

# HEALING

BY THE

## HAND AND WILL,

EXEMPLIFIED BY

MR. CAPERN,

DURING A RESIDENCE AT LAMPORT,

•

BY

SIR CHARLES ISHAM, BART.

LONDON:

F. PITMAN, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1862.

250. h. 61.

LONDON :  
F. PITMAN, 20, PATERNOSTER ROW.



## HEALING BY THE HAND AND WILL.

It is to be regretted that persons who make use of the hand and will in relieving pain, or in curing disease, cannot exercise their vocation without being subjected to cruel accusations and injurious reflections.

So late as August last, at a meeting of the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, it was ordained that —“No Fellow or Licentiate of the College shall pretend or profess to cure diseases by the deception called homœopathy, or the practice called mesmerism, or by any other form of quackery. \* \* \* It is also hereby ordained that no Fellow or Licentiate of the College shall consult with, meet, advise, direct, or assist any person engaged in such deceptions or practices, or in any system or practice considered derogatory or dishonourable by physicians or surgeons.”

As the following facts will bear the closest investigation, it is to be hoped they may assist those who require it, in obtaining more true and definite knowledge with regard to mesmerism than they at present possess, and draw their attention to allied subjects, the most vast and elevating which the mind can contemplate.

Having had unusual opportunities some years since of observing the beneficial effects of mesmerism, I considered myself fortunate last September in procuring the services of Mr. Capern, whom I had long known, and who, for nearly seventeen years has devoted himself to the mitigation of suffering by that agency alone. This gentleman remained with me upwards of half-a-year, during which period he daily demonstrated amongst the poor the relief which this power is capable of affording; and ample time has been allowed for observing the enduring effects of the same.

It will be unnecessary to enumerate all of the instances in which Mr. Capern was more or less successful, but I may observe that, although from various causes the desired effects were not always of long duration, he rarely failed in proving almost immediately to those who required it the reality of mesmerism as a powerful palliative. Some who had been sufferers from injuries of long standing, or from pain, would, in a short time, feel partial or even entire relief, the good results remaining for a longer or shorter period as the case might be, and when the pains returned they could again be as easily removed; others who were cured almost instantaneously, have had, after an interval of seven months, no return of their ailments. Amongst those upon whom Mr. Capern operated during his residence here, there has been but one who has gone into a decided mesmeric sleep; the rest, I believe, with the exception of one or at most two cases, were awake and perfectly conscious. This fact disposes of a prevalent idea, that sleep is a necessary concomitant to mesmerism.

The following facts I have selected from a number of cases of relief afforded by Mr. Capern in this immediate neigh-



bourhood ; they were obtained at or about the time of occurrence, by questioning the persons concerned, and those who knew their condition before and after, or who witnessed the treatment, cautiously guarding against any cause of inducement for an over-statement of facts. I have again, quite lately, had interviews with them and their friends, and have gone into the minutest details, taking them down at the time, and comparing them with my former notes. It will be observed that six out of the thirteen cases selected occurred at the adjacent village of Scaldwell ; these are amply attested by the rector, the Hon. and Rev. Arthur G. Douglas, who has kindly afforded me additional evidence, beyond that which I have given, relative to some of the cases of his parishioners.

LAMPORT HALL, NORTHAMPTON, May, 1862.

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No. 1.

THOMAS WATSON WARNER, *Scaldwell, Age 27.*

In October was attacked with tooth-ache, had been getting worse for a fortnight, face and neck much swollen, could scarcely see out of one eye, teeth in top jaw became loose, could only take liquids for some days, which were given him from the edge of a teaspoon, scarcely got an hour's sleep for four nights, stopped work one day.

Mr. Capern met him in the lane, near Scaldwell wind-mill. The face being tied up, he enquired the cause, saying, he thought he might be able to afford him some relief. The man not knowing in the least who he was or what he was going to do, consented to allow him a trial. They stood under shelter of the hedge whilst Mr. Capern drew his hand

lightly over the face for about five minutes, and Warner from that moment felt as well as ever he did in his life. He went home immediately and ate a dinner of solid food: the swelling was gone down by next morning. Each time the hand was passed over the face Warner felt as if half-a-pound weight was drawn from him. He has continued well seven months.

No. 2.

SAMUEL WILSON, *Scaldwell*.

Fell with a sack of barley a year ago. Since the accident he had always experienced much pain in the shoulder and upper part of the arm whilst at hard work, and was partly disabled thereby. Mr. Capern met him accidentally last November, and placed him under treatment for five minutes; he became warm, and felt the pain run down the arm towards the finger ends. Six months have elapsed, and he has been nearly free from pain all that time, and has recovered the use of his arm.

