

CASE
OF
SPINAL DISEASE
AT DERBY,
CURED BY MESMERISM.

DERBY:

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CURED BY

MESMERISM.

SOME groundless and absurd reports, relating to my case, having been circulated as authorized by myself or members of my family; I am induced to give a correct statement under my own hand, of the nature of my late illness and the progress of its cure; of which the following are the principal facts.

My illness commenced in the Autumn of 1843, the result of a fall from the top to the bottom of a flight of stone steps. The occasion of such an accident was extreme weakness, induced by a painful internal disease, the symptoms of which had first become perceptible about a year and a half previously. Immediately after the fall I was a little stupified and giddy, but shortly recovering from that felt very little pain in the spine, although both my back and head had struck on each step during my descent. And, notwithstanding the shock thus received, I felt little more head-ache than was usual with me; for since a similar fall I had in London eight years before, not a day had passed without bringing a head-ache, often severe, with a weight at the hinder portion of my head as though it were

dragged forcibly backwards; and generally some pain in my back also.

The only difference to be perceived in me for some time after the last accident, was drowsiness; which was noticed as unusual, two or three hours' sleep during the twenty four, being all that I could obtain after I first began to suffer from the fore-mentioned disease. This drowsiness increased gradually during two weeks, until at length, on the 15th of 10th Month (Oct.) my friends were not able to rouse me, except that I occasionally became aware of their presence for a moment. Bleeding with leeches at the back of the head was resorted to, and in the course of four or five days consciousness returned; but the right side was paralyzed, and I discovered the extreme sensibility of the spine, the slightest touch producing a sensation as though a red-hot wire were thrust upwards into my brain, and downwards throughout the extent of the spinal column; in addition to the acute and throbbing pain which was constant. In this state I remained, with little variation, until the beginning of the following year; the left leg had in the meantime become paralyzed as the right was before; and although neither could be hurt externally by pinching or otherwise, the pain in them was at times excruciating: I still retained a little power in the left hand,—with that exception I was entirely helpless.

Cramp and convulsions succeeded in the 2nd Month (Feb.) of 1844, after which I was for a long time unable to speak louder than a whisper, and at one time was dumb ten days. Sometimes the attacks of convulsion continued two or three hours so violent as to throw me from one side to the other of a large bed; or by contraction of the muscles my back has been drawn inwards, so that for the space of twenty minutes, or longer, the top of my head and my feet only rested upon the mattress, and the torture was indescribable. At other times I was convulsed only a few minutes; and then, being seized with cramp, the muscles in my limbs were drawn into knots, and the pain in every joint was

like the screwing of a vice. Hot fomentations afforded some relief to the stomach, or to any other internal part that was seized during these attacks; but the period of their duration, unmitigated in the back and limbs, was mostly seven or eight hours; yet occasionally the muscles relaxed sooner, in periods varying from two to five or six hours. For several months I continued subject to seizures of this kind, and occasionally to delirium and stupor; to remedy which leeches were applied behind the ears, and at intervals down the spine. To prevent the so frequent recurrence of convulsions, laudanum was administered; but Dr. Marshall Hall objecting to its use, the quantity was gradually diminished, and it was eventually altogether discontinued. Previously to my Surgeon's being thus advised, the attacks of convulsion had ceased to be so violent, but succeeded each other more quickly, and three times every day laudanum was administered; by which means I was usually in a half-intoxicated state, visited by what is commonly called "the horrors." Not being acquainted with Louden's method of discontinuing this medicine, I found the suffering it occasioned almost insupportable; but I did live through this also; we were able to persevere, and I was better. In about three months from the time when the opiate was discarded, this symptom of my disorder appeared no more. Subsequently I was removed into the country; and in the course of time, (whilst still employing friction and such other means as could be devised,) recovered some portion of the lost use in my limbs; so that, my whole weight being supported for me, I could move my feet a little; could for a few hours exchange the bed for the sofa, or recline in an easy chair so constructed as that no pressure could interfere with the spine, to apply a camel's hair pencil to which caused very great pain, but which was nevertheless somewhat relieved by the use of an embrocation thus applied with the greatest possible care. But however some of my complaints might receive temporary amelioration, the more deeply seated one, from which I had suffered

so long, was evidently becoming worse, and the pain in my head—constantly very great—often increased to so violent a degree as to over-master my reasoning powers, and delirium and stupor ensued.

