

MAGNETIC TREATMENT

FOR THE CURE OF CHRONIC
DISEASES.

EFFECTED BY MEANS OF
ELECTRO-MEDICAL APPARATUS.

THE INVENTION OF
J. SEILER, M.D.
PHYSICIAN.



LONDON:
H. BAILLIÈRE, 219, REGENT STREET.

7410.00.72
6

MAGNETIC TREATMENT

FOR THE CURE OF CHRONIC

DISEASES,

EFFECTED BY MEANS OF

ELECTRO-MEDICAL APPARATUS.

THE INVENTION OF

J. SEILER, M. D.

PHYSICIAN.



LONDON:

H. BAILLIÈRE, 219, REGENT STREET.

1870.

Dr. Seiler may be consulted at 13, Old Cavendish Street, Cavendish Square; where his Electro-Medical Apparatus may be inspected.





MESMER AND HIS TIMES.

AT the time of Mesmer's discovery static electricity was but imperfectly known, dynamical electricity had scarcely made its appearance in the world, and no one could then foresee how important a part it would play amongst us a little later on. Magnetism was much more familiar to men of science, and the minds of physicians and philosophers were almost exclusively taken up with it. Not a few eminent men believed that in it might be seen the very essence of life. They were not aware, as they are at this present day, of the identity of static and dynamic electricity; they did not know that by means of a magnet sparks

may be produced, and that with a galvanic pile magnets may be made of prodigious power. They had no idea of the transmutation of dynamic forces, and in the estimation of the learned they were all fluids; light and heat, electricity and magnetism, were all classed under this category. The theory whereby Mesmer endeavoured to support his discovery could not be otherwise than influenced by this general current of ideas, and become entirely magnetic, with the greater reason as the *passes* which he employed to magnetize his patients closely resembled the processes formerly used to make magnets. Mesmer, though an enthusiast, was nevertheless gifted with very great intelligence, and had he been acquainted with physics and physiology as the learned know them at the present day, he would doubtless have made his discovery harmonize more perfectly with true science.

His disciples have endeavoured, in the midst of scientific progress, to bolster up this antiquated theory, and they still maintain the idea of a magnetic

fluid flowing from their hands and infiltrating into the body of the patient. Would it not, in the interest of mesmerism itself, have been better to abandon an hypothesis which in these days is unsustainable, and try to explain in a more comprehensible and more acceptable manner the effects which they produce upon certain individuals?

DOES MAGNETISM EXIST IN THE HUMAN BODY?

IT is believed and it is often repeated that the learned are hostile to mesmerism. The fact is, that true men of science are generally the friends of truth, and willingly accept everything the existence of which is capable of proof. But they are compelled to be ever on their guard against error. It has more than once occurred that observations which had not received due and proper care have, at a later period, been necessarily rejected.

It is on account of such mistakes that experiment-
alists find themselves compelled to adopt every
possible precaution; and it has tended to render
them hard to please.

Apart from this, however, there have been phy-
sicians and physiologists who have seriously gone
into the question, and who have made numerous
and conscientious investigations with the object of
discovering magnetism in the human body. Longet,
in his "*Traité de Physiologie*," cites a great number
of these experiments. Though furnished with the
most delicate and admirably combined instruments,
their efforts have only had negative results. Yet
how could it be possible for men, versed in the
difficult art of experimentalizing and observing, to
fail to discover it, if it really existed, when they
have been able to detect the smallest trace of elec-
tricity in our muscles,—nay, in our very nerves?

It will, however, be shown hereafter that the
hypothesis of the magnetic fluid is not necessary
for the working out of the effects attributed to
mesmerism.

Long before the labours of Dubois Raymond, it was known that all chemical compositions and decompositions are accompanied by a greater or less evolution of electricity; it was likewise known that this was the case with friction and motion. It was very natural to draw therefrom the conclusion that the nutrition of our bodies, digestion, absorption, assimilation, secretions, the friction caused by the rush of blood through the arteries, and finally the movement of the muscles, should produce in us a certain amount of electricity, just in the same way as they produce warmth. Still, however probable or likely these conclusions might be, they were not sufficient for science; the reality of the fact had to be proved by demonstration.

The experimental physiologist to whom allusion has been made has furnished almost the whole of these proofs, and it is now known that our muscles and our nerves—our entire body, in fact—are charged, during life, with a certain quantity of electricity. Our body produces electricity just as it produces heat, but it produces no magnetism.