No. 3.

THOMAS SHARPE, *Scaldwell*, Age 60.

In December, 1859, fell about twelve feet through a trap-door at Old Malting-house, injured both ankles, was laid up eighteen weeks, six weeks in bed. The doctor told him he would never be a sound man again.

In November, 1861, Mr. Capern found him at light field work, which he could with difficulty get through, made him sit down on the damp ground and take off the boot of the left foot. This he objected to doing, saying, his foot was always so swollen after work that it would be impossible for him to

get it on again. Mr. Capern, however, insisted on his requirement, saying, he would undertake to get him home. Passes were then made over this and the other foot which had the boot on, a fellow labourer being time-keeper by the watch.

In five minutes perspiration dropped off Sharpe's face, and in five more he put on his boot, which went on quite easily and has never been very tight since, got up, and to show what he could do, began kicking about the clods, which up to that time he with difficulty could walk over, and felt as if he could almost jump over a hurdle. He now, after a lapse of six months, remains well, with a little occasional pain in the left foot and none in the right. He had never since the accident been able to move the great toe of the former until the time Mr. Capern mesmerised him. It then became perfectly free, and has remained so ever since.

Whilst these passes were being made Sharpe experienced a feeling of heat and a "working about" of the pain; it then seemed to go out at the great toe, at which moment there was a sensation as if the nail was being torn out. When Mr. Capern passed his hand lightly over the foot, scarcely touching the stocking, there seemed to be more "virtue" than when slight pressure was used.

It is needless to add Sharpe was never so astonished in his life.

#### No. 4.

JESSE SALE, *Scaldwell*, Age 15.

Had suffered three months from rheumatism; had become so much worse the last week as to prevent his going to work, and he could with difficulty get upstairs; the knee was so

much inflamed as to cause his father to apprehend white swelling. Mr. Capern observing him limping about the village, took him into a cottage and passed his hand over the knee for about ten minutes, before witnesses; the boy immediately *ran* home to his mother, then into the field to his father, also to Mr. Langley, his master, saying, a gentleman had just cured him, and he was ready to go to work again; the next day (Saturday) he dug potatoes all day; on Sunday he walked to Pitsford and back, about seven miles; on Monday he was at ploughing, and has continued work about five months, without any return of pain. He was mesmerised again for a few minutes.

No. 5.

MARY NORTON, *Scaldwell, Age 64.*

Had suffered excruciating pains in the head for 20 years, was never many days free, and had severe attacks every two or three weeks, the pain nearly deprived her of her senses; the late parish doctor had been able to do little or nothing for her during all the above period. Mr. Capern found her suffering, last autumn; he made some passes, and in a few minutes she perspired, and felt the greatest relief. Mesmerism was continued occasionally for a short time, and she had no more of them for some months. She is now very ill of an old complaint, and they have returned, but in a very modified form.

No. 6.

ANNE BOTTRIL, *Scaldwell, Age 2½ years.*

Had been a great sufferer 18 months. A semi-transparent white cloud covered the greater portion of the eyes, which

she was in the habit of screening with her hands, and cried unless the blinds were down or the shutters closed ; appetite very bad ; had been a long time under homœopathic treatment, and was a little better. When Mr. Capern first saw her, he passed his hand over her face without contact ; after two or three sittings there was a visible improvement. He continued this treatment three or four weeks, and the child was considered by the parents nearly well ; the cloud in the eyes rapidly diminished, and they could bear the full light ; the appetite became good ; the colour in the cheeks returned ; she was cheerful, and always showed delight at the approach of her mesmeriser. She has continued six months in this improved condition, and it is hoped will outgrow the little defect which still remains visible in the eyes.

## No. 7.

WILLIAM LETTS, *Rowell, Age 44.*

A thick-set strong-looking man. Fell from a scaffold at Winwick 11 years since. For the first few years the symptoms of spinal injury were chiefly confined to partial paralysis of the right leg ; afterwards the right arm became affected in a similar manner, and for the last four years he has been on the parish, and has been incapable of work ; he slept badly ; was always cold ; walked with difficulty, but could get to an adjoining bakehouse, where it was his custom to sit for warmth. For the last two years he had not strength to use his right hand in taking a cup of tea, and during the last twelve months it had become so unsteady that he found it necessary to have his shaving done for him. He had been a total abstainer long before the accident. He latterly had

been subject to dreadful spasms in the stomach, which compelled him to be exceedingly careful in his diet, and confine himself to brown bread, oatmeal, broth, and a little rice, the smallest piece of meat, unless boiled to a rag, and other food causing a certain return of the agonising pain.

