

Humanism and Religion

A SHORT SKETCH

OF

ANIMAL MAGNETISM:

INTENDED TO

DIRECT ATTENTION TO THE PROPRIETY

OF

PRACTICALLY EXAMINING THAT QUESTION.

BY A PHYSICIAN.

LONDON:

JOHN HATCHARD & SON, 187, PICCADILLY.

—
1838.

BF
1131
.846
1838

LONDON:
Printed by J. Bradley, 78, Great Titchfield Street,
ST. MARY-LE-BONE.

PREFATORY REMARKS.

SHOULD any one open this little treatise, expecting to find Animal Magnetism defended with the zeal of an enthusiast, or opposed with the bitterness of scepticism, he will find himself mistaken. The author's sole object has been to place, if possible, fairly before his reader the position which it at present occupies. He neither desires to "extenuate," or "set down aught in malice," but, so far as his feeble endeavours can avail, to urge the necessity of examining *practically* and *dispassionately* a doctrine of such high pretension.

To the Professors of the Art he perhaps ought to offer an apology; it may be, that in his endeavour to condense their leading propositions he has communicated on some points erroneous impressions. Where this occurs, his excuse must be the want of that detailed knowledge more or less inevitable with one who has only directed his attention for a short period, either to the literary records or practical observation of magnetic phenomena.

A SHORT SKETCH

OF

ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

THE history of science shows that many truths, now fully admitted, struggled into recognition by slow degrees ; that they had many difficulties to contend with, and many prejudices to overcome. When Gallileo told men that the sun did not move round the earth, but that the earth revolved round the sun ;—or when Columbus theoretically inferred the existence of a new continent ;—or when Harvey stated as a fact that the blood flowed through our bodies in a circular course, and did not flow into the liver and out of the liver in regular flux and reflux,

“ Like the tides of Euripus, between Attica and Eubœa : ”—

In all these cases (and numbers might be cited) many—even of the “ *learned*,” denounced the authors as *heretics*, or *visionary dreamers*, or *presumptuous men*—unconscious, at the moment, that their successors would regard such epithets as demonstrative proofs of ancestral ignorance.

This innate scepticism, while undoubtedly of use by testing well the pretensions of each alleged

discovery, has been equally the means of retarding the reception of many, which in their final issue have become firmly established, and productive of much advantage. The fact seems to be, that when men talk of the "*learned*" in any age, they generally mean those who have achieved to a large extent an acquaintance with the received and existing knowledge of the time in which they live; but it not unfrequently happens, that the very exercise of mind which leads to this acquisition, engenders a state of thinking in which the reception—nay, the very *examination*—of new facts, is encountered with extreme reluctance. There exists among such persons a pride of intellect, which, despite their better judgment, would seem to whisper that the extreme limit of knowledge is attained; and hence it happens, that her boundaries are usually extended by a few extraordinary men, who, dissenting from the established dogmas of their day, have encountered the sneers of one generation, while they have commanded the applause of the succeeding.

Those alone, who, with the author, have looked a little into the history of science, will feel the truth of these remarks. The mass of mankind unavoidably receive their knowledge at second-hand; they assume it on the authority of others; and thus men peruse the controversies and speculations of an era earlier than their own, wondering how facts or principles which they now almost intuitively admit, could ever have been objects of question or of doubt.

The history of gravitation, of electricity, of Galvanism, offer marked examples. One of those previously alluded to, offers the most marked of all. The circulation of the blood is not a speculative question ; its proofs (dependant entirely on certain points in the structure of the body) require, we might suppose, only to be seen to be at once recognized. Harvey told the anatomists of his day this simple tale—that the blood flowed in two circles, and that it could not *possibly* pursue any other course. We now wonder how any rational mind could have denied the assertion ; yet what is the story which his life records ? Years rolled on before his doctrine was received ; he was traduced in character, vilified by ridicule, almost ruined in his practice ; the learned laughed, the public sneered in unison with their leaders, and “scarce a man,” we are told, “*above the age of forty*” at first acceded to his views. This text is written in the annals of the seventeenth century ; its commentary may be found in the unquestioned tenets of our own.

The lesson, thus deeply graven on the page of history, should never be neglected, when new and hitherto unsuspected powers are asserted to exist : with what double force ought it to fall upon the minds of those who, living in an era like our own, have seen the discovery of new agents, or new applications of those already known not less wonderful, advance with a rapidity which the wildest fancies of our fathers could scarcely have imagined ! Numbers yet live who saw the discovery of *oxygen* at once overturn nearly the whole system of che-

mical science. A few years passed, and Galvani announced the discovery of that power which yet bears his name. Soon after we find this, directed by the mind and hand of Davy, rending asunder the strongest attractions by which bodies are united, till he simplifies chemistry to an extraordinary degree, and brings us many steps nearer an acquaintance with the final elements of our globe. The earth is scarce yet settled on the breast of Watt, whose spirit speaks to us, as it were, at every turn, through the stupendous engines which he taught us to construct. Let those not yet passed even the middle period of life recal how, in their day, the application of steam to navigation won its way; the jibes which were uttered by pompous ignorance; how the whole vocabulary which imbecility mistakes for argument was enlisted in the cause of opposition. Time progressed. The little *Comet** rippled the surface of the Clyde, and one step was gained. "Ah!" said the objectors, "*'tis very well for a canal, but on a rough sea impossible!*" A year elapsed, and larger vessels were constructed; the narrow but stormy lakes of the Highlands were traversed, and the natives of their shores marvelled at the fuming vessel, which seemed impelled by the fiery forces of a dæmon. I need not pursue the picture: our world is but a few years older; the little *Comet* has produced a giant progeny, which plough the ocean

* The *Comet* was the first steam-vessel tried in this country. She was constructed under the direction of "Bell," who, poor fellow, derived little advantage from the attempt. The Americans, under *Fulton*, had preceded us some years.

“from Indus to the Pole ;” and “steamers” being ranged among the *common places* of our day, men wonder how they ever thought the project visionary.

The author has deemed these few remarks a fitting introduction to this little treatise, not because it is assumed that Animal Magnetism will pursue a course similar to that of the discoveries they allude to : it remains yet an unsettled question, whether such a principle exists at all ; and where the affirmative of this is admitted, it seems quite certain that the laws of its action are exceedingly obscure ; but such extraordinary statements have been made, such singular phenomena announced from all quarters of Europe, at least asserted to depend on the exertion of a special power, that it would be quite unphilosophical to cast aside with indifference statements which rest on considerable authority, and may be found to have truth as a foundation. On the other hand, it is equally necessary to steel the mind against that unwise credulity which would open it to a reception of the marvellous, without due inquiry ; and if ever assertions demanded a rigid scrutiny before admitting them as facts, it is doubtless those which the magnetizers present to our review. He who receives them as truths, without due investigation—but investigation *fairly and legitimately conducted*—is unwise. He who at once discards them as founded on illusion or deceit, for no other reason than that they transcend the present limits of human knowledge, is in the highest

degree unphilosophical and illiberal ; he has either not read, or not profited by that lesson which the history of science might have taught him.

Firmly impressed as he is with the truth of these remarks, and himself but recently an inquirer into those phenomena on which the magnetizers ground their conviction, the author has seen enough to convince him that the question is not generally entertained in a manner most likely to elicit truth. In some he has observed an overweening credulity, viewing everything through the jaundiced medium of a most unsound belief ; in others, the most *unbending, dogmatical scepticism* :—among numbers he has observed an utter incapacity to comprehend what is meant by the very name of Animal Magnetism ; they have viewed the whole matter simply as a curious exhibition, in which certain actors played a part well or ill, according as they excited their temporary wonder. In a question of such importance, this is wrong. If its professions are groundless, it is high time they were discarded ;—if facts, it is equally high time that we should see what use can be made of them. The first step towards an attainment of either end is *dispassionate investigation* ; and should the author partly minister to this, his purpose will be fully gained.

*Sketch of the Origin and Progress of Animal
Magnetism.*

Late in the preceding century, *Anthony Mesmer*, generally said to have been a native of Vienna, and a graduate in medicine of that university, announced himself as the discoverer of a new power, which he professed to be capable of producing, on living creatures, extraordinary and hitherto unexpected effects.

To this he gave the name of *Animal Magnetism*; and the practical application of it, which he proposed, was that of curing diseases in a manner more certain than by the usual remedial means.

Mesmer was by no means successful in propagating this doctrine in his own country, and repaired to Paris in 1778.

He was there received with that mingled feeling of applause and censure which usually attends those who present themselves to the world as discoverers. The mass of persons who at that period occupied the high seats of learning, denounced his doctrines as visionary and absurd; a few enthusiasts lauded them with injudicious zeal; and the public arrayed themselves on either side, as chance or caprice might direct.

