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THE CONFESSIONS

OF A

MAGNETISER,

BEING AN EXPOSE OF

ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

BY A PRACTICAL MAGNETISER.

BOSTON:
UNITED STATES PUBLISHING COMPANY.

HEAD-QUARTERS:
F. GLEASON, No. 1 1-2 Tremont Row, Boston.
BRANCHES:
S. FRENCH, 293 Broadway, New-York. D. JUNE, 274 Main St., Buffalo.
1845

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1845, by F. Gleason, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

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"Humbug has reigned since days of yore,
As showeth forth all ancient lore;
But principally in ages dark,
And in the days of Noah's ark,
Though in these times of which we write,
It open flaunts in broad daylight."

Surgeon Genl's Off.
23886

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CONFESSIONS OF A MAGNETISER.

CHAPTER I.

The desultory manner in which we have sketched our experience, with a hasty hand, we hope may find an excuse in the fact of our unpracticed pen, and the proscribed limits in which we write. We have followed no fixed purpose, but have written that which we have to say quite at random. The reader will find some curious facts related here; but all have been experienced by the author, and that he has not come to his conclusions without good authority for so doing, and until proving the matter, we beg you to believe. These remarks, perhaps might be more properly embraced in a preface, but who reads the preface of a book ? Very few certainly, and therefore we have taken the liberty thus to preface our 'confessions.' Looking through these 'specs' dear reader, 'now gather and surmise.'

That there is much truth and much humbug in the science of Magnetism, if it deserve the name of science, no reasonable man will doubt ; at the same time it is too true that it is made the agent of great abuse and impropriety. I am one of those who believe that there is a certain will within the cultivation of every powerful mind, which may be so exercised over the *dormant* powers of another, as

to render the object or person, for the time being, subject to the authority or wish of the active agent.

For instance, if you, kind reader, were willing to subject yourself to the power of Magnetism, you must first seat yourself, acquire an agreeable and quiet state of mind, be perfectly willing, or rather exert no will against the process, and your mind or brain becomes dormant, while the active mind of the Mesmeriser is exerted to its utmost power and capacity, and thus take possession of your will, as it were, through the agency of the nervo vital fluid or invisible electricity, and becoming for the time and until that agency shall cease, the master of the body of the subject, its own mind being no longer active.

I do not design to prove the truth or actual existence of this singular agency, and therefore shall not go into an elaborate discussion of its principles, but propose simply to throw out such hints as shall enable the reader to understand my story. I do humbly believe that Magnetism may be made the means of doing much good, in alleviating extreme pain, in cases of nervous affections, and when it is necessary to perform any surgical operation, inasmuch as the patient is rendered for the time being, when in the perfect or rigid state, insensible to all outward feeling or pain. Thus many of the first physicians of Boston and other cities, can bear testimony to having fully tested the matter in some most trying and important cases of surgical operations, such as amputations and the like.

There are thousands of intelligent minds in this city, which being struck at first by some really astounding exhibitions, or proof of the singular powers of Animal Magnetism, render at once blind belief to all it pretends to, and being convinced at the outset of a hidden or unseen agency, they are ready to concede every thing o its power that the Mesmeriser, in his ingenuity, may lay down or devise. Now I have studied somewhat this action of the will, the peculiar operation of this agency, and can find it only powerful as I have expressed, in alleviating pain, as any prompt anodyne might do, and in rendering the subject for the time being completely within the control of the Mesmeriser.

Much has been written and said, and many have borne witness to the principle of clairvoyance as existing in the magnetised person. This principle is that of sight and power independent of either the subjects natural abilities, or the capacity of the Mesmeriser, and a person in this state is believed to be able to see and describe correct-

ly any place independent of space and time, without having either seen or heard of that place before, and of which the Mesmeriser is equally ignorant. I have labored hard, and with those said to be the best of subjects to prove if this be so, but have never been able to find a person who in any stage of the magnetic state could perform such a miracle. On the contrary, I have ever found that the subjects, however acute under the influence, however susceptible, or perfect in this state, can only reflect the mind and power of the Mesmeriser, or the person with whom they are put in communication, by means of the Mesmeriser, creating a degree of sympathy between them in the usual manner. In such a case, the individual put in communication, takes the place for the time being of the Mesmeriser.

I would say here that I believe the prescribing of medicine in cases of sickness, by a person in the mesmeric state a perfect humbug! for this reason. Being placed in communication with the ailing person, the subject forthwith reflects the sick one's thoughts, influenced, perhaps, in some measure by the judgment of the Mesmeriser. For instance, if you are convinced in your own mind that you are afflicted wit an affection of the heart, and present yourself before a magnetised person, for examination in relation to your health, that person, as soon as the sympathy is perfect, reflects your own mind, and will say, yourself holding the same opinion, that you have an affection of the heart. You are forthwith surprised at the singularity of the knowledge evinced by the subject, a perfect stranger perhaps to you, inasmuch as he or she has told you just that which you have every reason to believe true before, and indeed the same that your family physician has told you often times.

We have experimented and thought much upon this subject of clairvoyance, and do not hesitate to pronounce it an ingenious fabrication, founded upon the singular peculiarities of the agency in sho tthat the whole matter as it relates to the Clairvoyant state, is a monstrous mountain of humbug resting upon a mole-hill of fact. As to the examination of diseases, we know that there is much injury done in this way, though the Mesmeriser is careful not to permit his subject to prescribe any very powerful medicine, thus protecting himself from any reproach, should the patient die from improper treatment. In such an instance they declare the harmless character of the prescription; and I once heard a pretended Doctor, after this school, declare,—'Why, my dear friend, my medicine could not have injured your wife, in proof of which I am willing to undergo the same

course of treatment, if necessary, to convince you of the fact. In vain did the friend declare that the would-be-Doctor was a vile person and could bear experimenting upon, it was all to no purpose. The medicine was perfectly innocent, and as it did not cure, the deceased was incurable !

This prescribing for the sick through the agency of a mesmerised person, is carried to a much greater extent in this city than is generally known. I could mention eight practitioners at this time, now engaged in this employment. I also know one or two married ladies perfectly conscientious in this matter, persons irreproachable in morals and standing in society, who being magnetised by their husbands, prescribe for the sick among their friends. This being done gratuitously, it would seem hard not to award at least the mead of sincerity to such. The fact is they are themselves deceived, being told on their awaking from the trance, or unconscious state in which they have been, that which they have said and done, and knowing very well that they have not the power to discover these things in the natural state, they become convinced of the truth of clairvoyance, and actually practice the art from a sense of duty to their fellow beings.

The point most to be dreaded in this agency of the nervo-vital fluid is, that being within the reach of nearly every one, it may not unfrequently fall into improper hands. Some are far more powerful than others ; the ability in this agency being susceptible of an accurate analysis, as it is graded according to the powers of the mind, and the ability to concentrate the will, and the resolution to be obeyed. Thus he who possesses these qualities in an eminent degree becomes of course a powerful magnetiser. Let a person of strong mind, of good intellectual faculties, exert this power over another, and the person so affected will thrive in the very faculties which predominate in the Magnetiser, while on the contrary, if a person, say for instance, who possesses a poor memory, shall frequently mesmerise any one individual, that subject will inevitably experience the same inconvenience. How long the effect may remain I will not pretend to say, but that this singular effect will be produced, I know from actual and careful observation.

CHAPTER II.

As the reader will undoubtedly infer, I have been a practical Magnetiser, and for a long time was as much carried away by its supposed capabilities, as ever was the most ardent devotee; but like all who are determined to prove their belief, let it relate to whatever subject it may, I was not long in 'finding my level.' As I propose to be honest in this expose, I will frankly acknowledge, that when I found out the deception that had been practiced upon me, and in which I had been an innocent agent of deception to others, I did not do as I should have done.——In the first place I was ashamed to acknowledge my error, being actuated by a false pride, which led me rather to cleave to falsehood than to acknowledge my error. And then again it gave me sweet pleasure, the practice of this singular agency, inasmuch as by it I possessed a mysterious power over my subject or patient, who oftentimes were of the gentler sex.