Letts lodged at Lamport for nine weeks, during which time Mr. Capern mesmerised him daily. From the first hour he experienced great warmth, almost amounting to burning, whilst the light passes were being made, and his walking improved in so extraordinary a manner as to be remarked by all who knew him. From the first night he slept better than he had done for several years. He soon began to shave himself, lift his cup with ease with the right hand, and eat anything, even heavy pie-crust, without the slightest return of spasms. Although mesmerism has been discontinued for several weeks, he continues equally well and comfortable in all respects, except in his powers of locomotion, which have again failed him. A friend has mesmerised him since his return to Rowell, and he feels warmth from it, but not equal to that produced by Mr. Capern.

Whether the present condition of this man is of long continuance, or whether he returns again to his ordinary condition, this case must, I think, be considered a very decided example of the power of mesmerism in relieving a desperate injury after years of doctoring, and fifteen weeks' severe treatment in the Northampton General Infirmary had failed in enabling him to perceive more than very slight temporary relief.

There are some other remarkable facts in connection with this case which I do not publish.

## No. 8.

JOHN ABBOTT, *Farmer, Old, Age 34.*

Crushed the knuckle of the second finger of left hand; ached almost incessantly for six months, frequently keeping him awake at night; he could never completely open nor close that finger without the aid of the other hand, and as he could only use the thumb and two fingers it was to him a very serious injury: it was always much more painful and more swollen after working. Application was made to Mr. Capern for relief. Gentle passes were made over the hand on three occasions, and no more, twenty minutes each time.

During the first sitting Abbott experienced a very unusual feeling of faintness, and would not have submitted to a second operation but for the extraordinary benefit received, which enabled him in a few minutes to open and shut his hand freely. The effect of this first visit not being altogether permanent, was the cause of his returning after an interval of one day, and again a third time after two days' interval. On these latter occasions he found that by turning his face away, and avoiding looking at Mr. Capern's hand, he could in some degree overcome the feeling of faintness. I was present at the third sitting, which lasted just about twenty minutes. The result was complete so far as regarded the freedom of the hand, and he has now had perfect use of it for six months; neither has the pain since returned, excepting on one occasion. The swelling has not yet subsided, and a hard lump can be felt near the knuckle. I mention this fact as additional evidence of the serious nature of the injury. I have endeavoured to obtain further particulars relative to the

agreeing with him, he was glad to return to Lamport at the expiration of five weeks. At one time Bamford could walk two miles, but whenever mesmerism was discontinued a few days the weakness of the legs in a great measure returned.

Just about twelve months have now elapsed since he first saw Mr. Capern, from which day he has been free from severe pain of any kind, until a few days since, when he was laid up with a bad cold, and the cramp returned; but even then the dreadful form described above was not visible. He continues to sleep well, and when he wakes never experiences the miserable restless feeling he always formerly complained of.

No. 10.

JOHN BLUNDELL, *Lamport, Brick-maker, Age 33.*

Had been subject to rheumatism for two years, had an unusually severe attack in his arm in October, which lasted a fortnight; it became so bad that for a week he could not work; he was in bed for two days. During the three days previous to his seeing Mr. Capern, the pain had slightly decreased, but the swelling had increased; the arm looked purple about six inches above the wrist to first joint of fingers, and the knuckles were invisible. The arm could not be raised without the help of the other one, and the pain prevented its being allowed to hang down; neither could he use it to keep the accounts for my bailiff.

One evening the blacksmith proposed taking him to Mr. Capern to try what could be done for him. Blundell agreed to this, saying, his arm pained him so much that he should not mind having it cut off; but he had no faith in Mr. Capern's being able to relieve him. As soon as they arrived,



some passes were made over the arm and hand ; in less than ten minutes the pain was entirely gone, the swelling had so much decreased as to *render the knuckles visible*, life had returned into the arm, and he signed his name. The next morning Blundell went to work, he experienced no more inconvenience, and nothing more of this attack than "a few snatching pains ;" but being subject to rheumatism, is affected during stormy or wet weather.

The blacksmith, and Mr. Graves, the schoolmaster, witnessed this cure, and will give their testimony to the accuracy of this narration.

No. 11.

JOHN LATIMER, *Lamport, Age 70.*

Subject to very severe inflammatory attacks in the chest, causing great heat and pain ; he had also suffered from pain in the feet. He had partly recovered from a chest attack in May, 1861, but was still suffering much pain. Mr. Capern removed this in ten or fifteen minutes. It did not, however, entirely leave him, for he felt it passing down into the feet, which became very hot, and remained warm all night. The next day a few more passes were made, and Mr. Capern left Lamport.