There were not, however, wanting, men of character and reputation, who had the boldness to follow what they considered to be true. Deslon, a court physician of some standing, arraying himself

on the side of Mesmer, became first his associate, and afterwards his successor, in the practice of this asserted art; and other physicians, whose names are recorded in the history of that period, followed the example which he gave. The medical authorities indignantly resented the defection of their unworthy sons, and sought to stifle inquiry by the anathemas of collegiate vengeance. Some succumbed to edicts which they wanted resolution to defy. A few attested that magnetism, like other novelties, was capable of registering the names of martyrs to her cause.

It is scarce credible to what a pitch the mind of Paris was excited by Mesmer's doctrine. The war which raged in the chambers of the academy invaded the saloons of the gay, and the abodes of the sober citizen. As happened to the burghers of Strasburgh, in Sterne's matter of the *Stranger's Nose*, magnetism occupied the Parisians, from the postilion to the King.

In the state of feeling thus feebly described, Louis the Sixteenth commanded the *learned* to investigate; nor could any period be more unfavourable for a dispassionate inquiry after truth: the Academy of Science, and School of Medicine, from which bodies the commissioners were selected, were composed of men almost naturally opposed to such new and strange assertions, and the result of their labours could scarcely be a matter of doubt.

Of all the inquiries, then instituted, the one conducted with most apparent candour, and

sanctioned by the most imposing names, was that of 1784. Benjamin Franklin, Lavoisier, the distinguished chemist, and Jussieu, equally great in botanical science, constituted part of a committee comprising many other names.*

This tribunal declared against the truth of Mesmer's doctrine ; but it formed a somewhat remarkable feature in the case, that one member had the boldness to dissent from his colleagues, and furnish conclusions of his own, much less unfavourable. This member was Jussieu ; and the mere fact of such a man's dissent, at a period, too, when dissent was scarce to be expected, should be carefully considered while reviewing the question under circumstances of less excitement.

This denunciation of the commissioners in a great measure determined the public mind of France. The dowagers ceased to gossip, the citizens to dispute, the academicians to persecute, and Mesmer, having passed the usual ordeal of poetic wittings and dramatic satirists, was driven forth from France. It is probable, however, that the report was not the sole cause which influenced the temporary suppression of his doctrine ; high excitement is always followed by proportionate collapse. The mind of Paris had fermented long enough, and the commission acted like an anodyne, which calmed it down. Then followed the political epoch of the revolution, and the *storm of magnetism*

* The King first named physicians only—viz. Borie, Sallin, Darcet, and Guillotin ; to them were afterwards added Franklin, Leroy, Bailly, De Bory, Lavoisier, and Jussieu.

gave place to the *storm of politics*. As a leading question, Mesmer and his wonders ceased nearly to be thought of.

For good or for evil, however—in truth or in falsehood—he had sown a seed which was destined to germinate. In France, Germany, and Italy, believers still continued to exist, and from time to time the announcement of isolated facts, read only by the few, and thought of, probably, by still fewer, served to show that magnetism was not finally extinct. By degrees, a new taste for the study—luckily of a more sober character—began to diffuse itself at Paris, the original seat of its development and fall. In 1825 Dr. Foissac, a regular physician, who, in common with others, entertained a favourable impression of its truth, invited the Royal Academy of Medicine to revive the inquiry, by a fresh commission. After some discussion, the proposition was acceded to, and eleven persons nominated early in 1826.

The commission was composed of the following members—viz. MM. Bourdois, Double, Itard, Gueneau de Mussy, Guersent, Fouquier, Laennec, Leroux, Magendie, Marc, and Chillaye. M. Husson was named reporter.

Of these, Laennec almost immediately retired, from bad health; and Magendie and Double did not sign the report, because they had not been present at the experiments; its force, therefore, depends on the signature of the remaining eight members alone.

The commissioners continued their investigation

at intervals for six years, and in 1831 delivered a voluminous report, in which they to a considerable extent bear out the magnetizers in the assertions they had made. The conclusions they arrive at are given in the Appendix. To some of the cases they are deduced from, I shall probably have yet occasion to allude.

Those who approach the question with unbiassed minds, and an anxious desire to appreciate the truth or falsehood of magnetism, should study this report deliberately; it appears to contain internal evidence that the men who framed it were actuated by a sincere wish to arrive at accurate results. The innumerable fallacies which beset an inquiry of the kind were guarded against with sedulous care; the failures are fairly stated, and the successful cases by no means brought out in high *relief*. The time occupied by the experiments was considerable, the trials numerous, and the various asserted effects of magnetism, from those of a trivial and evanescent character, up to its all but incredible phenomena, were embraced by the commissioners. When we add, that the men who signed this report were versed in the preliminary knowledge requisite to insure a successful investigation, and that some of them, at least, had no previous bias in favour of the system, it would be folly to deny that the general result of this inquiry is decidedly favourable to the magnetizers.

Very different, however, has been the tendency of conclusions more recently afforded by another commission of the Academy of Medicine.

The dispute, it would seem, had remained in tolerable quietude among them since 1831. During last year, however, M. Oudet stated that he had extracted the tooth of a somnambulist, without the lady exhibiting any, or at least very slight, symptoms of pain: and again the *pro's* and *con's* were thrown into somewhat serious collision.

Almost immediately after, a young and doubtless enthusiastic magnetizer, M. Berna, deliberately challenged the academy to a fresh investigation. The men selected were of known honesty and reputation, viz., MM. Bouillaud, Cloquet, Caventou, Cornac, Dubois (of Amiens), Emery, Oudet, Pelletier, and Roux.

The phenomena which M. Berna undertook to prove before this commission were the most extraordinary, and probably the most difficult of production, which the magnetizers assert.

In the first place, he undertook to throw the patient into a state of somnambulism; while *in* this state, he agreed to prove that she was insensible to pain; that he could at pleasure restore the sensibility by his own magnetic influence; that he could at *will* cause her to lose the power of motion; that he could in the same way cause her to continue a conversation (while asleep) or *cease* it, and this too while separated from the patient by the intervention of a door. Such were his professions when the commission first commenced their labours; but as his enthusiasm became excited, he further agreed to prove the existence of what the magnetizers term "*clairvoyance*," meaning thereby a state in which

(as we shall presently see) persons are stated to acquire, in some other way, or through the medium of some other sense, such information of external objects or occurrences as are in the natural condition communicable only through the sense of sight.

On this programme, M. Berna and the experimenters joined issue; nor will it be denied that he had undertaken a task sufficiently difficult of execution.

The commissioners properly commenced by ascertaining whether the patient first introduced was *naturally* insensible to pain; for as *insensibility* to pain *produced by magnetic influence* was one of the facts to be demonstrated, it followed that this was not proved if she was from peculiarity of habit insensible in the natural condition. Her neck and hands were consequently penetrated by pins, and she declared she "*felt nothing*," nor could she, on close examination, be induced to say that she felt more than a "*little pain*." On this fact the reporters insist much, for disproving the power of the magnetizer to produce insensibility. But while this clearly follows, we must also carry along with us that it *tells* in two ways; it *tells* in favour of the *patient's honesty*; it renders collusion, which is more than insinuated, at least improbable; for had this woman wished to deceive, and had she been capable of deceiving with such address as the commissioners gave her credit for, it is scarce conceivable that she would have failed to *assume sensibility* in the outset, knowing that she would be expected to show its reverse in the sequel.

It would be quite beyond the limits or intentions of this little treatise to trace the experimenters through their entire proceedings; suffice it to say that the result was unfavourable to M. Berna's assertions. The commissioners evidently viewed him as occupying the position either of an impostor or an imbecile; a man who desired to deceive them or was himself deceived.*

On this report, the adversaries of magnetism ground much of their opposition. They appeal to it as affording the most indubitable proof that all which has been thought, and seen, and written on the subject, is based either on illusion or deceit. It might be well, on this account, to consider how far they are borne out in such conclusion, by a dispassionate consideration of the facts which it embraces.

We must bear steadily in remembrance that all the experiments forced as it were on the commissioners by M. Berna, relate merely to those assertions of the magnetizers which undoubtedly verge upon the *miraculous*, and that all *might* be proved untrue without affecting the leading proposition on which magnetism is based. It may be quite true that a special power exists by which we can cause a paralyzed or healthy muscle to contract—by which we can accelerate or retard the pulse—augment or diminish the respiratory motions—or produce sleep, be it healthy or somnambulic; and yet

* Should any reader wish to peruse a full account of this investigation, he will find it translated in the "Medical Gazette" of 16th and 23d September, 1837.

it may be quite *untrue* that, *during this* somnambulism, senses are transferred or insensibility to pain established; the one set of facts may be *distinctly* proved, while the other are as *distinctly disproved*.