The partisans of the latter pretend that their fluid passes from their hands into the body of an individual subject. This is a fresh error, because, as has just been shown, no magnetism exists within them; and because their *passes* cannot cause *electric* fluid to infiltrate into the body of another. The ambient air is sufficiently insulating to prevent it clearing the little space between the hand of the mesmerist and the body to be mesmerized. As the subject is moreover covered with garments, which are also so many insulators, we may affirm in the most positive manner that no fluid passes from one to the other.

The only explanation that is reasonably admissible of the action of the hand over the body of another individual is that furnished us by science with respect to electric influence. This requires elucidation, or rather the citation of an experiment which is, besides, a well known one.

The instrument made use of for this demonstration is a brass cylinder, the ends of which are rounded; it is placed horizontally upon a glass


insulator or foot, and to the two ends are suspended by hempen threads two balls of elder pith. In order to show the experiment of electric influence we must take a stick of sealing-wax, charged with negative electricity by rubbing upon woollen cloth or fur. Directly this stick of wax is placed near one of the extremities of the cylinder, it causes the separation of the two electricities, previously in a neutral state; the extremity nearest to the wax becomes charged with positive electricity, attracted to it by the negative electricity of the stick of sealing-wax. The two balls, which are likewise charged with positive electricity, fly off from each other, because electricities of the same name are repellant; but both are attracted to the wax, which is charged with negative electricity, because electricities of contrary names attract one another. Take away the wax, and the two electricities subside and the instrument resumes the neutral condition it previously held.

The sealing-wax has retained all its negative electricity; its fluid has not in the slightest degree

passed into the instrument, it has only acted at a distance, and through the insulating atmosphere, to effect the phenomena we have just described.

In like manner *nothing else* lies between the hand of the magnetiser and the person on whom he is operating; and the proof of this is that his hands may be effectively superseded by the poles of an electro-medical apparatus.

MESMERIZING BY INDUCTION COILS.

HE electric fluid, although identical in its principle, exhibits nevertheless certain secondary differences according to the source whence it is derived. Thus, atmospheric electricity does not in every particular exactly agree with the static electricity of our machines, with which it is most frequently compared. That of electrical fish produced by an organ which imitates tolerably well a voltaic pile has some astonish-

ing, and we might even say most marvellous peculiarities. It was, *à priori*, natural to suppose that the electricity of the human body would also have some specialty of its own; different in its details to that of our apparatus. The poles of an apparatus of this kind never, for instance, produce somnambulism or effects of a similar nature, and in the treatment of nervous maladies such apparatus is of great advantage, since the individual always retains his complete independence and entire liberty. The local effects, which will be hereafter referred to, are, on the other hand, much more pronounced, better characterized, and infinitely more powerful than those produced by a man's hand. But before entering upon this branch of the subject it is necessary to say a few words as to the application made hitherto, in medicine, of electricity itself and of the apparatus employed.

From the date of the existence of electrical machines, medical men have endeavoured to make use of them in the treatment of various kinds of

diseases, and for a considerable time discharges were given by means of the Leyden jar. Later on, use was made of the voltaic pile, and thus with each step in advance made by science physicians endeavoured to turn the new discovery to account, but ever failing to secure the favour of the public. But if they have frequently changed the instrument their *modus operandi* has nevertheless remained the same, they have always made use of the electrical discharge, and have always caused the fluid to pass through the diseased organ. The discharges thus given are generally more or less painful, but do not very materially change the vitality of the affected organ. In the treatment of paralytic disorders these discharges, more especially where they are very rapid, as given by the induction apparatus, form mainly an exercise for the muscular fibre, the motive nerve of which has become inactive. Directly a patient is mesmerized by this apparatus, matters assume a perfectly different shape. In the first place, there is no shock, no dis-

agreeable sensation, and the effects once produced are maintained from the very first day for several hours' duration; and we are aware of what is produced, of what is being done, and of what can be safely and seriously promised. The patient finds immediate relief, and, setting aside a few exceptional cases of chronic maladies, he can clearly distinguish the progress which he is daily making. The treatment is not, ordinarily, of long duration, inasmuch as the power of the apparatus can be regulated in accordance with the strength of the patient; and for this reason, also, all persons may be alike operated upon.

The electro-medical machines are, in every respect, preferable to all other electrical apparatuses, and the following description will show their nature and the way in which they act.

