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MESMERISM

IN ITS

RELATION TO HEALTH AND DISEASE.



MESMERISM

IN ITS

RELATION TO HEALTH AND DISEASE

AND THE PRESENT STATE OF MEDICINE.

BY WILLIAM NEILSON, ESQ.



“ Good men should feel the soul of Nature,
And see things as they are.”

WORDSWORTH.

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P R E F A C E.

ALTHOUGH the knowledge of Mesmerism has rapidly extended of late, there are still many prevalent misconceptions—especially in Scotland—which prevent the full inquiry that the importance of the subject demands. The object of this book is to assist in removing these misconceptions, and showing that the system to which they relate is intimately connected with the welfare of the community.

To attain that object, the Author has given a general, yet concise view of Mesmerism; supporting what is advanced with a variety of quotations from eminent medical and literary authorities, whose characters and qualifications guarantee the value of their opinions.

It may be stated, as an apology for some abruptness in the method of treatment, that, as the work, on completion, owing to the abundance of materials, was found to have considerably exceeded the proposed dimensions, it was deemed advisable—omitting many quotations—to condense it into the form in which it now appears.

It will be found that the theory of health and disease, advanced in the volume, is not opposed to the ideas of doctors—in so far as they have expressed any on the subject; on the contrary, it merely carries them out to their

legitimate issue. The Mesmeric process has a revealing power, which is denied to the dissecting knife; and what could not be discovered in the dead body, has been made plain by experiments on the living.

As the volume is designed for those who are not conversant with the subject of which it treats, the leading ideas have been introduced with some slight repetition, in order to direct the reader's attention to their important bearings.

Some of the numerous quotations, embodied in the work, convey the opinions of eminent men on the matters of fact under consideration; whilst others are introduced to fence in, as it were, those matters of fact with statements of general truth, calculated to suggest suitable thoughts. It may be observed, that the reason why many of them are not given with an exact reference to the volumes from which they were taken, is, that they were originally jotted hastily down as they stand, merely for private use. They will, none the less, answer the purpose for which they are introduced, if they incite the public *to investigate the subject for themselves*. However, the Author begs to acknowledge that he is indebted to the *Zoist* for several of these extracts.

EDINBURGH, 1, NORTH CHARLOTTE STREET,
November 1855.

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M E S M E R I S M.

CHAPTER I.

THE STATE OF MEDICINE.

Necessary to consider the drug system—Doctors prejudiced against Mesmerism—Their decree may be questioned—The public have a right to inquire—Dates no criterion—The two claimants—The Faculty the aggressors; Mesmerists, in self-defence, have to expose them—Uncertainty of medical art—Dr. Abercrombie's opinion—Errors in diagnosis—Errors in remedies—Opinions of literary men—Medical authorities.

BEFORE considering Mesmerism, Nature's curative force, it is expedient to glance at the drug system, in order that, having some idea of its powers and modes of action, the state of medicine, with its capabilities, pretensions, and the prejudices to which these have given birth, may be duly appreciated. A just appreciation of the old, is the first step to a just appreciation of the new.

It is natural that doctors should be prejudiced against, and therefore unwilling to believe in, Mesmerism, which proposes to cure all diseases with one appliance, seeing that their own art, to which their professional experience is confined, has so often completely failed in curing one disease with a hundred appliances; and the esteem to which they are entitled is not lessened by their being

liable, like other people, to be biassed by prejudice. But when they take upon themselves to decree that no such specific can, should, or shall exist, and that they who speak to the contrary are dupes, or worse, reverence for the profession must become so tempered with courtesy for the rest of the human species, as to allow any common man to ask plainly, Who constituted you the judge?

Moreover, when doctors say that they alone can cure the public, the public have a right, it may be presumed, to inquire if that really be a fact.

It might be seemly to take the word of a time-honoured institution regarding the infallibility which it arrogates to itself, in a question of mere speculation; but, when the health of mankind is involved, a plain common-sense consideration of the subject may not seem unreasonable to those who are not prepared to shape their belief by the sanction of antiquity, and the routine of custom. To say that the old has fittest adaptation to the times in which we live, because it is old, is just as convincing as to say, that the new has fittest adaptation because it is new. The question is, What *is* the old, and what *is* the new?

The claimants are Medicine and Mesmerism. A short statement of their claims, put in juxtaposition, may prepare the way for a verdict.

It may be remarked in passing, that Mesmerists have shewn no wish to depreciate the Faculty, or prevent them exercising what gifts of healing they can command. In common with all ranks of society, they render homage to their great learning and well-known zeal; and they do not believe that the profession contains more than its fair proportion of incompetent members. But when the Faculty become the aggressors—when, not contented with prescribing drugs, they take advantage of their posi-

tion to poison the public mind, under sanction of their corporate fame won in other paths, and but for which their assertions would be as harmless as they are unfounded—Mesmerists are compelled, in self-defence, to institute a few inquiries regarding what would secure monopoly by using such unjustifiable means.

IS THE DRUG SYSTEM PERFECT ?

Dr. Abercrombie, in his *Intellectual Powers*, says, "When, in the practice of medicine, we apply to new cases the knowledge acquired from others which we believe to have been of the same nature, the difficulties are so great, that it is doubtful whether in *any case* we can properly be said to act upon experience, as we do in other departments of science. For we have not the means of determining with certainty that the condition of the disease, the habit of the patient, and all the circumstances which enter into the character of the affection, are in any two cases precisely the same; and if they differ in any one particular, we cannot be said to act from experience, but only from analogy. The difficulties and sources of uncertainty which meet us at every stage of such investigations are, in fact, so great and so numerous, that those who have had the most extensive opportunities of observation will be the first to acknowledge that *our pretended experience must, in general, sink into analogy, and even our analogy too often into conjecture.*"

The pre-eminent characteristic of medical art, then, according to one of the greatest Allopathic authorities, is its UNCERTAINTY. Giving all credit to the doctors for their learning, zeal, and good intentions, and allowing that they have effected much good, especially in their treatment of simple complaints, it is no less a fact that they often prescribe without knowing what the disease

actually is, and that, even when they have discovered the disease, they very often prescribe the wrong drugs.*

It is admitted by those "who have had the most extensive opportunities of observation," that the "pretended experience" is a mere *system of guessing*; in which the rare sagacity of an Abercrombie, trained in as rare an experience, may be seldom at fault, but in which—not to mention the commonality of the profession—the learning of the "respectable physician" serves too often only to bewilder the owner, and lead him into ingenious mistakes.

Accordingly it is universally found, that the more complicated the disease is, the more conflicting the prescriptions are: the first physician being certain of one thing, the second of another, the third of another, and so on,—each one merely vouching the product of the whole—UNCERTAINTY! medically illustrating the aphorism of the philosopher, "all that we know is, that nothing can be known."

How often do we hear of a case like the following, related by Dr. Edward Johnson:—"A friend of mine once consulted six London physicians in one day, and then brought all their prescriptions to me; and it was most amusing to read over and compare these prescriptions. *There were not two which, in the slightest degree, resembled each other.* I proposed to my friend that he should take them all six. But he adopted a wiser course, and

* The remarks in this volume on the uncertainty of drugs, do not apply to the system of Homœopathy, in so far as it is founded upon law. "The only thing we have to desire is, that a medicinal agent agrees with, or, in other terms, that it has in itself the power of producing most of the symptoms we discover in diseases; that, consequently, it is in a position, when employed as a counter-irritant, in the form of medicine, to destroy or extinguish these same symptoms in the diseased body."—*Hahnemann.*

took none of them. The truth is, that, in the treatment of chronic diseases at least, the exhibition of drugs is pure speculation. There is nothing certain in the matter, but the certainty of doing mischief. The result of all this is that an entirely new set of diseases has sprung up among mankind, which have regularly taken their places amongst other ordinary human maladies, and are classed together as 'drug-diseases;' and each is named after the name of the drug which produces it. And we hear medical men talking familiarly together, and as unconcernedly about mercurial tremor, mercurial erythema, arsenical disease, iodism, narcotism, &c. &c., as though these disorders were inflicted upon us by Providence instead of by their own mal-practices! It is by no means uncommon for one medical man to be called in to cure a disease which has been caused by the drugs of his medical brother!"

The following case, communicated in the *Zoist*, by Dr. Elliotson, is selected as illustrating how two celebrated doctors can recommend exactly opposite methods of treatment; whilst it also shews how Mesmerism effected what drugs could not, and how a doctor can expose himself in order to disparage the Mesmeric cure, that so unpleasantly contrasted with his failure—not an uncommon case. The patient laboured under a severe form of St. Vitus's dance, of *nine* years' duration.—“Dr. Marshall Hall prescribed ‘*mustard cataplasms to the spine, cupping on the back of the neck EVERY FIFTH DAY, and mercury to such an extent that not one sound tooth is left in the patient's head.*’ He treated the case for *three* months, and wished to continue his plan for *a twelvemonth*. The friends, however, interfered, and Sir Benjamin Brodie was consulted, ‘who *condemned* the treatment in the most unqualified manner, declined to prescribe medicines, or to see the patient

again, and stated that nothing more could be done than to endeavour, by every means, to strengthen the debilitated frame.' Dr. Hall, however, wrote a letter, still in the possession of the family, maintaining his opinion, and treating Sir Benjamin Brodie's opinion most contemptuously. On being consulted, Dr. Elliotson advised that, 'as Mesmerism had been begun, it should be continued rather than the case be abandoned; though I entreated them not to be disappointed, if no good resulted.' And he adds, 'For the last four months, Mesmerism has been daily persevered with; and the gradual but steady improvement in the strength, the sleep, and looks of the patient, and the decline of the disease, astonishes every one. Now that Dr. Hall has learned the improvement by Mesmerism, he says that he *all along* (while cupping every five days, and giving mercury freely, and proposing to do all this for twelve months!) suspected, and is *now* (Mesmerism having done great good) *perfectly certain* that the case was *feigned!* I should like to observe his countenance when he says so.'"

Dr. Forbes, (now Sir John Forbes,) Physician to the Royal Household, says,—“This comparative powerlessness and POSITIVE UNCERTAINTY of medicine is also exhibited in a striking light, when we come to trace the history and fortunes of particular remedies and modes of treatment, and observe the notions of practitioners, at different times, respecting their positive or relative value. What difference of opinion,—what an array of alleged facts directly at variance with each other,—what contradictions,—what opposite results of a like experience,—what ups and downs,—what glorification and degradation of the same remedy,—what confidence now,—what despair anon in encountering the same disease with the very

same weapons,—what horror and intolerance at one time of the very opinions and practices which, previously and subsequently, are cherished and admired!"

Dr. Henderson, (Professor of General Pathology, Edinburgh University,) in his *Homœopathy Fairly Represented*, says, "No earnest or truth-loving man can peruse the facts recorded in the last chapter, without very seriously meditating on the state of medical affairs, or without the conviction, that there is something fearfully wrong, where both the public and the profession in general have been totally unsuspecting of error. These revelations are startling and new to most of us. . . . The same truth, says Dr. Forbes, 'as to the uncertainty of practical medicine generally, and the utter insufficiency of the ordinary evidence to establish the efficacy of many of our remedies, as was stated above, has been almost always attained to by philosophical physicians of experience, in the course of long practice, and has resulted, in general, in a mild, tentative, or *expectant* [that is, no medicine,—W. H.] mode of practice in their old age, whatever may have been the vigorous or heroic doings of their youth.' (*Brit. and For. Med. Rev.*) As an instance in point, of a very notable kind, I may state, that Sir Benjamin Brodie recants, in the last edition of his work on the joints, some of the chief practical directions he had laid down thirty years before."

The Professor adds,—“ I have *known* an accomplished consulting physician, and an eminent general practitioner, overlook or mistake double pneumonia of great extent, and discover it only on dissection; I have *known* a great advocate for cod-liver oil in consumption, mistake chronic pleurisy for the other disease; I have *known* an eminent stethoscopist, for mere irritation of the throat, which he

treated with caustic, as usual, mistake pulmonary consumption, which was fatal within the week, by the bursting of a tubercular abscess into the pleura; I have *known* an instance in which a notable hospital physician, not finding, on dissection, the pulmonary disease he had mapped out and described to his pupils, adroitly remarked, 'Gentlemen, you perceive the appearances on dissection don't correspond with the stethoscopic signs heard during life,' (the lung was sound;) and, not to be tedious, when *samples* alone are required, I believe Dr. Simpson knows of a case of *diabetes mellitus*, which a whole bevy of 'foremost' physicians mistook for some chronic inflammation within the cranium, and treated accordingly. Let us hear no more of errors of diagnosis, else the list may be greatly enlarged. *Humanum est errare.*"

Medical Journals are full of cases in point; for instance, "it appears that *considerable doubts* existed in the minds of Dr. Mantell's professional friends as to the exact nature of the affection, but *by many it was supposed to be a lumbar abscess*, connected, in all probability, with *caries of some of the vertebræ*; others, feeling a prominent swelling, partly hard and partly fluctuating, in the lumbar region, concluded, that there was a *tumour of doubtful character*. The patient used to suffer most excruciating agony. After death it was ascertained by Mr. Adams, that there was *no disease either of the bones or the intervertebral substances*; that there was *no trace of any abscess*, all the surrounding tissues being quite healthy: but the vertebræ were twisted in such a way, that, with considerable lateral curvature, there existed a backward projection of the lumbar transverse processes, to an extent sufficient to form a prominence. The spinous processes were in their proper relation to each other."—*Lancet*, July 8, 1854.

Dr. Elliotson says,—“Medical men should be the humblest of all practitioners of art. Highly as I estimate the powers of my art, when carefully and earnestly employed, and invaluable as is a skilful, laborious, and conscientious medical man, we know in our hearts that we have yet but an insufficient insight into disease; that the investigation of cases is too difficult and too laborious to be carried on efficiently, in the greater number of them, by persons who see many in the day, whether in charities or in a profitable round; that well-established measures require more pains for their perfect administration than are generally given; that for a very large number of cases our means are very inadequate, for many all but useless; and that medical men are receiving money every day for doing little or no good.”

The student of Professor Dungleson's Work, *New Remedies*, (Philadelphia,) is struck at almost every page with the conflicting and opposite views expressed by practitioners, in reference to the effects of the medicines therein treated of. By some, a particular remedy is extolled in high terms; by others, it is declared to be of little value.

Dr. S. Dickson says,—“So completely at variance with each other are even the greatest authorities on every subject in medicine, that I do not know a single disease in which you will find any two of them agreeing.”

And, in fact, to have an idea of the uncertainty of the medical art, one has merely to fix on any disease, and learn the conflicting opinions that it has given rise to. Take consumption, for instance. The celebrated Stohl attributed the frequency of consumption to the introduction of the Peruvian bark: the equally celebrated Morton considered the bark an effectual cure. Reid ascribed its frequency to the use of mercury: Brillonet asserted that it is only curable by this mineral. Rush says, that consumption is

an inflammatory disease, and should be treated by bleeding, purging, cooling medicines, and starvation: Salvatori maintained the disease to be one of debility, and that it should be treated by tonics, stimulating remedies, and a generous diet. Galen, among the ancients, recommended vinegar as the best preventive of consumption: Dessault and other modern writers assert, that consumption is often brought on by a common practice of young people taking vinegar to prevent their getting fat. Dr. Beddoes recommended foxglove as a specific in consumption: Dr. Parr, with equal confidence, declared that he found foxglove more injurious in his practice than beneficial!

See, again, how the Academy of Paris *settles* one of the commonest of all complaints! The extract is taken from the *Medical Times*.—"The Academy of Medicine has been engaged for *several days*, in a discussion of the best means of treating acute articular rheumatism, [rheumatism of the joints;] *but all the talent, experience, and learning displayed, have little other effect than to shew how 'DOCTORS CAN DIFFER,' when the cure of disease becomes the question of debate.* Yet how can men agree on the treatment of a malady, when they differ essentially in their opinions concerning its nature? Many members of the Academy—Bouillaud, Piorry, and others, see nothing in acute articular rheumatism, save inflammation of the joint. M. Grisolle regards rheumatism as a general disease, and denies that inflammation has anything to say to it. Lastly, the majority of the Academy seem to consider the complaint as a special one, with which inflammation of the joints or other parts may be connected in a *secondary*, but not essential manner. With such diversity of views, it is not astonishing that various plans of treatment should, in turn, be extolled or rejected. M. Bouillaud still sticks to his

formula of bleeding, '*coup sur coup*;' but the Academy evinced an evident disinclination to accept his statistics, while it was shewn that it was impossible, from M. Bouillaud's published cases, to determine the exact duration of the treatment. M. Piorry affirms, that it is reduced to less than four days by repeated bleedings; and, moreover, informs us, that the celebrated formula of '*bleeding coup sur coup*,' was a larceny committed on him, the aforesaid Professor Piorry. M. Martin Solon insists on the superiority of nitre over all other remedies for the cure of articular rheumatism, and thinks that it is the one most appropriate to the nature of the disease. The sulphate of quinine, say others, is the only remedy on which dependence can be placed. Finally, according to M. Dechilly, whose memoir gave rise to the five days' discussion now alluded to, articular rheumatism is a local malady, and best treated by a succession of blisters over the affected joint. None of the various speakers alluded to the tendency of many cases of rheumatism, thus apparently cured, to pass into a chronic stage; nor to the efficacy of the vapour and water treatments, which have assuredly, even in the hands of comparatively ignorant persons, been attended with surprising success, after what is called regular medicine had been tried for years, and failed."

"The public," says Dr. Elliotson, "have no conception of the absurd mode in which medicines are administered, by men who have an abundance of practice, or of the oceans of liquid physic, and mountains of pills and powders, which are swallowed without having, either through being unfit for the case, or improper in the doses, or shortness of the period of administration, the smallest chance of benefiting the patient."

Sir Benjamin Brodie seems to have employed the best

part of his life expressly to confirm what Sir John Forbes calls, this "positive uncertainty" of the art of curing. In his work on *Diseases of the Joints and Spine*, published in 1813, he enforces the advantages of bleeding, leeching, cupping, calomel, blisters, setons, caustic, issues, and long confinement to the recumbent position. In 1834, he published another edition, confirming what he had enforced in 1813. But in 1850, he published another edition, in which he declares that the treatment which he enforced in 1813, and confirmed in 1834, is *in the very great majority of instances not only not useful, but actually injurious*. His words are—"A more enlarged experience has satisfied me, that in the very great majority of instances this *painful and loathsome* treatment is not only not useful, but actually injurious. For many years past, I have *ceased to torment* my patients, who were thus afflicted in any manner, and I am convinced, that the change of treatment has been attended with the happiest results."

Even regarding such a common disease as Erysipelas, Dr. Watson has to tell his students,—“This is another of the diseases concerning the treatment of which there has been, and there is, a most embarrassing difference of opinion. Some, prescribing according to a *name*, tell you that it is inflammation, and, therefore, that the remedies of inflammation, and especially blood-letting, are to be vigorously employed; others declare, that the safety of the patient lies in the early and liberal administration of wine and bark.”

And the same gentleman, from his chair, King's College, pronounces the following, seemingly as such a matter of course, that he can scarcely keep from being humorous on the subject:—"I believe, that by the free use of opium I saved the life of a relation of my own, an old lady, who was in danger of being worn out by the cough and bron-

chial affection which attended the influenza. On the other hand, I have certainly known more than one person, labouring under extensive and severe bronchitis, so effectually quieted by a dose of the same medicine, that they never woke again !”

If these extracts were not sufficient, a quite unlimited number might be given, whereby it might be inferred, that those medical gentlemen should be exceedingly happy, who, on looking back, have not reason to say, “ I wish that I had not made that diagnosis,—that I had not administered that drug.”

Honouring physicians, then, as every profession that gives scope for intellect, learning, and benevolence, deserves to be honoured, and granting that their treatment of disease, especially when of a less complicated kind, has often been serviceable, it may still be inferred, with all charity, that—owing to the inherent UNCERTAINTY of their art—their services have not always been beneficial. Indeed, it is difficult to escape the conviction, that, *on the whole*, they have been the very opposite of that, if we are to give credit to the opinions of literary men, whose powers of observation and judgment, on other subjects, at least, are admitted to have been of no common order. Out of the multitude of such, four may be selected by way of sample :—

Dr. Samuel Johnson described the doctor as a man “ who puts medicines, of which he knows little, into bodies, of which he knows less.”

Addison says, speaking of doctors,—“ The sight of them is enough to make a man serious ; for we may lay it down as a maxim, that when a nation abounds with physicians, it grows thin of people. . . . This body of men in our own country may be described like the British

army in Cæsar's time, some of them slay in chariots, and some on foot."

Sidney Smith says,—“ Zengis Khan, when he was most crimsoned with blood, never slaughtered the human race as they have been slaughtered by rash and erroneous theories of medicine.”

And Sir William Hamilton, in his *Discussions*, says,—“ In Hoffman's Dissertations, *on the seven rules of good health*, the last and most important of these is, ‘ Fly doctors and doctors' drugs, as you wish to be well, (Fuge Medicos et Medicamenta, si vis esse salvus :)’ and this precept of the great physician is inculcated by the most successful practitioners (or non-practitioners) of ancient and modern times. Celsus well expresses it : ‘ Optima medicina est non uti medicinâ ;’ and I have heard a most eminent physician candidly confess, ‘ that the best practice was that which did nothing ; the next best, that which did little.’ In truth, medicine, in the hands by which it is vulgarly dispensed, is a curse to humanity, rather than a blessing ; and the most intelligent authorities of the profession, from Hippocrates downwards, agree that, on an average, their science, at least its practice, is a nuisance, and ‘ send physic to the dogs.’ The Solidists, indeed, promptly admit, that the Humorists were homicides by wholesale for above fifteen centuries ; while Homœopathy and the water-cure are recoils against the murderous polypharmacy of the Solidists themselves. . . . Has the *practice* of medicine made a single step since Hippocrates ?”

But as literary men may be supposed by some to be incapable of judging of the subject, which—on account of their ignorance, prejudice, and sheer love of falsehood—invited them to make it a butt for their arrowy wit, whose glancing and glittering, it must be admitted, are not always

proof that the aim is legitimate, a few opinions may be cited that are not liable to such objections,—opinions which have been deliberately pronounced by accredited leaders of the profession, and men who had “the most extensive opportunities of observation,” as the result of lives of professional experience.

Dr. James Johnson says,—“I declare it to be my most conscientious opinion, that if there were not a single physician, or surgeon, or apothecary, or chemist, or druggist, or drug in the world, there would be less mortality among mankind than there is now.”

Reid says,—“More infantile subjects are perhaps diurnally destroyed by the mortar and pestle than in the ancient Bethlehem fell victims in one day to the Herodian massacre.”

Abernethy, in his peculiarly graphic language, thus delineates the state of medical affairs,—“There has been,” says he, “a great increase of medical men of late, but, upon my life, diseases have increased in proportion.”

Sir Astley Cooper says,—“The science of medicine was founded on conjecture, and improved by murder.”

Dr. Paris says,—“The file of every apothecary would furnish a volume of instances where the ingredients of the prescription were fighting together in the dark.”

Dr. Billing says,—“I visited the different schools of medicine; and the students of each hinted, if they did not assert, that the other sects killed their patients.”

Frank says,—“Thousands are slaughtered in the quiet sick-room.”

Dr. Baillie, after retiring from practice, declared, without the slightest hesitation, that he “had no faith in physic whatever.”

The late Professor Gregory scrupled not to declare, in

his class-room, "that ninety-nine out of every hundred medical facts are so many medical lies, and that medical doctrines are for the most part little better than stark-staring nonsense." And again, he said, "Being admitted from his earliest youth behind the curtain, and let into the secret of the medical drama," and "after thirty-two of the best years of his life spent in learning, in teaching, and in practising physic, he has found much to confirm, and nothing to shake that unfavourable opinion of his own profession, and of a vast majority of those who have taught and practised it. . . . He did not know of any one disease, or any one remedy, that had not been the subject of violent controversy:"—Adding, "I am sure that I would not trust one paw of my great Newfoundland dog to a consultation of thirty, or three hundred of them."

The illustrious Hoffmann says,—“There is, assuredly, no art in which application is so doubtful, in which practice is so perilous. . . . There are MANY physicians, in name and reputation; FEW, in reality and effect. . . . There is here (using Pliny’s words) no law to punish murderous ignorance, no example of retribution. They learn their craft by the experience of our dangers; through our deaths do they carry on their experiments; and it is the medical practitioner alone, who enjoys an absolute impunity for homicide.”

Dr. Radcliff said,—“The whole art of physic, for which he had a profound contempt, might be written on one sheet of paper.” When he commenced practice, he says, he had twenty remedies for every disease, but before he got through he found twenty diseases for which he had not a single remedy. He advised parents not to select medicine as a profession for their children, but if they did, to rely on the fencing and dancing-masters for teachers.

Dr. Forth says,—that “a monarch who could free his state from this pestilent set of physicians and apothecaries, and entirely interdict the practice of medicine, would deserve to be placed by the side of the most illustrious characters who have ever conferred benefits on mankind. There is scarcely a more dishonest trade imaginable than medicine in its present state.”

Dr. Akenside says,—“Physicians, in despair of making medicine a science, have agreed to convert it into a trade.”

Dr. Elliotson says,—“Innumerable persons have been destroyed in all kinds of diseases by bleeding and other debilitating means; and innumerable persons, though not killed, being made worse or uncured, in neuralgic seizures, mistaken for inflammation; in giddiness, drowsiness, throbbing, heat, palsy, pains, and other affections of the head, &c., ascribed to determination and congestion of blood, when they are dependent upon debility, and congestion is the effect of the nervous affection. The distinction is often easy; but often requires a very careful consideration of all the present symptoms and all the previous history of the patient, and a thorough knowledge of the varieties of the same disease. The sacrifice of human life by this ignorance must have been enormous.”

Dr. Marshall Hall says,—“Of the whole number of fatal cases of diseases of infancy, a great proportion occur from the inappropriate or undue application of exhausting remedies.”

Dr. Henderson says,—“Has it not been shewn that Allopathy, with its lancet and other lethal weapons, destroys a large amount of human life; and is it not confessed by one of the Allopathic authorities, Dr. Forbes, that in a large proportion of the cases treated by Allopathic phy-

sicians, 'the disease is cured by nature, and not by them; and that in a lesser, but still not a small proportion, the disease is cured by nature *in spite* of them?'—in other words, their interference opposing, instead of assisting the cure."

In another place, speaking of medical practice, Dr. Forbes says,—“We cannot shut our eyes to the enormous mass of defects, or to the grievous evils which result, both to the community and the profession, from the way in which it is carried on in detail, by a large proportion of existing practitioners. . . . *Things have arrived at such a pitch, that they cannot be worse.* **THEY MUST MEND OR END.**”

Sir William Knighton says, in a letter,—“It is somewhat strange, that though in many arts and sciences improvement has advanced in a step of regular progression from the first, in others it has kept no pace with time; and we look back to ancient excellence with wonder not unmixed with awe. Medicine seems to be one of those ill-fated arts whose improvement bears no proportion to its antiquity. This is lamentably true, although Anatomy has been better illustrated, the *Materia Medica* enlarged, and Chemistry better understood.”

And Dr. Arnold, a man well qualified to give a dispassionate opinion, says,—“What our fathers have done, still leaves an enormous deal for us to do. The philosophy of medicine, I imagine, is almost at zero; our practice is empirical, and seems hardly more than *a course of guessing*, more or less happy.”

Dr. Watson's phrase, “effectually quieted,” recurs to one with awful emphasis.*

* The Faculty. See APPENDIX, No. I.

CHAPTER II.

THE FACULTY AND NOVELTIES.

Conservative tendency of the Faculty—Their position makes them magnify the old and decry the new—They habitually oppose new remedies—Sir William Hamilton's opinion—Reception of antimony, &c.—Circulation of the blood—The stethoscope—Inoculation—Vaccination—Girolamo Cardano—The Medical Faculty of Paris.

LORD BACON says,—“ In the UNIVERSITIES all things are found *opposite* to the advancement of the sciences ; for the readings and exercises are here so managed, that it cannot easily come into any one's mind to think of things out of the common road ; or if here and there one should venture to use a liberty of judging, he can only impose the task upon himself without obtaining assistance from his fellows ; and if he could dispense with this, he will still find his industry and resolution a great *hindrance* to his *fortune*. For the studies of men in such places are confined and pinned down to the writings of certain authors ; from which, if any man happens to differ, he is presently represented as a disturber and innovator.”

It is well that, by this university training, the Faculty are a conservative body ; for were it otherwise, if they had a passion for experimenting with novelties, how many more thousands might have been “ slaughtered in the quiet sick-room !” Like the rattle of the snake—whose crooked relative physicians have advanced to be their

emblem—this conservative tendency may be a providential safeguard for the human species. Yet it may become too extreme, and reduce the Faculty nearly to the state in which the serpent would be if composed wholly of rattle.

Unfortunately, this conservative propensity grows with the strength of the profession. The very prominence of the position which doctors occupy, instead of making them anxious to receive new remedies, tends to foster a spirit of opposition to them; for it is not to be expected that men, by being distinguished for their skill in certain modes of treatment, should become disposed to welcome new modes of treatment, whose reception would cast a slur on the former methods. On the contrary, it is the interest of the Faculty to magnify their acquirements,—to obtain a prestige of infallibility,—to impress the public with an idea of the certainty and perfection of their art; and not to recognise the novelties which would necessarily throw, in some measure, contempt on their former acquirements, undo the desired prestige, and advertise that their art has attained neither certainty nor perfection. They instinctively stand in the opposite of a receptive attitude, lest they should seem to confess that they need to be improved, and that their practice now may be useless, or worse.

It would be absurd to say that every practitioner is *conscious* of being actuated by such motives; yet he may, none the less, be influenced by them. In fact, as human nature is constituted, no man can remain uninfluenced by the pervading animus of the body of which he is a member.

However doctors, ignorant of the history of their own art, may deny these assertions, or seek to enhance their

dignity in that of the profession, by disregarding them as vulgar calumnies, a few quotations will shew that they are true,—that the Faculty have universally opposed new remedials, especially when these were calculated to be of universal benefit: so much so, that the rule seems to have been, that their opposition to a novelty should always be in proportion to the admiration with which they were by and bye to regard it,—when the force of public opinion should have compelled them to adopt it.*

Sir J. Stephens, in his lectures, says,—“ It is seldom given to individual men to emancipate their minds from bondage to the prejudices of their profession. To *professional assemblages* that freedom of mind is always unknown and unattainable.” And, having in his eye the most notorious illustration of this truth, Sir William Hamilton, in his *Discussions on Philosophy*, says,—“ As Hobbes has well observed, were it for the *profit* of a governing body, that the three angles of a triangle should not be equal to two right angles, the doctrine that they were would, by that body, inevitably be denounced as false and pernicious. The most curious examples of this truth are to be found in the history of medicine. For this, on the one hand, is nothing less than a *history of variations*, and on the other, only a still more marvellous history of how every successive variation has, by medical bodies, BEEN FIRST FURIOUSLY DENOUNCED, AND THEN BIGOTEDLY ADOPTED.”

Of course, only a sample or two of this history of denouncements can be given here.

Dr. Elliotson says,—“ The French Parliament *denounced* antimony at the request of the Faculty of Medicine at Paris, that antimony should not be used; and an eminent physician, named Paumier, was deprived of his degree for

* Chloroform. See APPENDIX, No. II.

prescribing it; and some years afterwards the same Parliament, at the request of the same Faculty, replaced antimony in the *Materia Medica*, because Louis XIV. had been cured with it. . . . The same French Parliament *denounced* and forbade inoculation. . . . For many years after I had employed prussic acid successfully in private and also in public at St. Thomas's Hospital, the Pharmacopœia Committee of the London College of Physicians shrunk from recommending to the College its insertion into their *Pharmacopœia*, because so many of the Fellows had *denounced* it in letters to them; and so late as 1836, an argument used by certain fashionable medical men to prevent patients from consulting me was, that I prescribed prussic acid. . . . When Ambrose Paré substituted, with perfect success, mild applications to gun-shot wounds, for the *tortures of boiling oil*, his brethren so violently *denounced* mild applications, that he had to defend his wholesome innovation long afterwards before Charles XI. in person; and after he had proved the success of tying arteries after amputation, as is the present mode of preventing hæmorrhage, his contemporaries assailed him, *denounced* ligatures, and persevered in the dreadful practice of applying boiling pitch or red-hot irons to the stump. When Asselli *demonstrated* the lacteal vessels, not a single doctor of the University of Montpellier would allow the evidence of his eyes, and acknowledge their existence, but *denounced* them. . . . Such was once the prejudice of the court physicians against Peruvian bark, they so *denounced* it, that Cromwell was allowed to die of ague rather than they would allow him to take it; and a man named Talber, who taught the regular Faculty the proper mode of administering it, was vilified all over England as an impostor. How the

whole profession violently declared the circulation of the blood to be a false fabrication by Harvey, and how they *denounced* and stigmatized him and ruined his practice, is known to all the world ; and now his name is revered, and the profession are all proud of him. When Jenner proved the efficacy of vaccination, and was about to send a communication on his discovery to the Royal Society, those Fellows who were his friends begged, in kindness to him, that he would do no such thing, for all the profession *denounced* it, and the Fellows of the Society followed them. . . . The College of Physicians *denounced* and imprisoned one physician for using internally a medicine (cantharides) now in common use, for dropsy, palsy, and some vesical and kindred affections, &c. ; and another for daring to differ from some medical dogma of Galen, who lived less than a century and a half after Christ, and was himself so prejudiced as to deny that the heart was muscular, and maintain that it only seemed so. If any candidate at our medical examinations were not now to declare every one of these *denounced* facts to be true, he would be sent back to his studies by the successors of those who formerly so nobly *denounced*."

The following extract, on another subject, from Dr. Elliotson's " Human Physiology," is no less edifying :—
" When Laennec first published his great work, I procured a stethoscope and investigated his statements. Although the facts of percussion, as detailed by Avenbrugger about half a century ago, must of physical necessity exist, I had always been taught, by the first teacher of medicine in London, at Guy's Hospital, Dr. James Curry, that they were fallacies, and they were dismissed in three minutes as unworthy of the slightest attention. Education, therefore, tended to make me sceptical. But

I soon found that Avenbrugger had been disgracefully neglected in this country ; and that Laennec, like Avenbrugger, had opened to us a new and extensive scene in disease, to which, though it had always existed, we were blind—that we had eyes and saw not—or really, to drop metaphor, that we had ears and heard not. For a length of time I found some at St. Thomas's treat percussion and auscultation with ridicule ; some with absolute indignation ; and others, for years, treated it with silent contempt ; who all, I am happy to say, now practise both. I was therefore in the habit of studying them in the wards alone, and at hours when I expected to be unobserved. When I at length advocated and taught them in the school, one of my colleagues, I heard, pronounced it nonsense or worse in his lecture ; and at the College of Physicians I heard a senior fellow, in a Croonian lecture, denounce the folly of carrying a piece of wood (some called the stethoscope *inutile lignum*) into sick-chambers and making observations to the destruction of all philosophical and dignified views, such as become men whose minds have been enlarged by the education which Oxford and Cambridge afford. When another fellow of the College (Dr. Chambers) was asked his opinion of auscultation, in the wards of his hospital, he at once, as I was informed by the gentleman who asked the question, condemned it as nonsense ; and when told ' that Elliotson assured his friends that he had a high opinion of it and made his diagnosis of affections of the chest with infinitely more accuracy by its means,' he replied,—' Oh ! it's just the thing for Elliotson to rave about !' Yet good sense and truth have prevailed. This physician has now a work on auscultation dedicated to him, as to one who had the candour to examine auscultation at an early period,

when others despised it, and who materially assisted to spread its adoption! Even Dr. Spurzheim was as unphilosophical on this point as others were in regard to phrenology. On seeing a stethoscope one day (in 1824) upon my table, he said,—‘ Ah! do you use that hocus pocus?’ And on my replying that it was highly important to employ the ear, he added, ‘ You learn nothing by it; and if you do, you cannot treat diseases the better.’ Both which remarks were incorrect, and shewed an unhappy state of mind. An old physician, on seeing me use the stethoscope, began our consultation by informing the practitioner, whom he had never seen before, and myself, that he ‘ never made use of these French fooleries.’ Yet ignorance of percussion and auscultation is now considered a sufficient proof that a man knows but half his profession, and Laennec’s name has become imperishable. . . . The first court physician of his day—the late Sir Henry Hallford—who had been physician to I know not how many of our monarchs, and other members of the Royal Family without number, as well as to nearly all our aristocracy, died in entire ignorance of the use of the stethoscope, though President of the Royal College of Physicians. Whether the present President, Dr. Paris, in whose presidency and in whose presence the four successive discreditable outpourings of Drs. Hawkins, Wilson, and Alderson, (the latter in lecture and oration,) were ventured upon, knows anything about it, I am not prepared to say; but I know that for very many years he spoke incessantly and restlessly against it as an absurdity.”

A rational man knowing the high status, talent, and learning of the profession, might suppose it certain, that the Faculty would, at least, be able to perceive a new truth—in spite of hereditary prejudice and Conservative

propensity—when wrought out in problem before them, in every subject they dissected, and, hailing it with delight, admit that nature was more perfect than their system of anatomy; but the rational man would be mistaken. “When the assertion that the blood circulated first attracted public attention, not only were those who believed the fact vilified as visionary, credulous, and ignorant, by the medical profession,—and therefore by the mass of the public, who thought the doctors must be proper judges of the matter, giving them credit for more knowledge, sense, and honesty than they possessed,—and lampooned both here and on the Continent, and nicknamed *Circulators*; Harvey himself losing his practice, while his loquacious and shallow opponents, now forgotten, flourished; no doctor beyond the age of forty, at the time, ever believing the circulation to the day of his death; *but books were written to prove, by reasoning, that the facts of the circulation could not be facts.* Among the rest was one entitled, *ERGO motus sanguinis NON CIRCULARIS*: Candidate, Simon Boullot;—a thesis read in the University of Paris, before the President, Hugo Chasles, 1482. Another, *ERGO sanguinis motus circularis IMPOSSIBILIS*, 1472: Candidate, Francis Bazin; President, Philip Hardouin de St. Jaques.”
—*Dr. Elliotson.*

“It was remarked, that *no physician in Europe, who had reached forty years of age, ever, to the end of his life, adopted Harvey's doctrine of the circulation of the blood, and that his practice in London diminished extremely, from the reproach drawn upon him by that great and signal discovery. So slow is the progress of truth in every science, even when not opposed by factious or superstitious prejudices! He died in 1657, aged 79.*”—*Hume's History of England*, cap. 62.

Lady Mary Montagu, during her residence in Turkey, became acquainted with the process of inoculation, and, having had ample evidence of its salutary effects, introduced it in this country. One would have thought that the Faculty would have, at least, honoured the as enterprising as beautiful lady, who was eager to teach them what they had not had an opportunity of witnessing. But their hearts were made of sterner stuff, preferring to render honour to the dignity of the profession; and while she illustrated the operation on the person of her own child, they wrapped themselves more firmly in their own prejudices, and abused the impudent woman who had dared to think that she could teach *them*.

Lord Wharncliffe, who wrote her life, says,—“Lady Mary protested, that, in the four or five years immediately succeeding her arrival at home, she seldom passed a day without repenting of her patriotic undertaking; and she vowed she never would have attempted it, if she had foreseen the vexation, the persecution, and even the obloquy it brought upon her. The clamours raised against the practice, and, of course, against her, were beyond belief. *The Faculty all rose in arms to a man*, foretelling failure, and the most disastrous consequences; the clergy descended from their pulpits, on the impiety of thus seeking to take events out of the hands of Providence; and the common people were taught to hoot at her as an unnatural mother, who had risked the lives of her own children. . . . The four great physicians deputed by Government to watch the progress of her daughter's inoculation, betrayed not only such incredulity as to its success, but such *an unwillingness to have it succeed*—such an evident spirit of rancour and malignity, that she never cared to leave the child alone with them one second,

lest it should, in some secret way, suffer from their interference."

