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A letter to Col. Wm. L. Stone

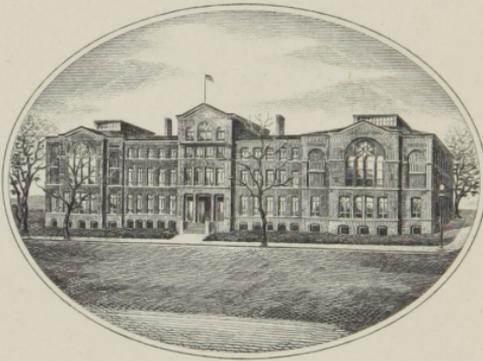
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A

LETTER TO COL. WM. L. STONE,

OF NEW YORK,

ON THE FACTS RELATED IN HIS

LETTER TO DR. BRIGHAM,

AND A PLAIN

REFUTATION OF DURANT'S EXPOSITION

OF

ANIMAL MAGNETISM, &c.

BY CHARLES POYEN.

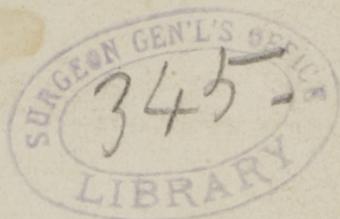
WITH

REMARKS ON THE MANNER IN WHICH THE CLAIMS OF

ANIMAL MAGNETISM SHOULD BE MET AND

DISCUSSED.

BY A MEMBER OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BENCH.



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THE reader will probably notice that the philosophical views expressed in my letter to Col. Stone, about the mode of mental communication between the magnetiser and the magnetised person, somewhat resemble what Mr Durant, the late glorious exploder of animal magnetism, calls "his theory." I must confess that such a resemblance exists; Mr Durant will not fail, therefore, to charge me with plagiarism; he will probably think that I have robbed him of the "beautiful product of his genius." But I would affirm here, that if any one has robbed the "theory" at all, Mr Durant is the only robber. What he boldly pretends to be his invention, has been for years professed and published in every possible shape by the German and French writers on animal magnetism. I have myself adopted the main parts of this theory ever since I have paid a serious attention to the matter; I have invariably devoted two hours and more to explaining it to my classes, wherever I had an opportunity of giving my whole course of lectures. I have no doubt, therefore, that Mr Durant has either read or heard

about it ; but as he seems to regard every one besides himself as a fool, he does not hesitate in presenting his doctrine as a " creation of his own," persuaded as he is that nobody will detect the fraud. We intend, in some of the following pages, to offer a long extract from Dr Rostan's Memoir concerning this theory. Those who have read Mr Durant will see, on perusing that extract, what an enormous difference there is between a truly scientific man and an ignorant scribbler, who boldly assumes the privilege of treating on matters so far above and beyond his capacity.

I will add a word more. My letter to Col. Stone was prepared, and I had already lectured most of its contents before my class in Salem, even before I had heard of Mr Durant's book. Those who have attended those lectures, may testify to the truth of what I now advance.

C. P.

LETTER TO COL. STONE.

SALEM, MASS. OCT. 9, 1837.

To Col. W. L. Stone, of New York.

SIR.—You are aware that the undersigned has been engaged, for some time past, in lecturing upon the “*science of Animal Magnetism*, in reference to which you have lately published an interesting narrative of facts. I trust, therefore, that you will not be surprised at the liberty I take of thus addressing you on the same subject. In my well known capacity as a professor of Animal Magnetism, I owe it to the cause of truth and of general information to communicate to the reading community, the remarks which the facts contained in your above mentioned publication have suggested to me. I am, moreover, strongly induced to do it from the circumstance that you have particularly alluded to me, and I must confess, in no flattering terms, by any means; some of your allusions deserve a frank answer from my part. Do not believe, however, that I shall indulge in any harsh impulse, and make this letter a personal concern! I hope, on the contrary that you will find me cool and respectful throughout my communication with you.

Feeling, as I do, a lively interest in the progress of magnetism in this country, looking with an anxious, but impartial eye upon every thing that is written upon it, I have read with much satisfaction your letter to Dr Brigham; I believe it has contributed more than any thing hitherto done, to prepare the mind of a great many to a candid investigation of the matter; and on that account, it will mark in the history of the deve-

lopment of the “*science*” in this country ! But, sir, like every thing else that emanates from man’s hands, it presents, to my mind, some defects which I beg leave to signalize here, for enabling people to have a more clear and correct understanding of the matter upon which you write.

Your pamphlet is entitled, “ A Letter on Animal Magnetism ;” and yet it appeared to me, on perusing it, that your plan was not to ascertain the reality of the peculiar agent or principle called Animal Magnetism. The experiments made by you on Miss Brackett, seem not to have been intended to throw any light upon the interesting question, viz. “ *whether one human being can exercise an influence over another, by the sole force of his will.*” Such a power undoubtedly exists, and it properly constitutes what has been termed animal magnetism. In the opinion of all truly philosophic men, it has always been, and is still considered, the most profound and important point of the whole subject. It appears, sir, that you were not aware of this fact, and I regret very much that in your interview with Dr Capron’s patient, you did not direct your attention towards eliciting some phenomena with the view of demonstrating the reality of the power in question. Such results, published by you, would have proved not only gratifying to the marvellousness of your readers, but also useful to the science of the psychological constitution of man. And I know, that Miss B. affords ample means for establishing the point alluded to, or at least substantiating what has already been observed and written upon it. I have myself, seen her twice under the influence of Dr Capron and Mr Ame. J. Potter, of Providence ; I have found that she was exceedingly sensible to the action of the will, and still more so to the approach of the magnetiser’s fingers towards her hands and head, even at the distance of several inches. The power of the will, is in my opinion the best ascertained of all the magnetic phenomena ! Out of twenty somnambulists, eighteen at least, are submitted to it in a very remarkable degree.

The extraordinary phenomena produced by that influence evidently demonstrate the existence in man, of a principle hitherto unknown, and of a force which had not yet been noticed and exercised ; through them, animal magnetism is raised to the rank of positive science, as well as physiology, pathology and mental philosophy. I am aware that you deny this point ; it is surely because you have not yet witnessed and carefully studied the effects produced by the will, or the cerebral force of man !

Your sole object seems to have been to satisfy yourself about the faculty of *Clairvoyance*, or the power of seeing, the eyes remaining perfectly closed, even bandaged. The experiments tried by you, for that purpose, were ingenious and well conducted, considering that you had no experience at all in the matter you were investigating ; every candid reader will acknowledge that the results obtained by you are exceedingly interesting ; but again, sir, they prove nothing so far as the magnetic influence is concerned. The class of phenomena described in your pamphlet were already known to every well read man, as a characteristic feature of the ecstatic state, of natural somnambulism and certain cases of catalepsy and hysteria.

The “ possessed nuns” (so called) of the convent of Loudun, in 1642, the French prophets or *trembleurs des Cerenes*, the *Convulsionnaires de St. Medard*, and other ecstatic persons ; the cataleptic patients of Drs Petetin, of Lyons, of Barbier of Cantal, and a crowd of other individuals affected with similar nervous disorders (see *Rapports et discussions, de l'Academie de Medecine sur le Magnetisme, publiés avec des notes explicatives, par M. P. Foissac, &c.* ; also, *Traité du Somnambulisme, par Alex. Bertrand*) had offered innumerable instances of the faculty of seeing even through what we call “ *opaque bodies*,” and their eyes remaining shut. The same power has been, on several occasions, observed in this country, particularly in the well known cases of the Springfield and Hartford somnambulist, in the cataleptic woman of

Uxbridge, Mass., who has been sometime under the care of Dr Robbins, and was carefully examined by Dr Jem. Parsons of Providence, and other distinguished individuals ! There is now in the town of Chesterfield, N. H., a natural somnambulist, whose *clairvoyance* is truly astonishing so far as I can judge from what I have been told by some very respectable eye witnesses.

The faculty of seeing at a great distance and through unusual ways, is likewise a well established fact in some parts of Scotland, under the name of "*second sight.*" A remarkable instance of the kind was personally observed in London, and related to me by Dr S. G. Howe, director of the Institution for the Blind, whom no one acquainted with him, will suspect of credulity.

I do not pretend, I beg you to understand, that magnetic or artificial somnambulists do not possess the faculty of clairvoyance ; far from it ; I am fully convinced that some of them have it in a very extraordinary degree, although it is liable to be impaired, and even entirely lost, under certain circumstances, which I need not to mention here. I have seen a number of that species of somnambulists who could see objects and read several lines through the top of their head, their forehead, or the pit of their stomach ; there could be no collusion or deception in the case, as the eyes were either kept shut by the fingers of another person, or very carefully bandaged. I have no doubt, therefore, that some of those who are thrown into the state of somnambulism by a magnetic operation possess the faculty of clairvoyance ; I mean to say only that this faculty, however remarkable it may be, does not prove that one human being can exercise a mental influence over another through a peculiar means of communication, a fluid, if you please to call it so, moved and directed by the will. The faculty of clairvoyance is a natural gift ; it is spontaneous and springs from certain peculiarities of organization belonging exclusively to the magnetised person ; it cannot be given or communicated by the magnetiser, how-

ever great the energy and activity of his will may be, to a somnambulist who does not possess it naturally. Some authors pretend that this faculty derives from a great accumulation of the vital fluid in the optic nerve, which gives an extraordinary delicacy and energy to the whole organ of sight; others think that it is exercised through the medium of a peculiar fluid, more subtle, nice, and powerful than common light, spread throughout the universe and penetrating all bodies of nature, however opaque they may appear to be to our ordinary means of vision. It is not my object to discuss here the value of these opinions. I will say only that comparatively *a few* somnambulists have the gift of clairvoyance, and that a magnetiser cannot impart it to those who have been denied it by nature.

I now proceed to a few remarks on the character of the facts related in your letter to Dr Brigham. I have already said that every candid reader can but find them exceedingly interesting; yet, I did not intend to say that they prove in a conclusive manner the reality of the faculty of clairvoyance, "*so far as the power of seeing at a great distance, is concerned;*" it is on the contrary, my opinion, that Miss Brackett's answers to your questions, although surprisingly correct, did not demonstrate in the least, that she actually "*saw* the various particulars described by you, in a place situated two hundred miles from her!" How can you account for the correctness of her answers? will you say,—Do you suppose that I meant to deceive? not at all.—Do you suppose there was connivance between us? neither! I am going presently to tell you how I explain all this. It is a fact well established by the daily observation of all magnetisers, both of Europe and America, that from the moment a person is put into somnambulism, he becomes capable of appreciating correctly and seizing the thoughts, the will, and feelings, not only of his magnetiser, but also of those who are put in close communication with him. This surprising and very interesting mode of knowledge is doubtless imparted to the somnambulist

through an emanation of some kind, (call it, if you please, the spirit, the magnetic or vital fluid) which springs from the brain of the two parties and thus forms about them a peculiar atmosphere, the fluctuations or movements of which vary according to the direction given by the organ from which the fluid originates. The brain of the magnetiser or of the person placed in communication, is the active instrument or apparatus, every operation of which necessarily impresses a new movement and direction to the fluid, which movement is more or less clearly felt by the corresponding analogous organ, viz. the brain of the somnambulist, and thus creates herein the same modifications as those which exist in the organ of the other party. Such modifications constitute what we call thought, reasoning, &c. &c.

These views, sir, do not belong to me exclusively ; I have no claim on their discovery or invention ; I adopt them because they appear rational and bear some analogy with certain laws already known of the electric and galvanic phenomena. I adopt them besides, because they have been sanctioned and openly professed by men of great intellect and high scientific attainments, as the German physiologists, Autenrieth and Reil, the celebrated de Humbolt, and most of the eminent writers on animal magnetism. I will quote here a few lines from a distinguished author whose name can but have a great weight in the mind of every well informed man. After describing the manner in which the nervous atmosphere is formed, Dr Rostan (see his *Essay on Animal Magnetism*, in the eighth volume of the *Dictionnaire de Medecine*,) continues thus, “ The *active* nervous atmosphere of the magnetiser mingles with the *passive* nervous atmosphere of the magnetised person ; this one is, thereby, influenced in such a manner that his power of attention is momentarily abolished ; and both, the impressions which he receives inwardly and those that are transmitted to him by the magnetiser, resort to his brain through another channel.”

“ The nervous agent possesses, like caloric, the faculty of penetrating through solid bodies ; a faculty which is, doubtless,

limited ; but can satisfactorily explain how somnambulists, may be influenced through partitions, walls, doors, &c. also it accounts for their perceptions of the savourous and odorous qualities, through certain bodies, which in the natural state cannot be penetrated by those particles. The innumerable facts which prove in an indisputable manner that the magnetic action can be exercised through solid bodies, and that the presence of those bodies does not prevent clairvoyance, compel us to admit that the nervous or magnetical agent must pass through them. This is no more astonishing than light passing through diaphane or transparent substances, electricity passing through the conductive bodies and caloric penetrating all sorts of bodies. The mingling of the two nervous atmospheres affords a very clear explanation of the communication of the *wish* and *will*, even of the thoughts of the magnetiser to the magnetised person. The wish and will, being “*actions* of the brain, this organ transmits them to the circumference of the body through the channel of the nerves, and when the two nervous atmospheres happen to meet each other, they are so much identified as to form but one ; both individuals become one only ; they feel and think together ; but one of them (the somnambulist) is constantly under the dependence of the other, while in the magnetic state.”