The two poles are charged, one with negative, the other with positive electricity, so soon as the apparatus is put in motion. The charge is, however, but of very brief duration, and as the fluid

cannot escape outwards, because it is retained by the atmospheric air, it passes into the very wire whence it took its birth, and the neutralization is effected within the coil itself; which may even be heard in an apparatus of any power. Scarcely has the fluid passed away before it is followed by a fresh charge, which flows on in turn, and thus it continues. These charges and discharges correspond with the interruptions in the voltaic current, and if the "hammer" marks 600 per minute, which is about the average, the poles will be charged ten times in a second, and discharged ten times in the same space of time.

In the actual state of the science we cannot describe the action of these poles upon our organism otherwise than by influence, although the matter is not so simple as in the experiment cited above. In the former case there is a body which remains charged with electricity whilst producing in the instrument the separation of the fluids. In the latter we have a succession of charges and

discharges, but which are too instantaneous, or in other words, last too short a time to enable the inertia of the instrument in question to be overcome.

In order to explain this kind of influence upon our organism we are obliged to take into account its reaction against all outward excitation. Thus it is just possible that the first ten, hundred, or thousand charges may not be sensibly felt, just in the same way as we do not experience the slightest sensation for some minutes after the application of a sinapism, or mustard poultice, because some time is required for reaction to set in. On the other hand, as the charges succeed each other in the poles with such great rapidity, they are the better calculated to awaken this reaction than poles would be that are charged continuously and always with the same electricity. It is for this reason, as well as because it furnishes a great amount of electricity, that the induction apparatus is more especially preferable.

There are persons of such extreme sensitiveness that the slightest current suffices to produce in them the desired effects; there are others again, and they are by far the larger number, who require apparatus giving out a great quantity of fluid; whilst the least impressionable demand apparatus of extraordinary power. The electro-medical apparatus sold by the trade are fitted only for a few exceptional cases of the first class of persons referred to.

PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF THIS MESMERISM.

THE fluids derived from the apparatus, whereof the poles are charged, act, beyond all question of a doubt, through their influence over the electricity of our organs. It is probable that they may occasion therein an accumulation, or a species of electric congestion, with some modification in the direction of the currents, and both produce in the muscular fibre an increase of its natural

tonicity. Even our ligaments and our tendons may thus recover their tonicity if they have been relaxed or weakened. This increased tonicity is by no means weak or barely perceptible; it is on the contrary very evident and sensible, and the stiffness or tension lasts for several hours after the operation.

In the nervous system, this mesmerism speedily diminishes a too great sensitiveness, and nothing can more surely or more successfully soothe and calm down nervous pains or neuralgia. Whether it sets in motion also the electric currents of the nervous organs, or increases the quantity of electric fluid in the body, cannot be positively determined; both hypotheses are however probable, for the weakest persons, convalescent patients, and nervous subjects are strengthened by it, throughout their entire system, in the same way, and generally in a more effectual manner, than by the inhalation of the pure air of lofty mountains or of the open sea.

MESMERIC TREATMENT.

IT is not possible here to enter upon a description of all the maladies that may be cured or ameliorated by mesmerism. The narration would be far too lengthy, for it is of enormous service in a vast variety of cases, more especially in convalescence after all grave diseases, such as typhus, inflammation of the respiratory organs after painful accouchements, and others. A few examples will suffice to make its mode of operation understood. We commence with

SPINAL IRRITATION.

A MALADY which is very well known on account of the great variety of symptoms it presents, and which so frequently baffles all ordinary treatment, is *spinal irritation*, or chronic inflammation of the spinal marrow. In the region of the nape of the

neck the third or fourth vertebra is very painful to the touch; this is also the case with two or three vertebræ in the back, the whole of the dorsal muscles are weak, and the patient can with difficulty maintain an upright position, or even sit without support. The legs too are weak, so that the slightest exertion in walking becomes excessively fatiguing. The very brain itself partakes of the general weakness of the nervous system. All study, or application, mere reading even, becomes a labour, and leaves the patient in a state of languor impossible to describe. This distressing malady is moreover frequently attended by headache, by neuralgic pains in the teeth, in the facial nerves, or other parts of the body. The appetite is feeble, the digestion slow and painful, the nutrition languid and frequently insufficient. Anemia and chlorosis often still further complicate this state of things with young women. All persons suffering from this complaint have their hands and feet, and more especially the latter, constantly cold; they take cold

also very readily owing to the want of energy in their organic life, and to the circumstance of the production of heat with them being far below the proper level; whilst they are altogether too weak to take the exercise necessary for health.