Reader, let me tell you that to be placed opposite a young and lovely female, who has subjected herself to the process for the purpose of effecting a cure of some nervous affection or otherwise, to look into her gentle eyes, soft and beaming with confidence and trust, is singular entrancing. You assume her hands, which are clasped in your own, you look intently upon the pupils of her eyes, which as the power becomes more and more visible in her person, evince the tenderest regard, until they close in dreamy and as it were spiritual affection.—Then is her mind all your own, and she will evince the most tender solicitude and care for your good. Your will then becomes not only as law to her, but it is the greatest happiness to her to execute your smallest wish; she is perfectly happy, (unless your natural tempera-

ment and habit differ widely) in the strange sympathy that now exists between you. Self is entirely swallowed up in the earnest regard that actuates the subject, and they will stop at no point beyond which they may afford you pleasure should you indicate it by thought or word.

Now I ask is not this a most dangerous agency that can so subject the most upright minds to the will of the unprincipled and oftentimes highly immoral practitioner ?

And then again it is the same in relation to this matter of the affections as it is in the instance of the mind, for as it will beget an evil effect upon the memory of the subject who shall be operated upon frequently by one peculiarly defection in that point, so does it produce a strange and ardent affection in the subject, who shall be magnetised by one of the opposite sex, particularly if he himself be actuated by a wish to leave such an impression; and who is there among us all who does not wish to please ? In this connection, I would observe that I have heard a practitioner openly avow that he could choose his wife from among his patients when he pleased, possessing as he did the power of magnetism to the full extent, meaning to accomplish the desirable object when the proper time should arrive through the agency of his art.

In magnetising an individual of the other sex, I have ever assumed at the outset of the operation, the most mild and gentle frame of mind. I have ever given full play to the warmth of affection that every refined mind must experience towards the female heart. And I have ever seen this feeling a thousand fold more ardent in the subject. At times I have endeavored, for experiment's sake to change my mind and feelings and to imagine a feeling of repugnance towards the subject; but I have only found it to render them unhappy, and frequently moving them to tears. I do not believe that the spirit of repugnance would be reflected in any case, but would create distress only in the patient or subject. I am at a loss to account for the cause of this phenomenon, though in fact no one can actually feel a repugnance to himself, or his own weal, and perhaps herein lies the secret; for though we may assume to be disaffected and to dislike the subject, or ourselves, which is the same thing while they are under the effect of magnetism, yet as it is only pretence, we find only reflection in the subject, where we may only hope to see as in a mirror, a truthful reflection.

I remember once to have deeply offended a lady, by some thought-

less remark, and nearly a year having intervened, I was again thrown into her company. I remarked to her that I regretted the circumstance of my offence, and that, as in duty bound, I was ready, and should be but too happy to expiate my offence by any reasonable penance she should inflict. But the lady was inconsolable or rather irreconcilable, and at length finding to what extent she proposed to carry her resentment, I told her I would entirely change her feelings towards me if she would give me her attention for a few minutes.—This she agreed to do, declaring however that it was impossible. I seated myself before her, and in a few moments and almost before she was aware of my purpose, I had so fixed her mind and eye that she did not desire to resist me, and in ten minutes from the commencement of my experiment she was completely magnetised, proving to be remarkably susceptible to the influence.

I allowed her to remain thus for nearly half an hour, subject to the examination of her friends with whom she was at the time. In the mean time exercising my mind to infuse the kindest feelings towards me into her thoughts, and after a few trifling experiments to amuse and satisfy the company who now understood the reason of the experiment, and even looking anxiously for the result, I gradually awoke her from the trance, and as she thoroughly recovered herself, I retired to a distant part of the room. But a few moments intervened before she arose and crossing the room sat by my side, and requested me to forgive her for the cold manner in which she had treated me.

'But can you forgive me ?' said I.

'Yes, but not myself,' was the reply.

'What has brought you to this conclusion ?' I again asked.

'I know not,' she said, thoughtfully, 'but it does not seem that you could be in the wrong in any case !'

This is a fact of personal experience, and by no means a solitary one, which I relate to show the reader the power of this singular agency.

There is at this writing, a man in this city, a practitioner in the art of Magnetism, whose pretended sanctity of character, should lead us to deem him worthy of trust, but it is to be deeply regretted that he has proved himself to exert his power in the art mainly for vile and sensual purposes. I cannot here refrain from warning young females and even married ladies not to trust themselves alone with practitioners who are comparative strangers to them, for did I feel at liberty to reveal some startling facts with which I am conversant, the communi-

ty would be thoroughly awakened to the danger of permitting publicly the exercise and employment of this agency. The ruin and utter destruction of many a domestic circle must eventually follow, and in one case I already know the greatest unhappiness to exist. There is no punishment too severe for one who will take advantage of a person when in the helpless condition to which Magnetism reduces them, and he who would commit that most heinous offence, would also put his hand into the subject's pocket and abstract whatever might be there of value. His punishment must come sooner or later ; justice abideth her time.

Here is a solitary instance in which we know the culpability of the operator, and how many more may there be all around us ? Nay, there is hardly any one, be he naturally ever so strong minded and virtuously inclined, that could withstand the series of temptations hat a practical Magnetiser must encounter. I have found this so, and although I call my Maker to witness that I have never betrayed confidence placed in me by the meanest thing in existence, so far as any actual deed of sin is concerned, yet have I followed the art as I have before said for the sake in a great measure of the delight experienced in female society, while in the exercise of the power of Magnetism. I could recount in this connection and in illustration of my position, scenes that would move the most stoical person on earth.

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Sunderland not long since astonished our good citizens by a boast that he could magnetise a certain number of his audience while lecturing to them, and in proof of this assertion, he agreed on the next evening, to throw several of the audience into the mesmeric state, each one thus effected to be a perfect stranger to the speaker, (Mr. Sunderland himself.) Now my purpose in alluding to the case is, to show the reader how much the imagination has to do in the matter. Here are an audience of some two thousand people, principally composed of the middling classes of the community, all absorbed with the wonderful experiment they are anticipating.

The lecture, commences by telling them with much confidence that certain members of the body before him will soon fall asleep. Well, now it is very strange if there are not some in so large and hetereogenous a compound of human nature, weak minded enough to have their nerves affected by this announcement. They become agitated, watch intently the speaker, and sure enough they do become affected. Entering into the spirit of the lecture, each expecting that it may be he or she that is to be affected, become magnetised in reality. This reasoning Mr. Sunderland must acknowledge himself, to be correct; and thus we account for what has been asserted by many to be the most singular experiment ever publicly made. There is one still more singular, yet explainable on the same grounds, relative to the imagination.

Let any one make a bow-knot of ribbon and pin it to the wall on a range with the eye of any naturally nervously inclined person, tell them to look intently upon it and it will magnetise them; ten to one that person will become insensible or magnetised in fifteen or twenty

minutes, and entirely through her own imagination. I have known a very singular case of this kind where the subject slept twenty-four hours before thoroughly awaking to consciousness. Thus the reader will see that in this case the imagination becomes the same, whereby the person is magnetised; in proof of this let any one try the experiment as here laid down. Yet how many vain-glorious persons, have I seen perform this trick, pretending to put the subject to sleep, while they themselves when in another room, and when it was found necessary to speak or to wake them up, they would go regularly to work and magnetise them in reality by the action of their own will, through the medium of the nervo-vital fluid, thus bringing them under their own authority and enabling themselves to wake them or otherwise as the case may be.

The imagination no doubt does much in every instance, and yet a powerful magnetiser will as readily overcome a skeptic as a regular subject. I know this is denied by many, but I have proved it to my own satisfaction in several instances.

I once sat in a room where there was a large company, when one of the ladies spoke to me saying, 'Mr. S—— you are a magnetiser, now do give us a specimen of your power, or tell us is it all a humbug?' I replied that I believed there was some truth in the pretentions of the art, and that if it would give the company any pleasure I would endeavor to prove the fact of the mesmeric state, taking as a subject any lady present who was willing to try the experiment. At this juncture Mrs. R. a very beautiful lady and not long a wife, observed:

'Mr S——, you might try till dooms-day upon me, and you would never succeed in making me believe in the truth of the science.'

'Will you allow me to make trial?' I asked.

'Oh, yes,' said she, unhesitatingly.

I was just seating myself for the trial when she observed,

'I shall claim the right to laugh at you as much as I please.

'Certainly,' said I, 'provided I fail.'

'Very well, proceed.'