In the natural state we are not capable of feeling the fluid above mentioned and experiencing its various movements, so as to become conscious of it ; it is surely because in the natural state the vital energy is thrown too much outwardly ; the life of relation is then predominant and constantly keeps our power of attention and feeling upon external objects ! But through the profound change determined in the functions of the nervous system, during the state of somnambulism, catalepsy, or ecstasy, we are enabled to hold, with a being organized as we are, a communication more or less perfect, according, of course, to the respective inward organic dispositions and capacity of the two parties. Indeed somnambulism and ecstasy are particularly characterized by a suspension,

for the time being, of the life of relation, whereas an inward sense, deriving from a great concentration of the vital energy, seems to be developed.

It is not, Sir, the object of this letter to expose the philosophy of animal magnetism ; I content myself with setting down in general terms, only such principles as are needed for a correct apprehension of my critical remarks. Whether my theory be rational or not, people will judge ! for myself, I care but little about it ! I wish only to establish facts, and to give them their proper value. Now, I hold it to be a well-authenticated fact, that the will and thought can be communicated without the aid of language or sign, whatever the medium of that communication may be ; out of fifty somnambulists, you will find upwards of forty who will present this order of phenomena to a certain degree ! I have seen, produced and read innumerable instances of it ; therefore, I believe it as much as my own existence ; I believe it, also, because I can account for it *through philosophical principles, as I have above briefly stated.* On the contrary, the faculty of seeing things that are transpiring at a great distance, "*in cities, for instance, where the somnambulist never was in his life, the situation and peculiar distribution of which he does not know and perhaps never read about,*" is wholly incomprehensible, and is not, indeed, substantiated by good authority ; I have never observed nor ever read any instance of it in the scientific authors who have written upon animal magnetism and somnambulism. I easily conceive and am willing to admit, that certain somnambulists and ecstatic persons have been able to see objects at a distance, but it was "*in places where they had been, and the exact situation of which they previously knew ;*" they had, thus, the means of directing their faculty of vision through the country, and take cognizance of things and persons more or less accurately, according to the extent of this power in them. But it is totally inconceivable, that they can see equally well in places, about which they have no previous correct impression in their

mind ! Suppose yourself a somnambulist, gifted with a high degree of clairvoyance. How could you distinguish one particular house or street out of the immense variety of streets and houses which form the cities of Paris, London, New York, &c., if you have never been in those places, or acquired by reading a perfect idea of them ?

I am perfectly aware that numerous facts, exactly similar to those related in your pamphlet, have been observed by other gentlemen in the city of Providence and other places ; but for all of them I can account in the same way ; viz. through the faculty that somnambulists possess of comprehending the thoughts and feelings of those who are put in close communication with them ;—in other words, of experiencing in their brain the modifications existing in the same organ of the other party. This being the most rational and scientific mode for explaining the above-mentioned pretended phenomena of clairvoyance, I adopt it sooner than to believe that they can see in the wonderful and wholly inexplicable manner of which we have been speaking.

I will presently quote a few instances of the communication of thought and of the influence of the will, which are very well calculated to illustrate the correctness of my views, — and are not less wonderful and conclusive than those described in your narrative.

“ The phenomena of the communication of thought and of the influence of the will were the first that were observed by the Marquis of Puysegur, when he discovered the state of somnambulism. In the very interesting letter written by him to some friends of his, immediately after witnessing those singular effects in the first somnambulist he had, he says, ‘ I obliged him (Victor) to move a great deal on his chair, as though he was dancing by a tune, which by singing *mentally only, I caused him to repeat aloud.*’ ”

Fournier, in his *Essai* on the probabilities of Magnetic Somnambulism, dwells principally on this phenomenon, as being the most common and important. He says, page 48,

that “*he saw* a somnambulist, whom he willed to get up and take a hat laying on the table in the entry, and to put it on the head of a certain person of the company.” I did not speak a word, says he, but only made a sign which traced out the line which I wish the somnambulist to follow. I must observe that he had a bandage over his eyes all the time ; he rose from his chair, followed the direction indicated with my finger, approached the table and took the hat which was laying on it, among many other objects, and put it on the head of the very person I meant.

I might quote a large number of such facts from foreign authors on magnetism, of undoubted veracity and merit ; but I prefer to refer to some of the same description, which have occurred in this country, as being probably more interesting and trustworthy to the American reader.

At one of my exhibitions in Pawtucket, some nine months ago, a medical gentlemen from Providence handed to me a bit of paper, upon which this sentence was written : “ Ask *mentally* to the somnambulist how far it is from Pawtucket to Providence.” I put the question to her, without either a sign made or a word spoken : after some effort of attention, she answered distinctly, “ four miles from one bridge to the other,” which is the correct distance.

At another exhibition in Boston, I was requested by an eminent gentlemen then present, to “ will the somnambulist to rise from the sofa upon which she was sitting, and to go and take another seat ;” I stood about twelve feet from her, and mentally put her the command. She shook her head negatively, as though she was refusing to do something. I then asked her why she did shake her head so : “ You want me to move from my seat ; I don’t want to.” In reference to this fact, Mr William Jenks of Boston, who had witnessed it, says in an article inserted by him in the Recorder of Feb. 17, 1837, “ Farther and more strange to our experience, while the eyes of the somnambule continue closely shut (the experiments have been tried too with bandaged eyes,) and while no

‘gesture or sound is used,’ I saw the ‘magnetiser’ ask the ‘magnetised’ a question, (suggested on the spot, and secretly by a bystander,) and heard the ‘magnetisee’ answer audibly and correctly.”

A scientific gentleman, who attended the experiments performed in Pawtucket by the Rev. Mr Daniel Greene, told me that at his written request, Mr Greene willed “that a piece of apple, which he held in his hand, would become a chestnut burr for the somnambulist.” He, in consequence, handed it to her, and immediately she began to scratch her hand and complain that it was full of prickles. “What is the cause of it?” “Why, you give me a chestnut burr.” Mr Greene, it is well known, has made himself celebrated in Rhode Island for the wonderful power that he exercises by his will only upon his patients.

Mr George Wellmarth of Taunton, related to me the following admirable instance of communication of thought that occurred under his own operation. He was requested by a witness to “will his somnambulist to quote Byron’s well known song, the ‘Isles of Greece.’” Mr Wellmarth *mentally* pronounced the first verse, and Mr Andros,* the somnambulist, starting from the last words repeated by the magnetiser, recited the whole song. Mr Wellmarth “willed him again to recite another passage; he said that he did not know it by heart, but that he knew where it was in the book, and would show it to him. Indeed, the somnambulist got up, walked towards the library, with his eyes perfectly shut, took the volume, and after looking over it awhile, pointed out the precise verses that had been indicated to him.”

Innumerable instances of the same kind might be offered. I will mention a few more; the two following took place last night, in presence of forty of the most respectable citizens of the city of Salem, Mass. A young lady of the place was put into the magnetic sleep by a member of my class, Dr Fisk, a surgeon dentist. “A tumbler of water was presented to the

* An intelligent and amiable student in medicine, at Taunton, Mass.

operator, with the 'written request that he would turn the liquid into brandy for the somnambulist.' The tumbler was, in consequence, handed to her; she drank some of it; and being asked what it was, she exclaimed apparently in displeasure, '*it is rum.*' A moment afterwards, the magnetiser was again requested to spill a little of the water upon her hand, willing it to be '*hot rum.*' So he did, and immediately the somnambulist began to move her hands and wipe them against her gown. Being asked what was the matter, she said that some hot rum had been dropped on her hands."

A person under my care, being in the magnetic sleep, a medical gentleman passed me ten or twelve grains of aloes, contained in a paper, and requested me by writing to "will it to be sugar for the somnambulist." Aloes is known to be an exceedingly bitter drastic. The somnambulist tasted it, and exclaimed, "it is beautiful." I asked her what it was. "Confectionary sugar," said she, and then swallowed a tongue full of it, with apparently much pleasure. But soon the medicine acted on her stomach, and she became quite sick.

On another evening, her eyes being blindfolded, a bunch of white grapes was held over her forehead by a gentleman of the company. I asked her what it was. "It is a bunch of white fruit," said she. "Well, what is the name of it?" "I do not know; I cannot remember it." Then I looked at her, and mentally articulated the word "*grape,*" willing her to repeat it. Instantly she shook her head, signifying that she understood me, and repeated aloud, "it is a bunch of grapes."

The faculty of understanding the thoughts and will of those who came in communication with them, was likewise remarkably developed in the ecstatic somnambulists, 1st. the "possessed nuns" of Loudun, the French Prophets or Shakers of the Cevennes, the Convulsionnaires de St. Medard, &c. This phenomenon was so common and striking, that it was

considered as the first proof of the reality of the possession, in case of the ecstatic nuns of Loudun. “*They could reveal the most secret thoughts.*” These are the very words used in the Juridic informations concerning that celebrated affair. Even some of the possessed persons had the extraordinary gift of understanding all languages. Although ignorant, they could answer correctly questions, in Latin, Greek, German, &c. even in the dialect of some tribe, which one of the visitors had learned during a residence in America. This last fact proves indisputably, that during the very peculiar state of the nervous system, caused by religious exaltation, or the magnetic operation, the human brain acquires the power of comprehending the thought and the will, in whatever language it is expressed. I had a somnambulist under my care in this country, who could obey my volitions, even when I mentally expressed them in French; although she did not know a word of that language. Indeed, the act of thinking and willing is performed every where in the same manner by the brain, however different the languages of men are; it is the thought and the will that the somnambulist seizes, and not the words mentally pronounced.

Now, Sir, from the foregoing facts, and a thousand others of the same nature, which it would be too long to quote, I will propose to you this question. If such a “*perfect sympathy*” can be established between the brain of a somnambulist and that of another individual, so as to enable the former to receive in his own mind the impressions and ideas which are formed in the mind of the latter, — is it not more rational to think that Miss Brackett saw through your mental influence, the pictures that adorn your parlor, rather than to admit that she went in spirit to New York, and saw them there with her immaterial eye?

That which confirms my opinion on this point is, that Miss Brackett can be very easily influenced by the mind of those

who are put in direct communication with her. Besides various proofs of the power of his "will over this somnambulist," afforded to me by Dr Capron, I will quote a striking instance which came under my personal observation. This fact shows that Miss Brackett is capable of apprehending the thought, not only of her magnetiser, but also of any one else put in communication with her. One afternoon, while Miss Brackett was under the magnetic influence, Mr A. Potter of Providence, and myself stepped into the room and sat at some distance from the somnambulist; I must state that she did not expect our arrival, and that Mr Potter had never seen her before. After some moments had elapsed, Mr Potter asked Dr Capron whether he had ever tried any experiments on his patient by his *will alone*. The Doctor said he had not, and did not know whether such experiments would succeed in her case. Mr Potter then begged to be put in communication with the somnambulist, to which Dr Capron readily assented. Mr Potter seated himself near Miss Brackett, and, *without uttering a word*, presented to her a small slice of an apple. She took it with both hands, as though it was something heavy, and, on tasting it, said that it was a *slice of melon*. Mr Potter had willed it to be so. He took back the same piece of apple from Miss Brackett's hands, and, without speaking a word, by a mere action of his mind, turned it for the somnambulist into four or five different articles in the space of two minutes. There could be no deception in the case, as Mr Potter had never before seen Miss Brackett, and as experiments of this kind had never yet been tried on this somnambulist. How did Miss Brackett know the taste that Mr Potter meant to give to the slice of apple? She must necessarily have been actually influenced by the action of his brain; she must have apprehended his thoughts. Such is, indeed, the clearness of a somnambulist's mind on some occasions, that he will seize with a wonderful accuracy the most complicated image or impression existing in the

mind of the person in communication.* The well authenticated facts I have quoted in the preceding pages, demonstrate forcibly this point,

Now, was it more difficult for Miss Brackett to see your pictures through the influence of your mind, than to apprehend so correctly, and at the very first attempt, Mr Potter's will? Are not both instances alike? Are they not equally surprising? You must remember, indeed, that those pictures were engraved on your brain, and that in directing the somnambulist to look at them and take them down, the one after the other, they presented themselves still more vividly and distinctly to your mind. As you already felt some interest in Miss Brackett, you "*wished* very much that she could see them:" therefore, their impression was carried forth into your nervous atmosphere, mingled with the somnambulist's atmosphere, and thus transmitted to her brain or thinking and imaginingsm organ.