Latimer has from that time continued perfectly well in the chest, now eleven months.

The pain, however, remained concentrated in the feet, causing great lameness and inconvenience ; still the removal of it to those parts was a great source of satisfaction to him, as it relieved him from a supposition which he had been led to entertain, that the lungs were permanently affected.

Mr. Capern returned to Lamport in September, the pain

in the feet, although not continuous, having been much worse than ever during the three months of his absence. A few waves of the hand, without contact, caused the pain this time to move in less than one minute, and by repeating them for ten minutes, it was entirely gone. For three weeks from that moment he experienced an amount of comfort which had been unknown to him for years, and from being lame and walking with difficulty, he could run like a boy. At the expiration of three weeks the pain returned, and although Mr. Capern could always give relief, he has not been able again to remove it for so long a period; it, however, has never been nearly so severe as it was between May and September.

No. 12.

JOHN LATIMER, Jun.

Was completely cured in about five minutes of a tooth and face-ache which had prevented him taking anything but liquids for several days, and had deprived him of sleep, except at short intervals, for several nights. Six months have elapsed and the pain has not returned.

No. 13.

LAMPART, NORTHAMPTON,

*February 15th, 1862.*

TO SIR CHARLES EDMUND ISHAM, BART.

SIR,

In compliance with a request made by you some time since, I beg to offer the subjoined statement of my case, and

the effects of MESMERISM upon me. I may say at once that I have purposely delayed the making of any statement, that I might have a fair opportunity to judge concerning the permanency of the effects which mesmerism has wrought in me, and so be able to speak more confidently upon the subject than I could have done at an earlier period.

It was in the winter of 1858-9 that I first experienced a weakness and soreness of my throat, which greatly distressed me whenever I attempted to articulate. It was with difficulty that I could talk; I could not utter more than four or five words consecutively without being compelled to rest. In the summer of 1859 I felt very little of it; but as soon as the cold weather set in, the affection of the throat returned. I went on in this way, suffering in winter, and finding relief in summer, for three years. My distress was so great during the winter of 1860-1 that I seriously contemplated resigning my situation, because, in consequence of my inability to speak freely, I felt I could not discharge the duties of my office in an efficient manner, nor to my own satisfaction.

In September, 1861, I re-commenced teaching, after the usual holidays, during the harvest, and in the first week the weakness, or relaxation of my throat, returned. Just at this juncture, Mr. Capern came to reside at Lamport. I had met with Mr. Capern, while he was visiting here in the spring of last year, and consequently was slightly acquainted with him. On the 30th of this month Mr. Capern called casually to see me on a friendly visit, and he enquiring after my health, I mentioned to him the circumstances of my sore throat without having the faintest idea that he could relieve it, as I had always believed that nothing but rest and a mild

climate could cure such a disorder. He said that he once cured a gentleman, a clergyman, in London, of a relaxed throat by means of *mesmerism*, and if I would allow him he should have great pleasure in attempting a cure of my case.

*Without any faith whatever in the efficacy of the means he proposed to me*, I agreed to his proposal to call upon him in the evening. I did so; Mr. Capern began to make passes over and about the parts affected; soon I felt warmth, which, beginning at the throat, gradually spread downwards; and shortly after this I felt a sensation similar to that of breathing air highly heated. I sat for half-an-hour at this time, and immediately afterwards went and sang with the choir at their practice for an hour and a half, and that with greater ease than I ever remember to have sung before. I had a greater command over my voice. On the next day, October 1st, I still felt a weakness of the throat, but had not that difficulty of articulation which I had experienced for a week previously, nor did I feel nearly so distressed. I waited daily upon Mr. Capern for a week, and afterwards at irregular intervals for three weeks longer. I have not been operated upon now, for upwards of three months. I have exerted myself as much by talking in school as ever I did, and I can positively affirm that since the first week in October, nearly five months since, I have not felt the slightest symptoms of distress from talking, or weakness of the throat in any way, even at the end of my hardest day's work; I therefore think I may not unreasonably conclude that Mr. Capern, by means of *mesmerism*, has *cured* my throat, and I may add, that I am extremely grateful to that gentleman for the kindness, attention, and time he has bestowed upon me.

I have great pleasure in making this statement, and am prepared to bear witness to its truth at any time.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

JOHN J. GRAVES,

*Master of the Lamport & Houghton  
Endowed Charity School.*



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