I assumed her hands within my own and commenced the operation. Here again I experienced the delight that in long practice had become almost necessary to me, and which I now craved, as would an intemperate man his glass of spirit. Gradually the stubborn spirit relaxes, the mild blue eyes, nature's loveliest color, beams first kindly, then affectionately upon me, and at length they close, her heart throb

bing to every wish of my soul. Here I had triumphed, but not to exalt; my happiness was already too perfect in the sweet being before me to express such a feeling. She would not spare me a moment to leave her, bnt nestling by my side seemed happy only then. If you never experienced such a scene, you cannot fully appreciate the feelings of the operator; he cannot act independent of this dependency; this affection so regardlessly shown before husband, friends and all! There was a perfect abandon in the exhibition of regard on the part of the subject that I never saw in any other case or instance. It is a singular expression I know, and poets say that we can love truly but once, yet I have loved, aye, and with my whole heart an hundred times, while in such a situation as I have just described. It would be a stoical heart indeed that could resist such temptations, and not give play at least to the impulse of the heart in the affections for the moment.

Again I ask, is it not a dangerous agency that will so act upon, and even control the strongest minds? You can make but one reply to this query.

I sat one afternoon in my room, when a gentleman entered accompanied by a young and beautiful female; it was his daughter. He informed me that from the effects of a serious fright about six months previous, she had never since enjoyed a single night or indeed an hour of natural sleep! That the effect of anodynes however potent or simple had ever been to throw her into a wakeful yet half torpid state in which she would apparently forget herself, while her eyes were still wide open. He wished to try the effects of magnetism.—He observed that he had very little faith in the art, but that he was unwilling to leave any reasonable remedy untried and therefore he had called upon me. After a few moments conversation, I found by experiment that the young lady was perfectly susceptible, and after announcing the fact asked if I should proceed. Having the consent of both, I commenced at once. Here again I cut loose every cord that bound my heart. I threw my whole soul into my eyes, and the object before me was one whose personal beauty called every power of admiration into action.

She was but just seventeen, and possessed of as perfect form and features, as one may have dreamed of, but never seen. Strange infatuation—I could have worshipped the lovely girl at that moment, when I saw how wholly she was in my power, how confiding she was, how thoughtful of my every movement, and seemingly jealous lest I

should remove even my eyes from her person. Well, she enjoyed a sound and refreshing sleep, for such is the effect of the magnetic influence; the parent saw it and was happy. At the expiration of a little more than an hour, I awoke her in the usual manner. When she left the room, she did not do as she had entered it, careless of its occupant, myself. Ah no! her eyes were bent blushingly upon the ground, and her heart was in my keeping!

From that moment, I felt convinced, and believe so still, that there is created through this agency of magnetism, not only a feeling of affection in the heart of the subject, but that there is also a corresponding sympathy aroused in the breast of the operator. Day after day that young and beautiful girl came to my rooms and was operated upon, unknown to her parents. Singular as it may appear to those who do not understand the effect of this agency upon the nerves, the first experiment entirely cured her, and her natural sleep returned to her at night as heretofore! She was bound to me by this new sympathy over which she had no control, and was unhappy unless we met at least once a day.

How I loved that gentle, thoughtless girl! I was about five years her senior, and our dispositions were singularly alike. Time rolled on, and this tender and gentle girl was daily more and more attached to me by our frequent meeting. I was poor; her wealth placed me far below her, but her fond parent wished only for his child's happiness—and but a few monts intervened in our more mature acquaintance, when we were married! From that hour I forswore magnetism, which all my experience showed me could be made the agent of so much evil. Although my wife had first been won by a strange and hidden agency, yet now she loved me through the natural channels of the heart's affection, and I was happy indeed!

CHAPTER IV.

We had been married about three years; my dear Eugenia and myself; and I defy the world to produce a happier couple or a sweeter home. We sat one evening reading aloud to each other, our little boy asleep in the cradle hard by, when a servant entered and handed me a note. I read the singular contents which were as follows :

Dear Sir:

You were once a practical Magnetiser. I know you discarded the practice of the art from principle, and therefore I do not fear to trust you, for I too understand its principles. I hope you will once more resume your power for the purpose of doing good ! If you are inclined to serve one who will ever pray for you. Meet me to-morrow noon at the hour of 12 M. at the Exchange Reading Room. I will there speak to you.

Respectfully,

One who needs your aid.

To R. S. Esq."

Placing the note in my pocket, I continued my reading, but my wife interrupted me by asking the purport of the letter. I turned the subject adroitly, determining to find out the object and purpose of the writer before I made the matter known even to my wife, her from whom I had no secrets. The letter was written in a bold and manly

hand, and I felt no small degree of curiosity to know its author, wherefore I awaited somewhat impatiently the coming of the appointed time, when I resolved to meet with the writer as he had proposed.

The appointed time arrived, and at the place designated I met with my unknowu correspondent. He was a young and gentlemanly looking person of some two and twenty years, and struck one at first sight as a gentleman at heart, and in every particular. He proposed that we should take a hotel hard by, and there discuss the business upon which he had addressed me on the previous night. I assented, and following him to the Exchange Coffee House, we were soon close by ourselves and deep in conversation.

'You received my note of yesterday?' he asked.

'I did.'

'And are willing to resume the practice of your power if convinced that you will be doing good thereby?'

'If convinced, I am.'

'May I confide in you?'

'Most implicitly.'

'I thank you sincerely.'

Here followed a pause, as I awaited for him to open the subject—he at length observed, after much hesitation:

'I know not what to say.'

'If I can serve you consistently with my honor and self-respect, speak freely,' said I. 'You need not hesitate to make known your wishes. I understand you to speak in confidence.'

Extending his hand to me, with warm and eloquent language, he thanked me for my kindness and proceeded to say:

'From my earliest remembrance, I have loved and been betrothed to Helen W———, as fair and lovely a being as nature ever blessed. She possesses every excellence of character and disposition, but has one single fault, and that is a fickleness of purpose, or rather an inconstancy in her affections. She has ever considered with myself that we are betrothed to each other, and that our future marriage is certain. I know she loves me as well and constantly as she can love any one, but every gay gallant who becomes acquainted with her, has an equal share of her regard with myself, for the time being. By business connections I have been called to Europe within the last six months and have now but just returned. I find that during my ab-

sence, another suitor, attracted by the large fortune she commands, has well nigh supplanted me in her affections, and by his constant attentions will, I fear, eventually, if he has not already completely alienated her love from me. He already absorbs her whole attention by his ingenious manœuvres and agreeable accomplishments.'

'Now Mr. W—— leaves his daughter to choose freely for herself, and though he favors my suit, yet he will use no argument I know with Helen in my favor. Thus I am left to look on terms and see myself supplanted by one whom I know to be unworthy. Now tell me sir, cannot magnetism be made to operate here to my advantage, and also for the good of the lady? I have thought of every other mode to accomplish my purpose, but cannot succeed. Now I know that you discarded the art from a conviction of its evils, and we both know that it contains some truths, and perhaps imporant ones too, notwithstanding the sea of humbug it is made to float in—therefore I have determined to consult with you in this matter. Can you, will you assist me ?'

'I am certainly ready and willing to serve you if I can find it consistent, as I have before observed, with my sense of self-respect and honor.'

'Do you really believe that this agency may be made to accomplish my most earnest wish?'

Properly exercised—yes.'

'Did I not know your independence in pecuniary matters I would offer you any sum of money, would you but promise to try the experiment in this case.'

'If I were to receive pay for such an engagement, I should break a most solemn oath that I long since made to myself relating to the practice of this agency.'

'But will you consent to aid me?'

'You have stated the case to me honestly?'

'I will swear it.'

After a few moments thought, and some ordinary enquiries of him, relative to the matter, I was well satisfied with his answers, and agreed to undertake his plan, which was was to endeavor to fix the affections of Helen upon himself, and to alienate them from any other object. I found that although he had never been able to magnetize himself yet he perfectly understood the principles of the art, which he explained upon philosophical principles, and in the only reasonable manner. Our plan was as follows. I was to be introduced into the family

of Mr. W——— as a friend of Mr. Milton, who had so long been engaged to Helen. I was then to endeavor, if possible, to accomplish my purpose in part without any open operation that might excite suspicion—or at least I was not to attempt any thing openly, until I should have obtained such influence over the lady as to ensure success.

On a certain evening accordingly, I was introduced into the family of Mr. W———, and was at once struck with the great personal beauty of Helen, as well as charmed with the accomplishments of her mind. But through all and every point, I could detect the one failing of fickleness. Said I to myself, if I can be the agent of fixing her purpose and affections, and thus add stability of purpose to her affections, I shall certainly be doing a good act. And so I resolved to attempt to accomplish my object, let the result prove to be what it might. In this frame of mind and thus purposing, I addressed her with a feeling almost of admiration for her beauty of person and mind:

'Miss W———,' I said to Helen, 'I think I never saw a face in which the science of Physiognomy could so plainly be proved as in the instance of yourself.'

