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OF  
MESMERISM

WITH FULL INSTRUCTIONS HOW TO MESMERISE.

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VARIOUS EMINENT PSYCHOLOGICAL AUTHORITIES,  
BY A PHYSICIAN.

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# Secrets of Mesmerism.

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## SCEPTICISM.

IF "Ignorance is bliss," Sceptics are the happiest people in the world. They base their ideas and arguments on a weak foundation of theory, and are totally oblivious of the stronger support of fact. Being inordinately vain, their "superior" minds will only cling to the shadow of inanity and not allow them to grasp the substance of common sense. Your thorough going sceptics believe in nothing except themselves; they are as obstinate as mules on all subjects, and so self-opiniated that they do not stop to think that scepticism is often the outcome of the most violent type of pig-headed obstinacy. They form a sort of "Mutual Admiration Society," and are very much in love with their own opinions, based on a strong foundation of overweening vanity. Ergo, scepticism is vain inanity.

## HISTORICAL FACTS.

It is a well-known fact, the sceptics notwithstanding, that Mesmerism, or rather many of those facts which now bear among other names that of Mesmerism, was certainly known to the ancients. It doubtless had a place among the sacred mysteries of the Greeks. There is every reason to believe that in the Middle Ages it was often practised, and gave rise to many of those accounts of working the black art which are now instanced as proofs of the extreme credulity of that period.

These observations seem to have been grouped at an early date, and stamped with the name of Animal Magnetism.

Ximernes, a Greek doctor, in 1165, made practical use of hypnotism among his patients, and loudly proclaimed it as an efficacious treatment for certain cases of nervous prostration.

Professor Mesmer did not initiate the doctrine of magnetism, but simply brought into prominence what had for a period been lying dormant and forgotten.

He induced what he called the magnetic state by the use of a more or less complicated apparatus: the magnetic tubs, the iron rods, or, more especially, the magnetic tree. The same effects could be produced in many cases by the use of certain "passes," and it was held by Mesmer and others that "force" of some kind or other emanated from the person making the passes, or from the apparatus, entered the person operated upon, and so produced the mesmeric state.

In 1785 a French Commission examined the claims of Mesmer. On this Commission sat Franklin; and, in short, they admitted that the effects of Mesmerism were produced, but denied that they were produced in the manner suggested by Mesmer. They came to the conclusion that the "effects" actually taking place were produced purely by the imagination, for they found that those persons who were easily affected by Mesmer's apparatus were affected if they only THOUGHT the apparatus was near, even when it was at a distance; and that they were NOT affected even when the apparatus was near if they thought it to be at a distance.

The report of the Commission did not afford a satisfactory explanation of all the facts observed, and the so-called science continued to be practised; Mesmer's theories being generally accredited by those who produced his results, or believed them produced by others, but his results as well as his theories being too readily denied by those who looked upon the whole as charlatanism.

The first really scientific enquiry into the various phenomena was undertaken by Mr. Braid. He endeavoured to show that the effects produced are, in a very great measure, due to a concentration of vision or of thought on some object, to the more or less complete exclusion of others. The one object thus becomes dominant, and the hypnotic sleep is induced. In different individuals, with different

susceptibilities, this sleep may be of various degrees of intensity, and of one of two kinds. Thus the subject may be brought to a condition of complete abstraction, with no object left before the mind, and yet the undivided attention alive and ready to be directed with full and exceptional vigour upon any suggestion ; on the other hand, the abstraction may be so intense that the condition resembles that of the most profound sleep, with or without rigidity of the muscles.

The condition of hypnotism resembles in many respects that of somnambulism, and both differ from that of ordinary dreaming, for in dreaming the ideation seems to be continuous, each idea following from some previous idea, and thus, after a commencement, internal suggestion, uncontrolled by the slumbering will, and almost uninfluenced by external suggestion, builds up the dream ; on the other hand, in hypnotism and somnambulism external suggestion plays a very important part, and in either case the external suggestion may be presented in one of two ways.

Firstly, by stimulating ordinary sensations in some particular manner, or by initiating certain muscular actions by placing some part of the body in a particular position, we may suggest the feeling and thought which have usually accompanied such a precise condition. Or, secondly, we may make the suggestion by means of words, and raise up images and thoughts at pleasure in a mind otherwise unoccupied, though free from the guidance of the will, and still possessing the power of keen attention.

