus uteri is more disengaged than at the last examination, and admits of being raised somewhat higher. It is certainly *less fixed*, and in this respect has improved at each time of examination since April 2, when the first degree of improvement was observed. The retroversion continues, the fundus still extending towards the sacrum, while the os uteri approaches the pubes—the organ remains large and firm, and is yet turned back nearly at a right angle from the cervix uteri. The two membranous pendicles remain hanging out of the os uteri, as at the last examination. The health is represented as quite good, and the catamenia as regular, the nervous pains and irritations having all subsided. The person is less full, but, as abdominal distention depended principally upon the gaseous and other contents of the intestines, and, in a slight degree only, on the uterine tumour, it is probable that renewed habits of activity have greatly contributed to restore the symmetry of the person in this respect.

“I have endeavoured to render the preceding sketch comprehensive and concise, avoiding equally unnecessary details, and omitting nothing essential to the full comprehension of the true character of the case. Knowing well that no symptoms of malignant disease of the affected organ existed, I always believed that a time would arrive, when my patient would be relieved from most of her distressing symptoms, and released from her long continued confinement. The catamenial crisis appeared the most probable period, but I did not despair of this happening sooner; *though she never willingly listened to any suggestions of the probability of such prospective events, and seemed always best satisfied with anything approaching to an admission, that she must ever remain a secluded invalid.*” P. 20.

Who does not see, in the sentence we have placed in italics, a condition of mind in itself calculated to keep the patient confined to her room, to demand opiates, and to produce much of the “sinking” and “distress”? And so soon as by means of any stimulus, hope in the curative power of mesmerism—or any other sufficiently strong—this gloomy, despondent state of mind had been removed,—who would not expect to hear of her giving up the opiates, and of her consequent improved digestion, health, and general habits? Mr Greenhow further remarks:—“In the history of this case it is probable that the advocates of mesmerism will find reasons and arguments in support of their opinions. But the experienced practitioner, carefully distinguishing the *post hoc* from the *propter hoc*, will have little difficulty in bringing the whole into harmony with the well-established laws of human physiology.”

We have been thus minute, because it seemed, even at the expense of being charged with tediousness, to be our duty, to quote at length this particular case. In the whole of mesmeric literature, we have met with no case of equal importance to that of Miss Martineau. The poultices of Teste, the rose water lotions of Townshend, and the vague generalities of other mesmeric practisers, are mere trifles compared to hers. As to the table of diseases cured or relieved by mesmerism, of which, on April Fools’ day, there is a very circumstantial one given in the *Critic*, signed by “Humanitas,” and as to the reports of cures of nervous diseases in the *Zoist*, we cannot place the least reliance on them. To authenticate facts like these, we must not only have the names of the observers and recorders,—but these must be medical men, and medical men *known* to be clear and cool headed, experienced in disease, and not apt to be carried away by enthusiasm, nor dazzled by theory. From such evidence alone would we give credence to the alleged powers of any new remedial agent; we are surely, therefore, justified in demanding it in the case of mesmerism. We have in Miss Martineau, however, a lady of talent and veracity, (whose malady every educated person in England knew and lamented to be of a serious nature,) recording her own sensations, stating circumstantially her progress from sickness to health, and giving her unqualified assertion, that mes-



merism alone had effected her cure. The case has been triumphantly quoted by believers in mesmerism, times innumerable, as proof of the remedial skill bestowed by the science. It is fortunate, therefore, for the sake of truth, that we possess a simple medical report of the case. Every one capable of judging, who has read this report, must see the lamentable weakness and credulity of the ladies who have so prominently placed themselves before the public, and who long ere this have, we dare say, felt bitterly the consequences of their imprudence.<sup>1</sup> It is unnecessary to give other cases of the "instinct of remedies." After having very carefully read a great number of cases, and having had others under our personal observation, we find the faculty of the remedial instinct not to be supported by any evidence whatever, which is not still more strongly adduced in favour of any Universal Medicine, or *Elixir Vita*.

The cases of reported cures in mesmerism may be divided into two classes; for though there are individual cases which will not come under either division, the great mass may be so arranged. Hysteria in various forms supplies the first and largest class; and of these many doubtless recover during the progress of the treatment, while a few are no doubt benefited by the moral influences set at work by the peculiar remedy employed. The second class consists of trifling cases, which would have recovered without any treatment, and of organic diseases asserted to be cured, the reports of which seem to us, however, not to be credited. In Miss Martineau's case, strong faith, hope, and fancy, were all on the side of the "passes:"—these roused her from her torpid condition, enabled her to give up the opiates, from which in all probability much of her misery sprang, and, by chasing away the despondency and gloomy *desire for despair* which she cherished, as many other long secluded invalids do, left her mind free to the genial impulses of nature, and her body to the salutary operation of the natural laws. Once more, out upon the golden sands of Cullercoats, with the fresh sea breeze upon her cheek, and hope swelling and beating time in her heart to the music of the billows, as they joyously scattered their silver foam at her feet; once more, enabled to look abroad on the earth and upwards to the sky, and to draw the long deep inspirations of returning cheerfulness, and her disease, so far as it was not organic, was already removed. She says herself, that without any of the tediousness of convalescence, she was "carried through." This shows that the cause must have been a moral one. We presume, that neither she nor any other mesmerist will assert, that the passes could at once diminish the body of the uterus, or suddenly shorten the ligaments of that organ.

In other cases of a hysteric nature there can be no doubt that the emotions excited by mesmerism have had,—as hope, fear, fancy, and grief, have at all times had,—very important results. In the times of Mesmer, and of the *baquet*, when numbers of persons were operated on at once, and when by music, darkened rooms, and mystical devices, the imagination of the excitable patients was made to run wild,—the most tremendous effects were found to result from mesmerism:—convulsions of the most dreadful kind,—evacuations,—cries,—embracings,—sobbing,—an entire abandonment of themselves, and often deep and con-

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<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written, a break-up has taken place in the mesmeric camp at Tynemouth. Miss Martineau's friend has discharged her mesmerising maid for not carrying a letter to the post-office, and for making disturbances in the house. Truly, as Miss Martineau *naively* says in her letters, "the subordination is in the wrong party, when the maid mesmerises." The petted manner in which Miss M.'s friend, the "clergyman's widow," we presume, complains of the the medical gentlemen who exposed the doings at Tynemouth, for hinting the cause of her dismissing her servant, is highly amusing; and the manner in which Miss Martineau herself abandons the case, without admitting the deception, is not what we had expected from her. These ladies have voluntarily placed themselves before the public, and they must abide the consequences. As the case stands at present, a more lame and impotent conclusion was never come to than to this, one of the best authenticated and most generally accredited mesmeric marvels which have ever been made public.



tinued insensibility attested the powerful nature of the agencies employed.<sup>1</sup> All these were then—as the sleep and curative effects are now, ascribed to mesmerism, to some occult influence proceeding from the operator, in the case of the *baquet*, to the influence of the power proceeding from the magnetized bottles of water, round which the excitable patients,—arm to arm, and knee to knee,—were arranged. Let it be remembered, that the records of Irvingism and of Love Feasts, both in America and England, furnish us with symptoms precisely similar; and that the reports of the Royal Academy of Sciences, and of the Royal Society of Medicine of France, show by decisive experiments, “*that the imagination without magnetism can produce convulsions, and that magnetism without imagination can produce nothing.*” It is stated also in the secret report, that it was a *feigned* crisis which led to the first real crisis, and thus brought on many others by imitation,—a statement which every medical man who has seen a number of hysterical or epileptic patients in an hospital go off into fits on one of their number being seized, will readily understand.