The Rev. George Sandby,* writing on this subject, says, "When, in 1718, inoculation for small-pox was adopted in this country, the greatest uproar was stirred up against it. Not only was *the whole medical world opposed to it*, but farther, as Moore tells us in his amusing work on Inoculation, 'Some zealous churchmen, conceiving that it was repugnant to religion, thought it their duty to interfere. . . . They wrote and preached that *Inoculation was a daring attempt to interrupt the eternal decrees of Providence.*' . . . A Mr. Massey preached in 1722 in St. Andrew's Church, Holborn, that 'all who infused the variolous ferment were hellish sorcerers, and that inoculation was the diabolical invention of Satan.' "

Vaccination was a still more enormous heresy.

As a preparatory exercise for the consideration of Mesmerism, the following extract from a paper by Dr. Simpson, may be advantageously read:—

"At the time of Dr. Jenner's first announcement of vaccination, in 1798, and for many years subsequently, the proposal of substituting vaccine for variolous inoculation was encountered by various members of the profession with incredulity and ridicule, and direct and determined opposition. The measure by which he taught medical science to save annually from death thousands of human lives in England, and hundreds of thousands throughout Europe, was, on its first introduction, bitterly denounced and decried in different quarters, its effects doubted, and its own safety and propriety strongly and strenuously called in question.

* In *Mesmerism and its Opponents*. A book which all "opponents" should read.

“ Dr. Squirrell earnestly and publicly supplicated His Majesty George the Third to suppress ‘ the destructive practice of vaccine inoculation throughout his dominions.’ ‘ It ought,’ observed Professor Monro of Edinburgh, ‘ to be prohibited by Act of Parliament.’ ‘ The College of Physicians have,’ exclaimed Dr. Moseley, ‘ a duty to perform, and I trust this business will not escape them.’ Others appealed to the people themselves. ‘ It would,’ said Dr. Brown, ‘ undoubtedly be downright madness to imagine *they* will condescend to encourage it.’ The *Anti-Vaccinarian Society* called upon the public ‘ to second their efforts in supporting the cause of humanity against cow-pox injuries,’ and besought their aid to suppress ‘ the cruel despotic tyranny of forcing cow-pox misery on the innocent babes of the poor—a gross violation of religion, morality, law, and humanity.’

“ Deaths from cow-pox inoculation were published in the mortality bills of London. ‘ I have,’ alleged Dr. Moseley, physician to the Chelsea Hospital, ‘ seen children die of the cow-pox without losing the sense of torment even in the article of death.’ Dr. Rowley, physician to the St. Marylebone Infirmary, professed to publish true accounts of fifty-nine deaths from ‘ cruel vaccination;’ and added, ‘ that when humanity reflects on these, and (to use his own words) a great heap of victims diseased for life, and likely to transmit to posterity for ages chronic diseases, it is enough to freeze the soul with horror.’ And ‘ it is,’ he exclaims, ‘ the duty of honourable men in the medical profession to alarm mankind of the impending danger of vaccination.’

“ He elsewhere eloquently declaims against ‘ affectionate parents being robbed of their serenity, and the minds of tender mothers being wrung with eternal sus-

pense,' 'while a few projectors or visionists are pursuing their deleterious projects on human victims, and perpetrating a dangerous innovation which so many fatal facts illustrate.'

"Mr. Lipscomb urgently maintained, that cow-pox, 'the new scourge industriously dispersed to afflict the children of men, is sometimes fatal of itself, and that the diseases introduced or brought into action by it may be also sometimes fatal, and can never be completely guarded against.' One author had seen 'numerous instances' producing coughs, dyspnoea, hectic marasmus, tedious and difficult to eradicate, &c., result from cow-pox. 'Shocking reflection,' he adds, 'to a human mind, that a poison should thus be introduced into the human constitution without the plea of necessity, or the support of reason and experience.' 'Several children,' observes Dr. Moseley, 'have died from diseases brought on by the cow-pox where no ulcerations had appeared, and others have lost their nails and ends of their fingers several months after the inoculation.' 'My accounts from the country are,' he continues, 'full of dismal histories of ulcerated arms and mortifications.' 'Blindness,' it was averred, 'lameness, and deformity, had been the result of employing the vaccine in innumerable instances, and its fatal venom had removed many an infant untimely from the world.' Nay, it was strenuously maintained and believed, that not only were various old maladies, peculiar to man, thus excited into action by the 'cow-pox poison,' but that different new diseases peculiar to the cow were sometimes communicated to the human constitution by vaccination. 'Various diseases,' writes Dr. Rowley, 'common to cattle, have appeared among the human species since the introduction of cow-pox; as cow-pox mange, cow-pox abscess,

cow-pox ulcer, cow-pox gangrene, cow-pox mortification, and enormous hideous swellings of the face, resembling the countenance of an ox, with the eyes distorted, and eyelids forced out of their true situation, diseased joints,' &c. This was published in 1806, eight years after Dr. Jenner's first essay on vaccination appeared. During the year subsequent to the first public announcement of his discovery, Dr. Moseley suggested the possibility of the 'bestial humor' of cow-pox producing a 'brutal fever, exciting incongruous impressions on the brain;' and, 'who knows,' says he, 'but that the human character may undergo strange mutations from quadrupedan sympathy, and that some modern Pasiphæe may rival the fables of old?' Some, after vaccination, were actually supposed to 'cough like cows,' and 'bellow like bulls.' And one anti-vaccinist ingeniously suggested, that if cow-pox were known to have existed in a family, this fact might debar the members of it from the chances of matrimony, 'for it would,' he remarks, 'be no letter of recommendation.'

"Nor were theological reasons, of course, wanting for calling in question the orthodoxy of vaccination, as of other new discoveries and practices. 'Small-pox,' argues Dr. Rowley, 'is a visitation from God, and originates in man; but the cow-pox is produced by presumptuous, impious man. The former Heaven ordained; the latter is perhaps a daring and profane violation of our holy religion.' And he subsequently proposed, 'whether vaccination be agreeable to the will and ordinances of God, as a question worthy of the consideration of the contemplative and learned ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and whether it be impious and profane thus to wrest out of the hands of the Almighty the divine dispensation of Provi-

vidence !' 'The projects of these vaccinators seem,' it was affirmed, 'to bid bold defiance to heaven itself, even to the will of God.' 'Providence,' reasoned another author, 'never intended that the vaccine disease should affect the human race, else why had it not, before this time, visited the inhabitants of the globe? The law of God,' he continues, 'prohibits the practice; the law of man and the law of nature loudly exclaim against it.'

"In short, vaccination was opposed and denounced on a variety of grounds. It was alleged to be occasionally fatal in its consequences; to be liable to excite various diseased actions and predispositions; to produce diseases new to the human constitution; to be 'impious, unthinking, profane, and irrational;' to be an innovation, neither 'established on the basis of reason, nor supported by the foundation of truth.' 'The vaccine,' exclaimed one enemy to cow-pox inoculation, 'was the damnedst thing ever proposed; he wished the inventors were all hanged, and he would give his vote for its being done.' And strong pictures were held up to the public eye of the miseries it would infallibly lead to, in case of the recurrence of epidemic small-pox. 'In many families,' writes an author whom I have already quoted, 'there will be none to attend the sick; nurses will quit their patients for their own safety, and servants fly from their masters' houses to shun the pestilence. Then we shall experience a horrid scene of public and private calamity, brought on by a medical experiment, embraced without due consideration; extended by a rash transgression over the bounds of reason; and, after the fullest conviction of its inutility, obstinately continued by the most degrading relapse of philosophy that ever disgraced the civilized world.'"

And how did the Faculty show their esteem for the

man who had discovered what was to save "HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF HUMAN LIVES?" When the learned societies in Europe had vied with each other in doing honour to Jenner; after almost every continental government had shown him some mark of respect; after a passport from him had insured an unmolested passage to the scientific traveller through Europe, (then occupied by hostile armies;) after the despotic Napoleon had secured him life and liberty, because of his fame; after the English parliament, always so chary in rewarding scientific merit, had voted him £20,000 from the public purse; after the University of Oxford had granted all the honours she had to bestow,—the College of Physicians, true to their colours to the last, refused to confer on him the fellowship of the College!

Every country that has had any medical repute, might give evidence of what has been advanced in this chapter; but the subject must be concluded with the following sample, extracted from a paper in the *London Quarterly Review*, October 1854, on Girolamo Cardano, who lived in Italy three hundred years ago. "He composed a work on the pleasant, yet profitable theme of *the Differing of Doctors*. In this book he had the audacity to denounce no less than seventy-two errors in the prevailing practice of physicians. . . . A wasp in a bee-hive would receive about as much welcome as Cardano received from his fellow-physicians, when he appeared among them, after the publication of a work which denounced their stupendous ignorance. He urged that to do nothing with physic was preferable to doing too much, &c. The universal medical world raised its voice, and shouted 'Sacrilège!' Because the author could not boast of an extensive *clientèle*, it was authoritatively declared that he could not possibly know

anything about the matter,—*he* who had spent years in watching the practice of other physicians, and had discovered its absurdity! Had taciturnity being allowed to wait upon discernment, they would have visited their colleague with only silent contempt; but *as he had fearlessly denounced what he knew to be error*, THEY TREATED HIM AS AN IGNORAMUS,—slowly adopted his ideas, and claiming originality as their own merit, denied it to the man but for whose light they would have been slaying by chance-medley, as they had been accustomed to do.”

In short, the criticism which the great lexicographer fulminated against an unfortunate author, seems to have been adopted by the profession as applicable to everything under the sun: “What is new is not true, and what is true is not new.” And the verdict that finds them guilty of condemning novelties, has to contain the unseemly words, “habit and repute.”

Does this appear to be exaggeration? The “Medical Faculty of Paris” was, in its day, the great exponent of the medical mind; and, consequently, its conduct gives the fairest representation of the profession; and, consequently, it was pre-eminent in conservative propensity, and hatred of novelty: its ruling principle was “no advance”—we are perfect! M. Flourens says, “I shall refer elsewhere to the ridiculous infatuation which led the Medical Faculty of Paris to reject the doctrine of the circulation—the bad reasoning of Niolan on the subject—the misplaced pleasantries of Guy Patin. *This folly, however, was confined to the Faculty*; it did not belong to the nation. Molière ridiculed Guy Patin, and Boileau ridiculed the Faculty, and Descartes, the greatest genius of the age, proclaimed his belief in the circulation. . . . Niolan, one of the Faculty whom Bartholin compliments

as the greatest anatomist of the age, rejects the discovery of the circulation, and says,—‘ Every one must now be making discoveries. Pecquet has done more than this. By his new and unheard-of doctrine, (namely, the lacteals and thoracic duct,) *he would upset both the ancient and modern system of medicine.*’ Guy Patin, the Dean of the Faculty, says,—‘ If M. Duroyer knew nothing more than how to lie, and the circulation of the blood, of which I hate the one, *and do not care for the other,* let him come to me, and I will teach him a better way *to a good practice of medicine* than this pretended circulation of the blood.’ At last the Faculty perished, as other corporations and other republics perish, by an exaggeration of its own principle. Its great object had been to restore the Greek and Latin system of medicine. This having been accomplished, it stood still with an obstinacy which was fatal to itself. *It ceased to move onwards while all around were making progress.* Discoveries were made in chemistry, anatomy, and physiology, but these were ALL UNDER THE BAN OF THE FACULTY.”

CHAPTER III.

THE FACULTY AND MESMERISM.

The cry against Harvey and Jenner revived against Dr. Elliotson—His character—A presumption in favour of Mesmerism—The profession that opposed Vaccination because it was new, might be expected to oppose the new curative that was to interfere with their monopoly—Their vituperation of Mesmerism—Wish to keep the public from inquiry—Mesmerists provoked, yet make allowance for the Faculty's position.

SINCE the Faculty—owing to their peculiar position, which tends to make them magnify their attainments as sufficient, and thereby prejudices them against improvements—whilst they seem to reserve the courtesy of their silence for such things as “brandy and salt,” and “Morrison's pills,” are found habitually to direct their powerful opposition against such things as the circulation of the blood, vaccination, the stethoscope, or whatever is calculated to save “hundreds of thousands of human lives,” it would bode ill of Mesmerism if they had not honoured the man who established it in England, with the same calumny, ridicule, and condemnation, which they bestowed on Harvey, Jenner, and Laennec. And so Dr. Elliotson had, in his turn, to learn that the profession have made the pedestal of fame their pillory, on which the glory of the occupant is signalized to mankind by the learned hooting of the surrounding crowd.

In consequence of the misrepresentations of his brethren, the name of Dr. Elliotson may convey a false impression to some people, which should be removed.

When the profession were baiting him, for fearlessly avowing what he *knew* to be true, and saving lives by a method of treatment which he had long investigated* and satisfactorily proved—so damaging his reputation that, to preserve his honour, he had to resign his Chair in the University; whilst practitioners, from fear, or prejudice, or other motive, refused to have him in consultation, even his greatest opponents were compelled, whilst abusing him, to testify to his character.

Sir Philip Crampton writes, even in 1839, "I have said nothing in my letters inconsistent with those feelings of admiration and respect, which I have ever entertained and avowed for his talents, integrity, and boldness." And Sir John Forbes, the leading Anti-Mesmerist, then editor of *The British and Foreign Medical Review*, writes, "But, above all, we lamented to see the great delusion supported by one of the ablest physicians of this country, filling the most important chair in the largest medical school of the kingdom." And again, "Of Dr. Elliotson we would not speak but with unfeigned regard; he has our sincerest esteem for the services he has rendered to practical medicine, and beyond his high qualifications as a physician and a scholar, there is a boldness and directness of purpose in his proceedings which we love to see."

And among many similar quotations that might be

* Dr. Elliotson spent *six years* investigating the subject of Mesmerism, making himself perfectly acquainted with its wonderful phenomena, before he publicly declared in its favour. Professor Gregory spent *twenty years* in the same way before he published on the subject. And yet people who have merely seen a person put into the sleep, or heard of such an operation, pretend to know all about it, condemn it as humbug, "rush into" print, and denounce Mesmeric authorities as enthusiasts who have not sufficiently investigated the subject!

given, a medical journal says, "Being then the Professor of Medicine at the University College, London, and physician to the North London Hospital, Dr. Elliotson was at that time one of the most rising physicians in the metropolis, and enjoyed a very extensive practice. His publications had gained him honour and esteem in the medical and scientific world, and he was universally looked on as one of the shining lights of our profession," &c.

But whilst the eulogy of many eminent individuals was thus extorted, by the standing in the profession, and the character of the man they opposed, it was no less to his praise that he was vituperated, by nameless writers, in every medical journal of the kingdom. The chase was up; and the way to gain at notoriety was to bay after the victim.

Yet truth triumphs at last; and Dr. Elliotson stands more firmly than ever in the eminent position from which his less-favoured brethren tried to hoot him.

Even the *Lancet*, in June 1854, talks of Dr. Elliotson as "an illustrious physician;" and when it is remembered that this journal has been *labouring*, for many years, to "put down" Dr. Elliotson, in the most unseemly manner, and that it is the avowed creature of the Faculty, the mouthpiece of the majority, the mere vane which shifts according to the breath of the profession;* such an admission writes great things in favour of him whom it could not "put down."

Among other journals, the *Examiner* was the first

* "We cannot publish any paper on the subject of such an odious fraud as Mesmerism."—*Lancet*.

"I exhibited to the Editor a variety of the most beautiful and satisfactory experiments which he has *entirely suppressed*. He said he was pestered with letters upon the subject; but that nineteen out of twenty were unfavourable. Nineteen persons, of course, purchase more *Lancets* than one."—*Dr. Elliotson*.

honestly to express its opinion:—"If, as we apprehend to be the case, the existence of certain phenomena, undoubtedly of great interest and probably of great importance in a physiological view, is pretty generally admitted to be the result of recent experiments, it is high time to cease calling names, and begin rational discussion. The treatment to which Dr. Elliotson has been exposed from the time these questions were started, the members of a liberal calling should surely have reserved for the interested quack, or the vain pretender. There had been as little of either in the career of this distinguished physician, as in that of the foremost member of the profession he had so long assisted and adorned. Policy and worldly considerations apart, no man had better claims to be respectfully listened to. His admitted learning, his foregone recognised discoveries in medicine, his unimpeached veracity and high character, as they qualified him for that course which only the *few* are at any time fit to take, should have saved him from those vulgar imputations which the *many* are at all times prone to indulge."

We may observe, in passing, that sometimes when a patient, wishing to try Mesmerism, consults his doctor on the subject, the doctor will pooh it as a humbug. If the patient, very reasonably, names some Mesmeric authority, such as Dr. Elliotson, in support of what he wishes to try, the doctor may reply,—“Ah! he is a very good family physician, but,”—and then with a very profound look, he will depreciate the authority by way of exalting himself, or at least of enforcing his opinion. In such circumstances, the patient should read to the doctor the above extract from the *Examiner*. And it might not be amiss to quote the following opinion of Sydenham regarding anatomy, &c. :—"It is a knowledge easily and soon

attained, and it may be shortened more than other things that are more difficult, for it may be learned by sight in human bodies, or in some animals, and that very easily, by such as are *not* sharp-witted. . . . Wherefore, that men should not so place the main of the business upon the dissection of carcasses, as if thereby the medical art might be rather promoted, than by the diligent observation of the *natural phenomena*, and of such things as do good or hurt." But to return to Dr. Elliotson, the Rev. George Sandby thus sums up the question:—"Let it never be forgotten who it was that in this country first placed the question on its legitimate footing,—who it was that first took the practice out of the hands of the charlatan, and added its multiplied and profound resources to the former stores of the healing art,—who it was that, risking the loss of friends, the loss of income, the loss of elevated standing in his own profession, stepped out manfully and truthfully from the timid crowd, and asserted the claims of this great discovery to a place within the circle of the medical sciences: and when the question is asked who it was that so boldly ventured on this untrodden ground, a grateful posterity will respond with the name of JOHN ELLIOTSON. But it will also be added, that he lived to see his calumniated art acknowledged and pursued; that he lived to see the stream of professional success flowing back to him with the full tide of popular support; that he lived to see every statement which he had advanced, every treatment which he had adopted, established and confirmed; and that as one of the first physicians of the age, first in practice, and first in reputation, he was classed with the proudest names of that honourable band,

' Qui sui memores fecere merendo.'

That such a man has devoted himself to establish Mesmerism, is surely some warrant of its truth. That he has regained the position, of which a calumniating combination could not long deprive him, is surely some warrant of its triumph.

We have seen distinctly that the Faculty are not infallible, especially when—leaving potion, pill, and plaster—they take upon themselves to denounce the new, *because they are not acquainted with it*. For instance, since the time when Mahomet wrote his famous chapter, entitled “The Cow,” has ever anything so extraordinary been uttered as their very fearful denunciations, implicating that respectable, useful, and ruminating animal? Vaccination was a “gross violation of religion, morality, and humanity.” It was to make men “bellow like bulls,” and “cough like cows.” It was to put an end to marriages, for “who would marry a woman with a bovan expression of countenance!” It was to bring on “a horrid scene of public and private calamity, &c., by the most degrading relapse of philosophy that ever disgraced the civilized world.” “It ought to be prohibited by Act of Parliament,” cried the great Monro of Edinburgh; whereupon Parliament saw it was time to do the very opposite, and passed an Act accordingly, making it imperative.

No one need wonder at the manner in which the Faculty have treated Mesmerism. If they could not abide the novelty which was to save “hundreds of thousands of human lives,” when administered by their own hands, it could not be expected that they should be very friendly to the novelty which was to do the same thing, administered by the hands of others.

If a mode of litigation should be invented that tended, in a measure, to dispense with the existing professional

services, it could not be expected that the lawyers, however learned, liberal-minded, and honest as individuals, would be the first to recognise the benefits of that mode, and foremost in pressing it upon the attention of the public. They would do the very opposite; their professional learning and prejudices would stand between them and the mode, and prevent them seeing it as it appeared to other men, who had inquired into, and become acquainted with its excellence. Men cannot help being enslaved, more or less, by the training and trammels of their position.

Moreover, it is universally found that men, relieved from the burden of an individual responsibility, will do things in their corporate capacity that they would have been ashamed to do as isolated individuals: the members lose their personality by becoming parts of the machine, much as an amiable man becomes part of the shark that has swallowed him.

Sir William Hamilton says,—“As the opinions of men are, in general, only a reflex of their interests, so it is difficult, even for a mind, however vigorous and independent, to resist the magnetic influence, as it were, of the ordinary minds with which it acts in concert; and thus is to be explained the otherwise inexplicable fact, that men of high intelligence, and the most upright intentions, are so often found engaged in the championship of measures which, had they acted of and from themselves, they would intellectually and morally condemn.”

Apply this idea to the medical profession, and we at once comprehend how such a body of enlightened men can be found denouncing the inestimable power of Mesmerism—although for the most part ignorant of it—with insane animosity. But one or two specimens of their

method of opposing it will be the best comment on their conduct—which makes one think of their former prophecy of how men would “bellow like bulls,” and “cough like oows.”

Though the following are detached passages, it should be remembered, that medical journals, in order to increase their circulation—as implied by the candid *Lancet*—only express strong opinions when it is known that they will be acceptable to the Faculty, as the expression of their own,—

“For editors must pander, or else perish,
To all the wrath that their subscribers cherish.”

“The Mesmero-mania has nearly dwindled, in the metropolis, into anile fatuity, but lingers in some of the provinces with the *gobe-mouches* and chaw-bacons, who, after gulping down a pound of fat pork, would, with well-greased gullets, swallow such a lot of Mesmeric mummery as would choke an alligator or a boa-constrictor.”
—*Medico-Chirurgical Review*.

“While the colleges suffer the presence of the Elliotsons, Ashburners, Hendersons, Gregorys, &c., can we wonder that other men should mistake their duties! The quacks must leave us. Confined to the ordinary paths of the rest of mankind, and left to their own insignificance, they are simply ridiculous. Mesmerists and homœopaths, while pursuing their frauds amongst lunatics and fools, give us neither umbrage nor disquiet; but within the walls of our colleges they are scandalous nuisances, and an insufferable disgrace. . . . Look at the chosen audience and instruments of this Mesmeric leader, (Dr. Elliotson.) Does he himself treat the harlotry, which he dares to call science, with any respect? Let the profession consider his allies and assistants, taken from the pert

folly of the nobility, the weakest among the literary people, high and low ladies, *quack clergymen*, itinerant lecturers, and exhibiting buffoons.”—*Lancet*.

“ But for divines, Mesmerism, Homœopathy, and such like lying spirits, would have been long since laid in the bottomless pit of oblivion.”—*Medical Times*.

The Surgeon's Vade-Mecum, written, of course, to please the profession, says,—“ We do not include Mesmerism in the list, because this so-called science is so intimately connected with *quackery, obscenity, and imposture, that very few respectable persons would consent to meddle with it, even for a good purpose.*”

No opportunity is let slip. The Faculty, even when assembled to hear the “ Harveian Oration,” could listen to the following sublime climax, by Dr. J. A. Wilson :—
“ *Of mesmeric bishops, of arch-mesmeric archbishops, allow me for this one day, while I am among my brother doctors, to hold my tongue out of sheer disgust, out of modesty, out of MY REVERENCE FOR RELIGION! Get out of the way, you modern patrons, you homœopathists, you hydropathists, you visionaries, YOU MESMERISTS! Your ways, your nature, disqualify you for patronizing in conjunction with that pure old English breed of the nobleman and the physician.* Do, pray, let the absurdities, the presumption, the indecencies, with which you,*” &c. &c.

This is by no means the most scurrilous passage to be found in the Harveian Orations, delivered *some years ago*. Since then, Dr. Elliotson delivered the Harveian Oration, and declared the truth of Mesmerism, and was

* One is apt to be reminded of the motive which induced certain leading men once to get up a *no small stir*, calculated to end in “ Great is Diana of the Ephesians,”

most cordially received. Such advance is the new truth making in London.

Such is the dignified language required to "put down" Mesmerism. Scores of such convincing arguments might be cited,—“blasphemy,” “indecency,” and other awful words running through them all, like the clenching of a chorus in a drinking song; whilst some of them—so carried away by their own vituperation, that they exemplify what they condemn—are quite unfit for quotation.

By these assertions, shamelessly vented in public, one may conjecture what is whispered, by the prudent many, to their patients in private.

Such language can scarcely be supposed to confer honour upon the motives of those who use it. If consistent with the love of truth, it, at least, sounds less like honest inquiry than like an attempt to “put down” Mesmerism by sheer force of belying and bullying,—to keep people from inquiring into it, by making it appear contemptible, and its supporters ridiculous and, if possible, infamous. At all events, we may take for granted that the means are worthy of the end.

Mesmerists are sometimes accused of being prejudiced against doctors, and speaking uncharitably of them,—perhaps there may be some truth in the accusation, for human nature is frail, and it must be admitted that they have had great provocation; whilst their reverence for M.D. may not be increased by finding that they can effect cures where the Faculty “invariably fail.” Still they believe that the frailty of human nature does not lie all on their side, and are willing to make allowance for the anti-improvement propensity of the profession, which, after all, is only displaying itself in a consistent manner,

and not more offensively than might be expected, considering the hard task that has now to be accomplished. The grandfathers had to stop the circulation of the blood,—the fathers had to “put down” vaccination,—the sons have to annihilate Mesmerism.

CHAPTER IV.

WHO IS TO JUDGE ?

Doctors not qualified to judge of what they are prejudiced against—The profession are ignorant of Mesmerism—Reasons why they oppose it—Professional pride—Committed against it—Purse-prudence—The Faculty threaten inquirers—Many doctors afraid to avow their belief in Mesmerism—The profession an interested party—Dr. Elliotson's opinion of Mesmerism—It is to be judged by those who have studied it—Its applications are numerous and varied—The Faculty prescribe it—The old stage-coachman and the new railway—Won't let their patients try it—However, scores of doctors practise it—It is widely practised by doctors on the Continent.

It is possible that the members of the Faculty are the fittest of all men to judge of what they, more than all other men, have made the subject of their study. It is probable that they are not more fitted than other men to judge of anything else. It is certain that they are the most unfit of all men to judge of what they, more than all other men, are prejudiced against. More than all other men they are prejudiced against Mesmerism.

The following extracts may be cited, as worthy of consideration :—“ The public are too apt to consider the subject of Mesmerism as purely professional, and will not take the trouble necessary to become acquainted with it till the doctors shall have determined what they are to believe concerning it. This is an error on the part of the public, for I am sorry to say that the doctors

in general know nothing about it, and, what is worse, will not learn; although there is *nothing in their previous knowledge*, however great and various, that bears directly on the subject, and can entitle them to decide, *ex cathedra*, on the truth or falsehood of the new doctrines. If Mesmerism be true, the doctors, old and young, *must all go to school again*; and this is what constitutes the bitterness of the Mesmeric pill.”—*Dr. Esdaile.**

“He who is ignorant of a subject is surely not justified in giving an opinion; and yet, medical men and others, because they are ignorant of the phenomena of the more wonderful and uncommon diseases of the nervous system, and of Mesmerism, preposterously pronounce the subjects of them impostors, and those who know the truth, to be fools, or rogues, or in league with the devil.”—*Dr. Elliotson.*

“Their aim has ever been, not to discover the uses, but to detect any fallacies, of the art; not to avail themselves of its resources towards the mitigation of disease, but to exercise their inventive faculties in starting far-fetched solutions for each result; to fasten on each imagined failure with the most unmitigated glee, to magnify the slightest miscarriage into a defeat of the system itself; to neglect the most important conditions required, and then assume that these conditions were of no moment in the trial; to task their ingenuity in suggesting, &c. . . . ‘I would rather believe,’ said a surgeon to a friend of mine, ‘that *all* Mesmerizers and their patients were impostors, than give credit to one of their facts, however well authenticated.’ ‘You must rather believe,’ said an anti-mesmeric lecturer, ‘that all your wives and sisters and children are false, than think any of these cases true.’”—*Rev. George Sandby.*

* Late Presidency Surgeon, Calcutta.

The reasons why the Faculty are contented to remain ignorant of the power of the mightiest of all curative agents, or to suppose that their prejudices are arguments against it, or to attempt to "put it down" at all hazards, as illustrated in the last chapter, are manifold; yet, though their likeness is almost as remarkable as that of Christmas geese, they may be arranged in groups to facilitate inspection.

The late Professor Playfair of Edinburgh, in the following general remark, touches the very germ of the whole:—"The introduction of methods entirely new, must often change the relative place of the men engaged in scientific pursuits, and must oblige many, after descending from the stations they formerly occupied, to take a lower position in the scale of intellectual improvement. The enmity of such men, if they be not animated by a spirit of real candour, and the love of truth, is likely to be directed against methods by which their vanity is mortified and their importance lessened."

"Men of a certain standing in the profession are unwilling to depart from the old routine; they are afraid of losing *caste*; they care not to *unlearn* their early teaching, and to begin with some fresh laws of nature, of which they were unaware; and so, sooner than sacrifice themselves, they sacrifice truth."—*Rev. George Sandby*.

"Mais, dit M. Castel, si la plupart des faits mentionnés dans le Rapport étaient réels, ils détruiraient la moitié de nos connaissances physiologiques."—*Foissac's Rapport de l'Académie*.

"Their tack is to call it dangerous. They most unscrupulously, and without any reason, being altogether ignorant of it, tell patients who wish for it that it excites the brain and causes insanity. I knew a royal physician,

a secret believer in Mesmerism, who was attending a lady with cancer of the uterus, and of course did her no good. Her son, understanding Mesmerism, wished to mesmerize her; but the physician forbade it; preferring that the poor woman should be unrelieved *rather than it be said that he had sanctioned Mesmerism*. . . . It is very common for medical persons to oppose Mesmerism violently in cases where they have long declared they could neither cure nor benefit the sufferer."—*Dr. Elliotson*.

Then some are committed against it. In rash haste to be conspicuous—with no warrant but what could be derived from a knowledge of *other things*—they have published their condemnation of Mesmerism; and to retract that would be to mortify their vanity, and condemn themselves: and so, like the remains of the false prophet, they confirm their evil doings with a crowning deception. Without courage to confess that they have been prejudiced, arrogant, and unjust, they have courage to remain so—impaled upon their own consistency.

That such a motive is not a rare characteristic in the medical world, may be inferred from the development of it which Le Sage has pictured in his professional hero:—"Let us change," said he, "our practice. Let us, from the idlest curiosity, just give our patients some different preparations, and see their effect. The worst that could happen, would be, that they could only suffer as they do at present, and die in the end." Sangrado was staggered for a moment; for something of the same feeling had been passing in his own mind. "My dear friend," he, however, replied, "I would make the trial willingly; but unfortunately it would be attended by an untoward consequence; my opinions are published, and surely you would not have me stultify my own statements?"

Another class is described by Dr. Esdaile :—" Those who live by the wisdom of their ancestors, and by chiselling and polishing old systems, howl against and persecute the discoverer of any new truth which disturbs their successful routine, wounds their self-love, and endangers their easy gains."

And the *Zoist* truly says of not a few, before whom the emblematic serpent should become a snake in the grass :—" Taking up the eminently safe position of denying nothing to be possible, and admitting nothing as proved, making large professions of candour at the same time that they are distorting facts, and endeavouring by ungenerous implications to destroy character, they wish to seize all the present popularity and pecuniary advantages to be gained by siding with, and advocating the cause of the majority, and save their future reputations, as men of science, when the day of the recognition of its truth arrives."

Such are the influences that make medical men indifferent, or dishonest, in regard to this matter ; whilst, behind them all, the " cold shadow" of the Faculty stretches out, forbidding inquiry. For it has actually come to this,— that the Faculty employ their organs candidly to tell those who dare to inquire into the truth of Mesmerism, that they do so at their peril. As a last resort, Mesmerism must be put down, and the reign of physic upheld by a mode of action borrowed from the Inquisition.

For instance, the *Lancet* says, " Mesmerism is too *gross a humbug* to admit of any further serious notice. We regard *its abettors as quacks and impostors*. They ought to be *hooted out of professional society*.—Any practitioner who sends a patient afflicted with *any* disease to consult a mesmeric quack, ought to be without patients for the rest of his days." And again, " Quackery and imposture

must cease in the profession. Men doing the bidding of idle lords and ladies, dabblers in physic, varying their gossip of the chorus of Grisi and Taglioni *with the astonishing lies of Mesmerism* and homœopathy, must be made to feel that they are *more accountable to their profession* than to their fashionable companions."

Though such a mode of threatening is a confession of weakness on the part of those who are reduced to use it, it produces the desired effect on the profession; and that it keeps many from prosecuting mesmeric inquiry, may be inferred from the reply of a celebrated surgeon, who believes in Mesmerism, on his being asked, if he was going to see a mesmeric operation,—“Do you suppose I would allow my name to be connected with Mesmerism?”

“As a profession, the course of conduct which they have pursued, upon this subject, reflects eternal disgrace. Would it be believed in this age of scientific advancement, that the committee of a medical college should stipulate and require, that every student entering it, should sign a declaration, that he would never practise this science, or investigate its phenomena?”—*The Zoist*, vol. x. p. 55.

And as a slight specimen of this spirit, it may be added, that in a medical class, Edinburgh University, last year, a student happened to say, “Last night I attended a lecture on Mesmerism.” Whereupon, the professor wheeled sharply round with—“What took you there?” Whereupon the young disciple whined forth—“Oh! I was never there before, and I’ll never go again.”

“Alas!” says Dr. Esdaile, “how many cowards does dependence make! . . . A poor general practitioner, trembling at the idea of his wife and family being at the mercy of unscrupulous journalists, who would gladly work

his destruction, justifying, in their own eyes, the attempts of needy rivals to rise upon their ruins."

Dr. Carpenter, in a letter, says, "So long as public opinion is such, that to uphold Mesmerism is to expose one's-self to the imputation of being either credulous or unprincipled, it cannot be expected that those who depend for their livelihood on the estimation in which they are held, should be very ready to place themselves in the way of thus 'losing caste' among their brethren and the public."

He adds, that a physician in Bristol, who "rejoices" in the subject, writes to him,—“But, for my own part, I cannot afford to play with my children's bread.”

Major-General Bagnold, in his speech at the annual meeting of the London Mesmeric Infirmary, 1855, said, "Guess, then, my astonishment at finding, that what I had rejected when presented to me, in the repulsive shape of religious jugglery in India, was founded on a simple fact of nature, and one as demonstrable, by a little patient inquiry, as any schoolboy's first lessons in electricity or chemistry! But if I felt a degree of shame and regret for opportunities lost of acquiring a useful knowledge, what will eventually be the shame and disgrace of those scientifically educated men, whose particular province is to look into nature's truths and make them known, but who, instead of doing so, abuse and revile those who would do this work for them? However, I do not totally despair of the medical profession. I have myself made some converts from that body, so far, at least, as belief goes—but, alas! I cannot, I fear, find their moral courage to avow and practise it. A talented young medical friend of mine, not long since, acting house-surgeon at one of our principal London hospitals, at my suggestion put it to the proof

by trying it on a most frightful case of hysteria, that had baffled every other treatment. He succeeded to his perfect satisfaction, and his poor patient left the hospital with prayers and blessings on his head. In the warmth of his feelings he promised me the case for publication, but when the time came he declined, saying, "With ample proof as to the fact, I dare not publish it, but I trust a time will come, when, being more *independent of the heads of my profession*, I can put them at defiance. *At present it would ruin me.*"

This "bitter constraint and sad occasion" so harps its tune through the whole Faculty, that we find even its noted men becoming merely leaders in the ignoble march. When Dr. Elliotson, before he resigned his chair in disgust, illustrated the truth of Mesmerism in University College, the Professors were amazed at his boldness, and did *not* imitate his example. The Dean urged, "That whether the wonderful facts were true or not, and whether great benefit in the treatment of diseases would result or not, we ought to consider the interests of the school; that if the public did not regard the matter as true and the benefits as real, we ought not to persevere and risk the loss of public favour to the school." And the Professor of Physiology said, "I think that there is something in Mesmerism, but if I avow my belief, I shall lecture to empty benches."

And the following extract from Mr. Lang's work on Mesmerism speaks trumpet-tongued:—"In 1833, Mr. Colquhoun published a translation of the French Report of 1831, with a copious introductory preface. The manner in which his attention happened to be first called to the subject, is not a little instructive. A medical friend of Mr. Colquhoun's, of high standing in Edinburgh, aware

of that gentleman's extensive acquaintance with continental languages, was in the practice of sending him, from time to time, various French and German publications. Struck with the fact that these were nearly all on animal magnetism, Mr. Colquhoun asked his friend one day why he kept sending him works on that particular subject.—‘Because I wish you to take it up,’ was the reply. ‘Surely,’ said Mr. Colquhoun, in return, ‘it lies much more in your way, as a medical professor, to do so;—this is a question for the physician and surgeon.’ The strange rejoinder was, ‘THERE IS NOT A MEDICAL MAN IN BRITAIN WHO WILL DARE TO TAKE UP THIS SUBJECT.’”

It may appear captious to advance these few extracts, in order to draw a general conclusion from them; but they are advanced as fair specimens of multitudes of such, which afford ample materials, for any one so disposed, to show that the guardians of the public health are level to the aim of the ridicule and contempt which they thought to turn upon others. They are advanced here merely to show the animus of the great body of the medical profession as regards Mesmerism, and their unfitness to judge of the new curative against which they are so prejudiced, that the vast majority of them are, at least, practically ignorant of it, and into which they dare not even inquire, unless it be to disavow their belief for “the interest of the school,” themselves, and—their patients.

It thus becomes evident, that when Mesmerism is to be judged, physic stands merely as an interested party at the bar. And it is no less evident that the avowed enemy—the hater of novelties, and dealer in UNCERTAINTY, whose business is in such a state that it “*must mend or end*”—has no right to deny a fair trial to that of which Dr. Elliotson says, after the experience of a score of years :

—"It makes an approach to a universal remedy; for it soothes and strengthens, and powerfully and pleasantly assists nature in her efforts to throw off disease. . . . We can proudly point to the stately pile of cures amassed in *The Zoist*,—cures surpassing those by ordinary medicine, because effected with no disgusting, harshly or uncomfortably acting drugs, exhausting measures, or torturing external applications; because effected in many instances, after all ordinary means had been long employed in vain; and because such cures in many cases were NEVER BEFORE EFFECTED BY ART. I boldly challenge our opponents to produce such an array of cures."

"The power of modifying with safety the human system, and of introducing new movements into it opposed to the continuance of diseased action, is the essential requisite in every remedy; and where shall we find an agent capable of modifying *innocuously* the nervous system (the mainspring of life) to the same extent as is done by Mesmerism? If asked, 'What single power do you covet most for the cure of disease?' I should reply, 'Enable me to extinguish pain, and to put people to sleep as long as is desirable, *without any of the subsequent bad effects of narcotic drugs*, and I will engage to cure a great variety of complaints by this agency alone.' . . . Its influence is primarily exerted over the nervous system; and, as this is the *animating principle* of the whole body, we might naturally expect it to be of service in the treatment of nervous and many functional diseases. In short, the discovery of such a natural power opens out a new means of modifying the human frame to an extent that can be determined *by long and varied experience only*."—*Dr. Esdaile*.

The question then remains, Who should judge of the

applications of Mesmerism? and the answer really must be, Only they who are qualified by knowledge and practical experience of the subject; they who have merely studied physic are as incapable of judging of Mesmerism, as they who have merely studied Mesmerism are incapable of judging of physic.

“To whom,” says the Rev. C. H. Townshend, “does the task of enlightening the public, *de jure* as well as *de facto*, belong? Manifestly to those who have made Mesmerism their particular study. It is they who ought to teach, to impose their conditions on those who wish to learn. In every other matter of experience it is so. Every branch of science has its professors. Nay, even every department of a branch has its peculiar students. Though mechanics and mathematics are intimately connected, we do not go to a mathematician to learn how to make steam-engines. And this one fact has been overlooked,—Mesmerism is a speciality, and demands a special study.”

Mesmerism is capable of manifold applications, which require to be varied according to the exigencies of the case. It can be applied to soothe or stimulate the whole or any part of the system, as required. The brain, nerves, absorbents, secreting glands, and all the organs of the body, are alike subject to its power; and to know in all cases when and how it should be applied to these, demands that intimate knowledge of the subject which can be attained only by the training of practical experience.

