

# THE ANTI-MESMERIST.

"THE EARTH HATH BUBBLES, AS THE WATER HAS,  
AND THESE ARE OF THEM."

SHAKSPEARE.

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## INTRODUCTION.

It would seem almost unnecessary to multiply illustrations in proof that Mesmerism receives no support from phreno magnetism or clairvoyance; but it is often urged that if ninety-nine supposed cases shall be disproved, and only one established, this one position is worth all the negatives that can be accumulated—"Though I fail a thousand times, if I can succeed once, *only once*, in exhibiting a clear, indisputable instance of clairvoyance, or indeed any other mesmeric phenomenon, the science is established, and after that, it becomes a mere question of more or less"—is the frequent argument of lecturers; and it is sound reasoning, because *what is, is*, and no number of extrinsic negations can prove a thing to be, and not to be, at the same instant. Mesmerism, if true! like all science, may be demonstrated in two modes—one moral, the other physical; either its effects on the body are so palpable, and so different from effects producible by other means, that we are restrained to admit a new, or at all events, long unknown agent, as their cause; or, the declaration of individuals affected are worthy of all credit, and cannot be contradicted. But it will be readily allowed that no assertion which involves a miracle, or in other words a departure from the *known* laws of nature, can be received as evidence unless supported by substantial proofs. Take an example; gravity is a known common law; a stone may be supported in air by the interposition between it and the earth, of some opposing power; remove that power and the stone falls; it ever has fallen, and ever will fall, until the laws which govern the material world, shall be altered. It will fall too, with different degrees of velocity and force, according to its height from the ground. Now, if it shall be found that descending bodies obey some general rule; if a stone always falls 16 feet in the first second of time, 48 feet in the next, and 80 in the third; and if this be ever true of similar stones under similar circumstances, then does the knowledge of this fact become the expression of a law, and

if several such immutable facts can be discovered, the knowledge of them becomes a science; from the Latin word "*scientia*," which signifies "knowledge;" therefore it follows that if any one phenomenon can be exhibited in the human frame not obedient to the governing laws already known, we must admit a new law by whatever name we may choose to call it; and a sufficient series of phenomena invariably apparent will constitute a science, and Mesmerism would be as good a name to give to it as any other. But in a case of this kind, the testimony must be of the most indisputable character—the facts of the most demonstrative nature. It will not do to say "we have seen this, we have seen that;" human testimony is only credible upon credible subjects; but no departure from known truths can rest upon it, unless corroborated by accompanying or descriptive circumstances. Did the marvellous occurrences detailed in the bible depend solely upon human testimony, we should be warranted in rejecting them; but if we find shells and bones upon the mountain top, which were once inhabitants of the deep sea, the belief that the waters of the ocean did once cover the highest hills is an inevitable inference. The deluge then, (one or many) improbable, nay almost impossible, as it may appear to us, who live in an age, where no such mighty changes are going on, is a fact, a proved fact, and may be taken as the basis whereon to build a system or a science. Could Mr. Vernon or any man shew us a fact, we quarrel not with his theory, but we deny that any single fact has yet been manifested, which is not consonant with known laws, and explicable by them. The grand error consists in admitting that there has been. "Give me a fulcrum," said Archimedes, "and I will move the world." "Admit one fact," say the Mesmerists, "and the science is proved;" granted! twenty times granted! now shew us your facts! and the challenge is accepted; hundreds of facts are said to have been privately ascertained, and the most striking, the most satisfactory, are publicly exhibited. All this is straight forward and fair; you claim an influence which we deny; in support of it you adduce facts, which we deny also. Urged to the proof you seek for the best, and you produce them. We meet you, examine these proofs, look into the facts, and what do we find? Why, a system of collusion and deception, of trickery and fraud, which has no parallel in the history of folly or of crime; and when every patient thus publicly tested invariably breaks down; when one juggle after another is exposed, as scrutiny becomes more perfect, we are met by the impudent assertion "oh! we don't care for these failures; the thing has been accomplished, although we

cannot shew it you, and present failure is no disproof of past success." If it were a question of probability, or even possibility, this would be sound argument, but when all testimony is against the assertion, it can only be considered as a falsehood. Take for illustration the supposed cases of clairvoyance:—Mr. Hewes' boy Jack, at Greenwich, was over and over again voted to exhibit this wonderful faculty; in spite of the proof to the contrary, which we ourselves exhibited, in spite of his own assertions to the contrary, he was voted even by our own audience to possess clairvoyance; and yet this very boy has been so detected at Manchester, that his employer has given him up. The history of Jane Knowles contains the same evidence of faith versus facts; for months she has been before the public, the London public—the reading and thinking public, which has fully admitted clairvoyance as an established fact upon her testimony. It matters nothing that she has never manifested, or pretended to manifest one single symptom of Mesmeric influence.—*She could read with her eyes blind-fold, that was sufficient*; and those who were hardy enough to doubt, were hooted, those who disputed, were fined. It matters nothing that her employer could shew no single departure from the natural condition; *she read!* that was enough; she might, and did, converse with anybody, as anybody would converse with her, adjust her dress, look about her, get up, play, and amuse herself; still *she read*, and therefore, she was "sleep-waking," not awake; and Mr. Blackwell was called upon to pay twenty pounds for denying it. And now, after it has been fully proved that when she does read, it is invariably *with her eyes*, and that she altogether fails when proper precautions are taken—after it has been demonstrated that when she does succeed, others can do precisely the same thing; see through the same plaister, through the same paper, and under the same handkerchief; we are coolly asked to admit that she *can* read, because a man whose whole career has been full of suspicion from first to last, says that he has seen her do it. Why, what a begging of the question is here!—this is the very thing to be proved, and failing proof, the whole thing sinks down into an infamous imposture. The *one* fact is not established; the hundred negatives are unantagonized; and as far as we have yet gone, there is no evidence whatever of the truth of Mesmerism. In further prosecuting this research, two courses are open to us; the one, to continue an examination of the evidences offered to the public in proof of each particular phenomenon, regardless of time or place; the other to give a brief history of our own personal adventures in search of the truth; concluding with a summary of the value of our evidence. We shall adopt both courses, although it will involve some egotism, because in so doing both our arguments will be advanced to a demonstrative result. We shall shew *that the best patients when fairly tested have ever broken down*, and that the parties exhibiting them are utterly unworthy of credit. We shall exhibit ignorance and knavery plotting together, and manifested even in the concoction of a handbill; moreover, the utter incapacity of a public audience to judge of science,