Various reasons have led to the abandonment of the practice of Mesmerism, as carried on by Mesmer and others in France, so as to produce convulsions and other violent effects. The chief reason, we believe, to have been, that the mode then employed, by strongly exciting the sexual feelings, was found to produce immoral results,—and indeed associations were formed in many large towns in France, called “Societies of Harmony,” in which, under pretence of cultivating the science of Mesmer, libertinism became widely extended. This also, we believe to be the reason, why various governments on the Continent have restricted the practice of mesmerism to the medical profession. Many shrewd

<sup>1</sup> The following description of the *baquet* is taken from the article, before quoted, of Dr Radclyffe Hall:—

“*The baquet.*—An oaken tub, from four to five feet in diameter, and a foot in depth, covered with a lid in two pieces, constituted the *baquet*. At the bottom were placed bottles, with their necks directed towards the centre of the tub, so as to form converging rays. In the centre, other bottles were laid, with their necks in the opposite direction, forming diverging rays. All were corked, and full of magnetised water. There were usually many superimposed layers of these bottles; the machine was then at high pressure, (*à haute pression*). The space between the bottles was filled with water, to which pounded glass and iron filings were occasionally added. The low-pressure *baquets*, however, were made without water. The lids were pierced with holes for the passage of iron rods, bent, moveable, and of different lengths, so as to be readily applied to different regions of the body. Through a ring in the lid was passed a cord with which the patients surrounded their ailing limbs, carefully avoiding to make a knot. Affections disagreeable to the sight, as wounds, ulcers, and deformities, were (conveniently enough) not admitted under treatment. The patients were placed in rows around the tube, in such a way as to touch each other by the hands, arms, knees, and feet. A cord, surrounding the whole number, kept them in their places. Each applied one of the flexible iron rods to the supposed seat of disease. Meanwhile, gentle strains of music, and occasionally the voice of a concealed opera-singer, stole upon the ear; the air was redolent of the most delicate perfumes; the magnificent saloon, surrounded with mirrors, which reflected on every side the attitudes and gestures of the patients, was so artfully arranged as only to admit of a dim twilight. After these magician-like arrangements had been allowed a sufficient time to produce their effect upon the minds of the patients, who were instructed to preserve the most rigid silence, the assistant magnetisers entered. These were *the handsomest and most robust young men that Mesmer could select*, (*les plus beaux, les plus jeunes, et les plus robustes*). Each carried in his hand a magnetising rod about a foot in length. Their duty was to heighten the effect of the magnetic tub by touching, handling, pressing, squeezing, and earnest gazing, maintaining still the most perfect silence. After the lapse of an hour or more thus occupied, Mesmer himself, arrayed in a robe of lilac silk, and with a grave, majestic air, for the first time entered the room. The less agitated, he *calmed* immediately by a touch of his magnetic rod. Upon the more excited he acted by taking their hands, and so applying his own, that their thumbs and fingers respectively were in contact, at the same time gazing intensely into their eyes, (*en rapport*), or by making rapid movements with his open hands at a distance from the patient, (*à grand courant*), or by crossing and uncrossing his arms with extreme rapidity, (*les passes en définitive*).



observers of human nature are of opinion that even now, and in England, the practice of mesmerism would not flourish so greatly, were the poor-law separation system enforced in pursuing the necessary investigations, and that the little *galant ries* inseparable to the practical details of mesmerism as of phrenology, give a zest to those studies, altogether apart from the scientific truths they reveal. On this subject we, however, offer no opinion. According to the method pursued now, the curative effects are said to be produced insensibly, by some mystical and unexplained agency, and without being accompanied by any phenomena except in the great number of cases—the magnetic sleep. Jussieu, one of the committee of the Royal Society of Medicine of France, differed from his associates in some respects on the subject of mesmerism, and drew up a separate report, in which he ascribes the mesmeric action to the animal heat existing in bodies, which is continually emanating from them and passing from one to another. He says, that judging by its effects, it appears to possess the properties of tonic remedies, and in proportion to the quantity communicated and the way it is used, like tonics, it produced injurious or beneficial effects. Now it seems to us undeniable that in many persons an extraordinary state of the nervous system is induced by the mesmeric processes, as well as by others which have been used from the very earliest times, and that sleep or coma more or less deep is the most universally observed phenomenon attendant on their processes. It is plausible to say that the same influence which induces this coma, if less powerfully applied, may soothe and tranquillize an irritable nervous system, and thus effect important remedial results. And were there any evidence to prove the existence of such a power or influence passing from the operator to the patient, we should be disposed to adopt this view, which is quite in accordance with the usual action of remedies upon the system.

But not only is there no evidence to prove that the operator has any means of regulating the “quantity communicated,” but there is no proof that any power emanates from him. For not only is the effect of the assumed influence capricious and uncertain in its action, operative only on a few individuals—thus being remarkably different from other agents in nature,—but the results affirmed to be peculiar to mesmerism, follow the simple fixing the eye and the attention on an object elevated above the plane of vision, and that with quite as great certainty in the latter case as in the former. Mr Braid’s Hypnotism, and Mr Catlow’s brushing of the forehead, show that no mysterious agent is necessary in order to induce sleep, and a variety of other phenomena, ascribed by the mesmerisers to “the passes” alone. Then, there does not seem to be sufficient evidence to show, that this sleep or coma can be lessened or deepened at the pleasure of the mesmeriser, so as to produce any state which might be beneficial to the nervous system.

The intensity of the symptoms seems no more capable of being regulated than are the phenomena of actual sleep. Mr Townshend, indeed, states some cases to show, that “mesmerism is a question of proportional force.” But we are not aware of any evidence to prove that proportional doses of mesmerism can be given to different patients, and that these can be regulated at the will of the operator, so as to suit the age, strength, or disease of the operer. Were it even true, that the mesmeric influence were capable of being poured forth at will, still we fear that the impossibility of regulating the “quantity communicated” would render it useless as a remedial agent. We shall immediately speak of

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“*Effects.*—The females, always the most impressionable, experienced first yawnings and stretchings; their eyes closed; their limbs tottered; they felt threatened with suffocation. The sound of the harmonica, the strains of the piano, and the chorus of the singers, appeared to increase the convulsions. Bursts of sardonic laughter, piteous moanings, floods of tears, burst out on every side. The body was contorted with tetanic spasms; the breathing became rattling; all the symptoms more startling. At this moment, the actors in this strange scene ran against one another, amazed and raving; they congratulated each other, embracing with joy, or repelling with horror. The most excited were removed to another room prepared for the purpose. In this, the chamber of the crisis, the choking females were unlaced, and suffered to knock their heads against the padded walls, or to roll about on the cushioned floor.”—*Delrieu.*



its assumed value in rendering surgical operations painless. Meantime, we may remark, that "epilepsy, palsy, nervous depression, and madness even," are said to be the diseases in which it is valuable; nay, M. Foissac of Paris not only asserts that somnambulists have almost escaped the pains of childbirth, but that he has seen men "restored to calmness, and finally to health, by mesmeric action, when suffering in the *last stage of spasmodic cholera.*" Organic diseases of various kinds have also been cured by the same agency, congenital deafness of thirty years' standing removed, opacities of the cornea dissipated, and contractions of the joints, which for years had resisted surgical skill, have been removed as if by magic! Thus it is, that by proving too much, the mesmerists compel us to refuse to accept any evidence on the subject not supported by other authority than theirs.

Mr John Bovee Dodds of Boston, who has published Lectures delivered by him to thousands of applauding hearers, places the curative power of mesmerism in a somewhat novel light. He believes that galvanism is the mesmeric fluid or medium, and that a full and healthy brain parts with it to that of the mesmerised, until both are in a state of equilibrium. He considers that the brain of all persons can be thus "magnetically subdued;" and that when this has been once effected, the mesmeric state can be afterwards induced at will, in a short time. "And not only so, but after the brain is once magnetically subdued, you can then throw the person into the state in five minutes. Yes, a child ten years old can then mesmerise a giant father. Your brain being magnetically subdued, it is worth hundreds of dollars to you. You are then ready for the day of distress. Come what may—toothach, headach, tic douloureux, neuralgia, or any pain of which you can conceive; let some one mesmerise you, and then wake you up, and the pain is gone. The whole process need not occupy more than ten minutes. Should you fall and break your arm, then let some one mesmerise the arm only, which can be done in one minute. You are free from pain; and though in your wakeful state, you can look quietly on, and see the bones put to their places. Your arm can then be kept in the mesmeric state, and thoroughly and rapidly healed without having ever experienced one single throb of pain. Or by simply mesmerising your arm or leg, you can sit in the wakeful state and see them amputated, and feel no pain. But if you neglect to have your brain magnetically subdued, then when the day of distress comes upon you, as it might require several hours to put you into this state, it will then be too late to avail yourself of the blessings which this science is calculated to bestow.

"It is not only a preventative of fits, insanity, and of the most frightful nervous diseases, and a safeguard against pain, but it will cure fits, if no congestion of the brain has taken place. It never fails to remove the ague and fever, however long it may have been upon the individual, and will prevent any fevers prevalent in northern climates, if the individual be mesmerised as soon as the disease is taken.