On quitting consideration of the Faculty, as connected with this subject, the most edifying fact that one can find to carry away is, that their differences in prescribing drugs are not greater than is their unanimity in proscribing Mesmerism. Patients should remember this when they consult them on the subject,—that is to say, when they act

as wisely as a traveller would do if he were to consult an old stage-coachman about the merits of the railway. The coachman might be quite an admirable Crichton in his way, and the most estimable of mankind; yet his professional learning and skill cannot but prejudice him against what would, in a great measure, put out of request that very learning and skill, which it has been the business of his life to acquire, and his pleasure, as well as duty, to apply, and on which, moreover, his public *status* and private profits depend. His name and honour may be synonymous terms; yet, before the anti-professional, his intellect stands askew. The old coach-box is not the point for true perspective of the new railway.

“ Might I not try Mesmerism, doctor ? ” is by no means an uncommon question now; and the reply, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, amounts to—No! If the doctor is of the true pompous order—that happily became almost extinct along with the tremendous wigs and long canes, which were its chiefest recommendations—the reply would be a grumph, and “ All humbug—imagination—nonsense ! ” But, more likely, the doctor—on the strength of having seen some one put into the mesmeric sleep, or if having heard of such an occurrence—will affect to know all about it. “ Ah! there’s something in it—wonderful power—very useful; *but it wouldn’t suit your case*; it would upset your nerves—or disturb your circulation—or throw you into convulsions—or make you deranged—or, in short, it wouldn’t suit your case.” And so it never suits any case. And so ninety-nine cases out of the hundred have to sink back, in their old despair, to be drugged, and die legitimately. Alas! to see multitudes sinking—sinking prematurely to the grave, Nature’s provided remedy within reach, and the doctors forbidding it.

These remarks are not made at a venture. Any one who takes the proper means of acquiring information, will find that they are correct, that the cases are very numerous in which it would seem that the only effectual thing that a doctor has to say is to forbid Mesmerism. Patients, even of several of the *leading physicians* in Edinburgh, after having been forbidden to try Mesmerism, finding that drugs did them no good, though heroically swallowed for many years, tried Mesmerism, and were cured; and the author knows that to be a fact, for he cured them himself; and he *knows*, moreover, that these leading physicians are practically ignorant of Mesmerism, and that they *wish* to remain so.*

Such remarks must necessarily be offensive to many; but all that can be said is, that they should enter into a diagnosis of their own case on whose ears truth falls with an unpleasant sound,—the symptom is very alarming.

But—although it appears that the greatest services which the Faculty have rendered truth consist in proving its power, by showing how it has always overcome their opposition, so trained in bondage of old routine that their most vigorous sign of life is their hatred of improvement—the profession may boast that it has always had its men of capacious intellect and noble spirit, who have scorned to be enslaved by hereditary conventionalism, prejudices of education, and purse-prudence. Its Harveys and Jenners have made it honourable, by leading it to truth, in

* There are, no doubt, many doctors who would be happy to have their patients, whom they cannot cure, try Mesmerism, upon condition that they should do so without consulting them on the subject,—they would rather have their patients cured than not employ unorthodox means; but they dare not appear to sanction the heresy,—they “will not have their names connected with Mesmerism.” When the unrelieved patient asks them, their kindly hearts would say *Yes!* but still professional etiquette compels them to say *No!*

spite of itself. And it is gratifying to think that, in spite of the profession playing over again the old game of its malevolence and persecution, Elliotson has not announced the truth of Mesmerism in vain. Scores and scores of doctors incited by his example, and daring to be really worthy of the name of physician, have had the honesty to investigate, and the courage to avow, and the humanity to practise Mesmerism. Not to mention other publications, the twelve volumes of *The Zoist* contain several thousand cases of Mesmeric cure,—a large proportion of these cases having been pronounced incurable by the profession; and, what has to be especially noted with admiration is, that many of these cases were recorded by eminent physicians, who themselves cured them with Mesmerism, after having in vain dozed them through the programme of drug-routine. It is speaking of these cases, among others, that Dr. Elliotson says,—“I boldly challenge our opponents to produce such an array of cures.”

If all doctors had duly studied and practically investigated Mesmerism, as those alluded to have done, all doctors would be qualified—but very, very few in *Scotland* are—to pronounce an opinion on the subject.

It is but justice, however, to mention, that Mesmerism is now practised very widely on the Continent by medical men, and that, too, by many who rank among the foremost of the Faculty.

The following quotation has more than general interest :—“The causes of all phenomena are at last occult. There has, however, obtained a not unnatural presumption against such causes; and the presumption, though often salutary, has sometimes operated most disadvantageously to science, from a blind and indiscriminate application.

. . . . It has induced men obstinately to disbelieve phenomena, in themselves certain and even manifest, if these could not at once be referred to already known causes, and did not fall in with the systems prevalent at the time.

. . . . An example of this is seen in the difficult credence accorded in this country to the phenomena of animal magnetism ; phenomena in themselves the most unambiguous, which, for nearly half a century, have been recognised generally, and by the highest scientific authorities in Germany ; while, for nearly a quarter of a century, they have been verified and formally confirmed by the Academy of Medicine in France."—*Sir William Hamilton*, (Edinburgh University.)

CHAPTER V.

THE CURATIVE FORCE.

Introductory quotation—The *vis medicatrix naturæ*—All cures are effected by it alone—Medical allusions to it necessarily vague—It originates in the brain, and is conducted by the nerves to the organs—The heart is impelled to action by it—All organic function depends on it—When it is deficient, disease is induced, which is cured by restoring the due supply—This brain-force can be stimulated by mental influence—Miss Martineau's deafness—Interaction of body and mind—Certain emotions disturb the nerval action—Mental influence, or "change of air"—Its effects on the brain-force limited—Drugs required to produce a sufficient action of the brain and nerve—Their curative power depends solely on such action—Dr. A. Thomson's opinion—Certain drugs affect only certain nerves: Proved, not by reason, but by experience—The Mesmeric process stimulates the brain-force to sufficient action—Also satisfactorily proved by experience—The circulation of the brain-force can be controlled by the will—Dr. Watson's opinion—Can be projected, by the will, from the nervous system of the operator upon the nervous system of the patient—Dr. Esdalle's opinion—Such communication of brain-force (implementing one brain with the force of another) is more efficacious than the application of drugs—It has more certainty—It does not exhaust the patient—Occult property of drugs—The force by which they stimulate the brain to action is probably imponderable—Dr. Dickson's opinion—All curative agents stimulate the brain-force by acting on the nerves—Galvanism—Kinesiotherapy—Hydrotherapy—Effects of heat and cold on the nerval circulation—Health depends on the nerval circulation duly stimulating the entire organism—The Mesmeric process implements and regulates the nerval circulation—Its consistency with the providential government.

THE following quotation, from *The Human Body and its connexion with Man*, by Dr. Garth Wilkinson, will serve to introduce the subject of this chapter. Speaking of Mesmerism he says,—“Of its virtues in cases that have resisted all other means, there cannot be a question: its facts are established not alone by rigid experiment,

but by deeds worthy of a mural crown, because they have saved the lives of many citizens. It is for this reason, and also because our organic philosophy, which knows no fear, demands it, that we pass on to Mesmerism, although a storm of hatred rages about it, and every step of its advance is a fight.

“It would be interesting in the history of science to canvass the reasons why certain large classes of facts have been rejected from time to time; why, for instance, the Church of Rome felt peculiarly aggrieved that the earth should go round the sun, and not *vice versa*; why certain moderns dislike to live on a planet which took more than seven days for its creation; why sceptics have a call to blink all evidence for spiritual communications, and afterwards opening their sockets widely, complain of the absence of facts; and lastly, why the medical profession fumes and shivers whenever Mesmerism is brought forward. In all these cases, as we deem, it is the instinct of self-preservation that like a skin defends the parties against the reception of the facts. They know instinctively that the limitation and eggshell of their state is in danger, and that if the obnoxious point be admitted, they will have the trouble of building a new house on a larger scale. At present the pill-boxes are arranged in pretty rows; but allow this Mesmerism and its consequences, and how they would rattle and dance,—what a long period of confusion and elimination they must pass, before any second order as neat as the first could be established! It is the dread of death, that shabbiest of fears, that everlastingly hates truth, because truth leads to death, future states, or integral enlargements, of which there is no end. Such is the motive of this very poor kind of conservatism, though there are as many pretexts as there are ingenious

lazy minds, who fancy that they have an interest in a well-arranged stagnation of the arts.

“As we have said already, Mesmerism stands upon its facts, which, in proportion to time, are as numerous and rigorous as those of any other science. But the facts appear so strange, and so little in the order of our knowledge, that they want at least the support which association of principles gives. Those who cure and are cured, obtain a grasp of the facts from mere gratitude and service; but the public require also something like a *rationale* in order to steady their minds. Hence, though the facts are the main thing for those intimately concerned, yet a view of the facts is quite necessary for the fixation of Mesmerism in the scientific sky.”

Let us proceed to this desired *rationale*.

Considering the many deteriorating influences with which it is surrounded, it were not unreasonable to expect—as consistent with the providential government, chiefly caring for its chief subject—that the human constitution should be endowed with a self-rectifying power,—a tendency to preserve that on which health depends. And that such a power, re-adjustive of the vital organism, does exist, is admitted by doctors, who call it the *vis medicatrix naturæ*, or nature's curative force. It is to this force that Sir John Forbes alludes when he says, “In a large proportion of the cases treated by allopathic physicians, the disease is cured by nature and not by them; and in a lesser, but still not a small proportion, the disease is cured by nature in *spite* of them.” And, in fact, it may be added that all cures are effected BY IT ALONE.

But, it may be asked, How comes this curative force of nature to require the assistance of art? Simply because it does not now exist in its primal conditions.

Engendered in, or being the forthputting of, the constitution of man, it is necessarily modified by the state of that constitution ; and the perfect health-preserving power of the perfect Adam cannot exist in his imperfect descendants. Yet the *tendency* still exists, although limited in power of action by the degeneracy of man's organism ; and art is required merely to assist nature's tendency to put forth more power of action. And man is so adapted to the circumstances in which he is placed, that, in so far as consistent with the present state of things, this can be accomplished in various ways. That medical allusions to this *vis medicatrix naturæ* should, for the most part, be vague and unsatisfactory, cannot be wondered at ; for it eludes the dissecting knife. Medical men cannot trace its (the vital force's) mode of working on the dead nerves ; and till they condescend to study its phenomena in the living system, as illustrated by Mesmeric experiments, they must continue to regard it as merely the central mystery of their "system of guesses" and "positive uncertainty."

However, there are ample reasons for believing that this health-agent—or, as it is called, vital force or nervous energy—is provided by the brain, from which it is conducted, by the nervous system, to the respective organs which it stimulates to work, commanding and regulating the whole actions of the system : the result of its perfect action being perfect health.

Homologating Priestley's idea, Sir John Herschel says, "If the brain be an electric pile constantly in action, it may be conceived to discharge itself at regular intervals when the tension of the electricity reaches a certain point, along the nerves which communicate with the heart, and thus excite the pulsation of that organ." If we may

conceive that the heart is thus impelled to action by the brain-discharge, we may also conceive that the movements of all the component parts of the body originate from the same stimulating force. In fact, we cannot conceive of their being stimulated in any other manner. Cut the nerves of communication between the brain, or its continuation, the spine,* and any organ, and the organ can no more act than can the organ of a dead man, whose brain yields no discharge.

Although doctors talk of muscular contractility as an independent action originating in the muscles, the only description they can give of it is, that it is "a spontaneous shortening of muscular fibres, in consequence of the impression of certain agents, stimuli." But this *spontaneous* shortening or function of the muscles, in consequence of certain impressions, ceases to take place when the nerves, connected with the muscle, are cut, and the nervous force is expended. Both Cuvier and Dumas regarded muscular contractility not as a primary principle, but a function of the nerves.

As a proof that the brain-force is the stimulus of functional action, it may be remarked, that when one function is called powerfully into play, the power of another is lessened. Thus, if after a hearty meal, the limbs are violently exercised, the stomach cannot digest; the necessary brain-force is drawn to the limbs, at the expense of the stomach.

How the brain is enabled to supply the continued nerval currents, or motive power,† necessary for the working of the organism, is as mysterious as the circulation of the

* "That the brain and the spinal marrow, though physiologically distinct, are yet intimately connected with, and dependent on each other, a thousand familiar facts assure us."—*Dr. Watson (King's College.)*

† *Od.* See APPENDIX, No. III.

blood once was. Probably it depends on the functions appropriate to the stomach, heart, and lungs, being duly performed. Thus Mr. Robert Hunt, in his popular work on *The Phenomena of Nature*, says, "The nerves are but the channels through which certain influences are carried, The *vis vitæ*, or vital principle—for we are compelled by the imperfection of our knowledge to associate under this one term the ultimate causes of many" (why not of all?) "of the phenomena of life—is a power which, although constantly employed, has the capability of continually renewing itself by some inexplicable connexion existing between it and many external influences. We know that certain conditions are necessary to the health of animals. Diseased digestion, or any interruption in the circulation of the blood, destroys the vital force, and death ensues. . . . Electricity is without doubt an essential element in the living processes; and, indeed, many physiologists have been inclined to refer vital force to the development of electricity by chemical action in the brain."

The healthy play of the organic functions, then, depends on the appropriate nerves being duly supplied with that force which proceeds from the action of the brain. In other words, when either the nerves are unable duly to convey the impelling force, or when the action of the brain is too feeble to provide them with a sufficient supply, the organic functions are disturbed, and disease ensues; and disease is cured by whatever re-adjusts the organic functions, that is, by whatever stimulates the brain to sufficient action, and regulates the nerval currents, on which the organic functions depend.

This, as already observed, can be effected in various ways.

Mental influence, of a certain kind, can stimulate the

brain to this sufficient action. And this is especially evident when the action is so suddenly induced that—the nerves immediately conveying the needed supply—the cure is instantaneous. Thus, headaches have been cured by a sudden surprise, that is, by what caused a sudden flow of the brain-force to the affected part; toothaches have been charmed away by the sound of the dentist's bell; and even paralysis has frequently been temporarily cured with the brain-action, induced by sudden emotion—the nerves of the disabled limbs so revitalized by the increased flow of the brain-force, that the suspended muscular functions were restored *so long as the influence lasted.*

The following extract gives a pleasing instance of the curative power of mental influence :—“ One other anecdote, otherwise too personal for print, will shew how engrossing is the interest of the pyramid on the spot. The most precious articles of property I had with me abroad were two ear-trumpets, because, in case of accident happening to them, I could not supply the loss. I was unwilling to carry my trumpet up the pyramid, knocking against the stones while I wanted my hands for climbing. So I left it below, in the hands of a trusty Arab. When I joined my party at the top of the pyramid, I never remembered my trumpet, nor did they, and we talked as usual, during the forty minutes we were there, without my even missing it. When I came down I never thought of it; and I explored the inside, came out and lunched, and still never thought of my trumpet, till, at the end of three hours and a half from my parting with it, I saw it in the hands of the Arab, and was reminded of the astonishing fact, that I had heard as well without it as with it all that time. Such a thing never happened before,

and probably never will again ; and stronger proof could not be offered of the engrossing interest of a visit to the pyramid."—*Miss Harriet Martineau's Egypt.*

Ideas are powerful brain-stimulants,

" Striking the ELECTRIC CHAIN wherewith we're darkly bound."

And the universal saying, that imagination kills or cures, is, like all universal sayings, founded on a universal truth. The invalid is more likely to recover when under the influence of hope ; and disease has double power when the brain has lost that stimulus. Habitual anxiety and mental perturbation, by disturbing the battery of the health-force, interrupt the functional integrity ; and despair *unnerves* the whole system, paralyzing more or less the action of the brain.

This interaction of mind and body is beautifully illustrated in the child, whose brain, incapable of mental influence, requires to be stimulated to action with the mode of nourishment that Nature has fitly provided—its mother's mesmerized milk,* in which the force of her developed brain flows into the being of her child, whose very helplessness secures that, between the influence of the pillowing bosom, and *the patting and stroking hand*, it shall have ample supply of the needed stimulus ; but as soon as its own brain becomes capable of receiving sufficient stimulus, through perception, nature withdraws the mother's milk,—*it* is no longer necessary, another

* Any fluid, or solid, becomes imbued with the brain-force when brought in contact with the living organism. Water in this condition induces, in some complaints, most powerful curative action. Sensitive patients have been frequently put to sleep by drinking a glass of such water without knowing that it had been mesmerized ; and, if several glasses of water be presented, they can distinguish those that have been mesmerized by the sensations they excite. This may appear to be too wonderful ; but it is still more wonderful that, at this time of day, it should appear to be so. The phenomena are not at all uncommon.

stimulating influence taking its place. Then, for the healthy growth of its organism, the child requires to be in perpetual movement, to which it is impelled by the continual flow of vital force along its nerves, which the brain is stimulated to supply plentifully, by the continued mental excitement arising from the world of novelty, in which the child flutters from object to object with ceaseless wonder and delight. Thus the mother-fed organism of the infant, stimulated with her brain-force, as formerly nourished with her blood, is developed into the conditions necessary for the mental influence which is to perfect the growth of the child,—the body advanced to manhood by the working mind, for which alone the body exists.

Perhaps it may be argued, that if what has been advanced is true, the greater the mental excitement is, the more curative will it always be, by stimulating the brain-force to more increased flow. But it must be observed, that, in order to cure, the brain-force must not only be duly stimulated but duly *regulated*. Now certain mental excitements, especially those of an irritating nature, whilst they stimulate the brain, have, generally, merely a disturbing effect on the nervous system: instead of regulating, over the system, the flow of the brain-force which they have stimulated, they concentrate it upon some one organ, disturbing its action with the undue supply, which should have been distributed among the others. It was probably on this account, that the ancients, finding that the indulgence of certain passions, instead of benefiting the body, tended to induce diseased action in certain organs, assigned the seat of love to the heart, jealousy to the liver, anger to the brain, and so on.

It is worthy of being specially observed, that emotions,

like drugs, have their stimulating power limited to certain nerves: they do not act on all nerves alike. Why it should be so, is a question apart from the consideration, that such is **THE FACT**. Thus joy stimulates the brain always to act on the nerves that command the muscular movement called smiling; hatred, through the action of certain other nerves, always currogates the brows; grief invariably excites sighs; and so on. Everybody knows that different medicines affect different nerves—one always affecting the nerves connected with the heart, another always the nerves connected with the liver, and so on; but nobody knows the reason why: intellect is at fault in the matter; and all that we can say is, such is **THE FACT**. All that we can say of these, or any curative agent, is,—our eyes inform us that such or such results follow their application.

There are, then, two conditions on which all the functions that contribute to a healthy state of the organism depend, and without fulfilling which, no cure can be effected: 1st, The brain-force must be **DULY STIMULATED**; and, 2d, it must be **DULY REGULATED**.

In accordance with this, it is evident that the simplest and most natural mode of re-establishing health, by fulfilling these conditions, is to work on the body, when possible, through the mind of the patient. Whether the instrument be emotion or imagination, the aim should be to encourage the pleasing excitement that tends sufficiently to stimulate the curative brain-force; and to restrain the violent emotions, or irritating passions, that tend to *mis*-regulate its flow over the system.

This is very often accomplished by the physician's pleasantest prescription, "change of air;"* that is, change

* If the curative influence of "change of air" depends literally on change of temperature and the component gases of the atmosphere, the physician could

of scene and circumstance, whereby pleasing mental excitement may stimulate the brain of the invalid to supply the general system with the needed curative force, on which the healthy working of the organism depends.

A patient may have his symptoms alleviated by change of atmospheric temperature, as suited to his peculiar complaint, but, when he is ordered to a particular locality, it should be remembered that his cure—resulting not from the climate, but from his *vis medicatrix naturæ*—depends on such *continued* change of scene and circumstances as will keep up the continued pleasing excitement necessary to stimulate sufficiently the curative action of the brain.

The poet Coleridge, while at Malta, was in the habit of attending much to those about him, and particularly those who were sent there for pulmonary complaints. “He frequently observed how much the invalid, at first landing, was relieved by the climate and *the stimulus of change*; but when the *novelty* arising from that change had ceased, the monotonous sameness of the blue sky, accompanied by the summer heat of the clime, acted powerfully as a sedative, ending in speedy dissolution.”

But, however long continued, this pleasing excitement—even when the process of nature is duly seconded by nature’s aids, suitable bodily exercise, nourishment, air, and cold water—is limited in its power, and, consequently, often fails to produce the desired effect. The disturbance in the system may have become so great that mental influence cannot induce a *sufficient* action in the brain to counteract it. In such circumstances the physician has to prescribe drugs—why? still merely, “either directly or indirectly,” to stimulate the brain-force and regulate

procure it with more *certainty* by confining his patient to a room duly fitted with a certain chemical apparatus of stop-cocks, pipes, and retorts.

its flow to the particular organ, which, for want of due nerval stimulus, has put on a diseased action.

That drugs possess this power appears to be the sole reason why they are curative. It is true that, by being absorbed into the blood, or producing chemical change, they may be palliatives; but their curative effect seems to result *solely* from their influencing, "either directly or indirectly," the nervous system, whereby they regulate the action of the brain or spinal cord.

Dr. A. T. Thompson, (anti-mesmerist,) Professor of *Materia Medica, Therapeutics, &c.*, in the University of London, says, in his *Elements*, 1835,—“That every medicine operating on the living solid, exerts its influence, *either directly or indirectly*, upon the nervous system, can scarcely be denied, (p. 5.) . . . It is not essential we should be able to demonstrate *in what manner* this communication with the distant parts of the body is effected by the nerves, (p. 7.) . . . It is enough for us to know that those substances which are comprehended under the term vital agents, produce their effects *by influencing the nervous energy*—that power inherent in the brain, the medulla spinalis, and the nervous system generally, by which not only ALL THE VITAL ACTIONS ARE MAINTAINED, but through which also, we are willing, moving, and conscious beings,” (p. 127.)

It appears, then, that that by which “all the vital actions are maintained,” can be stimulated, *1st*, by mental influence; and, *2d*, by the application of drugs. And it is worthy of observation, that while both these agencies so operate, we are quite ignorant of the “manner in which communication with the distant parts of the body is effected by the nerves;” and, also, why certain drugs, and certain passions, should direct the brain-force on

certain organs and not on others.* It is enough that we have experience of THE FACT, though we cannot assign the reason.

Another mode of stimulating the brain-force to sufficient action, and regulating its flow on the nervous system, is found in the Mesmeric process. And—whilst there is much here also of which we are quite ignorant, although that the Mesmeric process should possess such power, is not so contrary to *à priori* reasoning, as that drugs should—it is enough that we have experience of THE FACT, though we cannot assign the reason.

Mesmeric facts cannot be found by groping among the quagmires of metaphysics; and even he who has most defiled his common sense by such an occupation, must allow that, if doctors cannot understand how the health-force, or motive power, of a man's brain is communicated to his own nervous system, so as to regulate the working of his organic functions, it is utterly absurd in them to condemn Mesmerism merely because they cannot understand how the health-force of a man's brain is communicated to the nervous system of another. In either case, the fact does not depend on their comprehension. The question at issue is not about them at all, but about the Mesmeric process,—Does it convey such a curative force? Experience—the sole interpreter of such truths—has fully proved that it does.

Dr. Watson, (rabid anti-mesmerist,) King's College, London, talking of the brain, says, in his *Lectures on the*

* The same drug that, in one case, duly stimulates a certain nerve, (when its current of the health-force is deficient,) and so readjusts the organic action dependent upon that nerve, may, in another case, stimulate unduly the same nerve, (when its current of the health-force is *not* deficient,) and so be productive of functional disturbance—in one case curing the disease which it causes in another.

Principles and Practice of Physic,—" I adopt the belief that the grey (which are much the more vascular) portions of these nervous centres, form the part in which their peculiar powers reside, or are generated ; and that their white or fibrous portions are, like the white and fibrous nerves, mere *conductors of the nervous influence*. I incline also to the opinion, (recollect, if you please, that I do not press these opinions of mine upon you as being necessarily correct,) that the influence which originates in the grey matter, and is *transmitted* by the white, will at last be found to consist in, or to be closely connected with, *some modification of electricity*."

It is allowed that this nervous influence, or brain-force, can be projected and directed by the will. When a man wills to move, his brain-force immediately flows along the particular nerve, which induces the desired movement,—it is directed by his will.

Dr. Watson says,—“ The influence of the will is a cerebral influence ; it reaches and acts upon the muscles, through the interposition of the spinal cord.” And Dr. Esdaile says,—“ The nervous fluid is at rest when the will is inactive, but it travels with more than lightning speed to every part of our voluntary system when set in motion by the will. It is the messenger of the will to the muscles.”

So far there is no difficulty in believing that the will has a directive power of this cerebral force, the nervous energy ; and the remaining consideration is, Can a man will it to flow, not only to the extremity of his own system, but beyond it, so as to influence the system of another ?

It is well known that certain creatures have such power of willing or projecting their “ modification of electricity” beyond their own nervous systems, that it is the express

means by which they destroy the prey which they wish to secure. And who shall say that there is any necessity in nature why this power of willing should be restricted to purposes of destruction? Anti-mesmerists, with their usual infallibility, may *assert* that there is, but experience *PROVES* that there is not;—man's will possesses the same power and directive influence over his "modification of electricity," although for loftier purposes, in accordance with the circumstances of him who was designed to be the opposite of Cain.

Experience proves that nerves are conductors of cerebral influence, no matter how the influence is conveyed to them; no matter in what brain-battery it originates. As Dr. Esdaile says,—“When one person is made the exclusive object of another's attention for a certain length of time, surprising effects have ensued which are now called the *mesmeric phenomena*. . . . We can assign no reason why the nerves should not accept will-impelled nervous matter as well from one extremity as the other—as readily from the cuticular as from the cerebral terminations of the nerves.”

Admitting this to be a fact—which they who are not practically acquainted with the subject are very apt to deny, on the strength of the traditions of their youth, or the fancies of their manhood—we have three modes by which the curative brain-force may be stimulated to action,—1st, by mental influence; 2d, by drugs; and 3d, by the mesmeric process; and the fact that these three modes can produce such a result, rests on the same evidence, namely, our experiencing that they can so act.

As we have seen, the application of drugs has a more powerful effect than the stimulus arising from mental influence; and the reasons why the Mesmeric process—

which is, in fact, the implementing the action of one brain with the communicated force of another—is to be preferred to the applications of drugs, except in peculiar circumstances, are, 1st, it has more direct power ; 2d, it has more certainty ; and 3d, it does what drugs cannot do—it *imparts* vital energy. Whilst it stimulates the diseased organism to put forth its own brain-force in healthy action, it also *assists* the action, by imparting the force of another brain. Drugs may urge the system to do its health-work, but they cannot *assist* it in doing the work, which can be accomplished by nothing but brain-force.

That the Mesmeric process can produce more beneficial effects than the application of drugs, can of course no more be proved by argument, than it can be proved by argument that drugs produce any beneficial effects at all. As already observed, it can be proved by experience alone. And it remains for the men—*and for them alone*—who, like Dr. Elliotson, have had *years* of experience in the application of *both*, to numerous diseases, to say which has been most successful. See Dr. Elliotson's opinion, p. 68.

And that the Mesmeric process is more certain in result than the application of drugs, is also proved by experience. Even when the drug appropriate to a particular case is found—after the failure of perhaps a dozen, which, *at least*, have done no good—it may effect more than is desired. Whilst stimulating one part of the nervous system to the required action, it may be found that its stimulating power is not confined to that part, but that it is also acting, *unduly*, on another part of the nervous system ; thus inducing a twofold action, tending to readjust certain nerves, and so to cure disease in one organ, whilst, at the same time, it disturbs certain other

nerves, and so causes diseased action in another organ. The most skilful physician cannot prevent this uncertainty in the action of drugs ; after having administered a drug calculated to do good in one part, he is often obliged to withhold it, because he finds that it is doing harm in another. And so the disease is often allowed to go on, whilst the physician is experimenting, in vain, or worse, to find a drug suitable to the patient ; and at last, when it is found, even though the disease may be checked, the patient is often left utterly prostrated, his *vis medicatrix naturæ*, on which his re-establishment depends, well-nigh exhausted : by the very process that cured the one disease, his constitution is deprived of much of the vital energy on which the health-work of his organism depends. The lamp at last is trimmed, but during the process the oil has evaporated.

No such uncertainty is inherent to the Mesmeric process. It, in experienced hands, conveys the stimulus direct to the part where it is required, *and to no other* ; whilst it powerfully stimulates the brain-force, it also directs and *regulates* its flow along the nervous system, to suit the demands of the case. And when the disease is checked, the patient's *vis medicatrix naturæ*, instead of being exhausted, is found to be enhanced. The very process that cured the one disease has increased the vital energy, and left the constitution more fitted than ever to perform its general health-work. The oil has been implemented by the very process that trimmed the lamp.

Dr. Edward Johnson, in his work on *Hydrophathy*, says, "How many scores of diseases are there which depend solely on mere *want of power* in the system ! . . . Death never happens but in consequence of a deficiency of power in the vital principle to protect the organism from the

principle of destruction. . . . And this brings me to the point which I have all along had in view, which is this : that all important preventive measures must resolve themselves into such measures as have the effect of *restoring the living principle* when enfeebled ; and, in all cases, of exalting it to the highest pitch of energy of which it is capable. . . . Which system places the body in the most favourable condition to enable nature to recover her weakened energies, and so to enable her to do her work ; and which offers the most probable means of assisting her efforts, without interfering with them, and without inflicting any additional mischief on the machine ?”

“ When the fountain of vitality is low and reduced in power, the nervous currents will flow feebly to the different organs, and life will languish like a plant for want of water. But let the reservoirs of nervous power be replenished, and then the vital streams will flow freely ; a general vigour will be diffused through the system, and the organs, refreshed, will perform their functions with ease and regularity. The *primary* effect of Mesmerism on the nervous system is its most striking feature, but its *secondary* influence is not less important to the physician, by enabling him to attack chronic vices of function by a general, though indirect, stimulus or sedative, according to the object he has in view.”—*Dr. Esdaile.*

Since Mesmerism and medicine are thus curative, because they possess the power of stimulating the brain-force, it might be more than interesting to inquire if they both effect this result in the same manner, that is, by applying some “ modification of electricity,” or imponderable force to the nervous system. It is more than possible that this may be the case.

Let it be allowed, that, whatever makes medicine curative, the dose is the best which is sufficient to produce the desired effect on the diseased organ, without disturbing other parts of the system; and that such dose, in order that it may act beneficially, often requires to be infinitesimal, or almost unappreciable by the senses;* and we seem to be shut up to the conclusion, that its curative power arises from some occult property.

How else *can* the power of such doses, or of any dose, arise? Without occult force there can be no movement of any kind.

If a grain of musk be exposed in a large room for many days, even months, it will so fill the room with a nerve-exciting influence, that scores of people, by merely passing through the room in which it is, may have been unpleasantly affected, even to sickness; and yet it will be found that the musk weighs a full grain. A man diseased with the plague may poison another by merely touching his clothes in the slightest manner. And changes in the state of the atmosphere, that elude analysis, are productive of epidemic disease. With the class of facts to which these belong before us, it does not seem unreasonable to inquire whether the nerve-exciting power of medicine depends, not on the medicine itself, but on an imponderable force connected with it, and *modified by it*—according to the size of the dose: the imponderable force or particular “modification of electricity,” of the medicine acting, through the *particular* nerve, on the imponderable force of the brain,—stimulating and regulating the *vis medicatrix naturæ*, although we know not how. Dr. A. T. Thompson, as already quoted, observes, “It is not essen-

* Even allopathic doses are sometimes of an infinitesimal character. See Dr. Henderson's *Homœopathy fairly represented*, pp. 232, 242, 243.

tial that we should be able to demonstrate in *what manner* this communication (of the influence by which all the vital actions are maintained) with the distant parts of the body is effected by the nerves."

The following extract by Dr. S. Brown seems to favour such an hypothesis. "Davy, fearlessly following the principle of electrical induction by contact, discovered that half-a-dozen square feet of the copper sheathing of the British fleet are rendered electro-negative (that is, *the polarities of all the innumerable particles, which make up that extent of surface, are reversed*) by a zinc nail driven through the centre of the space, and are thereby protected from the corrosive action of the sea with its stores of oxygen, chlorine, and iodine, everywhere ready to be let loose upon metallic substances. Nay, Sir John Herschel finds, that the relation to electricity of a mass of mercury is such, that it may be *reversed* by the admixture of an almost INFINITESIMAL* proportion of a body, such as potassium, in an *opposite electrical condition*; and with such electrical conditions are all chemical actions whatsoever, inseparably connected; while every one is aware that physiological phenomena are complicated with chemical changes, as well as chemical disturbances with mechanical alterations. So impressed is Herschel with this class of observations as to observe, 'That such *minute* proportions of extraneous matter should be found capable of communicating sensible mechanical motions and properties, of a definite character, to the body they are mixed with, is perhaps one of the most extraordinary facts that has appeared in chemistry.'"

In fact, the idea is hinted at in several medical works; and Dr. Samuel Dickson, who is yet an anti-mesmerist,

* Less than a millionth part of potassium.

states it without reserve :—“ The phenomena of perfect HEALTH consist in the regular repetition of *alternate* motions or events. . . . DISEASE, under all its modifications, is in the first place a simple *exaggeration* or *diminution* of the amount of the same motions or events. . . . What are assimilation, secretion, absorption, the change of the matter of one organ into another—of the fluids into the solids, and *vice versa*, but operations of vital *chemistry*, and the brain and nervous system, but the *vito-galvanic* or *vito-electric* apparatus by which these operations are effected? . . . The CAUSES OF DISEASE, we have seen, can only affect the body through one or more of the various modifications of *nervous perception*. No disease can arise independent of this, no disease can be cured without it. . . . Medicinal substances can only disturb the existing temperature and motion of any organ or atom of the body, by the electrical or galvanic force which they exert upon it through a nervous medium. . . . The principle upon which substances can cure and cause disease is ONE and the SAME; namely, their power, for good or for evil, as the case may be, of ELECTRICALLY altering the *motive* state of certain parts of the body, and of altering at the same time their *thermal* conditions. . . . The primitive agency of the purely *medicinal* substances, then, is one and the same—namely, the power of electrically *moving* the body in some of its various parts or atoms inwards or outwards, according to the previous state of the vital electricity of the brain of the different individuals to whom they may be administered. For, through the medium of the brain and nerves, do all such substances primarily act. The ultimate and apparently unlike results of the action of different substances, depend entirely on the apparent dissimilarity of the functions

of the organs they respectively influence. As already stated, the temperature of the part or organ of a living body thus *motively* influenced, becomes in every case correspondingly altered. . . . You may ask why the influence of opium on the brain should set one man to sleep, and keep another from sleeping? and why strychnia, by a similar difference of cerebral action, should paralyze the nerves of motion in one case, and wake to motion the nerves of the paralytic in another? The answer is simple, and it affords a fresh illustration of the truth of this electrical doctrine. The atoms of the specific portion of brain of any two individuals, thus oppositely influenced in either case, must be in *opposite* conditions of vital electricity—*negative* in one, and *positive* in the other. And what but opposite results could possibly be the effect of any agent acting *electrically* on any two similar bodies, whether living or dead, when placed under electrical circumstances so diametrically opposite? In common with all medicinal substances, opium and strychnia may produce inverse motions—motion outward or motion inward, according to the particular vito-electrical condition of the body to which they may be applied.”

If then disease, or the *mis*-working of any organ, arises from deficiency of motive power—the brain-force, or disturbance in its flow along the nervous system, it is evident that that which can stimulate the brain-force and duly regulate its distribution—to the several organs, whose healthy working depends on being so supplied—possesses the power of curing disease, by restoring the conditions of health. Such a power is exhibited by the Mesmeric process.

The same power is put forth, more or less, by medicines,

however large or small the doses may be. And it may be presumed that all other curative agents act in the same way. For instance, galvanism applied to a nerve stimulates the brain to act on the organ appropriate to that nerve, in many cases with beneficial result. Again, kin-esisopathy cures by causing impressions, or muscular movements, which excite the local nerves to stimulate the brain,—the brain-force flowing to the part on which the impression is made. Again, hydropathy effects its results by applications that produce continued, or alternated, states of heat and cold; but the *curative* power does not exist in the water applied, but in the changes which it produces in the nerval circulation, on which, be it observed, the circulation of the blood,* like every other movement of the body, depends.

That heat and cold do thus most materially influence the brain-force and nerval circulation, is well known to mesmerists, who have often to apply currents of hot and cold air to the part in which they wish to induce certain phenomena, expressly to reverse the nerval currents, or to distribute them to other parts. They who wish to have full practical proof of this must study Mesmerism.† However, the power of heat and cold of promoting health and disease, is apparent even by their common action on the living body. Why does a draught of cold air induce toothache, rheumatism, indigestion, and even violent disease, such as inflammation and the various types of fever? Simply because it disturbs the nerval currents, according

* The phenomenon of blushing illustrates this. An emotion stimulates the brain; the brain-force flows along certain nerves; and the blood is distributed accordingly.

† If the mesmerist, who is ignorant of medicine, has much to learn from the doctor, the doctor, who is ignorant of Mesmerism, has not a little to learn from the mesmerist. He may deny, and deny, and deny; but the fact remains that he is ignorant of the most wonderful phenomena of the *living* system.

as it is directed, on a certain locality, or generally over the system,*—the amount of disease induced being in proportion to the amount of disturbance produced in the flow of the nerval force, on which the health-work of the organism depends. According as the flow of the motive power is disturbed, the action of the machine is deranged.

In short, there is reason to believe that all functional disease at least is consequent on a disturbance of nerval circulation, whereby the organism is deprived more or less of the brain-force, on which its healthy working depends; and that all cures are effected by restoring the nerval circulation, whereby the organism becomes duly impelled to action by the necessary brain-force.

This fundamental doctrine is generally more or less denied by medical men; and that it should be so is not to be wondered at, as they—"the boy is father of the man"—have not been taught to believe it at College. They deny the true theory of nerval action, because they can find no clue to it in the dead body, and will not employ the methods which illustrate it in the living. The origin of disease is one of their great mysteries. Of it, with amazing candour, the general profession truly declare that they know nothing, and therefore they decree that nothing shall be known. Where the dissecting-knife has failed nothing can succeed;—" *L'état, c'est moi!*"

However, it must be observed, that this great truth is confirmed by several eminent medical authorities. Even without the aid of mesmeric phenomena, some sagacious

* The orthodox phrase for explaining this is, the cold "sends the perspiration inwards." But the perspiration depends on the nerval currents, and, when they are disturbed by cold, the perspiration is checked,—merely the first symptom of the nerval disturbance, which may end in general derangement of the system. Perspiration, hot or cold sweats, can be caused or checked by the mesmeric process, without the patient being touched, and without heat or cold being applied.

minds have groped their way to, and announced it; and, in consequence, the belief of the Faculty, in so far as they have any belief on the subject, tends towards it. Most medical writers are still shy of facing the subject, and say nothing definite. They merely talk "about it, and about it, and about it;" yet a distinct utterance, or half-utterance, is occasionally found.

For instance, Sir Benjamin Brodie gives a half-utterance. In his *Diseases of the Joints and Spine*, he says,— "Indeed, I must confess that, in proportion as I have acquired a more extended experience in my profession, I have found more and more reason to believe that local diseases, in the strict sense of the term, are extremely rare. Local causes may operate so as to render one organ more liable to disease than another; but everything tends to prove that, in the great majority of cases, there is a morbid condition either of the circulating fluid or of the nervous system *antecedent* to the manifestation of disease in any particular structure."

Perhaps a still "more extended experience" will teach Sir Benjamin Brodie that a "morbid condition of the blood" is itself a disease, like all other diseases, merely a consequence of the *mis*-working of certain organs, which functional *mis*-work is a consequence of disturbed nerval action.