or detect a juggle, will be made most manifest. In the course of our narrative, some private exhibitions will be detailed; and we beg our readers to understand once and for all, that we do not impute deception to these. When we come to examine into the effects of imagination, we shall shew that death itself may be brought about by the action of a man's own mind upon his own body; but this has nothing whatever to do with Mesmeric influence, and those who say it has, are grossly ignorant of the whole matter.

## MODERN MESMERISM.

(Continued from page 14.)

The first mesmeric patient that we examined after Mr. Brooks', was one at Wadebridge, in Cornwall.

He was a young man who had created considerable interest in the County, by mesmeric exhibitions under circumstances so little likely to deceive, that to believe was less difficult than to doubt. Sir William Molesworth and Edward Gibbon Wakefield had both tested him in every possible way; and a more talented man than either of them, (Mr. William Norway,) challenged me to detect a fallacy. He was described as too simple to deceive, (as if cunning cannot be hid in the garb of innocence), and a day was appointed to test him.

A party assembled, and a surgeon had promised to bring his instruments, but he did not perform his promise, and this was the cause, it will be seen, of the failure of the first test. He was apparently put to sleep upon the sofa, and then we stated that "Mesmerism was making great strides in France—that we had been there and seen astonishing things, and could repeat them.—If the man were really mesmerized, his heart might be taken out and examined. It could then be replaced, and the wound sewn up, so that when he awoke he would be unconscious of any operation having been performed; but if he were not mesmerized, but merely feigning, the operation would kill him." Taking out a penknife, and removing his clothes, it was pretended to dissect out the heart; a sharp mark was made with the point of the knife, the anatomy described, a sponge called for to wipe up the blood, and the heart exposed. All this he stood unflinchingly, and well he might, seeing that his eyes were not bandaged; and with the back of one's head in his face, he could observe all that was going on. The experiment therefore failed; his clothes were put on, and Mr. Norway then commenced exhibiting the power of attraction, using the common method, which consists in standing before the patient and making forcible motions with the hand in the required direction. After awhile the man arose and followed my leader. The operator then went behind his patient, and drew or repulsed him at will; but it struck us that the patient could hear his retracing or advancing footsteps, so we quietly pushed Norway on one side, and took his place. Now, if Mesmerism were true, the man should not have been affected by us at all, instead of which as we walked he walked, although we directed the passes in one direction, our footsteps in another. Thus, if we drew him back with our hand, we advanced our feet; if we made forward passes, we retired, and in each case he followed the feet and not the hands, thus demonstrating that our suspicion was correct, and that the whole thing was a cheat.

He was now awakened, and taking Mr. Norway into another room, we requested him to put the patient asleep once more and again make him walk, "Let us say what we might." A few passes were made, and the farce began. After some preliminary remarks, we asked Mr. Norway if he could make him fall down, and upon his saying that he could, we asked him to make him fall on his *left side!* Norway commenced his passes as before, and with so much activity that the man must have been silly not to perceive them, but he seemed satisfied with the request, and not perceiving the trap, he leaned now this way, and now that, till at last, *plump he fell upon his left side*, as was required. Norway burst into a laugh and left the room. The man was dismissed and the failure acknowledged. As he passed the window he was heard

to say to his mother "Da think th'ave coot me mooch?" thus betraying his entire consciousness of an experiment made during pretended insensibility. It is difficult to decide whether this man was most fool or knave; he had succeeded in duping three of the first men in Cornwall; Did he deceive himself? Certain it is that up to the day of his death, he declared that "we had taken out his heart, washed it, and placed it on the right side of his chest, instead of in its proper place."

Another girl was detected in the same town, in the same manner. She fell as directed in opposition to the Mesmerizers intentions; and at St. Austell, a still richer specimen was afforded of ignorance beating science: Mr. Drew, a chemist there, volunteered to shew us a case past all suspicion, and would have ventured any wager upon our conversion. It was that of an old woman in the Workhouse. A Revd. and Honble. Gentleman, and an officer of rank, accompanied us to the appointment; a half silly old woman was introduced, and just as operations were about to commence, we offered her a shilling if she would not be mesmerized:—"What, I bain't to go to sleep thes time, bey I," was her appeal to Mr. Drew, "No! not if you can help it," was the triumphant reply. For thirty minutes "he stared at her, she stared at him," and one was affected just as much, and no more than the other. A shilling was now offered her if she would be mesmerized, "Then I bey to go to sleep thes time, am I," was her second appeal; "Yes," was the reply, "if you like," and she was off in two minutes and a half. She was then made to fall in any direction we pleased, in spite of all attempts to the contrary on the part of her Mesmerizer. Our readers will no more be converted by this case, than were we, although she did ask her father who had been dead twenty years, to "give her the bridle to fetch up the grey horse," which had been dead thirty years. *And Mr. Drew still believes in Mesmerism.* How it is that clever men, occasionally prove unable to deduce a necessary consequence from a palpable cause, we are at a loss to conceive. The cases we tested, if not the only ones, were at least the best, which the county of Cornwall could exhibit, and the belief of the gentlemen, whose names we have given, rested mainly, if not entirely upon them. But upon the very first occasion, they all break down when tried, and it follows, that the analogy may be extended to other cases which are only true because they have never been tested. At least, this is our main argument; *if we can shew that no case was ever yet fairly examined by a competent sceptic, without being proved a cheat, and if a very large number of cases have been so tested, and so proved, without a single failure, we have a right to extend the analogy to all the supposed evidences of a discovery which is at variance with all experience, opposed to all known truths.*

It has occurred to the Editor to witness many other experiments upon patients, of whose faith there was little question, and the belief of thousands was reposed upon them:—but they were equally valueless.

