

# MESMERISM AND ITS REALITIES

FURTHER PROVED BY



## ILLUSTRATIONS

OF ITS

## CURATIVE POWERS IN DISEASE

AS WELL AS BY ITS

DEVELOPMENT OF SOME EXTRAORDINARY MAGNETIC PHENOMENA  
IN THE HUMAN BODY

BY

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SURGEON

"HOR.—O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

HAM.—And therefore as a stranger give it welcome. There are more things in  
heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

EDINBURGH: PATON & RITCHIE

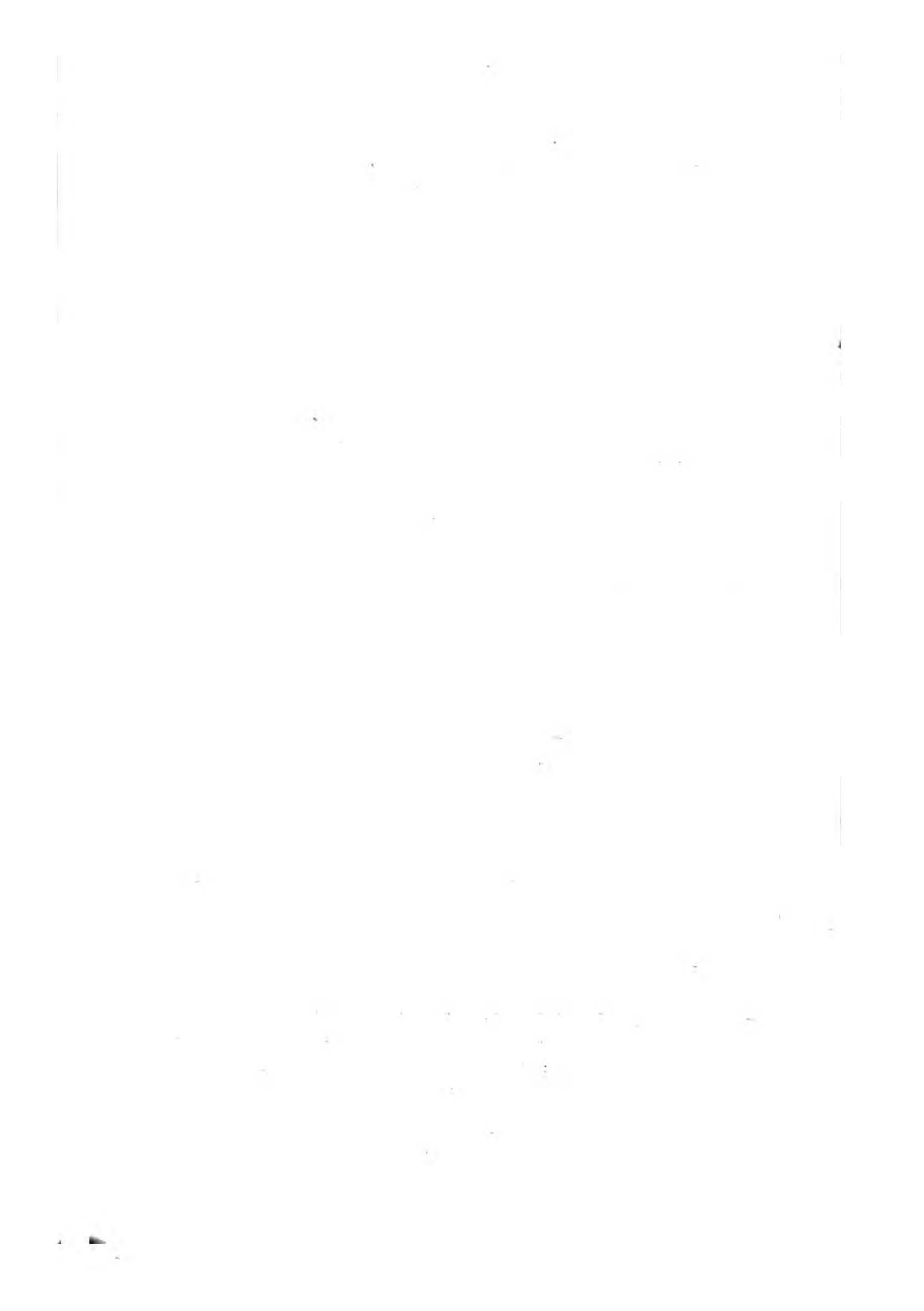
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# MESMERISM AND ITS REALITIES.

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## CHAPTER I.

### PREFATORY.

THE name of mesmerism, in general, produces a sneer amongst professional men ; but such arises from injustice, and not from conviction based upon practical investigation. This species of scientific Lynch-law is by no means creditable to a learned body, and had such an unworthy system of decision been universally adopted by us, it would have augured ill for the spirit, as well as for the judgment of our times. Happily, however, for the vindication of our high position, one man \* stepped boldly forward to the rescue, and, animated with a laudable desire "to prove all things," took up this much assailed question, and after a thorough practical examination of it, did not hesitate, in the face of a nearly universal derision, to make known that its existence was a great truth, and its power and value as a curative, incalculable. Many others, stimulated by his example and success, followed ; and all who have since then investigated the subject, have, in the majority of instances, given ample corroboration to the facts first adduced by him.

From the earliest period down to the present day, all theories or applications relative to disease, if novel, or out of the usual routine of the age in which they appeared, were, in a general sense, received with aversion, and, in some instances, at once condemned. But doubtless, all proclaimed benefits did not turn out to be such, nor do they even yet ; for after a short and unfruitful career, and supported only by the mistaken views of a few, they, from their impotency, perish.

\* Professor John Elliotson, of the University of London.

The acknowledged professional habit of opposition may have its advantages, in so far as it operates by preventing any new theory or therapeutic from being accepted as valuable or useful, until the same has undergone a most protracted ordeal; but when time rather than judgment becomes the arbiter of the value of any discovery or application, I consider that the principle is unworthy of us, and is, at best, but negative or pseudo-philosophy; and as affects the plea of caution adopted by some, most valuable in its place however, but when pushed and maintained in the face of a reasonable experience, and extensive practical application of a remedy, it can be no longer received as such, for it then assumes the form of prejudice—becomes an obstacle in the way of a more extended scientific investigation—retards the progress of truth—infects the minds of the people—and thus excludes many from an advantage they might otherwise have enjoyed. Science and mankind have suffered therefrom, and as familiar and remarkable instances of this professional bias, I will only mention the names of Harvey and Jenner. Had a more genuine spirit for scientific investigation prevailed amongst medical men in their day, and less of that bugbear, *animus*, the discovery of the circulation of the blood would have been sooner by the majority, received, both as a fact and a valuable discovery; vaccination and its virtues would have all the sooner been established as a means to mitigate and prevent a terrible scourge, and thereby thousands saved who perished.