Of course the introduction of foreign substances may poison the blood, and that "morbid condition" will occasion disease,—only, however, be it remarked, in proportion as it disturbs, "directly or indirectly," the nerval circulation. But, apart from foreign interferences, impurity of blood is the result of the nerval force not properly stimulating the organs, on the due performance of whose functions the formation of healthy blood depends.

Thus all natural "morbid conditions," whether of blood or tissues, resolve themselves into disturbance of the nerval circulation.

It is not to be forgotten, that Cullen and John Hunter declared that a *principle of life* governed the whole economy of the system.

And the late Dr. John Thomson (Edinburgh University) says, giving full utterance to the subject,—“The great and prominent merits of Hoffmann, as a medical philosopher, undoubtedly consisted in his having perceived and pointed out more clearly than any of his predecessors the extensive and powerful influence of the nervous system in modifying and regulating at least, if not in producing, *all the phenomena of the organic*, as well as of the animal functions in the human economy, and more particularly in his application of this doctrine to the explanation of diseases. . . . It was reserved for Hoffmann to take a comprehensive view of the nervous system, not only as the organ of sense and motion, but also as the common centre by which all the different parts of the animal economy are connected together, and through which they mutually influence each other. He was, accordingly, led to regard *all those alterations in the structure and functions* of this economy, which constitute the state of disease, as having their PRIMARY ORIGIN *in affections of the nervous system*,” &c. &c.

Dr. Roget (anti-mesmerist) talks of “the influence of the nervous power controlling the actions of the blood-vessels, and more especially of the capillaries; and also those chemical changes which produce the evolution of animal heat, regulating in a peculiar manner the processes of secretion,” &c.

See the opinion of Dr. A. T. Thompson, page 85.

In a word, then, the cause of disease * is one,—disturbance of the brain-force ; and the cure of disease is one,—readjustment of the brain-force.

And, in fine, in spite of those whose ingenuity, or interest, or other quality, has led them to dictate to nature, and declare that no universal specific ever can, should, or shall exist,—the mesmeric process cures all diseases arising from disturbed function, by duly stimulating the brain-force, and regulating the nerval circulation,—that is to say, by supplying the organism with motive power to perform its proper actions, the result of which is HEALTH.

In other words, **MESMERISM, BY COMMANDING THE NERVOUS SYSTEM, CAN REGULATE ALL THE ORGANIC FUNCTIONS.**

And it seems no less consistent with the characteristics of the providential government, than adapted to the existing state of things, that this nervo-vital force, flowing from its battery, the brain, which keeps the organism in movement, should also be the curative force that readjusts its disturbed function ; and that the health-force should be capable of being imparted from one individual to another,—from him who has to spare to him in whom it is deficient,—so that the “one blood” may share, through all its members, the self-rectifying principle implanted in the race ;—the vital force of mankind thus designed to subserve, as it does in all other respects, the conditions of their brotherhood, by alleviating the universal suffering that precedes inevitable death.

* It may be presumed that organic disease, even when congenital, springs originally from functional aberration. Of course, when disease is induced in the system by the introduction of foreign bodies, the bodies must be removed before cure can be effected.

CHAPTER VI.

CONCERNING MESMERISM.

All diseases originate in deficiency of brain-force, or disturbance of it in the nerval currents; and Mesmerism cures them by readjusting it—Mesmerism can produce any organic movement that drugs can—The Mesmeric force illustrated by irrigation—It cannot cure certain organic diseases, yet its application is always beneficial—The time required for its application—It cures tumours, &c., by stimulating the absorbents—It cures inflammation by extracting the cause, which is over-supply of the brain-force—Inflammation illustrated—Cases related by Dr. Watson—Counter-irritation cures by regulating the brain-force—Wounds cured, by inflammatory action, in the same way—Drugs are useful—Continued during Mesmerism—Effects of prematurely stopping Mesmeric treatment—Mesmerism may be misapplied—Illustrious illustration—The Mesmeric process perfectly safe when properly applied—The Mesmeric sleep—Causes of insanity—Curable by Mesmerism—Dr. Keane's cases—Summary of the subject—Mesmerism an illustration of the simplicity of nature's laws.

To say, then, that one agent can cure maladies of apparently opposite characteristics—all pain complaints, convulsions, epilepsy, and all other fits, St. Vitus's dance, paralysis, and all nervous complaints, spine complaints, sleeplessness, dropsy, eye and ear complaints, sprains, sores, tumours, fever, measles, erysipelas, bronchitis, and other inflammations, stomach, liver, and chest complaints, loss of voice, asthma, incipient consumption,* &c., is

* In cases of "decline," that is, want of vital power, the mesmeric process should be immediately applied; it imparts the needed vigour, and prevents consumption. When the disease is more advanced, the action of Mesmerism is also curative, probably owing to its power of stimulating the absorbents. Even when considerable tubercular deposit had taken place, many cases have been completely cured.

equivalent to saying that all these diseases are merely symptoms of deranged nerval action, arising from one defect—a deficient supply, general or local, of the nervous energy, by which the organism performs its health-work ; and that the one agent can induce a sufficient flow of this curative brain-force to whatever organ has, for want of the same, been unable to perform its proper functions. Instead of employing a hundred drugs, each of which is capable of being applied to one symptom—stimulant or sedative, as needed to control the secreting organs, absorbents, &c.—one force is employed, which is capable of being applied to a hundred symptoms, so as to effect the same sanative purposes in a more complete manner.

In other words, all the *curative* actions which are effected by drugs can be effected by the mesmeric process, when the patient has been once brought fully under its influence. It can be applied so as to diminish or increase the action of the heart, to excite vomiting, purging, and so on. That is to say, it can control all the organic functions of the system, by regulating the nerval action on which they depend.

This fundamental truth is so important, that, although it has been already reiterated, one may be excused for impressing it by illustration :—

If in Egypt, owing to deficiency of water in the Nile, or to some disturbance in the irrigating channels, there were to be a cessation of that on which the vitality of the country depends, or if too much were to flow to one part, or too little to another, the result would be alike, more or less, destructive, though producing, it might be, very different local symptoms. But if there were a force at command of man's will, by which he could implement the water when required, and duly regulate its flow, it is

evident that these local symptoms might be speedily removed, and the whole process readjusted, by a befitting application of the one controlling force. And, it may be observed, the efficiency of such irrigation would not be dependent on Bruce's having discovered the sources of the vitalizing stream.

Nature may be said to irrigate man with a vitalizing stream—the brain-force—on the due supply of which the whole health-work of his organism depends; and, in furtherance of the same design, nature has provided a process by which that force can be implemented, and regulated in its nerval channels, so as to readjust all the functional aberrations of the system, that is, all diseased action, or the local symptoms of deficiency, or excess, or disturbance of the health-adjusting stream, whose efficacy does not depend on the success of dissecting Bruces. *It is the same, though anatomists, because they cannot reach its sources, may deem themselves qualified to deny its existence.*

But though this brain-force has power to readjust all functional aberrations of the system—as sufficiently evidenced by the TWELVE VOLUMES of the *Zoist*, of which Dr. Elliotson's opinion is already quoted, page 68—the mesmeric process cannot cure disease when *very considerable* change of structure has been induced; for it is evident that no supply of motive power can enable a wholly unfitted organ to do its work. For instance, it can cure the blindness arising from deficiency of nerval power, or from morbid growths on the eye; but it cannot cure the blindness arising from destruction of the necessary parts of the visual apparatus.

At the same time, though necessarily limited in its power, the *tendency* of Mesmerism is in all cases to cure—to

assist nature to rectify even diseased structure, by alike stimulating the absorbents, whose office is to remove what obstructs, and those parts of the system whose actions combine to rebuild.

And thus the Mesmerist has often been the means of curing what the Faculty have pronounced to be incurable. And, even when advanced change of structure forbids restoration to health, the mesmeric process retards the advance of disease by its beneficial effects on the general system—tending to alleviate, strengthen, and soothe, *without exciting any disturbing reaction.*

As this curative agent thus works merely by assisting the restorative process of nature, it is evident that the length of time which it may require to effect a cure must depend on the state of the organism whose process it is to assist.

When the complaint arises merely from some slight disturbance in the flow of the brain-force along the nerves, a few passes will restore the due circulation, and so effect a speedy cure. Thus acute rheumatism, or toothache, induced by the disturbing action of cold, may be dissipated in a few minutes. And even *apparently* serious complaints are sometimes removed as if by magic—the cause of the evil being merely a slight disturbance in the nerval circulation; the *vis medicatrix naturæ* requiring merely a directive influence in order that it may do its proper work.

But when the disease arises from deficiency of nervous energy, or deadness of the nerves that should convey it, or general torpor of the system—poisoned by depraved secretions, or an experimental course of exhausting drugs—longer treatment is required, proportioned to the circumstances of the case.

It is unreasonable to expect that a disease, which has been at work in the system for ten or twenty years, should be counter-worked in as many days; yet it sometimes does happen that patients, who have spent a large portion of their life in literally transforming themselves into an apothecary's cellar, condemn Mesmerism after giving it, what they call it, a "fair trial" of three or four weeks. Accustomed to the immediate action of violent drugs, they distrust Mesmerism, because its action, in their case, is slow, and, perhaps, at first imperceptible—strangely forgetting that they have had enough of violent effects, and that curative power does not necessarily depend on such. They should remember that the mesmeric process merely assists nature, in its own quiet and gradual way, to re-adjust the system, by stimulating and strengthening the organs to perform their functions, and so overpower what has obstructed them.*

Nature has provided that the destructive infection of disease may be counteracted by the restorative infection of health; but the one must be applied in proportion to the amount of the other. Mesmerism does effect astonishing cures; but it never performs a miracle. It cannot instantaneously promote the diseased system, through all the intervening steps, to the conditions of health; it merely assists it to take the steps necessary, in common circumstances, to the attainment of these conditions. And the victim of disease need not expect to be cured by Mesmerism, unless he will submit to have the length of its application measured by the necessities of his case. Days may be sufficient; but weeks, months, even years may be required. Dr. Elliotson took four years to cure a case of confirmed cancer.

* Cases of Mesmeric cure. See APPENDIX, No. IV.

As might be expected, diseased parts that are cured by stimulating the absorbents, are powerfully affected by Mesmerism. Under its influence, dropsy, cataract, tumours, &c., are often speedily absorbed. So powerful is its action in this respect, that it has induced most wonderful results. Both Dr. Elliotson and Dr. Esdaile have recorded that patients, who were undergoing a course of Mesmerism to prepare them for painless operation, were completely cured by the process,—nature being strengthened to right itself, without the assistance of the knife.

But whilst the applied action of Mesmerism thus stimulates and strengthens the system to do its health-work, it also assists the process in another way. Whilst man is enabled to impart nerval force to the part that has too little, he is also enabled to extract it from the part that is over-stimulated, by having too much. It is by this process, which is called the tractive or *withdrawing* pass, that the Mesmerist, for instance, cures inflammation, which is a diseasing or excessive action, induced by over-supply of what causes all vital action—nerval stimulus.

When a part is injured by some undue application—say by a piece of glass, the nerves of the part are excited, or stimulated to act more freely; and, by the nerval force being thus unduly concentrated in the part, an unnatural activity of function, or diseased action, is induced. The tissue is no longer in its natural state: it becomes * hot, red, and gorged with blood—the local circulation of the blood *being modified by the amount of nerval force in the*

* In some cases of inflammation, the sensation of heat is not experienced; and in others, it is greater than the actual increase of the temperature, and is differently felt, as Dr. Watson says of pain, "*cæteris paribus*, by different persons, according to their natural susceptibilities."

This same *sensation* of heat is also generally felt, more or less, when the nerval force is concentrated in a part by the mesmeric process.

part. At the same time, by being concentrated in one part of the system, the flow of the nerval force to other parts becomes *mis*-regulated, whereby the functions of distant organs are soon implicated in the general disturbance; whilst, in this general disturbance of the health-machinery, the blood itself becomes vitiated.

In the case supposed, the physician would try to terminate the inflammation by *resolution*,—that is, he would simply withdraw the piece of glass, hoping that, by removing the exciting cause, the system would resume its healthy work. But, if the inflammation has reached a certain intensity, the irritation of the injured tissue (even although the glass has been withdrawn) will continue to cause a concentration of nerval force in the affected part, whilst, consequent on that continued *mis*-regulation, the general disturbance of the system will still continue and increase.

In such circumstances, the physician cures the inflammation by employing means to lower the vital force, so as to diminish the power of the local nerve-action. That is to say, he bleeds the patient, or in some other way lowers him to the point of death, so that the action of the brain may become enfeebled, and, consequently, the cause of the inflammation be reduced, by the flow of nerval force being diminished,—putting the patient, as Dr. Watson says, “in the state which is most favourable for the *spontaneous* subsidence of the disease. . . . *The salutary acts of restoration are such as nature conducts and originates.*” And then the patient may recover, if he can,—if he has *vis medicatrix naturæ* enough, in a few months or years.

The Mesmerist cures the inflammation by holding his hand over the part, that is, by drawing out the excess of

nerval force *directly* from the part ; and, the cause being removed, the disease is cured in a few hours, or weeks, according to the case.

Of course, to think of applying the process with success, when the inflammation has been allowed to become very intense, and the general system greatly implicated, would be absurd, *unless the patient has been formerly brought fully under the influence of Mesmerism.* Such a state of disease requires active remedies ; and Mesmerism, except in *very* susceptible individuals, cannot act suddenly when the disease has induced such a state of organic disturbance, unless the patient can immediately be put into the deep sleep. On the other hand, when the inflammation is local,* the mesmeric process gives immediate relief, even if the patient has not been influenced by it before.†

That inflammation is caused by the concentration of the cerebral, or nerval force, that has been alluded to, and cured by whatever *reduces* the concentration, seems confirmed by the following cases, related by Dr. Watson in his Lectures, when we consider the power which cold possesses of dispersing the brain-force, or reversing it in the nerval currents :—“ A strong plethoric child, five years old, after being for one day feverish, oppressed, and restless, fell rather suddenly into a state of perfect coma. She had been in that state about an hour when Dr. Abercrombie saw her. She lay stretched on her back motionless, and completely insensible ; *her face flushed and turgid.* She was raised into a sitting posture, and, a

* For instance, in bronchitis, mesmeric application gives immediate relief.

† This may be as easily denied as any other fact. It can also be easily proved. The author invites any sceptical gentleman to put a piece of glass in his finger, and call for him next day.

basin being held under her chin, a stream of cold water was directed against the crown of her head. In a few minutes, or rather seconds, she was completely recovered; and the next day was in her usual health. . . . Andral mentions his attending, with another physician, (M. Requier,) a young man who laboured under all the symptoms of acute inflammation of the brain. Cold water was made to drop slowly upon his head, and complete recovery took place, although no other active treatment of any kind was adopted."

Again, in talking of the opinion of some that inflammation arises from, or is modified by the state of the blood vessels, Dr. Watson says,—“The inquiry might be more properly directed, I think, toward *the vital condition of the nerves* of the part: BUT HERE WE ARE WHOLLY IN THE DARK.” Why will Dr. Watson not *condescend* to study nerval action as displayed in the living system by mesmeric phenomena?

Again, Dr. Watson says,—“The application of external *cold* will aid us very powerfully in certain serious cases of inflammation; and especially in cases of inflammation within the cranium. It is really wonderful what a sedative and soothing effect this expedient frequently has in allaying delirium, the result of active inflammation of the brain and its membranes.” And why will cold thus aid us? Simply because it can control “the vital condition of the nerves,”—driving or *repelling* the concentrated cerebral force from the brain.

And again, Dr. Watson says,—“The totally opposite measure, that of applying *warmth* to the surface, is of very great service in many cases of internal inflammation, especially in inflammations of the abdominal organs.” And why? simply because *warmth* draws, or *attracts* the con-

centrated nerval force from the internal seat of inflammation to the surface-nerves.

And, on the same principle, counter-irritation effects cures by giving regulation to the nerval currents. That is to say, one inflammation is made to attract to itself the cause of another ; an irritating substance is applied to one part, so as to stimulate the nerves of that part to increased activity, whereby they draw to that part, more or less, the nerval force that has been unduly concentrated in another.

And again, wounds are cured on the same principle, by irritating action ! a slight inflammation is set up, which, by stimulating the local nerves, induces a flow of nerval force to the part, *sufficient* to excite the vital action necessary to secure adhesion.

These remarks are merely made as necessary to illustrate the power of nature's curative force. And it will be observed, that what has been advanced in favour of the mesmeric process—as possessed, on the whole, of a superior curative power, not only by regulating the nerval force, on which health depends, but by implementing it—has not been advanced with any wish to depreciate the beneficial application of drugs. They, also, like all things provided by nature, are designed for man's benefit. And in many cases, owing to peculiarities of circumstances and constitution, their exhibition becomes imperative ; and, in skilful hands, may produce as beneficial results as it is too evident that in unskilful hands they can produce the contrary.

Who would wish that there were no lawyers, because many cases might be more advantageously arranged without their services ? The physician also has his appropriate province, and it is not his fault if men, who might cure

each other with nature's common gift, *will* call him in in cases where he can only make bad worse.

No doubt, if a member of every family knew how to mesmerize, and would apply the process *when the first symptom* of miswork in the organism appeared, physicians should have very little to do. But, in the present state of things, they need be under no uneasiness; like Milton's Adam, when the angels discarded him, "the world is all before them where to choose." Yet the world may be allowed to hope, for its own sake as well as that of the profession, that the time may come when the Faculty will be shorn of at least two-thirds of its members. "Things," says the allopathic Dr., now Sir John Forbes, speaking of medical practice, "things have come to such a pass that they cannot be worse. They must mend or end."

The expression of the above hope may be backed by a quotation from Sir William Hamilton's *Discussions*:—
"Even medical men themselves are, in general, equally careless and incompetent judges as the public at large, of all high accomplishment in their profession. Medicine they cultivate not as a *science*, but as a *trade*; are indifferent to all that transcends the sphere of vulgar practice; and affect to despise what they are unable to appreciate. . . . Medicine has now ceased in Scotland to be a learned profession; and though, even in Scotland, learned medical men may still be found, there is here no longer any assurance, not to say of superior erudition, but any guarantee against the lowest ignorance afforded to the public in a medical degree. . . . By the reduction of the physician to an unlearned practitioner, it is not medicine only, as a liberal study, which has suffered; it is not only that the bodies of the lieges have been turned over to the murderous confidence of ignorant dogmatics," &c. &c.

Of course, when medicines are employed, during mesmeric treatment especially, the more they approach the infinitesimal in character the better;—that is to say, it is desirable that the dose should effect its object without disturbing the rest of the system. However, though the less that the nervous system is disturbed either by physical or mental annoyances, it will be more freely effected by the mesmeric process, it may be observed, that the mesmeric process does not interfere with the action of drugs.

When stating that, from peculiar circumstances, there are many cases in which medicines act beneficially, it should be distinctly understood that, *as a general rule*, doctors seem to have discarded them altogether during mesmeric treatment. In the many various cases of mesmeric cure effected by eminent physicians, recorded in the *Zoist*, drugs, almost without exception, were disused, as they were found to retard the recovery.

The objection to medicines being exhibited during a course of Mesmerism, be it observed, is confined to such as act violently, or disturb the nervous system.

But whether medicines be employed or not, it is essential, in order to effect cure, that the mesmeric process be continued for a sufficient time.

Patients are sometimes apt to stop a course of treatment prematurely, on finding their strength returning, and their disease somewhat subdued. Perhaps they think that it is no longer necessary; perhaps, stranger still, because it is accompanied by no such uneasy signs as testify to the working of drugs,* they think that *it* is doing them no good, and that the complaint has merely changed

* Mesmerism, however, during its first applications, sometimes aggravates the symptoms in peculiar cases.

its mind, and is going to cure itself. In such circumstances, one of two things will take place. If sufficient impulse has been given by the mesmeric course to the brain, the patient will go on improving, especially if he has the stimulus of change of scene and pleasing mental excitement till a cure is effected; but more likely the disease, still lingering in the constitution, after a few months the brain, gradually losing the impulse that was supplied by the mesmeric process, will cease to provide the requisite curative force, and in consequence the organs will again become disturbed in the performance of their functions, the disease resuming its former power.

“ A great impediment to the successful issue of mesmeric treatment in private practice, as well as in our hospitals, is the expectation of a rapid, or even immediate cure, or of the production of sleep or some other phenomenon. We not unfrequently cure with astonishing rapidity, but we have shown that in the larger number of cases the cure is progressive. We not unfrequently produce sleep, and at an early stage, too, of the treatment, but persons must remember that we every day witness cures when, however long the treatment was continued, there had been no sleep, nor any other effect than the cure of the disease or the improvement of the health.”—*Report of the London Mesmeric Infirmary, 1855.*

Even after the complaint appears to be subdued, there are many cases in which the patient must continue for some time to be *occasionally* mesmerized. To insure its health-work, the system must be *completely readjusted* in its normal strength.

“ Some of our medical friends who do not say that we do not cure, or that we do any harm, or that we work by means of Satan, tell their patients that our cures are not

permanent. Now, our cures are permanent if we have fair play—if we are allowed to continue Mesmerism for a sufficient time after a cure is effected. No good mesmerizer would willingly desist as soon as a cure is effected, any more than a good physician would leave off quinine as soon as an ague has ceased.”—*Report of London Mesmeric Infirmary, 1855.*

As already remarked, there are cases in which the application of Mesmerism is not immediately appreciated, although its results are beneficial. When it has been applied for a few days, even to apparently dying patients, without producing immediate effect, the process has sometimes been stopped by unbelieving friends; yet the result showed that the constitutions of the patients had received an impulse that enabled them to rally in a most wonderful manner. Mesmerism has also often greatly ameliorated the agonies of approaching dissolution.

“But is the process perfectly safe?” asks the drug-doubting patient, trying to palter with his dread of offending the doctor. “Are you sure that it can do no harm?” In reply, it may be asked, “Is it not a necessary condition, as well as satisfactory proof, of any power that it may do harm *when misapplied?*” Mesmerism may be misapplied.

“When persons inquire of me whether Mesmerism is not a dangerous thing, I always reply that I am happy to say it is. They look astonished, and I continue,—Because, if it were not dangerous, it would not be a real power in nature. A nonentity, an unreal, though alleged power of nature, can do no harm; but all real powers of nature will work readily for evil, if misapplied.”—*Dr. Elliotson.*

“Mesmerism, like other powerful natural agents, not only is a remedy, but becomes a cause of disease *when*

abused. This artificial disease is not so transitory and light a matter as it seems to be reckoned by many mesmerizers who go about upsetting the nerves of healthy people," &c.—*Dr. Esdaile.*

"Animal magnetism is dangerous. But it is not the study of it, nor the knowledge of it, but ignorance of it, and the rash experiments of those who are ignorant of it, that are dangerous."—*Professor Gregory.*

This truth, like all others connected with Mesmerism, has had ample illustration.

For instance, a celebrated gentleman in Edinburgh, who used to enliven his tea-parties by making ladies intoxicated with chloroform, (and none had a better right,) attempted to vary the entertainment by introducing Mesmerism. At one of these parties, a brother *savant* put his inquiring penknife through the hand of the sleeping subject, who, passing into another state, to the astonishment of the scientific tea-room, made the exhibitor look somewhat like him who throws about firebrands, arrows, and death, and calls it sport. On another occasion, a gentleman was put into a state that required five others to hold him down—actually as friendly carters do an unfortunate horse, to get the bungling driver out of a scrape. And then the learned company, satisfied with their *investigations*, dispersed to spread medical reports about the awful dangers of Mesmerism.

With a like zeal, whatever the motive, some years ago, in the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, some medical *inquirers*, to their great satisfaction, mesmerized a woman into convulsions. And there are several reports of delirium having been induced in a most unwarrantable manner. But such result is not the fault of Mesmerism, but of those who, being practically ignorant of

it,* rashly apply it, and then presumptuously condemn it. Learned men should know that no experiment of any sort can succeed, unless the requisite conditions are observed.

In describing some such case of mesmeric disturbance, Dr. Elliotson observes,—“ This case should be a warning of the danger of ignorant and inexperienced persons trifling with such a powerful agent as Mesmerism.” “ Power,” says Dr. Bell in his *Animal Electricity*, “ united with ignorance, is like a loaded pistol in the hands of a child.”

And the eminent German physician, Dr. Hufeland, says,—“ We do not know either the essence or the limits of this astonishing power; whoever, then, undertakes to direct this power, let him enter upon the duty with the most profound respect for the principle which he endeavours to set in operation. Above all, *let him beware of magnetizing in sport*. In medicine, the most indifferent remedy is injurious to persons in health; still more so is an agent which is perhaps the most active and energetic of all remedies.”

But whilst liable to be dangerous when abused, just because it is one of the agencies which assist the universal beneficence of nature, by promoting the welfare of man—in the hands of him who knows what should be done, and how to do it, the Mesmeric process is one of PERFECT SAFETY.

“ Be it remembered that Mesmerism is perfectly innocent; never killed anybody; and never produced inconvenience except from ignorance and mismanagement.”—*Dr. Elliotson*. And Professor Gregory says, talking of the dangers of Mesmerism, “ I do not know of any instance

* A man may even have cured patients with Mesmerism, and yet be ignorant of the modes of regulating its power.

of such results in the hands of a judicious operator, well acquainted with the practice of it."

As might be expected, great prejudices exist against the mesmeric sleep, in consequence of the gross mis-statements and calumnies that have been propagated by the blundering experimenters and interested enemies of Mesmerism. But still it is the sweetest of all sleeps; and the candid inquirer, before he denies this, would do well to ask the opinion of any one *who has experienced it*. It is the restorative reality of what Shakspeare set in ideal before the murderer's brain—that felt what it required, when function was so smothered in surmise that his seated heart beat at his ribs, against the use of nature :—

" The innocent sleep ;
Sleep, that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast."

That this "sweet oblivious antidote" should in many cases be peculiarly serviceable in the most calamitous of all diseases, might be predicted from the nature of the brain.

Diseased structure of brain is not the only cause of insanity. If it were, the patient would have no lucid interval, and the cause of the disease would always be found on dissection. But the reverse of this is notoriously the case. Many patients have had lucid intervals, whose brains, on being dissected, gave no sign of what had caused their diseased action. The disease was merely, well named, *a derangement* of the imponderable brain-force.

As the brain-force, by being unduly concentrated in any organ of the body, causes over-activity of function, or

mis-work of some kind, so, by being unduly concentrated in any part of the brain, it causes disturbance in the functions related to that part of the brain, physical or mental, as the case may be.

Without entering on the subject of phrenology here, it is enough to know that there is such intimate connexion between the mind and the brain, that disturbance in either causes disturbance in the other. Action of mind affects the brain, and action of the brain affects the mind. Structural disease of the brain involves confirmed mental aberration; and derangement of the brain-force involves derangement of mental manifestation, in proportion to the amount and continuance of the cause. As the mesmeric process can readjust the functions of any organ of the body, by regulating the motive power, or brain-force, on which these functions depend, so it can readjust the functions dependent on healthy cerebral action; whilst at the same time, be it observed, it regulates the venous circulation, whose blood-vessels in the brain—having peculiar adaptation, and a confirmation peculiar to themselves—depend for their healthy action on the healthy state of the brain-force, with which they are surrounded.

That it is possible to cure mental derangement by re-adjusting that stimulus on which the functions of the brain depend, that is, by employing the process which *duly regulates* the brain-force or motive power of cerebral action, is no longer matter of hypothesis. It has been sufficiently proved that the mesmeric process, which can regulate the brain-force on the conducting nerves, can also regulate its action in the brain—stimulating or modifying it, as the case requires, and readjusting it in the conditions of health.

Dr. Kean, writing to Dr. Esdaile, says, concerning his

Lunatic Asylum at Berhampore,—“Taking a hasty glance over the years 1847 and 1848, I see that about seventy-four patients were mesmerized, and that of these, sixty-four were discharged cured to all appearance, and I think it has been successful in every case of epilepsy.”

Mesmeric cures of derangement, or functional insanity, are now frequently effected in England. Interesting cases, by Dr. Elliotson and others, will be found recorded in the *Zoist*; to which the author can add the testimony of his own experience.

The summary of what has been advanced is,—Every movement which takes place in the human body, is originated, directly or indirectly, by the stimulus conveyed by the nervous system. This stimulus or force, on which vitality depends, is provided by the brain, or its continuation, the spinal cord, from which it flows along the nerves or cerebral conductors. All functional aberration is the consequence of some disturbance, or *mis*-circulation of this vital force. Medicines are curative in so far as they stimulate the brain, and *regulate* its force, along the cerebral conductors, so as to impel the disturbed organ to healthy action. Mesmerism effects this, except in peculiar circumstances, in a more efficient, because more direct and certain manner; and because, whilst it stimulates the brain and regulates the nerval currents, it also implements the vital action by imparting a supply of the needed force.

In short, nature has provided that healthy organic function shall depend on a due supply of brain-force; and nature has also enabled men to communicate such supply one to another. And that the brain-force should be capable of being so communicated is not more wonderful than that it should exist at all. Being designed to regu-

late health, it exists in the conditions most fitted to fulfil the design.

That this natural process should so accord with the uniform simplicity of nature, is what makes it obnoxious to the prejudices of those who—having decreed that their college traditions shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—have been so trained in the intricate art of cross-drugging their patients, and summing up the evidence for further consultation, that they have come to believe that the complexity of remedial means *must* always be in proportion to the complexity of the disease. Driving their pleasant chariots, in the old ruts of the triumphal march of M.D., they naturally disdain and calumniate the presumptuous *parvenu* who—by curing their incurables—too convincingly proclaims that much of their hereditary acquirement, that has cost them so much, and their patients so much more, is worse than useless, “founded on conjecture, and improved by murder,” Sir Astley Cooper says; and that the whole idea of their scholastic method has been founded on error, or at least partial knowledge; because they have never employed that process which alone, by being applied to the living subject, can reveal the connexion between nerval power and organic action: the law that governs the health-movements of the organism being as simple as the law that governs the complex planetary system—a centralized force acting on fitness of parts.

Non-professional interference is, of course, a piece of insolence never to be forgiven, especially if it has exposed professional impotence and determination to resist the truth. But, to use the words of the Rev. George Sandby,—“Here, then, is our answer to the medical sceptic, who

tauntingly rejects our testimony as non-professional. We cannot, to please him, give the lie to nature. We cannot, to serve his views, suppress our own facts and convictions. Nay, with all deference be it added, it seems a question, according to Burke and Arnold, whether we, perchance, may not be as well qualified as himself for coming to an opinion. At any rate, as we have studied the subject, and he has not, some little respect might surely be felt for our experience, backed as it is by the strong corroborative proof afforded by some of the ablest in his own vocation."

Doctors who admit that their theory of health and disease does not resolve the problem, or who fearlessly assert that it never can be solved, should remember that scholastic erudition, however great and time-honoured, *may* be founded on error;* and that, in such circumstances, when the true theory is announced, it will at least be no presumption against it that it is chiefly countenanced, as best appreciated, by those who have not been prejudiced against it, by being trained in the professional status arising from, and *depending on*, such honoured erudition with its time-established errors.

All professions are naturally opposed to the improvement that would cancel their former acquirements. And it may console the Faculty—in the midst of their many performances in that line—to remember that, when the law of gravitation was discovered, many of the *savants*

* "Men now of middle age find the whole face of physiology to have changed since they were students, and the most important parts of the change are quite recent. They cannot but learn from this to abstain from the premature endeavours yet to construct imperishable theories, and to be content still to observe and to record. The veil which surrounds our senses is but gradually and slowly permitted to be withdrawn, and it is neither useful nor wise to hasten to positive conclusions, as if we had already seen all the glorious things that are behind it; and which, if ever fully to be known by man, successive men and ages will alone be permitted to disclose."—*Lancet*, Oct. 20, 1849. See Dr. Forbes's *Opinion*, p. 18.

who had been trained to believe in the mysterious theory of vortices, and other scholastic erudition of venerable date, deemed Newton a madman ; whilst, it is said, the manuscript of the *Principia* lay for ten years in the hands of Flamsteed, the astronomer-royal, and was first introduced to public notice in France, by a lady.

There is still one subject connected with Mesmerism which has not been alluded to,—a subject that has given ample scope for the ignorant, or unthinking, or malignant, to throw what ridicule, contempt, and infamy they could command, on the whole curative process with which it is connected ; and yet it is one of the most wonderful truths that nature has revealed in connexion with the human species.

The subject will be considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

CLAIRVOYANCE.

The objectors to clairvoyance—Their humility—They begin to investigate Mesmerism at the wrong end—Their reason for doing so—Sir W. Hamilton's opinion of clairvoyance—Clairvoyant power of natural somnambulists—Clairvoyance induced by disease—Natural clairvoyants—Second sight—Clairvoyant dreaming—The testimony of Mesmerists the most unexceptionable—Conditions of clairvoyance—Eye-sight as incomprehensible as clairvoyance—Nerval communication cannot be effected through the medium of light without an eye, but it can through another medium—The use of clairvoyance—Its adaptation to another state—Illustration.

“THIS phenomenon is the great stumblingblock. Some boldly declare that they never *will* believe it, forgetting that belief is involuntary, and that, on sufficient evidence, they must, if they attend to that evidence, believe it. In my opinion, after reading, I will not say the whole recorded evidence, but as much of it as I could procure, the recorded evidence of the fact is sufficient. But I have never expressed that belief, until after I had seen it myself. Now, I have observed two things among those highly estimable persons who do not yet admit the fact of direct clairvoyance. The first is, that they are, in general, quite unacquainted with the recorded evidence: the second is, that their objections, when sifted, always assume ultimately the shape of an assertion, that it is impossible, or that, as it cannot be accounted for, it must be rejected. I might add a third, namely, that these persons have rarely,

if ever, investigated the matter for themselves. Now, I do not quarrel with the philosophic caution which declines to adopt an entirely new and startling fact, unless on unexceptionable evidence, or on ocular demonstration. But when the witnesses are numerous, their character unimpeached, and the fact not physically or mathematically impossible, caution is not entitled to go further than to say, 'I am not satisfied; I must inquire into these things.' The most cautious philosopher has no right absolutely to reject facts thus attested, because he cannot see their explanation; and, above all, he has no right to brand the witnesses with a charge of deceit or imposition, *without full and careful inquiry*. If he will not, or cannot investigate, let him, in decency, be silent. I do not invent, I speak of what happens every day; and I say that those men of science who, declining to investigate, have nevertheless fulminated denial and accusations of falsehood against those who have investigated, have not acted on the golden rule, 'Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you,' and their conduct is as illogical and irrational as it is unjust and impolitic.

"But while I protest against this conduct, on the part of men of science, who ought to know better, I make every allowance for those not trained to scientific pursuits, many of whom, unwittingly confounding belief and understanding, really have a difficulty in admitting anything for which a plausible explanation cannot be found."—*Professor Gregory*.

"The presumptuous scepticism which rejects facts without caring to *examine* them, is, in many respects, even more destructive than uncritical credulity."—*Humboldt*.

The orthodox opposer of clairvoyance is always an individual of the greatest humility, who does not aspire to

know more than is level to the plain common sense of mankind, yet who talks, withal, as if conscious that the whole ocean of truth—from which Newton could only filch a stone or two—lay on the corner of his own little property, and that he had sounded its depths, chartered its currents, and arranged the sailing of all future generations.—“ I have not seen it, sir! and *my* noted friend, Humdrum, has not seen it, sir! and therefore it never has been seen, sir!” And so, with a wave of the hand, he sweeps all the evidences in its favour from the face of the earth.

That clairvoyance is recognised as a fact by *practical* mesmerists who have most opportunity of encountering it, is at least some presumption in its favour; and it may be reasonably asked, Why certain *investigators* begin their study of mesmeric phenomena at the wrong end? Why do they rush to the last and most complicated proposition, instead of following the order of nature, by commencing with the prior and more simple ones? Why attempt to read the mystery when they know not the A B C of the writing? The Rev. C. H. Townshend gives the answer:—“ Precisely because there is no *argumentum ad hominem* so forcible as personal practice; precisely for the same reason that they choose the most rare and difficult proofs of Mesmerism, when common and easy ones would be adequate to convince any reasonable person; precisely for the same reason that they are glad when an experiment has *not* succeeded,—that reason is, that they are anti-mesmerists and *wish to remain so*. They are not in earnest either in *desiring to know* anything about Mesmerism, or in seeking to investigate it with us as friends.”

“ What do you think of Mesmerism?” a well-drugged lady asks her doctor, who has attended her daily, in the

most disinterested manner, for fifteen years. "Pooh, pooh," says the learned gentleman, "sad stuff—clairvoyance, table-turning, spirit-rapping!"*—"But its curative power, doctor?"—"Pooh, pooh, my dear," chimes in the intellectual husband, "spirit-rapping, table-turning, clairvoyance—sad stuff!" Allowing the learning and intellect of these gentlemen to pass for what they are worth, the two following quotations deserve some consideration:—Lord Bacon says, "It certainly is agreeable to reason that there are some light effluxions from spirit to spirit *when men are in presence one with another*, as well as *from body to body*. . . . Men who have looked deeply into the hidden nature of things, the transmissions from one body to another, and the magnetic forces, have agreed that the human mind can be placed in communication with other minds, and transmit them impressions." And Sir William Hamilton (Edinburgh University) says, "However astonishing, it is now proved, *beyond all rational doubt*, that in certain abnormal states of the nervous organism, perceptions are possible through other than the ordinary channels of the senses."

After reading these two extracts, the denier of clairvoyance—who scorns it as an absurdity, because it is contrary to his maxims, and principles, and hypotheses—is requested to ponder the following sentences:—"The knowledge of bodies we must get by our senses, warily employed in taking notice of their qualities and operations on one another. He that shall consider how little general maxims, precarious principles, and hypotheses *laid down at pleasure*, have promoted true knowledge or helped to

* In "putting down" Mesmerism, no absurdity is too great to be made use of. Drug-drinking, especially in the shape of alcohol, is more likely to have connexion with spirit-rapping.

satisfy the inquiries of rational men after real improvements; how little, I say, *the setting out at that end* has, for many ages together, advanced men's progress towards the knowledge of natural philosophy, will think we have reason to thank those who, in this latter age, have taken another course, and have trode out to us, though not an easier way to *learned ignorance*, yet a surer way to profitable knowledge."—*Locke*.

"In reflecting," Dugald Stewart says, "on the repeated reproduction of ancient paradoxes by modern authors, &c. &c., one is almost tempted to suppose that human invention is limited, like a barrel organ, to a specific number of tunes. But is it not a fairer inference, that the province of pure imagination, unbounded as it may at first sight appear, is narrow when compared with the regions opened up by truth and nature to our powers of observation and reason? Prior to the time of Bacon, the physical sciences performed their periodical revolutions in orbits as small as the metaphysical hypotheses of their successors; and yet, who would now set *any bounds* to our curiosity in the study of the material universe?"

Lord Bacon says, "We have set it down as a law to ourselves, to examine things to the bottom, and not to receive upon credit, or *reject upon improbabilities*, until there hath passed a due examination."

"But why were eyes given to men," asks the triumphant opponent, "if they can see without them?" Leaving him the rare satisfaction of answering his own question, we can merely inform him that it is a fact that men have sometimes a power equivalent to vision when their eyes are shut.

The following quotation on this subject, by the Rev. C. H. Townshend, is interesting:—"But the most valu-

able contribution of Arago to our science is the following hypothesis, whereby he not only undertakes to explain, but to shew the *à priori* possibility of, anomalous vision. He says,—‘If the Newtonian system of vibrations be true, one must irrevocably admit that a ray ceases to be light from the moment that its quickness is either increased or diminished, even in the ten-thousandth degree. Thence we may derive conjectures, not only natural, but worthy of the strictest verification. All men do not see by means of the same rays. Marked differences may exist in this respect, even in the same individual, according to the different states of nerves in which he may be. It is possible that the calorific rays, which convey no light to one person, may be the luminous rays that do convey light to another; and *vice versa*. The calorific rays freely pass through certain substances, which are called diathermanous. These substances used formerly to be called *opaque*, because they transmit no ray which is generally luminous; but, at the present time, the words *opaque* and *diathermanous* have no positive meaning. Diathermanous bodies allow passage to the rays which constitute the light of some persons; but bar passage to the rays which constitute the light of other persons. Perhaps, following up this idea, we may find the key to many phenomena which as yet remain without any plausible explanation—

‘ Croire tout découvert est une erreur profonde :
C'est prendre l'horizon pour les bornes du monde.’ ”

It is a *fact* that natural somnambulists, without using their eyes, do give evidence of possessing a power equivalent to vision.