Thus several explanations have been advanced to account for the effects of Mesmerism.

#### IMAGINATION THEORY.

The imagination theory was put forward in the report of the French Commission. That imagination is a strong factor in the production of psychical as well as physical conditions, both in health and disease, has long been known. In its latter connection—that of disease—a case reported in the *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE MEDICAL SCIENCES* is well worth noting.

The patient was a lady who consulted Dr. Mackenzie, of Baltimore. She was thirty-two years of age, in good circumstances, and well nourished, but from infancy she had suffered from coryza of unusual severity. The asthmatic attacks first appeared at the age of six, and progressively worse every year. The attacks usually came on in May or June. Before each attack she usually suffered from depression, and it seems generally to have been traceable either to some disturbance in the weather, either a thunder-storm, or to various other causes, especially the presence or odour of hay or roses. The attack generally commences with a profuse watery discharge from the nostrils and eyes; the eyelids also became swollen, and the exposure of the eye to light caused great pain; the nostrils became at once obstructed, and paroxysms of sneezing came on frequently; the nose and ear became red and painful, and the thyroid gland perceptibly enlarged.

Many methods of treatment had been found futile, when at last Dr. Mackenzie applied the galvano-cautery to the most sensitive spots in the nose; there was great abatement of the symptoms, and in ten days she was practically free from the disease. She felt confident, however, that if brought in contact with hay or roses she would have another paroxysm.

The special interest of the case rests in the fact that Dr. Mackenzie, by suddenly producing an artificial rose, at once brought on a severe attack, with all the old symptoms strongly marked.

Here, then, we have an illustration of the power of the imagination and of purely psychical impressions to produce actual disease.

#### BRAID'S METHOD.

Take any bright object between the thumb and fore and middle fingers of the left hand; hold it from eight to fifteen inches from the eyes, at such position above the forehead as may produce the greatest possible strain upon the eyes and eyelids, and enable the patient to maintain a fixed stare at the object. The pupils will be at first contracted: they will shortly begin to dilate, and

after they have assumed a wavy motion, if the fore and middle fingers of the right hand, extended and a little separated, are carried from the object towards the eyes, most probably the eyelids will close involuntarily, and with a vibratory motion. If this is not the case, or the patient allows the EYEBALLS to MOVE, desire him to begin anew, but he is to allow the eyelids to close when the fingers are again carried towards the eyes, so that the EYEBALLS must BE KEPT FIXED IN THE SAME POSITION, AND THE MIND RIVETED TO THE ONE IDEA OF THE OBJECT HELD ABOVE THE EYES. It will generally be found that the eyelids close with a VIBRATORY motion. After ten or fifteen seconds have elapsed, by gently elevating the arms and legs, the patient has a disposition to retain them in the situation in which they been placed, if he is INTENSELY AFFECTED. If this is not the case, in a soft tone of voice desire him to retain the limbs in the extended position, and thus the pulse will speedily become greatly accelerated, and the limbs in process of time will become quite rigid, involuntarily fixed.

Mr. Braid's peculiar success in inducing this state seemed to depend partly upon his mode of working his method, and partly upon the "expectancy" of his subjects. After his subjects had gazed at a bright object, at about three inches distance, the mesmeric sleep would take place.

#### MESMER'S THEORY.

According to Mesmer, the nervous energy of the mesmeriser overcame that of the mesmerised, just as a strong magnet overcomes a weak one. A modification of this theory was the one held by Baron Reichenback, that a magnetic fluid, or odyle, very subtle, and differing from electricity, is that it could pass through glass, emanated from the operator, and entered the subject.

#### STENHEIM'S METHOD OF SELF-MESMERISM.

Place your left hand firmly on the forehead, and gaze fixedly at a given bright object held before the eyes for

some minutes. Do not move your limbs, but retain them in the same position, whether sitting or standing, while you gaze at the object, and the mesmeric sleep will take place.

#### LENDECK'S METHOD OF SELF-MAGNETISM.

If you are troubled with insomnia, rub the vertebra gently for a few minutes with the left hand, gazing fixedly as your reflection in a mirror, and it is more than probable that you will soon be overcome by a sleep that will last much longer than your natural slumber, and have a most beneficial effect.