'Indeed sir, and pray how would you interpret its legends as the hierologists say of the ancient inscriptions?'

The reader will at once perceive that my object in entering upon the subject of Physiognomy was to enable me to rest my eyes much upon her face, and thus get her attention, and also if possible to make myself in some degree agreeable.

'May I be assured of giving no offence if I translate freely, and as the text shall strike me?' I continued.

'Most certainly; and I shall be much amused to see my mind, and peculiarities of disposition reflected before me, as in my person from a mirror. But can this be possible? I have never had much faith in Physiognomy, for I have often been deceived by it.'

'You shall see how correctly I will speak, and then decide for yourself as to the correctness of the science, which is the only one, by the by, that is not made the foundation for some species of humbug.'

CHAPTER V.

I HAD taken especial care to inform myself relative to the general character of Miss Helen W——— through Mr. Milton, but aside from that information, I could read in her beautiful countenance so undisguised and open in its expression, nearly every decided trait of character she possessed; I began upon this theme as I have before observed, for the purpose of establishing a friendly relation between us, and as a good cover under which I might approach her, for as to any open exhibition of magnetism, I knew that she in common with many others, abhorred the idea, believing it only the invention of deceivers.

With my eyes fixed earnestly upon her face, I said, 'I read here that you are very frank.'

'Thank you,' said she.

'Nay, you are too much so.'

'Thank you again, for now I believe I may expect something like truth. I see you do not wish to flatter me.'

'You give your confidence at once, and without considering either the worthiness or the unworthiness of the object.'

'May be so,' she said, thoughtfully.

'You are fond of music.'

'These instruments might signify that,' said she, pointing to a harp and piano that ornamented the room.

'True, but they do not say that while you love to play upon them, are not able to accompany them with your voice, I think you cannot sing. Am I right, lady?'

'Very truly spoken.'

'I mean to be understood that while you are fond of music, yet you

play mechanically, and still there is no lack of harmony in your disposition. Your harmony of eye, if I may so express myself, I should say exceeded your harmony of sound. You love to see colors correctly blended; that is, in good taste, and much effect, a well painted landscape.'

'I do above all things.'

All this time she was looking intently upon me, and had even taken a nearer seat, though apparently without understanding or either realizing that she did so, so interested had she become. I continued with my eyes resting upon her with all the respeet, yet tender feeling expressed in them that I could command.

'You are very fond of new things,' said I.

'Who is not, pray?'

'I think that, for instance, now you have become familiar with this harp, you would prefer any other style of the instrument to the one you possess.'

'Why, I had thought of this within this very hour; say, Mr. Milton, is not this friend of yours a conjuror?'

'To give this trait or propensity the proper name, I should say that you are fickle in your regard for any object, and sometimes, (you know I am translating, not originating,) changeable, nay, quite so in your purpose.'

'Frank, upon my word.'

'Have I offended?'

'No sir, I gave you liberty at the outset.'

'But I see you do not like my interpretations.'

'Perhaps I ought to like it,' said she half to herself, while she toyed with her fan; 'I fear it is but too true. Go on, sir, if you please.—I had rather you had spoke thus, than to think you would flatter me.'

'You are very affectionate,' I continued, 'and love more than reverence your parents—your regard is as freely given as your confidence, and I should say you were much too ready to share both with those who are almost strangers to you.

She smiled coquettishly.

'You are given much to the ideal, and often build *Chateaux en Espagne*, forming glowing pictures in a fairy future that never glads your eyes.'

'You know what Pope says touching this matter of present happiness; do not all enjoy much by anticipation?'

'Very true; but I would speak of this castle-building propensity as possessing a large share of your thoughts. I can see by your eyes that you assent to the truth of what I say.'

During the whole of our conversation, I had remained with my eyes mildly bent on the pupils of hers, and at this stage of the conversation, I saw the usual change taking place. The moments flew fast, and within the half hour from the commencement of our conversation, Helen was in that half dreaming, half wakeful situation which precedes the perfect state under the magnetic influence. This was as far as I designed to go at this time, yet endeavoring strongly to impress upon her feelings a regard for me; then slipping a moment behind, by the usual passes and exertion of the will, I passed off the fluid, and she revived, while I pretended to cross the room for a book. As she became again completely conscious, she smiled most kindly on me, observing,

'I cannot have fallen asleep. I really beg your pardon. It is most unaccountable. Why, I never was so affected before;' and poor Helen blushed with mortification.

We took our leave, but with a still deeper blush, Helen asked me to call again, and she bid us both good night with more than usual courtesy.

As we left the house Mr. Milton remarked,

'Well, you have certainly begun well and succeeded wonderfully; thank heaven, no one appeared during the conversation, else we might have been suspected.'

'Have no fear,' I replied, 'I shall use all caution in this case, in which I have become deeply interested.'

'You have certainly won her good opinion.'

'It is all I designed to do on my first visit, but I have found her peculiarly susceptible, and think success is sure.'

'It is strange I cannot acquire the art.'

'You can with proper understanding as to the application of the will, and you must forthwith take some lessons of me, for it will be well that you should become an active agent yourself, in accomplishing our desired end relative to Helen.'

'I place myself under your control, and shall obey implicitly your instructions.'

'Come to my study then to-morrow at noon.'

'I will be punctual.'

And we parted. I was highly pleased thus far with the adventure, and promised myself more enjoyment at least, in carrying out the plan we had proposed.

Mr. Milton was punctual at my study the next day.

'How have you been accustomed to affect your subject,' said I to him, 'or rather, in what way have you endeavored to do so, for you tell me you have never yet succeeded?'

'First placing my subject in the usual position, and seating myself, I have taken the hands, and forthwith set myself to will that the subject should fall asleep, exerting all my powers of mind to conquer the brain or will of the subject.'

'Wrong, all wrong, and the plan that has caused thousands to fail in their attempt. The subject must be one of the most susceptible class who can be thus subjected. Now I care very little about taking the hands or even touching the subject personally, though I believe that by so doing you may hasten the effect, and perhaps heighten it. Now I have always endeavored, at the outset of an operation, to establish between myself and the subjects, the greatest degree of confidence, and give rise in their minds to a feeling of kindness, in short, to create a mutual sympathy between us. I then proceed to will *mildly*, yet resolutely, combining in my mind a purpose and determination to succed, with the most affectionate regard for the subject.—Then follows almost instantly the result; success is almost certain.

If, on the contrary, you will harshly, and with all your resolution to *conquer* the brain of the subject, your power must be very strong in the first place, to enable you to overcome the natural repugnance that such a course will give birth to in the feelings of the patient at the moment; for as you are exercised by a feeling of resentment as it were, a determination to be conqueror, so must their feelings partake in some degree of the same spirit, at least, until they become perfectly magnetized. Follow, therefore, the opposite plan in future, if you would succeed. I have hopes that you will succeed in this manner.'

CHAPTER VI.

When I parted from young Milton, we made an appointment to call again at the residence of Helen's parents, in pursuance of our purpose on the following Thursday. Evening came, and with it my new companion at the appointed hour, and we started for the residence of Mr. W——. After being announced, we were soon admitted to the presence of Helen, and the gracious smile with which she received me in particular, showed that I was already a favorite in her heart. I should here observe that I was unknown to the family, nor was I likely to meet with any one here who would recognize me, and trusting to good luck, I passed for a young unmarried man, and therefore the repetition of my visit at so early a day caused no particular notice, and probably no reflection on Helen's mind.

We found her surrounded by the aristocratic sprigs and young fops of the town, whose mustached faces likened them vastly to the ape tribe, albeit those comparatively respectable genus do not wear these 'attaches.' They were mostly of that class that carry their brains in their pocket, and their accomplishments on their person. My new friend Milton stood little chance among such fellows; he was a quiet well informed, and indeed, thoroughly educated young man, though in the matter of fashion he was perhaps inferior to those about him, a most desirable deficiency too, if Helen's companions were taken as a model.

Helen immediately evinced an undisguised preference for our society, and so decided too, as to elicit the remark of several of the fops present, one of whom observed:

'Who the deuce is this Mr. S——?'

'Don't know, 'pon honor,' said another.

'One of the Canaile,' put in a third indignantly.

'Guess he's from *Kam-skat-ker!*—ha, ha, ha!' said another little fop of a fellow, so tightly laced that he could hardly recover himself after the exertion of laughing at his own wit!