That no less philosophic observer than eminent physician, the late Dr. Abercrombie, gives many cognate cases, such as,—“ A child of four years of age underwent

the operation of trepanning *while in a state of profound stupor*, from a fracture of the skull. After his recovery he retained no recollection either of the operation or the accident; yet, at the age of fifteen, *during the delirium of a fever*, he gave his mother an exact description of the operation, of the persons present, their dress, and many other minute particulars." "An eminent lawyer had been consulted respecting a case of great difficulty and importance, and, after several days of intense attention to the subject, he got up in his sleep and wrote a long paper. The following morning he told his wife that he had had a most interesting dream, and that he would give anything to recover the train of thought which had then passed through his mind. She directed him to his writing-desk, when he found his opinion *clearly and luminously written out.*"

Innumerable cases might be cited: The inquirer will find a very remarkable one, by the Archbishop of Bordeaux, in the great French Encyclopædia. (See also Dr. Elliotson's *Human Physiology*, and Colquhoun's *Isis Revelata*, and Dr. Wienholt's *Lectures on Somnambulism.*)

And all these somnambulists performed what they did with their eyes closed, by memory! They remembered how to do things that they could not do when awake; and how to write out essays, and turn back a page, and read it over, (with a board held between them and the paper,) and, *at the proper place*, interline a word which had been omitted; and so on. Well done, memory! you are at least as wonderful as clairvoyance.

It is a *fact* that the same power is evoked by certain diseases.

Dr. Esdaile says, that many such cases are related in Dr. Petetin's work, published at Lyons in 1808. The

author (who had a great aversion to Mesmerism) relates, in great detail, numerous experiments made by him upon many cataleptic patients, among whom he had remarked that the seat of all the sensations was transported to the epigastrium, and to the points of the fingers.—“ His chair slipped, and he fell forward upon the bed while he was saying, ‘ It is very unfortunate that I cannot prevent this woman from singing!’ The patient, who had hitherto been *deaf to the loudest noises*, heard these words when pronounced near the pit of her stomach, and said,—‘ Do not be troubled, doctor, I will sing no more.’ Astonished at this new marvel, and especially at the cataleptic not answering him when he had reseated himself in his chair, he replaced himself in the position he was in when pronouncing the first words—that is, with his mouth close to her stomach, and in this position she again heard him : finally, after making numerous experiments, he was satisfied that the sense of hearing had been transported to the pit of the stomach, and to the extremities of the fingers and toes. He did not confine himself to the first discovery,” &c.

Professor Dumas says, “ It is possible that, by a singular concurrence of circumstances, certain organs may become capable of exercising properties, and fulfilling functions, to which they have hitherto been strangers, and which even belonged to different organs. . . . Five years ago, a young woman from the department of Ardèche, who gave an example of a very strange phenomenon, came to Montpellier to consult the doctors for a hysteric affection, attended with catalepsy. She referred all the sensations of sight, hearing, and smell, to the region of the stomach, the *appropriate organs being insensible to their usual stimuli.*”

Sir G. S. Mackenzie, Bart., published, in 1843, a case of hysteria, of which the following is an extract:—"All colours she can distinguish with the greatest correctness by night or day, whether presented to her on cloth, silk, muslin, wax, or even glass—and this, I may safely say, as easily on any part of the body as with the hands, although, of course, the ordinary routine of such an exhibition of power takes place with the hands, the other being that of mere curiosity. Her delicacy of mind and high tone of religious feeling are such, that she has the greatest objection to make that which she regards in the light of a heavy affliction from God, a matter of show or curiosity to others, although to ourselves, of course, all these unusual extravagances of nervous sensibility are manifest for at least twelve out of every twenty-four hours. She can not only read with the greatest rapidity any writing or print that is legible to us, music, &c., with the mere passage of her fingers over it, whether in a dark or light room, (for her *sight* is for the most part suspended when under the influence of the attack or paroxysm, although she is perfectly *sensible*, nay, more *acute* and *clever* than in her natural state,) but, within this month past, she has been able to collect the contents of any printing or MS., by merely laying her hand on the page, without *tracing* the lines or letters; and I saw her, last night only, declare the contents of a note just brought into the room, in this way, (when I could not decipher it myself without a candle,) and with a rapidity with which I could not have read it by daylight. I have seen her develop handwriting by the application of a note to the back of her hand, neck, or foot; and she can do it at any time. There is nothing *unnatural* in this; for, of course, the nervous susceptibility extends all over the surface of

the body, but use and habit cause us to limit its power more to the fingers. Many, even medical men, take upon themselves to declare that *we* are all (her medical attendants as well) under a mere delusion. We ask none to believe anything if they prefer not to do so, and only reply,—The case is equally marvellous either way; either that this our poor patient should be thus afflicted, or that eighteen or nineteen persons of my family and friends, in the daily habit of seeing her, should fancy she is, for every twelve hours out of twenty-four, doing at intervals, that which she is *not* doing. There are many exhibitions of extravagant powers which she possesses, that we talk of to no one; for, finding it difficult to acquire credit for lesser things, we do not venture on the greater. *Her power ceases the moment the attack passes off. . . .* Between the attacks she is as perfectly in a *natural* state as ever she was in her life. There is but one *paradox* in her state, and that is, that she can at such times hear *some* sounds and not *others*, though very much louder,—and see some things and not others, though placed before her. She could hear a tune whistled, when she would not hear a gun fired close to her. It is certainly the absorption or absence of mind that occasions this: *absent* to some things, though *present* to others, like *any* absent man; and thus Dr. Y—— accounts for it.” It may be observed that the *paradox* alluded to is sometimes found in mesmeric clairvoyants, who have, therefore, been called impostors by certain individuals who cannot condescend to receive nature as it exists.

Such cases are not so rare as is the desire of medical men to become acquainted with them.

It is a *fact* that the same power has been experienced in the normal state of the system.

The famous Zschokke, whose veracity is unimpeachable, says, "It has happened to me sometimes on my first meeting with strangers, as I listened silently to their discourse, that their former life, with many trifling circumstances therewith connected, or frequently some particular scene in that life, has passed quite involuntarily, and as it were dreamlike, yet perfectly distinct, before me."*—See an account of him in *Chambers's Journal*, vol. iv. No. 1.

Other instances might be adduced. The following extract may be added to show how the Faculty inquire into such cases:—"A case of spontaneous clairvoyance occurred in the person of a Miss M'Avoy at Liverpool, about thirty years ago. Dr. Renwick published a faithful account of it, but was *so persecuted by his brethren that he lost his practice and died broken-hearted*. Besides genuine clairvoyance, there was possibly superstition and pretence. But the portion of solid truth was flung to the winds. A practitioner had an hysterical case in which the patient read every letter—not every word in mass—backwards; and he mentioned it to Sir Astley Cooper, who anxiously advised him as a friend not to mention the *fact*, as it would do him harm."—*Zoist*, vol. viii. p. 26.

"As I said, we are all groping among mysteries and wonders. Besides, one soul may have a decided influence upon another, merely by its silent presence, of which I could relate many instances. It has often happened to me that, when I have been walking with an acquaintance, and have had a living image of something in my mind, he has at once begun to speak of that very thing. I have also known a man who, without saying a word, could suddenly silence a party engaged in cheerful con-

* Sympathy, or community of thought and feeling, is among the phenomena of clairvoyance,—although all clairvoyants have not that capability.

versation, by the mere power of his mind. Nay, he could also introduce a tone which would make everybody uncomfortable. We have all something of electrical and magnetic forces within us, and we put forth, like the magnet itself, an attractive or repulsive power, according as we come in contact with something similar or dissimilar."

—*Conversations of Goethe.*

It is customary to deny the existence of second sight, by way of getting rid of the difficulty; but that such a power has often been exhibited, though sometimes only partially developed, is beyond question. The very traditions of the thing, however exaggerated, prove the fact. "There can, I think," says Professor Gregory, "be little doubt that the second sight is also a phenomenon depending on animal magnetism, that is, on spontaneous lucidity. . . . I know that, in certain persons, extreme voluntary concentration, or reverie, may alike produce the conscious lucid state, and that persons unknown to the seer may then be seen."

"A man may appear ridiculous, if he expresses his belief in any particular story, to those who know nothing of it but its strangeness. And there is no doubt that human folly and human fraud are mixed up largely with most accounts of wonders. Yet, to say that all recorded wonders are false, from those recorded by Herodotus down to the latest *reports of animal magnetism*, would be a boldness of assertion wholly unjustifiable and extravagant. . . . We should consider whether the accounts are of force enough to lead us to search for some law hitherto undiscovered, *to which they may all be referred*, and become hereafter the *foundation of a new science.*"—*Arnold's Lectures.*

"If some *fables* have been received as *truths*, there are

probably many *truths*, disguised by circumstances, which have been generally *rejected as fabulous*."—*Colquhoun's Preface to Wienholt*.

As might be expected, many who have no clairvoyant power when awake, have, more or less, when asleep. How many a dream is called a strange coincidence! It is true that strange coincidences do occur; but that a person should dream of what is taking place at that moment, miles distant, and correctly describe the details, their sequency, &c., on awaking! "Oh! of course, the dreamer merely knew beforehand something that was expected to happen, and fancied the details," says the objector. But may the objector not be fancying? In many a dream that proved to be true, the incidents were wholly unexpected, even by the actors themselves, and the actors were quite unknown to the dreamer. Most people have heard of such among their acquaintance. The author can only say that he knows several such remarkable dreams or histories that occurred to his friends, which they themselves did not believe till found to be true. It is passing strange that their waking thoughts never evolved such coincidences.

But passing these, it is a *fact* that the same power is evoked in certain mesmeric states. And it is presumptuous in any one to deny that it is, merely because he *fancies* it to be impossible, when it is supported by the testimony of such men as Sir William Hamilton. Such states are comparatively rare, and therefore comparatively seldom seen, but it is enough that they have been seen by those—and *they* were the most likely to see them—who have made it their business to find them out. Doubtless *candid* objectors will set aside the testimony of the mesmerist as incompetent, because *he* is the very man who must neces-

sarily know most about it! The Rev. C. H. Townshend well remarks, "The whole, with them, is gratuitous assumption and reasoning in a vicious circle. Their mouth-piece first takes for granted the incompetence of mesmeric observers, then does away with the law which sets *any* observer of any sequence of facts above any non-observer of such facts, and then declines to receive the testimony of experimental believers, *because* he has pronounced them incompetent observers."

But, it may be asked, may the mesmerist never have been deceived by his subject pretending to be a clairvoyant? Certainly he may, *when sufficient time has not been allowed for investigation*. But when he is allowed sufficiently to test the subject, he cannot be deceived. And, on the other hand, an inexperienced person may often be deceived, in the opposite direction, by a true clairvoyant; for a clairvoyant's powers are not always the same; and when he fails, they who are present may be deceived into the belief that he is an impostor.

A consideration of the necessary conditions of clairvoyance cannot be entered upon here. All that can be said is, that clairvoyants often do fail *in particular circumstances*; but their failures do not invalidate the fact that they have succeeded.

Phenomena that depend wholly on the state of that most delicate apparatus, the nervous system, are necessarily subject to many disturbing influences, which can neither be seen nor detected; and he who asperses an accredited clairvoyant, as an impostor, because the expected phenomena may not be elicited at any given moment, merely proclaims that, either from dishonesty or ignorance, he has presumptuously condemned what he was not qualified to investigate.

The uncommonness of clairvoyance is no argument against its existence. And let us remember, that vision with the eyes, although a more common phenomenon, is as incomprehensible as vision without them.

Let us remember that "the causes of all phenomena are at last occult."—Who can comprehend how we take cognizance of twenty miles of landscape by having it imaged, upside down, on a small portion of the eye? "The moment we attempt to pass beyond the retina, science is at fault; no natural philosopher has been able to explain *how* the optic nerve conveys the image to the brain: we know that the mind is conscious of the images formed on the retina; or, in more familiar language, of the things seen by the eyes; but in what manner an opaque nervous cord, *differing in no essential particular from other nervous cords*, conveys the impression to the mind, we are entirely ignorant. Ordinary sight has, therefore, *a psychological basis*; and this is admitted by the physiologists."—*Dr. Haddock.*

All that can be said is, that the nervous cord, when it communicates outward objects to the brain, through the medium of light, requires a visual organ, which organ is not required when the communication takes place through another medium. The mind can transact, through the one medium, only with the nervous cord to which an eye is attached; but it can transact, through the other medium, with all the nervous cords alike. And that the mind has *visual* perception through the eyed nerve, is no argument that it cannot have equivalent perception through an uneyed nerve. As reason can no more prove the one fact than the other, so it can no more disprove the one fact than the other.

"Mesmeric experiment seems to indicate that the senses

of touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight, are but the successive developments of one essentially identical power of perception, modified and adapted to the various modes in which matter is calculated to impinge upon us; vision being the ultimate stage of refinement to which touch or feeling has yet attained in our normal condition. And this, you will perceive, has a relationship to the finest form of matter which we can use while in this condition, namely, light; but as this is obviously not the most penetrating of the imponderables—for almost every grosser form of matter will suffice to exclude it, while at the same time completely pervious to the magnetic currents—we might, from this alone, arrive at the conclusion, that vision is not the ultimate even of physical perception, because it cannot use the finer forms of imponderable force as its medium. Now, grant that the exalted ecstatic may use the magnetic currents as a medium of perception, and the difficulties of ordinary lucidity vanish; for the envelope of a letter, or the wall of a room, must demonstratively prove transparent to him who commands a medium that pervades them as readily as light does glass. For the same reason, a *lucide* needs not to use his eyes, for the skull, with all its integuments, is as pervious to magnetism as any other portion of matter. Let us remember that glass is transparent, not from its relation to us or the object which we perceive through it, but from its aptitude for the transmission of the rays of light. Now, to a *true lucide*, using even the magnetic currents or Od force—and, for aught we know, there may be finer forms of the imponderable than these—the entire universe must be as transparent as a shadeless crystal. . . . Darkness and opacity exist only for those whose range of perception is limited to ordinary vision; they are relationships which disappear in proportion as the faculty

of lucid perception becomes developed. Man has the regal prerogative, doubtless hereafter to be more fully developed, of transcending these narrowing circumscriptions.”

—J. W. Jackson.—*Lectures on Mesmerism.*

“But what is the use of clairvoyance?” asks the subtle man, who will not call a spade a spade, till he comprehends its connexion with the growth of potatoes. “Is it consistent, sir, with the providential government, that such an extraordinary power should be conferred on a few individuals for no practical purpose? You allow that clairvoyant revelation cannot be believed till it is proved by other means. What, then, is the use of it?”

Remarking that *the fact* of its existence does not depend on the answer to that question, and that the inquirer into Mesmerism would show more candour and love of truth, if he would begin by *investigating its curative power*—which any one may easily accomplish—and leave consideration of clairvoyance till he has obtained a practical knowledge that would qualify him to form an opinion on the subject, disbelieving it if he will, but *not denying its possibility*, till he has had the same opportunities of investigating it that they have had who have declared it to be true,—it may be replied that clairvoyance has been of service in diagnosis, recovery of property, and so on. Details need not be entered on in a work not expressly dedicated to the subject.

However, we must pause a moment over “the bank-note shut up in a box.” A thousand voices ask, “If clairvoyance be true, why don’t you read the £100 note, which (rumour) has set apart for him who can read it?” Enough to say generally, that a clairvoyant cannot be commanded to see a certain thing. Often a haze, depending no doubt on his nerval state being disturbed, seems to

rise over the object, like a cloud over a hill, and then he fails. Again, the capability of reading through a box—especially if the paper be folded, with the letters crossing each other—is comparatively rare. However, *papers in boxes have been repeatedly read*; and with what results? merely that the witnesses were convinced of the fact, and the rest of the world were convinced that the witnesses were deceived! WHERE IS THIS BANK-NOTE IN A BOX? Will the owner—if there be such a person—give it to any one who can tell him exactly what *he* was doing at any one of several specified hours?

But apart from consideration of details, the mesmerist knows that all the other phenomena of Mesmerism are dractically useful, and he accepts the fact of clairvoyance, believing that there are ample reasons for its existence. It may, for aught we know, be designed for a practical and universal use not applicable to the present state of things. Man is now a mere fragmentary existence,—a marred adaptation to unknown conditions,—and it may exist at present as the germ of a power to be developed into its requisite capabilities by future circumstances.

Yet, although humbly trusting “the evidence of their own eyes,” mesmerists are contented to accept the fact of which they have had ample experience without explaining it, a thought or two may be thrown out as sign-posts on the metaphysical desert, whereon our opponents love to lose their way,—thoughts which, for the sake of brevity, must be stated abruptly.

The kingdom of nature may be considered as a vast exchange, where the wealth of the whole is produced from the commerce of the units,—a system of endless intercircling.

The idea of this truth is proclaimed across the firma-

ment, where the movement of the worlds is the communion of their forces.

Moreover, this commerce of individuals, or intercircling movement, is ruled by a mysterious agency which cannot be proved to exist, except by the actions resulting from it; and occult interpenetration, whether called gravitation, electricity, magnetism, heat, light, molecular force, or chemical affinity, is the regulating force of the creation, the medium of Nature's alliances, whereby each existence has connexion with the others, according to its range of the medium—that is to say, that, in so far as this occult medium exists between bodies, in so far will they have community, or reciprocal experience of each other's influence: a oneness, according to the nature of the medium, and their range of it, will be evolved between them.

This oneness, or sympathy evolved between bodies, through an occult medium, being restricted only by the nature of the bodies and their range of the medium, may extend to the subtlest influences connected with these bodies. And man, by this law of action, being connected with the subtlest of all influences, mental influence, should have a power of sympathy with his fellows,—mental oneness, reciprocity of thought and feeling, if he can but command the range of befitting medium.

Now, we have ample evidence that an occult force, connected with its mental influence, does emanate from the brain, and there is reason to believe that this occult brain-force is such a medium of cerebral influence, or mental sympathy.

And it is consistent with all we know of nature, that this brain-force, which, by being imparted from individual to individual, is the means of stimulating vitality to continuous healthy action, should also be the medium of

cerebral sympathy, or community of mental influence, completing the oneness of the "one blood."

It is true, that owing to man's degeneration this imparted brain-force does not now fulfil its possible design of stimulating the organism to continuance of pristine health, and affording a medium of perfect mental community, but let us suppose it illustrated when things were not in a fragmentary state.

It is not unreasonable to suppose it possible that, when Eve was taken, like an offshoot, from Adam's side, such occult force, conditional of human life, emanating from the two beings, might, by its very nature, reciprocated from each to each, serve still to endow the divided existence with the pristine unity, "one flesh" still, though enhanced with twofold consciousness by being crowned with the double glory of man and wife; that such occult force might be the means designed, when "it was not good that man should be alone," to stimulate the organism to a continued vital action, insuring its continued perfection; that such occult force, passing from brain to brain, might connect the one organ of the mind with the thoughts and feelings of the other,—a perfect cerebral sympathy held in common by means of the perfect medium; that such occult force might be for the brain, from which it emanated, a medium of perception, giving cognizance of *all within its range*,—man not omniscient, but made in the image of the Omniscient, with a power like, though limited; that, if the human family had remained perfect when scattered over the world, such occult medium, reciprocated from each to each, might have prevented the misery of the necessary separations, interchange of thought and feeling, and perception of all coming still as perquisite of the "very good;" the severed

Edens complimentary of each other, overflowing their charms, as it were, into the flowerage of each other, through one all-embracing atmosphere—the local rituals of life, meanwhile, finding response everywhere : each man, as it were, a world revolving in its own sphere, yet, after the pattern of the firmament, regulated in the general movement of his welfare by communion with the forces of others—the wealth of the whole produced by the commerce of the units, their range of occult medium sharing alike health-stimulus to each, and giving entrance to the delight of all—even Time and Space bowing down, as it were, to serve God's image. The family oneness realized, that was typified by taking procreant Eve from Adam's side.

It is not unreasonable to suppose it possible that, when man lost his state of perfection, such occult force might share the degeneration of the brain from which it emanated, affording no more a perfect medium of perception and cerebral sympathy, yet, in certain rare and exalted conditions of the nerval apparatus, somewhat fulfilling its original design, or perhaps being merely prophetic of its fulfilment ; for clairvoyance, as now known in fragment, may serve as intimation of a state of existence to which its full development would be adapted. On the whole incomprehensible, it may be like a sentence not fully pronounced, yet sufficiently enough to give hint of a mighty meaning.

And such supposition would not fail in illustration of the beneficence of the providential government, if, whilst a *perfect* clairvoyance—which *now* would be as great a curse as formerly it might have been a blessing—has become impossible by the degeneration of its medium, the occult force should, nevertheless, still be found capable of being concentrated, *as most needed now* for curative ac-

tion, in so far as consistent with the present state of things.

It is not unreasonable to suppose it possible that, when man, in more than former Adamhood, shall put on full perfection, the perceiving power, now almost latent, may find that it is accompanied in its restoration with an ample range of occult medium befitting the state in which he who commands it shall see as he is seen. Man at last fully conscious of the angel-faculty which, marred by his condition, he carried about with him in his fragmentary state unconsciously for future use.

The above is not advanced as hypothesis, but as protest, that, *for aught we know*, such or such may be the use of clairvoyance. Our business is with *the fact*, humbly admitting that the interpretation thereof is among the things which are beyond our reach.

Seeing that the wonders which have been revealed on earth are but as hints of the wonders that are yet concealed, which have successively to arise, like words pronouncing anew from time to time the divine I AM, it is enough for us to accept what is written in the Book of Nature, believing that even the most difficult passage will, in due time, be explained by the other parts of the volume; all the passages being equally wonderful, though we are not equally acquainted with them.

The following extracts bear on what has been advanced:—

Our great Scotch metaphysician says,—“No man can show it to be impossible to the Supreme Being to have given us the power of perceiving external objects without the organs of sense. We have reason to believe that, when we put off these bodies, and the organs belonging to them, our perceptive powers shall be rather improved

than destroyed or impaired. We have reason to believe that the Supreme Being perceives everything in a much more perfect manner than we do, without bodily organs. We have reason to believe that there are other creatures endowed with powers of perception more perfect and more extensive than ours, without any such organs as we find necessary."—*Dr. Reid.*

Isaac Taylor, in his *Physical Theory of another Life*, says,—“ Everything belonging to human nature is mysterious, or rather bespeaks the existence of powers and instincts *undeveloped*, and which, though they just indicate their presence, do not reach their apparent end. . . . The second supposition that offers itself in relation to the communion of minds is this, namely, that the method of expression by arbitrary signs should be altogether superseded, and that in the place of it the mind should be endowed with a power of communication by a direct and plenary conveyance of its own state, at any moment, to other minds, as if the veil of personal consciousness might at pleasure be drawn aside, and the entire intellectual being could spread itself out to view. ‘ If there are tongues,’ says the Apostle, ‘ they shall fail;’ and it may be intended not merely that the various languages of earth shall be exchanged for the one language of Heaven, but rather that language itself, or the use of arbitrary symbols, shall give place to the conveyance of thought, in its native state, from mind to mind.”

And Dr. Moore, in his *Power of the Soul over the Body*, says,—“ Do we not *now* feel that this flesh is no match for the mighty spirit? . . . There must be a world where will alone is power, and where the acting being, *consubstantiated with the element in which it lives*, shall

reciprocate at a thought with other beings a like state throughout extents and periods, measured not by time, but by transits of affections, to which the speed of light is tardiness, and the range of telescopes restriction."

" We are fearfully and wonderfully made !"

CHAPTER VIII.

HISTORY OF MESMERISM.

Antiquity of Mesmerism—Evidenced by the ceremonial of Paganism—Illustrated in ancient Greece—Extracts from the Classics—Fragmentary evidence—Mesmeric phenomena of witchcraft—"Put down" by persecution—Witch-mesmerism among the ancients—In America—As witch-persecution ceased, Mesmeric art was cultivated by isolated individuals—Greatrakes—St. Ewald's reputed miracle—Dr. Elliotson's note upon it—Antiquity of Mesmerism in India—Connexion with priestcraft—Present native practice—Mesmeric phenomena traced in traditions—Attested by the Old Testament—Retrospect—Advance of Mesmeric art—In spite of ancient priestcraft, modern superstition, and medical monopoly—The medical press—Mesmerism is advocated by physicians of European reputation—Its position in Scotland—In England—On the Continent.

As there are some individuals in the world who calculate a man's worth by considerations connected with his grandfather, so there are certain others who calculate the importance of a truth by the date of its history. "Mesmerism," say such, looking at the family-tree of Mesmer, "is seventy, eighty years—pooh, a modern humbug! quite unworthy of our august consideration." That is to say, they deem it, at least, as contemptible a *parvenu* as geology, which lay unpronounced by science for nearly six thousand years on the surface of the world, written out, too, in about the largest characters extant.

But Mesmerism is not the party convicted by such mode of induction; for, although re-discovered by Mesmer, it is of such ancient existence that its footsteps can be traced back almost to the margin of the flood.

It is only they who are not practically acquainted with the nature of the subject, who will wonder when they find that mesmeric phenomena seem, in most countries, to have had a prominent place in the ceremonial of pagan religion ; and that in fact there are few records of the one that do not contain some record of the other. The pagan man universally seems to have employed his mysterious occult force to mediate, as it were, between him and the unknown for which he instinctively yearned.

If, for example, we turn to ancient Greece, in whose ideal paganism culminated, we find many passages of her classics—alluding to the sacred mysteries of the day—which were quite inexplicable till the cypher of their mystery was recovered by Mesmer, by which we can now read her priestly practice of the occult phenomena.

What was the Grecian religion? An attempt to deify mortality. Transactions, illustrating human greatness, passed into myths that were typified by her marble gods; and man, as he bowed before them, was merely rendering homage to the ideal of his own nature. It was natural that this man-worship,—this attempt to deify human aspiration, should seek to elevate itself by giving expression in its ceremonial to what supernatural seeming it could command ; and it was fitting that it should draw its miraculous sanction from the occult power of man.

Whether the man-worship was originally based on a superstitious feeling resulting from the phenomena evolved by that power, or whether that wondrous power was merely called in to implement the creed, matters not : we have evidence enough to prove that its priesthood over-awed the commonalty with the results of the sacred mysteries,—mesmeric cure and clairvoyance. For whilst man's occult power was dedicated to the man-worship, it

gained the impress of an awful sanctity by being connected with mysteries, into which only the most learned or noble of the people were initiated; instituted, no doubt, for the scientific investigation of the occult phenomena, whose results, by giving miraculous sanction to the people's belief, had a national significance.

Without discussing the subject, a few extracts may be quoted from the classics, in illustration of what has been advanced. And if some of the allusions appear to be indistinct and fragmentary, it must be remembered that, in the circumstances of the case, they could not be otherwise, in order that, whilst conveying pregnant meaning to the initiated, the authors might not incur the odium of divulging the sacred mysteries—to reveal which was wisely constituted the greatest sacrilege.

The knowledge among the Greeks of the sanative power of the human hand, appears very distinctly in the following passages of Solon and Æschylus:—

Solon says,—“Often from trifling pain great suffering arises, not to be allayed by the administration of soothing medicines, but touching with the hands the sufferer by malignant and obstinate diseases, you immediately restore him to health.”

The passage of Æschylus occurs in the *Prometheus Vincitus*, 847: Prometheus foretells to Io, that after all her wanderings in frenzy and persecution, she will find relief at last at Canobus, at the mouth of the Nile:—“There Zeus will render you sane, stroking you with gentle hand, and simply touching you.”

A more exact description of mesmeric manipulation can hardly be imagined, unless it be that of the parallel passage in Moschus:—“Zeus was represented gently stroking or soothing (Io) with divine hand.”

If any doubt could exist as to the nature of the influence ascribed here to the hand of Zeus, it would be removed by our meeting with records of the details and celebrity of mesmeric cures in connexion with the sanctuaries at Canobus in historical times.

"Canobus," says Strabo, who visited the country in the time of Augustus, "is a city distant 120 stadia from Alexandria by the road, with a temple of Serapis, of great sanctity, and affording medical assistance of such repute, that men of the first consideration or credit put faith in it, *and sleep there*, either on their own account or that of others. *The cures and the oracles* of the fane are both the subjects of *numerous literary works*."—*Strab.* xvii. 1.

There is a curious passage in the works of Celsus, the Roman physician, in which he states that the old Greek father of physic, Asclepiades, practised *light frictions*, as a means of inducing sleep in *frenzy* and *insanity*; and, what is more remarkable, he says, "*That by too much friction, there was danger of inducing lethargy*."—*De Medicina*, lib. iii.

"In the bodies of the Psylli of Africa," says Pliny, (vii. 2,) "is a natural virus fatal to serpents, the very smell of it sending them to sleep. A similar race was that of the Marsi in Italy, said to be sprung from Circe the enchantress."

These accounts and references to the Psylli are further illustrated by Ælian:—"If the Psyllus found the anguish of the wound still tolerable, he relieved it by his saliva, and prevented worse consequences. If he found the sufferer in extreme torment, he gave him water to drink that he had held in his mouth; and in cases where the virus had gained still greater power, he lay down naked by the naked patient, and delivered him from his danger, by

communicating to him, by *gentle friction, the sympathetic vigour of his own body.*"

A proof that Mesmerism was practised by the priests of Pagan Rome is, that the poets and philosophers speak of *passes* and touching the body to produce sleep; and there is only a step from this to somnambulism.

A passage in Plautus leaves no doubt upon the subject; it is in his *Amphytrion*, Act 1, in which Mercury and Sosia are introduced. Mercury, at a loss how to get rid of Sosia, whether by giving him a beating or putting him to sleep, says:—

Mer. "Quid si ego illum *tractim tangam*, ut dormiat?"

Sos. "Servaveris, nam continuas has tres noctes per-vigilavi."*

History, inscriptions, and monuments, agree in connecting cures of evident mesmeric character with the worship of Isis:—

"The Egyptians," says Diodorus, (i. 25,) "claim for the goddess the invention of numerous healthful medicines, and cures through sleep, evidenced by positive facts. . . . Standing by the sick *in sleep*, she relieved their disorders, and those who attended to her were cured beyond all expectation. Multitudes despaired of by physicians, were saved by her; and many who had entirely lost the use of their organs of sight, or other parts of the body, having recourse to the goddess, were perfectly restored."

The art of curing by occult medicine, by frictions called *mysterious*, among the Egyptians, is attested by Prosper Alpinus, who wrote a work upon Egyptian medi-

*"What if I should put him to sleep by *long passes*?"

"You will save my life," replies Sosia, "for I have not slept for the last three nights."

cine. The occult remedies were principally frictions, which are declared by him to be *different from ordinary frictions*, the imposition of the hand, the action of turning the finger round and round, and *breathing*. They used friction in pestilential fevers, small-pox, and most inveterate dysenteries, &c.—See the *Zoist*, vol. iii., “Allusions to Mesmerism in the Classics.”

Different writers of our own day have elucidated the subject. For instance, Dr. Esdaile says, “Everything goes to prove that the oracles received in dreams, and the cures which followed them, were the consequences of what we now call mesmeric exaltation of the nervous system, variously brought about, no doubt, but frequently by the modern method of manipulations, assisted by breathing. . . . The temple of Isis, consecrated to the powers of nature, contained hieroglyphics which would probably be a history of Mesmerism. Here we see a man sitting on a couch, before whom a person moves his hands,” &c. &c.

And Warburton, in the *Crescent and the Cross*, says, “Magnetism appears to have been well understood by the Egyptian hierarchy; not only from some of the effects we find recorded, but in one of the chambers, whose hieroglyphics are devoted to medical subjects, we find a priest in the act of mesmerizing. . . . The patient is seated in a chair, while the operator describes the mesmeric passes, and an attendant waits behind to support the head, when it has bowed in the mysterious sleep.”

With all its brokenness, the torso contains revelation of more than its own dismemberment, however time-defaced it monuments the art to which it owes its existence. So those scattered utterances, alluded to in the Classics, interpret a meaning beyond the compass of their

words—serving as chinks through which one may see how the mesmeric system was at work.

Without aiming at the cumulative result of such fragmentary evidences, methodically gathered from different countries, a few desultory glances at the subject will sufficiently prove that Mesmerism has been practised, in some mode or other, for many ages, in many lands.

It was a necessary consequence, that as the Pagan religion died out in a country, its sacred mysteries should cease to be practised; and so it happened that the knowledge of mesmeric phenomena passed away from certain places: the science, or art, not only losing what ground it had gained, but leaving traditions, connected with the vanished Paganism, which would prejudice lands of a purer religion against the investigation of such phenomena.

But though the religion of Greece and Rome, in which it was conserved with special dedication, seems to have been the stronghold of Mesmerism in Europe, it might be reasonably expected that the power universally possessed would in some sort make itself universally known. And such was the case. For instance, they who study the trials for witchcraft will find that the imputed crimes, *in so far as not imaginary*, were nothing more or less than the inducing of mesmeric phenomena—such as making an arm rigid, removing pain by sundry innocent gestures, and presumptuously curing diseases that had defied the doctor's skill.

De Foe, in his *System of Magic*, speaks of “ a rational magic, in which men *cured diseases* by charms, by herbs, by *such and such gestures, striking the flesh in such and such a manner*, and innumerable suchlike pieces of mimicry; working not upon the disease itself, but upon the imagination of the distempered people, and so effect-

ing the cures by the *power of nature*." De Foe evidently refers to some facts with which he was acquainted by tradition or observation: the quotation is a curious one; but our writer, in his remark on "imagination," undervalued that "power of nature" on which he was dwelling.

In allusion to this, Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, in *The Last of the Barons*, writes,—“Besides these illusions, probably produced by more powerful magic lanterns than are now used, the friar had stumbled upon the wondrous effects of animal magnetism, which was then unconsciously practised by the alchemists and cultivators of white or sacred magic.”

It is no great wonder that superstition—by right of its mother, ignorance—which in Greece attributed the phenomena of occult power to the gods, should in other places attribute it to the devil.

The man who, by extending his arm, could produce strange effects in another, *must* have a supernatural power—he himself could account for it in no other way—and therefore “suffer not a witch to live.”

Woe to the man who presumptuously cured a toothache in those days, or profanely kept a black cat—whose electric condition possibly connected it with wizardom—for the anti-witches were as zealous then as the anti-mesmerists are now. The mode of proceeding, however, was rather more conclusive in those good old times, when a man's orthodoxy, on all subjects, was measured out to him by his grandfather's belief. Think of it, O Wakley! hundreds of poor mesmerists were induced to confess that they were in league with Satan, by being put to the torture! And even the *suspected*—think of it, O Wakley!—were thrown into a lake! if they were drowned

they were pronounced innocent; and if they got out of the water they were led to the stake!

Look at the judicial scene:—"The green slough parted with an oozing gurgle, and then came a dead silence. 'A murrain on the hag! she does not even struggle!' said at last the hump-backed tinker. 'No, no! she cares not for water; try fire! out with her! out!' cried Red Grissell. 'Arroint her, she is sullen!' said the tinker, as his lean fingers clutched up the dead body, and let it fall upon the margin. 'Dead!' said the baker, shuddering; 'we have done wrong—I told you so! She dealt with me many a year. Poor Madge! Right's right. She was no witch!' 'But that was the only way to try it,' said the hump-backed tinker; 'and if she was not a witch, why did she look like one! I cannot abide ugly folks.'"—*The Last of the Barons.*

To what prejudice leads when it has opportunity!

The persecutions for witchcraft did not commence in Europe till towards the close of the fifteenth century; that is, when what are called the dark or middle ages were rapidly passing away. In 1484, at the time of our Richard the Third, Pope Innocent VIII., in his conclave of cardinals, denounced *death* to all who should be convicted of witchcraft. The succeeding popes, Alexander VI. and Leo X., lent their aid in this fearful persecution. About 1515, just before Luther commenced his career, 500 witches were executed in Geneva: 1000 were executed in the diocese of Como. In Lorraine 900 were burnt. In France the multitude of executions is called "incredible." In Germany, after the publication of the Pope's bull, the number of victims stated is so portentous, as to lead to the hope that there must be some mistake in the calculation; and we are told that the

clergy went about preaching what were called "*Witch Sermons*," and inspiring the people with a fanatic ardour in the pursuit. In England, executions were frightfully numerous. For instance, during the Long Parliament, *three thousand* victims suffered. Scotland was no less zealous.

Such circumstances were certainly not calculated to encourage the practice of Mesmerism; yet they may be supposed to testify that the occult phenomena—for inducing, or being suspected of inducing, which, men were burned—did then exist, although the *savans* of that day, by way of solving the difficulty, had decreed them into connexion with the supernatural. Our *savans* have seen fit to issue several other decrees; and, upon the whole, modern mesmerists should be thankful that the ordeal is changed,—fagots having given place to what Solomon likens to the crackling of thorns.

It might be expected that, in the still more primitive times of ignorance, mesmeric phenomena would be especially regarded as evidence of the supernatural power of him who evoked them; and that, accordingly, the wonderful man, who unconsciously exerted the healing power, would be regarded with veneration by the tribe to which he belonged; and that the antics, which he might find it expedient to indulge in, would be believed to have such connexion with the healing power, that the art of healing and the jugglery of witchcraft would come to be synonymous terms. Such seems to have been the case.

And, although the mesmeric curative is regarded as a mere modern usurper, there is reason to suppose that it was the first therapeutic agent employed, however mixed up with superstitious observances; and that the occult power of drugs was merely called in to supplement the occult power of man.

Witch-mesmerism has been universal; and, in the dawning of all nations, magic and physic—herbs gathered by the light of the moon, and so on—were received as handmaidens, whether the operator was called priest, seer, or physician.

Galen tells us, that for the use of herbs, their formularies, introduced originally from Egypt, were magical, thus connecting them with a country whose priesthood were mesmerists, and used therapeutic clairvoyance in the subterranean chambers of the temples of their brilliantly illumined Isis. The further we penetrate their history and push our research, the more this truth becomes confirmed; and the figures, in their hieroglyphical paintings, like many ancient Indian statues, are in mesmeric postures; the three first fingers are extended, and the others bent under the hand or broken off; and the Isiac table, which Champollion thinks was executed in the reign of Hadrian, presents a group in mesmeric attitudes. Among the Nadvessis and Chippeways, and even now among the Osages, the offices of priest, magician, and physician, are inseparable; in Mexico, the physicians were also priests, and the Pegoodinavian virgins were simultaneously instructed in magic, physic, and surgery, and were also therapeutic clairvoyantes. In the *Ile des Saintes* were formerly magicians, who were healers of the incurable, according to the fashionable authority of the day, and they combined other arts, whence we may infer that clairvoyance was not unknown among them.

One rather curious method of magical therapeutics was the healing of diseases by the sound of musical instruments.* This method seems closely connected with the

* The effect which music produces on the nervous system is of most beneficial

traditionary stories of Orpheus, the musician and charmer, soothsayer and, it would appear, physician also, since it is recorded that he made many discoveries in medicine. (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxv. 2.) He is considered as the founder of the Grecian mysteries, whose import is supposed to have been explained in the ancient Orphic poems. He, moreover, received his mystical knowledge from the Dactyli (fingers = finger-men possibly = handmen) of Mount Ida, so celebrated as magicians and such skilful physicians, that their name became synonymous with that of healers. See the *Zoist*, vol. viii., *Phenomena of the Will*. Also, Colquhoun's *History of Magic, Witchcraft, and Animal Magnetism*.