"Here, then, are opening before us new fields of action, where those who have hearts of benevolence may freely roam at large, and find ample scope for the full gratification of all their sympathetic and Christian feelings, and those who scoff and sneer at this science, do scoff and sneer at human woe and human pain, and know not what they do."

This sweeping mode of preventing and curing disease is quite in "transatlantic" style; and in mesmerism, as in other matters, our Boston brethren are resolved to "beat creation." There is nothing, however, in these theories of Mr Bovee Dodds more startling or incredible than in those of M. Foissac, M. Deleuge, or Mr Townshend; and we consider that in quoting them, we are giving our readers a fair representation of the opinions of mesmerisers in the curative power of the passes.

"Chardel also, a French writer on mesmerism, gives an interesting account of two sisters whom he mesmerised, as a physician, with the hope of checking a *tendency to consumption* which they had both evinced. One evening, being in sleep-waking, they, as if prompted by a natural instinct, entreated their mesmeriser to leave them in that state, *only so far demesmerising them as to enable them to open their eyes, and to be committed to their own self-guidance.*



Day after day they renewed their petition, for day after day they felt their health returning under the mesmeric influence. In other respects, they pursued their usual habits, and their mesmeric existence had its alternate periods of sleep and of waking, as regular as those of the natural life. (!) At the end of three months, their cure appearing to be complete, M. Chardel conducted the sisters, accompanied by their mother, to a beautiful spot in the country, where he restored them to a knowledge of themselves. He describes, in lively terms, their surprise and joy on returning to consciousness. It was winter when they entered the mesmeric state; it was now spring. The ground was then covered with snow, but now with flowers. They were then looking forward to an early grave, but now the feeling of renewed health tinged every thing with hope and life; almost doubting if they did not dream, they threw themselves into their mother's arms, gathered flowers and smelt them, and endeavoured, by the exercise of their senses, to convince themselves that it was a blessed reality. *Not a circumstance of the three past months survived in their memory."*

Here is an extremely pretty mesmeric romance, which requires only to be reduced into scenes, diversified with a clairvoyant song or two, and furnished with the appropriate *denouement* of the young physician marrying one of the young ladies, in order to be adapted for the boards of the Théâtre du Palais Royal. We trust M. Scribe will adopt the theme.

The disciples of Mesmer, and others perhaps also, will remind us, that we cannot disprove the truth of the above narrative by thus passing a jest upon it; and the mesmerists, above all, will say, as usual, that we deny the influence of mesmerism in this interesting case, because by it, if true, the science of physic is thrown into the shade.

Our best reply perhaps will be, to say that there are other "infallible" cures of consumption besides mesmerism, and these, too, advocated by well-educated medical men, the value of which we hold to be very much upon a par with those effected by the agency of animal magnetism. Naphtha and cod liver oil—to mention the two latest (and which by the way are sometimes useful),—can boast of cures far more striking and circumstantial than those of M. Chardel.

Dr Pereyra, of Bordeaux, (we quote a French physician out of compliment to M. Chardel), in his little work lately published, "*Du Traitement de la Phthisie Pulmonaire*," narrates cures, not of patients *threatened* merely with consumption, but of one with "an enormous cavity in the upper lobe of the left lung;" another with "two cavities, of some size, at the upper part of the right side." With these, the patients had other symptoms of far advanced phthisis, viz. frequent pulse, copious night-sweats, emaciation, and hectic fever. "How M. Pereyra," says the *British and Foreign Medical Review*, "distinguished the *two* cavities, he does not inform us; a neat piece of diagnosis, however, which would have been worth making public." We also felt a little surprised at the diagnosis of *two* cavities in the upper part of the *same* lung; but ascribed it to the acknowledged superiority of the French over the English in all kinds of fancy work. Dr Pereyra gave this patient, a girl aged eighteen, two table-spoonsfull of the cod liver oil daily, ordered her good food, and a seton to be placed over one of the cavities. Two months afterwards, she returned to the street behind the "Théâtre des Variétés," pretty, strong, and ruddy, with "her crude tubercles rather smaller," but with the *two* cavities still in the lung. Three years afterwards, she was admitted into the hospital for another complaint; she had then "no tuberculous sound, the caverns were "*much smaller*," (!) "and the rest of the lung natural." Other cases are mentioned by Pereyra to prove consumption curable by cod liver oil. But does the intelligent portion of the profession, either in this country or in France agree with him? By no means. When cavities are formed, they place cod liver oil and mesmerism very much upon a level. We had the fortune to see something of Dr Pereyra's practice in the magnificent Hôpital Saint André, in Bordeaux, at the time when he was, as one of his confrères expressed it, "mad after the cod liver oil;" and from one or two specimens of his diagnosis,—*without auscultation*,—of caverns in the lung,—we feel disposed to believe that his evidence, as to the therapeutic



power of the oil, is not much superior to that of Mr Townshend, or M. Chardel, on the curative influence of the mesmeric passes.

While thus, however, expressing our unqualified disbelief in any curative power conveyed by means of mesmerism, from the body or brain of one person to that of another, we are not disposed to think, that the cures ascribed to mesmerism have, in every case, originated in exaggeration, mistake, or wilful falsehood. Though the subject is enveloped in much absurdity and exaggeration, we think that some truth will be found beneath it all. That so many respectable men, professional and non-professional, should have circumstantially recorded cases of cure, would, if there was no truth whatever in the business, be almost as incredible as clairvoyance itself. We believe that a large portion of individuals, by fixing their eyes immoveably upon an elevated object, holding their heads slightly inclined backwards, respiring slowly, and isolating their attention, will speedily feel a greater or less degree of insensibility steal over them. In some the coma will be deep, in others only partial. The whole nervous system will in many persons be singularly influenced by these manœuvres. Now it seems to us not at all impossible, that in irritable conditions of the brain and nerves, this temporary coma may produce beneficial results. In various forms of hysteria, especially, it is reasonable to think, that the exhaustion of the brain, thus brought on, may soothe and tranquillize. If a bandage, bound tightly round the head, will sometimes repress agonizing nervous pains in the scalp, by pressure apparently on the extremities of the nerves, we do not see why we should refuse to admit, that pressure exerted on the roots of these very nerves, as is certainly the case in the coma spoken of, may not also relieve pain. We think this subject is well worthy the attentive examination of the medical officers of hospitals; for there only could experiments on a sufficiently extensive scale be entered upon. The testimony of isolated individuals in private practice will always be looked on with suspicion; but in hospitals, the opportunities are ample, the facility of procuring intelligent medical attendants great, and the evidence thence resulting, being easily corroborated by numbers, would be received with confidence by the profession. Unfortunately, the exaggerations and absurdities of the animal magnetisers respecting their cures have repelled medical men from the subject; but we do not despair of, in no long time, hearing of experiments on a large scale being entered upon, with a view of discovering whether we have not the power, by inducing, and if possible, regulating the coma, of lessening the sensibility for a longer or shorter period afterwards, and thus, perhaps, of securing a new, and valuable remedial agent.

In addition to the physical causes just alluded to, no one will deny, that the moral agents called into operation by means of mesmerism, are calculated to produce important effects upon the animal economy. We have no doubt whatever, that many nervous disorders have been dissipated by the mental excitement—the hope—the faith—the fancy,—awakened and elevated by the mesmeric treatment. The very mystery that invested the mode of cure, would with many patients increase its powers tenfold. But animal magnetism—a fluid or power passing from man to man,—had nothing to do with all this. Diseases have been produced and cured—persons have been killed—by the influence of excited imagination, and *faith* in the expected result. Bread pills and faith have cured cases of hysteria without number; and the well-known effects upon hypochondriacs of reading Buchan or Graham's Domestic Medicine, is to produce the symptoms of many of the diseases which they study. Dr Elliotson thinks ague might be cured by flogging; and the anecdote of the ague patients, (told we think by Dr Heberden), whose fits were kept off by fear of having the actual cautery applied, should they appear, is familiar to us all. We have read of a condemned felon who underwent an experiment, by which his imagination, acting upon fear, caused death. He was blindfolded and bound to a table—veins in his arms and legs were then pricked with a pen—immediately little fountains were made to play, so as to resemble the streaming of blood into vessels—the state of his pulse was remarked on in whispers, as “now it sinks, flutters, fails,” &c.; and in short, the result was, that the man, without losing a drop of blood, or suffering the least injury, died upon the table. A medical friend of great intelligence has furnished us with two cases which



occurred in his practice, wherein the conviction of the patients (both working men) was so strong that they would die, that although their symptoms were of a trifling nature, their excited imagination produced delirium and death. This important moral agent, then, is called into operation by the mesmeric processes, and may doubtless be powerful for good or evil. The French Academy, in their Record of Experiments made for the Investigation of Animal Magnetism, in 1784, speak as follows:—"Ce que nous avons appris, ou, du moins ce que nous a été confirmé d'une manière démonstrative et évidente par l'examen des procédés du magnétisme, c'est que l'homme peut agir sur l'homme, à tout moment, et presque à volonté, *en frappant son imagination*; c'est que les gestes, et les signes les plus simples peuvent avoir les plus puissans effets; c'est que l'action de l'homme sur l'imagination peut-être réduite en art, et conduite, par une méthode, *sur des sujets qui ont la foi*."<sup>1</sup> Mr Townshend thinks, that the Academy, so far from here denying animal magnetism, not only allows the phenomena, "but concedes the real question in debate in terms the most explicit." Now it appears to us, that in the words "en frappant son imagination," the Academy distinctly disavows all mesmeric or magnetic agency whatever, and ascribes the phenomena to a well-known and most powerful mental cause.