The reception of mesmerism has been of a similar nature. The experiences of many able men bear ample testimony to the advantages to be derived from its application, in numerous, but not all varieties of deformity and disease; yet, in the face of all such, the majority of the profession at the present day deny its power, indeed, its very existence. Reasonably viewed, it is too absurd to suppose, that men of such eminence as Elliotson and Esdaile would have bowed their minds to countenance imposture, or have spent so much valuable time in propagating falsehood; for what else does the profession make out against them, when it will not receive their testimonies as facts, but a direct charge of dishonour?—and if not that, I see no other explanation of their behaviour, than, having forsworn truth, they are no longer open to conviction. But



*palnam qui meruit ferat*, were the intelligent public more familiar with what Dr. Elliotson underwent for the sake of truth, when he first espoused mesmerism, and with the illiberal treatment he received from his colleagues in the University of London,\* on account of which he resigned his professorship therein; or with the successes of Dr. Esdaile in India,† where operations of the greatest magnitude (before chloroform was heard of) were performed, while the patients were in a state of unconsciousness from mesmeric trance, it could not but applaud the zeal and integrity of both, and thereby testify to the groundless nature of the imputations, emanating from men holding important positions, who, from their unphilosophic spirit and cramped judgments, were totally incapable for such.

I maintain, it is the privilege, if not the duty, of every man directly concerned in the treatment of disease, to make known the results of his experience in the application of any new system or remedy, more particularly when he has found the same to have been beneficial in circumstances of pain and suffering. It matters not what the nature of such may be, if in his hands its practical utility and benefit have been satisfactorily established, he is in a position to speak of it advisedly; and any one who may dispute the accredited power of the same, his statements, to have any weight, must be also based on practical investigation, and not assumed, either through fancy or ignorance, or to swell the note of party outcry.

It is not from any extensive experience of mesmerism that I have thought proper to publish this *brochure*, but from the cases in which I have applied it having proved signal instances of its power and success, one or two of which I will give as examples; and I feel proud of being able to lend my small support to the maintenance of truth against prejudice and injustice.

To the imposture-crying part of the profession I will only say, *firstly*, that unless I firmly believed and knew every point in relation to Case No. I. to be a fact, and which I can prove by practical demonstration if required, I would not have written a syllable in regard to it.

\* See the "Zoist." Builliere, London.

† See Dr. Esdaile's work on "Mesmerism in India," likewise his pamphlet on the same. Kent & Co., London.

*Secondly*, That I am not deceived in the slightest particular in the case, as I have invariably used every available means to detect deception, and have always failed; indeed, under the most rigid scrutiny, I have not been able to trace the least approach to it.

*Thirdly*, That, being a most determined opponent of all pretence or sham, and wishing only to deal with facts, I could have no greater gratification than to unmask imposture, my reader may rest satisfied (let imitations exist where they may, as they undoubtedly do, by which too many judge, and form false impressions from), every particular in this case, however strange or unlikely it may seem, is reality, and no imposition.

To the clerical part of the community, or rather those of it who delight in denouncing mesmerism as infidelity or Satanic agency, and to those likewise weak enough to accept what such men say, without ever considering the value of the same, to read the Rev. George Sandby's work on "Mesmerism and its Opponents,"\* wherein they will find it satisfactorily proved that mesmerism is neither infidelity nor yet the work of the devil, but something of a very different type; and, as a work of general information on the subject, by, evidently, a pious and shrewd man, it cannot fail to recommend itself to them.

Apart from the application of mesmerism to particular forms of disease, the wonderful changes which can be brought about in the disposition and tendencies of individuals, by operating directly on the phrenological organs, affords, I think, a subject worthy the consideration both of physiologists and psychologists. My reasons for such an opinion arise from the fact, that I have frequently changed the disposition of persons while in the mesmeric trance, and which change, too, remained for hours after the removal of the influence; and, in the case of Miss Armitage, so persistent was it, that I never yet found the effects of the change die out, but had always to replace the influence, and then restore her to her usual way.

I will only again repeat, that I advance nothing but what I can prove, in connexion with all my cases, and I am thoroughly satisfied that no one can prove them an imposture, nor the cause to be anything but the involuntary effects of mesmeric

\* "Mesmerism and its Opponents," by the Rev. George Sandby. Longman & Co., London.

influence; and, if not that, then indeed the phenomena are the results of the operation of a new imponderable.

In producing an abstract of the following cases, I have endeavoured as much as possible to avoid medical phraseology, so that all may be able to judge for themselves; and my reason for so doing is, that the profession will not give the subject a fair hearing, and too frequently misrepresent facts herewith; consequently, I wish to afford a check to any unwarrantable assertions, by placing the public in nearly as capable a position for exercising its judgment as the profession assumes it has.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE CASE OF MISS ARMITAGE, ITS HISTORY, TREATMENT, AND CURE.

IN this, my first experiment with mesmerism as a curative agent, it was not, as the sequel will shew, until I had failed by every other means to give relief, that I was induced to test its reported powers. I was already familiar with its curative effects, from the writings of others who had experimented with it; but I had never been induced to apply it in disease, although I had otherwise experimented with it. Probably, had I known practically more of its powers, the cure, in this instance, might have been accomplished in shorter time than it took me to bring about; but, as I had no one to consult on the subject, I had either to proceed cautiously, or abandon its application altogether.

It was fortunate for the success of this case, that my patient's relatives had the firmness and confidence sufficient to withstand the representations of danger they were incurring, by countenancing such *unlawful* practices, and which were so frequently made to them by professed friends to their interest, but who, in reality, were only opponents of mesmerism, and who were suspicious lest its application might succeed in bringing about a cure. Had the case terminated fatally, judging from the opinions I heard, I had no doubt whatever but that I should have been most unhesitatingly pronounced the cause of the young woman's death. I was satisfied, however, that if those individuals *had* the capability of judgment, they at least spoke

from ignorance, and as applying to this case directly, they had never once seen it ; whereas I, along with my patient's relatives, had every opportunity of judging of the effects of the application, and the great relief afforded by it when the patient was in the greatest suffering. I felt conscientiously, however the issue of the case might be, that I had been enabled to do much in her behalf through the means adopted ; and as it had been otherwise ordered, instead of the confident assertions of our opponents proving quite prophetic, I had the satisfaction to see my patient get well.

On the 26th of May 1856, I was called to see this patient, whom I found suffering from bilious derangement, which, after having continued about a week, assumed the symptoms of remittent bilious fever. From the nature and duration of the disease, she became much exhausted, and not until the 12th July was she so far recovered as to be able to sit up in bed, and amuse herself with any light occupation. Suffice it, convalescence was progressing satisfactorily, when an acquaintance who had called, thinking to give her something entertaining, asked her to execute a trifling piece of needlework for her, which my patient willingly undertook and finished, but at a greater cost than either had anticipated. On finishing the work, which had occupied her an hour or two, she expressed herself as fatigued with what she had done, and I found her at my evening visit in a very excited and uncomfortable condition. The real cause of this disturbance of system was at first concealed from me, and I concluded that a relapse of the fever had taken place. After prescribing for her, I left, expecting to find her better in the morning, instead of which I found her worse than I had left her. Her pulse was rapid, and her breathing very much increased in frequency. I satisfied myself, by a minute examination of her chest, that no apparent cause existed there for her state, nor could I detect any tenderness or derangement abdominally. On making inquiries as to mental or nervous shock, I was then told the circumstances of her afternoon's occupation. Seeing now that her condition was to be ascribed to over-exertion, producing a considerable amount of nervous excitement, I again prescribed as I thought suited the circumstances of her case. She continued throughout the day and evening



more composed, but about midnight got worse, and early next morning I was sent for, when I found her condition even worse than formerly; great increase of excitement, and in a most violent and incessant coughing fit, exactly resembling whooping-cough, namely, a continued succession of coughs, say a dozen or more in succession, terminated by a loud and screaming inspiration, loud enough to be heard at a considerable distance; in fact, the cough was of so violent a nature, that I feared rupture of a blood-vessel would occur. The cough continued, uninterruptedly, from eight A.M. till two A.M. following morning, then three hours' sleep, and at five A.M., on her awaking, it relapsed as bad as ever, continuing again for about the same period, from fourteen to sixteen hours. At the commencement of the attack I administered quinine and iron very freely, adding afterwards morphia. These having proved of themselves unavailing, I administered chloroform in addition, which was the first application that arrested the cough. For the remainder of the week the cough continued nearly in the same manner, sometimes of longer or shorter duration, the same appliances being kept up. I wished her friends to allow me, or rather themselves, to keep her continuously under the influence of chloroform, but this they were nervous about, and objected to do.