At Derby, a boy shut his eyes, and appeared to be asleep. The mesmeric influence was said to be upon him, and it was offered to submit him to any test that might be thought satisfactory evidence of the fact.

Phreno Mesmerism was attempted, but without producing the smallest result—and upon one occasion, the boy opened his eyes and actually looked at what was going on. Mr. Vernon has so familiarized the public with the absence of all appearance even of Mesmerism, that its full value will scarcely be given to this fact. *The moment he opened his eyes, he proved himself a cheat,* but least there should be any doubt about it, he pulled us by the coat, and put his hand to his mouth, as much as to say, "deme mesmerize me" For he it known that we were the operators upon this occasion. When water was thrown into his face he started, and evidenced indeed the most culpable imposition. We did not hesitate to tell him so, and *although asleep,* he heard what we said, and bitterly complained of it. Some other exhibitions had been given at Derby, at one of which the audience was challenged to produce an individual able to hold up his legs as long as a patient, when Mr. Johnston, a surgeon of the place mounted the platform, and beat him by ten minutes or more, holding a stool on his ankles for a portion of the time.

(To be continued.)

## MESMERISM UNMASKED.

(Continued from page 24.)

Mr. Weekes said he did not comprehend me, but if I explained myself, it should be done. I then required him to take from the table any article he pleased, and ask the boy what it was—that would serve as an illustration of my meaning. He complied by placing something under the boy's nose in front of the light. The boy took it up, rose, and bent towards the light, presenting the crown of his head in that direction, holding the object in question close to it, declaring its name. I now begged he would offer my test to the boy's head in that position, before suffering him to sit down; I wanted nothing further. Immediately that I had given utterance to these few words, the lower features of the boy turned pale, alarm was depicted in his countenance, and the boy began to cry out, "Oh, master! Oh, master! Oh! Oh! Oh! master," in the greatest terror. Mr. Weekes then took off the mask, and said, I had alarmed the boy by speaking; that I had acted in opposition to the rules, in consequence of which he dissolved the meeting. This I construed into nothing less than a perfidious design to escape detection; a system at once dangerous and destructive to the science. I therefore asked him to mesmerize the boy again, or permit me to do it, and I would make him or any other gentleman in the room, a bet of a sovereign, the boy could not tell the number of dots upon one of the dominoes he had been playing with, if held over his head; he replied, betting would not decide the truths of the art. I then, in order to have the boy put to the test if possible, offered a further temptation of two to one; this was not accepted. I next offered to give the boy a sovereign if he could read the inscription on a coin which I would shut up in a box, or make a bet on this point; not accepted. I then, without the slightest hesitation, denounced the boy an impostor, stated that he had been awake the whole time, consequently could see from beneath the mask, and that the whole was a complete juggle throughout. This raised the ire of Mr. Weekes, who derided my statement, and said if I had sent up my wish in writing, the boy would have complied with it; as it was, if I had a desire to test the boy's powers privately, he would afford me the opportunity. After apologizing to the company present for the interruption, I was about to withdraw, when a gentleman rose, and said he felt with myself anything but satisfied with the experiment exhibited, and that he retired with the same degree of feeling as when he entered the lecture room. This closed the evening's entertainment. I need scarcely mention, that all mesmerists have attempted what is beyond their power, and most of them have practised gross impositions, professing that which they knew they never could realise, and that their undertakings have invariably, when properly investigated, terminated in an *expose* of their nefarious and barefaced attempts to impose upon the credulity of the weak-minded. When will such glaring ignorance be removed? Never—until the disordered imagination shall seek to solve the proof of these ridiculous follies, by philosophy alone.

[One can scarcely believe that such a direct imposition as this that we have quoted, could ever be attempted in the nineteenth century, and are induced to exclaim in the language of Banquo—

"Were such things here as we do speak about,  
Or have we eaten of the insane root  
That takes the reason prisoner?"

Ed.]

We understand that Mr. Vernon "despairs of producing conviction in the minds of many of the Committee, especially those who gain their livelihood by opposing the doctrines of Mesmerism. Mr. Rumball, for instance, he could not expect to convince him." On a previous occasion, this same Mr. Vernon declared his belief that when Mr. Rumball had excited sufficient attention, he would drop the "Anti," and write in favour of Mesmerism. Mr. Vernon seems to care neither for principle nor fact. No one knows, or ought to know, better than the Editor of the People's Phreno-Journal, that a loss, a heavy loss is all that can be expected by the Editor of the Anti-Mesmerist. No one knows better than Mr. Vernon, that Mr. Rumball has for nearly five years made great sacrifices by opposing Mesmerism. But we judge of others by ourselves; and any man making money as Mr. Vernon makes it, may be excused for suspecting all mankind.

## ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

(Continued from page 19.)

These experiments, then, furnished some important facts. Of fourteen invalids, five experienced some effects from the operation, but nine felt none whatever. All the effects observed in the nervous lady, however, might be occasioned by the irksomeness of the same posture for so long a time, and by her attention being strongly fixed upon her feelings: for it is frequently sufficient to think of these nervous attacks, or to hear them mentioned, in order to reproduce them when they are habitual. The three other instances occurred among persons of the *lower class*: and this circumstance was remarked with surprise by the commissioners; that the only effects, which could be ascribed to magnetism, manifested themselves in the poor and ignorant; while those who were better able to observe and to describe their sensations felt nothing. At the same time, it was observed, that *children*, although endowed with the peculiar sensibility of their age, likewise experienced no effect. The notion, that these effects might be explained by natural causes, therefore, suggested itself to the commissioners. "If we figure to ourselves," they observe "a poor ignorant person, suffering from disease, and anxious to be relieved, brought before a large company, partly consisting of physicians, with some degree of preparation and ceremony, and subjected to a novel and mysterious treatment, the wonderful effects of which he is already persuaded that he is about to experience; and if, moreover, it is recollected, that he is paid for his compliance, and supposes that the experimenters will be gratified in being told that he perceived certain operations; we shall have natural causes by which these effects may be explained, or at least very legitimate reasons for doubting that the real cause is magnetism." *Rapport des Commis. p. 30.*

Since the supposed effects of the *animal magnetism*, then, were not discoverable in those who were incredulous; there was great reason to suspect, that the impressions which were produced, were the result of a previous expectation of the mind, a mere effect of the *imagination*. The commissioners, therefore, now directed their experiments to a new point; namely, to determine how far the imagination could influence the sensations, and whether it could be the source of all the phenomena attributed to magnetism.