In a word, then, we do not deny the truth of all the reports of cures given in mesmeric literature. We believe that some of them *may* have been the result of the peculiar condition of the brain, induced by position and exhaustion; and that many *were* the result of *faith* and *imagination*, exciting cheerfulness and hope; but we consider that there is no evidence whatever to prove that any sanatory influence, of the kind called mesmeric or magnetic, passes from the operator to the patient.

Though Mr Braid of Manchester seems to us to be a little carried away by his enthusiasm for hypnotism, and though some of his cures are somewhat startling, yet we think there is much that is valuable in his views, and that the profession is under obligation to him and Mr Catlow for the exertions they have made to take away from the more simple of the mesmeric phenomena the mystery which surrounded them. They show, that the causes inducing the sleep, the stare, the isolation, the monotony, &c., act with tolerable certainty, and that thus hypnotism, animal magnetism, *aut quocunque alio nomine gaudet*, is gradually acquiring that attribute of science of which it has hitherto been so deficient,—exactness. We have no doubt, that as the true portions of the phenomena become divested of the magic and jugglery which have hitherto surrounded them, they will be investigated by great numbers of our medical brethren; and we are not without some hope, that from this extended and searching investigation, good to humanity and to the science of medicine will result.

#### PHRENO MESMERISM.

We now come to phreno-mesmerism; and on this subject we shall be brief; because although it forms the chief attraction of the drawing-room and the platform, it is by no means universally admitted into works on mesmerism. The phrenologists, finding themselves assailed on all hands as to the truth of the mapping out of the brain, gladly called in the aid of mesmerism, and the result has been, that mesmerism has smothered this part of the science with too much and with too circumstantial evidence. We consider that the phrenologists have done serious injury to their science, by entering into this alliance with mesmerism. A science, *based at least*, as human and comparative anatomy prove, on

<sup>1</sup> That which we have learnt, or at least that which has been demonstrated to us in a clear and satisfactory manner, by our examination into the magnetic processes, is, that man can influence man, at any moment, and almost at pleasure, by striking his imagination;—that gestures and signs the most trifling may have the most powerful effect;—that the influence of man upon the imagination may be reduced to an art, and conducted according to rule, upon persons who have faith." Mr Braid's system of hypnotism, however, requires no faith. He tells one of his lady patients who pleaded her want of faith, that he did not care about her faith, if she could only sit down and stare. She was speedily hypnotised.



truth, and capable, in all probability, by means of close and laborious observation, of gradually opening up to us more correct notions of the operations of the mind than we at present possess, has thus been travestied, and thrown back in public estimation. The wildest and most fanciful doctrines of phrenology have been attempted to be advanced, by a machinery so clumsy, so ridiculous, so inadequate to the results aimed at, that even the illiterate have treated the attempt with derision, while the lovers of knowledge have been compelled to smile, while they sighed at the folly. Of the innumerable patients who have exhibited the phreno-mesmeric phenomena, that a portion have been guiltless of all deceit, we cordially admit; but we believe that the great majority have been tricksters, who, for the love of money, or a joke, have cheated the operators. We shall give an instance of a case, wherein we believe the patient was guiltless of collusion, and of another, where there was trickery; and these, we imagine, will be found types of all the phreno-mesmeric cases recorded. A young lady, who had been afflicted with chorea for many years, who could not stretch out her arm without exciting spasmodic action, which generally induced the fit, was told that mesmerism would probably cure her. She was in high spirits and hope on the subject, and an itinerant mesmeriser was brought to perform the manipulations. From having had fits daily, she was said to have escaped for some days in succession; her spirits were improved, her digestion was better, and she seemed in a fair way towards recovery. At this stage of her complaint, she was exhibited as one of the marvels of mesmeric power. After a few passes from the mesmeriser, he announced that she was in "the sleep;" and it certainly was difficult to believe, that the being before us, a gentle and pious girl—one who had not left her room for many years—to whom the world and its attractions were dead—and whose pale saint-like features spoke of many a past hour of agony and prayer,—it was difficult to believe that *she* could be willing to deceive. Nor did we believe it. Though in chorea, as in hysteria, in all its forms, it is reasonable and philosophical to suspect deceit, whenever any unwonted phenomena arise, there was something in the placidity and the previously known character of the patient, which forbade us to form this opinion. She displayed,—the assumed position of the organ of Veneration being touched,—a lifting of the hands, face, and eyes to heaven;<sup>1</sup> and on Tune being touched, she sang, in a low voice, a verse of a hymn.

This was all; but if true, this was ample. We should remark, before going farther, that the hope which had at first sustained her having failed, the young lady was, shortly after the scene narrated, as ill as ever. Now, struck with the above phenomena, we made careful inquiry, and found, that although the lady had been often mesmerised before, she had never manifested the phreno-mesmeric phenomena, until she came under the hands of the peripatetic spoken of. He touched Veneration and Tune, *mentioning, at the same time, the results that would follow.* The results followed of course; and any one acquainted with the phenomena of hysteria, of which chorea is a species, would have predicted it *a priori*. Now this was an instance in which there was probably no willing deceit in the patient at least. The operator induced the phenomena by well-known means. We have seen other instances of phreno-mesmerism in which, although no results followed the mere touching of the organs, the appropriate phenomena were manifested when the slightest suggestion was made. And so superior was the suggestion to the manipulations of the organ itself, that on *touching* Combativeness and *mentioning* Tune, we had a song, and on touching Veneration and suggesting Combativeness, we had a pugnacious exhibition. Our belief is, that the patients—hysterical girls or excitable boys—after gazing intently upwards for a time, feel strange and unpleasant symptoms in their eyes

<sup>1</sup> Mr Newham, in his lately published work on Human Magnetism, after a well-reasoned chapter against phreno-mesmerism, declares his belief, that the phenomena so designated are to be explained by clairvoyance,—the somnambule displaying the faculties to which the operator, in touching the various organs, silently refers! He has thus drawn down upon himself the maledictions of the *Zoist*.



and head, are confused and sleepy, and closing their eyes either at the command of the mesmeriser, or in consequence of weakness of the eyelids and eyes, are perfectly willing to believe that they are in some extraordinary condition, (mesmeric if the learned call it so), and are also perfectly ready to follow any suggestion made by the operator. The Abbé Faria found it sufficient, after placing his patients in position, to cry "*Dormez!*" and he often succeeded thus in bringing on the mesmeric sleep. Mr Braid in his *Neurypnology* (see preface and chapter vi.) gives a great number of cases in which the phrenological organs were influenced when the patients were hypnotised. Twenty organs brought out at the first sitting, in patients before sceptical, is more than once mentioned. "Such," says Mr Braid, "is the power of hypnotism." As he is no mesmerist, neither does he hold the phrenological organ theory. He has a theory of his own, of which the following fragments will furnish a tolerable idea. "Philoprogenitiveness, by calling into action the recti and occipito frontalis muscles, gives the rocking motion, and hence the idea of nursing, &c.: pressure on the vertex, by calling into action all the muscles requisite to sustain the body in the erect position, excites the idea of unyielding firmness; veneration and benevolence, from giving the tendency to stoop and suppress the breathing, thus create the corresponding feelings," and so on. Verily, this is a theory more curious than complimentary to the phrenologists, who thus find all their own artillery seized and pressed into the service of hypnotism. We no longer wonder that Mr Braid developed twenty organs at a first sitting; and we cannot help, on seeing the fanciful enthusiasm with which he illustrates this portion of his subject, reflecting, that it is necessary to recollect this quality of his mind, in perusing the list of startling cures which he has narrated. Nevertheless, his little book is curious, and well worthy of perusal. But of the phreno-mesmeric patients, the grand majority, in our opinion, are rogues, with or without the knowledge of their mesmerisers. We have known some instances where the mesmerisers were deceived by the patients; the operators being induced thereto by their own vanity, credulity, and love of effect, and we have known other instances where both mesmerisers and mesmerisees were tricking. Some little time ago a lecturer exhibited four patients to a respectable and numerous audience in a fashionable watering place in England. The catalepsy and phreno-mesmeric manifestations were very remarkable, and even highly satisfactory, to the intelligent audience. One individual objected to the experiments; but he was hissed down. This individual, however, afterwards examined in the presence of a number of gentlemen, the whole of these four patients, and after they had gone through the same manifestations as on the platform, he extracted from them all a confession that they had from first to last been tricking!