You will probably observe, that Miss Brackett mentioned several particulars which had no trace at all in your mind, and which, on inquiry, you found to be correct. For instance, in walking through the "*College Green*," she remarked that "there was one of the trees which was decaying, and should be cut down and taken away." She also said, that "there was nobody living now in the first wing of the college, that the house was empty," &c. I can assure you, Sir, that these particulars were mere suggestions of Miss Brackett's imagination, and do not prove that she actually "*saw*" the objects mentioned by her. I have carefully observed a large number of somnambulists; I have read also a

* A writer in the Baltimore Commercial Transcript, Oct. 14, 1837, says: 'That in many cases of somnambulism (he had seen twenty, at different periods,) the very ideas, no matter how erroneous, of the magnetisers, were imbibed and expressed by the subjects, leaving no doubt of the influence possessed by the operator, who certainly transmitted his very thoughts, — how? I cannot say, but I know the fact. One I have seen daily for several years in that state, hardly under the influence of the magnetiser, but still wandering to subjects that had been for years his study, and repeating verbatim his theories.'

great deal about the peculiarities of mind during that state. From my reading and personal observations, I have acquired the conviction that even the most lucid somnambulists, are often dupes of their own imagination, exactly as we are, all of us, of our dreams during the natural sleep. For this we can easily account, when we know that somnambulists experience the same effects, both mental and physical, from a falsehood as from a reality. They are liable to be so completely deluded, that it is sometimes very difficult for the magnetiser to make them become conscious of their errors. Being thus mentally constituted, their faculties of attention are entirely absorbed by the object which occupies them, whether true or not. They feel, speak, and act, and take as animated a part in a visionary scene as though it was real. But that which characterizes the dreams or visions of somnambulists, is the perfect consistency existing between the various parts of them. It is surprising to see how minute they are, how careful to place each particular in its proper place.

This being the case, you understand that we should be very attentive to distinguish, in the description and narration of a somnambulist, what is the mere product of imagination, and what is an actual fact of clairvoyance, in regard either to external things upon which their attention is directed, or to internal impressions resulting from modifications of their own system! I now return to Miss B.'s case. Imagining or dreaming *from the impulse* she had received from your mind, that she was really walking through an avenue of trees, she noticed, *as a person would do in the natural state*, that one of those trees was decaying and should be taken away! A somnambulist *feels* indeed, that among a great many trees forming an avenue, it would be extraordinary that one of them at least should not be older than the other, and even injured in some of its parts; he knows that our large cities are full of mischievous fellows, always ready to mar, tear and destroy every thing they meet in the streets or on

public places. All these circumstances presented themselves at once to Miss Brackett's mind, connected with the idea of the green. It is not surprising therefore, that she made a remark which coincided with what was "*a fact.*" But although correct, it is not sufficient to convince me that she saw the trees, as her remark might have been only a "happy guess." The same may be said of what she told concerning the absence of the president of the college; you had already observed to her that it was vacation time, and she consequently drew the inference that the president and his family were gone to the country, on a visit to their friends, &c. Every body knows, indeed, that it is customary for the officers of our public institutions to employ the vacation time in travelling and restoring their health, &c.

Somnambulists are generally so ingenious, consistent and particular in their descriptions, that I would have been surprised if Miss Brackett had omitted to make the above mentioned remarks. As to the pictures described by her, she could not possibly have *guessed* at them, as they were most of them, of a very rare and peculiar character. Some unreasonable skeptics pretend that you were fool enough to whisper about the room, and even tell aloud to Dr Capron, what those pictures were!—others suppose that the gentleman who called at your house, with a letter of introduction from Providence, had been sent to spy your movements, and investigate the contents of your house, &c. Such conjectures are but contemptible, and I pity the poor brains and narrow hearts from which they emanated. I do believe that Miss Brackett became aware of the existence and nature of those pictures by her admirable somnambulic faculties! she "*saw*" them through your own mind; although she very honestly pretended to see them in New York. I will terminate these remarks by repeating that I have, as yet, neither seen nor read a single fact, (not even in the notes inserted at the end of the two first parts of Mr Hartshorn's translation of Deleuze) which is capable, after a mature examination, of con-

vincing me that a somnambulist can transport herself in spirit, where she never was in her life, and see what is transpiring in places about which she had no previous correct idea, I do not, however, reject the thing *as utterly impossible!* For, do I know all that is possible? I merely say, that such a thing is wholly inexplicable and cannot be referred to any philosophical principle whatever, like *all the other magnetic phenomena*. I will, therefore, deny this miraculous clairvoyance, until I have abundant and conclusive proofs of its reality!

You will ask perhaps, whether I believe in clairvoyance at all? Yes, I believe that some somnambulists can see in a very remarkable manner, their eyes being perfectly shut and independently from a mental action of the magnetiser! I believe, that in a high state of *lucidity*, they can see what is transpiring in the adjoining rooms, or even in a neighboring town, where they had previously lived or resided some time. I had, in my practice, numerous and indisputable proofs of this power; I have read also many striking instances of it from very scientific sources. These phenomena moreover, can be accounted for, either through an unusual increase of energy and delicacy of the organ of vision, or by admitting the existence of a peculiar fluid penetrating all bodies of nature, and affecting in an equal manner the various parts of the brain and the nerves which emanate from it. If such a fluid exists, it appears that the human system is not always equally susceptible of perceiving it, for the faculty of clairvoyance is often diminished and *sometimes entirely* lost.

Such are, Sir, my views on the facts related in your letter to Dr Brigham. I do not pretend that they are absolutely correct; I am satisfied about them; but others may find them erroneous, and many will probably reject them! They will think it just as wonderful that a somnambulist could read a person's mind, as to see certain objects at a distance of two hundred miles! But let them compare the facts related in your work, and those I have mentioned in the preceding

pages; they will surely find a striking analogy between them, and see that they can be explained in the same way, viz. through the philosophical principles I have presented.

After all, although your experiments with Miss Brackett were not especially intended and calculated to ascertain whether the agent called "Animal Magnetism" exists or not, yet they come, for me, to the same final result; they demonstrate, in my opinion, that one human being can exercise an influence over another, by the sole force of his mind, and that the thoughts and impressions of one human brain can be transmitted to another without the aid of language and signs.

I trust, Sir, that you will not mistake the intention of the foregoing remarks. My object has not been to *criticise only*, but to call your attention to an order of phenomena, viz. "*the influence of the will and the communication of thought,*" which are better calculated than any other, to prove the reality of the *animal magnetic principle or agent*. I hope that you will pursue your investigation of the subject and conduct it in a proper manner, that you may be able, at a future period, to crown the work you have so well commenced, by communicating to the world the results of your further observations. In waiting for that moment, I now most heartily congratulate you for what you have so far done to forward the cause of truth. The courage and independence of mind with which you have proclaimed your opinion in regard to a matter, as yet, so little understood, so generally denied and ridiculed, are truly praiseworthy. You have proved that you comprehend, and do not fear to practise the duties which your profession of editor devolves upon you, viz. to be an impartial observer of the manifestations of the time, and to enlighten the public mind about them. Animal magnetism will undoubtedly prevail, notwithstanding the furious and blind opposition which is now made against it. Then your exertions in the defence and propagation of truth shall be duly appreciated, whereas your sneerers will be in their turn *sneered at* and despised for their conceited ignorance and ungenerosity.

But, Sir, while you seem to have been so earnest to do justice to animal magnetism before the public, you have been, I must confess, singularly hasty in forming an opinion, and very careless in the manner in which you have expressed yourself about the character and conduct of the man who has been for nearly two years, struggling to introduce the subject in this country. I read in your letter to Dr Brigham such a sentence as the following ; “ I pray you not to write me down as a believer in the charlatannerie of Mesmer and Deslon, or as a disciple of Mr Poyen, or as an encourager of the other strolling dealers in somnambulism, who traverse the country, exhibiting their ‘*sleeping beauties*’ as lovers, not of science, but of gain.”

Thus, I am, in your opinion, a charlatan, a dealer in somnambulism, whose sole object is gain, &c.

Now, I ask you from what source did you derive your information concerning me. Did you believe yourself sufficiently authorized from mere appearances and the vulgar attacks of some of your brother editors, to pronounce so decisive and severe a judgment upon a man with whom you had no previous personal acquaintance, and whose acts never afforded an evident ground for reproach ? Did you not feel, in writing down this judgment, as though you were doing wrong to a fellow creature, and forfeiting to the fairness, soberness and charity which are becoming of a christian mind, of a philosophic and earnest searcher after truth ? And, besides that, how could you have allowed yourself, in a publication of a serious character, to indulge in such a sneering and trifling way of writing, as is manifested in the word “*sleeping beauties* and others.” I have never exhibited any “*sleeping beauty* ;” and Miss Gleason, to whom you have probably alluded, never had any pretension to be any thing of the kind ; on the contrary, she already bears on her face and whole system the marks of the power of those unmerciful destroyers of beauty ; age and sickness.

It seems to me, Sir, that before venturing to pronounce an

unfavorable judgment upon a man's intentions and conduct, it would be but just and prudent to look previously for proper information. It would have been easy for you to obtain some concerning me, during your visit in Providence. I am pretty well known there. Rev Dr Wayland, Prof. Chace and Caswell ; Rev Messrs E. B. Hall and Farley ; Dr Crocker, have conversed with me ; most of them have attended my lectures. They have thus been able to form an opinion of my character and education. They might have informed you whether I am, or not, moved by purely selfish motives, whether I have or not manifested any love for science and philanthropy. I have now in my portfolio a letter of introduction from Dr F. Wayland, to Rev Dr Day and Prof. Silliman of Yale College, that would do honor to any man. Drs Brownell and Capron might also have furnished you with the means of forming a correct and impartial opinion. I had considerable intercourse with them ; they had the opportunity of observing the tendency of my mind, and my way of treating and propagating animal magnetism. I might, in a word, if I deemed it worth while, refer you to a great number of other individuals belonging to the most respectable and literary classes in New England. But it is, sir, a painful thing to any writer of common sense and delicacy, to be compelled to speak of himself, in the view of vindicating his character, and it is with the utmost reluctance that I have undertaken here, to justify myself from the offensive allusions contained in your letter to Dr B. I would not have done it, had I not considered it a duty to remove, as much as I can, the prejudices and wrong impressions entertained of me, for the sake of the advancement of the important subject which it has been my lot to lecture upon in this country, and to which my name is particularly attached. It is in that view that I take the liberty of presenting to you the written opinion of a few distinguished gentlemen concerning my character and conduct. These gentlemen have seen me often, and are well qualified, from the acquaintance they had with me, to

judge of my course and intentions. A letter of introduction given to me by Saml. H. Jenks, Esq. of Nantucket, to Thomas G. Woodward, Esq., editor of the Connecticut Herald, commences thus : "Give me leave to introduce to your friendly acquaintance Dr Ch. Poyen, for whom I entertain the profoundest esteem and respect ; esteem for his philanthropic virtues ; respect for his learning and devotion to science. *

* * * * *

A more intimate acquaintance with Dr Poyen will strengthen your attachment to him. He has been abused by many of our * * * * * brethren, who call themselves editors."

From the above mentioned letter of President F. Wayland to President Day and Prof. Silliman, I extract the following lines:

"Dr Poyen has resided some time among us in Providence, and I have every reason to believe him an intelligent, amiable and philanthropic gentleman. As such I beg the favor of introducing him to your acquaintance."

In an article on animal magnetism, inserted in the Boston Recorder of February 17, 1837, by one of the most intelligent and learned gentlemen of the city, you will find these words:

"How disgusting is the tone some journals assume towards Dr Poyen, and how vulgar their abuse ! Since I have known him, he has sustained a high intellectual and moral character ; and the object of these few remarks is to induce those of like character to unite with him in classifying these phenomena, fixing their relations to the great body of science, and following out and popularizing their medical and psychological uses."

The following paragraphs are extracted from an article in the Providence Journal, July 20th, 1837, by Thomas C. Hartshorn, Esq. translator of the Deleuze :

"Had Mr Poyen come among us in his *true* appellation, as a marquis of the old *regime*, and not in poverty, he would have found a thousand ready to fall down and worship his

title, and to attribute to himself all the distinguishing traits of nobility, where he finds one now who is willing to be pleased with the truly gentlemanly feeling which is inherent in him, and with the learning which he is not ostentatious in displaying.

“Mr Poyen demeaned himself in society in a modest and unassuming manner. There was no arrogant pretension to superior skill or power. On the contrary, he expressly stated in his lectures, that others who were there present, might possess it in a much higher degree. He seemed anxious to impress a conviction on the minds of his auditors of the great advantages of it as a curative process. He stood by the bed of the sick, and instructed several gentlemen of the faculty and others, in this and the neighboring towns, in the mode of procedure, and they were more successful than himself in producing the desired results. He received no recompense from those persons whom he instructed, except what they may have paid for tickets of admission to his lectures. And, finally, as a triumphant vindication of his character from the charge of imposition, the magnetic practice in this city has been attended with such decisive proofs of its therapeutic virtues, that no man of character here will venture to gainsay the assertion, under the authority of his own name.

“Mr Poyen’s exertion in the cause, and the fact of his being a pioneer of it in New England, demand a public statement of these truths, so honorable to him.”

Such is the opinion of those who have conversed with me, and observed my course and character.

You have not treated Mesner and Deslon with any more justice and propriety than you have done me. Instead of referring to the opinion of the prejudiced, superficial and time-serving editors of periodicals and to the authors of cyclopedias, about those distinguished men, I would beg you either to read their works, if you can procure them, or to see what the virtuous, judicious and learned Deleuze says concerning them in his “*Histoire Critique du Magnetisme animal*,” Vol. I. ch. 1, and Vol. II. ch. 1 and 2.

If you desire more information concerning me, I would beg leave to refer you to a work just published, entitled "*Animal Magnetism in New England*," in which I give a faithful account of the manner in which I became interested in the "science," and of the course I have pursued to establish it in this country.