Admitting therefore, to its full extent, that we have no right to question either the honesty of purpose or precision of experiment on which the conclusions of these gentlemen are founded, the man who believes in the existence of a special magnetic power is fairly entitled to question the arguments of those who would foolishly allude to them as containing a refutation of his entire doctrine; the commissioners had one object to accomplish, and this they doubtless accomplished well. A young enthusiast challenged them to report on certain phenomena, which he undertook to show; he failed in the attempt, and his judges very properly, some with regret perhaps, and some with pleasure, reported that he failed. It may be that this offers only an illustration of the fact, how severely an injudicious friend may damage the cause he is but too anxious to serve; however this may be, it is undoubted that the report proves one of three things; either that M. Berna was a trickster, who intended to deceive—or that he was the dupe of his own patients—or, that they were not in a fitting condition to display the phenomena which he proposed. And in reference to this last possibility, another question might not unfairly be entertained. If such mental phenomena as the magnetizers state really do occur in somnambulism, they must clearly depend on some peculiar exalta-

tion of the intellectual powers—quite beyond our comprehension, it is true, but which we may not irrationally conclude will arise only during a more or less undisturbed condition of the patient; they are also professedly induced by an act of volition on the part of the magnetizer, implying an undisturbed possession also of his mental faculties. It is quite clear that under no conceivable circumstances are these conditions more violated than during an investigation before a learned commission—the pomp and circumstance which attend its proceedings—the precautions *properly* taken, but which obviously imply suspicion—the dread of failure on the *magnetizer's* part, and the novelty of situation on that of the *magnetized*, are one and all causes eminently calculated to invalidate the whole attempt; nor is it quite impossible, on this view, that M. Berna may have entirely failed in shewing to the commissioners what, under different circumstances, he had not only seen himself but honestly believed he could present to their review.

The investigation undertaken on the challenge of Berna was, I believe, the fourth, and certainly the last which Mesmer's doctrine has originated in France; and when we reflect on the testimony thus afforded of the zeal which characterizes our continental neighbours in their endeavours to determine such disputed questions, I cannot abstain from expressing my astonishment that no similar attempt should be made among ourselves. At one point of this vast metropolis I see an institution

destined to preside over general science throughout the empire; an institution, the admission within whose portals constitutes—and, I question not, justly constitutes, the highest aim of scientific ambition. At other points I meet two structures, the abodes of learned bodies, which, endowed by kingly munificence and fostered for many years by popular favour, are presumed to influence in a great degree the destinies of medicine and its allied sciences. Aware that such establishments exist; aware that a question such as magnetism, which if true may be of vast importance, and which if false should be immediately suppressed, now divides the opinion even of thinking men; I cannot help reflecting, with not less of wonder than regret, that no one of these bodies should consider its investigation worthy their regard. Each among them includes members well able to test its pretensions by direct experiment, and the public institutions of this great city would readily offer them the means. A report emanating from such a source could not fail to influence the fate of this still unsettled question; and the effort would at least prove that our national colleges were not indifferent to any subject where the interests of truth might be at stake.

Magnetism being thus consigned to individual inquiry, it is impossible to say what may be its fate among ourselves. Among those whose habits and knowledge render them fitting judges, a few—and but a few have deigned to examine for themselves. The mass of professional or scientific men are content to receive the reports of others, and, as far as

can be gathered, look on the whole affair as a German reverie, unworthy the attention of a philosophic mind. It is not in this way that a strictly physiological proposition, involving assertions, if not facts, of extreme interest, should be met. That the public so should meet it, is perhaps to be expected; but that members of a learned and liberal profession—men to whom their fellows have a right to look for the elucidation of truth in such departments of science as they cultivate—that they should continue to indulge in vapid declamation and theoretic argument on a subject which can only be decided by a reference to facts; and, ignorant as the best among us is of the cause or laws of vital action, that they should meet an asserted discovery which professes to advance our knowledge, with the most valid argument of a passing jest, and hug themselves in the vain conceit that it is beneath their dignity to learn! Such conduct, and I regret to say one meets it daily, will not, I fear, add another laurel to the coronet of English science. We continually hear it asserted by philosophers of this description, that Mesmer's doctrines are exploded! that a belief in magnetism is confined to a few honest, perhaps, but visionary men; or to those who desire to impose on their fellow mortals. I am entitled distinctly to deny the fact. Whatever be its ultimate fate, the question is *not yet decided*. Nay, if we dispassionately review the various conclusions which have emanated from learned committees on the Continent, making due allowance for the unavoidable suspicion which its pretensions must ex-

cite, and couple this with our knowledge of the general feeling which prevails, we shall find ample reason to conclude, that the impression of such as examine it is decidedly in favour of its truth. Nor is this opinion at all invalidated, because the earliest of these commissions referred the production of *facts which were admitted* to known and common causes ; or because the last found a young enthusiast to fail in presenting phenomena which he perhaps had not power to elicit, or which his patients were not in a condition to display.

The author does not feel that his duty would be faithfully discharged, did he abstain from a passing allusion to the physician who at present solicits attention to Mesmer's doctrine among ourselves ; and he does this with more confidence, because he has never communicated with M. Dupotet in any way beyond the few words which have passed between them in his public room. In the whole bearing of that gentleman, he has seen nothing but sincerity and candour : he offers the utmost freedom of investigation ; he makes use of no adventitious means to insure success in his experiments ; he lays no claim to peculiarity of power, though, from long experience, it may be reasonably concluded that he applies what power he does possess with more efficiency than the novice ; his whole deportment, in fact, indicates the honest man, who may indeed be wrong in his convictions, but cannot be accused of any desire to lead others into error. Nor is the task he has undertaken among us stubborn English, an easy one. "Magnetize me," says one,

“and if you succeed, I will believe.” “Magnetize me,” says another, “and I will do so too.” The request is reiterated, from the girl in her teens to the grave physician in his spectacles! The first may naturally be excused—the latter cannot; he, at least, ought to know, that trifling such as this never can determine this disputed question: it would be more in the spirit of true philosophy, did he endeavour conclusively to ascertain whether the varied phenomena, which undoubtedly in many examples are produced, ever do arise under circumstances which render it impossible that they can depend on any cause but magnetism. This is the real difficulty which besets the investigation; and it is not by success or failure in an isolated case that it can be overcome.

In the preceding pages I have spoken of “Mesmer’s doctrine” of “Animal Magnetism.” Among those who read them, there may be some who know little but the name; others may have seen it practised, yet still be ignorant of its assertions or its aims. Let us, therefore, endeavour to explain briefly what these are.

Effects resulting from Magnetism, and Modes of producing them.

The leading proposition of the magnetizers is this—that one human being possesses, under particular circumstances, the power of influencing at will the vital actions, and not unfrequently the mental faculties, of others, in such a manner as to produce in them phenomena of an unusual character, not capable of being referred to known and common causes. It is further stated, that they are capable of influencing, in a similar manner, the vital motions of creatures inferior in the scale of creation to themselves; but whether animals are presumed also to possess the faculty, I am unable to say.

The person exercising this power is named the magnetizer; the person on whom it is exercised, the magnetized; and it is asserted to reside in all individuals, though in different degrees of strength. The effects stated to result from magnetism are extremely various, as we shall presently see; but they are by no means exhibited in all cases where the attempt is made: frequently the person acted on manifests no symptoms whatever; sometimes the effects are very slight, sometimes well marked, and at others intense. Very often they are not induced till the person has been several times magnetized; and as a general rule it seems to be admitted, that the amount of effect bears

a ratio within certain limits to the frequency of repetition.

In common justice to the adherents of this doctrine, it is proper to carry those positions along with us, for the non-production of effects in a particular case or cases is frequently adduced as evidence against it, whereas no magnetizer professes himself capable of visibly influencing every individual on whom he operates. It seems generally considered that there are no appreciable signs connected either with the temperament or organization of individuals, from which it can be inferred with certainty that effects will be produced, or, if produced, of what description they will be ; but it is held, that persons labouring under disease are more susceptible than those in health, and that among them, those whose complaints seem most connected with derangements of the nervous system most readily receive magnetic impressions. It is likewise stated as a general rule, that females are more readily influenced than males.

The conditions presumed to be desirable, or, as some I believe consider, *essential* on the part of the magnetizer, are his *willing* to produce an effect, and *an innate conviction that he can produce it*. But even when these exist in a high degree, it does not necessarily follow that the power of the magnetizer will be great ; on the contrary, there would appear to exist peculiarities of organization, or modifications of vital force, among individuals, not cognizable, which determine the extent of magnetic power which they possess.

An act of volition, and a conviction that they can be acted on, are not, it is asserted, conditions essential on the part of the recipients ; so far from it, we are told that powerful effects have been produced on persons who submitted themselves to the magnetizer, impressed with a firm belief that they could resist his influence, or even a firm disbelief in the whole of his pretensions. It is admitted, however, that a belief in the reality of magnetism is a powerful auxiliary to the reception of its influence, and it would seem probably to follow that a conviction of its falsity must equally impede that reception.