As a type of the phreno-mesmeric cases, let us instance one of the above lads, who had for nearly three years, in numerous drawing-room and public séances, displayed phenomena, which, in the opinion of the spectators, incontrovertibly proved, not only the truth of mesmerism, but also of phrenology,—meaning by this the mapping out of the brain.

At 20 minutes past 3 the mesmerisee arrived. His wary look of low cunning showed that he was prepared for scrutiny, and was not to be easily circumvented. By various observations and questions, having succeeded in lulling as much as possible his suspicions of our intentions, we got him to permit us to try to put his arm into a state of catalepsy; in which, after some time, we succeeded. It remained perfectly rigid, and by and by the fingers became white, stiff, and, as he declared, perfectly insensible. We took care to state our great surprise at the curious and extraordinary phenomena, and he appeared convinced that we were fast becoming a convert. (Every old soldier understands the method by which the axillary artery can be nearly occluded, and, consequently, the warmth and sensibility of the arm and fingers reduced in an extraordinary degree.) We now essayed our mesmeric powers,—a good while elapsed before the patient's eyelids closed; he was apparently still a little suspicious, and after divers quiverings of the eyelids, and slow upturnings of the eyes—done in the most accredited manner of the mesmeric platform—he fairly opened his eyes and said, he feared "it would not do." A second attempt, made with more faith, succeeded,



and having been stroked down *secundum artem* for some time, he pronounced himself, on inquiry, asleep; and, furthermore, said—"he would sleep for half an hour if he were not awakened." We now addressed ourselves to those organs commonly known among such persons as this patient,—the dramatic organs,—the organs of the platform and drawing-room,—Tune, Veneration, Firmness, Philoprogenitiveness, Combativeness, &c. With some of these he seemed pretty well acquainted; but in the case of Veneration, he required the slightly prompting question (in the sleep,) "Do you never say your prayers, my lad." Whereupon the impudent and shameless rogue instantly got up, put down his hand to bend one of his knees, *which was a little stiff*, and having kneeled, repeated the prayer—"Lighten our darkness, O Lord, we beseech thee," &c., not inappropriate in the present state of the science. On touching Tune, he sang in a most dolorous croak, "Rory O'More," to an air which Lover, the witty and admirable author of the melody and words, would have been horrified to hear. At Benevolence, he was at fault, until asking him if he never were kind to the poor, he began to fumble in his pockets, but finding nothing there, he remarked, that he had "nothing for the poor man." At Firmness, he always stood lumberingly erect, and on the finger being withdrawn, he always fell as lumberingly down. In falling, however, both in the public and private *séances*, he always reminded us of Dr Elliotson's description of the manner in which the sham-epileptics fall: "They never fall against the bars of the fire, or where they can be hurt, but they lie down *like a cow*, carefully and quietly." At Philoprogenitiveness, he moved and strained forward, saying, there was a child there, but he could not get at it. By and bye, having exerted himself in drawing it to him he said, "It is coming;" he then moved his hands as if scooping up the child, and then began dandling the ideal darling upon his knee, and singing "Lucy Long." At Combativeness, he went through the whole of his manœuvres as seen at the public exhibition, and with which the lecturer and his audience seemed so well satisfied. At Destructiveness, he always slapped his thigh with spite and vehemence, as if knocking off a wasp or reptile. At Imitation, he spoke short French and Latin sentences. The patient, no doubt, felt that we were now confirmed in the truth of phrenomesmerism. We therefore awakened him, by blowing on his breast and arms, according to the rule in such cases made and provided; and, finally, dismissed him with half-a-crown, evidently under the impression that he had cheated the Doctor handsomely. His mesmeric pretences on being awoke, his rubbing his eyes, and stretching himself, were the very essence of lubberly knavishness. Next day we procured three more of the boys who had been shown at the lecture, and mesmerised one of them before a friend. So slyly did this boy conduct "the phenomena," turning up his eyes until they presented the ghastliness which Mr Townshend asserts is characteristic of the mesmeric state, that our highly intelligent friend, though warned beforehand that the whole was a trick, declared his belief of the reality of the manifestations, and was only induced on the confession of the boy to give up his opinion. Two days afterwards, we brought the whole of these patients before a few friends in a private *séance*, wherein there were two devout believers in mesmerism. The whole of the patients went into the sleep, and showed all the "manifestations" which they had exhibited at the public lecture. One by one, after they had shown these manifestations, they confessed, on being threatened with justice, that the whole was trick. It was objected by the mesmerisers, who, of course, were much annoyed by the exposure, that this was not a fair way to procure evidence; but in what other way could it be wrung from knaves? One of the lads was nineteen or twenty years of age,—old enough to despise all fear of justice, unless he were conscious of guilt. The details of these confessions were highly ludicrous and circumstantial, and showed the *modus operandi* of preparing patients for mesmeric lectures in a new light. Moreover, the whole of the patients, some days after their exposure, when under no fear whatever, but when the whole business was treated as a jest, signed a document to the effect that they had never been asleep, and that the mesmeric influence had passed—in the shape of small silver coins of the realm—from the lecturer to themselves, the common "mesmeric medium," we suspect, of the platform. A curious phenomenon occurred in the examination



of the eldest lad, who had for so many years carried on his system of deceit. On touching Combativeness, he struck out with great energy, whereupon he gradually wheeled him round to the wall, and *powerfully exciting the organ*, he was compelled to strike vigorously, or subject himself to suspicion. Accordingly, he struck the wall a smart blow or two. We here cried to the spectators, "Behold a true mesmeric case; would this lad injure himself *if he were sensible?*" The patient, on this, of course, struck out more decidedly, hitting his knuckles pretty severely against the wall. By and by, however, finding the ordeal too severe, (for, we confess, the experiment was so interesting, that we prolonged it,) the phreno-somnambule *opened his fists*, and shot his flat hand in a slanting direction upon it, to the great chagrin of the mesmerisers present. Then, by way of bringing the business to a close, he attempted to strike a portrait of our respected teacher, Liston, which happened to hang near him.<sup>1</sup> At the public lecture, his legs had been catalepted, and half-a-crown was placed before him, which he was to have by stooping for it. We were sorry not to have proposed at the time, that a few sovereigns should be put down by the lecturer; it would have punished him appropriately; for, on being asked in his confession what he would have done had five guineas instead of half-a-crown been thrown at his feet, the somnambule replied, with the genuine sparkle of gratified low cunning, that "he would have picked it up, and laughed in the lecturer's face."

In fine, the result of our inquiries into the subject of phreno-mesmerism has been to convince us, that a few persons in perfect good faith have shown certain manifestations on the corresponding organs being touched, from an association in their own minds between the organ manipulated and the effects expected to arise;—these have had some knowledge, however trifling, of the phrenological organs; that the greater number of those who have exhibited phreno-mesmerism in good faith, have had, in the first instance, the manifestations suggested to them, and have afterwards imitated those manifestations on the same organs being touched,<sup>2</sup> "*ipsi sibi somnia fingunt;*" and that the grand majority are tricky boys, or hysteric girls, who partly dupe, and partly are duped. Meantime, immense numbers of new organs have been discovered and called into action, so that were Gall and Spurzheim to return to earth, they would find the outlines they drew on the skull so "filled in" by the mesmerists, as no longer to be recognised by themselves.