This universal tendency to give pronouncement to man's occult power has, in the course of time, often been repressed by circumstances. For instance, as already observed, on account of its connexion with paganism, the occult art ceased to be practised in Greece, when the worship, to which it was dedicated, became extinct; and in modern times, its struggling existence was well-nigh put an end to by witch-persecution. But other circumstances succeeded. And when the rage for burning people, who were guilty of employing the great gift of nature, ceased in Europe—exhibition of mesmeric phenomena being no longer quite equivalent to blasphemy—many isolated individuals, in various countries, finding that they could cure with passes, indulged the practice for the benefit of their neighbours, and became very renowned operators. Among many, one illustrious instance may be cited:—In the middle of the seventeenth century, an Irish Protestant gentleman, named Greatrakes, of spotless

assistance in the induction of certain mesmeric states. Hence, no doubt, its very common employment in magical ceremonies.

character, receiving no recompense, acting in the purest spirit of piety and benevolence, and not pretending to explain how he did it, "stroked" thousands of the sick with his own hands, and, though he did not pretend to cure all, is said to have cured large numbers; and two celebrated men, Boyle and Cudworth, put themselves under his care, which, we presume, they would not have done, if the great doctors of the day had not failed to cure them. The Lord Bishop of Derry declared that he himself had seen "dimness cleared and deafness cured," pain "drawn out at some distant part," "grievous sores of many months date, in a few days healed, obstructions disappear, and stoppages removed, and cancerous knots in the breast dissolved," by his manipulations. The Royal Society published some of his cures, and accounted for them "by a sanative contagion in Mr. Greatrakes' body, which had an antipathy to some particular diseases, and not to others."

He was born in 1628, at Afane, near Waterford; educated in England; held an official situation in Cork, and was in the commission of the peace for that county; and died in 1680.

The following, though interesting in itself, is chiefly quoted in order to introduce Dr. Elliotson's note on it:—Mrs. Jameson, in her *Legends of the Monastic Orders*, gives a sketch of a painting by Bernard von Orlay, who died about 1560, of St. Ewald (A.D. 700) healing a maniac; and she adds, "I have etched the scene of the miracle. The attitude of St. Ewald is precisely that which I once saw assumed by a famous mesmerist, when throwing a patient into the mesmeric sleep."

Dr. Elliotson's note is as follows:—"The saint is represented *extending his thumb and fore and middle fingers towards the patient's front, while his ring and little fingers*

are bent against his palm. This is a very ancient representation of an exertion of influence.

“To the edition of the anatomical works of Galen, by Joannes Guinter, in 1531, is prefixed the figure of a man, with his hands crossed upon his breast, imploring another person, who is stretching forth his own hand towards the sufferer, and whose *thumb and two adjoining fingers are extended*, while the *ring and middle fingers are bent*. Galen flourished in the second century.

“In another edition of Galen’s works, published in 1625, to the book *De Sectis ad eos*, is prefixed the figure of a man with his right hand stretched forth; *the thumb and two adjoining fingers are extended*, while the *other two are bent*.

“The works of the ancient Egyptians were destroyed at the period of the invasion by the Romans, and we know no more of their medical and mesmeric practice than can be learnt from the history and writings of other nations who were acquainted with Egypt in its prosperity and decline. Their medical practice was divided into the ordinary and the occult. Its practice was forbidden to the common people, and permitted to kings, grandees, and priests only. In the monument which is named the Table of Isis, are three persons: one lies upon a bed, a second places his left hand upon the other’s breast, and holds up his right wide open, while a third, in front of the second, who is looking towards him, holds his right hand above the head of the recumbent person, with his *thumb and two adjoining fingers extended, and the two others bent*. The gesture and attitude of the third person are very striking: he evidently is giving directions.

“The Indians, according to M. Gauthier, like other nations, observed that the mesmeric force was great, active,

and penetrating in the thumb and two adjoining fingers, united and extended, while the two others were bent; and that the force was diminished when all were extended.

“The god Vishnu has four arms and eight hands: two arms and their hands are raised, the others at a level with the chest. The *thumb and two adjoining fingers* of the raised hands are *extended, the two other fingers bent*. Each of these four hands is surrounded by *flame*.

“The four hands of the two other arms are wide open. The god presents them all with an evident intention, which was not discerned by antiquarians because they were ignorant of Mesmerism.

“Other divinities, Chiven, Parachiven, Ravanen, Parachati, are represented sometimes with four arms, sometimes with many, and all the hands are represented open and extended, or with three fingers raised and two bent.”

It may be observed in passing, that the appearance of flame round the hands, alluded to in this note, has a peculiar significance; being nothing less than a representation of the mesmeric force issuing from the hand. People who are very sensitive (mesmerically) see such an appearance of flame, or blue haze, issuing from the hand of the operator. Indeed, judging from his own experience, the author would say that most people are capable of seeing it, more or less; he has scarcely found any one to whom it could not be made at least visible. The same appearance of flame, or haze, can be seen surrounding the head when the brain is stimulated. For instance, it is very distinct when the person is engaged in fervid devotion; and hence doubtless arose the custom of drawing a halo round the head of saints,—typifying their devotion by the natural phenomenon attending it.

Thus, go where we will, superstition lays hold of the

occult force which seems to give it supernatural sanction ; and in India—the very idols being pedestalled in mesmeric postures—we find pagan religion once more consecrating the occult force of man. And here we have not to rely merely on the allusions of ancient authors ; for the machinery of the religion of India is much the same as it ever was, and affords us the advantage of somewhat seeing the process at work, and witnessing the mesmeric phenomena.

The following extracts are given in illustration.

A gentleman, resident in India, well qualified by his intelligence and intercourse with the natives to give an opinion, favoured the author with an interesting memoir on the subject, which appeared in the *Zoist*, May 1855. The following is an extract :—“ The brahmins of Madura practise divination in all its most occult forms ; and there is nothing more certain than that Mesmerism, with all its modern improvements and discoveries, has been known and practised by this very race of brahmins from the most remote ages. . . . One of their most fixed and popular opinions is, that at the creation of the world Brahma endowed mankind with a portion of his power : he breathed into their nostrils the breath of life, and acquainted them with the power they possessed of imparting a portion of that life to others, by means of the will simply, but more particularly by the power of the eyes and the motion of the hands.”

And Dr. Esdaile writes as follows :—“ In my first work, I said that I had satisfied myself that the medical practice of the Indian conjurors, or *Jadoowalla*, was only Mesmerism disguised by incantations and mummerly ; and I described the processes gone through by a celebrated conjuror for soothing pain and curing nervous complaints.

This has been confirmed from different quarters of India. Dr. Davidson, late resident at Jyepore, in Upper India, visiting the Mesmeric Hospital in Calcutta, and seeing the native mesmerizers stroking and breathing upon their patients, said,—‘ I now understand what the *Jar-phoonek* of Upper India is ; it is nothing but Mesmerism.’ Being requested to explain himself, he continued,—‘ Many of my people, after I have tried to cure them of different severe complaints in vain, used to ask leave of absence for several weeks, in order to be treated by the *Jadoowalla*, and, to my great surprise, they often returned to me quite cured in a short time ; and, in reply to my inquiries as to how they had been treated, they all said that they had gone through a process called *Jar-phoonek*—the meaning of which I could never make out. But I now see it before me in the continuous stroking and breathing of your mesmerizers. *Jarna* means in Hindoostanee *to stroke*, and *phoonekna* is *to breathe*, which very exactly describes your mesmeric processes.’

“ Dr. Thorburn thus wrote to me from Arracan, the other extremity of India :—‘ Among the Assamese the local passes receive separate names, according to the sites over which the passes are performed ; thus those used for the purpose of relieving headache are named *Matapon*. The long passes are known to them by the same name as in Upper India, viz., *Jar-phoonek*.’

“ Colonel Bagnold of the Bombay army describes the same practices to be prevalent on the Bombay side :—‘ This semi-barbarous people have handed down traditionally what we, with all our pretensions to science and research, have either overlooked, or, what is most probable, rejected through sectarian prejudice.’ ”

Perhaps sceptical people will object,—“ Oh, *our* friends

in India have never seen anything of the sort !” Possibly there are many things in India which their friends have not seen. But various gentlemen of inquiring minds have amply recorded their evidence. See, for instance, *The Zoist*, April 1851 ; *Mesmerism in India*, by Lieut.-Colonel Davidson.

The antiquity of mesmeric phenomena has also evidence in the traditions of almost every country,—inarticulated, it may be, merely haloing them, like the “ blue haze ” round a saint’s head, yet unmistakeable,—for tradition is the inwoven life of the past, the national tapestry, as it were, handed down in continuation from sire to son ; and however it may deviate into modern variation, the groundwork of the old belief runs its colour through all the tracery. No doubt traditions become enveloped with the fabulous, mossed over like old stones, yet the very overgrowth may but reveal what it hides to those who have the qualifying knowledge. That one man pushes out his hand in a dark night, and comes against what to him has no significance,—the reality of its nature not depending on his perception,—is no proof that to the touch of another man it may not convey a profound meaning. Even national absurdities have a hieroglyphic reading ; and, for instance, the mesmerist who peruses *The Arabian Nights’ Entertainments*, will recognise the phenomena on which many of their wonders are founded—monstrous exaggerations, no doubt, yet testifying to the existence of a natural truth as surely as the huge movements of the shadowy figure of the Brocken testify to the existence of a natural man. Though the field has run wild, the husbandman can find ample trace of the crop among the weeds that mark out its ancient furrows—their very rankness helping his calculations.

In Milton's *Comus*, we see how a mesmeric tradition may be translated into exquisite fiction, where the Lady sits "bound up in alabaster," the spell requiring to be removed

" with rod reversed,
And backward mutters of dissevering power."

But, looking beyond the region of tradition, we have evidence that Mesmerism was practised in the times of "the world's grey fathers," confirming the opinion that its occult phenomena have universally had a place in Pagan ceremonial. The Old Testament, in its historical record of truth, incidentally shows how a Pagan of those days expected to be supernaturally cured, by having passes made over him.

It may be observed in passing, that, owing to its connexion with Paganism, Mesmerism, along with other things, *in themselves not sinful*, seems to have been wholly forbidden in the Old Testament times, ranking with the sacred groves, meats offered to idols, and all that appertained to Pagan ceremonial. The Israelites were commanded "not to walk in the *manners* of these people,"—the Pagan nations. And to show that they were a people set apart from all others, the command was wisely extended even to the most trifling observances;—for instance, "Ye shall not round the corners of your head, neither shalt thou round the corners of thy beard," &c.

If the demarcation between these nations required to be so complete even in their mere modes, it is evident that any practice connected with the Pagan ceremonial would be most stringently condemned. "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son, or his daughter, to pass through the fire, or that useth divination," &c. "For these nations, which thou shalt possess,

hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners ; but, as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do." And, therefore, "divination," *i. e.*, clairvoyance, used in Pagan worship, as afterwards at the Delphic oracle, "is as the sin of rebellion."

The ordeal of fire, divination, resorting to a familiar spirit or clairvoyant, *pretending to be possessed with supernatural power*, which constituted the sin of witchcraft, were usages employed to sanction the false religion ; and, therefore, the Israelite, who in any way countenanced these, was guilty of opposing the true religion, which was equivalent to the sin of avowed rebellion.

Several passages in the Bible illustrate this. For instance, in the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, it is written,—“If there arise among you a prophet, or dreamer of dreams, &c., saying, *Let us go after other gods*, which thou hast not known, and serve them,” &c. And, in the twentieth chapter of Leviticus, after denouncing whosoever shall give his children unto Molech, it is written,—“And the soul that turneth, (in its worship of Molech,) after such as have familiar spirits, (clairvoyants,) and after wizards, (pretenders to divine power),” &c. And, in the fifth chapter of Jeremiah, judgment is pronounced on the house of Israel, because “Thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods ;”—that is, they followed the Pagan religion ; and their rebellion is summed up in the practice of the Pagan clairvoyance,—“A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land, the prophets prophesy falsely, and *the priests bear rule by their means.*” Israel had left their God to obey the Pagan oracle.

Whether or not Satanic agency was mixed up with these observances is a question of no consideration here.

All that we have to observe is, that as fire was a natural fact, so was clairvoyance, whatever use might be made of them. As clairvoyance has always been a sacred rite accompanying the Pagan practice of Mesmerism in other times and countries, we may infer that the divination alluded to was clairvoyance, if we can but show that the mesmeric process was then a part of the Pagan ceremonial; and that such was the case appears from the following passage:—

“ But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand (or, as in the margin, *move it up and down*) over the place, and recover the leper.”

It is generally inferred from this passage that Naaman was wroth because the prophet did not command him to do some great thing. But what was the great thing *which he expected*? Just that the prophet would *move his hand up and down over the place!*—a very strange expectation if Mesmerism was then unknown. And, moreover, why did he expect the prophet to “ call upon his God ” before making the passes? Surely that gives some insight into the Pagan ceremonial. He seems to have thought that the passes required to be preceded by such religious ceremonial. His own priests had no doubt called upon their gods, and made the passes in vain; and, when he hears of the wonder-working prophet, he comes to try the virtue of his hand—expecting him also to call on his God as preliminary to the cure. And when the prophet told him to wash in a river, he was very naturally “ wroth,” at what he esteemed to be a mere mockery; for he believed that all rivers were alike in curative effect, but he *knew* that all hands were not; and it was in that belief

that he came *expressly* to try if this renowned man could cure him by the appropriate ceremony of calling on his God and making the passes.

He is "wroth," merely because his expectations of the *mode* of cure are outraged. However, he is at last persuaded—by his servant making a suitable appeal to his vanity—to obey the prophet, and is cured. Whereupon, as he had been honestly "wroth," so remembering that the prayers and passes in the "house of Rimmon" had been in vain in his case, he honestly returns to acknowledge the evident miracle,—“there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel;” as though he had said, “I came to be cured by your prayers and your hand, and I was wroth that you did not so cure me; but I am now come to confess that you have cured me, and that too in a way which convinces me that your God is indeed God.”

This passage of the Bible alluded to as illustrative of Paganism is but as a little chink, yet to the qualified eye, it opens up a wide view.

Many other passages might be adduced, illustrative of mesmeric phenomena in biblical times, time and place convenient.

These historic notices that have been advanced of the practice of Mesmerism are necessarily fragmentary; yet they are sufficient. One bone interprets the whole skeleton, especially if the race to which the animal belonged is far from being extinct; and if we can pick up such fragments every here and there over the world, we may conclude that that of which these fragments formed a part had once existence in these wide-spread here and there places. The universality of the stray joints restores belief in the universality of the whole animal.

If, in the circumstances of the case, the practice of the occult art had continually advanced in former times, till, its laws being eliminated, it became an accredited science, it would at least have been as wonderful as if the universal power had not shewn a tendency to declare itself in universal practice. The practice of the art, in different nations, shared the fate of the institutions with which it was connected. But in the course of progressive change, which is ever reassorting the instruments of providential government, so as to give the truth more influence, the circumstances that had prevented the spread of mesmerical knowledge ceased to be, and the universal power, unhampered with the conditions of false religions, or the stigmas arising from connexion with unhallowed ceremonial, began to shape itself in due development. Isolated individuals, by chance, found out that they could cure disease by "moving the hand up and down over the place;" and so, in many parts of Europe and America, the revived truth began a series of outcirclings that had freedom to spread. Still even the wonders of a Greatrakes were confined pretty much to his own locality, though working quietly on, to come in powerfully in the after-evidence; and it was not till Mesmer made an attempt to systematize the phenomena, that the attention of the public was directed to the subject.

But the more the attention of the public was directed to it, the more was the hostile prejudice of interested parties aroused; and the doctors, according to custom, mounted their old infallible hobby-horse to ride the marches of belief, and denounce the novelty—the most absurd new curative that, without their leave, presumptuously enabled nature at the hands of any common man, to set up an opposition to the druggist. With more than

the royalty of Canute, once more the Faculty laid down its pharmacopœia, on the shore of truth, to stop the advancing tide ; but once more the tide was more stubborn than they.

The truth that had survived the monopoly of ancient priestcraft and the persecution of superstition, was not doomed to be annihilated by modern prejudice. The Faculty, with its wide-spread organization, was a mighty opponent ; but, fortunately, cursed with former fame, the very vehemence, not to say virulence, of their one-sided debates and party publications, induced people to inquire into the "no small stir," and ask, Why are the learned gentlemen running a-muck once more ? What is this new "great fact" which they are trying to assassinate now ? And the more the doctors—backed by the tribe of *savans* who admit the inexplicable only when sanctioned by their grandfather's belief—laboured to "put it down," the more they gave evidence that they were not succeeding. They were merely putting Mesmerism to the old ordeal, to show that it had a right to rank with vaccination.

And here it must be observed that the opinions of the medical press regarding Mesmerism are wholly unworthy of respect. The medical organs have not been slow to admit any paper *against* Mesmerism, written by men practically ignorant of the subject,—they have not been slow to admit anonymous vituperation and unseemly personalities ; but when men—celebrated in the profession, and admitted by mesmerists to have *thoroughly* investigated the subject, have offered these journals papers demonstrating the truth of Mesmerism, *with their names attached*, these journals have been slow to receive them,—so slow that such papers have never appeared in their

pages, except, in one or two instances, *in a mutilated form*,—that is, so garbled that they appeared to sanction the assertions of their adversaries. Without scrutinizing the motive too nicely, one may surely say that such conduct is unbecoming the high position of the Faculty.

“It is high time that the public should have the option of choosing between the deliberate statements of honourable and responsible men, and the reckless assertions of the nameless assailants of Mesmerism, who in general have evidently no knowledge of the subject, and trust to their readers having still less when perusing a ‘*smashing article*’ in a review, magazine, or newspaper. . . . To pretend that there is a *Free Medical Press* in Great Britain at this moment, is a mockery and a delusion: and the proof of this is, that medical men who pledge their unblemished private and professional reputation for the truth of their statements, are not allowed to be heard by you in your professional organs, if what they advance is contrary to the prejudices and foregone conclusions of the editors; and the men who give you the security of a good name for their good faith are vilified, and the attempt is made to starve them into silence and submission by nameless and irresponsible writers, who erect themselves for the nonce into the philosophers and guides of the medical world, though in general practically unacquainted with the subject upon which they pretend to decide.”—*Dr. Esdaile*.

As already remarked, it is no less to the glory of the Faculty that it has always had its great men than it is to its shame that they have always been stigmatized as “innovators,”—men who, in spite of their conservative training, had intellect to perceive, and honesty to avow,

the "new truth" of the day, and courage to disregard the authorized howl of their less favoured brethren,—men who advanced the standard of science to new heights, and were deemed mad for doing so, and, in due time, were followed by the commonality of the profession—when it was no longer prudent to illustrate their incapacity by sticking to the old regime. It is by such men, incited by the noble example of Dr. Elliotson, that the truth of Mesmerism has been established. Breaking through the prejudices of *caste*,—passing from the applause of their brethren to wider fame, whilst looking only to the interests of humanity, scores and scores of doctors, even in Britain, are now practising nature's curative; and thousands and thousands, who seemed doomed to hopeless disease, have blessed them for their honesty and courage. Scotland has also experienced the blessings of Mesmerism; and even in medical Edinburgh—though the great majority of the profession are utterly ignorant of its curative power, and consequently prejudiced against it—there are a few doctors who patronize it out and out; whilst others, who are only partially acquainted with it, honourably recommend its application in so far as they conscientiously can.

In England, Mesmerism may be said to be all but universally established. "The progress which the knowledge and conviction of the truth of Mesmerism has made since the last meeting is immense; we might say that its truth is universally admitted. The few who, for consistency, still pretend not to believe it, say but little, and their chief opposition is in ascribing the phenomena to imagination, suggestion, and dominant ideas; passing over in silence, shortsightedly as well as dishonestly, the innumerable facts recorded, and occurring daily, in which

there can be no imagination, no suggestion, no dominant ideas; passing over in silence the innumerable splendid mesmeric cures of all kinds of diseases, and the alleviation of distress and agony, as well as the prevention of pain from the knife, the corroding caustics, and hot irons of the surgeon. As the folly of denying the truth of Mesmerism may now be considered to have passed away, so will the absurd explanations of its genuine effects; and the wickedness—the *wickedness*—of ignoring it in the medical journals and other medical writings, and in the lectures delivered in the medical schools, must soon be given up in very despair and shame.”—*Report of the Mesmeric Infirmary of London, 1854.* Read by Dr. Elliotson.

“We have to announce, as at every former Annual Meeting, that the progress of the conviction of the truth of the mesmeric phenomena and of a peculiar agency or influence, as well as of the conviction of the great power of Mesmerism in mitigating and curing disease, and in removing and preventing pain, has continued steady.

“When we reflect upon the violence with which Mesmerism was assailed throughout the kingdom from 1838 for many years, and regard its present firmness and prosperity, we are enabled to point out a fresh and glorious proof that, when a thing is founded upon truth and capable of application beneficial to mankind, no ignorance, no selfishness or other discreditable feeling, no rancorous violence, no cunning, no misrepresentation, no false accusation, no combination of men, can ultimately prevail against it.”—*Report, 1855.*

On the Continent, Mesmerism has for long been established.—*See p. 72, extract by Sir William Hamilton.*

“Probably few of my hearers are aware that this dawning science, which is so superciliously condemned by those

who, from entire ignorance of its nature, must necessarily be incompetent judges of its claims to their attention—but few, I say, are aware that it has a literature, extending over many hundred volumes, composed by philosophers, physicians, and men of literary eminence, in all the cultivated languages of southern and western Europe; that it has hospitals devoted to its practice, and respectable journals in which its progressive development is regularly chronicled.”—J. W. Jackson.—*Lectures on Mesmerism.*

As in politics, free trade is none the less a universal blessing, though still condemned by those who were determined that it never could, should, or shall succeed, so, in therapeutics, though the old Protectionist party may still thunder their awful chorus against it, Mesmerism is none the less a “great fact.”

CHAPTER IX.

OBJECTIONS TO MESMERISM.

The Faculty ignorant of Mesmerism—Their pretended investigations—Their disingenuousness illustrated by the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and the *Quarterly Review*—Their education does not qualify them to judge of Mesmerism—Their research confined to what is in harmony with their previous opinions—Their objections to Mesmerism unworthy of consideration—Exposure of general objections:—*You can't put me to sleep—Mesmerism is contrary to the laws of Nature—Is opposed to Reason—Is not supported by great names—Is imagination—Causes congestion of the brain—Is Satanic agency—Gives one undue power over another*—Such objections are advanced by people who will not inquire—Anti-Mesmeric folly—Sages of Timbuctoo—Unconscious state induced by opium and chloroform—The q. x. n.—Man can obtain knowledge of facts only by using his eyes—Without this, reason cannot arbitrate.

To say that the Faculty have used their influence to "put down" Mesmerism, and have consequently succeeded in retarding its advancement, does not involve them in moral culpability, further than that they have condemned that which they had not sufficiently investigated; for—although many medical men have acted, and still do act, from interested motives—it is evident to any one acquainted with the subject, who has had an opportunity of hearing their conversation, or perusing their writings, that, as a profession, they are really practically unacquainted with its curative applications. The prejudices natural to their position is their excuse; and—proud of their professional attainments, and unwilling to admit

anything that would militate against their sufficiency—they merely do to Mesmerism what they would have done to Vaccination, had they lived in the days when it was the absurd novelty. Mesmerism is the new innovation, and the old professional instinct rises once more in opposition : the amount of the opposition, as on former occasions, proving the greatness of the truth with which it has to contend.

“It is the influential men, and the doctors that seal up from the mass this sole-appointed remedy for some diseases. They enter not into the domain themselves, nor permit others to enter in. By creating prejudices against Mesmerism, they prevent sick persons from untold benefits.”—*The Rev. C. H. Townshend.*

“The reason of this discreditable ignorance among well-informed persons is, that all evidence and information on even the professional part of the subject, has been systematically withheld from the medical profession and the public by the medical press of Great Britain.”—*Dr. Esdaile.*

“But we have investigated the supposed Mesmeric phenomena,” some of our medical opponents will exclaim in high indignation, “and we denounce them merely because all our experiments were failures.” Very likely they were. But, gentlemen, your failures are no proof that other parties have not succeeded. What would be thought of the hatter, or other respectable person, who, though skilful in his craft, insanely denounced chemistry, because he had failed in eliciting certain experiments? Merely that, not having the qualifying knowledge, he had not observed the requisite conditions. So it is with these medical denouncers. That they have not elicited the phenomena, whether they wish to do so or not, is merely

proof that they failed in observing the necessary conditions—conditions which, in such delicate experiments on the nervous system, must be strictly complied with, and which are of such a subtle nature that they may altogether elude the observation of one who is not practically acquainted with the subject.

And when such opponents—investigating after their kind—do succeed in eliciting phenomena, they are very apt, owing to the prejudices of their position, traditions, and foregone conclusions, to construe them amiss, and so utter the truth through a falsifying throat. Speaking of such a hostile investigator, the judicious Deleuze says, “He seems to me to make a mistake in what he says upon the action of magnetism, and upon the principles of that action. He has searched into physiology for the explanation of phenomena which depend upon a different law; he has generalized the observations which were proper for his purpose; and he regarded as illusions facts less surprising than the ones he has seen, when they did not accord with his theory. If he had been a witness of many of the facts which have passed under my eyes; if he had examined the evidence in favour of most of those which have been reported by enlightened men, he would not have thrown aside what he calls the pretensions of the magnetizers.”

That the public have been greatly misled by the pretended inquiries of doctors regarding Mesmerism, is apology enough for pointing out the disingenuousness of such investigators.

For instance, if we turn to the article “Animal Magnetism,” in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 1842, by *Dr. John Thomson*, (*Edinburgh University*,) what do we find?—a fair representation of the belief of mesmerists of the

present day, and of their recorded experience of the phenomena? No such thing. We have an account of what took place in the days of Mesmer, unfairly representing his character. We have an account of the commission, appointed in 1784, to inquire into the subject; and we have their condemnation of *the theory of Mesmer*, as reported to the Academy of Paris, duly recorded. But we are not informed that Franklin, who signed the condemnation, as one of the commissioners, *was not present at the experiments* on which that condemnation was founded. And whilst we are told, in a general way, that the illustrious Jussieu did not agree with the other commissioners, we are not distinctly told that, "notwithstanding the pressing solicitation of his colleagues, and the menaces of the minister, the Baron de Breteuil, he refused to subscribe his name, and actually drew up a special report of his own. In which report he states that the experiments he has himself made, and those of which he has been a witness, convince him that man produces upon man a decided action by friction (*frottement*), by contact, and, more rarely, by an approximation at a little distance;—that this action seems to belong to some animal warmth existing in the body;—and that, *judged by its effects*, it occasionally *partakes of a tonic and salutary result*;—but that a more extended acquaintance with this 'agent' will make us better understand its real action and utility."

Surely, when we consider further, that the experience of the last half century, including by far the most important section of mesmeric investigations in Europe and America, is never once alluded to in the paper; and that it contains no notice of the second commission, composed exclusively of medical men, who laid their report before

the Academy in 1831 ; in which report they say,—“ Considered as a cause of certain physiological phenomena, or as a therapeutic remedy, *magnetism ought to be allowed a place within the circle of the medical sciences* ;” the report concluding thus,—“ We dare not flatter ourselves with the hope of making you participate entirely in our conviction of the reality of the phenomena which we have observed, and which you have neither seen, nor followed, nor studied along with us. We do not therefore demand of you a blind belief of all that we have reported. We conceive that a great proportion of these facts are of a nature so extraordinary that you cannot accord them such a credence. . . . We only request that you would judge us as we should judge you,—that is to say, that you be completely convinced that neither the love of the marvellous, nor the desire of celebrity, nor any views of interest whatever, influenced us during our labours.”—Surely the gentlest word that can be applied to such a paper, purporting to deal fairly with the subject, is “disingenuous.”

Again, in an article on Mesmerism in the *Quarterly Review*, 1854, by an eminent doctor, the subject is treated in a most disingenuous manner. The writer not only shows that his practical knowledge of the subject is exceedingly meagre, but he quotes facts apart from their connexion, and mutilates, omits, and mis-states, so as to serve his purpose ; and then he reasons!—not the only person who has laboured “to make the worse appear the better reason.” The Rev. C. H. Townshend has published a volume, which triumphantly refutes the mis-statements contained in this paper, entitled *Mesmerism proved true, and the Quarterly Reviewer Reviewed*.

In short—in their zeal to find “objections”—the public

treatment which Mesmerism has received from medical opponents is, from various causes, so universally disingenuous, that it is wholly unworthy of consideration.

It must be allowed that it is very natural that doctors—who, as such, are ignorant of man's occult force—should think that they are qualified to give an opinion regarding any phenomena which, depending on the human system, seem to fall within their special province; and it is very natural that the public—who may be equally ignorant—should believe that all who bear the honoured name of Doctor are fully qualified to do so; but they should remember that Mesmerism demands a “special study.” Knowledge of mesmeric phenomena cannot be acquired by studying *other* branches of knowledge. Dogberry himself, even if he had been a doctor, would have hesitated to deny this.

“The public,” says Dr. Esdaile, “are too apt to consider the subject of Mesmerism as purely professional, and will not take the trouble necessary to become acquainted with it till the doctors shall have determined what they are to believe concerning it. There is an error on the part of the public, for I am sorry to say that the doctors in general know nothing about it, and, what is worse, will not learn; although *there is nothing in their previous knowledge*, however great and various, that bears directly on the subject, and can entitle them to decide, *ex cathedra*, on the truth or falsehood of the new doctrines. If Mesmerism be true, the doctors, old and young, *must all go to school again*; and this is what constitutes the bitterness of the Mesmeric pill.”

In connexion with the above, the following extract from Dr. Henderson's *Homœopathy Fairly Represented*, affords a suitable theme for anti-mesmeric meditation:—

“ It is absurdly supposed by those who have no acquaintance with ‘ scientific’ men, and know not the metal of which they are made, that they are always gratified by the addition of new facts and principles to their respective sciences. Nothing can be generally more untrue than such a conclusion ; nay, I suspect the instances are comparatively few in which the disposition of men, already matured in their own field, towards all that is new, may not be illustrated by an anecdote of a late eminent professor of chemistry, who, on receiving from a colleague an answer in the negative to his inquiry, if there was anything new in the fresh number of a scientific journal, replied, ‘ I am very glad to hear it ;’ or by another, of a professor of the same science in a northern university, who, compelled at last to advert to the discoveries of Sir Humphrey Davy, regarding the composition of certain alkalis, dismissed them with the shortest possible notice, and dubbed their author ‘ a verra troublesome person.’ Of course there are exceptions in every pursuit, but fewer, it may be justly said, in medicine proportionally than in any other. Medical men, in general, are more concerned to ply their arduous vocation with the instructions they may have received in early life, and such small and easy additions to their stock as they have leisure to pick up from the journals of the day, than to sound the depths of science, and seek the treasures of knowledge that lie hid in her bosom, by the light of the midnight oil, when a ‘ good soft pillow’ for their tired heads, whether white or black, is what the properties of the time demand. And of the exceptional instances—the busy-minded men who roll in their carriages by day, and are fresh enough for study by night—it may be justly said that their welcome, when they have any to spare for

the researches of others, is offered very rarely to doctrines opposed to the labours of their own lives, but is reserved for such as are *in harmony with their previous opinions, and with the views to which all their success and importance in the medical world is inseparably linked.*

“It is nothing that second or third-rate men, whose field of vision is naturally and unavoidably of small extent, should be incapable of perceiving new and great truths just in proportion as they *are* new and great, and therefore far aloof from their own habitual trains of thought, or petty additions to the common currency. We look for blemishes of this kind in ordinary mortals, and are in no degree moved by their occurrence. But when first-class men, standing so high above their fellows as to command the whole field of intellectual enterprise, fix their eyes with a fond partiality on the fruits of their own genius, and what may be closely akin to them, to the neglect of other objects good in their way and important in their own place, we remember with regret that man in his best estate is but vanity, and that to expect among terrestrial beings freedom from weakness, is but to look for

‘A faultless monster, which the world ne'er saw.’”

The objections, then, to Mesmerism, founded on the opinions of such medical investigators as have been alluded to, may be fairly set aside without ceremony, being mere impertinences, or, at least, confessions of incompetence.

The other objections to Mesmerism—it almost pains one to expose the nakedness of the adversary—do not pretend to be founded even on the failures of experiments. They consist of mere assertions; only proving that they who use them are akin in sagacity and justice to the

judge who found it expedient to hang the man before he had tried him.

One or two of these may be noticed, in order that the *arguments* of our opponents may be fairly appreciated. And, lest they should be defrauded of their full force, it is right to state, in passing, that they are extensively quoted by—those “ever stronger on the stronger side”—the breed of individuals who would feel uneasy if they thought that the very flies, on the walls of their houses, could laugh at them. However, it is consolatory to know that, when the leaders of their flock take the jump, these individuals also will jump, and bleat as honestly on behalf of Mesmerism as they now do against it.

You can't put me to sleep!—This defiant observation is very often the last resource of our posed adversaries. And—after they have had the worst of a controversial conversation, quibbling, shuffling, nonplussed, and crest-fallen—it has such a candid sound! as if they reared themselves upon their battered stumps to say,—“You see I am arguing only for the sake of truth. You say that you can elicit the phenomena: well, Sir! *I* do not shrink from practical investigation: put *me* to sleep, that's fair!” The inference of the logical sceptic being, If you can't put me to sleep, you can't put any one!

But such defiant observation is merely a concluding evidence that the gentleman is in a condition which allows one charitably to hope that his opposition to Mesmerism has arisen from sheer ignorance of the subject.

He should know that the mesmeric process—although capable of universally effecting cures—was never said to be capable of putting all people to sleep; and that probably two-thirds of the mesmeric cures have been effected without the sleep having been induced. In many cases the

sleep is most desirable, but it is not a *sine quâ non*; and in many cases the mesmerist never even attempts to induce it. The idea that mesmeric treatment consists in putting to sleep, is about as correct as it would be to say, that medical treatment consists in prescribing a blue pill, and calling next day to ask if it had been properly swallowed.

As one proof of the existence of the mesmeric power, mesmerists do appeal to the fact that it induces sleep; but they know that, even when it is induced, especially in healthy people, it may not be so at the first, second, or many trials; and they have reason to believe that, in many cases, it cannot be induced, at least not without long treatment.

Will the logical sceptic not consent to the conditions of Nature, and be contented with seeing the sleep induced in others—it may be at the first trial? Let us hope at least, that in pursuing his system of investigation, he will not demand a personal application if he should require to test the efficacy of prussic acid.

It is impossible to tell beforehand what phenomena may be evoked, by the mesmeric process, in any individual. The experienced mesmerist may shrewdly conjecture; but he who predicates, like an oracle, that such or such a one could easily be put to sleep, proclaims exactly what he is trying to keep from being known.

Mesmerism is contrary to the laws of Nature.—May we ask, Which edition of the laws of Nature? By whom edited? Where sold? One would like to have a copy.

“How little, we are ready to exclaim, can even the mind of a Descartes anticipate of the profundities of the universe; and how worthy is that cardinal maxim of Bacon, of being deeply engraven on man’s memory, as a lesson of humility as well as truth in philosophy, ‘that

the subtlety of nature far transcends the subtlety of either sense or intellect.”—*Edinburgh Review*, Jan. 1852.

“ In the study of nature and its laws, we ought at once to make up our minds to dismiss as idle prejudices, or at least suspend as premature, any preconceived notion of what might, or *ought* to be the order of nature in any proposed case, and content ourselves with observing, as plain matter of fact, *what is.*”—*Herschel*.

“ How little progress had been made till a very recent period in the examination of the nature of bodies as opposed to their movement, may be well understood from this fact, that in the popular works on science which were in circulation in our own childhood, fire, air, earth, and water, were still represented as the four elements of the universe. To what point the inquiry into these subjects may be carried hereafter, it seems impossible to anticipate; the doctrine of atoms appears indeed to be bringing us to the very elements of physical existence; while the study of the phenomena of electricity, of magnetism, and ABOVE ALL, OF WHAT IS CALLED ANIMAL MAGNETISM, seems to promise that in the course of years, or it may be of centuries, we may arrive at some glimpses of a yet higher mystery, the relations of physical and moral existence towards each other, and the principle of animal life. . . . The accounts of wonders, then, from Livy’s prodigies downwards, *I should receive*, according to Herodotus’ expression when speaking of one of them, οὔτε ἀπιστέων, οὔτε πιστεύων τε λίαν: sometimes considering of what fact they were an *exaggerated or corrupted representation*, at other times trying to remember *whether any and how many other notices occur of the same thing*, and whether they are of force enough to lead us to search for some law, hitherto undiscovered, to which they may all be referred,

and become hereafter the foundation of a new science.”—*Arnold's Lectures*.

“ And as he (the self-satisfied philosophist) will not learn from others, so not even by *Nature herself will he be taught*. He thinks he knows so much, that his estimate of what is *to be known is lowered*. . . . He has a theory to maintain,—a solution which must not be disproved,—a generalization which shall not be disturbed ;—and once possessed of this false cipher, he reads amiss all the golden letters around him.”—*The Bishop of Oxford*.

The facts of Mesmerism are opposed by Reason.—Then the sooner Reason shifts its position the better.

“ Whilst the unlearned were all busied in getting down to the bottom of the well, where TRUTH keeps her *little court*, were the learned in their way as busy in pumping her up through the conduits of dialectic induction ; *they concerned themselves not with FACTS,—THEY REASONED*.”—*Sterne*.

“ It is a very obvious principle, although only forgotten in the pride of prejudice and controversy, that what has been seen by one pair of human eyes, is of force to countervail all that has been reasoned or guessed at by a thousand human understandings.”—*Rev. Dr. Chalmers*.

Dr. Elliotson aptly quotes the following extract :—“ In Kepler's correspondence (*Kepleri Epistolæ*),” says he, “ is a letter from Galileo, in which he writes :—‘ Oh, my dear Kepler, how I wish that we could have one *heartly laugh* together ! Here, at Padua, is the principal professor of philosophy, whom I have repeatedly and urgently requested to look at the moon and planets through my glass, which he pertinaciously refuses to do,—why are you not here ? *What shouts of laughter we should have at this glorious folly !* and to hear the *philosopher* of Pisa

labouring before the Grand Duke *with logical arguments*, as if with magical incantations to draw the new planets out of the sky.'”

The following words of Laplace may also be prescribed to the logical sceptic :—

“ Les phénomènes singuliers qui résultent de l'extrême sensibilité des nerfs dans quelques individus, ont donné naissance à diverses opinions sur l'existence d'un nouvel agent, que l'on a nommé magnétisme animal : . . . Il est naturel de penser que l'action de ces causes est très-faible, et qu'elle peut être facilement troublée par des circonstances accidentelles ; ainsi, parceque dans quelques cas, elle ne s'est point manifestée, on ne doit pas rejeter son existence. Nous sommes si loin de connaître tous les agens de la nature, et leurs diverses modes d'action, qu'il serait peu philosophique de nier les phénomènes, uniquement parcequ'ils sont inexplicables dans l'état actuel de nos connaissances.”—*Essai Philosophique sur les Probabilités*.

Mesmerism is not supported by great names.—Mesmerism is content to be supported by great facts ; yet, if great names are needed as a garnish to the truth, she can suit the most depraved appetite.

Merely mentioning that many eminent members of the aristocracy, the army, the church, the faculty, and the law, have avowed their belief in Mesmerism, a few names may be quoted :—Cloquet, Jussieu, Baron Breteuil, De la Motte, Fouquier, Husson, Teste, Georget, Orfila, Rostan, Hufeland, Cuvier, Ampère, Laplace, Agassiz, Archbishop Whately, Sir William Hamilton, Gregory, Elliotson, Ashburner, Engledue, Esdaile, Wilkinson, De Morgan (author of *Probabilities*), Coleridge, Arnold, Sir Bulwer Lytton, &c. &c.

Such is a specimen of what is written on the roll, which this great Truth bears about with her like a jewelled train, approving her regality and perquisite of homage.

Surely the subject which is so recommended should not be lightly condemned.