The intensity of magnetic effects is presumed, as already stated, to increase within certain limits, as the person showing them has been more frequently acted on ; and this is fairly employed by the magnetizers in reply to the objections of those who presume that alarm, novelty of situation, &c., are the really efficient causes of the phenomena they admit. "For," say the Mesmerians, "if you are right in assigning such causes, surely the effects ought to *diminish* as the patient becomes habituated to our manœuvres." The author has no desire to enter the lists of controversy on either side ; but he may state as a fact which has many times come under his review, that when effects have been produced, these effects have usually been more marked as the sittings became more numerous. Neither does he desire to theorize upon a subject scarcely susceptible of this, when its very facts are in dispute. But supposing it admitted that a special influence

really is at times produced, we can, he submits, only rationally conceive of it as dependant on some peculiar principle belonging to every human being in a greater or less degree, communicable from one to another, and capable, under certain circumstances or certain relative conditions, of producing in the one towards whom it is directed variable but appreciable effects. Nor, founding on this assumption, does it further seem very absurd to suppose that effects will only be manifested where the communicator exceeds the recipient in magnetic powers ; and that where this excess exists in a degree sufficient to produce them, they may become manifested, within certain limits, with greater and greater force as the action is repeated.

The reader has now heard the general propositions of magnetism. We have talked of effects, but have neither stated what these are, nor adverted to the modes by which they are induced. The latter point ought first to occupy attention.

By whatever process of thinking Mesmer arrived at the leading idea on which his system founds, there can, I think, be little question that he believed it to be true : but whether he was dishonest in the practical methods he adopted ; or whether, with a mind strongly imbued with mysticism, as it evidently was, he really fancied those external means and appliances which he used *essential* to success, are questions which it would be difficult to answer.*

* Without disparagement to magnetism, as now practised, we are justified in saying that Mesmer was, in the highest degree, an idealist His inaugural thesis was on the subject of

On either view it is at least certain that, in his own practice and that of his immediate disciples, matters were conducted in a manner eminently calculated to excite suspicion ; nor is it quite impossible that the feeling in respect to magnetism produced by this very indiscretion, or intentional artifice, may have operated as one cause of retarding its general recognition.

It would be tedious to detail an account of these proceedings as contained in the writings of the day ; suffice it to say that much of mystery pervaded his practice. We read of pianos, on which airs were played with a view to assist the presumed agency ; of tubs, perforated by holes in which glass bottles were arranged in a particular manner ; of wands, waved with all the mystic art of the magician ; of iron rods, which touched the patients ; of cords, which connected them together ; and of many other arrangements well calculated to excite distrust.

Whatever opinions may now be held, one fact is undeniable—that the modern magnetizers adopt means so simple as to remove these causes of suspicion, and present the question to our view entirely stripped of all such absurdities.

Generally the patient is seated on a chair, or at times stands before the magnetizer ; or, where several are operated on at one time, they form a row, in

planetary influence ; and it is said that his day dreams on this very question, and his desire to find some connecting medium between the stars and man, first led him to suspect the existence of a magnetic power. If there be truth in his idea, we probably owe its development to the circumstance that he *was* a speculative dreamer.

which the face of each points to the back of the one before him, while the operator acts immediately on the first, and mediately, or through him, on those behind. Very commonly his first process is to grasp the hands of the recipient in his own, and hold them for a short time, with a view, it is understood, of equalizing their temperatures.

Having then fixed his attention on the object, he begins slowly and steadily to wave his hand in a vertical direction before the patient's body, each motion, or "Pass," as it is technically called, commencing at the forehead, and generally ending about the region of the stomach.

The distance from the body at which these passes are performed, varies from a few inches to many yards, the magnetizer appearing to diminish the distance in proportion as he desires to augment the effect. Sometimes one hand is used—at times another; and they are often changed, not only on account of weariness, but from an idea, I believe, that the supply of that "something," on the emanation of which they suppose the effects to depend, becomes exhausted in the one employed.

Not unfrequently the "Passes" commence at the stomach, and are continued downwards; and occasionally the extended hand is steadily held a few inches from that part which, it is stated, affords one of the most ready inlets to magnetic power.

Occasionally the operator employs both hands at once, the ends of the extended fingers of one as being held a few inches from the forehead, before described, while the other is waved down-

wards ; as if he intended to radiate a fluid into the brain from one, while he determined the course of its current by the other.

When the magnetizer has ceased to act, his object is to replace his patient in the natural state. To effect this, he usually passes his thumb and fingers many times transversely across the forehead with a steady pressure, commencing about its centre, and moving them outwards on either side, following up this manœuvre by running his hands gently downwards, in contact with the clothes, from the chest to the feet.

When sensible effects have been produced, the difficulty of recalling the patient seems to depend on their intensity. Sometimes this purpose is easily effected, at others the reverse ; occasionally the magnetizer would appear to have excited a condition which neither he nor his patient know the means of quelling, until accident reveals it ;* and where they amount to that unusual state which has been named—somnambulism—the magnetizer often professes his inability to recal or awaken the patient, until the means of so doing are announced by the intuitive perception of their nature which that mental state supplies.

The manipulations hitherto described are by no means presumed to be *essential* to the production of magnetic effects, but only employed by some magnetizers. Many, again, state that they effect their intention by *contact*, the thumb generally of the recipient being held by the communicator, or

* Vide Appendix, p. 51.

the hand of the latter being placed on different parts, more especially the stomach. Others, again, adopt the plan of merely fixing their regards steadily upon the person they desire to influence, or holding their extended hand before him.

To the believers in magnetism there is nothing very absurd, or irreducible to one principle, in these varied manipulations ; for as all, at least the rational among them, *almost* inevitably speculate on the existence of a fluid or aura, transmitted from one person to another, being the cause of magnetic effects, it is just as probable that it may be so transmitted by the eye as by the hand ; and not much less probable that it may be carried by a conducting medium (for example, air) as communicated by direct contact ; but to persons (and they are numerous) who admit certain phenomena, while they at the same time deny that magnetic power exists, it must be confessed that these differences in the mode of their production are sad stumbling-blocks, for one of their hypotheses is, that sleep—the most common, we shall see, of all—is simply referrible to the continued motions of the hand ; and certainly, where this occurs without such motions the argument cannot be entertained.

But what are the effects which do result, or are asserted to result from magnetic influence, by whatsoever mode communicated ? and how do its assertors connect these with the assumed cause which induces them ?

It is maintained, that the influence *cæteris paribus*

is most readily shown when the person acted on is asleep; and as in this condition, too, he is clearly removed from all causes which may be presumed to act through the mind, so any effects which may then be produced are least liable to objections.

When a waking person, then, applies himself to magnetize another so circumstanced, it is stated often to occur, that in a short time a restlessness pervades the sleeper; his breathing becomes oppressed, or quickened; twitchings are seen in the muscles of his face, which assumes an expression of anxiety and uneasiness; the head, perhaps, jerks from side to side, or the arms or legs are affected with spasmodic movements; frequently the patient awakes with an undefined impression that something unusual has occurred.

These constitute some of the minor physiological changes produced by magnetic action, which it is maintained that any person may by his own agency frequently induce.

When magnetism is practised on persons awake, it in many examples entirely fails, even after repeated attempts, to elicit any effects. In others, at the first several sittings, none which are appreciable follow, even when the result afterwards proves the person to be susceptible under precisely similar circumstances.

When sensible effects ensue, they are of various kinds, but may fairly be reduced to two classes,—

1st. Certain physiological changes in the vital action of particular organs, or the production under unusual circumstances of such as are natural.

Or, 2ndly. Certain mental phenomena, arising only in rare examples, and apparently superinduced upon the others. When these occur, the person is said to be placed in a state of somnambulism.

Of those included in the first class very many are extremely slight and transitory ; nor, perhaps, can they be readily detected, except by an observant eye. Slight alterations of temperature, a little agitation, a trifling oscilation of pulse, partial drowsiness, hurried breathing, and occasionally deep sighs, with flushing of the countenance and other slight symptoms by no means very determinate, or very certainly announced, constitute the list of effects which may be, and are doubtless with truth, often attributed to common causes.

One, however, of the most common, and not apparently so readily explicable on such principles, is the seeming power of the magnetizer to induce sleep. Sooner or later, after he commences his proceedings, the patient's countenance assumes a fixity of look ; presently the eyelids droop, and if you ask the cause, it is stated that " an indescribable but irresistible feeling of weight or oppression presses them down." If the attention is now engaged, or a mental diversion effected by any means, a struggle seems made against the power in action ; the eyes are many times opened and as often closed, just like a person endeavouring to resist a tendency to somnolence ; at times this effort succeeds, the patient as it were conquers ; at others the sleep is perfect only for a short time, and at

others, still complete and permanent. An influence so decided as to determine perfect sleep is, I believe, seldom shown till after many sittings; though this is by no means without exceptions, but it seems to be in cases where this condition has been produced, and during its existence in a greater or less degree, that the power of the magnetizer over the vital motions of different parts is most forcibly exemplified.