Helen overhearing these remarks, did not hesitate to show them by her conduct that she wished a *private* interview with us. This was done adroitly, and with the skill of a courtier.

One by one they dropped away, before the hour became late, and having patiently awaited the departure of the last, we were again on such a footing that we both felt perfectly at home. I enjoyed a hearty laugh at the leave-taking of the little fop, he who had so nearly extinguished himself in the exertion attendant upon laughing at his own wit.

After one of the most stiff and approved bows, he waved his hand graciously to Helen, saying:

'Bon soir, my dear Miss W——, bon soir,' and thus he repeated the only French phrase he knew perhaps a half dozen times. I doubt if the fellow could have spelt that. At length he bowed himself out.

'Well, Mr. Necromancer,' said Helen to me.

'Call him rather a professor of Physiognomy,' said Milton; 'did he not read you well?'

'I think he did,' said Helen thoughtfully.

'You acknowledge the potency of the science, then?' asked Milton.

'It is incontrovertible.'

'There were some points, perhaps, that Mr. S—— did not speak of,' said Milton; 'would you have him still further translate the story of your open and tell-tale countenance, Helen?'

Milton spoke tenderly, and I could see from the intonation of his voice, and every expression, that he loved her.

'There is one point,' said I, 'as our mutual friend, Mr. Milton has suggested, upon which I would speak more fully if I felt at liberty.—My object at least is a good one.'

'You have full permission, and indeed I even esteem it a favor, you have treated me so frankly.'

'My object in warning you against that, which I, as one having studied the science, at once recognize, is because I think you are not aware of possessing the trait yourself.'

'I am all curiosity, pray go on,' said Helen.

'You remember, perhaps, that I spoke of a fickleness of character which you possess; excuse me, I am now acting professionally,' said I, with mock gravity; 'it is the only point in your general character that I can read, which I would change one iota, were you dearer to me than life itself; but that is a *fault*.'

I paused a moment to see what effect this decided announcement would have upon her. She turned her head from me, and when I again met her eyes they were suffused with tears. Suppressing all appearance of outward emotion, she said:

'I feel this to be a compliment, though I know you do not mean it as such.'

'There are few that are chargeable with but one great fault,' I replied.

'You are very candid with me, and I feel strangely willing to listen to that from your lips that I should not have hearkened to even from Henry,' refering to young Milton, to whom she looked kindly, and as if at a loss to account for the singularity of this matter.

'Are you conscious of possessing this failing?'

'I am.'

'A sin acknowledged is half repented.'

'Yes, this fault is mine,' answered Helen.

'I thank you, for I have certainly assumed a situation that I have no right to; yet still with your permission it may perhaps be made of good issue. I say I thank you, for even the candor that leads you to confess this is also depicted in your face, and you have thus unwittingly bore testimony to the truth of the science.'

During the time of this conversation I had bent my eyes constantly, and with the tenderest expression upon her, and in a few moments more of general remark, I had again completely magnetized her!

I then placed her hands in those of Mr. Milton, formed the connection or sympathy in the usual manner, and directed him to operate as I had already instructed him. He then concentrated all his powers into his will, and desire to please, which was tempered by the most ardent love. In the meantime I withdrew by degrees my own will from her by the usual exertion of the will and the passes, and thus he gained his own power upon her. Had we not all three been of nearly the same temperament, this might not have been accomplished, but as it was, it succeeded perfectly, and Helen was now completely in the power of Mr. Milton.

My object was attained!

He followed implicitly my directions, employing every tender sensibility of his heart, perfectly happy in the effect, for Helen showed a warm affection for him while thus under the influence. He awoke her gradually, and as she revived he retreated from her so as not to excite her suspicion.

'Did I faint?' asked she.

'Slightly so,' said we both.

'Just forgot yourself,' continued Milton; 'but you have now quite recovered yourself, I think, Helen.'

'I am; but how very singular.'

'Shall I ring for your maid?' asked Milton.

'No, I am quite recovered, *dear* Henry!'

I fairly jumped from the floor with joy at my success. *Dear* Henry —that was the word. Dear Henry? I was greater at that moment than Napoleon.

Let me fan you, *dear* Helen,' said Milton.

Oh, thought I, it's catching, is it? Perhaps I had better bid good night; there may be business to be done here that does not require a third party for witness.

'Good evening,' said I.

'Good night, Mr. S——,' said Helen; 'honor us by calling often, do, and believe me your friend.'

'Bon soir, bon soir,' said I, imitating the little fop.

CHAPTER VII.

From a transient acquaintance I became the most intimate friend of Mr. Milton, and I need not add also of Helen, who really considered me as her best friend. She did not understand the agency by which her inconstancy was cured, but rather attributed it to a consciousness of possessing the fault as portrayed by Mr. S——, the Physiognomist, (myself,) and her own inclination to overcome and conquer it. She was completely cured, and you never saw a couple more devoutly attached to each other. The secret agent had done its duty and had its effect, and was still in operation. If we can once create a feeling of sympathy between two persons of a proper condition, leave alone the rest—there will soon be love there.

Reader, between ourselves, Helen W—— and Henry Milton were married not long subsequent to this. There was a rich and ample fortune went with the bride, and I felt no envy, for they were so designed by Heaven for each other. Young, handsome, and accomplished, with hearts moulded for each other's sphere of happiness. They were married, I say, and I still was esteemed the same friend as before, and there was ever an earnest invitation from Milton to visit him as often as I met him in the street.

Like an intemperate man who has resolved to banish from him the intoxicating cup, and who by some accident has again got taste of the fatal enemy, I was exercised by a strange desire to put again in practice my power and propensity. I had sworn an oath never to do so for pay, but I longed for the excitement and secret gratification that I had ever experienced while in the practice. My adventure with Hel-

en W—— had again whetted my appetite for my old vitiated taste, and I could not withstand the temptation again to engage in it. In her case I had acted purely from a sense of honor, and resigned immediately the power I had gained over her, when I found by so doing that I could accomplish the proposed end, for which young Milton had besought my assistance. Constantly was I exercised by a burning desire to resume my old practice in the exercise of the power delegated by magnetism.

In this frame of mind I called one day on Helen, now Mrs. Milton, at her new home. She received me with all kindness, and I could see that she felt towards me anything but the cold and ordinary friendship of the world. I looked earnestly and intently upon her for a moment and saw the latent fire kindling in her eye.

I was magnetizing her!

What was to be done? I could not resist the temptation. I found that unconsciously I loved that gentle and lovely woman. I now felt its full force, and by its strange agency she also revealed the same regard for me. I have before alluded in these pages to the belief that the operator in this secret agency is drawn in no small degree towards the subject, at the same time that they evince the most earnest regard for the operator. In this case I proved the truth of the principle without at first realizing it.

What could I do? my whole soul was entranced, yet I knew the sin I was committing, and still I persevered, and drank in the transient bliss of guilty love—guilty? doubly guilty; for had I not a wife and she a husband? These thoughts all crowded upon me in a moment of time.

I awoke her in a moment of good resolution, and succeeded in so conducting as not to permit her to realize the state she had just been in. But there was still my influence left upon her that I could not remove. Her large and love beaming eyes were bent affectionately upon me in earnest love. I was half delirious with smothered passion. I took her hand, pressed it to my lips, and declared my love freely.

What was the consequence? I looked for contempt—to be upbraided. But I had not calculated upon the potency and extent of the power I had exercised. She loved as deeply as myself, the passion was reciprocal. She sank her head upon my breast and wept; at length recovering in some measure from her excited feelings, she said:

'I have often thought of you since the two first evenings we met, and with a strange and unaccountable interest.'

I pressed her to my heart, and remained silent.

'And now,' she continued, 'I appear to have awakened to a sense of my feelings, and see that I love you!'

'Would to Heaven we had never met.'

And she laid her head upon my breast and wept aloud. I pressed my lips to her forehead and rushed from the house.

No man can realize the anguish I then felt. Thoroughly awake to my sinful conduct, yet was I powerless in my endeavors to withstand the impulse that drew me onward. We met again and again in secret, and I grew daily more miserable in the strange affection that was thus consuming us both. I took no *irretrievable* step; no, my own self-respect, as also Helen's prevented that; we were too wise to be so wicked. I would have welcomed death in this frame of mind. I was even strongly tempted to commit suicide, but my good angel prevented me. Oh, I cannot even now look back upon the frame of mind I then experienced without a shudder. Between the promptings of passion and the gnawings of conscience I was miserable indeed. How had I merited the trust of Milton, the free and generous Milton, how betrayed him in his deepest wealth Arnold in his utmost misery, was less the traitor than I felt at that time.