If opponents say that Mesmerists are incapable of observing facts, we humbly refer them to the quotation already given from Laplace, and to the following extract by Cuvier :—

“Cependant les effets obtenus sur des personnes déjà sans connaissance avant que l'opération commençât—ceux qui ont lien sur les autres personnes après que l'opération même leur a fait perdre connaissance, et ceux que présentent les animaux, ne permettent guère de douter, que la proximité de deux corps animés dans certaines positions et avec certains mouvements, n'ait un effet réel, indépendant de toute participation de l'imagination d'une des deux. Il paroît assez clairement aussi que ces effets sont dus à une communication quelconque qui s'établit entre leurs systèmes nerveux.”—*Anatomie Comparée*, tom. ii.

And if they have found that mesmerists are incapable of reasoning, they may make known the discovery to the Archbishop of Dublin and Sir William Hamilton.

Sir William Hamilton's opinion of Mesmerism has been already quoted.—See page 72.

The Archbishop of Dublin presided at the annual meeting of the London Mesmeric Infirmary in 1854. In 1853, as chairman at the first annual meeting of the Dublin Mesmeric Association, he said,—“I am myself a living monument of the truth of Mesmerism, having suffered severely for many years from rheumatism. When the doctors had done their best or their worst, as the case might be, I was advised to have recourse to Mesmerism

as a last resource. In the course of one week I was perfectly cured, and have never since experienced any severe return."

After having enumerated a great many remarkable cases of mesmeric cure, in his *Mesmerism and its Opponents*, the Rev. George Sandby continues thus—

"And who and what are the men that have thus advocated Mesmerism? I shall answer in the words of the celebrated French physiologist, Dr. Georget, who says,— 'It is a very astonishing thing that animal magnetism is not even known by name among the ignorant classes; it is among the enlightened ranks that it finds support; it is men who have received some education who have taken its cause in hand; it is partly *learned men, naturalists, physicians, philosophers*, who have composed the numerous volumes in its favour.' And what is the reply of our opponents to this pyramid of facts? That they are all cases of delusion? Granted, for the sake of argument, that very many might be so; that in several instances the ablest men might be deceived. What then? Still, even with the largest deduction under this head, what an accumulation of evidence would yet remain! As Mr. Colquhoun observes, 'Upon what evidence are we permitted to believe any series of facts? What amount of proof is required?' The host of competent and highly qualified men who have narrated their experience, forbid the supposition of a universal delusion. Some other theory must be adopted. Mesmerism is a science of facts. To facts we appeal; and we do not believe, as has been well observed, that 'any science rests upon experiments more numerous, more positive, or more easily ascertained.' . . .

"Il a été établi en France, et dans presque tous les pays du nord, des traitemens magnétiques, où des *milliers*

des malades ont trouvé la santé. La relation détaillée d'un grand nombre de guérisons a été publiée, soit par les particuliers, soit par les sociétés de l'harmonie.—FOISSAC, *Rapports*, p. 500.

“This was said by Foissac, a medical man himself, in 1833, before the practice of Mesmerism was much known in England. If Foissac could say in 1833 that there were *thousands* of sick persons who had received benefit from the art, what might he not state now? This, let it be remembered, is the main question, that the *number of successful cases* proves the power.”

Mesmerism is imagination.

Imagination, like hysteria, is a convenient word employed by doctors to cover over what they can't explain; because, on their own confession, they are “quite in the dark” with regard to nervous complaints, they vote them into the regions of imagination, and decree that their cure must come from the same locality; for “you know our drugs can't be expected to affect that which does not exist.” And so their infallibility gets out of the scrape.

For instance, it is related that a lady, who was unable to walk, owing to a severe nervous complaint, was ordered by a renowned doctor—who *knew* that she was only unintentionally shamming—to be driven a mile out of town. He then sent the carriage away, and coolly prescribed for her a walk home! The sublime impudence of the unexpected proceeding, backed by the awful idea of the great man, did what his drugs were unable to do. The sudden mental excitement gave such impulse to her brain,—that is, so stimulated it to increased action, that the supply of brain-force requisite for the readjustment of her nervous system was provided; and so her complaint, arising from disturbance of the brain-force, being cured, she walked

home, to be an illustrious quotation of the Hocus-pocus of Imagination. Why? Because she was cured without drugs.

The power that mental influence has of stimulating the curative force of the brain, has been alluded to in a former chapter. It is by evoking this influence with "change of air," that doctors hope to subdue nervous complaints. The renowned man alluded to, effected his patient by evoking the same influence, though he did it in an extraordinary way. Perhaps if doctors would use more hocus-pocus and fewer drugs, they would be more generally successful, seeing that even with their lavish exhibition of poisons, as Sir John Forbes says, the disease is often "cured by nature in spite of them."

Thankfully does the mesmerist receive what aid he can from imagination, in effecting cure,—only wishing that he could receive as much assistance from it as the doctor does. For what are the circumstances? The patient believes that the doctor is the man who can cure,—he obstinately believes in drugs; and, though all the former ones have failed, he swallows *this one* with a new hope, as he hides the precious talisman in his stomach. Whereas, the mesmerist is generally called in cases when hope has been well-nigh drugged away; and the operation not unfrequently commences with the patient saying, "I must candidly tell you that I have consented merely to please my friends, for I myself do not believe in Mesmerism." The doctor comes accredited to the imagination; the mesmerist does not: who should be the most successful wooer? Yet the mesmerist succeeds in cases where the doctor "invariably fails." Can it be that drugs have too much reality?

But it is sometimes objected that, because people have

occasionally gone into the mesmeric sleep when they merely fancied that they were being operated upon, the mesmeric force is not a reality. Indeed! Because some people have become sick by merely fancying that they had swallowed a nauseous substance, will the logical sceptic declare that there is no such thing as ipecacuanha?

The imagination, by its power of stimulating the brain, has great influence in Mesmerism, as well as in other remedies; but still there is a mesmeric force, approved by a thousand instances: take one,—in certain cases when the patient is so sound asleep that he can neither hear nor feel, a single up-pass, made at the far end of a long room, will completely arouse him. Is that imagination?

It may be remarked here, that there are many points of resemblance between Magnetism and Mesmerism. For instance, it is well known that if a powerful magnet be repeatedly drawn downward upon a small magnet, the power of the small magnet becomes so increased that it can raise a weight which it formerly could not: if then, reversing the process, the powerful magnet be drawn once upward on the small magnet, the small magnet becomes incapable of again raising the weight. Can that, too, be explained by imagination?

Surely, if imagination is such a mighty curative agent as our opponents will have it to be, and if the mesmeric process can so unfailingly evoke it, doctors, *if they really wish to cure their patients*, should use the passes, as they do other things, to practise on the imagination, and honestly declare that hocus-pocus beats drugs. Better to be innocently hocus-pocus'd into health, than be with doubtful result converted into a drug-funnel.

“If the imagination possesses the wonderful charm to

bring the nervous system into a condition where we can bid defiance to pain, and gain a complete victory over the whole frightful army of human woes, then surely the science is equally important, possesses the same transcendent claims upon our benevolence; and the man who discovered that the imagination possessed this charm, is worthy of the united thanks of all human-kind; and being dead, his bones are worthy to repose with the great men of the universe. In this case it will only be necessary to change its name, and call it—**THE SCIENCE OF THE WONDERFUL POWER OF THE HUMAN IMAGINATION TO CHARM ALL PAIN.**”—*Rev. J. B. Dods.*

Surely, very invaluable, oh mothers! is that process which can enable a child, even before it is capable of understanding the meaning of the word Mesmerism, to cure itself with its own imagination.

Miss Martineau had once occasion to call in a cow-doctor. He did what he could, but declared that the animal would die during the night. Miss M. immediately made a man mesmerize the cow, which stupidly became drowsy, nodded its head, and recovered. On arriving in the morning the doctor was amazed, and delighted at the evidence of his own skill. But when he learned what had been done, he, in high professional style, nearly cursed both Miss Martineau and her cow. How much more dignified it would have been if he had merely turned to the animal, and exclaimed,—Oh, the strength of your imagination!

Mesmerism causes congestion of the brain.—Unfortunate Mesmerism! conceived in imagination, to be brought forth in murder!

Some people believe, and others assert, that the mesmeric state is induced by mere gazing at an object, till the optic nerve becomes fatigued, which so disturbs the

whole nervous system that the brain is compelled to congest itself, probably in courtesy to the afflicted economy ;— a very short and easy way of solving the matter. It certainly is a fact in nature, that people may be put to sleep by mere gazing, just as they may be put to sleep by a mere blow on the head ; but neither of these are Mesmerism.

Besides the expression of intelligence or emotion, the eye conveys a thrilling something,—a fascination, or feeling of nerve-sympathy,—the glance, as it were, touching the music of the life-strung instrument on which it falls, interpreting the myth of Memnon's sun-song ; in short, more than any other part of the body, the eye projects the occult nervous energy direct from the brain, so much so, that the sensitive can *feel* when certain people look at them, and turn round, if need be, to fraternize with the glance. In mesmerizing, the gazer projects the influence of his brain direct through the recipient eye to the brain of the patient. Yet one may mesmerize without gazing. Blind people have been put into the mesmeric sleep,—their act of gazing not taking place until they awoke ; and, in many cases, the eyes require to be closed before the operation commences. Dr. Esdaile has recorded that he made it a rule to mesmerize his patients, for painless operation, with their eyes closed,—some of them not even knowing that they were expected to fall asleep, and have tumours of a hundredweight, or so, pleasantly extracted, with imagination and other instruments.

“ I also wish to remark, that I have seen no indication of congestion of blood on the brain ; the circulation, while my patients were in the trance, being natural, like that of a sleeping person.”—*Dr. Esdaile.*

Mesmerism is Satanic agency.—Good people should re-

member that it is not well to stigmatize their fellow-beings, and that it is very far from well to attribute one of God's best gifts to the devil.

Without dwelling on this painful subject, it may be mentioned that the Rev. Mr. Bickersteth, Rector of Watton, after having hastily, in his *Signs of the Times in the East*, pronounced Mesmerism to be supernatural and diabolical, honourably wrote to the editor of the *Zoist*, (No. xvii., p. 71,) that he "frankly admits that his language was unguarded and improper;" that his "words conveyed an idea far from his mind;" and that he "has seen enough to make him think that, though Mesmerism may be fearfully abused, it may yet be *one of those powers which God gives for the benefit of the human race.*"

And the Rev. Mr. Close of Cheltenham says, in his *Lectures on Miracles*, p. 25, "He was certain that there was no interference of the evil spirit in Mesmerism. *Satan had nothing more to do with Mesmerism than he had to do with us in everything else.* Never would he grant this vantage ground to the prince of darkness, or suppose that he had exercised mesmeric power. True, we could not explain the phenomena; but therefore to conclude that they are diabolical, appeared to him the most inconclusive argument," &c.

"Satanic agency first comes forward in the character of an old woman, curing the sore eyes of a boy by an infusion of dock-weed.

"Satanic agency next appears in the character of a Jesuit, scowling darkly around, and curing a tertian ague by the Peruvian cinchona.

"Satanic agency again appears in the character of Lady Wortley Montagu, importing inoculation from Turkey, and arresting the fearful ravages of small-pox!

“Satanic agency again appears in the character of Doctor Jenner, convulsing the College of Physicians with his novelties, and saving myriads of infants by the process of vaccination !

“Satanic agency lastly appears in the character of a modern Mesmerizer, healing, by his soothing power, some of the most distressing diseases, and expelling a whole train of neuralgic pains, which had defied the skill of the Faculty !

“And they, who utter these denunciations, think that they are doing God service !”—*Rev. George Sandby.*

Mesmerism gives one undue influence over another.—
Villanous Mesmerism ! that enables one man to make the eyes of another close, by keeping them wide open ; whereby the operator obtains unlimited power over the congested body and mind ; whereby the patient ceases to be a free agent,—robbed of the prerogative of humanity, beguiled by sheer humbug, lulled in the lap of imposture, carried away on the wings of imagination, and deposited in the realms of Satanic agency !

It is a striking fact, that the enemies of Mesmerism, *whilst silent about the cures which it effects*, delight in attributing to it the fabulous phenomena associated with the days of fagots and black cats. It is fitting that they should display themselves enthroned between the monstrous horns of an unseemly dilemma,—inasmuch as, if they are practically unacquainted with Mesmerism, they spread reports which *they do not know to be true*, which, if they are practically acquainted with the subject, *they must know to be false*.

If Mesmerists were inclined to retaliate, they might say, with some show of reason, that the agency, so boldly alluded to, is certainly at work on one side of the ques-

tion,—especially when they find that the people who spread these reports, often boast of being ignorant of mesmeric phenomena, and disdain even to read a book on the subject. “Who love the darkness because their deeds are evil,” may be applied to the stigmatizers of any truth.

If the sages of Timbuctoo were to hear of some of Professor Faraday’s experiments, how they would test the new light of truth with that infallible extinguisher, their own experience; how they would declare him to be a humbug, rogue, or fool; how they would ring the changes on imposture and delusion; how they would “put him down” with *their* laws of nature and enlightened reason; how they would spread reports; how, if they could not actually burn his body, they would delight in destroying his character! Some anti-mesmerists should have been born in Timbuctoo!

But to put one in an unconscious state, &c., &c. ! In answer to all which, it may be said that mesmerists—who may be supposed to have some respect for their own character—make it a rule never to put a patient into the unconscious state without having a friend of the party present, to see what horrible things are to take place. Opium and chloroform put people into rather unconscious states, and they are tolerably easy of being administered; and arsenic and prussic acid are liable to be abused; and—therefore people should not be mesmerized!—Q. E. D.

The absurdity of the objections preclude their being seriously treated.

Let man boast of his reason as he will, he is, in some sort, merely a superior insect; and sight has been given him, as a feeler, to be thrown across the sphere, that, by touching the reality of things, he may come to a know-

ledge of their value. However regal his after-prerogative, he must first condescend to employ the feeler, even when mesmeric facts are in question : without this reason is useless ; it cannot arbitrate. What I think—what doctors say—what people report, give no data for the decision ; and the fundamental consideration is, **WHAT ARE THE FACTS ?**

CHAPTER X.

MESMERISM IN THE FAMILY.

Considerations brought out in the previous chapters—*1st*, The drug-system is not in a satisfactory state—The Faculty discourage inquiry into their professional attainments—The public should institute such inquiry.—*2d*, The Faculty are not competent to pronounce on new curatives—Their opinion of Mesmerism is worthless.—*3d*, Mesmerism is established on facts—Disease is the consequence of deficiency, or disturbance of the *vis medicatrix Naturæ*—Mesmerism cures disease by implementing and regulating the *vis medicatrix Naturæ*.—*4th*, The duty of the public to inquire into the truth of Mesmerism—Belief in Mesmerism rapidly spreading—Difficulty of procuring mesmerizers—The difficulty met—Mesmerism in the family—Its easy application as a preventative—Idiosyncrasies of patients—Nervous patients—The application of Mesmerism demands time, strength, and experience—Difficulties in the way of family Mesmerism obviated by consulting an experienced Mesmerist—The system tested by the Author.

THE subject brought under notice in the foregoing chapters, has necessarily been treated in a very cursory and somewhat desultory manner—merely sketched, as it were. Yet however meagre the outline, it has prominently brought out some considerations which demand the most serious attention.

In this age, when so much is done for the welfare of the community, for the enlightenment of the masses, and for improving their social position, morally and physically, it is passing strange that the question which demands most consideration, as fundamental of all social improvement, is set aside as unworthy of being inves-

tigated,—the question, namely, Are the means at present employed for preserving the health of the community the best that can be obtained? Inquiry and innovation are allowed and encouraged on all subjects but this one: the time-honoured drug-system must not be doubted; it must not be inquired into; we must take it upon credit; we must be contented with the opinion of those who make their livelihood by it;—fifty thousand doctors have a vested right in it, and therefore mankind has no interest in the matter, apart from swallowing drugs and paying fees. And is it indeed to be received as a fact that mankind live for the benefit of the doctors? If not, why do so many of the doctors, and all the journals whose existence depends on serving them, denounce as a dupe, fool, or rogue, any one who presumes to inquire in how far the doctors live for the benefit of mankind? It is an honest question, a most important one—one, be it observed, that has for the most part been answered merely with volleys of vituperation. “Oh,” says the man of courtesy, “it is unseemly to ask such a question: the Faculty are such a body of learning, of wisdom, of kindness, that they have always been implicitly believed in, and universally admired.” Alas! great pyramids, *when at last explored*, have been found to contain nothing but a wretched mummy.

The health of the community at stake, and the question being, what is the most efficient curative method? we must have another answer than vituperation. That so many of the Faculty should have thrown up such a defence, bespeaks a consciousness of the weakness of their citadel: this may be said with all due respect for their learning, wisdom, and kindness.

In such circumstances, among those which have al-

ready been advanced, the four following considerations deserve prominence :—

First consideration.—It appears, by the confession of the leading Allopathic authorities, that the drug-system is in a most unsatisfactory state. How much this is owing to the essential nature of the system, and how much to the incapability of those who administer it, is a question that may be left, in courtesy, for the decision of the Faculty. It is enough for the public to know that, to repeat the authoritative words of Sir John Forbes, “ things have come to such a pass that they could not be worse : they must mend or end.”

In such circumstances, surely it is a very striking fact, that, in these days of enlightenment, progress, and general information, whilst the cultivators of other sciences, as becomes their place, delight to give direction to the march of intellect,—to come forth from mystery, and court inquiry into what forms the subject of their studies,—honestly revealing the amount of their attainments, popularizing the recondite, taking the public into their confidence, and whispering in their ear, as it were, the interpretation of some mighty utterance of nature, the Faculty find it becoming their place of dignity to wave back “ the profane crowd,” to retire from the light of honest inquiry, and shroud themselves in mystery and dog-latin ; denouncing every attempt to teach the public the nature and amount of those attainments over which the emblematic serpent pushes out its unrevealing tongue. Why should the Faculty alone invest itself in the awful cloak of professionalism, and refuse to take the public into their confidence, and whisper in their ear the interpretation of some mighty utterance of nature ? Alas, if it should be that they have none to whisper !

Surely it is not very presumptuous to suppose it to be desirable that men should learn all that has been discovered of the formation of their own bodies, and the laws which regulate their health-work, so that they may be enabled to observe those sanitary conditions which necessarily involve the general wellbeing of the community at large, and the knowledge of which consequently should not be restricted to the medical profession. Surely this is not the knowledge in which the public should have least interest; and surely we might expect that, instead of being systematically withheld, it should be eagerly communicated by the philanthropic parties who have made it the chief subject of their study, especially when we remember that their express business is, or should be, so to deal with the community in the matter of prevention, that there may be no occasion for their services in the matter of cure. On the other hand, it might be unreasonable to expect that the Faculty should inform the public of their professional mysteries, if all that they had to say was, "Our art is a system of *guesses* and *positive uncertainty*. Thousands are slaughtered in the quiet sick-room."

No doubt the Faculty have their reasons, whatever they may be, for discouraging, as they universally do, any attempt to popularize medical science—constituting themselves, apparently, an exclusive priesthood of physic, that can exist only on the sufferance of the blind faith of their drug-devotees; still, as knowledge and the right of private judgment have been always found to act beneficially in advancing the interests of mankind, it might be well for the public to qualify themselves to form an opinion of the capabilities of that system which so arrogates the infallibility of an absolute and mysterious power.

To acquire the requisite knowledge would demand neither much time nor extraordinary capacity. Without entering on the innumerable details, which can be mastered only by a life-long experience of professional practice, the perusal of a few volumes, such as lectures published by eminent professors, would suffice to give a general view of the subject—a peep, as it were, behind the curtain, whereby one might be enabled to form a tolerably correct idea of the practical results of medical science. If this priesthood of physic really do command the curative power which they arrogate, as brought to a state of perfection by the cumulative learning of ages, an inquiry into the subject on the part of the public could only give the Faculty additional *prestige* and importance, by converting the blind faith of the devotee into the confirmed assurance of an intelligent belief. And if this priesthood are really sacrificing to their drug-idol—at the rate indicated by their eminent authorities in the first chapter of this volume—it is no less desirable that the public should be made acquainted with the fact. It is ruinous to hold an erroneous belief, however magnificent the object of it may be. Honesty, truth, and the well-being of the community, demand that the Faculty shall no longer be wrapped in professional mystery. It is true that the public exceedingly admire the cabalistic letters M.D., but that is no reason why they should not aspire to know their meaning.

What has been advanced is not without medical certificate. For instance, Dr. Garth Wilkinson says,—“In this old corporation medicine is an art and mystery, not only a separate profession, but a fenced, paled, and invisible park of society, with advertisement of man-traps and spring-guns to all intruders. The public has no business

there, for it is corporate private property. Under that regime, the people has nothing to do with prescriptions but to swallow them. 'Tis a medical despotism, with *secrecy* and *espionage* working as right and left eyes in the head of absolute power. The secrecy is humanely couched; the apparatus of medicine is concealed, lest the ignorant public, like children playing with loaded pistols, should kill themselves, and thus enter the other world without making that seemly difficult bow to this world which is implied in dying according to art. And the secrecy also incidentally brings grist to the mill, and keeps up the proper monopoly of the medical guild," &c.

When, in her old Stamboul, great with traditions of vast, vague, and vanished glory, the Turkish woman walks forth in her mysterious veil, the stranger is apt to endow her with a world of charms, and believe that she, in her time-honoured garb, is exactly what he imagines. Fond fool! If she possessed a tith of what he supposes, she would take ample opportunity of letting him have assurance of the fact.—The Faculty do not wish us to peep under their veil.

These remarks are not made with any wish unduly to disturb the equanimity of those who shrink from the investigation of truth,—who pin their faith to "the legitimate," and live so under the despotism of habit, that they would rather even die of the doctor than live without his leave.

Second consideration.—As indicated in the second chapter of this volume, it is evident that the education which qualifies a man to be medical, does not qualify him to be impartial, but the very contrary. His teachers draw around him the legal circle of knowledge, and he becomes incapable of going beyond it, unless it be to tell the

human race that knowledge is confined in the University, and that the rest of the world is merely an extension of the trip from Dan to Beersheba. And so some world-accepted truth comes, from time to time, to his exclusive College, only to find "no admittance" written above the door.

Why have the Faculty alone, of all mankind, opposed, in the most decided, and denounced in the most unseemly manner, every discovery that was calculated "to save hundreds of thousands of human lives?" Was their intellect right in the matter? Did they perceive the countless benefits which the innovations were calculated to confer on the human race? And did they, so systematically, vigorously, and rancorously oppose them in the spirit of sheer heartless wickedness? The character of the Faculty, who have ever been renowned for their zeal and self-sacrifice in the cause of humanity, wholly forbids the idea. The habits engendered by the nature of their professional training, of conserving what has already been so laboriously acquired, and of magnifying their attainments so as to impress the public with an idea of the completeness of their art, can alone account for such unbecoming conduct. To hint that they, the priesthood of Hygeia, suckled, as it were, by the pharmacopœia, and legally consecrated by *alma mater*, can possibly have yet to become acquainted with a great therapeutic truth, is to offer them a personal insult, and they resent it accordingly. They will not listen to it, far less inquire into it, *until compelled by the force of public opinion*; and so it happens that, in medical matters, the Faculty are always an age behind the rest of the world,—truth's heirs of entail, who succeed to their property by holding the title-deeds of a former century.

Seeing, then, that the position, training, and prejudices of the doctors are all against their arriving at a just appreciation of a new curative, it might be expected that they would be especially opposed to Mesmerism, against which their interest* is also enlisted; that they would denounce it in the most unmeasured terms, or admit that "there is something in it," only to give an appearance of candour to their condemnation of it *as not applicable to their patients*,—the prevalent mode now of "putting it down."

The ancient king of Drugdom, with lethal javelin in hand, cannot be expected to smile upon the youthful *parvenu* that would harp away his evil spirit merely for the benefit of the community.

In short, the Faculty's rabid condemnation—read by the light of their past history—is the crowning proof that Mesmerism deserves to be inquired into, as what is calculated "to save hundreds of thousands of human lives."

Third consideration.—All cures are effected by the *vis medicatrix Naturæ* alone.

We have seen, in accordance with what medical authorities have spoken out on the subject, that health depends fundamentally on the integrity of the nervous centres, the brain and spine. We have seen that the brain-force, flowing along the cerebral conductors, the nerves, regulates all organic function: centric disease, which is the mis-working of the nervous centres, and eccentric disease, which is the mis-working of the organs, originating in one cause, disturbance in the flow of the brain-force. And whilst this disturbance can be readjusted, more or less, by

* I: may be supposed that doctors, at least in this respect, are not more immaculate than other men.

mental influence, medicine, and various applications, we have seen that the mesmeric process can effect the same end in a more perfect manner, by *sufficiently* implementing and *duly* regulating that on which alone recovery depends—namely, the brain-force of the patient. And that the occult force of Mesmerism is thus curative, is proved by that which gives the sole proof that the occult force of medicine is curative—namely, experience. Experience has amply proved that, as any conducting wire may have the requisite force imparted from any battery, so any organism may have its requisite health-force imparted from any brain.

Mesmerism, like every other great truth, has been established by its own results: the work approves the worker. Triumphantly, amid the scorn, and obloquy, and ignorance, and dishonesty of its assailants, it appeals to the public, by pointing to its magnificent array of cures, many of which are such as were never before effected! “I challenge our opponents,” says Dr. Elliotson, in honourable exultation, “to produce such an array of cures.”

Fourth consideration.—The truth of Mesmerism has been declared by some of the most distinguished philosophers and doctors in Europe and America. That it should have so commended itself to men so qualified to investigate natural phenomena—especially when we consider that it has done so in spite of the great prejudices, and other hindrances, arising from the position and training of many of them—is surely a voucher that it is not undeserving of public consideration: surely the approval of such men invests the subject with a right to be respected, or at least with a claim to be inquired into, however it may be laughed at by the ignorant, or denounced by the interested; or rather, seeing that there is such testimony

to the truth of Mesmerism, the knowledge of which is of such vital importance to the community, is it not the duty, as well as the interest, of every one candidly to inquire into the subject before denouncing it—to inquire if it be really calculated to save “hundreds of thousands of human lives?” To sneer at it, in ignorance of what it has effected, is no longer excusable; it is, to say the least, disgraceful.

And what makes such inquiry, on the part of the public, more imperative, is that it can be so easily instituted,—a pair of eyes and a little common sense being the requisites. The question is not, what do doctors say? or, what do mesmerists say? but, what do patients say? Patients who have been cured with Mesmerism are not very difficult to be met with. Let the inquirer find out such, and ask them how many doctors attended them, for how long they were drugged, and what were the results; and then, for how long they were mesmerized, and what were the results. The inference will be self-apparent. To subtilize on such a subject is to falsify. There is no room for dialectics regarding the comparative virtues of the drug-system and the mesmeric process: the question is simply regarding their results,—What is the arithmetic of the FACTS? Do more cures follow the exhibition of Mesmerism than the exhibition of drugs? If so, let doctors *explain* the cures as they may, the facts are in favour of Mesmerism. Even supposing that it were mixed up with humbug, if it is more beneficial to mankind, it is more to be preferred than the system of drugs, even supposing that that system were wholly devoid of humbug. But let it be observed, that, to find out which system is the means of saving most lives, would be to discover which has most connexion with that terrible word.

Surely it is not becoming to any party concerned, that respect for an incorporate body—however renowned it may be as such, and however esteemed it may be on account of the private character of its component members—should prevent an honest and full inquiry into what has been declared, by well-qualified and trustworthy authorities, to be an invaluable truth, intimately connected with the welfare of mankind. With all due respect for constituted authorities and hereditary opinions, mankind may surely look around them in the open light of day, and believe in the facts which Nature spreads before them, and judge, if need be, of the fitness of their practical application to their own persons,—whether it be of food to nourish, or Mesmerism to cure : surely they require neither a philosopher nor a doctor to tell them what has made them fat or healthy.

Let us own to ourselves, what we dare not confess to each other, that the reverence for authority, the power of habit, and the fear of ridicule, are the great hindrances in the way even of unprofessional inquiry into a new truth ; and that the advancement of science is retarded by social as well as by professional slavery, dragging against the onward movement, whose genuineness, however, is fortunately thereby proved. But fortunately also—however Pope, Czar, Faculty, or Fashion may demur—mankind cannot be kept altogether from turning their eyeballs ; and, by that fact, the speedy spread of Mesmerism is assured. Although, once on a time, Sir B. Brodie, Dr. Marshal Hall, and others, with more than philosophic caution, refused to go a few steps to see some exquisite mesmeric phenomena, whilst Dr. Robert Johnson, with the audacity of genius, declared that if he should see them, “ he would not believe the evidence of his eyes”—

all deserving to rank with the philosopher who would not look through Galileo's telescope, as he was determined to have no interference with the laws which *he* had proved should regulate the sky—the facts of Mesmerism are becoming so generally known, that even its most rabid opponents are now obliged, through very shame, to say “there's something in it;” so generally known that, throughout the country, there are many invalids—and the number is rapidly increasing—who would willingly be mesmerized, if they had an opportunity of being so by an experienced operator. The author makes this statement from his personal knowledge of the fact. And this leads to consideration of the special subject of this chapter.

In speaking of the difficulty of procuring a sufficient supply of mesmerizers, the Rev. George Sandby says,—“The treatment of a chronic case generally demands a sacrifice of time, which, even if men have the inclination, they have not always the leisure, to bestow. Experience and knowledge are also indispensable: I should be sorry to place a very delicate patient in the hands of an unpractised mesmerizer. Temper, patience, and presence of mind, are also requisites; and, as was before stated, character and right principle must not be forgotten. Here then are a number of qualities desirable for the formation of a competent mesmerizer, and which are not to be procured at a moment's warning. And this, for the present, throws a difficulty in the work. It retards its course of more extended usefulness. Still, time will correct this inconvenience. What the public demands, the public will always find provided ere long. As there is every certainty that Mesmerism will shortly take its rank among the established branches of the medical art, a supply of

qualified practitioners will be soon forthcoming. Our difficulties are but temporary. Many junior members of the profession will devote themselves to the study, and obtain a standing in society by their experience and success. Others, whose time is less at their command, will only give a general superintendence; while the actual treatment will be conducted by pupils, specially instructed for the work," &c. In the meantime, Mr. Sandby recommends that the mesmeric process should be applied, when possible, by the members of the family. And this is the practical end of the subject; the summary of all lectures and writings on Mesmerism being,—Free yourselves from the bondage of authority and custom; investigate the subject with your own eyes; and, when you are convinced of its value, apply the process to each other. This does not seem to be very unreasonable.

That every one may apply Nature's curative who holds nature's diploma—health, is the consideration that invests the subject with inestimable importance, and imperatively commends it to the attention of the philanthropist. To say that a healing application is procurable, without expense, in every dwelling in the land, may sound like a dream, but it is a truth; and when we consider what bearings the result of such universal family application would have on the general health, and consequently on the social advancement of the community, it will not appear surprising that they who have practically proved the capabilities of this mighty sanative agent, should venture, in spite of authority and routine, to announce its value, and denounce whatever opposes it, as, in so far, a mere nuisance—an obstruction in the way of the public. Reverence for truth must have the precedence of reverence for all else.

It may be objected that the conditions requisite for the efficiency of the mesmeric process—namely, knowledge of what is to be done, and experience of the mode of doing it—forbid its general application as a family remedial. But the time may come when the difficulty will be wholly obviated by the applications of Mesmerism forming a part of household education; and in the meantime it is not insuperable.

Mesmeric applications resolve themselves into two general divisions,—those which are preventive, and those which are curative.

The preventive applications require neither great mesmeric power, knowledge, nor experience. If, when the *first* symptoms of disturbance in the system occur, a few simple passes—continuing and repeating the process as may be required—be made locally, or generally over the system, according to the case, the constitution becomes speedily readjusted in its normal vigour,—resuming its health-work, as the nerval circulation restores due impulse to the organism. Tens of thousands of fatal diseases might thus be checked by rectifying their initial disturbance which tends, it may be in the process of years, to implicate one organ and then another, till the whole system becomes hopelessly involved. However awful at last it may become, every disease has a beginning; and any member of a family might check it in its first feeble symptoms, by applying the readjustive process. Thus used as a preventive in the family, the application of Mesmerism is as universally possible as it would be invaluable. Such application may be compared to holding out the hand to prevent a friend falling into the water,—a comparatively simple operation, that may be performed by any one.

But when the symptomatic disturbance has been allowed to proceed, till the diseased action has caused habitual functional aberration, or induced organic change, the curative application required may demand much mesmeric strength, knowledge, and experience. To draw a drowning man out of the water, is a much more serious operation than to keep him from falling in.

No doubt there are many cases in which any one might apply even the curative process with perfect safety; but then there are many others in which it would be rash and unwarrantable in an inexperienced person to operate. Mesmerism induces very different states in different individuals, the results induced depending on the constitution and peculiar idiosyncrasy of the patient; and it is impossible to predicate what the result will be in any case. The process must have been fully applied to the patient, before we can determine whether or not it would be safe in inexperienced hands. As a general rule, the inexperienced operator should confine himself to such cases as require merely a local application.

It may be observed, that it is generally thought by those not practically acquainted with Mesmerism, that what are called nervous cases are the most easy of being influenced and conducted to a favourable termination. But the contrary is the truth. Such cases sometimes put in requisition all the skill and qualifications of the experienced mesmerist; and an injudicious interference would be productive of more harm than good. They who have seen the process skilfully applied to a nervous patient may indeed think that it is a very simple operation, which might be performed by any one; but they should remember that the operator knew when and how to *vary* his manipulations, so as to suit the case, and prevent the

unpleasant results which might otherwise have ensued. Though it may escape the observation of the spectator, it is this varying of the manipulations, at the proper time, that tests the judgment and skill of the operator.

It may be well to mention, that there is one unpleasant result sometimes connected with mesmerizing a nervous patient, however skilfully the process may be applied, for which the operator should be prepared. Every one knows how an idea sometimes takes possession of a nervous patient, and works out a reality, good or evil, according to the inspiration of the notion. For instance, should he fancy that his food has been poisoned, the anxiety occasioned by the notion will so act on the nervous system as greatly to abnegate the nourishing quality of the food; yet the food may be excellent. A like unfounded notion may counteract the beneficial effects of the mesmeric process. For instance, if, a few days after the process has been commenced, the patient is seized with a whim, such as that Mesmerism is connected with the black art; or if some friend (who knows everything) tells him of a person who (according to report) was the worse for having been mesmerized; or if the doctor, whom he has almost worshipped for many years, happens to call, and mysteriously shake his head, and hint that he is not very sure about Mesmerism—that there is something in it, but, &c. &c., it is evident that the anxiety of the patient will produce a most disturbing effect on his nervous system. The mesmerist will call—the process will be proceeded with—and the patient will find that it merely makes him “fidgety.” Next day the mesmerist calls, and the patient tells him that he never felt so miserable as last night—that he had no sleep—that all his symptoms were aggravated—and, in short, that Mesmerism has done him harm. In vain

will the mesmerist represent that, until last night, the process had been beneficial—that it had procured unwonted sleep, soothed him, and so on, and that a further trial——“ No, no !” exclaims the patient, “ I never felt so ill in my life—I am much worse.” And possibly he might speak truth ; yet it was not the mesmeric process that had done the harm, it was the notion, the report of the friend, the awful shake of the doctor’s head. Such cases do occasionally occur ; and they admirably serve the purpose of the “ opponent,” who loves to spread prejudicial reports, without inquiring into the circumstances on which they are founded.

Whilst the mesmeric process may easily be applied as a preventive of disease, as observed, there are difficulties in the way of its being employed in the family as a curative agent. *First*, the member of a family may not be able to command the requisite time ; *second*, he may not have *nervo-vital* force to spare for the operation ; and, *third*, he may not have the experience requisite for the safe conduct of the process.

These difficulties, however, may be obviated by consulting an experienced mesmerist, one who should examine the case and direct the member of the family how to proceed, and generally superintend the process ; or who would himself conduct the process in so far as requisite, or provide a mesmerizer suitable for the case ; for, it is to be observed, that some diseases and constitutions are more beneficially affected by a special mesmerizer.

That there are many cases in which Mesmerism may be safely applied even by an inexperienced person, is balanced by the fact that there are many others of quite a different character ; and a knowledge of this, together with the consciousness that he is wholly inexperienced,

may often keep a member of a family from attempting the process when he might do so with perfect safety, his fear of acting rashly and prejudicially precluding the benefit that might be so easily derived. In such circumstances, the advice of an experienced operator should be procured. Even if it proved to be unnecessary as regards the patient, it would give the inexperienced operator a consciousness of doing what was right, and consequently that self-reliance which is essential to a good operator. Any perplexity in the mind of the operator regarding the process he is employing, by disturbing his own nerval circulation, disturbs the operation, and may act most prejudicially on the patient.

Such a system seems calculated to obviate the difficulties which lie in the way of Mesmerism being employed in the family as a curative agent. Its desirableness might be enforced with many considerations; but, without dwelling on the subject, the author will merely add, that he advocates the system in consequence of his own experience of its practicability, having employed it for a number of years in Edinburgh with the most satisfactory results,—so satisfactory that even invalids, who had been pronounced by the first doctors in Edinburgh to be incurable, have been completely restored to health, chiefly through the instrumentality of members of their own families.

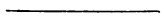
Such is the curative power of Mesmerism, and its applicability in the family.

Having devoted himself to the curative practice of Mesmerism, the author feels justified in thus bringing forward the results of his experience; and so convinced is he that the system alluded to is calculated to make the benefits derived from Mesmeric treatment generally avail-

able in the household, that—without interfering with his ordinary attendance on patients—he has made arrangements for being consulted by parties who wish themselves to apply the mesmeric process, and, when necessary, have it generally superintended.

As on a subject of vital importance, which we have particularly studied and fully appreciated, we are apt to feel keenly and speak strongly—especially if its merits are belied by a formidable opposition—our advocacy, just because it is honest, may appear over-charged and one-sided to those who have not had an opportunity of duly estimating the practical bearings of the question at issue. If there is an appearance of such bias in this volume, the reader is requested to remember that it may be owing to his not having duly appreciated the incalculable importance of the subject, and that a practical investigation of its bearings might lead him to a different opinion. The object of the volume is gained, if a consideration of the statements which have been advanced incite him to institute such an investigation.

APPENDIX.



No. I.

THE FACULTY.

To add the Faculty to the devastating accompliceship of War, Pestilence, and Famine, may to some appear to be the object aimed at in advancing the medical quotations embodied in this work; but they have not been selected even in a spirit of hostility to that learned and most estimable body of men, further than is justified by their general anti-improvement attitude.

Competent medical men are as invaluable as suitable medicines; and it is no small pleasure to bear a part in the homage which is rendered to them by mankind.

Yet, as most physicians of eminence—whilst conscientiously applying their art, in that which they deemed the most beneficial mode of dealing with disease—have, in some way, recorded that the system of Allopathy is uncertain in its practical results, and that this uncertainty is greatly increased in many cases by professional incompetency, any man—leaving the Faculty to settle their professional discussions and internal disputes—without presumption, may say that his own observations have confirmed these recorded opinions, and that it is the duty of the

public seriously to consider what is involved in such avowed uncertainty and incompetency. That is all that has been attempted in advancing these quotations; and if the Faculty feel aggrieved by them, they have at least the consolation of being aggrieved by what has come out of their own mouth.

In the circumstances of past generations such uncertainty and incompetency were inevitable, and therefore do not detract from the learning, zeal, and benevolence which have always characterized the Faculty.

Seeing that they had no law to guide them in the application of their drugs, and that their "pretended experience," to use Dr. Abercrombie's words, was "mere analogy," which "too often sunk into conjecture," the success of practitioners depended almost entirely on their own sagacity. With nothing external to guide him, but the history of various modes of treatment which had sometimes succeeded and sometimes failed, whilst, at the same time, conscious that all these modes *might* be equally inapplicable to the peculiar circumstances of his patient, yet necessitated to decide on some active measure without delay, life and death at stake,—the physician required that rare endowment of intellect which discerns truth as if by intuition. Mere average men could not meet the occasion, save with their "pretended experience," from which they had, as it were, to draw out an arrow and shoot it at a venture—kill or cure. What could they else? Their learning enabled them to do no more; in fact, *it* only perplexed them, for it was so very extensive that they knew they had forgotten the half of it. In short, they were incompetent,—lost in a maze of uncertainties; and even their knowledge of how *former* cases had been treated and terminated, only enabled them to indulge in a hap-hazard

routine ; till they too had to own that an extraordinary brain was required, by calling one in for consultation—when it was too late !