#### THE MESMERIC MEDIUM.

It is scarcely necessary for us, after the opinions previously expressed, to enter into the subject of the mesmeric medium, in the investigation of which the philosophical writers on mesmerism have expended so much learning and ingenuity. In the attempt to clear up the mysteries of clairvoyance, &c., the writings of the higher order of mesmerists are full of what Wordsworth eloquently calls,

"Those obstinate questionings  
Of sense and unknown things,—  
Blank misgivings of a creature  
Moving about in worlds not realised,  
High instincts, before which our mortal nature  
Doth tremble like a guilty thing surprised."

Mr Townshend—one of the most eloquent and acute of those theorists—has lost himself in a German ocean of metaphysics; and swimming about in the mysteries of mind and of life, though he makes many a vigorous dive for truth, he

<sup>1</sup> When this lad confessed, one of the mesmerisers stoutly asserted that he had been asleep; and the patient as stoutly asserted that he had not—reminding him that in his sham sleep, he had struck the picture, &c. The earnestness with which the somnambule asserted his roguery, and the obstinacy with which the mesmeriser insisted, in spite of his confession, in convicting him of innocence, was a droll exhibition of knavery on the one hand, and credulity on the other.

<sup>2</sup> That ultimate law of the mind, which ordains that the repetition of a definite sensation shall be followed by a renovation of the past feelings with which it was before associated."—HIBBERT, *Philosophy of Apparitions*.



seems to us to grasp nothing but water, which slips from his fingers even whilst he is holding up his prize triumphantly to our gaze.

A notice of mesmerism, however, would not be complete unless it glanced at the reasonings and theories by which men of genius and science have been led to advocate and attempt to explain the wonders of their science. We shall, therefore, very briefly allude to them.

"The sleep-waker, then," says Mr Townshend, "does not *divine* what passes in the mind of others,—he reads it 'by the media and language understood by him alone.' The power of reading this language is elsewhere denominated 'an instinct.' But what is the language, and on what impressed? Mr Townshend believes in the existence of a 'pervading medium' of thought, analogous to the luminiferous ether, or the electric medium; but his medium is infinitely more subtle than the luminiferous ether, and his theory one to which the undulatory is coarse and palpable.

A few quotations from his article on the Mesmeric Medium will place his views fairly before the reader.

"Other points of resemblance between the sentient and the mesmeric medium may be found. It appeared probable that the former, from its action from a distance, and the rapidity of its communications, was, like the luminous ether, of an elastic and vibratory nature,—Now considerations of a similar kind induce us to come to a similar conclusion with respect to the mesmeric medium."

"The idea of a material substance emanating from the body is absurd."

The phenomena of community of sensation are said by Mr Townshend to resemble those of sympathetic vibration produced by tremors of the air. "Mesmeric action is capable of communicating impulses to the human system from a distance." Thus, for example, a note sent to a distance produced mesmeric results upon the recipient! Then Mr Townshend asserts—

"Every thought moves the brain in an appropriate manner." "A pervading medium being allowed to exist throughout nature, (such as the electric), it follows, as a consequence, that every thought which moves the brain imparts motion also to the ethereal medium. Mesmerised persons being in a state of extreme sensibility are cognisant of the motions of finer media than common.

"The motions created by the thoughts of other persons being transferred through the brain, and through a certain medium to the sensorium of a mesmerised person, *are to him intelligible signs of thought*, a language which, though new to him at first, he, by a gradual process of association, gives meaning to, and learns to comprehend."

Thus, then, in brief, Mr Townshend infers,—Thought moves the brain; then, that particular thoughts produce particular motions; then he infers a medium, through which these particular motions are conveyed to the lucid mind of the somnambule; then he infers an intuitive interpretation of all these particular impressions, effected by the particular cerebral motions produced by the particular thoughts, and thus he *explains* the method by which one individual can read the mind of another! Is it necessary to pass one word of comment upon all this ingenious folly?

With respect to seeing objects at great distances, the theories of the animal magnetisers remind us of that of Lucretius from whom possibly they are derived. Lucretius, like Dr Elliotson, was an avowed materialist, and, like him, believed in apparitions, (for what else is it to see the forms of persons distant hundreds of miles?—clairvoyance), though his philosophy obliged him to maintain that the soul and body did not exist separate. Lucretius, indeed, seems to have found it impossible to deny the existence of apparitions, to a belief in which the general superstition of the Romans was extremely favourable; and in order to reconcile it with his philosophy, he constructed one of the most fantastic and unphilosophical theories that ever, before mesmeric times, entered into the mind of man. In his 4th book, l. 33, &c.—*De Rerum Natura*—he says:—

"Nunc agere incipiam tibi, quod vehementer ad has res  
Adtinet, esse ea, quæ RERUM SIMULACRA VOCAMUS;  
Quæ, quasi membranæ summo de corpore rerum  
Dereptæ, volitant ultro, citroque, per auras;  
Atque eadem, nobis vigilantibus obvia, menteis



Terrificant, atque in somnis, quom saepe figuras  
Contuimur miras, simulacraque luce carentum;" &c.<sup>1</sup>

"Haste we next t' unfold

Those forms minute, a theme connected close,  
Term'd by the learned IMAGES OF THINGS:  
Forms that, like pellicles, when once thrown off  
Clear from the surface of what ere exists,  
Float unrestrained through ether. Fearful these  
Oft through the day, when obvious to the sense,  
Bu. chief at midnight, when in dreams we view  
Dire shapes and apparitions, from the light  
Shut out for ever, and each languid limb  
With horror gaunt convulsing in its sleep."

*Mason Good's Translation.*

For our own part, as we cannot bring ourselves to believe in any clairvoyant story yet related, we are disposed to think that the mesmeric medium will often be found, (as in the case of the boys related,) to consist of the current coin, and that if it bear any resemblance to the current electric, it is when it is a medium with knavery at the positive, and credulity at the negative pole.

We here close our review of the incredible portion of the mesmeric manifestations, and gladly emerge from the mystic obscurities amid which we have been wandering, to a clearer atmosphere, and a world of realities.

"Now at last the sacred influence

Of light appears, and from the walls of heaven  
Shoots far into the bosom of dim night  
A glimmering dawn; there Nature first begins  
Her furthest verge, and chaos to retire."—*Milton.*

#### THE SIMPLER PHENOMENA OF MESMERISM.

In the phenomena which we have hitherto examined, there is nothing analogous to what has been heretofore observed and acknowledged as fact; we have therefore looked for more substantial and incontrovertible evidence of the truth of the alleged conditions, and not finding it, we are thrown back on unbelief. We not only find that every possible precaution against error has not usually been taken, but that in the more notorious cases of clairvoyance, some of which we have quoted, wherein it was asserted that the most rigid scrutiny *had* been employed, failure was nevertheless the result. In almost every case of every writer, we find a degree of laxity which would be reprehensible even in the investigation of common phenomena, while generally there is displayed so strong a tendency to adjust the "manifestations" to a preconceived theory, as totally to preclude the probability of the observer coming to correct conclusions.

That phenomena like those of lucidity, the prophetic power, &c., should have attached themselves to mesmerism, no one familiar with the history of popular delusions will be surprised to learn. In all ages of the world powers of this nature have been the attributes of false prophets, and supernatural systems of every kind. From the Magi of Egypt and India, down to Johanna Southcote and the prophet of the Mormonites, the power of foretelling future events, and some of the phenomena of clairvoyance, have been the staple commodities employed.

It is not difficult to trace the origin of the belief in some of these marvels. The authentic reports of cases of highly exalted vision and hearing probably originated the idea of lucidity—the tendency in very excitable persons to the fulfilment of events connected with themselves, which they have foretold, the events being brought about by the very fact of their having foretold it,—has apparently formed the basis of the belief in *prevision*; while the curative power, having been, for obvious reasons, an almost constant attendant on mira-

<sup>1</sup> Lucretius tells us, "that the surfaces of all bodies are perpetually flying off from their respective bodies one after another; and that these surfaces, or their cases that included each other, whilst they were joined in the body, like the coats of an onion, are sometimes seen entire when they are separated from it, by which means we often behold the shapes and shadows of persons who are either dead or absent."—*Addison.*



culous endowments, has naturally been appropriated by the supernatural agency of the day,—mesmerism.<sup>1</sup>

But in the miraculous “facts” themselves there is so lamentable a want of trust-worthy evidence, that although the statements concerning them have been before the public in connexion with mesmerism for sixty years, the belief accorded to them among calm-minded and scientific men, does not seem to have advanced one step since the days of Mesmer.