#### MODERN METHOD.

It has been found impossible to mesmerise an idiot. This does not imply that all who fail to be mesmerised are consequently idiots. Some of the most intelligent persons are easy subjects. The class of individuals however who appear most susceptible to the mesmeric condition have a strong resemblance to each other, both in organization and characteristics. It has always been found easy to impress vain and unstable characters—those who have a fair amount of sail, but with little compensating ballast. When a lecturer gets his volunteers to ascend the platform and submit to his influence they are told to sit down facing the audience, to place their hands on their thighs, and to close their eyes. The lecturer then usually makes some remarks to this effect: “Now, ladies and gentlemen, I am going to TRY and mesmerise these gentlemen. I don't know whether or not I shall succeed, as we only claim to find one person out of every twelve who is subject to the influence.” It is desirable to note that emphasis is always placed upon the word “TRY.” If he said I am GOING to mesmerise these people, his subjects would immediately place themselves in mental antagonism and defeat his object, as it is very often impossible that anyone can be mesmerised against his inclinations, even by the most accomplished experimenters. After leaving his subjects in this tentative frame of mind for about five minutes, he goes to them each individually in turn and gently asks one to open his eyes. Directly he does so, the lecturer steadily fixes him with his eyes, but only looking into the left eye of the subject. After firmly

gazing into the one eye for about one minute, and never once relaxing the steady stare, the subject is told in a very quiet, slow, but decided voice, "Close your EYES,"—stress being put on the word eyes. Directly the eyes are closed, the operator raises his right arm, and places the flat of his right hand, with the fingers extended, on the left side of the subjects face. With the hand in this position a few gentle passes are made down the side of the head, only touching the skin in the downward pass, and always bringing the pass as though, if continued, it would terminate at the tip of the chin. After three or four such passes have been repeated, the hand, with the fingers still extended, is placed gently in contact with the side of the head, but the thumb is fixed above the root of the nose, about half an inch above where the eyebrows would meet, did they converge. At the same moment the operator says, in a still gentle voice, "Close your eyes slowly," and whilst the eyelids are drooping he slides his thumb down the ridge of the nose to a point corresponding to the level of the pupil of the eyes, and then presses quickly, but firmly, the parts beneath the tip of his thumb, and repeats at the same instant, "YOU CAN'T OPEN YOUR EYES." If the subject immediately opens his eyes and stares the lecturer naturally in the face, he is recognised not to be, at least immediately, a good subject; but if, when he opens his eyes, he begins turning up his pupils beneath the upper lid, he is placed on one side for further development, and, ten to one, during the few short moments he has received an impression that may materially add towards him becoming a good subject. On some occasions the professor is fortunate enough to secure three subjects out of twelve volunteers. After he has secured half a dozen subjects, the remainder are told they may return to their seats, and the six are each again in turn put through exactly the same process. The subjects under control are immediately placed to sleep by passing the right hand several times over the brow from before backwards whilst repeating the word SLEEPY three or four times, and are only tested to the extent of telling them, "You CANT say your name." As a rule the subject will make several inarticulate efforts, and fail in pronouncing his name. The next test is to request him to place his arms,

extended from the elbow, above the arms of the operator, placed in a similar position. He is then told, "You CAN'T raise your arms from mine." If the subject is under "the influence," he will be found to press with both arms downwards, instead of making any effort to raise them.

The next step is to test their sensibility to pain, and for this purpose the subject is told to close his eyes, and whilst they are shut the operator states, in a very deliberate and precise manner, "when you open your eyes you will be able to feel on the right side of your body, but not on the left; open your eyes." The two sides of the body are then separately tested with a needle, and, if successful, the side of the body which is insensitive to pain may be penetrated as deeply as the curiosity and judgment of the operator may decide.

With raw objects it is better, when you wish them to do anything, always to commence in this manner: Repeat in a clear voice the following:—"Close your eyes;" "When you open your eyes you will see a bear;" or "you will see a ship on fire," or any other subject your imagination suggests. Then you say, "Open your eyes." The subjects will then open their eyes, and state to the operator that they see whatever has been suggested. It is a curious fact that when under an impression they see no one but the operator, and can alone hear his voice. Any other person speaking to them produces no effect. You may fire a pistol off behind them without them hearing it—stick a needle into them without them feeling it, &c., &c.

The following are among the experiments, but there is scarcely any limit to what a subject will do when under control:—

"When you open your eyes you cannot taste;" you test this by giving them quinine, or any other bitter or any nauseous drug. They will eat as much as you give them, and even believe it to be sugar if you have fixed this impression.