If any one doubts the truth of the remarks advanced, let him even now reckon how many of his acquaintances have been afflicted with some chronic disease ; and how many have been cured with drugs, that is, had their disease *eradicated* ; and how many had merely their symptoms palliated,—the disease breaking out from time to time, till finally they died of it.

That “ thousands have been slaughtered in the quiet sick-room,” is not then necessarily a disparagement of the profession of physic ; but, at least, it is a proof that the requisite number of qualified physicians—qualified by nature as well as art—could not be supplied. Even universities, unfortunately, in manufacturing doctors, cannot give that greatest requisite—a rare endowment of intellect.

But that in the circumstances of former times, the Faculty accomplished all that could be expected, whatever that was, is no reason why the public should not inquire *now* into the avowed “ uncertainty” and “ incompetency” pertaining to the profession. If “ things have come to such a pass that they must mend or end,” the public are surely justified in instituting an inquiry *with the view of finding out what will mend them*.

The status, &c., conferred by a diploma, is no doubt a very interesting consideration, especially to those who have the honour to possess it ; yet, whatever their entailed distinction, or conventional privileges, courtesy to men must not be extended at the expense of justice to man. And when the Faculty, as a body, stand forth as the opposers of a great truth, it is time at least to have it

clearly understood—whatever their motives—that they are in that attitude.

The author has ventured to allude to them in this volume, merely to shew that they are in that attitude, and why they are in that attitude, and their weakness in that attitude. Our admiration of his greatness is no plea that we should not expose the giant's faults, and, if need be, sling a stone at his forehead, and, finally, even cut off his head with his own sword.

No. II.

CHLOROFORM.

It may be asked, If the Faculty are so “habit and repute” opposers of new therapeutic discoveries and inventions, how has this novel anæsthetic agent been so favourably received by the profession? And the answer, as will presently appear, is, it was so favourably received, not on account of its own merits, but as an antidote to the hated Mesmerism, whose triumphant painless operations, it was fondly hoped, would, by the success of chloroform, be thrown into the shade. In spite of their time-honoured habit of abhorring whatever would jog them out of the ruts of their old routine, as self-preservation is the first law of nature, the drug-novelty was eagerly embraced by doctors as an instrument to “put down” what threatened to throw *them* into the shade.

But when it is said that here is at least one new drug, or rather application, which was universally received by the profession, it must be observed that what is said is not true. It has been loudly lauded, but not universally;

many doctors condemn it. For instance, we find the following condemnatory opinion in the *Medical Gazette*:—
“Facts of this kind have become so multiplied that it is no longer possible to attribute them to any other cause than chloroformization. Omitting all the cases of which we have not the exact details, and confining our attention to those already referred to, it is clearly impossible to arrive at any other conclusion. In all these, the symptoms which preceded death, compared with the necroscopic results, prove the extinction of life to have been owing to a real asphyxia, the direct effect of the special deleterious influence of chloroform on the brain.

“In the present instance, the patient died as if struck by lightning, despite the small quantity of vapour inhaled, and the precautions observed. . . . M. Sedillot has pointed out that the supervention of muscular relaxation is the period at which the administration of the agent should cease; but the preceding case shows that this indication is fallacious. The pulse does not furnish a more certain indication, since, in M. Berrier’s case, life and the pulse ceased simultaneously. . . . The *poison* enters at once into the circulation, and penetrates through the whole system, and but a few minutes elapse between apparently perfect health and the death of the patient. Art is powerless in dealing with the *poisonous* effects of the vapour.”

Mr. Bennett, in the *Edinburgh Monthly Journal*, says,—
“The *poisonous* action of chloroform, as observed in animals, is precisely similar to that of a pure narcotic.”

In a paper *On Death from Chloroform*, Mr. Sibson says,—
“That when asphyxia is induced, we must regard chloroform as one of the most *uncontrollable narcotic poisons*.”

And *The Medical Times*, November 12, 1853, says,—

“These recent deaths should teach us to continue researches for some anæsthetic agent which may confer upon mankind all the advantages derivable from chloroform without its dangers.”

But supposing the above not to disprove that chloroform has been universally received by the profession, it must at least be admitted that the practice of drugging patients into coma is not new. It was indulged in centuries ago, with what beneficial results, in general, may be inferred from the fact of its being allowed to fall into desuetude.

Even from the earliest periods of medical history, various methods have been adopted for producing both general and partial insensibility, either complete unconsciousness, or numbness of the part to be operated upon. Dioscorides, in a chapter on mandragore, says that a strong decoction of the roots may be given to those who are to be cut or cauterized to *produce insensibility*. Apuleius, Galen, and Pliny describe the same treatment; and Theodoric described in the thirteenth century a method of applying the fumes of opium, hemlock, henbane, and other narcotics combined by means of a sponge, until a person about to submit to operation falls asleep, when the operation may be performed. He is roused by vinegar and other means after the termination. In 1579, Bulleyne speaks of casting a patient into a “trance, or a deep terrible dream, until he be cut for the stone.” Augustus I., King of Poland, towards the end of the seventeenth century, had his foot amputated by Weiss, a pupil of Petit, while sleeping under the influence of some powerful secret remedy. The art, however, appears to have been lost, for, with the exception of some attempts towards the close of the eighteenth century to benumb a part by compressing its

nerves or vessels, it was not until 1800 that attention was again drawn to the subject by the hint of Sir Humphrey Davy, that the inhalation of nitrous oxide might deaden the pain of surgical operations. In 1828, Dr. Hickman proposed carbonic acid for the same purpose. The intoxicating effects of the vapour of ether had long been known, but it was not until 1847 that the application of this power as an anæsthetic was carried into effect.

In a paper on the subject in the *Zoist*, vol. vi., Dr. Hookham Silvester says,—“ I will refer chiefly to one author, namely, Joannes Baptista Porta, who appears to have collected, in his *Dissertation on Natural Magic*, everything known at that period (namely, the end of the sixteenth century) on the subject now occupying our attention.

“ He quotes from Dioscorides a passage, which describes the Greek physicians as in the habit of exhibiting drugs to their patients *before any great operation*, and so of keeping them in a state of *perfect insensibility for three or four hours* ; and he remarks that Demosthenes, in one of his speeches, likens some men to those who have drunk of the mandrake, and whom no eloquence can awake. The simplicity of ancient prescriptions seems to have been relinquished, for we now find a *pomum somnificum*, composed of divers secret ingredients, much in use,—opium, the mandrake, solanum, belladonna, the juice of the cicuta, and seeds of hyosycamus, with the addition of a little musk both for concealment and fragrance. These were beaten together into a mass as large as the closed fist, and an essence extracted from the composition. This essence *was not to be swallowed*, but BREATHED OR INHALED, according to the following directions :—

“ Let the essence be shut up in vessels of lead, most accurately closed, lest the subtle aura escape, for in that case the whole power of the medicine would be lost. At the moment of using, the lid being opened, place the mass immediately under the nose of the person, and he will draw in with his breath, by smelling the most subtle strength of the vapour, and thereby his senses will be locked up as it were in a citadel, so that he will be buried in a most profound sleep,” &c. &c.

The practice has existed, even in our own day, among barbarians, who, in their ignorance, do not believe that pain *does the patient good*. “ The Abyssinians know how to bring on the *afflatus* of the soothsayer, and also practise painless surgery, with the help of narcotic drugs. . . A Galla of the Ittoo tribe had undertaken the removal of severe rheumatism, to which end he administered a powerful narcotic, which rendered the patient insensible. Armed with a sharp crease, he then proceeded to cut and slash in every direction, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot.”—*Highlands of Ethiopia*, by Sir W. C. Harris.

But whilst the Abyssinians were thus preventing the pain of operations, the civilized Faculty preferred to let the afflicted enjoy a full consciousness of the skill which was exercised upon them. Their patients were accustomed to suffer pain,—it was the authorized routine,—the legitimate mode,—in fact, it was a law of nature. Adam, it is true, had a nervous system adapted to be put into a deep sleep when occasion required, and his children naturally shrink from pain ; but then science requires to be consistent ; and, having formerly denounced the innovation that was to do away with the application of hot irons and boiling pitch, it did not seem to be the Faculty’s business to prevent pain now. At all events, strange as

it may seem, they exhibited anything but a desire to encourage inquiry into the practicability of applying anæsthetic agents.

For instance—"A Manuscript, by Papin, so well known for his successful experiments connected with the motive power of steam, has just been discovered (says the *Siècle*) near Marburg, a small town of Electoral Hesse. This work bears the name of *Traité des Opérations sans Douleur*, and in it are examined the different means that might be employed to deaden, or rather altogether nullify, sensibility when surgical operations are being performed on the human body. Papin composed this work in 1681, when filling the situation of professor in the university of Marburg; and in it he has anticipated the effects produced in modern times by chloroform and sulphuric ether. He communicated his ideas to *his colleagues in the university*, but from them received *anything but encouragement*. In consequence, he took such a disgust to medical pursuits that he gave up his profession," &c.—*Daily News*, March 6, 1851.

And so late as the year 1800, Sir Humphrey Davy gave it as his opinion that the inhalation of nitrous oxide would deaden the pain of surgical operations; but the Faculty found it right wholly to disregard the opinion even of that great authority. Pain was no evil *then*: *it did the patient good,—was a wise provision of nature,—a necessary stimulant, &c. &c.*

In the meantime, Mesmerism was gaining ground. The truth began to be somewhat generally known that the mesmeric coma was a state of complete anæsthesia; and that painless operations in France, England, and America had been performed on patients, under the mesmeric influence, with complete success. At last the undeniable

fact, of Dr. Esdaile's unprecedented painless operations in India, stood in its colossal dimensions before the public, and, it would seem, behind the Faculty—for they declared that they could not see it: without turning to examine, they assured the public that it could not exist; and if it could, it would be quite unworthy of consideration. And whilst, in honest zeal, some of them declared that it would be "an impious interference with the arrangements of Providence," others actually found that pain was so far from being an evil that it was a positive blessing. This is no exaggeration. No less a person than Dr. Copeland propounded to his consenting—or at least not dissenting—fellow-doctors, "If the account of the man experiencing no agony during the operation is true, *the fact is unworthy of our consideration, because pain is a wise provision of nature, and patients ought to suffer pain while their surgeon is operating; they are all the better for it, and recover better.*"

In spite, however, of this learned deliverance—which reminds us of the good old lady who, in the end of last century, denounced the umbrella as interfering with the providential dispensation of rain—the public took a different view of the matter; and the mesmeric coma, *with its train of anti-drug cures*, threatened to be in the ascendant, when, fortunately, the anæsthetic power of ether was discovered; and the Faculty hailed it with delight. A change had come o'er the spirit of their dream: pain was no longer a blessing,—it was a monstrous evil; and, perhaps for the first time in the history of medicine, they did not denounce the new discovery! The change was surely ominous of something.

But etherization was found not sufficiently to realize the humanized aspirations of the profession. And Dr. Simp-

son, with the vigour by which he is characterized, instituted a series of ingenious experiments with the laudable view of discovering a more complete anæsthetic agent; and at length—upon the suggestion, as Dr. Arnott states, of Mr. Waldie, a chemist in Liverpool—found that chloroform possessed, in a high degree, the anæsthetic property of which he was in search.

Multitudes of doctors no doubt rejoiced to possess a *legitimate* mode of preventing pain in surgical operations; but at least the authorities, whose word was to give fame to the new discovery, were conscious of another motive, so powerful that it could not be suppressed,—nay, it was openly declared, as necessary to induce novelty-hating doctors to patronize the anti-mesmeric drug.

The following extracts sufficiently reveal the motive alluded to.

On the discovery of the ether application, Mr. Liston wrote a letter, which appears in the *North British Review*, No. xiii., triumphantly announcing the fact. “Hurrah!” the letter commences. Why? that pain was to be prevented?—No; *there is not a word of rejoicing on that subject in the letter.* His mind was full of something more important; and so the letter begins thus:—

“ Hurrah !

“ Rejoice ! Mesmerism and its professors have met with a heavy blow and great discouragement !” Then, after describing how the ether should be inhaled, he concludes with another “ Rejoice !”

And the organ of the Faculty, *The Lancet*, January 1847, congratulates the profession in the same spirit:—“ We suppose we shall hear no more of Mesmerism and its absurdities,” &c.

In connexion with the above, as illustrative of the

candour of medical inquiry, it may be stated that Dr. Marshal Hall declared, that a man who had his leg amputated, when in the mesmeric coma, was an impostor, and Mesmerism a humbug, because, when the one leg was cut, the other did not move; there was "no reflex action," which was contrary to the law of nature. But presently it was found that the influence of chloroform also prevented the "reflex action;" and, alas for humbug! Dr. Marshal Hall had to repeal the law of nature.

It may be remarked, in passing, that mesmerists were not at all opposed to the introduction of drug anæsthetics. The *Zoist* was among the first periodicals that announced the discovery of etherization, and Dr. Elliotson and Dr. Esdaile patronized both ether and chloroform till they found that their influence was not so beneficial as that of Mesmerism. Moreover, before *etherization was discovered*, Dr. Collyer, a MESMERIST, published a pamphlet in New York in 1843, in which he says that he had made trials of the inhalation of stimulating and narcotic vapours combined, in above twenty persons, with entire success, the unconsciousness lasting from half an hour to two hours. These experiments were the topic of conversation from one end of the United States to the other. Above a thousand copies of this pamphlet were sold.

That hostility to Mesmerism does yet influence the profession, may be inferred from the fact, that they prefer the method of inducing anæsthesia, which entails the greater fatality, whilst they denounce the other without having tried it.

Dr. Esdaile, who performed upwards of three hundred capital operations when the patient was in the mesmeric coma, or state of unconsciousness, writes,—“The deaths in two hundred operations for scrotal tumours have been

five per cent.; and it is a remarkable fact, that, though *twenty at least of the tumours were from 50 lbs. to 103 lbs. weight*, and many of the patients were fifty, and several of them sixty years of age, yet IN NO INSTANCE DID DEATH ENSUE DIRECTLY FROM THE OPERATION, but took place many days or weeks after in consequence of lock-jaw, fever and dysentery, cholera, and ultimate exhaustion of the system. I very much doubt whether an equal number of consecutive amputations of a joint of the fingers and toes (in all states of the constitution) could be performed in any hospital with a smaller mortality than five per cent. arising from accidents in the course of the cure. . . . This has been going on here for a period of *four years*, WITH ALL THE REGULARITY OF A LAW OF NATURE, and yet the medical profession are kept in total ignorance of it by their journals, *which dare not let the facts be known*, because the editors had long ago, in presumptuous ignorance, declared the thing to be *impossible*. . . . If any doubt exists among the public and medical profession in India of the SUPERIORITY OF MESMERISM OVER ALL DRUGS WHATEVER, AS A MEANS OF INDUCING INSENSIBILITY TO PAIN, *I shall be glad to demonstrate the fact by comparative operations to any extent that may be deemed conclusive*. But, even if Mesmerism were superseded by some perfectly innocent drug for surgical purposes, it would still be of great service to the surgeons in *the medical treatment of surgical diseases*; for, by its aid, he will often be able to save his patients much pain and distress during their cure, and will frequently even be spared the painful necessity of lopping off the limbs and organs of his patients to save their lives."

Very large collections of cases may be found in systematic works on surgery, drawn up by Phillips, Lawrie,

Malgaigne, and others, proving that the mortality, after various capital operations, averaged thirty-five, forty, and even fifty-seven per cent. In the same species of operations performed under the influence of ether and chloroform, the mortality has only ranged from twenty-three to thirty-four per cent.

And, according to Dr. Simpson's comparison of the results of operations performed in British hospitals, twenty-nine in every hundred died before the discovery of inhalation, and only twenty-three in every hundred after it. **ONLY FIVE IN EVERY HUNDRED** (*all capital operations!*) **DIED WHEN MESMERISM WAS EMPLOYED**; and, let it be observed, these five deaths did not take place during the application of Mesmerism, nor even in consequence of it.

In the *Zoist*, Nos. 28 and 46, Dr. Elliotson has published a list of fifty deaths which occurred during inhalation, *as recorded in medical journals*; and he adds, "Probably this list presents a fraction only of the deaths that occurred in the period. Far more must have occurred, because when the death takes place several days afterwards, the patient gradually sinking, it is not spoken of as the effect of the poison. It is amusing to notice the strange views of medical men on this point. A London lecturer on midwifery, Dr. Barnes, gives a case in the *Lancet* for July 3, 1850, p. 50, of one of these unrecorded deaths from chloroform:—'A lady underwent amputation of the breast from chloroform. She was utterly unconscious of the operation, but the shock was too manifest to be mistaken. The energies of life were fatally struck; the pulse ebbed away hour by hour: on the sixth day she was dead. What did chloroform effect here? It saved the patient the perception of pain, the mental shock. The blow had been struck at the heart.'

“ Can any one doubt that no bodily shock, but poisonous chloroform, killed the patient? Such cases are continually occurring in which the operation could occasion no shock, as it was the extraction of a tooth, the removal of a little pile, &c.; whereas when, not chloroform, but Mesmerism, has been employed, tumours weighing from ten to above a hundred pounds have been cut away again and again, and never has an instance of death taken place.”

Dr. Esdaile remarks that Mesmerism not only saves the patient from the shock of the operation, but strengthens his constitution and assists recovery. And ample experience has proved that Mesmerism acts more beneficially *in all the cases* in which unconsciousness of pain is desirable by assisting the recovery.

The reason why the inhalation of chloroform is so often fatal is, that it sometimes affects all the nerves of the body alike, and so paralyzes the organic functions on which life depends. That is one fact; and another is, that however deep the mesmeric sleep may be, it never paralyzes the nerves on which the vital functions depend. As might have been expected, the anæsthetic agent provided by nature acts only on those parts where its action can be beneficial. Mesmerism has never caused a single death.

If doctors object that Mesmerism could not be employed in their hospitals on account of the time required to induce the state of coma, they may be answered with the fact that the Indian government provided Dr. Esdaile with a staff of mesmerizers, who, without trouble to the surgeon, prepared the patients for operations. If it be said that all patients cannot be mesmerized, the answer is—Mesmerize when practicable, and reserve chloroform *till it is necessary*.

It is an instructive fact, that Dr. Esdaile has offered to exhibit the superiority of the mesmeric coma for painless

operation, in any British hospital—in vain! Doctors do not wish it: they prefer the 23 per cent.

Yet they can admire the 5 per cent. Dr. Simpson wrote to Dr. Esdaile, “that he had always considered *the few deaths out of so many formidable operations* one of the most remarkable things in the history of surgery.” Dr. Simpson, says Dr. Esdaile, sent me a message, that “I owed it to myself and my profession, to let my proceedings be known in England; and that, if I would write an article, he would get it published in the journal he was connected with. I therefore sent him *an account of one hundred and sixty-one scrotal tumours removed in the mesmeric trance.*” This paper, however, was rejected on the plea that it had already appeared (*but mutilated in the most unwarrantable manner*) in the *Medical Gazette*. A more general paper was offered. But, after some compliments, and considerable delay, Dr. Esdaile writes that Dr. Simpson informed him that “my proposal had been submitted to his brother editors, but that they feared that my article would not be sufficiently *practical* for a *practical* journal like theirs.” *One of the most remarkable things in the history of surgery*—namely, how to reduce 23 per cent. of deaths to 5 per cent., not practical!!

It is very curious to read the above in connexion with the extract from Mr. Lang’s work. See p. 66.

It is also very curious, that when Dr. Simpson professed to publish an account of all the means which have ever been employed to prevent the pain of operations, he quite forgot to mention Mesmerism.

“The inquiry of truth, which is the love-making, or wooing of it; and the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it; and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it; is the sovereign good of human nature.”—*Lord Bacon*.

No. III.

OD.

Nervous energy is a term employed by most doctors to denote that by which the nerves act mysteriously on the body ; but they cannot explain what it is. It is not a fluid, they say ; it is not an imponderable ; it is merely a something which eludes the dissecting-knife.

It is well that doctors should believe in what the dissecting-knife reveals, even though it sometimes takes a century to make them do that ; but are they to believe in nothing else, although its existence be otherwise proved ?

Hoffmann, Cullen, and John Hunter had great reverence for the dissecting-knife, yet they believed that the whole economy of the system is governed by *a principle of life* ; they saw the necessity of a pervading force, or motive power, though they could not dissect it into a "preparation," and convince the College of Surgeons by exhibiting it to them in a bottle ; and, as they had no experiments on the living system to guide their conjecture, they had to denote it by the vague term, *a principle of life*. But the medical world, true to their time-honoured habit, denounced the heresy, and *proved* it to be an impossibility. For instance, to come to our own day, Dr. Roget writes regarding it : one principle cannot occasion such varied results, "for it is the fundamental principle of the method of induction, that similar effects alone are to be ascribed to the agency of the same physical cause.

Judging, therefore, from the observed effects, which differ widely in their nature from each other, we ought to infer the operation of several distinct powers," &c. &c.

In other words, because the "fundamental principle" is applicable to lifeless matter, Dr. Roget *takes for granted* that it is applicable to the living organism; at least he has forgotten to state by what series of experiments he discovered that no principle of life can exist in conditions different from those appertaining to acids and alkalis. It is very convenient sometimes to begin at what Locke calls the wrong end of science.

Logic can no more disprove the *one principle of life* than the dissecting-knife can discover it. What the sagacious Hoffmann, Cullen, and John Hunter were constrained to believe in, in spite of dissecting-knives and fundamental principles, has been proved by experiments on the living system, to be an imponderable force, and mesmerists call it *Od*. It is provided by the brain, and conducted by the nerves to the different parts of the body, all whose movements depend on the due circulation of this stimulating force. And when this circulation is disturbed, proportionate disturbance occurs in the organic functions. Even in lifeless machinery, an appliance may so disturb the valvular arrangement as to shut off the motive power from one operation, and concentrate it unduly on another process. One can comprehend how much more easily the delicate machinery of life may have the adaptations of its telegraphic nerves deranged—producing a confusion of results.

The following sentences by Dr. Garth Wilkinson are suggestive:—"Be it observed, however, that we do not dogmatize respecting the physical properties of this which we term a fluid. In reasoning by analogy, we are forced

to take with us the garb of the known sphere, and to talk of a fluid, because the body furnishes the word. We desire, however, to hold the term loosely, and no longer than until a better analogy, or the real name, arises. . . . The analogies of the grosser parts point to the tubular structure of the nerves. In the body, where there is an organ as a bed, and trunks, branches, and twigs proceed from it, the derivations are hollow, and carry a fluid. This is the case with the heart, the lungs, the stomach, the liver, the kidneys, the pancreas, &c. On this ground we understand their functions; in their product we recognise their use in the economy. Again, what reason can we give for the quantity of blood which is applied to the brain, and which is more in proportion than is sent to other organs, if it be only required for its nutrition, and not for supplying a large quantity of fluid. How also can we account for the physical debility consequent upon certain effects, unless by a waste and spending of a fluid? And recurring to analogy, does it not seem to be in the order of things, that the living principle should act through the fluid upon the solid, when we find that the more living parts of the body, as the brain and nerves, are the softest; and the less living, as the tendons, ligaments, and bones, are the harder and the hardest: also that, in the earliest stages of formation, all things are fluid, and at the very beginning, a fluid, and that hardness grows up by degrees, and plasticity ceases; old age consisting physically in stiffness, unyieldingness, and ossification. Further, that the change of pervious canals into solid ligaments, fibres, or threads, which takes place often in the body, is always a change from vitality towards the contrary; shewing that the solid form is a degradation of the previous fluid, and not *vice versâ*. It seems, then, a prepared belief,

that the nearest thing to life is the most life-like, the most movable, the most quick, in short, the most fluid ; in a word, that a nervous fluid is itself the first organ in the body, and the physical handle of the spirit. . . . If this fluid is *quasi-life*, or, what is the same thing, physical life, it may well be conceived that the nervous tubes will close against it in the moment of dying ; as the dying arteries contract, and shed away the arterial blood. Death has no hold upon life, but its chill grasp is its means of losing it. Hence microscopic observations upon the nervous fibres never can give the negative to their tubular form or fluid contents. The problem does not come within the brains of necrology. Moreover, how if the tubes were spiral, and not straight, which might be the case in a system where velocities are such that distance forms no element in the calculation ? In that case, even supposing the tubes were hollow, they might never be seen as tubes by reason of their insinuations and turnings."

But it may be asked, "What proof is there of such a force, fluid, or imponderable ?"

Referring the inquirer to Baron von Reichenbach's work, *Researches on Magnetism, Electricity, Heat, Light, Crystallization, and Chemical Attraction, in their Relation to the Vital Force*, translated, with Preface, Notes, and Appendix, by Dr. Gregory, which contains a multitude of interesting experiments on the subject—without entering on details here, one proof of the existence of Od may be advanced ; viz., if, among several glasses filled with water, one be mesmerized, a mesmeric sensitive, on tasting the various glasses, can discern which one has been charged with Od, by the sensations which it occasions. And the power of a charged glass of water has been further frequently proved by its inducing sleep in mesmeric sensi-

tives, when it had been mesmerized without their knowledge.

But it may be objected that, if odized water gives sensations to anybody, it *must* give them to everybody. Why must? The conditions of the experiment may not be the same in every case. The sensations caused by the nervous force of the operator, mingling with the nervous force of the patient, may be modified according to the *compound* formed by the meeting forces,—the force of the mesmerist causing a sensation, when meeting with the force of one patient which it may not cause when meeting with the force of another; the sensations being as varied as the *compounds* on which they depend.

Again, it may be objected that if Od be an imponderable, it *must*, like other imponderables, be capable of being measured by an instrument. Why must? What if, being peculiarly adapted to act on the living nerve, it should be incapable of being appreciated by anything else? And what if, in the circumstances already stated, the exceptional nerve should alone be capable of measuring its intensity? However, be it observed, that the desiderated instrument may in time be discovered; and that it has not yet been discovered, is, in the meantime, no proof that Od does not exist.

No. IV.

CASES OF MESMERIC CURE.

The inquirer has been already referred to the twelve volumes of the *Zoist*, in which he will find recorded several thousand cases of diseases that were cured by mes-

meric treatment. These cases include a wide variety of diseases, many of which had been pronounced to be "incurable" by the profession; and the interest that attaches to them is enhanced by the consideration, that the mesmeric treatment was, in many instances, conducted by eminent physicians.

While these volumes illustrate, in a convincing manner, the sanative influence of Mesmerism, as applicable to all diseases, they also shew that, as a general rule, the curative process requires to be continued in proportion to the length of time during which disease has existed in the system. For it is to be observed that the benefits resulting from mesmeric treatment, are not confined to cases in which every other treatment has failed, but are more speedily experienced when the process is applied during the earlier stages of disease, whether that be of an acute or chronic character.

If any one wishes personally to make inquiries concerning the experience of individuals who have been cured with Mesmerism, the Author will have pleasure in referring them to his former patients.

The following case of mesmeric cure, though incomplete, is inserted here in order that any inquirer who wishes may, on application to the author, have an opportunity of personally watching its progress. With an honourable feeling, the patient is desirous—in order to make known the curative power of Mesmerism—that a full account of the case, with the names of all the parties connected with it, should in due time be published; but at present the following statement is sufficient.

Seven years ago, the patient, who is now seventeen years old, was affected with spine complaint, which gradually increased till his whole body became involved

in disease. At the commencement of the mesmeric treatment, he measured three feet eight and a half inches,—his growth having been entirely checked by the complaint. His back and chest had shot out very considerably; his head was sunk quite between his shoulders; his legs were completely paralyzed, so that he could not even move his toe; his knee-joints could be bent forward as well as backward; his ankles were quite blue, and, with his feet, were very much swollen; his breathing was short and difficult; his pulse was very rapid; he was *habitually* subject to bowel-complaint, sickness, and very severe pain throughout the region of the viscera; his kidneys were completely disordered; he felt as if a cord had been drawn tightly round his waist, and as if something in his back were continually pushing him forward; he was exceedingly nervous, continually sighing, and thinking that some one was scolding him for having done something amiss,—the excitement being so great that he often cried out, and, to use his own words, “felt afraid of going deranged;” whilst his weakness was such, that he could not sit up even for a single moment, and, if supported in an upright position, he could not breathe.

This was evidently a very serious case. He had been attended in the kindest manner by three doctors, who rank among the first family physicians in Edinburgh, and a consulting physician, a Professor in the University. One of these gentlemen plainly said that he could do nothing for him; and another told his mother that it was impossible that he should ever again have the use of his legs. He had ceased to take any medicine except laudanum, the dose having been gradually increased to eighty drops a day, as found requisite to alleviate his bowel-complaint, pain, and nervousness, and to induce sleep.

In these circumstances the author commenced the Mesmeric treatment. On the fourth day from the commencement of the process, the patient raised his feet from the floor to the sofa; on the tenth day he was able to sit up, without support, to have his likeness taken in calotype. In a week from that time he could walk half a dozen steps with the support of two sticks, when he found that his right leg was shorter than the other; and, at the end of four weeks more, he had grown half an inch in height, whilst he measured one inch less round the chest and back. In short, his improvement has been such that he can now walk a quarter of a mile by leaning on two friends. His legs are the same length—his breathing is greatly improved—his sickness, pain, and swelling have disappeared—his nervousness has almost entirely ceased—his bowels are generally regular—and so completely is he changed, that, instead of lying all day on a sofa in his former miserable state, he goes to church every Sabbath, and is qualifying himself for the active duties of life.

He has taken no medicine during the Mesmeric treatment except the laudanum, his daily dose of which is being gradually reduced. He at present takes twenty-five drops a day.

It may be stated that the young man, when the Mesmeric process was commenced, expected that it would soothe his pains, but he did not believe in its curative power. He had no hope of ever again using his legs.

For the satisfaction of the reader who may not have access to the *Zoist*, a few of the cases of Mesmeric cure recorded in it, as conducted by eminent physicians and surgeons, are appended, giving some idea of the time required to effect cure.

St. Vitus's Dance, cured by Dr. Elliotson.—"Henrietta Power, aged 17, servant of all work, was admitted under my care in University College Hospital, April 28, 1838, for St. Vitus's dance. About a fortnight previously, while taking in the tea things, she suddenly dropped them, and the disease at the same moment declared itself, but without any other disturbance of a single function. She was in constant motion, flexion, extension, rotation, twitching and catching; constantly pulled her clothes in different directions; dragged one leg along the ground; rolled the face and chin on the neck and shoulders; grimaced; rubbed her eyes; could not continue to sit in the same situation. The least excitement rendered all the movements more violent. Her mother had been obliged to make her a bed upon the floor, and sit up all night to prevent her injuring herself; and she had slept but little during the fortnight. The left arm and right leg were more affected than the others. She could swallow well, but had extreme difficulty in speaking. When asked to give me her hand, it went into all sorts of movements. Though she was ruddy, and of a full habit, her pulse was quiet and weak. I ordered her no medicine, but Mesmerism for half an hour every day, morning or afternoon. She was mesmerized in the afternoon for half an hour with no sensible effect. It was *necessary* to confine her in bed by straps to prevent her falling out; she slept only *two* hours altogether in the night, but during her sleep was quiet.

"29th, More quiet than yesterday. She was mesmerized for half an hour. Slept *six* hours at night, and did *not* require to be confined in her bed.

* * * * *

"June 3d, Only drowsiness induced since the 29th.

“ 4th, Not rendered even drowsy.

“ From this time she was rendered drowsy, but nothing more ; and

“ *July 5th*, was all but perfectly well, and I kept her till the 24th of July to see her cure established. She took no medicine all the time, and ate meat several times a week.

“ Here was another admirable cure without any expense for drugs. But it was beneath the notice of the doctors, and, above all, of the distinguished Dr. A. T. Thomson, who had patients in the same ward : and such simple, inexpensive, and perfect cures were forbidden by the Committee of the College.”

Palsy, cured by Dr. Elliotson.—Hannah Elizabeth Hunter suffered from palsy, asthma, St. Vitus’s dance, convulsions, rigidity, and insensibility.

“ At her admission into the hospital on January 1st, 1838, I found her lower extremities so *palsied*, that not only could she *not stand*, but she *could only just move them in bed*, and they had *no feeling*. Her head was heavy and painful, especially at the left side ; and her sight was often dim. There were darting pains and tenderness in the left side of the body, and tenderness to the left of the spine about the middle dorsal vertebræ. She had frequent attacks of shortness of breath without cough or expectoration, and frequent attacks of palpitation. The spine was found slightly bent to the right. Her pulse was 120, soft and small.

* * * * *

“ *March 18th*, Though she had long been quite well, I detained her till to-day in the hospital, and had her regularly mesmerized.

“She continued well, has continued well, except little colds, up to the present time,—now above five years, and is, I understand, a fine young woman, and about to be married.

“The paralysis undoubtedly was simply functional, and likely to cease spontaneously one day or other; but it had lasted more or less for three years, and was worse than ever. She had been ill for seven years, and scarcely out of medical hands all the time, and had taken loads of physic, to say nothing of issues, &c. &c. Her disease was instantly improved in the most marked manner by Mesmerism: her improvement was most rapid, and her health for the first time established permanently.”

Dr. Elliotson has recorded most interesting cases of insanity, epilepsy, &c., but they are too long for quotation.

Weakness, &c., cured by Dr. Esdaile.—“Nov. 25th, *Weakness of legs and perfect insensibility of his whole surface*, for four months, in a labourer, aged 50. Feels nothing when severely pricked all over with the point of a knife.

“Dec. 13th, Walks and feels *like any other man*; and thinking himself perfectly recovered was discharged at his own request.”

Headache, cured by Dr. Esdaile.—“June 25th. A. Sperods, aged 32 years. Ill 22 years. *Fits of excruciating headache*. The pain seizes one temple only at a time, and never lasts less than twenty-four hours, and during it no food is taken except slops, and they are often rejected. Throbbing; intolerance of light, noise, and conversation; inability to sit up without maddening pain and drowsiness; various other symptoms. Endless

remedies from endless practitioners, regular and irregular, in vain."

He was completely cured in two months.

Epilepsy, cured by Dr. Kenny.—"Elizabeth Naish Cooper, although she had been vaccinated in infancy, sickened of the small-pox in the year 1846; this was succeeded by violent headaches, and she had been subject from childhood to sick headache with which she awoke in the morning; the headaches at length ceased, and epileptic fits began in December 1848. The fits gradually increased in severity, duration, and frequency, until we almost began to despair. She not only fell suddenly down senseless and went into strong convulsions by day, but after a time was attacked in the night, though never during the first three hours of sleep, and she sometimes was not awakened at all by the fit. They were often very numerous in her sleep. At last the fits took place most frequently when she was getting up, or turning in bed before waking. In the convulsions she would bite her tongue, and roll her eyes upwards. Besides the strong fits she had very many slight ones, almost merely threatenings. After an attack she usually vomited, and always had pain at the pit of the stomach, stupor, and headache. Before the fit she always had pain in her jaws; and before, during, or after it, nettle-rash, which would not spare her eyelids, tongue, &c. She was always very thirsty, and had a voracious appetite, and her feet were always cold. Two eminent medical gentlemen in vain attempted to cure her."

She was cured in two months. Dr. Kenny adds, "Nearly eight lunar months have now elapsed without the slightest return of her disorder. For five months the mesmeric

treatment has been discontinued. Her digestion is good, so also are her spirits, and she has every indication of *vigorous health.*"

Abscess, cured by Mr. Parker, Surgeon.—"T., twelve years of age, had been subject to frequent abscess of the ears, followed by constant discharge upwards of seven years. Considerable dulness of hearing had resulted; and, at my first seeing him, he was suffering from the formation of a fresh abscess, which made him heavy, dull, and stupid—a state the opposite of what was natural to him. He was mesmerized for one week, when all his sufferings, including the discharge, were removed, and his hearing quite restored."

Chlorosis, cured by Mr. Parker.—"E., aged 22 years. Her countenance was of a yellowish white: there was frequent palpitation of the heart, and almost breathlessness in attempting to go up stairs; her appetite was very bad; and she was quite unfit for any active operation. She had tried the various remedies which are daily prescribed for such cases without the least effect. She was now advised to try Mesmerism, and after a month's trial her system became *regular*, and all the other sufferings were removed; and now, at the expiration of eight months, her health continues very good."

Chronic Pneumonia, cured by Mr. Parker.—"August 1849. A little girl, eleven years of age, had been suffering considerable pain in the chest for two months. On my arrival I found her much emaciated, with frequent cough, and expectoration at times streaked with blood. The whole of the chest was very tender on percussion,

and respiration was very puerile ; the pulse 120. She was too much emaciated for any active treatment. Mesmerism combined with soothing treatment continued for six weeks, has quite restored her, and she has passed through this winter without any trouble."

Erysipelas, cured by Mr. Hands, Surgeon.—"On Jan. 6th, 1845, Mr. Brogden sent for me to attend him professionally. I found him suffering from vesicated erysipelas, spreading from the roots of the hair down the forehead, covering the eyes, nose, and cheeks."

He was cured in three days.

Scrofula ; the case is communicated by Dr. Elliotson.—"James Edwards, aged 11. His mother showed me a sore in the neck, which she told me had been open about six months, and had resisted all the remedies applied at the hospital to heal it.

"The complaint had also appeared in the nose and lips, which were much swollen, and occasionally very red."

Cured in a week.

Deafness, &c., cured by Dr. Buxton.—"Miss S., æt. 30, a dressmaker, short, spare, pale, and of a nervous temperament, began mesmeric treatment on the 25th September 1845. She had been very deaf for above nine years, and complained of constant loud noises in the head. She thought that the deafness had been caused by repeated colds, and by her brothers often startling her by bawling in her ears.

"When with her, in order to make her hear, it was necessary to engage her full attention, to be near her, and

speak clearly, much above the ordinary tone of conversation.

“She had also been subject, for eight or nine years, to fits coming on at uncertain intervals, bearing the general characteristics of epilepsy, but unattended by the foaming at the mouth or subsequent coma; but during the last year had been almost free from them. These fits were attributable to very severe domestic trials.

“She had had much advice and medicine from various medical men and aurists, but without any permanent benefit.”

She was cured in five months.

Eye-complaints,—amaurosis, ophthalmia, cataract, &c., are speedily cured by Mesmerism.

Rheumatism, cured by Mr. Tubbs, Surgeon.—“W. Ward, aged 24, a tall, fat, and strong labourer, who had been the subject of painful joints, disabling him from work for more than a month, and who had been under Mr. Allen’s care, of Lynn, (surgeon to the Odd Fellow’s Lodge, Ward belonging to that Society,) called me in on the 2d February 1851. I prescribed for him. On calling upon him on the 5th, I found that he had not sent up for his medicine. I mesmerized him at the request of a neighbour: he was asleep in a few minutes. When awake, he could walk up and down the room with comfort. It was a damp day, and I was astonished to see him at my surgery at seven o’clock in the evening, waiting to be mesmerized again, having walked a mile and a half. After daily mesmerizations of an hour’s duration, I sent him away cured. Several individuals saw this interesting case.”

Cures of severe cases of tic, spinal irritation, &c., might be quoted, if space permitted.

Asthma, cured by Mr. Thompson.—"In the first week of January last, I was called in to see a friend who was suffering from a severe attack of asthma, brought on by cold. He says that he never suffered so much from a sense of suffocation before, and certainly I never witnessed so distressing a case. By making passes over the back and chest, in less than ten minutes the severity of the spasm was very sensibly lessened, and within three quarters of an hour, the attack was over. He had no return, and he gradually and steadily improved in health, though I had not an opportunity of mesmerizing him more than three times."

The *Zoist* contains cures of much more serious cases than these. These, serving as a sample of the application of Mesmerism to different diseases, are quoted, in preference to others, merely on account of being more condensed.

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