Ah! it was a just punishment.

I could scarcely sleep at night, and when I did so was constantly uttering incoherent sentences, or talking aloud upon strange subjects. This state of things had existed for nearly two months, when at length I felt a singular quiet growing about me; a gradual cessation of the burning love that I had felt for Helen. Day by day I became less and less affected by my passion. I now slept more soundly, felt more quiet, was happier while engaged in my studies at home, in short I found myself again strongly domesticated. It was unaccountable to me. I had no desire to meet Helen again as heretofore; the temptation was entirely removed.

One day I sat writing at my table when my wife having entered the study, drew her chair near me and commenced working upon her embroidery.

I continued my occupation until at length I felt a singular drowsiness come over me, and gradually I fell asleep. I might have remained in this situation for nearly half an hour, when I gradually awoke,

and looking round, beheld my wife. She had never appeared half so lovely to me before—my first impulse was to embrace her!

'Dearest,' said I, enquiringly, 'I have been sleeping?'

'Apparently,' said she.

'Why, it is singular,' said I; 'here was I just in the middle of an unfinished sentence.'

'You did, I believe, drop off very suddenly.'

The incident puzzled me amazingly. I was not in the habit of speaking during the hours of the day, and was entirely at a loss for my singular feeling.

'Your were fatigued, perhaps, dear,' said my wife.

I drew my chair near to her and said:

'Dearest, you have some secret to tell me. I know you have and can read it in your eyes—what is it? I drew her to my lap. I had never loved her more dearly than at that moment.

'Husband,' said she, 'I have been watching you with grief and pain for many weeks lest you should become crazed. Night after night have I lain awake hearing your incoherent sentences and strange talk, until I gathered that much of your ills were to be traced to the influence of magnetism. I studied long and earnestly to know what was my best course to pursue, and at last I resolved to study the secrets of the art, and if possible to devise a remedy for the unhappy state you were in. I did so, and from your own books and with the instruction I have recalled from your own practice before we were married. I at length acquired the art and—and—'

'Have magnetised me?'

'I have—do you forgive me?'

'Forgive you? I bless you for it. You have broken the chain that bound me. I was never so thoroughly happy as at this moment. And then to be relieved by you is such unexpected joy!

CHAPTER VIII.

As the principal object of this little book of confessions or rather more properly speaking, this expose of magnetism and its evil effects is designed and hoped to do some good in forewarning and thus forearming the public against this hydra-headed agency, I cannot refrain from again calling your serious attention to the evils that may be produced through its agency, and refer you for proof to the two last chapters. Ought its public practice to be tolerated, and in the hands too of designing and sensual men? not possessing the least degree of shame.

I took an early opportunity to impress upon young Milton the importance of exercising the power that he had attained, at least once in a while over Hele n.

'But you have told me,' said he, 'that this is not necessary after having once overcome her brain, you said the effect would remain until another should affect her.'

'Yes, yes. I did tell you so, but you know the peculiar manner in which we effected our object and I fear that some of my own will remains to the exclusion, in part, of yours.'

'I did not think of that.'

'Perhaps you had better operate once more.'

'I will.

'And thus assure yourself that your will is yet unshaken and your power remans.'

'My friend,' said he, drawing me close to him. 'I have long desired to speak to you upon this subject. Helen has been so singular in her conduct lately, particularly when asleep talking and even starting and crying out at times. Once or twice, I have heard her call your name while in such situations.'

'As I have feared,' said I.

'And you attribute this to the remnant of your influence still left in her mind since the second night you effected her.'

'I do, certainly.'

Here I was forced to tell a double falsehood to get poor Helen released from her unhappy situation. She to must have suffered as accutely as I had done and it gave me joy to believe that she would now be happy again.

'You will take my advice.' said I?

'I shall adopt it immediately.'

After the intervening of a few days, I met Milton again on change; he stopped me, pressing my hand and looking gratefully upon me.

'You are still my best friend.'

'What is your news?'

'I have done as you directed.'

'And with what success?'

'Complete.

'I rejoice to hear it,' said I, and so I had removed a load of trouble and unhappiness from my heart.

'I can never repay your kindness,' said he.

'Yes, by never alluding to the topic again.'

He pressed my hand warmly as we parted but how unworthy did I feel of that gratitude!

Happily, I had succeded in accomplishing my purpose without exposing in any way my error or criminating Helen to young Milton, while his wife was again happy as before, and wondering at the unaccountable (at least so to her) change in her feelings. Thus the most direful consequences of this affair was fortunately prevented not by my judgement but by mere chance as it was in that my wife should adopt the successful plan she put in execution. The story I have told you took place in one of the first circles of the town and had the the affair taken any other turn than it did, such developements would have taken place as would have made the blood run cold to relate, as it was, young Milton never suspected the circumstance which I have re-

lated, and which took place between Helen and myself, nor should I have ever alluded to it again, but for the hope of doing good by showing the evil influence of this agency. I should perhaps here say that another inducement for me not to keep it secret, or fear to wound the feelings of others by making it known, is that Mr. Milton himself has since deceased, while his wife, a young and handsome widow, with a fortune, resides near Bologna, in Italy.

In the public exhibition of mesmerism there is always more or less deception practiced. I have seen some most monstrous impositions mingled with the few facts that were made manifest to the audience. Many seeing some fairness and the truth resulting therefrom, or as I have before had occasion to say, finding that there is actually a secret agent, and of which they can take no cognizance through the medium of their senses, they are ready to admit all.

Dr. Colyer, who lectured in this country for some time, was a perfect monomaniac on this subject. Headstrong and impetuous, he ever defeated his own object, and finding he had but poorly succeeded in proving the truth of the art, in showing it naked to the public, he forthwith, like many practitioners of this time and at this wrt-ing, endeavored to invest it with a vast cloak of humbug, so that almost every sensible person became disgusted with the very name of Magnetism. All the truth that there is in the art can easily be explained on rational and philosophical principles, and any one who seeks to understand it will find that it soon ceases to be a mystery after a little examination and study as to its general principles.

Heaven protect us from the present use to which this agency is put. If you hear of a person who practices Mesmerism as a business, look well to his moral character before you trust him; see that he is what he should be before you place any confidence in him, and if you will take the advice of one who knows the tricks of the trade you won't trust to it at all. It is dangerous ground to tread upon; I think I have shown it in my 'confessions' thus far, and that the little good it may possibly do is far more than counterbalanced by the sea of trouble and misery it may give rise to, and that it is now creating from day to day.

I once asked a practitioner:

'How can you thus impose upon the public?'

'Oh, it's not imposition,' said he, 'its only experiment.'

'Rather a costly one sometimes,' said I.

'Am I not "in for it," regularly established?' said he; I take good care to do no mischief, and thus keep a clear conscience.'

There is too much of this; there are too many in this *trade*, and the public should be warned, that they may guard against imposition and the evils that it may lead to.

The life and adventures of its author and discoverer is somewhat significant of the principles of the art. We propose to give a very condensed sketch of it, purposely to show that the learned men of his time, as ripe scholars as those of the present day, made light of the whole matter. And we cannot refrain from saying that if any one should have succeeded or could have done so, it was the indefatigable and persevering Anthony Mesmer—a man whom no obstacle barred from carrying out his purpose and plan. A man who was obliged to fight inch by inch with the medical faculty all over the world, in order to establish what little truth there was in his art. Had not Mesmer, as many of his disciples have done since, endeavored to mystify the matter, by useless ceremonies and practices. But the disciples have followed the master.