When I had been ill but a few months, Mesmerism was recommended for me, and some of my friends strongly urged me to be mesmerized; but I was averse to it, and as it was difficult for me to read, and painful to listen to conversation, such arguments as were advanced failed to overcome my objection. The subject was at intervals resumed—still, I withheld my consent; and in the summer of last year, (1845) when my condition was as described above, two remedies were submitted to my choice, as being all that remained untried, Mesmerism, and the Water Cure. I preferred the latter, and for a time derived benefit from it; but the experienced medical gentleman who applied it to my case, told me that he could only apply the treatment very partially, my state being too reduced to allow of the usual means; and the difficulty of producing reaction proved a serious obstacle.

There was now no resource—one excepted, and that an often rejected one. All the means that medical skill could suggest, had failed; tonic medicines and nourishing diet, on the various occasions on which they had been recommended and tried, produced invariably the effect of increasing the suffering;—unpleasant appearances indicated the presence of disease internally; and at the same time my strength decreased.

At the commencement of the present year I was still persevering with such portions of the Hydropathic treatment as were available in my case; but for some weeks the improvement which at first was promised, had ceased, and in most respects I had relapsed into the same condition as that of the preceding summer; added to which, on the 15th of 1st Month, (Jan.) a new feature of the complaint, (which seemed now to have taken possession of my whole frame) appeared. Feeling exceedingly

weary all the morning of that day, in the afternoon I had fallen asleep,—a quiet, dreamless sleep of about twenty minutes,—when I was suddenly awakened with severe pain all over my person. But I cannot describe it, I have but an indistinct recollection of the occurrences of this day, and merely remember waking with pain more acute than usual, and afterwards feeling faint. The faintness soon passed away and was succeeded by a pleasant sensation, or I should rather style it a gradual loss of sensation. I felt as though I was sinking,—dying a painless death;—but shortly became totally insensible to all that was passing about me. I suppose this attack is attributed by my medical attendant to partial paralysis of the heart; and on recovering from it I felt as if a flood were pouring into my chest, in waves slowly following each other. I was, by this day's increased illness, so much reduced in strength that I could not lift my hand or move myself in any way.

In this state I remained four weeks; attacks of the same description as the first returning three, four, or five times daily during that period; differing solely in this respect,—that they were not preceded by pain and faintness: the only indication was a sinking feeling giving me no uneasiness whatever, all the suffering I endured being in the recovery; and it was discovered after a time, that strong coffee administered without delay before the power of swallowing was gone, would prevent some of the unpleasant symptoms, and my return to the ordinary state was less painful.

At the end of four weeks I was informed that Spencer T. Hall was in Nottingham; and the attacks continuing as before, and my weakness being such that it was difficult to raise my voice above a whisper, I requested he might be asked to see me. Accordingly on the 13th of 2nd Month (Feb.) he kindly attended upon me; it was about noon when he arrived, and already since 12 o'clock the night before, I had three times suffered the effects of this apparent cessation of the heart's beating. Having been

made acquainted with the circumstances of my illness, Spencer Hall proceeded to mesmerize me by manipulation, passing his hands, without contact, from the head to the knees; in about 5 minutes my eyes could no longer resist the inclination to close, and the lids slowly fell. I was, at that time, unable to move under any circumstances through debility; therefore the only proof that I was not under my own control was the irresistible closing of my eyes; for, on that first occasion, I had no other unusual sensation than one of delightful refreshment: though I must not omit to notice that I had no power to speak unless addressed by my Magnetizer—then, his fingers being placed in contact with my eyelids, I could answer readily. When the influence had been removed (perhaps after the lapse of half an hour,) by transverse passes and wafting with a silk handkerchief, I felt rested and much better; could speak in whole sentences instead of broken words, and felt no uneasiness from the exertion of speaking. This was my first séance, and on that morning the complaint of the heart took a final leave, not the slightest symptom of it was ever perceived afterwards: yet the enlargement on the left side of my chest did not immediately disappear, but, diminishing by slow degrees, when several weeks had passed no deformity was observable.

On the following morning I was mesmerized again, when I felt, as it were, a soft stream passing downwards until it reached my feet; then it flowed back, passed through my chest and into my head. I cannot remember whether during this particular séance I was insensible to what was passing in the room; sometimes I am so during the mesmeric sleep, (as it is usually called) at other times I am aware when any person enters or leaves the room; and generally know if the Operator has left me and what he is doing. In the course of the ensuing two weeks I was magnetized occasionally, and acquired new strength each time. I frequently felt a sensation like a succession of electric shocks in the lower vertebræ of the spine, and in the knees and feet. When

I was thrown into the magnetic state by contact of the hands, instead of the longitudinal passes, a more powerful effect was produced; my eyes closed in a few seconds, and the result on my being restored by the usual process, was even more beneficial than before. At this time the Gentleman whose efforts for my relief from suffering had been, by the blessing of God, so wonderfully successful, had imperative engagements requiring his presence elsewhere, and he consigned me to other care. But before he left, the acute pain in the back and head, and also in the limbs, was considerably lessened, and I was much stronger; besides which the extreme tenderness of the spine was in some degree removed.