To one set only of effects of this kind do the limits of this little treatise permit me to allude, namely, the power which the magnetizer appears at least to possess, of influencing the contraction of such muscles as he desires.

When his manœuvres continue directed to the body generally, the patient is often affected by sudden irregular spasmodic twitchings, very similar to those produced by electricity. When again he limits them to particular muscles, very decided contractions of such frequently ensue; sometimes so marked that a finger or even an entire limb follows the hand of the magnetizer, just as a needle does the common magnet; at other times his power, without causing the entire muscle to contract, appears to induce an internal quivering of its fibres, as if each separately crept and yearned under his control; and, what is more singular, these phenomena I have myself seen produced on paralyzed muscles, which had long remained incapable of motion.* Of these facts I believe there

* Vide Appendix, p. 61.

can be no question, though their explanations will doubtless be various.

The purely physiological phenomena, asserted by the Mesmerians to result from their endeavours, might be considerably extended did the limits of this pamphlet permit. Its author believes them to include those which afford the best kind of evidence which the magnetizers produce in support of their views; they are not only cognizable to the senses, but cognizable under circumstances which enable the observer, as far as may be, to determine whether any cause but the one assigned can account for their occurrence. When we presently come briefly to notice the second class of effects, those of a mental character, the various changes in the perceptive faculties stated to arise during somnambulism, it will be found that much greater room is left for deception, and much less power necessarily vested in the observer to determine with precision whether the wonders which appear to be presented are feigned or real. To some extent he must depend on the honesty of the patient; and even where this is not entirely the case, when he imagines he has taken every possible precaution to avoid fallacy or expose deceit, the apparent facts presented are so marvellous as almost to justify him in repudiating what his very senses announce to him as truth. In such a case, the prudent man will fall back upon the words of Hamlet, and consider that—

“ There are more things in heaven and earth
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy.”

Should there be found, among the readers of this little treatise, any who deduce from the author's statements that he credits the existence of a magnetic power, some will be but little disposed to confide in his judgment, and others inclined to smile at his credulity. It is at least pleasant to appear in good company, and show that if this belief be laid to his account, there have not been wanting men of sense and of reputation who held the same opinion.

When finishing a rapid sketch of the physiology of the nervous system, a distinguished writer adds the following observations :—

“ It is necessary to allude also to the influence which the nervous system of two different individuals can exercise on each other ; the abuse which has been lavished on this question as mere quackery on the one hand, and the exaggerated statements sent forth in its favour on the other, have so rendered it an object of suspicion, that philosophers are nearly interdicted from alluding to the subject. It must be admitted that it is extremely difficult experimentally to distinguish the effects arising from imagination in the persons acted on, from the physical effects produced by the person who acts on them ; and the problem is hence often found to be extremely complicated.

“ Notwithstanding this, the effects produced on persons unacquainted with them before the operation commenced, such as arise in persons after they have lost all consciousness by these operations themselves, and those exhibited by animals, *scarcely permit us to doubt that the proximity of two animated*

bodies in certain positions, and by the use of certain motions, exerts a real effect independent of the influence of imagination. It appears also sufficiently clear that these effects are owing to some sort of communication established between their nervous systems."

These are the words of a philosopher—the words of Cuvier, penned many years ago, when magnetism was viewed by the world generally as little more than a chimæra of the brain. It would be curious to speculate on how they will be received when the world is as many years older.

I have hitherto spoken of the physiological effects alone; it remains to advert briefly to those phenomena of a mental character which it is maintained arise in certain individuals who have been highly susceptible of magnetic influence.

There are few readers who have not heard of the "sleep walking," or somnambulism, which occasionally occurs from natural causes; and were they to search the records which contain cases of this description, attested by authority which it is scarcely fair to doubt, they would find circumstances detailed which are only a few degrees less marvellous than those reported by the adherents of magnetism.*

The difference between such, and the reported cases of magnetic somnambulism, consists chiefly in the mode of their production; in one case they occur from natural causes; in the other they are

* Those who desire information on this head will do well to consult the cases of natural somnambulism reported in *Abercrombie on the Intellectual Powers*.

stated to result, though rarely, from the agency which Mesmer pointed out.

Independent, however, of this very marked distinction, there exists also some difference in the very curious phenomena exemplified by each. The facts related of natural somnambulism are such as may possibly be explained by the recal or renewal of ideas already existing in the mind, and resuscitated as it were under some peculiar conditions. Those reported to occur in somnambulism, magnetically excited, are often such as cannot be possibly explained on this principle; they are either founded in imposture or deceit; or, if real, they depend on peculiar changes in the perceptive faculties which cannot be reconciled to any laws, either mental or physical, before recognized—the seeming juggles of the soothsayer and magician may have been no illusions, provided *they* are true.

Somnambulism arises generally as follows:—The common magnetic sleep, before described as of very frequent occurrence, becomes more and more perfect, and more and more protracted, as the sittings increase in number; at length symptoms of a singular character display themselves. The eyelids are at times open, and at others closed. The eyes assume a peculiar vacant stare, and the pupil is not unseldom dilated, and insensible to the stimulus of light; or, when the lids are forcibly raised, the ball of the eye is sometimes rolled upwards, so that the white part of it is alone visible.

In this state the patients frequently rise from the

chair or traverse the room with ease, avoiding furniture and other obstructions, precisely as if awake; or hold conversation with the magnetizer, or sometimes with others who surround them. On rousing from that somnambulic condition, which, unless removed by the magnetizer, it is stated, will often last for many hours, or even days, the patients invariably profess to have forgotten every event which occurred during its continuance.

It is admitted that there are no determinate symptoms by which somnambulism can be defined; it is only known to be present by the phenomena displayed.

During this state, there is asserted to exist a mysterious sympathy between the somnambulists and magnetizer, or between them and others thrown into the same condition by the same agency; in consequence of this, it often happens that the somnambule hears the voice of the magnetizer alone, or the voices of those in connexion with him, being apparently unaffected by the voices of all others; under such circumstances, the magnetizer professes often to be able at will to alter this state, and cause his patient to hear others and converse with them. The sway thus exerted depends on some peculiar ascendancy obtained by the individual whose agency induced the somnambulic condition; and this, in the technical language of the art, is designated by the word "*rapport*." A person under magnetic influence is said to be "*en rapport*" with his magnetizer, or with others whom he has magnetized at the same time.

Among the remarkable phenomena of somnambulism, one of the most singular, doubtless, is the insensibility to pain which frequently, if not always, attends it. The sentient nerves would seem to cease their functions, and the skin may be pinched, pricked, burnt, or cut, without any visible signs of disturbance. In one remarkable case at Paris, M. Cloquet, the distinguished surgeon, performed a very painful and protracted operation on a somnambule, who evinced no sign of suffering at the time, and awoke quite unconscious of the ordeal she had passed through.*

Many disputes have arisen between the magnetizers and their opponents on this subject. That no signs of pain *are* evinced cannot possibly be doubted by any one who tries the experiment, and credits his own senses; but it is said that pain may, by a mental effort, be endured, as the savage laughs in the midst of his torturing foes, when the muscle quivers and the nerve is thrilled. The argument here is a weak one, and the analogy imperfect. In the one case we have pride, the most powerful of human passions, in action during the struggle; in the other, the motives for endurance are at least but small; for few are disposed to encounter voluntary suffering in support of an hypothesis. It is again said, that some persons are *naturally* insensible to pain. Such cases must at all events be rare, while the examples of somnambulic insensibility have been numerous.—I suspect we must look for stronger arguments.

* Vide Appendix, p. 60.

I now come, in the progress of this sketch, to notice the mental phenomena of somnambulism.

These are stated to be of three kinds, occurring rarely, and only manifested by persons who have passed into somnambulism of the most complete kind—expressed, as it would seem, by the Mesmerians as the state of “Lucidity.”

In this condition persons are said occasionally to exhibit, either separately or conjointly, the phenomena of “*clairvoyance*,” “*interior prevision*,” and “*exterior prevision*.”

By the term “clairvoyance” the magnetizers mean a transposition of the sense of sight; or rather the acquisition of a new faculty, by which persons receive, through some other channel, such information as in the natural state can only be acquired by the sense of sight. It is said, and, according to some, has frequently been proved, that with the eyes closely bandaged, or the eyelids held down by the hand, patients read portions of printed books casually opened, or manuscripts, the contents of which they could not possibly have known; that they have correctly stated the value and colour of different playing cards presented to them; or indicated the hour on watches; in short, in a great variety of ways, exhibited the perfect capacity of gaining such information by some other means as the eyes naturally supply.

By the term “interior prevision,” they imply that patients in a state of “lucidity” at times acquire the power of intuitively perceiving what goes on within their own organization, so as to be capable

of indicating the nature of their malady, predicting the period of its next accession, that of its termination or cure, and the means best adapted to effect it.