Anthony Mesmer was born in Sweden. After attaining to the title of M. D., and having ballasted his ship with the florins of a wealthy young widow, who was but too happy to change her name for the title of 'Fran Doctorine,' he started on the voyage of life. He was strongly addicted to the study of the magnet and its powers, and what he termed human electricity. At length he stumbled on Animal Magnetism. He conducted all his experiments with the utmost secresy and mystery, thus seeking at the outset to clothe the art with a covering of humbug. After wandering about over a greater part of Europe, and endeavoring, but in vain, to make proselytes, we find him, in the year 1778, in Paris, where he was endeavoring to establish himself and his science, but in vain. Nevertheless, it appears on good authority that the French government offered him an annuity of twenty thousand livres for his secret. This offer Mesmer refused, and what was the reason he adduced for not accepting of it? *The fear that it might fall into the hands of those who would make an improper use of it!*

Very conscientious truly, and yet in less than a twelve month from the time he made this answer to the French government, he formed a secret society known by the name of Harmony, if our memory serves us right, at Versailles, when any one, after paying the sum of one hun-

dred Louis d'ors was admitted. Then, after taking a solemn oath to keep inviolate the secret, was admitted into the arcana of Animal Magnetism. This speculation is said to have afforded to Mesmer the respectable sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Animal Magnetism having now become the property of the public, was practiced by clergymen, chevaliers, &c. In the course of time, many not content with the revelations already made, overthrew the whole, and reared such a structure of falsehood and humbug as best suited their own fancy. Mesmer himself was obliged, for some of his sinful acts in the operations of his art, to seclude himself from society, and escaping to a small town, he died in obscurity.

CHAPTER IX.

I WAS knowing to the particulars of a most ingenious robbery committed through the agency of mesmerism. It is a story which I believe, for a wonder, never found its way into the papers, the party who was made to suffer on the occasion, being somewhat sensitive upon the point.

I was at the dinner-table of Howard's Hotel, Broadway, New York, sometime in the fall of 1842, where, sitting after dinner, and talking over the wine, there remained together three individuals, and directly opposite to me, so near that I could not choose but hear every word of their conversation. One of them, as I afterwards learned, was a lawyer of New York, another a merchant from the south, and the third a foreigner of what nation I knew not, for he spoke like a native.—Apparently, by chance the conversation turned upon Magnetism, which subject was then the rage in all the Atlantic cities, and in the mouth of every one fond of an argument for or against. I have noticed that this subject comes up periodically before the public, and actually rages once a year, say generally during the long winter evenings; perhaps I have been somewhat influenced in writing my confessions just at this time, that I might be in season to serve as a straw in the scale, at the present time.

'You deny, then, the fact of the mesmeric state,' said the little foreigner.

'In toto,' said the lawyer.

'Nothing but humbug,' said the merchant.

'You can't mean that.'

'Never was more in earnest.'

'Nor I,' said the lawyer.

'Now if I were in the habit of betting,' said the little foreigner with a great deal of sanctity, I would lay a wager that I could convince you as to the actual existence of the mesmeric state in two hours time.'

'Will you bet upon that,' said the merchant.

'Well, I don't like to bet—its against my principles. I don't care though, you are so particnlar in the case. I bet you, if you please, an hundred dollars that I will prove this to you in the time I have specified.

'Done,' said the merchant.

'Is it a bet?' asked the lawyer.

'Yes,' answered both.

'On this condition,' continued the little foreigner. 'We will all retire into a private room, and——stay,' said he, 'perhaps we can induce this gentleman to participate in the experiment,' alluding to me, 'he being a stranger to us all, shall be the judge, if he will so oblige us.'

'Will you honor us?' asked the lawyer.

Feeling an interest in the affair, particularly relative to the experiment, I agreed to the proposition, and we retired to a private room together. I was personally a stranger to each of the company; in fact we were all strangers to each other.

The stakes (two one hundred dollar bills) were produced and placed in the hands of the lawyer, who also was to be the subject for the operation, and the preliminaries being all arranged, the little man commenced.

He was very ingenions in his mode of proceedure, commencing by endeavoring to mystify his subject by his singular manipulations and mumbling talk, operating like one who knew well all the truth there was attached to the practice, and a vast deal of the sham also. I watched him shrewdly, for I understood the trade as well as he. A little more than an hour having passed in this manner, and just as we were getting pretty tired of the nonsense we were witnessing, the operator pronounced the lawyer to be asleep. And so he was.

'Are you convinced?' asked the foreigner.

'I will experiment first,' said the merchant.

And after satisfying himself that his companion was actually in an unnatural state, to say the least of it, he said:

'I have lost, that's a fact.'

'You acknowledge it?'

'I do.'

'The stakes are mine?'

'Decidedly,' said the merchant.

'And, Mr. Judge,' said the mesmerizer, you too award the palm to me?' This question he put to me apparently to make all sure.

'You have won the bet,' said I.

'I'm satisfied; now I'll awake him.'

He proceeded forthwith to awake him by the usual means while the merchant remarked to me rather soully,

'It's the devil's doings.'

'I think not,' said I, 'unless it be that the operator is after that school. I believe I can explain the matter to your satisfation.'

'Spare your breath—it can't be done.'

'Have patience,' said I, and I proceeded to show the cause and effect of the phenomenon as to its truth and deceptions.

'Place two bricks side by side,' said I, 'one shall be heated to its utmost capacity, while the other shall be as cold as it can be made to be. Place these together and the heated brick being the most active agent, will entirely expel the cold from the body it is joined to, and both will become of a like temperature.'

'What is the applicability of this, pray?'

'I will show you.'

'I see a flaw in your smiles already.'

'Perhaps so, but it will serve me for an illustration.'

'Two individuals are placed together—the will and power found in each is illustrated by the heat and cold. The one is instructed to become perfectly passive, him I show you in the cold brick—well—'

'But it is not well, I tell you I see an absurdity in this.'

'No matter—you will understand my purpose. I'll acknowledge it a flaw. Well, I say the other exercises his will and mind to its utmost capacity and tension; in him you have the heated brick. The temperature of the two will assimulate through the power of the nervo-vital fluid, and the dormant will, must be overcome by the active agent.'

'This is certainly reasonable.'

'It is all the philosophy of the art.'

'You understand it then!'

'I do thus far.'

'I have never seen the matter in this light before.'

'True, it is clothed in so much humbug and nonsense that all reasonable minds have become disgusted with it; but then there is some reason and philosophy in the art, nevertheless,' said I.

'By this time the lawer awoke from the trance, he had been in and was compelled to admit that he had been thrown into the unconcious state by the little foreigner, call it what he might.

'I have lost,' said the merchant to the lawyer.

'It appears so to me,' said he rubbing his eyes.

'You all acknowledge that I have won them?'

'Yes, yes,' was the response.

Whereupon the lawyer took the two bills from his vest pocket where he had placed them, and handed them both to the operator, saying: 'you have got that sum doubled at cheap cost.'

'A tribute to science,' said the disciple of Mesmer, who took an early moment in which to bow himself from the room.

I sat after his departure talking with the other two gentlemen, while the time slipped unconsciously by, and the gong sounded for tea. We seated together at the table, where we expected to meet our a mesmeric friend, proposing to induce him still farther to experiment for our gratification. I had drtermined to show him up, or rather charge him with the foolish mystery that he endeavored to cast around the art, and offer to magnetise him, without touching him, for I had already become convinced by observation that he was very susceptible. But when we come to look about for him, he was gone.

'Waiter?' said I.

'Sir.'

'Where is the gentleman who sat opposite at dinner? I mean the little man with large whiskers.'

'Gone, sir.'

'Oh, ho, left has he?'

'Yes, Sir.'

'Eastward?'

'No sir, by the Southern line.'

We were somewhat disappointed at this announcement, but talked

over the theme still, while we retired to the smoking room, and indeed most of the evening until we retired.

I had got fairly esconsed in my bed, pulled the clothes over my head to shut out the noise that ever rages till midnight in a New York hotel, when suddenly I heard a loud abrupt knock at my door. Throwing on a loose gown, I opened the door, wondering what could have brought me a waiter at this unusual hour. I cautiously opened the door almost suspecting foul play, so loud and impatiently was the summons made, when lo! my new friend the lawyer crowded himself into the room.

'Mr. S——.' said he in the utmost turpidation of mind. 'Sir I have lost my pocket-book. I have been robbed, sir, and as I have been with you through the most of the day I have come to consult you sir.'

'Are you sure you had your pocket book at dinner?'

'Certain of it.'

'And have not had occasion to take it from your pocket since?'

'Not once.'

'I mused for a moment and the truth flashed upon my mind at once. The little foreigner had not manipulated so strongly for nothing. Oh no, he had not only won the bet but stolen the lawyers pocket-book!

'Do you know that little foreigner?'

'He that magnetised me?'

'The same.'

'No, but by Heaven I have it—'

'What, the pocket-book?'

'No, no, but where it is gone to,' said he, 'here's a case—nearly a thousand dollars gone too.'

'He rang the bell violently, and demanded of the servant to send the landlord forthwith to my room.

'The polite and attentive Mr. H—, soon made his appearance.