*Second Week.*—There was little abatement of the cough, the same medicines being continued as before. During this week's application of chloroform, and after its soothing action had passed off, a powerful sedative action commenced, the patient continuing very sick and low, which latterly terminated in severe and protracted bilious vomiting; indeed, after one night's application of chloroform, the bilious vomiting continued incessant all next day and night, with this difference in her condition, however, that so long as this effect lasted, there was not the slightest appearance of cough. As this sedative effect wore off, threatenings of cough again made their appearance, and knowing the entire absence of cough during the sedative effect of the chloroform, I put her upon potass. tart. antimon., which produced a similar action, and, like the other, controlled the cough. The continuance of this treatment, however, I found unsuitable, as it prevented her taking

her usual amount of nourishment, wine and beef-tea, and it appeared that instead of curing, I was only substituting one form of illness for another. I therefore had recourse again to the tonics, increasing the dose. Although anxious to dispense with the chloroform, I was forced to apply to it occasionally.

*Third Week.*—The cough was a little abated during the day, but as it abated, threatenings of convulsions made their appearance, which, towards the end of the week, became more marked, gradually increasing as the cough decreased.

*Fourth Week.*—Cough less frequent, convulsions increasing in force. I then put her upon acid. hydrocyanicum (S), in doses of three drops every two hours, which I persisted in for three or four days, without any marked benefit. I subsequently pushed Cannabis Indica, with no better effect. From the commencement of the cough, sinapisms to the chest were frequently applied.

*Fifth Week.*—The cough nearly disappeared, but in the face of my exertions to check them, the convulsions became now perfectly uncontrollable, unless by chloroform, which I had again to have recourse to, and after being dosed with it till she fell asleep, was followed on her awaking with the same severe bilious vomitings as formerly. Her condition was now becoming very weak, and despairing of a cure, I had given her up as incurable, still, however, persevering with the use of chloroform, as the only means I had to relieve the severity of her condition. As a last resource I thought of giving mesmerism a trial, and proposed to the patient's friends that, if they had no objections, I was willing to try it. I assured them that I had no experience of its effects, but considered that, if all recorded was true, as to its powers, it certainly was not to be despised. They were quite willing that any means I might consider as likely to afford relief should be tried; and, assuring them that at least no harm could arise from the attempt, I at once commenced its application. The poor patient at this time was screaming and tossing about, apparently in the greatest distress; and, having secured her as well as I could with one hand, I made the mesmeric passes over her for about twenty minutes, with my other hand, without any apparent effect. Chloroform was again had recourse to for that night, and next

day I repeated the experiment, but with as little effect as formerly. I was now rather doubtful of any benefit being likely to arise from this unusual course, but in the evening I again made the attempt to entrance her. She was at the time lying perfectly unconscious and rigid, from the effects of a fit, but after having continued the mesmeric passes for about ten minutes, she suddenly opened her eyes, and followed the movements of my hand as I made the passes over her. In about ten minutes more she fell into the mesmeric sleep, and continued to sleep calmly and soundly all night, without any other application, this being the first night's uninterrupted sleep she had had for six weeks. I could not but consider this a triumph for mesmerism, and I even was sanguine enough to hope that there would be no more of the disease, the effect produced being so unexpected as well as inexplicable, and that the properties of this, to me, new curative, might easily be as potent as new. It proved otherwise, however; as next morning, on her awaking, the convulsions set in worse than ever. In the evening I again entranced her, which was again followed by an excellent night's rest, more so than the previous night, for, not awaking as she had previously done, I was sent for to restore her to consciousness. The convulsions still continued during the day, and to get free of which, I extended the mesmeric application to the forenoon as well as evening, which after all did not completely control the fits. Some days she would have no attacks; others, again, she would have several; but it was perfectly apparent the disease had received a check. I now applied no other means but mesmerism for her recovery, and as its application was extended, a drowsiness was induced thereby, which daily increased, and latterly became so powerful that the mesmeric application was not required. The drowsiness—indeed sleep, which it ultimately became—was now so overpowering for her, that great difficulty began to be felt to get her aroused at meal times, and even when aroused, she had the greatest difficulty in remaining awake till she had finished the meal; and it was no unusual occurrence, when in the midst of a meal, so to speak, for her face to fall forward on her plate, so completely was she overpowered by sleep. This sleepy state continued three or four days, and on the

evening of the 26th August, while being shifted in bed, she fell back in the arms of her attendants, apparently in a swoon. Being present when this occurred, I found her pulse regular and steady, and her breathing scarcely perceptible. In this state of trance she continued sixty hours, during which time she swallowed nothing, and it was at the expiry of this time I ordered a beef-tea enema to be administered. While the preparations were being made for the same, she awoke, but probably had this operation not been set about, her sleep might have been more prolonged. She now drank half-a-cupful of beef-tea, and immediately thereafter relapsed into the trance, which this time continued twenty-eight hours. At the end of this time she awoke, and made signs for writing materials. Her father, who was present at this time, on asking her if she could not speak, received no answer. On her getting a slate, she wrote the word "grapes," and on her father again asking her if she could neither hear nor speak, she looked earnestly at him for some time, and then wrote "she could see his lips moving, but could hear no sound." She this time remained awake two hours, and again fell asleep, which continued till next day, when she again awoke, partook of a few grapes, and drank some beef-tea. She again fell asleep, and slept forty-eight hours; and so she continued in this state for several days, sleeping and waking at longer or shorter intervals. During the continuance of this sleepy state, she had neither cough nor fit. She in the long-run fell asleep, and continued to sleep uninterruptedly for three weeks, and during this long sleep I frequently made mesmeric passes over her, to see what effect they might have in changing her condition. After repeated trials to impress her with the influence, her arms became obedient to the passes, I being able to raise them or change the position in which they might be, by their influence alone. This state of matters having continued for several days, I then attempted to administer food by the same power; and, after having made several passes over her head, face, and neck, I brought my face as near her as possible, without contact, and by opening and shutting my mouth several times, she began to imitate the movements. I then took a cupful of beef-tea, and, holding it close to her lips, and at the same time



imitating the acts of imbibition and deglutition, which she also did, with the important difference, however, that she thereby actually partook of the beef-tea. Having now discovered a *feeding* process, I was enabled occasionally to administer support. As the quantity she took was small, not exceeding a half tea-cupful twice a-day, to induce her to partake of it more freely, I excited the organ of alimentativeness, which produced a very remarkable effect, quite different from what I expected. Instead of this operating so as to make her desirous for food, it acted as an index of the condition of her stomach, as to whether food was agreeable or otherwise, as frequently, when I had the cup at her lips, and excited this organ, yea, after several hours abstinence, instead of her partaking of the contents, she would spit out, and shew unmistakeable signs of aversion to food. At other times she would take it with relish. I therefore, latterly, on account of this effect, before letting her have any food, tested her inclination for the same by this means, and not until she shewed symptoms of a desire for it did I give her any. Her fasts had various durations; frequently she would take nothing for from twenty-four to forty-eight hours, once she had nothing for sixty hours, and the longest period she passed at this stage without food or water, indeed, without swallowing, was eighty-four hours. During these periods I frequently tried to give her beef-tea, but without effect.