By the name of “exterior prevision” is meant that persons in a lucid state occasionally acquire a knowledge of events exterior to themselves, or become capable of acquiring an intuitive knowledge of what goes on within the organization of others—particularly those in connexion or “rapport” with themselves, and thus also of correctly indicating the nature and period of cure of their diseases, together with the means of effecting it.

All these extraordinary powers, it is said, co-exist occasionally in the same individual ; sometimes one only is displayed. At times, when the “lucidity” is very perfect, they are distinctly marked ; at others, less so ; and sometimes they are only shadowed forth in an obscure degree.

As a general rule, the patients who display them seem, when in their somnambulic state, to be extremely capricious, and it requires much management to induce them even to attempt answering the questions which are put ; they usually maintain that it gives them “*pain* to think,” and appear desirous of avoiding the effort necessary to effect it.

Such constitutes a mere introduction into those magnetic regions, where clouds and thick darkness immediately beset our path ; nor can the author offer even the glimmer of a feeble taper to guide his reader through their dense obscurity. The question is simply one of evidence ; and to a certain extent

we do possess testimony to the truth of those statements ; but we must ever bear in remembrance, that an investigation into this part of the Mesmerian doctrine is beset with many fallacies which the most honest and careful experimenter can scarce be certain he avoids. I would again, however, caution the reader not to throw aside the whole as an absurdity, because some of its asserted facts seem to touch upon the confines of sorcery and witchcraft. Its physiological proofs are distinctly within his grasp ; let him examine and judge from them—avoiding the equally dangerous quicksands of undue credulity and unbending scepticism, alike fatal to the man who desires to pilot his mental vessel to the haven of truth.

Tendency and Curative Efficacy of Magnetism.

Presuming magnetic power to possess a real existence, and presuming that on this admission it came to be extensively exerted, the conclusion inevitably follows that it would place within our grasp a most important agency, which might be employed as the means of much good or much evil as regards both the moral and physical condition of man.

In debating the question, therefore, it is no very uncommon thing to hear this doctrine attacked or supported by arguments deduced from its tendency on the one hand, and its utility on the other. Believers often exaggerate its merits in a manner not justified by what we yet know of its curative application; while some objectors, without precisely denying its existence, denounce its pretensions as presumptuous and wicked.

The author has been too much accustomed to contemplate arguments founded upon *tendency*, originally urged against truths now generally admitted, to bestow on them one moment's attention; but there are many who view this matter in a very different light, and to them he would in conclusion offer a few brief remarks.

Our Creator, himself the centre and essence of knowledge and of truth, has gifted us with intellectual powers analagous to, though immeasurably inferior to his own; He has placed us in a universe which teems with wonders; He has conferred on

us organs of sense, through which the mind receives impressions of every thing around, by which it collects, as it were, the materials it feeds on, and from which it deduces its final conclusions. By means of the senses, we acquire an acquaintance with phenomena in the material universe ; by a mental process, we arrange or class these in such a manner as to refer in some instances a certain number of phenomena, or effects, to one common cause, and when this is done we dignify the generalization by the name of science, although at the same time admittedly ignorant of the nature or essence of these causes themselves. When we say that the fall of a body to the earth depends on gravitation, or that substances unite by the force of chemical affinity, we do not mean to assert that these powers are really known to us ; we only mean that we infer their existence, and possess some acquaintance with the laws regulating their action ; in other words, that we have arrived at the recognition of certain general truths, and in so far simplified our knowledge.

The legitimate end therefore of all scientific investigation is simply *the elucidation of truth* ; and the real philosopher will pursue this, and this only, in the full and perfect confidence that the Being who gifted him with those faculties, by which alone he can expect to reach it, will not permit them to lead him to results *really* hostile to happiness or virtue. True, indeed, it is that, dimly as we see into the relation of things both in the moral and physical world, the best among us may sometimes

dread the application of principles which his judgment announces to be true. But let him cast aside such puerile alarms; let him consider that if truth be their basis his opposition cannot finally obstruct, even should it retard their development, and that his great and paramount duty is to direct their applications into channels best fitted to benefit his kind. Above all, let him consider that every step which we advance in the discovery of truth, brings us one step nearer to the great source of truth—the Deity himself.

These few general remarks would appear to apply with special force to magnetism. That if such a power really exists, it might be employed for purposes hostile to morality or virtue is doubtless possible, but the very same argument might be employed against the most sublime of all human knowledge—religion itself. Crimes have been perpetrated under the sanction of her pure and holy name; but who on this account would desire to see religion banished from the earth?

Of the benefits to be derived from their professed discovery, especially in disease, the magnetizers have asserted much; and some will, doubtless, say, have proved but little. In justice, however, it should ever be remembered that positive proof of the efficacy of any remedial means is attended with great difficulty, and can alone be deduced from very extensive observation.

The man who endeavours to practise physic as a science, not merely as a productive trade, will probably agree that he encounters few greater diffi-

culties than those which beset his path in estimating the *real* value of different remedial means. He finds one case of disease seemingly alleviated or removed by a particular remedy; another—to all appearances analagous, remains uninfluenced; and in a third, an aggravation seems to be produced. In all, he finds it difficult to say how much of the benefit, and how much of the aggravation, is dependent on the means employed; and it is only by a long series of observations that he can expect even to approximate the truth. Apply the same reasoning to magnetism, and it appears obvious that experience yet requires to be accumulated ere we are justified in talking with any confidence of its remedial value. True, indeed, it is that numerous cures of epilepsy, paralysis, hysteria, headach, nay, an infinity of diseases, may be found lavishly scattered over the now voluminous writings of Mesmer's pupils; but many will, doubtless, think them unsupported by that degree of proof which it is ever proper to demand, though extremely difficult to obtain on such complex questions.

Disposed, however, as the author is to consider this question as one of extreme physiological interest; and disposed as he is to think that a real influence, call it magnetism, call it what we may, can be exerted effectually by one human being on another; he is by no means disposed to question its real value as a remedy. On the contrary, if he is *right* in this conviction, he cannot probably be *wrong* in also holding the belief that this influence, properly directed, may be of essential value in disease.

Uncertain as we must confess our science to be in nearly all its details, there exists one class of maladies which, unattended by extreme danger, not only often baffle our efforts to relieve them, but embitter every moment of the patient's life. Such are usually and properly termed nervous affections, dependant apparently on some obscure functional derangement of the nervous system, and but too frequently attributed to fancy or caprice by those who estimate the amount of suffering in reference only to that of immediate hazard. It is certainly not proved that even over such affections magnetism exerts a curative control, but it is at least asserted that it does. And if indeed we admit its positive existence, there seems nothing irrational in the supposition that it may, when properly applied, exercise a powerful influence in restoring, during disease, the action of such parts of the organization as it seems mainly to affect during a state of comparative health. For it may be probably announced as one of the few general laws which medicine boasts of, that whenever any agent, be it appreciable to the senses or otherwise, can powerfully influence the vitality of any organ during health, it may, when properly applied, be also rendered a valuable agent in disease. This truth, I believe, holds good throughout ; but we must ever carry with us, that the very same qualities which render it useful may also render it deleterious. Few, for example, will deny that opium or mercury are valuable medicines when judiciously employed ;

but none will assert that they may not, when misdirected, be productive of tremendous evils.

Let not, then, the general question of magnetism be too much identified with its remedial application. We ought at present to view it as a simple proposition ; it is either *true*, or it is *false*. Let those who look on it as false study the phenomena. Let those, again, who think it true, investigate how the power they recognize may be most advantageously directed, and most safely employed ; avoiding the absurd speculations of the early magnetizers, who said—" There is but one disease and one remedy, and that remedy is magnetism."

APPENDIX.

Conclusions of the Commission named by the Royal Academy of Medicine of Paris, in 1826, to examine the question of Animal Magnetism; presented and read at the sittings of the Academy on the 21st and 28th of June, 1831. Translated from their Lithographed Report.

1. The contact of the fingers or hands, frictions or certain gestures performed at a short distance from the body, and called “*passes*,” are the means employed to act on the patient (*pour se metre en rapport*); or, in other words, to transmit the action from the magnetizer to the magnetized.

2. External and visible means are not always necessary; on many occasions the *will*, or steady look, were sufficient to produce the magnetic phenomena, even when the patients were ignorant of the attempt.

3. Magnetism has acted on persons of different age and sex.

4. The time necessary to transmit and produce the effects of magnetic action, has varied from half an hour to one minute.