Not unfrequently also this spinal irritation is complicated: in married women, by the displacement of the uterus, because the suspensory ligaments and almost all the organs of the genital system are relaxed in consequence of painful labours.

The treatment is commenced by mesmerizing the back, and giving to the dorsal muscles a degree of tonicity which occasions in the patient a sensation of stiffness; the poles should also be applied to the painful vertebræ in order to remove their too great sensitiveness; after which "passes" should be made over the feet and legs. So soon as the patient feels them less heavy and well warmed, the operation may be suspended, as it would be useless to continue it longer. After the very first *séance*, a degree of comfort will be experienced, that will last

for several hours ; the weakness of the back will be found far less sensitive, the pains will have disappeared, the feet and legs will have lost their sensation of fatigue, and the whole nervous system will feel strengthened. By degrees the effect of the mesmerism will diminish, without however disappearing completely the first day.

If there is a complication of displacement of the uterus, the poles should be placed simply one on the right, the other on the left, over the region of the suspensory ligaments, outside the garments of course, and they must be kept there without any "passes" being made. After the lapse of some five or seven minutes, the patient will feel the weakness previously experienced in those organs gradually diminish ; and when, after the *séance*, she gets up, she will be perfectly astonished to find that the weight from which she has long suffered has entirely passed away. The treatment should be thus continued, one *séance* being held daily, and it will rarely be found that more than eighteen or

twenty *séances* are required to effect a perfect cure ; in fact, it is only in cases where there exist undoubted symptoms of incipient paralysis, that a longer period of time will be needed. It must also be observed that if the depression of the uterus is complicated by chronic inflammation or tumefaction, or if there is any hypertrophy of the organ,—in a word, if there is any increase of volume and weight, the treatment can no longer be so simple or so easy as in cases where no complication exists.

SCOLLASIS, OR LATERAL CURVATURE.

CASES will be found which, at the outset, appear to be only premonitory symptoms of a spinal irritation. They are met with in young females a short time previous to, or during their development. The disease shows itself in a weakness of the back, causing them to lean to one side or the other, and ending not unfrequently in actual curvature. This mere muscular weakness of the back does not require long treatment, and the curvature, if only

incipient, will speedily disappear. In complete scoliosis, with ossification of the vertebræ, no possible remedy can be found for the cure of the deformity, but the patients become more and more crooked until the false ribs actually rest upon the bones of the pelvis, and thus occasion intense pain; the great organs, such as the liver, the spleen, and the heart, are forced out of place and compressed, and life becomes thenceforth a perpetual suffering. There is no cure, we have said, for cases of this nature, but by strongly *tonifying* the muscles of the back the patient may be somewhat lifted, the intense pain softened or removed, the gait may be rendered easier, and the tendency to lean over on the affected side be stayed.

SENILE WEAKNESS.

MESMERISM is likewise of great utility to men who feel the weight of years, and when the vigour of their organs forsakes them; to men, more particularly, who are worn with labour, and who experience,

so to speak, a constant lassitude. To such men it is of immense benefit. The mode of treatment here should be by passes over the back, the arms and the feet; in fact, an almost general application.

This weakness often assumes a particular form. The back, for instance, gives and bends, the chest falls in, and breathing becomes difficult; the patient loses his breath with the slightest exertion, and one may frequently hear him exclaim, "It is only my wind that is wanting; otherwise I am all right." Now the back may be straightened by supplying the muscles with their former tonicity; the chest be freed, and again expanded, the breathing be cleared, and the normal circulation in the capillary system be once more restored.

ASTHMA.

THIS complaint is ordinarily attributed to a disturbance of the nervous system, and to the pneumogastric nerve more especially. The play of the respiratory muscles is diminished; the dia-

phragm chiefly appears to have lost its regular power of contraction, and it is possible that the pulmonary tissue itself no longer possesses its tonicity. By applying the poles round the waist, at the insertion of the diaphragm, with a view to induce contractions in that organ; at the hollow of the stomach, in order to calm the irritation of the nerve and of the solar plexus, and finally by re-establishing tonicity in the muscles of the back, we may succeed in calming in a few minutes any asthmatic attacks. A re-establishment of the system would of course require longer treatment, and in certain cases the use of inhalations, with the object of combating the inflammation of the mucous membrane.

PULMONARY CONSUMPTION.