On her awaking from this trance, which was at the end of three weeks, she made signs for food; after getting which, she had a little bilious vomiting, which, after a while, increased and continued for the next two days. On the third day she wrote, "she wished an apple," which she got, and again the bilious vomiting commenced, and continued for a day. On the termination of this bilious attack, her appetite considerably increased, her taste becoming most capricious; and, from her partaking of the strangest mixtures, which she would not want, becoming quite excited and unmanageable whenever I tried to prevent her, she for a few days longer was subject to occasional fits of vomiting. As these became less frequent, the convulsions again increased as before the trance—they having made their appearance in a subdued form in a short while after she awoke from the trance, but, on account of the sickness setting in, were

kept under, till now that the sickness began to disappear. The convulsions having assumed their former severity, scarce ever being absent, I thought I might succeed in controlling them were I to keep her continuously mesmerised. I, therefore, kept her entranced for a whole day, during which the force of the convulsions broke through the restraining power, but which, I afterwards discovered, was owing to the power of the influence becoming exhausted. Being sent for at these times—that is, when the convulsions came on—by renewing the exhausted mesmeric influence, she became again tranquil. At the expiry of six days, as I was not aware of any one having been kept so long under the influence, and was doubtful as to what might be the effect of so continued an application of it, I commenced to remove it; but no sooner had I begun to lessen its power, than a most violent convulsion seized the patient, who, at the time I commenced to do so, was lying perfectly quiet. I was glad to renew its power, which I had some difficulty in accomplishing; but, when done, I kept her constantly under its influence, day and night, for eight weeks. After the second week's application, she passed into the sleep-waking state; and from this time henceforth she amused herself in making various articles of knitted and bead-work. I regularly tested, every three or four days, the improvement she had made; but every time I did so the convulsions recurred, and not till the expiry of eight weeks could I remove the influence entirely, when she remained perfectly quiet for about five minutes, the convulsions again coming on, requiring the re-application of the influence to subdue them. I have frequently, in the presence of medical men and others who visited the patient, exhibited most unmistakeably the controlling power of the influence, as by a few passes I changed her condition presented to them—namely, perfect composure, and busily engaged knitting—to a state of pain with convulsions, and in like manner again restored her to quietude. She now continued regularly to improve, and at the end of every week I found a considerable extension of the improvement. The time at last arrived when she could dispense with the influence both by day and night; but this took months to accomplish, the progress made being so gradual, the same means being kept in

operation all the time. It was not till 15th March 1857 that she slept all night without the influence, having slept under it every night since I commenced its application. From this night henceforth all her former ailments had disappeared, her health became gradually established, and she is now stronger and has better health than ever she had.

It was during the eight weeks' continuous mesmeric sleep that the various extraordinary magnetic phenomena were developed, an account of which I shall give in the following chapter.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE VARIOUS MAGNETIC PHENOMENA DEVELOPED IN THE COURSE OF CURE.

AMONG the first phenomena observable was that of me not being able to visit patients living in the same house with this patient, without her being aware of it. These patients lived up stairs, and not on the same storey with her. The door of her room was at the extremity of the passage or lobby, on the ground floor, at a distance of several yards from the street door; and the stair leading to the floors above was placed just within the street door. On entering at the street door, if, instead of going along the passage to her room, I went up stairs, she immediately commenced to scream, and so long as I remained in the house, and away from her, the screaming continued to increase, and, latterly, she became so violently agitated that, to prevent a convulsion ensuing, I had to go to her without further delay. There is no doubt that, had she been able to have left her bed, she would have come after me, having always a strong desire to do so whenever I entered the house; and it was from her not being able to accomplish this, that occasioned the violent symptoms. On asking her the cause of all this, she could give no other explanation than that it was *something* which destroyed the influence and hurt her. I had latterly to give up visiting other patients in the house, as the disagreeable effects spoken of, continued to increase so much. On leaving her room I had always, if any one was leaving at

the same time, to go out last, as the same effect—screaming, &c.—was produced, if any one intervened between the patient and me. This would also occur if, even in the passage, and not visible to her, any one intervened; and not till I was outside the entrance door did this remarkable relation cease.

She further gave evidence of clairvoyance, and I was often not a little surprised at her relating to me how I had been occupied in the course of the day; or, for instance, if I had been longer than usual in visiting her, instead of her asking me to tell the cause, she would frequently tell me the cause. She made some remarkable statements while in this state as to the progress and changes to occur in connexion with her disease, all of which took place exactly as she had foretold, in some instances weeks after. She likewise gave evidences on other matters regarding other individuals, many of which turned out correct.

The severity of her disease having made her deaf and dumb, in which state she remained nine weeks, I at the end of that time commenced an attempt to restore the power of these organs; and for that purpose I made passes directly over the larynx and ears, which gave her great pain, but which, after some days' perseverance, had the effect of enabling her to utter monosyllables, and in the course of time, had the effect of enabling her to speak and hear as usual. For many weeks afterwards, however, if I left her in the morning, after operating, able to speak and hear, on returning in the evening I found her speech and hearing again gone. At first the ability or use of these organs continued for about ten minutes, and after every operation its duration gradually extended, till at last she stated the time when the power of these organs would remain permanently, which was to be, she said, in four weeks, at a certain hour of the day, and which occurred exactly as she had said, and the power of these organs never again left her.

After she had been about a week in the continuous mesmeric sleep, one of her friends, on coming into her room one day, happened to lay her hand upon the post of her bed, when she immediately began to shew signs of something being disagreeable to her, and which effect was afterwards invariably produced when anything touched either her bed or bed-clothes.