5. Magnetism does not generally act on persons in health.

6. Neither does it act on all that are diseased.

7. There arise sometimes, during the exercise of magnetism, certain fleeting and insignificant effects, which we do not attribute to its influence alone; such as a little uneasiness, a slight sensation of oppression, of heat or of cold, and some other

nervous symptoms which may be explained without supposing the intervention of a peculiar agent—such as by *hope* or by *fear*, a *new* and *unknown situation*, the *ennui* resulting from the *monotony* of the gesticulations, the *silence* and *repose* observed during the experiments, or, finally, from *imagination*, which exercises so powerful an empire over some minds and organizations.

8. A certain number of the effects observed by us have appeared to depend on magnetism alone, and not re-produced without it. These include phenomena both physiological and therapeutical, well established.

9. The real effects of magnetism are extremely various; it agitates some and calms others. Usually it leads to a temporary acceleration of the circulation and respiration, or to thrilling convulsive movements, resembling electric shocks; to numbness, more or less decided; to heaviness and somnolence; and, in a few, to what the magnetizers term *somnambulism*.

10. The existence of a special character, sufficient in all cases to determine the reality of this state (*somnambulism*), has not been proved.

11. Nevertheless, we may conclude with certainty, that such exists when it gives rise to a development of new faculties, which have been called by the names of *clairvoyance*, *intuition*, and *interior prevision*; or, when it produces great changes in the physiological state, such as insensibility (to pain), a sudden and considerable increase of (muscular) power, when such cannot be referred to another cause.

12. As among the effects attributed to *somnambulism* there are some which may be simulated, so *somnambulism* itself may be also sometimes feigned, and thus furnish to quackery the means of deception. In observing, therefore, such of its phenomena as yet present themselves as isolated facts, irreducible to any theory, it is only by *examination the most attentive*, by precautions the most severe, by proofs the most numerous and varied, that we can escape illusion.

13. Sleep, produced more or less speedily, and established to a degree more or less profound, is a *real*, but not constant, effect of magnetism.

14. It has been demonstrated to us, that this has been produced under circumstances where the magnetized persons could not have seen, and were ignorant of, the means employed to produce it (determener).

15. When a person has once been acted on, so as to produce magnetic sleep, it is not always necessary to resort to contact and “passes” to re-produce this state; the look of the magnetizer—his will alone, have the same influence; not only could he act, not only have we seen an effect produced, but also a person thrown into somnambulism and brought out of it at the will of the magnetizer, and all this when out of his sight at some distance, and with the intervention of a door.

16. Changes more or less remarkable have generally been produced in the perceptions of individuals who have been placed in a state of somnambulism by the influence of magnetism:—

A. Some, amidst the noise of confused conversation, hear only the voice of their magnetizer; many answer with precision questions addressed to them by him, or by others in magnetic relation (*rappor*t) with them: while others hold conversations with all around.

It is rare that they hear what is passing around them; generally they were complete strangers to external noises, suddenly and unexpectedly made beside their ears, such as the resonance of copper vessels sharply struck, the fall of articles of furniture, &c.

B. The eyes are closed: the eyelids yield with difficulty to the efforts which are made to open them with the hand; this operation, which is not unattended with pain, exhibits the globe of the eye convulsively rolled upwards, and sometimes towards the bottom of the orbit.

C. Sometimes the sense of smell is, as it were, annihilated, and the patient is not incommoded by the fumes of muriatic acid or ammonia, and is not even aware of their application; on the contrary, in some cases they are sensible to odours.

D. The greater part of the somnambules whom we have seen were completely insensible; we could tickle the feet, the nostrils, or the angles of the eyes, with a feather, or pinch their

skin till echymosis (effusion of blood under it) was produced, or force needles suddenly to a great depth beneath the nails, without their showing any signs of pain—indeed, without their appearing to know what was done. Finally, we have known one on whom a most painful surgical operation was performed, and where neither by her look, her pulse, or her respiration, was any sign of emotion given.

17. The effects of magnetic power are equally intense, and felt with equal speed, at the distance of six feet as of six inches, and the phenomena developed by it are the same in each case.

18. Magnetic action transmitted from a distance (*l'action a distance*) appears only to act successfully on those who have already been subjected to magnetic influence.

19. We have never seen a person magnetized for the first time fall into somnambulism. It has sometimes been only on the eighth or tenth sitting that this condition has been produced.

20. We have always observed that *natural sleep*, which is the repose of the organs of *sense*, of the *intellectual faculties* and of *voluntary motion*, precedes and terminates the state of somnambulism.

22. The persons we have observed in the state of somnambulism have, during this condition, exercised all the faculties which they possess while awake. Their memory even appeared to be more faithful and more extended, since they remember whatever happened during the whole time, and each of the times they had been placed in the somnambulatory state. On awaking, they profess to have forgotten all the circumstances which occurred during their somnambulism, and never to recollect them. On this head we cannot possess any guarantee beyond their own declaration.

23. The muscular power of somnambules is sometimes numbed and paralyzed; at others, the motions are only a little constrained, and they walk or stagger like a person drunk, sometimes avoiding obstacles which they meet with in their progress. Some somnambules preserve entire the exercise of their movements, and some are observed to be even more active and strong than in their waking state.

24. We have seen two somnambulists distinguish, while their eyes were closed, objects placed before them ; they designated the colour and value of cards (playing) without touching them ; they read manuscript, or lines from books opened at hazard. This phenomena has been shown, when the fingers were applied so as accurately to close the eyelids.

25. We have seen in two somnambulists the faculty of foreseeing circumstances connected with their own organic actions, more or less distant, and more or less complicated. One of them indicated, several days and several months before it happened, the exact month, day, and minute on which epileptic fits would occur. Another pointed out the exact period of her cure. Their predictions were fulfilled with remarkable precision. They appeared to us capable only of judging of the actions or lesions of their own bodies.

26. We have met only with one somnambule who marked the symptoms of illness in three persons placed in relation with her, although our researches have been made on very many.

27. To establish with any precision the connexion between magnetism and the healing art, it would be necessary to have observed its effects on a great number of individuals, and to have made continual observations, and for a long time, on the same patients; this not being the case, the Commission is bound to state that it has seen too small a number of cases to enable it to offer any opinion.

28. Some of the persons magnetized experienced no relief, others received alleviation more or less marked, viz. one of them, the suspension of habitual pains ; a second, the return of strength ; a third had his epileptic paroxysm suspended for many months ; and a fourth was completely cured of an old and severe palsy.

29. Considered either as the agent of physiological phenomena, or as a means of cure, magnetism ought to take its place in the list of the medical sciences ; and consequently physicians should either use it themselves, or direct its use in their practice, as is now the case among northern nations.

30. The Commission cannot verify, because it has not had the means of examining, other faculties stated by the mag-

netizers to exist in somnambulism; but they have communicated facts in this report, so important that they think the Academy should encourage researches on magnetism, as a very curious branch of psychology and natural history.

Signed BOURDOIS DE LA MOTTE (*President*),
 FOUQUIER, GUENEAU DE MUSSY,
 GUERSENT, HUSSON, ITARD,
 LEROUX, MARC, CHILLAYE.

It has been the author's desire, in the preceding pages, studiously to avoid controversy; so much so, that some readers may think he has "fallen upon Scylla," while "wishing to avoid Charybdis," and bestowed too little attention on the arguments generally employed on either side of the magnetic debate; he who desires it may find them briefly sketched below.

The magnetizers assert, that one human being is capable of influencing the vital motions of others, under certain conditions, and by certain modes of action. In proof of this, they appeal to observation and experiment, and state that in numerous examples changes both of a purely physiological and mental character, are induced by those means, inexplicable on any other hypothesis.

The objectors answer, they admit the fact of these changes being wrought, but that, in the first place, they differ little, if at all, from phenomena very often displayed in disease, or by persons of a highly excitable temperament; and that, in the second, when they do appear to be produced by the direct agency of a magnetic power, they are, in fact, explicable on common principles, such as imagination, imitation, and similar mental causes.

To the first objection the magnetizers reply, that it is quite true that very many of the physiological, as well as mental,

effects, do spontaneously occur; but the question here is not whether they may or may not naturally arise, but whether we are capable, under certain conditions, of producing them *at will*. If this be proved, the mere fact of their occurrence, under different circumstances, does not affect in the least degree the proofs of our proposition; and that they do so, we consider proved.

To the second they reply—imitation, you say, produces these effects. Good. But imitation *necessarily implies the presence of something to be imitated*. And how do you explain the fact over and over again shown, that these effects are equally marked, when the magnetized and magnetizer have had none beside them, beyond those necessary to attest their occurrence? Imagination, however, you say is conclusive. Good, again. But how do you get rid of the fact, often demonstrated, that very many of those effects have been produced on persons in profound sleep; or the same effects very constantly, on individuals who had no conception of the means to be used, or the phenomena expected? or how is it, on your hypothesis, that they are displayed by infants, who can scarce be called very imaginative? nay, by the lower animals themselves, in whom imagination has positively no existence.

The objectors say, that admitting many of the phenomena—sleep especially—they may arise from the monotony of the waving motion, from the silence observed, from agitation on the patient's part, or from the alarm produced by an unusual situation.