I will now finish this letter by a few remarks on the reproach which you have addressed me, of being "*a lover not of science, but of gain*." I assure you, sir, that if I am at all moved by the "*love of gain*," I am far from possessing the *art of gaining*. You would, yourself, acknowledge this to be the fact, should you have a chance of investigating the contents of my purse. I will even dare to affirm, that very few, nor perhaps yourself, would have persevered as I have done, in the troublesome and difficult task of lecturing upon animal magnetism in this country for so little pecuniary compensation.

But, when a man is accomplishing a useful object, when he is qualified to carry it about faithfully and honorably, is it not equally unjust and unphilosophical to charge him with being moved by motives of gain? Who will ever engage seriously and perseveringly in any work of some importance, without a strong hope that he shall be rewarded for it? and what can this reward be, but MONEY, that is to say, the means of supporting himself and enjoying the comfort of life? In the present age, and *in this country especially*, we find very few *worshippers of pure glory*. No one, in our days, is wild enough to seek fame and glory at the risk of wearing rags, living upon air, and dying in an *attic*. The present generation are all thirsting for the waters of the *golden Pactole*; money is the vital element of society; it is the vast and vivifying source from which the heart draws sensibility; the brain, intellect and power of combination;—it is the mighty lever by which the hand of *industry* erects splendid buildings, digs up canals, constructs railroads, builds steamboats and packets; finally, accomplishes all that is necessary for the material welfare of so-

ciety. God has *wisely* endowed man with *acquisitiveness*; this faculty, when properly balanced by a due proportion of *benevolence* and *conscientiousness*, is capable of yielding as useful and glorious results as any other passion of human nature! The extraordinary prosperity of the United States, and their high station among civilized nations, illustrate strikingly this truth.

It is time, therefore, that we should cease to reproach a fellow creature with the use of a faculty inherent to the human organization, and so necessary to bring about the *designs* of the *Divine providence* in her *temporal government of society*. The love of gain, the “*sacra fames auri*,” is general; it inspires the preacher of the gospel, the healer of human infirmities, the ruler of the people, as well as the humblest mechanic and farmer. The “*priest must live upon the altar*,” is a proverb which is applicable to men of all professions indiscriminately.

If you reproach me, Sir, with being a “*dealer* in somnambulism,” the same reproach might be addressed to you. Indeed, I have heard many a one insinuate that your pamphlet was a mere money concern! People observe that you might just as well have published your observations in two or three numbers of the *Journal* edited by you, rather than to make a pamphlet for sale. Myself, I pay no attention to such suppositions; I am pleased to think that you have been moved by the pure love of truth. But, supposing that you had any pecuniary object in view, I would still thank God for having organized you in such a manner as to *compel* you to come forth publicly and fearlessly, in support of a noble and important truth, for the sake of satisfying your “*acquisitiveness*.”

As far as a man seeks gain without departing from what is right and honorable, he cannot be blamed; but, from the moment he sacrifices truth, conscience, and his duties towards his fellow creatures, to a base appetite for money and the selfish gratification of his exuberant vanity, he renders himself

contemptible and can no longer be considered as a safe member of society. This last trait, Sir, establishes a broad difference in the mind of the well thinking part of the community, between the talented writer of the "*letter to Dr Brigham,*" and the impudent, self-conceited and vulgar scribbler who has just enlightened the public with an "*Exposition or a new theory of Animal Magnetism.*"

I am, Sir, respectfully, yours,

CH. POYEN.

REMARKS
ON
THE CAUSES OF FAILURE
IN THE
ANIMAL MAGNETIC EXPERIMENTS;
INTENDED AS A
REFUTATION OF C. F. DURANT'S EXPOSITION
OF ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

I WOULD consider it a wicked waste of time and labor to enter into a minute critical examination of this libellous pamphlet. I am satisfied that it carries its full refutation with itself; I would, indeed, challenge any person of education, of common delicacy and power of discrimination, to read it without experiencing throughout its perusal, a perfect disgust for the coarseness of the style, the vulgarity of thought and manner exhibited in it. I shall not, then, for the present trouble my mind about it.

The object of the following remarks is particularly to resolve some *difficulties* which seem, at the present moment, to bear hard on the public mind, and which are calculated, I must confess, to retard the advances of magnetism in this country, should they not be promptly removed. If, moreover, the explanations that I propose to give, are deemed satisfactory, Mr Durant's assertions and the pretended experiments related in his book shall have no more weight in the eye of the reading part of the community than the gas with which he was wont to swell his balloons.

Let us come to the point. People say, "If animal magnetism is a matter of facts the reality of which can be ascer-

tained by actual observation, why do we hear so many contradictory reports from those who have witnessed the experiments? why is there such a difference of opinion concerning the alleged facts?"

These are the questions which the present state of things requires of me to answer in a peremptory manner.

I must, in the first place call the attention of the philosophical reader to a very important point, viz. the respective grounds upon which those who have *reported* in favor or against animal magnetism, have based their judgment.

In looking over the history of this "*science*" in Europe and America, we are struck with the fact that *all those who have written "ex professo" in support of Animal Magnetism*, were, or still are MAGNETISERS. They have themselves repeatedly and carefully performed the operations on a great variety of individuals;—and what is remarkable, none of those who have thus given a fair *practical trial* to the subject have remained unconvinced, *although they were formerly decided skeptics*; none have pretended that the claims of the science were not founded on reality. This is the history of all the magnetisers of Europe and America. Now, from the rank occupied by those individuals in society, from their education and well known character, we cannot suppose either that they have deceived the people, or that they have suffered themselves to be imposed upon. Therefore, the facts by which they were convinced must have been of a *positive character*, that is to say, evident enough to satisfy skeptical and enlightened minds.

When, on the other hand, we inquire of the motives upon which the opponents of animal magnetism have based their opinion, we find that none of them say that *they have themselves magnetised*, and acquired from personal experience, the conviction of the falsity of the doctrine. They all reject the claims of it, either on the ground that it is contrary to the laws of nature, &c. or because a few experiments they have seen tried on *persons magnetised* by others in their presence

have failed ! Such is the position of the enemies of animal magnetism.

The preceding remarks partly explain, in my opinion, why contradictory reports have always been in circulation concerning the magnetic phenomena, and why there is such a difference of opinion respecting their reality. Those who have witnessed or themselves produced conclusive effects, are thus led to espouse the cause of the science ; those on the contrary, who have *seen failures only*, deny its reality and, without looking farther into it, remain satisfied from those failures that what they have heard about it cannot be true.

From what has just been said, a plain inference follows. In order to become convinced of the truth of magnetism, it is not sufficient to see and “*scrutinize*” a few experiments made by other people ; it is necessary to perform the operation oneself a number of times and on a variety of subjects. No one has a right to deny the reality of the phenomena and reject the statements made by other respectable persons until he has given this patient and unprejudiced trial to the matter. Indeed, I would candidly ask whether it is philosophical to base one’s judgment upon one or a few failures ? It is admitted that negative facts cannot overthrow positive ones. If on witnessing some magnetic performances, we meet with failures only, are we sufficiently authorized to conclude that the experiments have never been successful ? for, how could so many intelligent persons who advocate animal magnetism, have been satisfied of its reality and value, if they had not obtained conclusive results ?

Here, another question of importance presents itself.—Why do the magnetic experiments succeed so well at times and fail completely at other times ? The reason is simple enough ; because these experiments are performed under *different circumstances*, some of which are highly *favorable*, and others *contrary* to their success. Thus far, there is nothing surprising. The chemist, the natural philosopher, the physician, &c. know that the experiments attempt-

ed by them often fail, and that they fail either because the materials used were not in good order and of a proper quality, or because certain circumstances which the operator had not foreseen and provided against, have unfortunately taken place. Such failures are easily accounted for by the professor of the science or the physician, and people make no difficulty in accepting his apology; they say, "the experiments have not succeeded today, for such or such reasons; but they will probably succeed better tomorrow, &c. All is for the best!" People do not retire discontented; they do not exclaim, imposition! deception! nothing in it! &c.; because they are perfectly aware that the chemist, or the professor of electricity cannot *concert* a plan with their apparatus: they are aware that *brute bodies* cannot connive with any living being to deceive mankind. But, with respect to the magnetic experiments, it is altogether different. If they succeed, the skeptic says, it was a plan skilfully concerted, or if they fail, he retires indignant, considering the whole as a wicked imposition, &c. Why so? I regret to say, it is because people are aware that the animal magnetic experiments *are performed on, and by, a human individual, viz., by, and on beings that are capable of conniving together to deceive their fellow creatures.* On witnessing these experiments the public do not reflect, and they appear not willing to grant, that their success depends also on "*the proper state and quality of the materials used,* and on certain other important circumstances without the presence of which the required and usual effects cannot take place.

The materials, as we figuratively call them, are the *brain and nervous system of the magnetiser, and the brain and nervous system of the person magnetised.* These are the two pieces or elements, as Georget calls them, of the magnetic apparatus. One of these two elements is active, the other is passive; the influence emanates from the former, and is received and felt by the latter. But in order that the desired effects should be properly manifested, it is necessary, indis-

pensable, that a perfect equilibrium should exist between both elements. The operator's brain and nervous system must exercise its action in a *regular*, even, and constantly strong manner; at the same time, the brain of the person operated upon must find itself in a state of perfect calmness and tranquil sensibility, in order either to feel the intended effects of the action directed upon it, or to exhibit the phenomena which may belong to the exercise of its own activity and power, independently from the magnetiser's influence. Every thing therefore, that will disturb the normal order of either or of both elements of the magnetic apparatus, will destroy the required equilibrium, and the experiments must fail.

There is one point, in all this, which I desire the reader to bear clearly and constantly in his mind; it is that the human brain and nervous system are not *brute, inanimate* objects; they are not, for instance, like the electric machine, the galvanic battery, &c. They are the most *complex, nice*, organized and living instruments. They are therefore, submitted to the action and reaction of infinitely more numerous causes than any other object in creation. They are (and we should expect it to be so,) infinitely more susceptible of changes and modifications than any scientific machine or apparatus that can be devised and made by man's hands. We know besides, that the complication, delicacy and modifiability of organized bodies vary according to the degree which they occupy in the scale of life. A plant is more complex and modifiable than a crystal; an animal of a lower order is more complex and modifiable than a plant, &c. Now, how much more complicated, delicate and changeable, is the organization of man than that of all other living beings. Besides all the physical causes that are acting continually on him, as well as on other animals, man is submitted to another continual source of actions, reactions and modifications, which is within himself. I mean his own exquisite sensibility and his *passions*. Now, let us reflect that the brain and the nervous system are the seat of sensibility and of pas-

sions; let us reflect also, that it is from the same organ that the magnetic influence emanates, and that they are the instruments principally used for magnetising. How then, can we be surprised at the variety of results obtained, and even at the numerous failures that are met with in the practice of animal magnetism? If the chemical, electric, galvanic, &c. experiments fail often, although the laws of electricity and chemistry are comparatively simple and few, it is but natural that animal magnetism, the laws of which are not yet well appreciated, and which is subjected to a great many causes of variation, should present still more numerous failures.

The circumstances either favorable or contrary to the success of the experiments in animal magnetism must be, of course different from those attending the experiments made on and with inorganized bodies. They are peculiar to the nature and capacity of the agents employed, viz. the human brain and nervous system. Those circumstances are numerous, so delicate and profoundly hidden that it requires a long experience, and the attentive reading of the best authors, united to an acute power of observation, comparison and discrimination, to know them all and appreciate them properly. This constitutes, therefore, a branch of knowledge that comparatively very few magnetisers possess when they commence practising, especially in this country, where there is an almost absolute deficiency of books and written instructions on the subject. Being thus involved in complete darkness about the causes that are calculated to favor or disturb the magnetic action, they can but meet with failures whenever they venture to expose their somnambulist and themselves to circumstances different from those under the influence of which they have performed successful experiments. The magnetic power being natural to man, and the means of using it exceedingly plain, it becomes thus very easy to almost any one, to produce the phenomena which are known to take place under such operation. But in this case power is not *science*. The person who just begins to magnetise may be able to obtain

wonderful effects, and yet be utterly incapable of understanding both what he is doing, and the causes which have made his experiments succeed. He does not perhaps suspect that those experiments are liable to fail, and even sees not why they should fail, as he does not yet appreciate the nature of the agents used in the operation, and has not learned through experience and study that those agents are susceptible of a great many modifications. Thence the numerous failures which have given rise in Europe, as well as in this country, to the contradictory reports which people have heard, and to the difference of opinion which is existing about the reality of the magnetic phenomena.

In order to convey a clearer idea of what I mean, I will present a few cases of the failures to which I am alluding, as they generally occur to those who commence the practice of magnetism. Let us take for example, one of the magnetisers mentioned in Mr Durant's book. I will show how *this beginner* will, from mere ignorance, create failures on his way, and thus expose himself and his somnambulist to be considered as impostors by some uncharitable and *equally ignorant* skeptics.