"You cannot hear—you cannot see—you cannot feel—you cannot get off your chair," &c., &c. "When you open your eyes your chair will be red hot—there are pins in your chair," &c.

### TO REMOVE THE IMPRESSION.

Go close up to the subjects, and say in a very distinct voice, "All right," and crack your fingers close to their ears, or bring both your hands smartly together so as to make a distinct report.

### MESMERIC SECRETS.

If you use any of the foregoing or following methods, you may become a successful operator.

#### FIRST METHOD.

Seat your subject in an easy posture, and request him to be calm. Take him by both hands, or else by one hand, and place the other gently on his forehead. But whatever part of his body you may choose to touch, be sure to come in contact with a corresponding part of the opposite side. Having taken him by both hands, fix your eyes firmly upon his, and let him contentedly and steadily look you also in the eyes. Remain in this position till his eyes close, and then make the passes down over the head, chest, and off to the tips of the fingers. Continue these passes until he hears no voice but yours; he is then in the mesmeric sleep.

#### SECOND METHOD.

Take your subject by the hands, the balls of your thumbs along the roots of his thumbs, your fingers along the back of his hand. Let the pressure be moderate, but firm; gaze into his eyes in a firm, resolute manner. If, after gazing from ten to twenty minutes, you do not perceive any signs of his closing the eyes, then with the thumb of your left hand, the finger being extended over the top of his head, press on the region situated in the middle of the lower part of the forehead, just above the root of the nose; let the pressure be downwards, your right hand still pressing along the root of the thumb of the subject's left hand, his right hand resting on his knee. Gaze into his eyes. Continue this position for another ten or twenty minutes; if the eyes should still be open, close them, and make the passes until the hour is up. If he does not go into the sleep by this time, you must try again the next day; persevere, and success is certain.

### THIRD METHOD.

Take the subject by the left hand, and gaze as before directed for about ten minutes. Then shut his eyes, and lay the hands on his knees, and proceed to make the passes down over his head, eyes, chest, and off to the tips of his fingers, for another ten minutes, and so on alternately until the hour is up.

### MAKING THE PASSES.

Stand in front of your subject, with your arms by your side and hands closed. Throw them from your side, and raise them above your head until your hands are nearly close together; open them palms downwards; now let your arms go down to your front towards your subject, the fingers and thumbs pointing towards his head. Your fingers should be about one or two inches distant from his head; bring them down, but so slowly as to create no draught over his eyes, face, shoulders, chest, arms, and off to the tips of his fingers, and repeat. Close the hands whilst raising them again. You must be very careful when making the passes, to throw your hands outwards, and to close them on returning to your subject's head. This is to avoid awakening him. By passing them upwards in front of his body, you may undo all that you have done, for by so doing you demesmerise instead of mesmerise.

### HOW TO DEMESMERISE.

To awaken your subject, express to him your wish that he shall awake, and in a minute or so make upward passes until the eyes be open.

If the eyes should afterwards feel stiff, blow smartly on the forehead to remove the inconvenience.

The breath may be used in two ways. If you blow sharply it removes the mesmeric effect, but if you blow softly you mesmerise most powerfully. If you tell your subjects that at the word three they shall wake up, you begin this way—one, two, THREE; the three to be brought out suddenly, and at the same time clap your hands together, and the desired effect is produced.

Be careful never to get frightened if he does not come to himself quite so soon as you could wish. Perhaps your subject may be very sensitive; sometimes a handkerchief or sheet of tissue paper waved upwards, in front of his face, will help to awaken him.

If he should still continue to sleep, let him sit down and tell him to wake up in half an hour, which he will do, feeling quite refreshed.

Whatever might happen, never let fear take possession of you. All will come right in time; he will sleep off the effect.

Should catalepsy ensue during sleep, do not allow yourself to feel the least alarm at it. Let the patient remain perfectly tranquil for a few minutes, collect your thoughts, and demagnetise as before directed, until he be awakened.

It is right at all times, when your subject is asleep, to ask him quietly if he hears you speak. If answered in the affirmative, you can then inquire if a sufficient number of passes, or too many, have been made; he will give you directions whether to make more downward or upward passes.