It may appear at the first blush strange to speak of mesmerism in connection with a disease of the lungs. It is however well known that they are persons of feeble constitution, whose chest is

flat and insufficiently developed, who suffer most frequently and most readily from tubercular deposits; certainly, far more so than those of strong and robust constitution, with broad shoulders and well-developed chest. Now the tonisation of the muscles of the chest by mesmerism will allow of its being raised, of its circumference being enlarged from one and a half to two and a half inches, and sometimes more than that, and of the very lungs themselves being expanded. Not only will the respiration gain thereby in volume, but the oxidation of the blood will likewise become more complete; the latter is better arterialized, becomes more fibrinous and remains less albuminous, less lymphatic; and it is a great gain to overcome a tubercular predisposition. But mesmerism will extend its effects also to the pulmonary organ itself; it will increase the tonicity of the contractile fibres, of the aërial cellules, and will thus facilitate the expulsion of the air which has already done its work, and contribute to a more complete ven-

tilation of the organ. The capillary network being likewise tonised, the walls can better resist the flow of the blood; there is consequently less stagnation, that is to say, less congestion of the lungs, which is an element of primary importance for the preventing the formation of tubercular deposits. It is easy to understand that the tonisation of the entire respiratory organs, and the effects produced by more ample respiration, may prevent the development of phthisis, just in the same way as by restoring tonicity to the muscles of the back we may prevent the formation of scoliosis.

RELAXATION OF THE JOINTS.

It is not in the muscular system only that we may succeed in restoring the tonicity which has been relaxed or dispersed. The ligaments of the joints are equally open to improvement. It frequently occurs that after any subluxation the ligaments of a joint, those of the foot, for instance,

become weakened; the foot will twist with the slightest irregularity in the road, and the relaxation is often such that it obstinately refuses to yield to all other systems of treatment. In these cases, if simple, if there be no inflammatory complication, mesmerism will not fail to restore the tonicity of the ligaments.

CEREBRAL CONGESTION.

CONGESTIONS of this nature are commonly accompanied by a noteworthy diminution of the vitality of the extremities. The feet especially are always cold, and the legs have a sensation of great fatigue. Many diseases begin with these congestions; apoplexy amongst others. The latter, it is true, will sometimes come on without a moment's warning, but the congestion, as a precursory symptom, most frequently precedes it by weeks and even months. The patient experiences heat about the head, giddiness, frequent want of sleep, a tingling in the leg; or still more often in one leg and one arm on the

same side. In cases of this kind it is important to restore the troubled equilibrium of the vitality of the body, to bring back the "innervation" into the legs and arms, to promote circulation in the limbs, and favour the production of heat.

Cerebral congestion is however not always of so serious or so dangerous a kind. Men engaged at the desk, with their minds strained and preoccupied, are especially subject to it. A good amount of exercise and nutritive but light diet will contribute to diminish it; but in all cases whether the congestion appears of an alarming nature or not, mesmerism will be found the best and safest remedy.

TREATMENT OF NEURALGIA.

IN the medical treatment of this painful affection the observer is frequently struck by the efficacy of revulsives and derivatives. The same is remarked in the treatment of this class of affection by mesmerism. For instance, a regular neuralgia of the superorbital nerve will more readily yield when

the arm on the same side has been strongly mesmerized than if we mesmerized the affected part itself. This in fact may be laid down as an axiom in the treatment of almost every kind of neuralgia. It is not unlikely that the first day after a lapse of a few hours the pain may return, but it will be weakened in intensity, and after each mesmeric *séance* it will grow less until it disappears altogether.

All neuralgia in the head, including *tic-douloureux*, can be treated by this system, which may be applied with equal success to intercostal and abdominal neuralgia, and to the reduction of sciatic pains. In the last mentioned case it will be advisable to commence near the coxo-femoral joint, but always descending towards the foot, which, of all other parts, should be the most strongly mesmerized.



Dr. Seiler may be consulted at 13, Old Cavendish Street, Cavendish Square; where his Electro-Medical Apparatus may be inspected.



MESMERISM

AND

ITS HEALING POWER.

BY

PROFESSOR ADOLPHE DIDIER.

AUTHOR OF "THE TREATISE ON ANIMAL MAGNETISM AND
SOMNAMBULISM."

FOURTH EDITION.

LONDON:

BAILLIÈRE, TINDALL, & COX,
20, KING WILLIAM STREET, STRAND.

1875.



MEMORANDUM

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION

REPORT OF THE AGENT IN CHARGE OF THE INVESTIGATION
CONDUCTED AT

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

RE: [REDACTED]

AND A LIST OF THE INDIVIDUALS
WHICH WERE INTERVIEWED