Mr C. hears of the wonderful effects of what is called animal magnetism and he wishes to obtain them himself; he, in consequence, magnetises a person well known to him, in whom he has confidence, say his friend, his sister, even perhaps his own wife. The success is complete; at the first attempt, he throws the subject into the magnetic state; he is already in amazement at his power; he repeats the operation and succeeds in producing the first phenomena of somnambulism; his admiration and enthusaism are still greater. He decides to invite a couple of friends, well known both to himself and to the subject of his experiments. Mr C. in presence of these friends feels the same confidence as he had when alone; he is at his own house, pursues his *own course*, and acts from the impulse of his own mind,—the experiments succeed again to the satisfaction of all present, for, so far, the circumstances *are favorable to the operation*.

But Mr C. already wishes to convince more people, say two or three influential persons; he invites them to see an exhibition. They come with high expectations, but unfortunately the experiment fails; Mr C. cannot even put his patient to sleep; how, and why? he cannot tell, for he does not know that he was *too anxious to succeed*, and that his very *solicitudes* have disturbed his nervous system and prevented both in himself and in his patient the degree of *confidence and regularity of action* necessary to produce the required effect. Among those invited, one or more were, perhaps, *entire strangers to his subject*, and Mr C. does not yet know that the presence of strangers agitates a somnambulist and that such agitation is *contrary to the success of the operation*. The persons who had been called to witness wonders, retire disappointed, and say that poor Mr C. was *deluded*, &c. After they are gone, Mr C. makes a new attempt and succeeds very well; and it cannot be otherwise, for the causes of disturbance exist no longer.

After magnetising his patient ten or twelve times, always successfully, and in presence of several *friends*, Mr C. again invites some strangers. This time he succeeds in producing sleep. He then pronounces the subject to be in a profound sleep from which nothing, not even the discharge of a park of artillery, could arouse her. Indeed, the bystanders make noise, shake, pinch and prick the sleeper, without producing any apparent effect. Mr C. also pretends that she hears nobody but him, for, in the preceding sittings he has *observed* that she never answered any one else. He then tries, *from his own impulse* and according to *his own fancy*, a few experiments to test the power of the will. They are perfectly successful. Another experiment, *more complicated*, of which he *never thought before*, is suggested to him on a piece of paper; he *hesitates, doubts, feels anxious for the result*; he tries, however, and *of course*, fails; and it could not have been otherwise, for this experiment did not spring *spontaneously* from his mind, and he did not try it *with sufficient confidence* in

himself, therefore the action of his brain could not be clear and regular enough. Two or three similar *suggested* experiments are tried again, with no more success, for the magnetiser having failed once, is *afraid* of failing again, and such fear will prevent him from succeeding. Do not we often see a stout, robust man, knocked down by a man of feeblor muscles? Why? because he is a *coward*. On witnessing such failures, what will the persons invited think and say? Some will *think* that there was a *concerted plan*, others will say that Mr C. is a visionary man.

Again, another experiment is performed on the day following, in presence of several individuals, among whom *is found* a thorough and ungenerous skeptic, who has conceived some idea that the somnambulist is practising deception, and has resolved to *detect the trick*. This skeptic will manage an experiment like this: he writes on a piece of paper, "Will this pencil case to be a melon," and passes it to the magnetiser; at the same time standing near the somnambulist, he will say aloud or simply whisper, but so as to be heard, "Mind what I wrote on the paper, will this pencil case to become red hot iron?" and even before the somnambulist has felt *any action at all* from the magnetiser's will, (for it generally takes longer to feel the *will*, than to hear,) she exclaims, "Oh! oh! you burn me, &c." Indeed it unfortunately happens that this subject is one of those whose sense of hearing, although *deaf to any other kind of noise*, is open to the human voice, no matter whose voice it is. She therefore caught the skeptic's words, and taking them in earnest, acted in consequence. Mr C. is stupefied, he begins himself to think that the patient is not asleep, and is feigning, &c. Indeed, as he had observed that she never *noticed* the questions of any body besides himself, he candidly *supposed that she could not hear*, for he does not yet know by experience or reading, that there are certain somnambulists who, although they hear what people say, yet *imagine honestly and strongly*, that they ought not to answer any body but the magnetiser, because they have *heard* while awake and *before they were magnetised*, that somnambulists

generally speak with their magnetiser only, and with no other person, unless they are *willed to*. Now, if Mr C. had experience enough, and had read the best authors, he would know that certain impressions, those particularly referring to magnetism, that are made on a somnambulist's mind, and while in the wakeful state, *act most powerfully on their imagination, when in the magnetic sleep*. But let Mr C. recollect all the successful experiments he has privately tried on his subject, without a word spoken or a signal made, when there could be no possibility for deception, and he will be convinced that his somnambulist is in earnest, and that it is not probable that she would attempt to feign such a state; Mr C. then will infer that a person in the magnetic sleep is not always deaf; that it is, in consequence, necessary to be very careful not to speak aloud about what is going on; that every experiment with such somnambulist should be performed without a word of any sort uttered in their presence. Mr C. will learn also that it is very important to ascertain by proper experiments, whether a somnambulist hears others or not, in order that he should not positively assert before strangers that she does not hear at all, &c.

Again, having been told that after a person had been successfully magnetised a number of times, the manipulations usually employed in the beginning to produce the magnetic sleep, became useless; that a steady look, with a firm will, were sufficient to cause the same state to take place, Mr C. tries that new method and with the greatest success;—he repeats the experiment again and again, and always successfully, even in the presence of other people; indeed, his subject has been so often magnetised by him, and is so completely under his control, that she cannot help going into somnambulism when he wills her to. Now, among the persons present, there is a shrewd skeptic who doubts the sincerity of the somnambulist. He takes Mr C. into the entry and requests him, *in a whisper*, to sit and *look steadily at the patient's face without willing any thing at all*. Agreeably to the suggestion, Mr

C. takes his position and looks at the subject ; soon she appears drowsy, and within three minutes she is, to all appearance, fast asleep. They try her in the usual ways and she resists all the trials with an inconceivable courage and without flinching once. Indeed, she is really in the somnambulic state. Mr C. is surprised ; he cannot account for it ; what ! is she feigning again ? Mr C. knows indeed, that he has *not willed her* to sleep ; but he is not yet aware of the wonderful power of imagination *on those persons who have been repeatedly subjected to the action of animal magnetism*. If he had experience enough, or if he had read the best authors on this subject, he would know that this singular, *unaccountable and powerful agent which is commonly called imagination*, is capable of producing the same effects as the *real magnetic influence* exercised by another person. He would know, indeed, that what we call *imagination*, is the *magnetic force or power of the spirit of each individual*, acting independently from *the will* ; he would know that the *magnetic operation* has a great tendency to increase the natural activity and energy of the imagination in those upon whom it is practised, to such an extent that *the least impression*, on those persons' minds is sufficient to cause the state of somnambulism to take place. When Mr C. is informed of all this, he will beware of acting on his subject's imagination, in order to obtain results of *a positive character*, and not to expose himself to be treated as a fool, and his innocent somnambulist to be considered as an impostor by ignorant and skeptical witnesses. If any one inquires whether all the phenomena attributed to animal magnetism are not the products of imagination, as the above mentioned fact authorizes us to suppose, I would answer that I have directed my attention particularly towards resolving this difficulty, and that I have acquired the strongest possible evidence that there is a power besides *imagination*, deriving from the exercise of the will of one individual over another, and which is capable of producing both the magnetic sleep and all the phenomena of somnambulism. This is my

experience, and it is corroborated by that of thousands of other magnetisers, (see the Report of the Royal Academy of Medicine of Paris, 1831 ; also the Experiments performed by Dr Dupotet, at the Hotel Dieu, in 1820, &c.) Of the existence of this power, Mr C. can satisfy himself at any time, by magnetising his subject through a partition wall, and when *she is not at all aware of what is going on*. Most of the magnetisers of this country have already made such experiments with the most perfect success, and they have been convinced by them, of the reality of animal magnetism. But it appears that they have not yet observed that *imagination* can produce the same effects ; let them satisfy themselves about this power, and they will surely come to the same conclusion as I have, that what we call *imagination*, is *the genuine magnetic force, or the power of each human individual, acting independently from the will*. The state of somnambulism elicited under the influence of mere imagination is not generally so regular and profound as that which is produced by the *will of the magnetiser*, but it is real notwithstanding ; any one can convince himself of it by trying the usual experiments, such as willing various things without either a sign or a word spoken, &c. The somnambulist will show that she is evidently affected by such mental action. But I repeat, magnetisers should beware not to act on their subject's imagination before strangers who are ignorant of the matter, because the sleep produced in that way is liable to be imperfect, and it may happen that all the subsequent experiments will be very unsatisfactory.

I now leave Mr C., and will finish these explanations by extracting a few more instances of failure from the practice of Mr A., another beginner, an equally ignorant and shallow observer. Mr A. has made a great number of experiments on his somnambulist, in whose honesty he has the greatest confidence, as she is the most intimate friend of his bosom, his own wife. He has so far obtained wonderful results, and has been fortunate enough to satisfy a good number of his friends.

As magnetism is a subject of general curiosity and interest, and as his own business is for the present rather poor, Mr A. takes a notion to make a fortune by exhibiting the magnetic phenomena, for money. He knows very well that he is utterly ignorant of the science, that he can neither account for the extraordinary effects produced, nor explain one of the failures that may take place, &c. But the thirst for gold perverts his judgment and silences the cry of his conscience. Having succeeded well *at home*, he flatters himself that he will succeed equally well in a *strange city, and before a large promiscuous assembly*. He does not see why he should not, for he has not yet reflected on the nature of animal magnetism, and is not, moreover, capable of understanding the properties and *structure of the agents used in the operation*. He starts then, for the city of New York, anticipating the most brilliant results. Among his visitors in New York, is a selfish, double-tongued, vain fellow, who, at first, conceives the idea of associating with Mr A. to make fortune in common, but on perceiving the ignorance and simplicity of Mr A. this shrewd fellow despairs to make any thing of pecuniary consequence with him ; feeling also that in the present state of universal and warm excitement existing on the matter, it might prove more profitable to oppose, and if possible, explode the *science* than to advocate it, he boldly takes it into his conceited brain that the whole is an imposition, and forms a mighty plan to *expose* it before the world. But he avoids telling any thing of his intentions to Mr A. On the contrary, he carefully keeps him in the belief that he is still his friend, and is seriously thinking of helping him along. This malicious fellow pretends that he has invented a profound and scientific theory that will account for all the phenomena of magnetism, and will infallibly secure to Mr A. a prompt and immense success. Among the experiments which he suggests, there is one, which if it succeeds, will establish beyond all dispute and cavil the correctness of *his theory*, and thereby prove the reality of animal magnetism, and make

Mr A.'s fortune as certain as though he had already got it in his purse. "This experiment," says he, "cannot but *succeed*, it *must succeed*, for it is founded on *the well known analogous laws of nature*. It consists in cutting off the magnetic current producing somnambulism, by interposing a sheet of *tissue paper* between the magnetiser and the person magnetised. This tissue paper is pretended to be *a newly discovered and very rare substance*, which has the extraordinary property of neutralizing the effects of common mineral magnetism, and as, in the views of the ingenious fellow, mineral and animal magnetism are alike, the *cerin* (so called tissue paper) must of course neutralize also the effect of animal magnetism.*

Mr A. and his wife, poor simple people, who suspect nothing of the infernal and absurd trick played upon them, swallow the whole at once ; their imagination is full of it ; they become *infatuated* with the *new theory*, and they propose to try the experiment immediately ; Mrs A. sits in her rocking chair, persuaded that no effect is going to follow, and *wishing strongly* that none should be produced. The *cerin* or tissue paper is placed before her face ; Mr A., sitting at some distance, looks at his wife for a few moments and *tries* to will her to go to sleep. But how can he will such a thing, when he *so eagerly wishes* that the contrary should take place ;—when he is so profoundly impressed with the idea that his *will* can have no effect in the present case ; when finally, he fears to exercise his *will*, as he knows that his sweet dreams of fortune would vanish away as a bubble of soap, should any effect be produced. Under such *mental circumstances* the experiment proposed by the *profound* and *acute minded fellow* could not but succeed : indeed Mrs A. could not be put to sleep. Now reader, is it not evident to you that the inventor of the admirable theory above alluded to, has shown in the said experiment his asinine ignorance, as well as a ridiculous vanity and a base malice, instead of acting like a man of common sense

* This experiment is taken from Mr Durant's book.

and feeling. Indeed, could this fellow *will himself* to sleep, when at the same time he strongly *desires* that sleep would not touch his lids, for fear that a robber would introduce himself into his room and steal away his money? Could he *will himself to walk*, when at the same time he *wishes* to stay still, and is fearful that if he gets up he shall break his leg at the first step? Why then, did he so improperly act on Mrs A.'s *imagination*? why did he place Mrs A.'s brain between two *opposite forces*? This *theorician*, who claims for so much science, shows yet that he is not even aware of the simplest law of nature, viz. *when two equal forces are acting in a directly opposite sense to each other, no motion is produced*. This law is applicable to moral as well as physical forces.