With respect to the simpler phenomena which remain for examination, strange and curious as some of them are, the state of things is widely different. Conditions of the human body similar or analogous to them have been long known to exist; testimony of the highest kind has placed their existence beyond dispute; and the question only remains,—are these conditions really induced by the agency to which, by the animal magnetists, they are attributed?

We refer to the sleep, the coma, the convulsions, the impaired or lost sensibility, the catalepsy, reverie, and somnambulism.

Writers on mesmerism agree, that the sleep is the most uniform of the phenomena—that many persons are not subject to it—that some of those who are, only go into a semi-somnolent state—that females of excitable systems are most easily affected—that the sleep often deepens into coma, is frequently attended with an altered state of the consciousness—that there is sometimes great elevation, sometimes great depression of feeling—that all the senses are occasionally deadened to all impressions—that sometimes a cataleptic, sometimes a convulsive condition is induced—that a state similar to reverie, wherein the will of the mesmeriser seems to direct the actions of the patient, frequently occurs, and that more rarely a state of genuine somnambulism appears, wherein there is high exaltation of some of the faculties with depression of others—a concentration of the powers on particular objects, with complete apathy in relation to every thing else, the events of which state on awaking are not recollected, but which vividly appear to the mind when the patient is again placed in the state of somnambulism. But let us place the subject before our readers in the words of mesmeric authors of repute.

Mr Townshend, in his 4th case, describes the case of P. S., an under graduate of Trinity College, thus:—“In about ten minutes his eyelids drooped, and closed gradually; his head followed my hand; his features became fixed and rigid; his colour fled, and a dead stillness came over his countenance: the change was the more striking, on account of the usually animated and mobile character of his physiognomy. It painfully resembled the alteration caused by death. Nevertheless, on being interrogated as to his state, he declared that he was well, with the exception of a slight pain in the back of his head, which was shortly relieved by the mesmeric passes. To other questions, he replied, that he did not sleep, but was unable to move or to open his eyes.”

Kluge describes six degrees of magnetisation, of which the first three are,—

“1st, The sensation of a current from the head to the extremities; slight redness; increase of heat, ascertainable by the thermometer; perspiration; general ease and comfort.

“2d, Increased heat appearing to the patient to spread out from the stomach as from a centre; pulse becomes fuller and stronger; breathing deeper; there is heaviness, then closure of the eyes, and incapability of opening them. The patient is perfectly conscious, though not always able to speak. Hearing, smelling, taste, and touch, are acute—often extremely so. Sparks or luminous halos, prickings, twitchings, shuddering, uneasiness at the stomach, and sickness, occasionally follow.

“3d, Yawning, stretching, sighing, deep sleep, in which the patient has nei-

<sup>1</sup> The fanatics at the sepulchre of St Paris; the tremblers of Cevennes; the Ursuline nuns, in 1632, possessed by evil spirits; Valentine Greatraks, in Ireland; Jean Joseph Gassner, in Germany; and many other instances are alluded to by writers on mesmerism. Some of these possessed only the curative power; others knew languages they had never studied, possessed the prophetic power, could dive into the thoughts of others, and were insensible to pain. Deleuze, in his *History of Animal Magnetism*, Paris, 1813, shows the influence of mesmerism in some of the most extraordinary of these cases. *Credat Judæus Apella, non ego.*



ther sensation nor consciousness. Occasionally, tremblings, faintings, convulsions, catalepsy, and even apoplexy."<sup>1</sup>

Deleuze, p. 49 of his *Instruction Pratique sur le Magnétisme*, says, "The person magnetised is compelled to close his eyes,—his eyes are so shut up that he cannot open them, he has a calm comfortable feeling,—he slumbers, he sleeps,—he awakens if spoken to, or else he awakens at the end of a certain period, and feels better. Sometimes the magnetisee passes into the state of somnambulism."

Now, there seems little in all these symptoms, making allowance for fancy, which may not be thus explained:—The fixed stare wearying the eyes, and inducing dimness and dizziness, the exhaustion of the retina, causing dilated pupils and other results, the repressed breathing and the position of the head arresting the return of the venous blood from the brain, and by thus keeping back from it its appropriate stimulus of arterial blood, inducing a comatose state,—the position of the cranium, in reference to the spinal cord, when gazing upwards continuously, by which, we suspect, some pressure upon the medulla oblongata is effected,<sup>2</sup>—these circumstances, together with the isolation of the mind, and the monotony thence resulting will, we think, be sufficient to account for the usual symptoms of the mesmeric coma, without resorting to any mystical influence exerted by man upon man.

At the same time, we by no means deny that, in addition to these physical influences, very important effects are to be ascribed to the moral agencies put into operation by mesmerism. Imagination, with her daughters and handmaids, Fear and Hope, are called into active exercise in mobile minds, by the mysterious acts of the mesmeriser. What class of persons is it which is most susceptible of the mesmeric influence? It is universally acknowledged that hysterical women constitute the grand majority of the somnambules,—and the diseases which are said to be principally benefited by mesmerism, prove that such is the case. Now, patients of this kind are peculiarly liable to be influenced by the presumed supernatural power of mesmerism.

Place a pale-faced hysterical girl in a chair, let some powerful mesmeriser make mystic passes before and around her, let him be placed *en rapport* with her, palm to palm, and knee to knee, and from the sensations physical and mental thus excited in her palpitating bosom, what results are too astonishing to be predicted? Tremors, spasms, convulsions, hysterics, in any and in every shape? Any sensible old matron would declare that such consequences would naturally follow. On a careful examination of mesmeric histories, we find that this is the class of patients which has displayed the most extraordinary phenomena,—young women and boys of an impressionable system, and that all the symptoms which are said to have occurred in persons in good health, are such as, we humbly conceive, may be accounted for by the physical effects of the stare. Our limits forbid us to quote cases in support of this opinion. Now, a very large proportion of persons suffer from the nervous diseases or disorders to which we refer,—epilepsy, and hysteria, in all its forms. The phenomena of these diseases, as described by writers on the practice of physic, are so similar to those of mesmerism, that in quoting Dr Elliotson, Watson, or Mason Good, we seem to be making extracts from Testé or Townshend. In every large town, there are numbers of patients of the kind spoken of, and as they are the persons most capable of being acted on by mesmerism, so they are the very persons who, from their morbid vanity, susceptibility, and love of attracting attention, submit themselves to the manœuvres of the mesmerist. It is not necessary to bring before the attention of medical men, cases to prove that many of the mesmeric conditions are precisely those of hysteria, in some or other of its forms,—chorea, reverie, trance, ecstasis, and catalepsy.

Dr Elliotson, for example, says, in hysteria,—“You will generally find that the insensibility is incomplete,—that the patient has some knowledge of what is going on around.” Sometimes boys and men, in very violent emo-

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from an article by Charles Radclyffe Hall, Esq., M.D., in the *Lancet*, Feb. 3, 1845, which we hope will be shortly published in a separate form.

<sup>2</sup> “Pressure upon the medulla oblongata always causes sleep.”—MAGENDIE.



tions, exhibit hysteria. "Any woman may have hysteria, if she have but emotion [of mind strong] enough." "I should suppose there is scarcely a woman who has not had hysteria in some slight degree." "The slightest cause induces it,"—and the mystery and excitement of mesmerism, by "striking the imagination," supplies an ample cause,—*the tendency being already in existence.*

Catalepsy Dr Elliotson describes as "merely a variety of hysteria." Dr Heberden mentions in his Commentaries, a case which presents some points of resemblance to the catalepsy of mesmerism. The woman was 36 years of age.

The pulse and breathing were natural, the eye was fixed, as if she was looking attentively at some object, the arm continued as it was placed for twenty minutes together, and once for a whole hour, and he was told that it would sustain a weight of seven pounds in any posture in which it was placed."

We had marked cases for quotation, and written some remarks to show that the spasm, insensibility, coma, &c., were in our opinion, merely hysterical conditions of the frame induced by the hypnotic stare, modified by the action of imagination, hope, and fear,—in short, by mesmerism—taking the word in a widely different sense from that attached to it by the animal magnetists. These remarks and cases our limits compel us to cancel—which we do the more cheerfully that, since drawing up our views on the subject,<sup>1</sup> a most admirable article by Dr Forbes has appeared in the *British and Foreign Medical Review*, in which the relation of hysteria to mesmerism is enforced and illustrated.