For more than three months (the time of Spencer Hall's absence) I remained in most respects, almost without interruption, in the same state as that in which he left me. A few weeks the operation was performed by my Mother, but the exertion proving too great for her she was obliged to desist. My head was again more painful, and to prevent if possible the delirium which was threatened, I used the cold bath prescribed as a remedy by the Surgeon who applied the water treatment for me. This had the desired effect; but still the pain continued with its increased severity, and it was necessary to use the bath every day.

At length on the 3rd of 6th Month (June) my Magnetizer returned, and resumed his philanthropic labors. In a short time the bath was unnecessary, my head was cooled and the pain much diminished; I bathed only as I would do in perfect health. On the 22nd of the same month my paralyzed limbs were sufficiently strengthened to enable me to raise myself from a recumbent to a kneeling posture;—for some days I had been able to stand supporting myself with one hand; but on the 23rd I stood unassisted, and, leaning on my sister's arm, walked a few paces without increasing my pain in any way. But both my legs had, whilst I was subject to convulsions, become ex-

ceedingly contracted; the right was soon made straight, the left, however, proved more refractory; and when I was made stronger, and otherwise capacitated for standing and walking the toes only of that foot touched the ground. So much was it deformed by convulsion, that it remained now extended like a continuation of the leg nearly in a straight line; the knee also was very much contracted, and the limb thus rendered almost useless. Particular attention was directed to it; and after being manipulated for some time, whilst I was so powerfully magnetized that every part was perfectly rigid, the heel was stretched downwards and the knee pressed with great force, but without pain, into its proper position. So it has remained, enabling me to walk without the awkward limp I had before.

I have not for a long time been inconvenienced with ulceration of the mouth and throat, a complaint from which I was, for more than a year previously to my being mesmerized (as it is called,) seldom free. For the internal disease to which I have adverted before as growing gradually worse, I could obtain little or no relief; and although no drugs have been employed, nor indeed any other remedy whatever, than Spencer Hall's magnetic power, I suffer at the present time comparatively little pain in the region of that complaint; and elsewhere have no uneasiness, if I make the exception that the weight is not at present quite removed from the back of my head, and that I have sometimes a little pain there; yet it is less than I have felt every day since the injury I sustained when a little child in falling down stairs.

After suffering, as a Medical friend once informed me I had suffered, all the symptoms that are ever observed in cases of this kind,—an accumulation of bodily distress which, I heard with pleasure, does not often fall to the lot of human beings;—I am within the last few weeks, through the powerful agency of "Mesmerism," restored to comparative health. A month ago, on the first occasion of my going out, I rode in a carriage a

distance of eight miles; sustaining no injury, but, on the contrary, deriving a great amount of enjoyment and benefit. Subsequently I have spent an afternoon in the Arboretum belonging to our town, where I rambled over the mounds and through the walks at least the distance of a third of a mile: indeed, it is unfavourable weather alone that confines me to the house, and when I am for such reason detained at home I have the delightful privilege of usefully employing my fingers.

And even should my restoration be—as the opponents of this beautiful science say it will—but temporary; and should I as they affirm fall suddenly back into a state as bad (worse they say, but such it can scarcely be to leave me any life at all,) as before; still, this cannot—if it be a truth—afford a reason why I should feel less thankful for the health with which I am now blest; and which not only all the power of medicine, and the kindness and skill of Physicians and careful Nurses; but also the fresh breezes of the Peak country, and afterwards the often-efficient treatment of the Hydropathist, alike failed to procure me.

In reply to other observations made by persons acquainted with some of these facts, I should further remark, that I have had many illnesses, but the remedy which restored me to health at one time did not ensure a continuance of the same healthy state through life. Without doubt I must still be liable, as then I was, to the casualties of mortal life; and if it be the will of God again to afflict me with the same kind of sickness, or one quite dissimilar, I could not assert, with more justice than in former cases, that my cure was a fabled one, or that the illness which had newly attacked me was but a sequel to the last.

7th Month 26th, 1846.

In the foregoing account a symptom is mentioned as not entirely cured, though much ameliorated, a feeling as of a weight

dragging my head backwards; but when three or four weeks more had elapsed, this also was removed, and I was so much stronger as to be able to enjoy a ramble of some length through the fields. The amendment in my health was at first very rapid, afterwards the progress was steady, and it has continued to be so to the present time, the 12th of 9th Month, 1846.

MARY ANNE LONGDON.

FRIAR GATE, DERBY.

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