Again, the same fellow impresses on the mind of poor Mr A. and Mrs A., that owing to his theory, which is calculated (we must remember) to yield a large fortune to them, there is and can be no such thing as *clairvoyance* or power of seeing, the eyes being closed. Of course, Mrs A.'s imagination being perplexed on this point, she cannot see when she is asleep! She fails or gives wrong answers to almost every question which is asked her. And the reason is plain enough. It is because she imagines *she cannot see!* Every sensible man will easily conceive this. There are other reasons why Mrs A. and other somnambulists have failed in the experiments made by the judicious *theorician* of whom we are speaking, to test the power of clairvoyance. In the first place, this faculty is known to be the most changeable and uncertain of all the faculties of somnambulism. The least mental or physical derangement will disturb it. It is, therefore, very rare that it will fairly manifest itself when there are strangers in the room, which is a circumstance *always* disagreeable to a *female somnambulist*, particularly when she is away from home, in a large city like New York. In the next place, this mode of vision is very painful; the exercise of it is extremely fatiguing, and soon overcomes the somnambulist's brain. It is

the observation of all magnetisers of Europe and America, that a lucid somnambulist cannot exercise his clairvoyance on more than three or four objects at each experiment. Therefore magnetisers should be careful not to ask of their subjects more than they can do. Somnambulists are generally vain. They prefer, when urged with questions, to guess rather than to say *they cannot see!* These are the facts; they may appear ridiculous and improbable to those who have no experience in animal magnetism, but they are true, and we must take them such as they are.

There is another and most powerful cause of disturbance for somnambulists, which we must mention here, although it is deemed supremely absurd and ridiculous by the opposers of magnetism. It is the *wrong mental action exercised by certain skeptics*, present at the experiments. I divide the skeptics into two classes. Some disbelieve the magnetic phenomena, merely because they are new to them, because they are wonderful, apparently miraculous, &c., but they are honest, candid, open to conviction; and they readily surrender themselves to evidence, when it is presented to them. The other class is composed of persons naturally stubborn, conceited and envious, who decide *a priori* that magnetism is a deception, reject with the utmost contempt the testimonies of the most respectable witnesses, and affirm that the experiments, the most satisfactory to other intelligent people, were the result of a concerted plan. These prejudiced and unjust men attend experiments for the sole purpose of *detecting the trick*, and are unwilling to give to the science the only sure and fair trial, by which they could arrive at the truth, viz: to magnetise for themselves. It is particularly recommended by all the most learned and judicious writers, as Georget, Rostan, Deleuze, De Puysegur, &c. to avoid having such characters present at the magnetic experiments. These *eminent intellects* say that they have invariably observed that their somnambulists always had to complain very much of those skeptics, and that their faculties were completely de-

ranged by their presence. This I know will appear ridiculous to the vulgar ; but to those who reflect, it is rational and perfectly *philosophical*, in admitting that every human being carries with himself a nervous, magnetic or vital atmosphere, the movements and fluctuations of which are in direct concordance with the action exercised by the brain and the nervous system.* This atmosphere, indeed, is formed by certain emanations emitted by the *nervo-cerebral* organs. Now, we are aware that the modifications of these organs derive from the peculiar nature and tendencies of the mind and passions of each individual. Thence a plain inference follows, that the vital or magnetic atmosphere of such a living aggregate of malice, self-conceit and impudence, as the above-mentioned celebrated discoverer of the new theory, (so far as I can judge from his deeds,) cannot be favorable to the magnetic experiments. Let us reflect, indeed, that owing to the great change determined in the perceptive and sensorial faculties of the human organization, during the state of somnambulism, the nervous system of the person who finds himself in that state, is rendered capable of feeling and appreciating, even at a distance, and through very peculiar ways, the mental action of those who approach him. It is true that somnambulists feel *their magnetiser* more than any other ; but however close their communication with him may be, they are still more or less sensible to the influence of those who stand about them. Experience has also proved that they feel more persons of strong power of determination and of great nervous activity, than those of feeble will. It appears to me that the property that the nervous system has, during somnambulism, of being so much influenced by the *vital emanations emitted* around them, is analogous to the property of electrometers to mark the quantity and nature of electricity contained in the atmosphere, or emitted by certain electrified bodies ; it is likewise analogous in some respects to the capacity of a barometer for marking the variations of the weather. That such a faculty belongs to the nervous system of man, when placed under

* See my preceding Letter to Col. Stone, pp. 9, 10, 11.

peculiar circumstances, is not at all unlikely and surprising, when we know that brute bodies, as the above-mentioned instruments, possess a similar one.

I have endeavored, in the foregoing pages, to demonstrate that the difference of opinion which exists in regard to the reality of the magnetic phenomena originates from this main cause, viz : some basing their judgment on positive facts, obtained through experiments performed either by themselves or their friends, are thus led to advocate magnetism ; whereas its opposers judge only from a few failures, which they consider at once as evident proofs of deception or of the falsity of the doctrine, without inquiring into the reason of those failures, or taking the trouble of magnetising for themselves. I have further endeavored to show, 1st. that the magnetic experiments are liable to fail when they are made under circumstances contrary to the free and proper operation of the *agents used* ; 2d. that most magnetisers, being as yet ignorant of the true nature of these various circumstances, and of the peculiar structure and properties of these agents, are thus often led to experiment at random and contrarily to all the *laws existing*, but so far, *hidden to them*. I have also observed that it would be extremely unphilosophical to expect as *constant* and uniform results from experiments on animal magnetism, as from experiments made on *brute bodies* and with inorganized apparatus. Indeed, the *agent* used in the animal magnetic experiments is no other than the *spirit* or *vital principle* of man, and the apparatus employed is the human nervous system and brain. Therefore, the favorable or unfavorable circumstances attending on experiments of this kind must be of a *peculiar description*, viz : appropriate to the well known properties and dispositions of the human system. We know, for instance, that if mankind are every where alike in the *essential* and general features of their organization, they vastly differ in the details, both moral and physical. What a variety in their bodily forms, color, and external appearance ! What a difference in their intellectual capacities and passions !

In fact, *variety and multiplicity of manifestations*, seem to be the attributes of human nature, more, at least, than of any other species of organized beings. This is a primary fact ; we cannot account for it ; but *it is*, and we must take it for granted.

It would be, therefore, irrational to expect that every somnambulist should present the same phenomena to our observation. Indeed, their faculties and dispositions vary a great deal, and it is, I repeat, natural that it should be so. Some of them *can see* while asleep, and their eyes being shut ; — others cannot, even with the best of their efforts and wishes. Some hear every person in the room, and can answer their questions ; others hear, but cannot answer ; others, finally, hear nothing and nobody except their magnetiser, &c. Now, we easily understand how important it is that magnetisers should know all these particulars, in order to save both disappointment to their visiters, and injurious reports against the innocent subjects of their experiments.

It will be said, perhaps, that if the dispositions of somnambulists are so various, it becomes very difficult to ascertain what is real or not. Very true ; but a plain consequence follows, it is that both the witnesses and operators should be perfectly informed of the nature of what they are doing or seeing, and of all those causes of mistake. Then they would conduct themselves in a proper way, to have positive results ; they would not, like Mr Durant, take so much trouble to find out an *imaginary deception*, by suggesting certain tests, which, however ingenious, are not at all calculated to prove any thing against the subject of inquiry. I affirm that such positive results can be easily obtained by following the proper course. (I would beg leave to refer the reader to the numerous facts contained in my work lately published, entitled “*Animal Magnetism in New England*,” &c.)

If I am permitted to express my opinion, I would now venture to say, that to those who have attentively read the preceding considerations, there cannot be two ways of judging

Mr Durant's *Exposition of Animal Magnetism*. It is evident enough that this scientific *theorician* has *exposed* nothing but his utter ignorance of the matter upon which he treats. Every one of the *pretended* experiments which he has made on Mrs Andros and others, for the purpose of *showing the imposition*, can be referred to the cases of failure I have mentioned and explained through the same way as I have those failures. These experiments, even supposing them to be true, show only *an appearance of deception to superficial observers*. But they do not weigh *a straw* against the numerous *positive facts*, by which so many distinguished individuals have been convinced. Those individuals, it is true, did not resort to the many vulgar and mean tricks used by Mr Durant ; not because they had not *wit enough* to imagine them, but merely because they saw at once that they could yield but negative results, and were altogether insufficient to bring forth evidence enough to satisfy them. If Mr Durant believes that the plan applied by him to *detect the deception* was something new, he is greatly mistaken. I assure him, that however shrewd he is (and I readily confess that he is remarkably so,) there is many a Yankee fully equal to him in this point. All the tricks played by him have been a hundred times applied to my somnambulist, but always unsuccessfully, because she cannot, like Mrs Andros and others, hear what is said in the room. I have myself often resorted to the very same means, not merely to expose an imposition, but to ascertain the peculiar dispositions and faculties of my new subjects. Mr S. H. Jenks of Nantucket, will remember how severe were the tests, and how shrewdly concerted was the plan adopted by us to detect a person I had magnetised at his house, and whom we suspected of deception. Yet the result of these experiments, although still stronger than that obtained by Mr Durant against Mrs Andros, was not sufficient to convince us that the girl was not asleep ; for she presented other phenomena, which could not possibly have been feigned by a human creature in the natural state.

Now, reader, allow me to tell you frankly what I think of Mr D.'s work. It is throughout the most inconceivable exhibition of self-conceit, impudence and vulgarity that could perhaps be presented to the world in the shape of a book. Read it, if you *please*, and if you do not come to the same conclusion, you must be . . . at least, uncommonly forbearing. I do not propose to enter into any particular examination of its contents ; I will only say that the manner in which the author treats Dr F. Wayland, president of Brown University, Miss Brackett, the Rev. Daniel Greene, and others, is extremely contemptible, and deserves punishment. You will now ask what was Mr Durant's object ? See the clap-trap engraved on the cover of the book, and you will easily guess at it ; the honest author *thought it his duty to magnetise the public's eyes in order to catch their pennies*. His object was to make money *at any rate* ; and I am sorry to say that he will accomplish it, for his *favorite composition* addresses too directly the mischievous and vulgar tendencies of men, not to excite the curiosity of all, and be greedily swallowed by many of his kindred minds.

But I must warn those who desire and are candidly seeking the truth, that they ought not kindly to rely on what Mr Durant says ; for myself, I cannot credit any part of his narrative ; he has, to my knowledge, committed too gross misrepresentations of the truth to be believed in any thing. *Ab uno, noscite omnia*, might be properly said of the whole book ; the two following specimens of the author's antipathy *to truth*, will clearly exemplify what I mean. Speaking of the Report made in June, 1831, by a Committee of the Royal Academy of Medicine of Paris, he says :

“ The commission spent five years with the most scrutinizing experiments, and finally, in 1831, reported unfavorable to the science, but acknowledged in the report, having seen many extraordinary and unaccountable facts, which was sufficient to show their prejudice and total incapability of judging in a science in which the fundamental principles were above their comprehension.

“The respectability of the society which appointed the commission had some influence in retarding the rapid advances which the science was making.”

It is evident to my mind, that in the preceding remarks the honest author has most daringly attempted to impose upon the public. For the report to which he alludes, is altogether favorable to the claims, even the most extraordinary, of magnetism, and is justly considered as having formed a new era in the history of the science. Those who have read it, know this to be the fact. Among other conclusions drawn from all the experiments related in the report, and which are presented at the end of the volume, I will extract the following :

“A certain number of the observed phenomena appeared to us as having been produced by magnetism alone, and could not be produced without it. These are physiological and therapeutical phenomena well established.”

“Considered as an agent of physiological phenomena, or as a therapeutical means, magnetism should be ranked within the frame of medical knowledge, and consequently physicians alone ought to have the privilege of using it, as it is already practised in the northern countries of Europe.”

“The committee have collected facts important enough to allow it to believe that the Academy should encourage and favor researches on magnetism, as being a very curious branch of psychology and natural history.”

Now, can we suppose that Mr Durant had not read the said report? To me, this supposition is inadmissible. But if he had not, how could he so boldly and pertinently speak about it?

Here is another specimen of his love of truth and fairness. The following letter was written by Dr L. L. Miller, one of the most eminent physicians of Providence, whom he mentions in his book as having been present at some experiments tried by Mr Potter, on a respectable infirm young lady :

For the Journal of Commerce.

Messrs Hale and Hallock, — Sirs, I have noticed in your daily of the 20th inst. an extract from Mr Durant’s book on Animal Magnetism, respecting the case of Miss Ebon, (should be Miss

Aborn.) My name being mentioned in connexion with the case, I cannot assent to the whole matter contained in the extract, therefore, I wish you to do me the kindness to insert the following in your paper. Miss Aborn has been a patient of mine for two years or more. Her disease is lateral distortion of the spine, under which her sufferings have been very severe, causing sleepless nights, loss of appetite, strength, &c. A long and strict perseverance in medical treatment failing to relieve her, as a dernier resort, I suggested the trial of animal magnetism, with the single view of procuring rest. Her answer was—"I will assent to any thing you think proper." I called upon Mr Potter to make trial of animal magnetism. His first attempt was successful in about thirty minutes. On visiting her next morning at 8 o'clock, I found her sitting in the room, and she exclaimed with an expression of the most perfect sincerity—"I have not had so comfortable sleep for two years, and feel as much refreshed as I ever did from my natural sleep." I advised her to try the experiment again. She was magnetised every night for some weeks, and with but two or three slight exceptions, rested perfectly well and continues to, up to this time, without the aid of any medicine whatever.

Her general health soon began to improve, and she now enjoys all the comforts of quiet sleep, good appetite, &c.