The commissioners had recourse now to a M. Jumelin, who magnetised in the same way with M. M. Mesmer and Deslon, except that he had made no distinction of the magnetic *poles*. Eight men and two women were operated on by M. Jumelin; but none of them experienced any effect. At length a female servant of Dr. Le Roy, who was magnetised in the forehead, but without being touched, said she perceived a sense of heat there. When M. Jumelin, moved his hand about, and presented the extremity of his five fingers to her face, she said that she felt it as it were a flame moving about: when magnetised at the stomach, she declared that the heat was there; at the back, and the same heat was there: she then affirmed that she was hot all over the body, and suffered a head-ache. Seeing that only one person out of eleven had been sensible of the magnetism, the commissioners thought that this person was possessed of the most mobile imagination. They therefore tied a bandage over her eyes, and she was magnetised again: but the effects no longer accorded with the parts to which the magnetism was directed! When it was applied successively to the stomach and to the back, the woman only perceived the heat in her head, and a pain in her eyes, and in the left ear! The bandage was removed, and M. Jumelin applied his hands to the hypochondres; she immediately perceived a sense of heat in those parts; and at the end of a few minutes, said that she was faint, and actually swooned. When she was sufficiently recovered, her eyes were again bandaged; M. Jumelin was then removed to a distance, silence was commanded, and they made the woman believe that she was again magnetised. The effects were now precisely the same, although no one operated, either near or at a distance: she felt the same heat, particularly in the back and loins, and the same pain in the eyes and ears! At the end of a quarter of an hour, a sign was made to M. Jumelin, to magnetise her at the stomach; he did so, but she felt nothing; he magnetised her back, but without effect; in fact the heat of the back and loins gradually ceased, and the pains in the head remained!

Here, then, was demonstrative evidence of the operation of the imagination. When the woman saw what was done, the sensations were placed in the parts magnetised; but when she could no longer see, they were referred to the most distant parts, where no magnetism was directed; and above all, they were equally felt, when she was not magnetised at all, and not felt when she was magnetised, after a little repose, but unknown to herself. The fainting of a nervous woman, when made the subject of a mysterious experiment, and continued in a posture of restraint for a considerable time, is explicable upon natural causes. This experiment also shewed, that the distinction of poles was purely chimerical. It was repeated the following day upon a man and a woman, with the same results. Sensations, felt, when they were not magnetised, could only be the effect of imagination; and it was found only necessary to excite and direct the imagination, by questions, to the parts where the sensations were to be felt, instead of directing the magnetism upon those parts, in order to produce all the effects. A child of five years old was then magnetised; but it felt nothing, except the heat which it had previously contracted in playing.

These experiments were repeated by the commissioners in various ways, upon many different persons, of all classes, and with the same results, differing only according to the difference of susceptibility of the imagination of the individuals. They found effects constantly experienced, when no magnetism was used, and *vice versa*, (when the eyes were covered,) according to the direction of the patient's attention by questions put to him with address. Now this practice could not lead to any error; since it only deceived their imagination. For, in truth, when they were not magnetised, their only answer ought to have been, that they felt nothing.

Some facts, communicated to the commissioners by M. Sigault, an eminent physician at Paris, place the power of the imagination in a strong light. "Having announced," he says, "in a great house, that I was an adept in the art of Mesmer, I produced considerable effects upon a lady who was there. The voice and serious air which I affected, made an impression upon her, which she at first attempted to conceal: but having carried my hand to the region of the heart, I found it palpitating. Her state of oppression indicated also a tightness in the chest, and several other symptoms speedily ensued; the muscles of the face were affected with convulsive twitches, and the eyes rolled; she fell down in a fainting fit, vomited her dinner, and had afterwards several motions from the bowels, and felt herself in a state of incredible weakness and languor. A celebrated artist, who gives lessons in drawing to the children of one of the Princes, complained during several days of a severe head-ache, which he mentioned to me when we met accidentally on the Pont-Neuf. Having persuaded him that I was really initiated in the mysteries of Mesmer, almost immediately, by means of a few gestures, I removed his pain, to his great astonishment." Dr. Sigault justly remarks, that it is probably by such an impression on the mind, that the sight of the dentist removes the tooth-ache, when the patient has gone to him for the purpose of having his tooth drawn. He adds that being one day in the parlour of a convent, a young lady said to him, "you go to M. Mesmer's, I hear." "Yes," he replied, "and I can magnetise you through the grate;" presenting his finger towards her at the same time. She was alarmed, grew faint, and begged him to desist; and, in fact, her emotion was so great, that had he persisted, he had no doubt that she would have been seized with a fit. *Rapport, note p. 39-41.*

But although the commissioners were convinced, by their experiments, that the *imagination* was capable of producing different sensations, of occasioning pain, and a sense of heat, and even actual heat, in all parts of the body; and therefore that it contributed much to the effects, which were ascribed to *animal magnetism*: yet the effects of the latter had been much more considerable, and the derangements of the animal economy, which it excited, much more severe. It was now, therefore, to be ascertained, whether by influencing the imagination, convulsions, or the complete *crisis* witnessed at the public treatment, could be produced. In proof of this point, their experiments were not less conclusive, as the following relation of one or two of them will evince. As M. Deslon acknowledged that the complete success of the experiments would depend upon the subjects of them being

endowed with sufficient sensibility, he was requested to select some of his patients, who had already proved their susceptibility of the magnetic influence, upon whom the trials might be made.