This strange effect increased to such a degree that a convulsion was the immediate effect of contact with her or her bed. I was frequently sent for to relieve her from this convulsed condition. A frequent cause of this disturbance was the skirt of the dresses of females, while passing through the room, coming in contact with the bed curtains; the cat had also to be banished from it, proving a great and frequent annoyance in getting about her bed; and I have frequently heard her complain of mice coming out during the night, and causing her about as much uneasiness as any. Her sensitiveness even exceeded this; for if any person happened to touch my hat, set on a table at a considerable distance from her bed, or anything else which I had carried on my person, the same effect ensued. Say, for instance, I laid my lancet-case on the table, unseen by her, if it was touched by any one but myself a convulsion immediately followed, which continued until I removed the effect. She had also, in the course of her illness, lost the ability either to stand or walk, and she foretold about a fortnight previous, the exact day on which she would be able to stand and walk. Her limbs up to this time appeared quite shrunk and powerless, and she could not even then lift up her feet in bed. About four days previous to the time she had fixed for the change, from observing no change in the appearance of her limbs, I thought of arousing the action of the muscles by making frequent darting passes all over her limbs; which having been repeated several times, had the effect desired, though accompanied with considerable pain continuing for two hours. During the operation of this change, she said that owing to the passes I had made, they would have the effect of enabling her to walk sooner than the time she had fixed; and she even thought she would be able to walk across the room that night, which she did. She further informed me, that as a consequence of this premature effect, she would be in danger of falling into a trance if she were allowed to sleep longer than three hours at a time, which trance would continue five weeks. This tendency, she said, would continue till Sunday, at two o'clock P.M., after which there would be no risk of it occurring, however long she slept. In this instance, the change was foretold three days previously to its occurrence. I had, to meet this difficulty, so to arrange

that I might see her before the expiry of three hours, should she fall asleep. Once or twice the time had nearly expired before I could see her, and I had considerable difficulty in arousing her. This state of matters continued exactly as she had said until the expiry of the time, after which it disappeared.

I had heard of various effects being produced by touching different parts of the body of mesmerised people; and, finding my patient so very susceptible, I made the experiment with her. I remember, while she was yet dumb, of a remarkable effect being brought out by the ankle-joint. I had tried many of the joints previous to this one, and also the prominences of the face, with, in each case, a different effect; but, from the patient being unable to express herself as to what the vision was, I could only distinguish whether it was one of pleasure or terror by the effect produced on the patient. On the ankle-joint being touched the effect was this. She clapped her hands, attempted to laugh, looked fixedly at the fireside, and watched with great pleasure the motions apparently of animals, which, from their situation, I considered would be kittens, at play. In this belief I remained for several days, till one day, being in great spirits at what she saw, she made repeated attempts to speak, but could not. By keeping up this effect of the vision for some time, and at the same time exciting the organ of language, she began to attempt to sound the letter R, and at length got to "Ra," when, thinking she meant rabbits, I wrote the word on the slate, which gave her great satisfaction, intimating, as far as she could, that that was what she meant. After a few days practice of this sort her speech daily improved, and ultimately got quite restored, when we then had from her the explanation of the different effects produced by various parts of the body being touched. They are as follow:—On the bridge of the nose being touched a vision of flies was produced, causing her to complain loudly of their annoyance, and at the same time she kept up a continual slapping with her pocket-handkerchief, as if driving them away. The point of the nose produced a vision of birds, at first pleasant, but afterwards fearful, from the size she said they took. The cheek-bones produced a vision of a hen laying eggs; and many amusing effects have been brought out by this, such as making her take the eggs

from under the hen, which always resisted her attempts to do so, getting, as she always did, well-pecked fingers, of which she made sore lament. The chin produced a frightful vision of a bear; shoulder-joint that of flowers, which she would pluck and present to me. Strange effects, and ludicrous too, were produced by exciting say two visions at once, such as the hen and flowers, &c. &c. The elbow-joint produced laughter; the wrist-joint a vision of fishes swimming about. The first row of finger-joints a vision of dancers—three ladies and two gentlemen; second row of finger-joints, five vocalists, singing the several parts of air, counter, tenor, and bass; third row of finger-joints, a vision of five violinists, consisting of air, violin, tenor, bass, and double bass. The promontories of the vertebrae in the whole course of the column produced such frightful visions, and so terrified her, that she screamed aloud. Hip-joint produced a vision of ponies running in a circle, which vision was accompanied by a continual rotary motion of her head, as if following them in their course. The knee-joint produced a vision of dogs, frightful to her; ankle-joints that of rabbits. The heels and toes produced a disposition to dance, which she always kept refusing to do, yet her feet would not remain still. The trunk of the body at various parts had its peculiar visions, but their nature could not be explained, as during their presence she never spoke, but continued to laugh and wring her hands.

A remarkable fact in connexion with these different effects was, that she explained them all herself, and whatever the vision excited might be, I could not make her fancy it to be anything else but what she believed it to be. For instance, say that the vision was rabbits, excited by the ankle, I could not make her believe she saw cats, or change the vision peculiar to the part of the body excited. The fact of the facility of belief of parties in the mesmeric sleep, will be familiar enough to those acquainted with its effects, as, for instance, I could take a stone and make her believe it was fifty different things in succession, but in no instance could I change the character of the vision, produced through touching any particular part of her body, by saying it was different to what she first said she saw it. I have never yet found the slightest deviation from the visions first produced,

each part of her body invariably producing the same. As to the laughter produced by touching her elbow, for instance, I could not restrain the laughter by telling her not to laugh, but it continued until I controlled it by the elbow. It seems to be a fixed law in her case, that whatever effect may be produced by touching any part of her body, it must be controlled by the same.

These visions, from different parts of her body being touched, can likewise be produced by simply saying the parts are wrong. In the same manner, I can render her deaf, dumb, blind, and incapable of motion. I have only to say she is blind, and she becomes so, and of all tests in the world as to the impossibility in this case of imposture, the greatest sceptic that ever existed, and who understood the difference between the action of a voluntary and an involuntary muscle, could not but be satisfied by this proof alone. On saying she is blind, she immediately asks where I am, while, at the same time, I am looking into her eyes, watching the action of the iris; and, it being fully dilated, on bringing a light suddenly close to her eye, no contraction of the pupil takes place. On making her deaf, which can be as readily done as the other, a rather striking effect is produced. Were I to say to her, her elbows are wrong, she would at once laugh; but if I first say she is deaf, and then her elbows are wrong, no effect is produced. If, in a few minutes after I have said so, I say she can hear, she will then say she hears something sounding and coming towards her, but cannot explain what, and on the sound reaching her she then begins to laugh in the usual way, or to display whatever effect may be expected from the part of her body operated upon.

The phrenological organs are, as is usual with others, quite obedient to mesmeric effect. The developments of the different organs can be called forth either by touch, speech, or by holding the finger opposite the seat of each. If I excite tune she cannot sing, as the effect of music is then too powerful for her, but under the influence of time alone, she sings very agreeably. I remember, during her illness, she requested me to play upon any musical instrument I chose, as she thought the effect of music on her would be beneficial. I did what I could to satisfy her in this way, and while I was playing a tune, she apparently



could not find means to express her gratification, the effect produced on her thereby was beyond description. After a few nights' repetition of this, the effect became so powerful on her, that she could not sit still while she heard the music, but would spring towards me, seize the instrument, and ask me to cease, as she could not stand it. If I had previously made a few passes over the instrument, its power over her, when sounded, became greatly increased. I have often, through the influence of music alone, soothed her when irritated ; and the least disturbance of her system, from whatever cause, invariably prevented the development of the different magnetic effects, besides making her uncomfortable and restless. When in this state of derangement, she at first paid no attention to the music, but as I continued to play, the music gradually overcame her indisposition, and the magnetic effects, which were all absent, became again present on demand. There is not the smallest approach to anything of this kind when she is in her natural state ; any amount of music produces no apparent effect upon her—indeed, less so than I have seen upon many.