I cannot imagine how Mr Durant arrived at the conclusion that Miss Aborn is a "self-deceived somnambulist," and much more am I surprised that he should give so vulgar a description of the progress of magnetising, together with his vile insinuations. It is true, the magnetiser is seated in front of his patient, and that in the process of manipulating, the hands are passed over the limbs. But I assure you, there are no circumstances attending it, that would excite such thoughts in an honest heart.

The imbecile language she is made to use in his extract, I have never heard from her, and am assured by Mr Potter, she never used it in his presence. I have no recollection of any other experiments than the one willing the pencil a watermelon, and willing her to awake in a given time, which I am very happy to say are true. However, this does not interest me so much as the manner in which the young lady is treated in the extract by Mr Durant. Miss Aborn is well known to a large circle of friends of the first respectability. Her character here, does not need a moment's comment. She is a young lady of good powers of mind, and a heart as honest and pure as the one is vile which attempts to traduce it.

LEWIS L. MILLER.

Providence, Oct. 27, 1837.

The description given by Mr D. of the experiments performed on Miss Aborn, is such as to make even a *soldier* blush. Any person of common sense and delicacy cannot help being indignant at the gross outrage against decency, truth and christian charity contained in these libellous pages.

The reader will, perhaps, find me rather severe in my remarks. This may be ; but I beg his pardon, I cannot be otherwise. I am a man, I feel like a man, and express my feelings as they are. If I thought that Mr Durant were capable of appreciating *mildness*, I would have been mild towards him. If I thought that he would have considered *silence* as a proof of perfect *contempt* rather than of *fear*, I would not even have said a word about him. But I am fully convinced that such a vain and prejudiced character always sees things through a distorted medium, and cannot but mistake the true sentiments of others either for homage or an expression of dread of his superior skill. I would add, moreover, that my feelings towards Mr D. are not those of anger and revenge ; he has surely spoken of me in very harsh terms, but I pay no attention to it ; I feel particularly *indignant* for the impertinent and unjust manner in which he has ungratefully presented before the public, so many respectable persons from whom he had received only polite attentions at Providence. The interest that I feel in those estimable persons, as well as the love of truth have prompted me to write these pages ; God knows that I have been moved by no other motive whatever.

In justice to Mrs Andros, the somnambulist, who has been so unfeelingly imposed upon by Mr Durant, I will say a word more ; I have seen her twice in the magnetic sleep, and she gave me as well as to others who were present, indisputable proofs that she was in magnetic somnambulism. She had been magnetised nearly three months, by Mr Ame. C. Potter, an intelligent and amiable gentleman of Providence, before she ever was magnetised by her own husband. She never had

any idea of going to New York, to appear before the public as a somnambulist until very lately, when she was strongly advised to do it by several influential gentlemen from that city. Mr Andros, induced by the hope of making his fortune, determined to follow the plan suggested to him, and in consequence went to New York with his wife. But I must say, that a few days before her departure, this lady told me that she was very reluctant to leave her home for such a purpose, and that she was doing it to comply with her husband's wishes. I must also declare that I strongly disapproved of Mr A.'s resolution, although *I had myself no idea and never had an inclination to go and lecture in New York.* I objected to Mr A.'s plan, on the ground that he was incapable of properly managing a somnambulist, was totally ignorant of the science, could not give a single explanation about the effects produced, and was not at all qualified to face on any occasion with a scientific man. I observed to him that I knew from experience that in thus displacing his somnambulist, he would expose her to frequent failures, and very probably throw himself and his innocent wife into very serious troubles ; I finally assured him, that, should he persist in his plan, I would publicly protest against his doings in New York ; it being my duty to do so, as I felt responsible for the success of animal magnetism in this country and bound to secure all possible means to favor its free and regular development. Mr A. did not take any notice of my admonitions ; he went to New York, and exhibited his somnambulist, although every circumstance was unfavorable to his experiments. I did not protest in the newspapers, both out of kindness towards Mr A., and for fear that he and others would have charged me with jealousy ; I thought it better to keep silent. Mr A. acted then on his own responsibility. Whether his wife ever contrived to practise deception or not, I leave it to others to judge. But if she had, would it be just and philosophical to draw the inference that all som-

nambulists do the same ? Can people, besides, decide any thing concerning animal magnetism, from the conduct and language of Mr Andros, ignorant as he is of the matter ? *

C. P.

* I refer the reader to the appendix of the last edition of Col. W. L. Stone's letter to Dr Brigham, where several wonderful and well authenticated proofs of *lucidity* were afforded to him by this very Mrs A. whom Mr D. represents as an infamous deceiver.

N. B. The reader will probably have noticed several grammatical inaccuracies and idiomatical phrases in the two preceding Essays. In preparing them for the press, I was obliged to rely solely upon my own imperfect acquaintance with the language. Those of my friends to whom I wished to submit the MS. before publication, were so much engaged at the time that I hardly thought it proper to withdraw their attention from their own affairs. I must therefore ask the indulgence of the reader for this first edition. The next one (should there be demand for another) will undergo a careful revision.

R E M A R K S
ON THE MANNER IN WHICH
THE
CLAIMS OF ANIMAL MAGNETISM
SHOULD BE MET AND DISCUSSED.

[A long and very valuable dissertation under the above title, appeared some months ago in the *Bristol County Democrat*, published at Taunton, Mass. We at first intended to extract the whole of it, but are obliged, in order not to exceed too much the proposed limits of this pamphlet, to leave out several parts of it. These omissions, however, do not substantially alter the sense and connection of the arguments.]

ANIMAL MAGNETISM seems, at this time, and in this vicinity, to excite some public attention and interest. The number and character of the believers in the reality of this mysterious power, are such as to entitle the subject to a candid consideration and impartial examination. The question whether its claims, as presented by its advocates, are founded in truth, is one of considerable importance, and the evidence which its advocates offer in the affirmative should be subjected to a rigid, but unprejudiced investigation. It is not my intention, at present, if ever, to discuss that evidence, or to attempt to establish or controvert those claims; but simply to make some remarks and suggestions as to the *manner* in which those claims should be met and discussed. This seems to me to be a necessary preliminary to the actual discussion; because, so far as I have noticed any published remarks on the subject, in this vicinity, the writers appear to me to have approached it in a manner and spirit little calculated to lead to correct results.

It may be proper, in the first place, to state as distinctly as may be, what is to be understood by the term "animal magnetism." The definition of the term and the description of the phenomena produced, as given by Mr Poyen, are as follows :

“ It is a peculiar state of the nervous system, during which some unusual physiological phenomena, not yet well appreciated, present themselves — a state which is ordinarily produced in one individual by the *will* of another, performing certain manual evolutions for the purpose of causing it to take place.”

“ The phenomena produced under the influence of the *will* and *gestures*, vary according both to the disposition of the person to receive the magnetical action, and the power of the magnetiser to exercise that action. Thus *some individuals*, especially those who are strong and enjoy perfect health, *feel nothing*, some others feel some heaviness of the eyelids, cephalgia, nausea, much calm or great agitation. Finally, some are plunged into a peculiar sleep, called magnetical sleep, and reach, after a few sittings, that very singular state known under the name of somnambulism. The magnetical sleep is characterized by a complete suspension of the external senses. Somnambulism is the faculty of speaking during the sleep; of recognizing external objects through unusual ways, and finally, of hearing nobody but the magnetiser or the other person brought into relation to the magnetised.”

Here, then, we have a definition of the alleged power or agency in question, and a statement of the phenomena said to be produced by it. The questions to be settled are, whether any such state of the nervous system can be produced in the manner stated, and if so, whether any such phenomena as are described, are consequent on such a state? Now it is obvious that these are simply questions of fact, and to be decided, like all other questions of fact, by the evidence. And in an inquiry of this kind, what is the nature of the evidence which we are to expect, and which ought to be required?

My first principle, in answer to the interrogation is, *negatively*, that the facts are not to be proved or disproved by a course of mere *abstract reasoning*. No fact in physical science ever was, or ever can be, proved or disproved conclusively by reasoning *a priori*. Facts are to be established, in the first place, by their appropriate evidence — the evidence of experiment, observation and testimony — and from the facts thus established, we may, by reasoning, draw inferences and deduce conclusions as to the causes and consequences of these facts. Facts are the *data* — the basis — and the *result* of reasoning. You may, by reasoning from previously established analogous facts, show, more or less satisfactorily, the probability or improbability of another alleged fact; but such reasoning must always and necessarily be inconclusive, and subject to be controlled by evidence having a direct bearing on the question. Who, for example, would ever think of proving by abstract reasoning the fact of the falling of

meteoric stones from the atmosphere, or from regions beyond it? or the fact that a certain metal took fire and burnt up on being immersed in pure, cold water? Before any such facts were known to have occurred, one might, by reasoning analogically from the known properties and qualities of stones and the atmosphere, in the one case, and of metals and cold water in the other, have shown, very clearly, the *improbability*, and might claim to have proved demonstratively the *impossibility* that either of these phenomena could take place consistently with the established laws of nature. And yet the facts, in both cases, are proved, by incontestible evidence, and are now admitted by all who have examined that evidence. Reason is to be employed in deciding upon the nature, the credibility, the weight and the effect of the evidence adduced in support of any alleged fact. But when reason is satisfied that the evidence is appropriate, its credibility unquestionable and effect conclusive, reason has nothing further to do but to yield its assent to the truths thus established, however strange and mysterious they may appear.

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The intrinsic improbability of miracles is, to say the least, as great as that of animal magnetism, and if similar evidence, or evidence equally cogent, can be offered in support of animal magnetism, which its advocates do not set up as a *miracle*, but merely as a recently discovered operation of the ordinary laws of nature, consistency requires assent to that also. I do not say that such evidence has been or can be adduced. I am not now examining the question of the reality of animal magnetism, but endeavoring to settle the principles upon which the examination should be conducted, and the nature of the evidence which should be required.

* * * * *

My second negative proposition is, that the truth of the alleged facts and phenomena of animal magnetism is not to be proved or disproved by '*Revelation.*' In this enlightened age and country, I should not have deemed it necessary to announce this principle, if I had not heard it asserted that some persons refuse to believe in animal magnetism because they consider it contrary to scripture.

* * * * *

The truths of nature may contradict the *letter*, but never the *spirit*, of the scriptures. They may, in some instances, contradict our previous private interpretation of the scriptures, but no scripture is of private interpretation. There may be *apparent* but there cannot be *real* contradictions or inconsistencies. The scriptures speak of the *rising and going down of the sun*. Astronomy teaches that the sun actually *neither rises nor goes*

down, but is stationary. This *astronomical* truth was once supposed to contradict the *scripture* truth, and was accordingly denounced as heresy; but that notion has long since been exploded. More recently the truths of the science of geology were supposed to be inconsistent with the truth of the Mosaic account of the creation, and infidels rejoiced and some believers trembled in view of the consequences of this discovery; but farther researches and discoveries have shown that the revelations of geology are not only reconcilable with, but furnish corroborative proofs of the truth of the scriptural account, in its fair interpretation, of the formation of the earth and its inhabitants. Very recently, we learn, his holiness the pope has issued his bull condemning the supposed truths of phrenology as heresies; but I presume the advocates of that science, in this country at least, will not be driven, by its terrors, to the abandonment of their investigations and pursuits. Neither do I believe that the investigations of the enquirers into the claims of animal magnetism will be abandoned on account of the tremulous apprehensions of those who have so little confidence in the foundations of their own faith in christianity as to be alarmed lest they should be overturned by the puny discoveries which may be made in natural science. There is nothing to be feared from an indulgence of the sober spirit of inquiry into any subject. Christianity is founded on 'the rock of ages' and all the discoveries which man can make in the laws, operations and phenomena of nature will only contribute to the proof of its strength and immutability.

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My third negative proposition is, that the questions relating to the reality of animal magnetism are not to be settled by the mere authority of names, and opinions of men however learned, intelligent, and respectable. Facts are to be established by evidence, and opinions are to be founded on facts. If the opinions of others are not based on facts, they are *baseless* and utterly without weight, by whomsoever entertained. If they are based on facts, let them communicate the facts to *us*, that we may form our own opinions. 'Have any of the rulers and of the pharisees believed?' is a question which, in substance and spirit, though in various forms, has been repeated times innumerable, during, at least, the last eighteen centuries. But after all, mere opinion as to matters of fact is, in general, utterly worthless as evidence of truth.

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The question as to the reality of animal magnetism is not one of science and skill, but of the existence of certain alleged facts and phenomena; and upon this question the mere opinions of others, however exalted,—whether popes or cardinals, clergy or laity, physicians or patients, cashiers or designers, merchants or law-

yers, mechanics or farmers,—can have no legitimate authority, and are of no use but to save the careless and indolent the trouble of examining the evidence and forming opinions for themselves, by furnishing them ready made to their hands.

Here it may not be improper to suggest, more distinctly, the difference between the expressions of a *mere opinion* and *the testimony* of a witness as to facts. The distinction would seem to be sufficiently obvious, but still, I apprehend, it is sometimes confounded. When a credible witness declares that a certain fact about which he could not be mistaken, took place within his personal observation, that is appropriate and competent evidence, and may be considered as full proof of its actual occurrence, though it may be in itself strange and improbable; but if he merely expresses an opinion that a certain fact took place, about which he knows no more than I do; or if he goes further and expresses an opinion as to the unknown cause of that supposed fact, this is evidence only of the state of his mind—of his opinion—and is not evidence of the correctness of that opinion. If the fact which he *believes* took place appears to me to be more probable than the contrary, and if the cause which he assigns appears to me to be adequate, I may adopt his opinions on the subject, but if not I am bound to reject them. In other words, I ought not to adopt them without knowing and examining the facts, the grounds, the evidence on which they are founded.