According to the principles of the magnetisers, when a tree had been touched by them, and charged with magnetism, every person who stopped near the tree would feel the effects of this agent, and either fall into a swoon or into convulsions. Accordingly in Dr. Franklin's garden at Passy, an apricot tree was selected, which stood sufficiently distant from the others, and was well adapted for retaining the magnetism communicated to it. M. Deslon, having brought thither a young patient of twelve years of age, was shewn the tree, which he magnetised, while the patient remained in the house, under the observation of another person. It was wished that M. Deslon should be absent during the experiment; but he affirmed that it might fail, if he did not direct his looks and his cane towards the tree. The young man was then brought out, with a bandage over his eyes, and successively led to four trees, which were *not magnetised*, and was directed to embrace each during two minutes; M. Deslon at the same time standing at a considerable distance, and pointing his cane to the tree actually magnetised. At the first tree, the young patient, on being questioned, declared that he sweated profusely; he coughed and expectorated, and said that he felt a pain in the head; he was still about twenty-seven feet from the magnetised tree. At the second tree he found himself giddy, with the head-ache as before; he was now thirty feet from the magnetised tree. At the third, the giddiness and head-ache were much increased; he said he believed he was approaching the magnetised tree; but he was still twenty-eight feet from it. At length, when brought to the fourth tree, *not magnetised*, and at the distance of twenty-four feet from that which was, the *crisis* came on; the young man felt in a state of insensibility, his limbs became rigid, he was carried to a grass plot, where M. Deslon went to his assistance, and recovered him.

This experiment, then, was altogether adverse to the principle of magnetism, not negatively, but positively and directly. "If the patient," said the commissioners, "had experienced no effect under the tree actually magnetised, it might have been supposed that he was not in a state of sufficient susceptibility; but he fell into the *crisis* under one which was not magnetised; therefore not from any external physical cause, but solely from the influence of the *imagination*. He knew that he was to be carried to the magnetised tree; his imagination was roused, and successively exalted, until, at the fourth tree, it had risen to the pitch necessary to bring on the *crisis*."

Many other experiments furnished the same results. M. Deslon was requested to select from among his poor patients, those who had shewn the greatest sensibility to the magnetism; and he accordingly brought two women to Passy. While he was magnetising, Dr. Franklin and several persons in another apartment, the two women were put into separate rooms. Three of the commissioners remained with one of the women, the first to question her, the second to write, and the third to represent M. Deslon, who (they persuaded her, after having bandaged her eyes) was brought into the room to magnetise her. One of them pretended to speak to M. Deslon, requesting him to begin; but *nothing was done*: the commissioners remained quiet, only observing the woman. In the space of three minutes, she began to feel a nervous shivering (*frisson nerveux*); then she felt in succession a pain in the head and in the arms, and a pricking in the hands, she became stiff, stuck her hands together, got up from her seat, and stamped with her feet: in a word, the *crisis* was completely characterized. Two of the commissioners were in an adjoining room with the other woman, whom they placed by the door, which was shut, with her sight at liberty, and made her believe that M. Deslon was on the other side of the door, magnetising her. She had scarcely been seated a minute before the door when a shivering began: in one minute more she had a clattering of the teeth, but yet a general warmth over the body; at the end of three minutes the *crisis* was complete. The breathing became hurried; stretched out her arms behind her back, writhing them strongly, and bending the body forwards; a general tremor of the whole body came on; the clattering of the teeth was so loud as to be heard out of the room; and she bit her hand so as to leave the marks of her teeth in it.

Now, the commissioners observe, these two women were never

touched, not even their pulse felt. A more clear and demonstrative proof of the power and agency of the imagination could not have afforded them. It may be added, however, that one of these women, being sent to M. Lavoisier's, actually fell into the *crisis* in the antichamber, before she had seen either M. Deslon, or any other of the commissioners; but she knew that she was to meet them there. While she was alone in the anti-chamber, a short time afterwards, different persons went to her who had no connection with magnetism, and the convulsive motions began again. They remarked to her that no one magnetised her; but so much was her attention excited, that she replied, "If you did nothing to me I should not be in this condition." She knew in fact that she came there for the purpose of being the subject of experiment, and the approach of any one, or the least noise, attracted her attention, recalled the idea of magnetism, and produced a fresh accession of convulsions.

It is unnecessary to carry this detail of facts any farther. No experimental inquiry could have been more ably prosecuted, and no philosophical truth more clearly developed, than that the mere operation of the imagination is sufficient to produce all those great and extraordinary changes in the animal economy, which were ascribed to an hypothetical agent in nature, which was termed magnetism. If, indeed, it should be still maintained, that the effects, produced in these isolated experiments, fell short of the phenomena which occurred at the *public magnetisings*, there is another principal of the human constitution, which will fully account for this difference in the degree, independently of other physical circumstances necessarily existing in the latter mode of treatment; we mean the principle of *imitation*, as it has been termed, of which we shall say more under its proper head. Independently of the warmth and contamination of the air, in a crowded room, which particularly affects the head and the nervous system, and of the influence of music in increasing all emotions, and in addition to the multiplied impressions upon the sight and hearing, as well as those of touch and pressure, not employed in the private trials, this principle of *imitation*, which heightens all emotions, and augments all tendencies to action, would be sufficient to explain the difference. It was remarked that when one person fell into the *crisis*, the rest were speedily overcome. In like manner, we see a sort of contagion in all the emotions and impressions excited in a crowded assembly. Hence the powerful impressions made by public spectacles, and the enthusiasm excited in theatres by generous sentiments; hence the general ardour which spreads at once through an army in the hour of battle; or, on the contrary, the universal panic which is propagated with inconceivable rapidity, often from the slightest causes, or from causes merely imaginary; and hence also the ungovernable fury of mobs. But to trace the principle to a closer analogy, all nervous and convulsive diseases are liable to propagate themselves among those who witness them, and thus to become, as it were, epidemic; whence hysterical and epileptical convulsions have prevailed at times in large schools, manufactories, and even in religious assemblies, in a most distressing manner, and were prevented only by a complete separation of the individuals, or by exciting strong counter impressions on the mind, such as dread of punishment, &c. The greater effects, therefore, produced at the public operations of the magnetisers, are explicable upon the known principles of the human constitution, and serve to confirm, rather than to invalidate, the inferences of the preceding investigation.