The magnetizers reply, such silence and monotony may occasionally induce sleep; but, independent of the fact that the condition so produced by magnetic action, and called "*sleep*," for want of a better name, frequently presents phenomena of a kind never seen in natural sleep; it (as well as natural sleep) is often produced when no *waving of the hand* is attempted, and where, instead of silence being observed, much and varied noise surrounds the patient.

As regards the hypothesis of "agitation," or "alarm," they reply, that the *first sitting* of the patient is of course the one

at which *those causes* must operate with *most force* ; whereas the general fact is, that the power of the magnetizer is more and more shown as the sittings *increase in number*.

The objectors demand how it happens that healthy persons, especially men, are seldom if ever affected, while diseased persons, especially those labouring under epilepsy and other nervous affections, where *imitation* is known from universal experience to have great power—or hysterical, susceptible women, are usually, if not invariably, those who are acted on.

The magnetizers answer, it is *not a fact* that men are *never* affected ; so far from it, these phenomena are often displayed by them. But the argument is not a fair one, for, according to our yet slender knowledge of the laws of the magnetic action, the *weaker* the person the more certain appear to be the effects ; and as women usually exhibit a greater mobility than men, so you object only to what is deducible from our own theory. For the same reason persons in disease are, *cæteris paribus*, more likely to be influenced ; and of these, the most likely, such as suffer from nervous affections, as epilepsy.

The argument deduced from imitation we have already answered.

But, say the opponents, you wish us to believe in all the marvels related of somnambulism ; you desire us to think with you, that persons can be made to *see* by the sense of touch, to derive an intuitive perception of what goes on within their own bodies or the bodies of others, to prophecy future events—in fact, to perform a thousand antics which *must* be *false*, unless all the exploded tales of “ second sight ” and sorcery be *true*.

The Magnetizers answer—We do not ask you to believe anything, unless you have good foundation for your credence, and this you can only obtain by *experiment*, as we fancy we have done : on the contrary, we freely admit that one and all of those phenomena are so entirely irreconcilable with what the world has previously thought established, that it would be quite unwise in you to credit them till after the most *rigorous investigation*. If they be facts (as we believe), they are at present *isolated facts*, irreducible to any theory. What we *assert*

is, that in some rare cases we have observed them ; what we *ask* is, that you suspend your judgments till you too have had an opportunity of observing them, *and taken advantage also of the opportunity so afforded.*

But do not (say the Magnetizers, in conclusion) judge our theory only by a reference to extraordinary cases ; remember that the basis of all our professions is, that we can often produce manifest *physiological* effects. These, at least, are cognizable to the senses, removed from the fallacies which *may* beset somnambulism, and hence afford not only better evidence, but evidence which is much more readily procured. Examine this *faithfully*, and let Magnetism depend upon the issue.

The circumstance named in the text (p. 31) seems well illustrated by the case of a young and respectable female, lately, perhaps now, a patient of M. Dupotets. Early after her attendance, she was affected by strong and continued contractions of the muscles which elevate the shoulders and chest towards the head, such commencing very shortly after her magnetizer begins to operate. For some time these were quite uncontrollable, and on one if not more occasions continued so long as to become alarming ; nor could her magnetizer discover the means of ending them. At length, as she herself announces, accident revealed it. Her shawl was on one occasion fastened by a pin in front, which the heat, caused by this violent exertion, induced her to remove. In the act of so doing, she found *that the contact of her own fingers with the upper end of the breast bone* at once quieted the contractions, and she now finds no difficulty in resuming her natural state by these simple means. The author has seen this frequently practised ; nor has he had the smallest reason to doubt that she is perfectly honest in the statement given.

The case alluded to in the text (p. 41) was briefly as follows:—Madame P., aged 64, residing in the Rue St. Denis, had long been afflicted with a cancer in the right breast, accompanied by an enlargement of glands in the axilla. M. Chapelain, her ordinary medical attendant, had many times magnetized her, with a view, as he said, of removing the disease, but obtained no further result than that of establishing a very profound sleep, in which sensation appeared to be annihilated, while her ideas remained clear. He at length consulted M. Cloquet, proposing to him that he should operate on the patient while she remained in magnetic sleep; and that gentleman, considering the operation indispensable, consented.

The day fixed on to perform it was the 12th of April, 1829; during the two previous days she was magnetized several times by M. Chapelain, who persuaded her, while in somnambulism, to support the operation fearlessly, though while awake she repudiated the idea with horror.

On the day arranged, when Cloquet arrived, at half-past 10 A. M. he found the patient in magnetic sleep; she spoke with calmness of the operation, and when every thing was arranged, undressed herself, and sat down on a chair. The operation lasted from ten to twelve minutes, being, from the extent of the disease, protracted and severe.

During the whole time the patient conversed with the operator with great tranquillity, and exhibited not the *smallest symptom of sensation*; not a movement of the limbs or features was perceived; her pulse and breathing were perfectly unaffected, nor did her voice even betray the least emotion; throughout the operation she remained in the same automatic state that she had exhibited before it commenced.

The patient was placed in bed when the operation finished, while still in a state of somnambulism, and remained so during 48 hours. On the second day the dressings of the wound were removed and fresh ones applied, without any signs of pain being exhibited; after this dressing her magnetizer (M. Chapelain) awoke her from the somnambulant state, which had continued

during two days. This lady did not appear to have the slightest idea—the smallest impression of what had passed ; but on learning that she had been operated on, and seeing her children round her, she manifested great emotion, which the magnetizer quieted by immediately replacing her in a state of sleep (magnetic).

The above case is condensed from the report of the second French commission ; in that document it is much more voluminously given. The Commissioners did not *witness*, but report it as supported by testimony which they could not doubt. The very operator himself, M. Cloquet, is no mean authority, and is certainly not rendered less worthy of trust, by having also signed the report on M. Berna's commission (vide p. 17), so decidedly hostile to magnetism. The only weak point in this case is, that we have no proof that the patient might not have been *insensible to pain* in her *natural* state.

The great difficulty in proving that the physiological effects attributed to magnetism really result from such specific cause, depends on the great number of accessory causes, such as imagination and the like, to which they *may* be referred ; any example therefore which seems to exclude them, is more or less valuable ; the following is one :—

A child aged nearly three years had, from a year after birth, suffered from paralysis of both legs below the knees, not referrible to any spinal or other central cause, as far as could be determined after examination by various medical men.

At the instance of the author and a friend, he was subjected to the treatment of M. Dupotet, and operated on by him in his public room, in the midst of much noise and under various causes of excitement. At the third sitting, I think it was, this child, under the apparent influence of the mag-



netizer, soundly slept, and during sleep the evidence appeared to myself and others perfect, that his magnetizer could determine the contractions, not only of the healthy, but paralyzed muscles also, according as he directed his power to one or other extremity.

I do not instance this case because the effects were manifested with that intensity which is most likely to attract popular attention; for these more trifling physiological effects are just such as persons generally overlook, though they afford by far the purest kind of evidence. I name it merely because, from occurring in an infant, brought by a mother who knew not what was to be done, or what was expected to result, there could evidently be no imagination on the one side, and no collusion on the other.

“There is no new thing under the sun,” said the wise man of Israel; and in accordance with the rule, magnetism may be one of them, for hints of it are reported to be found in many old authors; the following I have not heard alluded to in connection with the subject; it exists in an old book, the *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus* of Henry More, and is set down in the second volume of Southey’s *Omniana*, p. 145.

“There may be (says he) a sanative and healing contagion, as well as a morbid and venomous; and the spirits of melancholy men being more massy and ponderous when they are so highly refined, and actuated by a more than ordinary heat and vigour of the body, may prove a more powerful elixir.” * *

“I shewed this place,” he adds in the *Scolia* to this Treatise, “to that excellent person Mr. Boyle at London, as I was talking with him in a bookseller’s shop; being asked by him what I thought of the cures of Valentine Gretrakes,” a noted quack of the day, with the fame of which all places rung at that time: “I told him *my* opinion of those cures was fixed some years before

they were performed, for that one *Coker* (for that was the name of the person whose remarkable way of curing or healing I now mention) *by a very gentle rubbing or chafing of his hand cured diseases ten years ago*, to the best of my remembrance, as Gretrakes did, though not so many and various." He then adds that "Gretrakes wrote a book, attested by good hands," setting forth cures of many diseases named, but states "that he did not succeed *in all his applications*, nor were his cures always lasting; moreover it was not only his *hand* that had this healing quality, but his *spittle*, &c., whereby you may the more easily discover that cures have a reference to the *temperament* of the body."

Is it possible that what is now called animal magnetism may be obscurely indicated in this treatise of the olden time? Of course the professors of those cures were considered quacks of their day (17th century), just as the magnetizers are often considered mere tricksters in our own—but this goes for little.