Besides her presenting the usual effect of mesmerism—namely, that of being deaf to all sounds, but through or by the operator—she can see no one in the room but myself, let there be ever so many present, and if I happened to call upon her when she had any visitors, whenever she heard my foot in the passage coming towards her, she used to wish her visitors good night, as she said, "The doctor was coming, and she would not see them any more." On my leaving the room and the house too, the persons that were in when I entered, if there when I left, became again visible to her, but she had no recollection of having seen them that day before, although she had been conversing with them only five minutes previously. She could allow no one to touch her when I was present, as catalepsy would have been the consequence, but in my absence, touch by another was only disagreeable ; if repeated too often, however, catalepsy was induced. When she was so far recovered as to be able to dispense with the magnetic influence during the day, on my visiting her at night I did not require to point at her, or to make passes to entrance her, for whenever I entered her room she became entranced simply by my presence ; and previous to her

being able to dispense with the influence during the night, whenever I met her, on the street, or anywhere else, she became entranced at once.

The effects of different metals upon her are likewise peculiar and interesting. On a piece of gold being laid in her hand, she complained of a burning feeling of heat, increasing in proportion to the time the same is allowed to remain, until it becomes so hot that acute pain is the result; and, at this crisis, a tonic spasm commences in the fingers, gradually extends up the arms, and over the body, and ultimately has the effect of making her as rigid as a statue. Her hand being firmly clenched on the gold, the greatest force short of injury which I can exert, will not open it, and I only succeed in doing so through the application of silver, which has the effect of gradually relaxing the spasm, and opening the hand. Copper, under the same circumstances, produces similar effects; the heat, however, is not so great, and the force, as well as the disagreeableness of the spasm produced by it are also aggravated. Brass produces no feeling of heat, but a more violent spasm accompanies its application. Iron and pewter produce no feeling of heat, but there is violent spasmodic contraction, accompanied with much pain and uneasiness. Silver produces a pleasurable feeling, with coolness; indeed, the patient delights in the handling of this metal. Nickel produces an effect similar to brass. Silver has the power of neutralising the disagreeable effects of all the metals, and is the most immediate means I have of checking their different effects. Dr. Elliotson says, "The influences of metals can be communicated to each other by contact." I have frequently proved this, and, as an instance, I have placed a silver and copper coin in contact for a short time, and, by placing each in succession on her hand, a mixed action was produced, particularly marked with the silver coin, which usually gives her pleasure; and which, after the contact with the copper, she threw from her with aversion. The influence of individuals can also be communicated to metals, and their peculiar effects thereby interrupted. Say, I take half-a-dozen shillings from my purse, and place them all in succession in her hand, she manifests the usual satisfaction at the touch of the metal; but should any person, previous to one of these

coins being placed in her hand, touch the coin, she, on receiving it, will immediately throw it from her, and will not receive it from me until I have removed the influence foreign to it. The same effects are produced by silver from the purse of a stranger, and which she will also receive as mine, by making a few passes over it. As another effect of metallic contact; previous to her being entranced, she has to remove from her pocket any copper or keys which may be therein, as, if such are allowed to remain, whenever I begin to entrance her, she becomes affected by their influence. She revealed the cause of her sudden rigidity, by, on one occasion, pointing to her pocket, when, on examining the same, I found a key and a case of crochet needles. Once or twice she has had to remove her stays, owing to the brass and steel about them producing their effects; but after some time, she said that the metals got impregnated with the influence, and did not hurt her, rendering their removal unnecessary.

So susceptible was she to the mesmeric influence, that I have known her fall into the trance from visiting a patient whom I had just operated on. The first time this occurred, she was anxious to see a patient who was in a very weak state, and on whom I had been operating for some time. It so happened that the day she called on him, I had just been gone about half an hour, and she had no sooner sat down in the man's presence, than her eyes closed, and she became entranced. The poor man was sadly put about, it having been the first visit she had paid him; and thinking she was seized with sudden illness, he sent for me. On entering the room, I will never forget the mingled expression of dismay and surprise which he exhibited, as he sat intently gazing at the sleeping girl; and still more was his surprise increased, when I aroused her, and when she smiled and said she was quite well, and would not fall asleep the next time she came to see him. This extraordinary effect seems only to occur once with the same individual, as I have never yet found the effect repeated. A similar result occurred with my own little boy of five years of age, whom I had been regularly mesmerising for deafness. On one occasion, after I had just finished operating on him, he had gone out to the garden, where he met my patient, and she no sooner saw him than

she was immediately entranced and fixed to the spot. I was called in a great hurry to come out, "as John had mesmerised Mary, and she was standing sleeping, and could not move." They, after this, met frequently under the same circumstances, but nothing of the kind resulted.

With the exception of the last two instances, where no repetition seemed possible, in all the other remarkable effects produced I have thoroughly proved their regularity and truth by the most satisfactory tests, and I have never yet observed, in regard to any peculiar manifestation, the slightest deviation from the effect first developed. I subjected her to the operation of the most intense joy and fear, and when impelled by such to rush from my presence out of the room, so soon as her hand grasps the door-handle, which is brass, to open the door, her course is arrested, her whole body becoming at the same time quite rigid, and she calls to me to come to her relief.

Another very remarkable effect is brought out through my position as regards the magnetic meridian. I am enabled by this means, and by no other, to throw her into a state of perfect insensibility to pain. (I have latterly done so by simply telling her she has no sensation, which, I have over and over again proved to satisfaction.) Drs. Esdaile, Elliotson, and others, have been able to produce this state by the usual mesmeric manipulations, when tumours of enormous weight have been cut from the bodies of persons, as well as many other capital operations performed, and all without the slightest pain having been felt by the patients; but in the deepest trance I could induce in this case, I have never been able to extinguish sensibility to pain, unless through polar influence. To illustrate this, it matters not what position she may be in, nor yet how she may be occupied. Let her even be acting under the impression of a vision brought out through some part of her body, I have only to raise my hand so that my finger will point in a direction due north, when, in a few seconds, she falls into this state of insensibility, she being at the time in a sleep-waking state, her eyes close, and she appears to be in the deepest sleep. This will continue so long as I continue to hold my hand in the same direction. On lowering my hand from



this position, it is some time before the effect passes off, which it does gradually; but should I wish to hasten the return of consciousness, I have only, in the same manner, to raise my hand, pointing in the direction due south. If I continue to hold my hand in this latter direction longer than is necessary to remove the effect produced by pointing towards the north pole, she at once begins to grumble, and complain that "I am depriving her of the influence, and that I might at least let her keep what I have given her." In the same manner, when I had taken my seat beside her, in such a position that the point of my foot, when raised a little, pointed direct south, I at the same time keeping her attention occupied by conversation, I have frequently seen her pull my foot out of the direction in which I had placed it, as she said "she saw the influence all running off at my foot." I can likewise affect her very peculiarly by establishing a current of natural electricity through my body; and so long as a positive and negative point are kept established, no effect is produced on her, but whichever of these points I remove, she becomes affected accordingly; and I have kept her frequently for a considerable time alternating between the various effects—mechanically nodding asleep and awaking, just as I raised or lowered my fingers pointing in opposite directions. These effects are all produced by movements unseen by her, and, to satisfy sceptics, her eyes, in addition, blindfolded; in short, in respect to this very peculiar effect, as with all the foregoing, I have taken every means possible to establish the reality of the phenomena displayed, and it is not until after repeated experiment that I now most confidently assert that all the various effects which I have described are actual truths, developed through the agency of mesmerism.