Somnambulism is acknowledged to be but seldom seen. "It is," says Mr Newnham, in his very excellent treatise, on "Human Magnetism," just published, "a comparatively rare phenomenon, and seems only to be found in certain peculiar constitutions, which, doubtless, under favourable circumstances for such disordered function, would become the subject of catalepsy, *natural* somnambulism, &c." M. Bertrand, also, "compares together natural somnambulism, that which shows itself in many diseases, that which is owing to the excitement of the imagination, and that which follows the magnetic treatment, and proves that all present analogous phenomena, and depend on the same cause."<sup>2</sup> We have here admitted, by mesmerists of repute, almost all that we contend for. That somnambulism occasionally, as the other hysteric phenomena, more generally, may,—*the tendency to it previously existing*,—be induced by the agency of the mesmeric passes and position, disturbing the balance of the cerebral circulation, and "striking the imagination," we can readily believe, but instead of classing animal magnetism with the other unknown causes of somnambulism, as if it were that the mesmeric fluid, for this is what is meant, had this specific action on the brain, we think it would be more correct to say, that the patient is so influenced by the state of his brain, and his emotions, that the unknown condition inducing somnambulism is produced.

The insensibility induced by mesmerism has been dwelt on by all writers; and in its relation to disease, and especially to surgical operations, has, perhaps, taken as much hold of the public mind as any of the other phenomena.

Could such an insensibility be safely and surely induced, it would be one of the greatest boons bestowed by Providence upon man. That a certain degree of insensibility may frequently be caused by the hypnotic stare we are convinced, but whether it could be safely induced, so as to be useful in operations, we think very doubtful. Still, this is a branch of the subject which ought to be diligently cultivated, with a view to obtain correct and full information.

The state of the question at present stands thus. It is asserted that multitudes of minor operations have been performed without pain in the mesmeric trance, and that four or five important operations have been also rendered painless from the same cause. With regard to the minor operations, such as those of drawing teeth, and cutting for strabismus, we may dismiss them, as, at all events, not furnishing evidence unequivocally proving the painlessness. For nothing is more common than for a patient to declare, that "they had not felt the tooth come out," and the very sight of the instruments or the sound of the dentist's bell, has frequently dissipated the pain. As to strabismus, we have

<sup>1</sup> Had space permitted, this article should have appeared in our April number.

—EDITOR

<sup>2</sup> See Deleuze "Instruction Pratique sur le Magnétisme," note 7, p. 382.



seen many scores of patients submit to it without complaint; and these too were generally the young women. In the case of Madame Plantin, who had her breast amputated in the mesmeric state—she conversing with the operator all the while, and declaring afterwards that she was unconscious of the operation, —there is unfortunately some doubt, for it is said that Plantin confessed afterwards that she had felt, but had resolved to conquer her emotion. Whether this be correct or not, it is now too late to inquire; but that the feelings may be thus controlled, a fact that the public generally disbelieve, we can furnish many cases to prove.

One most interesting case we give in the words of the intelligent medical friend to whom we are indebted for it.

“When I was a pupil at St George’s Hospital, I think in 1811, there was a little boy, some 6 or 7 years old, who had to undergo the operation of lithotomy. He was alarmed; but having, through the great kindness of his nurse, formed a strong attachment towards her, he promised, that if the nurse were allowed to remain in the operating room, he would not only consent to the operation, but would not cry. The humble request was granted, and the little boy, blind-folded, was carried to the operating table, and bound in the usual way. I saw him brought in—I was near him—and could hear every sound of his voice. He wanted to keep hold of the nurse’s hand, but that was impracticable; so he called out,—‘Nurse, are you there?’ ‘Yes, my dear.’ ‘Do not go, and I will not cry.’ As the operator’s knife was used, the child cried out *in his usual tone*, ‘Nurse, are you there?’ ‘Yes, my dear.’ ‘I told you, I would not cry; and I won’t.’ And thus, through this painful operation, he kept talking to, and with his nurse; but no cry, no groan, not a murmur escaped his lips! The impression made upon my mind by this scene will never pass away whilst my powers of memory remain. There was no preparation: it was a self-formed idea: there was no applause or profit to be won:—all was simple nature at its most guileless age.” Our friend, whose high character, and strict precision in matters of evidence, render his testimony peculiarly valuable, furnishes another case, in which he amputated the thigh of a man who displayed perfect non-chalance. “No cry escaped him—not a groan—not a sigh—not a movement of the limb. I might as well have operated on inanimate matter.” We remember also a man who, during an operation for hernia, displayed entire absence of feeling: it was remarked, that the operator might as well have been cutting a piece of leather. Two cases have been particularly dwelt on by mesmerists. One, an amputation of the thigh by Mr Ward, of Wellow, in Nottinghamshire, the patient being mesmerised by Mr Topham. This is the case which caused such violent discussion in the London Royal Medico-Chirurgical Society. The second case is that of Mary Ann Lakin, whose thigh was amputated by Mr Toswill of Leicester, in the presence of a number of gentlemen, Mr Hollings being the mesmeriser. It stands upon the testimony of all the gentlemen present, that both these patients *declared they felt no pain*. A moaning, all but inaudible, was heard from the patients in both instances.

These patients had both been frequently mesmerised, and had been thus wound up to the operation. It is impossible now to gain the exact truth with regard to these two cases. Two of the gentlemen, in one case, differed from the other, at the time. If the patients were both bent on being notorious, as proofs of the efficacy of mesmerism, we see nothing more wonderful in their suppressing their cries and gestures of pain, than what has frequently been the result of pride or honest resolution. The motive was quite as strong as that which keeps the poor soldier or sailor silent under the lash,—much more powerful than that which enabled the child, whose case we have quoted, to repress all symptoms of the agony which he must have felt.

Perhaps, however, in the girl especially, a state of hysterical insensibility may have been produced, during which, the pain of the operation might not in reality be felt.

Though in Germany, France, and other Continental kingdoms, mesmerism, confined to the hands of the medical profession, has been extensively tried in surgical diseases, we have extremely few cases, in which it is even asserted, that



operations have been performed without pain. This leads us to infer, that the requisite condition can but rarely be induced, and makes us fear, that it will never be capable of being resorted to with confidence in surgical practice. But even if we be able to produce the insensibility with as great certainty and facility as many mesmerists, and Mr Braid by means of hypnotism, assert that it may be induced—we should still have to inquire whether it can be done with safety to the patient. Would there be no danger of convulsions or unmanageable spasm being induced in a state of the nervous system, such as that spoken of? The recollection of a circumstance which took place after the amputation of the thigh of an epileptic patient, excites this inquiry. During the operation, the patient was very quiet,—but it was evident that he was about to have an epileptic seizure. By a strong effort of mind, as he thought afterwards, he was able to keep off the fit; but after he was placed in bed, and the surgeon was just withdrawing his hand from under the stump, after placing it on the pillow, he went off into convulsions, flung the stump violently about in the air, and burst open the plasters, causing fearful hemorrhage. It was necessary, in consequence, to open the wound, and take up two arteries. Now what certainty have we, that in insensibility produced by hypnotism or mesmerism, similar results might not follow? If it is only in hysterical patients that the condition can be induced,—have we not all too frequently seen the insensibility of hysteria pass suddenly into convulsive action, to induce us to resort to such a means of saving a patient pain? And with such a *possibility* even before him, would the operator retain his calmness?

To sum up the results of our inquiry, we think there is evidence that the sleep, coma, impaired sensibility, convulsions, and hysterical phenomena, *may* be induced by mesmerism, and many of the same phenomena by hypnotism,—but that their results are caused by the condition of the brain, and the emotions of the patient,—that in short they are caused from within, and are not the result of any specific action or fluid passing from the mesmeriser. With regard to the higher phenomena, we think that there is not evidence before the public, sufficient to justify any rational sceptic in believing one iota of any of them. The fact that many of the professors of the art are men of great intelligence and undoubted benevolence, has made it a somewhat painful task for us to speak of what we believe to be their delusions in the manner which truth demanded,—we console ourselves, however, with the reflection, that the mesmerisers in general have been too liberal in their invectives against our profession, to wish that we should not, in our turn, speak out frankly and plainly. One of them, at our ear just now, tells us that we are bigots—that we shut ourselves out from knowledge by obstinate incredulity—that their science is firm as the pyramids of Egypt, and will stand for ever. To this we can only meekly reply, that their credulity and ignorance is at least as likely as our bigotry to shut them out from knowledge—and that if there is any resemblance between their science and the pyramids, it is, in being based on the sand, and in being a pyramid of error inverted on an apex of truth.

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