NOTE.—[The above report, decides the fate of Mesmer and his pupils, "La Mesmerism est nul, l'imagination fait tout," "Mesmerism is nothing, the imagination does it all," was the charitable sentence passed by the commission. We are in a position to characterize the whole proceedings by a much harsher term. The patients were evidently most of them as great impostors as those of the present day. Phenomena much more marvellous than any exhibited in France, are now known to be simulated so perfectly as almost to defy scrutiny. That imagination *may* produce results equally striking, will be proved in a future number; but as yet, we have seen nothing but fraud.—ED.]

## MESMERIC PROCEEDINGS AT COLCHESTER.

The following letter, containing an account of some Mesmeric proceedings at Colchester, was written some time since. It is the nature of a periodical to admit of disconnected information. Communications from Correspondents could not otherwise be inserted. They arrive too irregularly to be woven into the arguments, but the total evidence is not the less valuable.—ED.

SIR,—On Monday evening, the 17th of July, I attended a Meeting of the Colchester Pnenological Society, for the purpose of witnessing some experiments in Mesmerism to be performed by Mr. Holmes, at the house of Mr. Underwood, the Secretary to the Society.

Mr. Holmes produced his patient, Lucius Hughes,\* a young man about twenty years of age, short, but strongly built, sallow complexion, dark hair and eyes, and rather loutish in his appearance.

I was requested to examine him by Mr. Holmes, who then proceeded to make certain passes, and looked fixedly at him for about ten minutes, keeping the fore and middle fingers of the right hand before his eyes.

He stated that the patient was then in a state of catalepsy, made a number of passes from the head downwards, and then requested me to examine him again. I found him apparently in a quiet sleep, pulse regular, about 76, and breathing tranquil. I raised the eyelids, and am quite certain that the iris acted immediately on the application of a common candle.

Mr. Holmes made a number of passes along the right arm, from shoulder to wrist, and in a few minutes the limb became rigid, and extended at right angles from the body. I depressed the arm, and it rose again immediately. I attached a weight to the hand, and letting it go suddenly it rebounded.

I may here mention that as I was the only medical man present, I was requested to proceed in testing Mr. H.'s experiments by himself and the Meeting, who were all friendly to the science, if not advocates for it. The patient having a bandage over his eyes and ears, was seated, and I placed myself at his right side. I now requested Mr. H. to restore the arm to its usual state, (as he said it could only be done by himself,) and that by making reverse passes, that is to say, from wrist to shoulder. Speaking in a loud tone of voice, I at the same time took Mr. Holmes's right hand, and placed it on my shoulder; and finding that he was making a private signal to his patient with his left, I also put that on my shoulder and held them firmly there. I continued to speak to Mr. H., requesting him to make the passes in the usual way, not too fast, in order that we might see the effect. The arm fell gradually to the side. I now desired that it might be raised again, it soon became rigid as before; then to reverse the passes, and it resumed its natural state. No passes whatever were made, either by Mr. Holmes or any one else during this experiment!

The Meeting declared with me that it was satisfied.

Mr. Holmes, not content with this, said he would shew clairvoyance in his patient, and the following experiments were made: Having so arranged with Mr. Edwards, chemist, a hunting watch was stated to be placed near the patient, but carefully retained in the hand of Mr. Edwards. A noise of seals, &c. was made, and I placed the young man's hands on that of Mr. E., in the manner Mr. Holmes requested should be done. Mr. Holmes went some little distance, and asked Lucius if he had a watch. He said not wholly. "Have you now?—Can you tell us the time?"—"I can within a little." "Do so, then."—(Mark the *denouement* of the experiment.) When the patient had stated the time, I desired Mr. Edwards to go into the centre of the room, extend his arm, but keep his hand closed. He, Lucius, was out in his guess, as to time, one hour and twenty minutes! And then the watch was exhibited!—IT WAS A SMALL SILVER SNUFF-BOX!!

Here Mr. Holmes said we were taking an unfair advantage of

\* Can any one inform us if this is the Mr. Hughes who has been lecturing in London?—amusing if true.

him and his patient—putting him on a false scent, &c. I immediately placed an ordinary watch in his hands, and, without altering the time, requested he would try this. The "patient," after some consideration, having the watch in his own hands, stated the time: he was out one hour and a quarter.

I think I am entitled fairly to consider these experiments as conclusive, at least as far as Mr. Holmes is concerned; so think nearly all those gentlemen who were present. I am sorry to find that Mr. Underwood stated next morning, on Mr. Holmes's authority, that the "patient" was drunk, and to this I have only to say he certainly was not.

I challenged Mr. Holmes to meet me again the following evening, which he, I think, prudently refused to do.

I make no comment on the foregoing statement. I leave it to speak for itself, and pledge my honour to its accuracy in all respects.

CHARLES EDWARD BLAIR, M.D., K.C. & K.T.S.  
Late Staff-Surgeon, Portuguese Service.

Colchester.  
July 27th, 1843.

## MR. DAY'S LETTER.

Although we never intended to be present ourselves at any more of Vernon's exhibitions, we find that we cannot to the letter abide by our resolution not again to notice them. The following communication has been sent to us by Mr. Day, and as it exposes one more deception, we insert it. The sheet of paper may be inspected at our office.—ED.

London, May 29, 1844.

SIR,—Having occasion to go to the Continent for a short time, I shall not be able to attend Mr. Vernon's lecture to-morrow; and as it may be some time before I have an opportunity of personally making some observations on the experiments of yesterday, I avail myself of this means to make an explanation which I feel it my duty to submit to the numerous visitors who habitually attend the Mesmeric lectures.