It is matter of great satisfaction to me that my patient is now, after so protracted and severe an illness, in the enjoyment of good health, and without the least impairment of her faculties, which many might expect to exist, after so peculiar and obstinate derangement of system. She continues as susceptible as ever to mesmeric impression, which, when applied, seems to change her both as to her own disposition, as well as in her relation to others. She loses all recollection of her previous condition, cannot tell how she has been occupied throughout the

day, does not know where she is, and while I am present she can neither hear nor see any other person, and can, by a touch or a word, be influenced so as to develop any of the singular effects previously related; becoming thereby a living testimony to the truth and power of mesmerism, an insurmountable barrier to the progress of false assertion, and, furthermore, setting at defiance the attempts of many to mislead their fellow-men, and induce them to view mesmerism either as an imposture, or even worse, as nothing but infidelity, and as such, only the practice of infidels. However, nearly ninety years of such treatment has not succeeded in crushing it, for, like every truth, the base means intended for its destruction only foster and establish its power, and, in the end, make its victory the more triumphant!

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## CHAPTER IV.

### ILLUSTRATIVE CASES OF CURATIVE MESMERISM, AS MORE USUALLY EXPERIENCED.

IN addition to the foregoing case, I have applied mesmerism in many others, some in which relief had not been obtained by the treatment generally adopted in such cases, and others in which it was tried previous to any other being practised. These, although not presenting such striking and remarkable effects as the previous case, yet the benefit derived from the mesmeric treatment was in no way less marked. As examples of such, the following cases will suffice:—

#### CURE OF LUMBAGO AND SCIATICA.

A lady being severely affected with these complaints, I was requested to attend her, and on going gave her the option of being either treated mesmerically or by the usual applications. She agreed to allow me to attempt to entrance her, but should I not succeed in half-an-hour to do so, the usual remedies were

to be had recourse to. From her suffering severe pain, which was greatly aggravated on the slightest motion of her body, I could not get her placed in the most convenient position, and had to satisfy myself with a semi-recumbent posture, not the most suitable for mesmeric application. Having commenced the usual passes, she continued to complain much of the pain she was suffering, but after about ten minutes application, her moanings became less frequent, and she gradually became entranced. From this lady having her eyes closed from the commencement of the operation, I could not decidedly say at what period she fell into the mesmeric trance, but she having remained perfectly still for about half-an-hour, I requested her husband, who was in an adjoining room, to go and speak to her. After making the greatest vocal effort he could to make her hear, which failed, I stated to him that as she was now entranced, she might sleep for an hour or two. The length of her sleep was greater than I expected, and, having been out of town all day, I was much surprised on receiving a message in the evening that I was to come immediately, as the lady had never awoke since the forenoon, when I operated on her. Her friends told me that they had used every effort to arouse her, and had stopped short of no attempt to make her hear, but all without effect. I was anxious that they should allow her to awake of herself, as it would prove so beneficial were she to sleep out her sleep; but they were anxious, and doubted even the possibility of any means being able to arouse her. After a few waves of my hand across her face, she opened her eyes, sat up, and declared herself a great deal better. The freedom of her motion alone, was a sufficient indication of the benefit she had received from her long sleep. On asking her how long she supposed she had slept, she said about ten minutes; but on proving to her it was about as many hours, she had doubts of permitting its application to be repeated. Next morning her disease had relapsed, and I again repeated the application, allowing the effect to continue ten minutes. In the evening I again entranced her, when she slept all night, and awoke about breakfast time, quite free of any annoyance. This case is peculiar, from the rapid and powerful effects produced, for it is by no means usual to induce sleep at a first operation, and not

until mesmerism has been several times applied, does sleep usually result. In many cases sleep is never induced at all, even although the disease under treatment has been so obstinate as to take months to overcome, the patients gradually recovering, without ever having once slept.

The next case will in a manner illustrate this :—

CASE OF SEVERE GASTRODYNIA, CEPHALALGIA, AND OTHER  
FUNCTIONAL DERANGEMENT.

A lady who had long been severely affected with pain in the stomach, accompanied with headache, caused by other functional derangement. Whenever she partook of the smallest piece of solid food, it was followed by severe headache, which continued for an hour or two. She was likewise frequently seized with headache during the night, and the only relief she got was by the continued application of cold to the head. When I saw her first, headaches had come on regularly every night, preventing her sleeping, and from the length of time she had been unwell previously, and the more recent aggravation of her complaints, she was altogether in a poor state of health. She had previously consulted eminent city practitioners without any benefit, and as I considered it a suitable case for applying mesmerism, I advised her to try what effect it would have. She reluctantly complied, having been influenced against its use, as if not dangerous, it was at least useless. After half-an-hour's operation, she was not much influenced, felt only a slight soothing effect, but nothing approaching to sleep. The application was continued daily, and her condition actually became worse, accompanied with a smart attack of ophthalmia. This state of matters formed a suitable opportunity for her friends to renew their advices to relinquish it, but fortunately the lady had sufficient time to judge that some effect was operating, and being resolute, she continued in its use, and at the end of a fortnight she could eat and sleep, without the slightest inconvenience. All her former ailments had disappeared, and she was, in short, cured. It is now several months since, and she has not had the least return of her former complaints. It will be observed that this was a cure effected



without the mesmeric sleep having ever been once induced, yet the progress of the recovery was regular and satisfactory. Sleep, or mesmeric trance, is not indispensable to cure, it only indicates the degree of effect produced on the individual, though doubtless, when it can be induced, the effect is more powerful, and the cure sooner brought about. In some cases the sleep only comes on after repeated operations; in others, again, it never appears at all, though mesmeric treatment may have been continued for months. Dr. Elliotson states that some of the most remarkable cures by mesmerism have been those in which sleep had never been induced, where, indeed, no perceptible effect of its application existed, the patient to appearance continuing in the same state at the end of an operation, as he was at the commencement of it.

#### CURE OF DEEP-SEATED ABSCESS, PRODUCING LAMENESS.

Mrs. L., who had been in indifferent health for a year or two, and latterly had become quite lame, not being able to walk without a considerable halt, and which she had had for eighteen months, she having been an erect and active walker previous to this attack. She had, as usual, consulted many different practitioners, without deriving any benefit, and at last was advised to try the mesmeric treatment, which she did. She had previously consulted me as to her condition, but at that time I had not begun to apply mesmerism to disease, and the means then resorted to had little effect. The abscess was so deeply seated that its existence could not be detected, but she constantly complained of a pain about an inch or two internal to the spine of the ilium, or haunch-bone. After not many operations her walking was visibly improved, and in about a month she was able to walk as well as ever she did. In the course of cure the abscess was matured and discharged in one of the ways peculiar to diseases of that nature; and it was not till this occurred that the true cause of her lameness was discovered.

GREAT RELIEF IN A CASE OF REPORTED PULMONARY  
CONSUMPTION.