'Sir,' said the lawyer, I have been robbed by a scoundrel in this house—that Mr. what-do-you call him, who has gone south with his d—d big whiskers.'

'Oh, the lecturer on mesmerism?' enquiringly put in Mr. H.

'Yes, yes he's the man.'

'I'm sorry that you did not make this known before,' said the landlord, 'for he has got a good start of you now, for the south.'

'Gone, yes I know it, but I'll catch him. I'll after him.'

Mr. H. offered all the consolation and advice in his power to the sufferer, and on the following morning the lawyer started off by the early train, for Philadelphia; but the robber had got a 'large 'start of him, and his pursuit proved fruitless. He traced him to Pittsburg, but there he was at a loss how much farther to proceed, and before I left the city, he returned to the hotel empty handed, or rather without any news of the little scoundrel. He bore his loss manfully, and well he might, for he was a very wealthy man.

CHAPTER X.

About six months subsequent to this date of the theft or robbing that I have just related, I was passing a few weeks in New Orleans on business; the city of Creoles and masquerade balls. I happened to step in one day at the supreme court, where I found a case was trying in which the plaintiff was a highly respectable and wealthy, citizen; the defendant was a little Frenchman named Perrot, a public lecturer.

The charges were just being read to the court as I entered and sat forth, that whereas the prisoner had seduced the plaintiff's wife from his bed and board, and also taking with her through the connivance of the said Perrot, certain sums of money, valuable articles etc. In short to place the whole matter in a nut-shell, he had seduced an honest woman to elope with him, and to take from her lawful husband certain articles of value and sums of money.

The court put the usual questions through the clerk.

'Prisoner at the bar, are you guilty or not guilty ?'

'Not Guilty,' said the little Frenchman.

'As soon as he had spoken, I at once recognized the mesmeric lecturer who had robbed the lawyer at Howard's hotel.

'Brought up at last,' thought I.

The case interested me so much, that I attended the court through the whole trial.

It appears that Perrot resorted to New Orleans, as a good field for his operations, immediately after leaving Now York. His first plan was to commence a series of lectures upon mesmerism, which he followed up very successfully, as it regarded pecuniary profits. He had become acquainted by some means, in the family of the plaintiff, and through the agency of the power of magnetism, succeeded in alienating the affections of his victim, and in accomplishing his purpose as set forth in the indictment. Being pursued, he was caught, and forthwith brought to justice.

I called upon the plaintiff and related to him that which I have told to the reader relative to the robber at Howard's hotel, and also told him that I was ready to swear to the identity of Perrot, and although I did not wish to enter into any prosecution, still if it was necessary to call in question the former character of the prisoner, I was quite ready and willing to give my evidence to that point.

Perrot had been enabled through his wealth which was of no mean character in amount, although obtained in the vilest manner, to engage the first and best counsel, and in the absence of certain necessary evidence in the case, the plaintiff was very likely to loose the cause. The wife had not as yet been found, and herein lay an important item in the show of evidence.

The case stood thus, when I spoke with the counsel who the next day asked permission of the court to introduce evidence showing the former character of Perrot. The court ruled the matter as admissible, notwithstanding the learned efforts of the opposite counsel to defeat it. In fact Perrot had adduced evidence as to his good character at the outset. I was called to the stand.

I stated, as it had occurred, the story and particulars of the robbery at New York, and I did not spare the Frenchman in relating every minutia that I thought might show his true character; and when I left the stand, I could see by the expression in the countenances of the jurors, that they had made up their mind, and that the mesmerizer would get justice done him.

The counsel for the plaintiff summed up the evidence to the jury in behalf of his client in a few words, telling them that the case was too plain to them, for him to go into details. Their minds were already made up, and the evidence admitted.

In the due course of procedure, the judge pronounced these words:

Jaques Perrot, the jury find you guilty of the several charges alledged against you, and as laid down in the indictment.

And the little disciple of Mesmer was sentenced to a lodging in the States prison at the State's expense, for a series of years, and there he is still serving an apprenticeship to the trade of stone-cutter, in a *stone* establishment.

Thus ended my acquaintance with Jaques Perrot.

CHAPTER XI.

Such is the wickedness this secret agent is often made the instrument to accomplish—such the class into whose hands this power of Magnetism has too often fallen. I met not long after with my friend the lawyer, who had lost his money by Perrot. I told him the story of the Mesmeriser's conviction, and he declared that he was content to father his loss, so that the rascal was brought to justice. I asked him what he now thought of Mesmerism? he replied:

'Its *powers* are incontrovertbile.'

I understood the remark, for the lawyer had experienced a loss of about nine hundred and fifty dollars.

The champion of Magnetism will say, perhaps, what does all this signify? Simply, that there are bad men in every occupation and profession.

Very true; but I relate these examples now to show you to what base use it may be made subservient, and what a successful agent it has proved in the hands of rogues. These examples will serve those

who read them as a warning to them against imposition in a like case. I ask again, is not an agent that is so capable of abuse, and whose powers are so perverted, a dangerous one?

A case strikes me at this very moment of a practitioner in this city, whose apparent standing in the community should place him above suspicion, and yet that man is guilty to our certain knowledge. It may have been the peculiar influence of this singular agency that has seduced him to evil: but evil he is, and it cannot be denied. I will relate one case in which innocent trust has been betrayed, and then I think I shall have said enough to convince those who have read thus far this little expose, by one who knows the tricks of the art, that Magnetism, or rather the practice of it, should no longer be tolerated, unless in certain cases, and then in proper hands.

A young female, a native of one of our manufacturing towns in this vicinity, came to the city, seriously affected by a nervous complaint, and by the advice of her friends resolved to adopt a course of Mesmeric treatment for her complaint. She accordingly placed herself in the hands of a practitioner. The application proved very successful, and in the course of a few weeks she was entirely cured of her illness, whether through the agency entirely of Mesmerism or otherwise I cannot say. The female was far from home; the operator knew this; the power of Mesmerism had had the usual effect to cause her to place all confidence in him. She was entirely in his power, and the black-hearted villain betrayed her.

What course is there left for her to adopt? But one, if justice is to be done; and that is, to make public the injustice and the villainy of her betrayer. But in so doing, she would have to encounter the scorn of the world, whose finger of contempt would be pointed at her. She rather mourns over her misfortune in secret than thus expose her own shame.

This is a single case, but by no means a solitary one.

I contend that it is the natural consequences of the practice of Mes-

merism to lead to results like this and even worse than any I have instanced. Its practice must inevitably give life to all the latent desires in the naturally passionate heart and disposition of man. The trust and confidence, aye, and affection too, that it gives birth to, I have shown by example is fatal to the peace of mind of the subject, and oftentimes to that of the operator, unless he be of a hardened heart, and then worse consequences ensure.

The practice of Mesmerism was carried to such extent in France at one time, and its deleterious effects became so manifest, that the further practice of it was forbidden by law, and very justly too, for even those scarcely beyond the age of childhood had assumed its powers, while yet so young as not to be able to understand its principles, and thus oftentimes serious mischief was done. We may reasonably fear the approach of a like trouble with us, and would it not be preferable to check the evil in its infancy? We have already sufficient example of its evil consequences.

A few cases of iniquity as connected with the practice of Mesmerism, have lately come before the courts of our commonwealth, and one in particular of recent date. The expose of its pernicious promptings in the cases alluded to, will no doubt have a beneficial effect upon the mind of the community, and it is earnestly to be hoped that public opinion will at length put down the practice of it, and if necessary, that the law will prohibit its public exhibition.

How many domestic circles have been rendered miserable through its agency. How many tender hearts blighted and deserted. How many acts of depravity and heinous crimes may be traced to its secret influence. Have I not then done justice, and justice only, in making public my opinion, after having at least a general experience in the practice, after being introduced by the knowing ones into the secrets of the art?

Those acquainted with the first principles of Magnetism can easily prove the positions laid down by us, and thus satisfy themselves as to their truth or otherwise, and it will not require a very acute or par-

THE END.

ticularly able mind to detect the evils lying beneath the smooth outside the practice offers. Consider who are the practitioners of the art at the present time; see what characters those persons are possessed of, and you can judge in what estimate the wise who understand the science hold it by their studiously avoiding its practice.

I am sure that those who have had the patience to read these few pages to the end, will at least be warned against the vice to be feared as concealed beneath the cloak of Magnetism. And should they serve to undeceive but one, to effectually forwarn but one, and thus save from the bitter cup of experience, their object will have been accomplished.

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