It will be remembered that of four envelopes, containing printed words, which were offered by the scrutineers as tests for the exercise of the clairvoyant faculty by Mr. Vernon's patients: three were found impervious to their vision, while with regard to the fourth, the lad John Gibson, made three several essays, all more or less successful. In the first instance, he declared that there were no letters in the papers at all, which was the fact; in the second, he declared the letters M O R, and, he thought, an X, the word enclosed being "Morning." In the third, he declared an N and a D, the word enclosed being "And."

This result was publicly announced by the Secretary, and confirmed by me as conductor of the experiments. I suggested the possibility of Gibson having inferred the emptiness of the envelope, in the first instance, from my hesitation in answering his question as to the size of the letters enclosed; but with regard to the other two instances in which he had correctly declared the letters, I stated my inability to account for the fact on any other supposition than that he had discerned them through the paper, which it appeared impossible he could do by the ordinary mode. In answer to a question from one of the audience, as to other parties besides myself being cognisant of the words enclosed, I stated that I had inserted them privately—that it was just possible I might have been overlooked, but that I did not suspect any collusion in the case. I closed my observations by remarking on the circumstance that Gibson had three times succeeded with one particular envelope, while he had failed with the other three—a circumstance for which I could not account, as although the one paper had a yellow tint and the three others a blue, they all appeared, when folded, to be equally impervious. The paper was then handed about through the audience, and the generally expressed opinion was that the boy had shown preternatural powers; at any rate, no one ventured to rise, and utter a conjecture as to how otherwise he had managed to decipher the enclosures.

At the conclusion of the lecture, I asked the secretary's permission to examine the envelope, thinking it just possible that close

inspection might detect some tampering with its texture, which might account for the result, without having recourse to the supposition of an extraordinary faculty. But it had most unaccountably disappeared! The secretary—Mr. Vernon—the boy—nobody knew what had become of it; and I therefore, as the nearest approach I could make under the circumstances to a scrutiny of the possible accessaries to fallacy in the case, procured from Mr. White, the secretary, a half sheet of paper, precisely similar to that which had so strangely vanished, and brought it away with me.

This morning I reconsidered the subject, and for some time the conclusion appeared to me irresistible, that whatever reasons I might have for distrusting any manifestations from Gibson in regard to other phenomena, I must admit his pretensions to clairvoyance, unless I found by his repeated failures in numerous experiments, that I might fairly ascribe his partial success yesterday to extraordinarily lucky guess-work. Conversing, however, with a sceptic on Mesmerism, and explaining to him the occurrences which had confounded me, I took the paper I had obtained from Mr. White, and folded up in it a word cut from a posting bill, in the same manner as I had done for Mr. Vernon's patients. To my great surprise, he was able to read the enclosure, and I then discovered that owing to a want of due precaution in the folding of the envelope, there had only been two thicknesses of the paper outside the back of the letters which consequently were distinguishable with very little difficulty. This simple explanation made the whole thing clear, and I have now not the slightest doubt remaining that Gibson read the enclosures through the back of the envelope, as I or any other of the audience might have done, had the idea occurred to us, instead of directing all our attention to the upper surface of the paper.

In order to make my explanation more clear, I send you a sheet of paper folded in the same way as in yesterday's experiments, and shall forward a duplicate of this letter to Dr. Jones, to be read at the Adelaide Gallery, to-morrow, if he thinks proper.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
THOMAS DAY.

#### ADELAIDE GALLERY.

We have received a long account of the proceedings at the Adelaide Gallery, on Saturday last, but we have only room for an abridgement. The Committee has been selected. It seems that although thirty-five names had been originally sent in, only twenty-one had been subscribed to the conditions required. These were, therefore, unanimously elected. Some irrelevant remarks were made, but as they were mostly personal to ourselves, and as untrue as they were harmless, they are omitted here. *We are upon the Committee*, and if fair play be shown, Mr. Vernon's day draweth nigh. In pursuance of a truth, and for a public benefit, we rescind our resolution not to notice him again! Nay, we will forget that we ever saw or doubted him. All prejudice shall be banished, all memory laid aside, and the experiments shall be tested strictly and solely upon their own merits, and as this must be the winding up of the drama, a full and minute account of the proceedings shall be given. The experiments on Saturday, were said to be most successful.

After a few observations, recapitulating prior successful experiments, Mr. Vernon brought forward Miss Budd, who exhibited the phenomenon of cataleptic rigidity, attraction and repulsion, phreno-mesmerism, &c., very much to his satisfaction. The little girl Fanny, who failed in every attempt on Saturday last (see p. 19) was then produced, and a young gentleman (invited on the platform by the lecturer) made experiments of her clairvoyance by sticking two letters on her forehead, which after a few minutes she declared to be E R, which was correct. Another gentleman then advanced, and placed on the child's forehead the letters A G E,

when after a short interval, she declared two of them to be A & E, the other she could not distinctly make out. These experiments were declared to be also highly satisfactory by Mr. Vernon, who expressed his regret that he could not then stay to pursue them further, as he had an engagement some distance from town to attend in the evening. The exhibition for the day was therefore closed.

Now, in this short paragraph, we have the whole history of Mesmerism:—Successful fraud when the scrutiny is imperfect; detected imposition when competent tests are applied. The same child who fails altogether, when experienced scrutineers are present, succeeds to admiration when two young and incompetent hands are employed. The method by which she could read—nay, the method by which she *did* read, is evident enough. We have the authority of one of the most constant scrutineers at the Gallery, for saying that none of them were upon the platform upon this occasion. He himself, remaining in front for the express purpose of permitting success. And how was it obtained? why, the letters upon her forehead were sufficiently large to be seen at forty feet distance; the whole audience could see them; and confederates ever being present to aid and assist, what can be more easy than for some one to be placed among the spectators, in a position known by the child, and then and there to designate the letters by the fingers, as the dumb do, with wonderful facility—nay, as every school-boy and girl learns to do in a week. The hands need not be thrust forward into public gaze, the child knows before hand where to look for them; and as she does not even pretend to keep her eyes shut there is no difficulty. *Do our readers believe this to be the true explanation, or do they, -or any of them, believe that she read with her forehead?*

#### EXPERIMENTS ON MENTAL TRANSFER, BY DR. COLLYER.

AT THE ADELAIDE GALLERY, MAY 13, 1844.