#### FASCINATIONS OF MESMERISM.

Mesmerism has its fascinations—also its dangers; the former, however, to the adept, evidently predominating over the latter. Many of the most intelligent minds will sacrifice their vocations at the shrine of this mystic and alluring science. Some of them look upon it as an idol, and almost worship its mysteries. Therein lies the danger. These enthusiasts, not satisfied with one severe test, will try another and still another, and only when they have gone too far in their operations and it is too late to recede do they see the danger of their enthusiasm. Even the most eminent medical men, who are over zealous in their desire to study the mysterious effects of this mystic science, when they have gone what they consider too far beyond its depths, and cannot revive a subject in a cataleptic condition, will show the white feather, and at once call in the aid of the only resource left, a power often stronger than the electric battery—the power and will of an “adept” in the science of “MESMERISM.” Two of the most eminent physicians in Paris, MESSRS. ALFRED BINET and CHARLES

FERE, both Members of "La Société Psychologique" and belonging to the Salpetriere, where they have had various cases of supposed death under their notice, state that in certain cases of catalepsy induced by hypnotism "the spirit is so far disengaged from the body that it would be impossible for it to re-enter it without the effort of the mesmerizer's will. The subject is practically dead and if left to itself "the spirit would escape forever." Furthermore, that "the phenomena of animal magnetism, or hypnotism, defy simulation on the part of the subject acted upon. The spirit, or life, can be freed from the body, the body assuming the appearance of death, breathing and pulse extinct." Therefore it can only be by the aid of a thorough adept in Mesmerism that the danger emanating from over zealous enthusiasm in the science can be obviated. Also when a supposed death ensues has the physician called in the aid of the Hypnotiser. A well known physician of extensive practice, formerly a sceptic, is authority for stating that "I must acknowledge that even in the case of a cataleptic trance, 'NOT' induced by hypnotism, the patient would never awaken unassisted by any power but HYPNOTIC INFLUENCE." Another eminent medical authority states "The natural signs or indications of death are cessation of respiration, arrest of the heart's action, loss of animal heat, rigor mortis and putrefaction. A great many tests have been proposed to prove real death, the most important being auscultation to determine whether the movements of the heart can be distinguished and application of the galvanic or electric current to ascertain if excitability of the muscles remains. Both tests are fallible when applied to cases of cataleptic trance. What the electric current cannot affect the Hypnotiser can effect. It may be safely admitted that the tests of death available for ordinary use are entirely unreliable, and it necessarily follows that there is a chance of a person being buried alive, if the last resource, 'Hypnotism,' is not called in.

Another physician corroborated the foregoing and adds, "I have had occasion to observe the effect of hypnotism in my practice. A patient who had his hand fatally injured by a gun accident was told that it must be amputated. He insisted on being hypnotized having experienced the effects

of animal magnetism in toothache. A well known mesmerist was brought, who made a few passes and my friend was rigid. He never winced nor evinced by any muscular action whatever that he felt the least pain or inconvenience during the operation. Here was a curious sequel to the operation. My patient's wife who is a very religious woman, took the amputated hand and had a morocco case made for it. Then a married lady friend and herself made a journey to Greenwood Cemetery, and while pretending to put flowers on the grave of an old acquaintance sleeping below, buried the casket containing the hand. It often happens that the extremities of divided nerves telegraph to the brain and make him believe that pain exists in the fingers of the hand that is gone. It was so in this case, and one night he asked his wife what she had done with his hand. She told him. 'What!' he exclaimed, 'you put my hand in along with that fellow's carcass! It's no wonder it aches like hell. Great Scott! I owed that fraud a licking at the time he died!' On the following Sunday he went with his wife to the cemetery and exhumed his hand, and before they came back home the small casket and it's inclosure had furnished fuel for a dummy engine. He solemnly swears the hand has never ached since."

There is this to be said in favor of mesmerism, both regarding the operator and the subject, that the former after gaining experience in the science can readily bring out the most amusing characteristics of the subject if desired. He has merely to command and the latter will obey. Therefore, when desirous of using the science only for the purpose of entertainment, and not thorough scientific investigation or operation, the operator will find it not alone instructive but most amusing. One thing is certain, that the medical fraternity are beginning to realize the fact that Mesmerism will soon become one of the most important and pleasing sciences. Scoffers will eventually take a back seat, scepticism evaporate into thin air, and from the chaos of war between doubt and truth, the latter will boldly stand forth Conqueror in the name of "MESMERISM."

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