A gentleman who had been for some months in a delicate state of health, which had never been robust, but who in the course of last winter, from causes both mental and physical, had got into a very weak condition. He had been a month or two under treatment before I saw him, and had been drugged with iron and cod-liver oil, *ad nauseam*. His chest had been pronounced unsound, and he had been ordered change of air as indispensable. On his return from the country, he being no better, I was called to him, when I found his state very far from satisfactory, he not being able to eat, sleep, or walk, his appetite quite gone, restless and disturbed nights, profuse night sweats, pulse from one hundred and ten to one hundred and twenty—in short, to all appearance, he could not survive a few weeks, if that. I had a very hopeless opinion of him, and despaired of being able in the least to better his condition. As to the exact state of his chest, I had no opportunity of judging, as he objected to its examination, being particularly nervous on that point, and whether the report already given (which, I may mention, was only assumed) was correct or not, I could not determine. However, bad as appearances certainly were, I commenced mesmerising him, twice a-day, and in about a fortnight his condition was visibly improved. This continued to increase, and by the end of three months, he was able to walk about, attend to his duties in part, and had no complaints either as to want of appetite or sleep. By his own wish he went to the sea-side for a month, from which he returned considerably strengthened. This case, like all the others, proved a good chance for our opponents. At the first their cry was—"Certain death to the man, hastened, of course, by the remedy adopted," and as he, unfortunately for them, improved, it was amusing to hear the reasons they gave for it. Ah! it was just the wine and good diet, &c. &c., that did it; but at the same time they forgot to explain *how* it was that before the man was mesmerised, that the liberal drugging, good dieting, &c. &c., which were all so abundantly forced upon him, had not their good effect then—*how* it was that the best that could be thought of could not

induce a relish—*how* that the most skilfully compounded medicine could not procure him a night's rest—the poor patient, in spite of all the cramming, daily sank ; yea, in the *midst* of the very means that were now said to have cured him. Despicable sophistry, how insurmountable is truth !

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## CHAPTER V.

### CONCLUSION.

IT may now be asked by some, How does mesmerism act ?—what is it ? As to the former question, we are still uninformed, and it will remain for succeeding investigators to elucidate this point, if indeed it ever will be. As to the latter, what it is, remains in about equal obscurity. All we can say about mesmerism is, that the influence called mesmerism, after the name of its *reviver*, but known and forgotten long before his day, is allied to magnetism, has an immediate connexion with the nervous system of the human body, is a nervous or vital force common to all individuals, but existing in some individuals more abundantly than in others, as has been proved by the extraordinary powers of some operators. It is by the communication of this influence from one individual to another, that the curative and other remarkable effects observable on the human body are produced. That this influence has not an imaginary existence, is proved from the fact that it can be seen by some individuals, as also by persons entranced, issuing from the finger-points ; and to some sensitive people, the whole body of the operator assumes a luminous appearance, which is more distinctly seen in a darkened room. The latter individuals say that it is this influence which enters their body, and they, having in some instances the power of introvision, state that it goes directly to the part affected. In addition to this, the influence can be communicated to inanimate objects, and therein detected by the same sensitive individuals. The case of Miss Armitage will illustrate these remarks ; and I have likewise the testimony

of other operators on the point. These, then, comprise the amount of our acquaintance with this next to invisible agent; and as it is doubtless much too little to establish its existence with a great many—who consider, in their ignorance, that all matters, to be truths, ought to be as clearly defined as they can do the number of inches to a foot—I will only bring before their notice the remarks of an eminent scientific man, Professor Gregory of Edinburgh, which will shew how limited our vaunted wisdom is—how little indeed we do know of some of the laws of nature. He says, “Human conceit and vanity never take a wilder flight than when they persuade us that we know all the laws of nature, that we can explain all natural phenomena; and therefore, any alleged facts which appear to be inconsistent with the known laws of nature, or which cannot be explained, must be false.

“Not less absurd is the idea, that because we can explain all known facts, therefore what cannot be explained must be false. So far is it from being true that we are able to explain all natural facts, that it may be said with literal truth that we are unable to explain even the most familiar of them. The most acute and profound writers all agree in this, that to assign the true cause of any phenomena or fact is beyond our power. We say that we see by means of our eyes; and we add, by way of explaining this, that the rays of light falling on the eye are transmitted through the retina, where they form an image of the object, and thus we see it. Now all this is true, but does it explain vision? Does it tell us *what light is*? Does it explain *how* light passes through the eye? *how* this light forms an image on the retina or optic nerve? *why* this image *is inverted, or turned upside down*? *how* this inverted image reaches our minds? and, finally, *how* is it seen *erect*, and not inverted? I believe I may say that, with the single exception of the image of an object becoming inverted when seen through a round transparent body, such as the eye, the greatest philosopher living cannot make the least approach to answering one of these questions; and even in the *case* of that one fact, he can only say that it is an observed fact that the images of bodies are thus inverted. Newton saw the apple fall, and discovered the law which *regulates* its fall, as well as the motions



of the heavenly bodies—the law of gravitation. But did he thus *explain* the fall of the apple? No. He could not, nor can any one tell us, *why* the apple falls at all; but only that, when it does fall, it falls with a certain degree of speed, according to its distance from the earth. We amuse ourselves by giving names to what is unknown, and thus we say the apple falls, because there is an attraction between it and the earth, which we call the attraction of gravitation, and this is the cause of the apple's fall, and of the earth's motion round the sun. But if we are asked, What is this gravitation? *why* does the earth attract the apple, and the sun the earth? then we perceive that gravitation is only a name for the *unknown cause*, which produces certain effects, of which cause *we know nothing but its effects*.

“If, then, no man can explain the true causes or essence of vision or of gravitation, two universally familiar facts, how absurd, how illogical, to insist on having an explanation of mesmerism before admitting it. We ought, on the contrary, to ascertain the facts, and then try whether we can discover their cause, as Newton did, and as Bacon taught us to do.”

In the midst of our ignorance of great natural laws, it is, as regards mesmerism, a most comfortable assurance to know that the rare ability to explain *what it is*, and *how it operates*, does not in the least interfere with our ability to apply it to disease, nor yet with the potency of its effects; for in the hands of those practically acquainted with its various effects, it is a remedy immense in power, and utterly devoid of risk or danger: that, under such circumstances, the greatest amount of evil it can produce is, simply, to effect no cure, and leave the patient, as to its effects, exactly as he was when its application was commenced. Again, no one can say when mesmerism will not cure, unless, indeed, when our judgments tell us that the natural functions or structure of the body are either so much deranged or disorganised that the issue is unmistakeable, it being “appointed unto all men once to die;” yet, I say reasonably, thousands have been pronounced incurable where this means has afterwards proved effectual, if not in restoring health, at least in relieving “the ills that flesh is heir to;” and where people have the opportunity, they should certainly not despair

of relief with this means untried. Taking eminent medical testimony as our authority, and *facts* as our guide, there is not a curative of itself that has been the means of affording so much benefit to the distressed, or that approaches so near to the character of a universal remedy. Its application is at present limited to diseases of a certain class; but I have no doubt that, as our knowledge of its nature increases, and the laws which regulate its application better understood, its application will become much more extended. Nevertheless, as it is not the law of our existence that diseases shall always be curable, and hence, as there will always be incurables, all who have recourse to mesmerism for relief cannot expect to find it; but as these will form the exceptions, the majority who try it will have cause to be satisfied of its efficacy, and, when enjoying the benefits of its application, will not fail to acknowledge, with grateful hearts, that mesmerism is truly a provision for our welfare, and, like all the other blessings we enjoy, can only have one origin—our great and bountiful God.

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