(From a Correspondent.)

The Lecture being concluded, Dr. Collyer introduced his patient Miss Taylor, to the audience, and a Mr. Robertson, a medical gentleman was the first with whom the lady was placed *en rapport*. After a short time Miss T. completed her description of what appeared to be passing before her, and Mr. Robertson declared it to be in general accordance with the image on which his mind was fixed; namely, some public building in the country, but that it was not very clearly defined. Dr. Collyer accounted for this by suggesting that Mr. R. might not possess the power of abstraction and concentration in a sufficient degree. A Mr. Davis then offered himself, and at the conclusion of the experiment, declared, that having fixed his thoughts on a church in Belgium, he found Miss Taylor's description of the image on her mind to be remarkably applicable to the object in his own.

Mr. Day then wrote a few lines which he shut up in a book, and was then placed *en rapport* with Miss Taylor, who shortly afterwards described a great variety of images; a large plain surface very dark, with something large in the middle of a lighter colour, with figures about: but not human figures—something high in the middle, with a figure at the top, a constant moving about which hindered her seeing plainly; several other minor particulars of no definite character, and lastly, something so bright as first to give her great pleasure, and then become painful. Dr. Collyer here declared the description completed, and Mr. Day produced the paper which he had previously written; it was in substance as follows:—"I shall direct my mind forcibly to the recollection of an adventure which happened to me about fourteen

years ago on the coast of America: namely, being in a small open boat with ten persons besides myself. We had been out thirty hours, and having missed our ship, were in a state of great peril, having neither food, water, sail or compass on board, and the crew being exhausted with rowing. Soon after sun-down we descried land. This is the time and scene I shall dwell upon in my mind."

Dr. Collyer hereupon claimed the result as most successful, dwelling on the aptitude of the description of a large plain surface, to the sea; something large in the middle, to the boat; a number of figures about it, to the crew and passengers; and most emphatically urging on the audience that it was the beautiful appearance of a Tropical sun-set, which had elicited the concluding descriptive remarks of Miss Taylor.

Mr. Day, in explanation, admitted the coincidences so far as they were apparent, but contended that they were applicable to many other objects; the descriptions where applicable, being of so vague and general a nature, that without much straining they might be held to be equally descriptive of the most opposite subjects. He then showed that those items in the description of the image in Miss Taylor's mind which were not conformable to the written statement, had been passed over unnoticed by the Lecturer, particularly the most striking, "something high in the middle, with a figure at the top." While even the coincidences on which he so strongly relied as evidence of the faculty of "mental transfer," were of much less value than he supposed, when the facts were taken into consideration, that according to the image summoned by his memory, the sea was of a yellowish mud colour, and consequently, much *lighter* than the boat, which was *black*; that it was calm and almost motionless; that the term "sun-down" was used as a proximate term, not as indicating the precise time of the sun's setting; but that in fact, the time he had in his mind was certainly half an hour after sun-set; that he was looking at the land at the South East; that he had no recollection or impression of light on his mind; and that the land itself was barely discernible as a low dark margin to the horizon.

[Mr. Day might have added that the absence of any community of feeling of thanksgiving for his preservation from imminent danger, would render this experiment of little value, even had the admitted coincidences been more striking than he has shown them to be.—ED.]

Dr. Normandy *en rapport* with the patient. This experiment was a very brief one:—

Miss Taylor having described a large enclosed space with a hollow place in the middle, with some minor accessories, and the description being declared completed by Dr. Collyer. Dr. N. stated that he had fixed his thoughts on the single object of the statue of Sertorius (or Sparticus.) The description given by Miss Taylor being wholly inapplicable in this case; the experiment was admitted by the Lecturer to be a failure.

[We do not lay much stress on these experiments as striking or conclusive, but Dr. Collyer claimed them as splendid manifestations; and so they are, they prove indisputably that drowning men catch at straws, and that the very evidences of the falsehood, are trumpeted forth in support of Mesmerism.—ED.]

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During twenty years he has also had under his roof and at his table one or more patients, many of them having been cured, and all having been treated as members of the family; Mr. R.'s father and himself having been among the very first to adopt the system of non-restraint.

Dr. Elliotson has not noticed our challenge! With Dr. Elliotson as a Physician, practising any mode of cure which he may think most efficacious, we have nothing to do, but with Dr. Elliotson, as a professed Mesmerizer, chief contributor to the *Zoist*, and avowed champion of the cause, we have every thing to do. Had he confined his experiments to his friends, his opinions to his own circles, no man would have a right to attack the one, or obtrude himself upon the other; but he has thrown out a challenge to the world at large, by calling upon that world to believe in his reports and defer to his opinions. Without intending for an instant to doubt his convictions, we withhold our own, and his opinions are worthless, if built on delusion; that they are so based we pledge ourselves to prove, if he will give us an opportunity; if he refuse this, the public will draw its own conclusions. Truth fears no test, science no objection. And if Dr. Elliotson decline submitting to the examination required, we shall say that he dare not, and our respect for his good faith will be wonderfully lessened.

**NOTICE.**—*Mr. RUMBALL* is in Town for the Season, and may be consulted daily from twelve o'clock on Monday, until five on Saturday afternoon, until further notice.

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#### ERRATA.

Some trifling typographical errors will be observed in some of the copies, which the reader can easily correct. It is necessary, however, to point out a few, as they alter the sense—

No. I. p. 2, line 1, for "March" read "May."

No. III. p. 23, note, for "very" read "every."

..... line 13, for "was" read "has."

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