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In discussing the question of the authority of names and opinions in relation to the alleged phenomena of animal magnetism, it seems to be necessary to advert to the report of the commissioners, of whom Dr Franklin was one, appointed by the king of France in 1784 to investigate the subject as it was then presented by Mesmer. That report it is well known was against the claims and pretensions of Mesmer. So far as the question submitted to them could be decided by their authority, it was decided by that report. The public, with some few exceptions, seemed to be satisfied, and have ever since, until recently, implicitly acquiesced in that decision, as a final settlement of the matter. I now propose to offer some remarks to show that the report of those commissioners is not conclusive on the principal question now in debate, and that it rather *encourages* than *precludes*, further examination.

In the first place M de Jussieu, one of the commissioners, whose skill and judgment as a man of science and an accurate observer of the phenomena of nature are well established and extensively known, after carefully witnessing the experiments with the others, and experimenting also by himself, published another report, in which he had the independence and boldness to express a contrary opinion, and to acknowledge the magnetic influence and effects.

In the second place, the experiments witnessed by the commissioners differed *materially*, if not *essentially*,—both in the mode of proceeding and in the phenomena produced,—from those of the present day. The difference is so broad and striking that it may suggest a reasonable doubt whether both are produced on the same principles or by the same agency. At any rate they differ so widely that if the former experiments and phenomena utterly failed to prove the reality of animal magnetism, it does not follow that the latter must also necessarily fail. In the former experiments there were oak boxes, iron rods, vocal and instrumental music, and a great parade and extensive apparatus of complicated machinery. *Now* there is no parade, no machinery. The operations of the magnetiser are few and simple, and little calculated to impose even on the feeble minded and credulous, or to produce “excited sensibility.” In the former experiments, some of the effects were convulsions, expectorations of viscous and sometimes of bloody matter; involuntary and precipitated motion of the limbs and body, quick internal muscular movements; cries, tears and immoderate laughter. *Now* all is said to be *in general* comparatively quiet; the patient generally remains at rest, sometimes falling into an easy slumber, and occasionally, but more rarely, into somnambulism. Thus the facts and phenomena but very slightly, if at all, resemble each other, though the *name* has been retained. The apparent change of *aspect*, if not of *essential character*, invites further investigation.

In the third place the pretensions and theory of Mesmer, which those commissioners were appointed to examine, had a tendency to lead their attention from the precise question now in debate and to direct it to another and entirely distinct one. Mesmer pretended (and probably believed) that he had discovered “a fluid universally diffused, and filling all space, being a medium of reciprocal influence between the celestial bodies and the earth, and living beings;—it insinuated itself into the substance of the nerves, upon which therefore it had a direct operation; it was capable of being communicated from one body to other bodies, both animate and inanimate, and that at a considerable distance, without the assistance of any intermediate substance;—and it exhibited, in the human body, some properties analogous to those of the loadstone.” In short he said, “Nature offers, in magnetism, the universal means of curing and preserving the lives of men.”

This was Mesmer’s theory; and the attention of the commissioners was directed to the facts principally in their relation to this theory. The question was whether this *theory* was proved by the *facts*, and it is obvious, so far as I can judge by their report, that they examined the facts and phenomena, almost exclusively, in relation to this question. Now the facts and phe-

nomena certainly did not prove Mesmer's theory, and the commissioners therefore, very properly, reported against it. Finding that *this theory* was not established by the phenomena, the commissioners undertook to theorize for themselves, and attempted to account for the phenomena by imputing them to the agency of *imagination, imitation, and contagion* or *excited sensibility*. Whether this theory is more satisfactory than Mesmer's, it is unnecessary to our present purpose to decide. The present advocates of a power or agency to which—perhaps improperly, or at least unfortunately—they also give the name of animal magnetism, do not adopt the theory or the pretensions of Mesmer. If therefore his theory and pretensions are utterly demolished, the question now in debate is not thereby affected in the slightest degree. The present advocates of what they called animal magnetism only insist on this single proposition, viz: that *certain specified facts and phenomena may be produced by means of certain specified mental and manual operations*; but they do not require that these facts and phenomena should be accounted for in any particular manner, or on any particular theory. Each one may account for them as he best can, or leave their cause in its original mystery and obscurity. Their wish is to establish and multiply *facts* and not to *theorize*. The question whether the proposition above announced is true or false, is that to which they wish to direct attention; and that question is not only not *decided*, but not even *touched*, by the report of the commissioners of 1784.

I regret that I have not been able to find a copy at length, of that report. I have relied on the accounts of it which are given by Dr Willich, lately published in a newspaper in this town; in the *Encyclopædia Americana*, article 'Magnetism;' and in *Ree's Cyclopædia*, article 'Imagination.' These articles were evidently written by *unbelievers in animal magnetism*, in any sense of those terms; and of course would not make any misstatement favorable to its reality. From those accounts it appears that the commissioners gave a statement, in their report, of the facts and phenomena upon which their opinion was founded. It seems to me that those facts and phenomena are of a character so extraordinary and remarkable as to invite further scrutiny. I have already alluded to some of them, and shall not repeat them. "Nothing," say the commissioners, "can be more surprising, or more inconceivable by those who have not witnessed it, than the spectacle of these convulsions; all seem to be under the power of the magnetiser; a sign from him, his voice, his look, immediately rouses them from a state of even apparent stupor. In truth," they add, "it was impossible not to recognise, in these constant effects, a great power or agency which held the patients under its dominion, and of which the magnetiser appeared to be the sole depositary."

This is the literal language of the commissioners, in a report which is generally supposed to have annihilated forever the pretensions of animal magnetism. They witnessed certain experiments. They acknowledge that certain *surprising*, and before *inconceivable* phenomena were produced; that these phenomena were the "*constant effects*" of the operations performed to produce them; and that these things prove the actual existence and influence of a "*great power*," which was wielded and directed at the *will* of the magnetiser! Now it seems to me that these statements and acknowledgments of the commissioners go very far toward establishing, if they do not completely establish, so far as the authority of the commissioners can establish, all that is essential in the reality of *animal magnetism*, in the present use and acceptation of those terms; and they leave in dispute only Mesmer's *theory*, the *name*, and some unessential phenomena which were then unknown. But I care not for the *name* or for Mesmer's theory, or any other theory, even that of the commissioners. The theories may be true or false without in the least affecting the reality of the facts and phenomena. The name may be inappropriate. It may lead the mind astray as to the proper subject of inquiry in relation to the agency in question, by connecting it with Mesmer's theory of an all pervading magnetic fluid. I think it has had some such unfavorable influence. Some name expressive of the phenomena produced or of the manner of producing them, without apparently assuming any theory as to their *causation*, would unquestionably be better. The agency may have no such resemblance, affinity or analogy to animal magnetism as is suggested by its name. Abandon the old name, then, if you please, and give it one more appropriate. Call it *Animal Influence*. Call it any one or all of the names given to it by the commissioners—"imagination"—"imitation"—"contagion,"—if you think them more expressive and less liable to mislead. I admit all the *facts* stated by the commissioners. I have no controversy with them even about their *opinions* as to the cause and origin of the phenomena, or the *name* selected by them to designate the power by which they were produced. They may be right in their views of all these things, and yet the question *now* in debate remains wholly unaffected by their decision. Adopt their *opinions*, *theory* and *nomenclature*, if you choose. Then proceed in your experiments to ascertain, by a careful induction of particulars, the extent, limits and uses of the newly discovered functions of those long known and admitted powers and faculties of man. Even in this view much remains to be done, and the subject is worthy of farther investigation. It may lead to important discoveries in intellectual philosophy, physiology and therapeutics. It certainly *invites* and may *reward* your labors of research.

I hope I have now succeeded in my attempt to shew that the question as to the claims of animal magnetism, as they are presented at the present day, is not so completely settled and put at rest, either by the *facts* or *opinions* stated in the report of the French commissioners of 1784, as to preclude or even discourage further examination.

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I proceed to state, as a fourth negative proposition, that the question of the reality of animal magnetism is not to be settled by *ridicule, sarcasm and wit*. These are very proper in their place. They serve for an amusing exercise and recreation, which may, on this and most other occasions, be indulged without harm. I can enjoy the keenness of ridicule when aimed at the follies, and foibles, and absurd opinions (as the belief in animal magnetism is by some supposed to be,) of men, without wounding their feelings. I can smile at the corruscations and brilliancy of wit, when it flashes and sparkles without scorching; and I can excuse even the shafts of sarcasm, when hurled against the arrogance of self-conceit, without lacerating the sensibility of the modest and unassuming. But ridicule is not the test of truth. The fear of it may cause the faint-hearted to shrink from the avowal of those opinions against which it is directed, and from an examination of the evidence in their support. But its wavering, flickering light is not the lamp of evidence. It can never become a sure "lamp to the feet and light to the path" of the lovers of science. It will never be a "pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night" to guide the wanderers in their journeyings through the wilderness of doubt and ignorance, to the promised land of certainty and truth. The bare suggestion of this proposition is, I trust, sufficient to teach the necessity of care to distinguish between ridicule and evidence, sarcasm and truth, wit and wisdom.

My fifth and last negative proposition is, that this question is not to be settled by general and sweeping objections, however oracular in their enunciations, sometimes advanced with little thought and received with less consideration. Such objections I have often heard of, and I now propose to examine a few of the most prominent. If I mistake not, I can, with little labor, either demonstrate their fallacy, or show that they are too loose and indefinite to be distinctly met, and therefore unavailing. The objections are announced in conversation, and it may not be possible to state them in the precise words of the objectors, but I shall endeavor, as far as may be, to retain their full force and spirit.

The first objection I shall notice under this head, is announced in terms like the following. "I cannot believe in animal magnetism, because all theory is opposed to it." Now if the objector, instead of using this general form of objection, would conde-

scend to enumerate and specify some theories which he supposes are opposed to it, he might, perhaps, discover the fallacy of his own objection. At any rate, I should be better able to understand and appreciate its force. What theories are against it? There is a theory of the tides, a theory of gravitation, and one Symmes once formed and announced a very curious theory of the earth. Are all these or any other conceivable theories, (except the objector's own theory on the very subject in question) opposed to animal magnetism? Have they any bearing upon it or relation to it? If so, I will thank the objector to point out the bearing to it.

But what if all theory is opposed to it? What is theory? Johnson tells us it is "speculation; not practice; scheme; plan or system yet subsisting only in the mind." Theory, then, however plausible, is not *fact* or *evidence* of fact. *Facts* may sustain *theory*, but theory never can *prove* or *disprove* facts.

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Another of these sweeping objections is substantially this: "I cannot believe in animal magnetism because it is contrary to the laws of nature, — a miracle." This general objection, like the former, cannot be directly met and answered, but by a general denial. The advocates of animal magnetism say that its phenomena are not produced by a *violation*, but by the *operation* of the laws of nature. The objectors affirm the contrary. Here is general assertion against general assertion — opinion against opinion, and they leave the question in dispute precisely where they found it — a question of fact to be proved or disproved by its appropriate evidence. If the objector will point out some particular, established, admitted, universal law of nature, and show distinctly how that law is violated by the alleged phenomena of animal magnetism, the objection must prevail, but I have never known this attempted.

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Another objection — or rather *declaration* — which has been made by some persons possessing corporeal vigor and mental activity, is of this kind: "I will not believe until some person shall cause *me* to fall asleep by the magnetic influence." Whether this specific piece of evidence ought to be more satisfactory than any other, I shall not stop to inquire. The objection savors strongly of the spirit of the unbelieving Thomas. He refused to believe the concurrent, positive testimony of the other disciples, and even went so far as to prescribe the precise nature and degree of evidence to which alone he would yield his assent — the evidence of *two*, at least, of his own senses. In that case the required evidence was graciously furnished; but accompanied at the same time, with a gentle reproof for the slowness of his belief. "Thomas, because thou hast *seen* me, thou hast believ-

ed; blessed are they who have *not seen* and yet have believed." The *fact*, in that case, certainly required as strong proof as that of animal magnetism; and the implied reproof of the unbelief of Thomas shows the unreasonableness of rejecting the concurrent testimony of numerous credible witnesses to a fact, even of an extraordinary character, about which they could not be mistaken; and of rejecting all evidence except that of *our own* senses and personal experience. Some persons, I am told, have even gone farther than this, and declared that they would not believe in animal magnetism on *any evidence whatever*. This is a species of *monomania* which, *quoad hoc*, deprives the objectors of the characters and attributes of reasonable beings, and to them, therefore, I can make no reply.

Another objection—not so much to the *truth* of animal magnetism, as to an *examination of its evidence even*—is that, "if true, it is wrong and wicked, and ought not to be meddled with." This, I suppose, is merely a remnant of the old superstitious feeling against *magic*, and *sorcery*, and the *black art*, and "solemn compaction or conversing with the devil by way of witchcraft, conjuration and the like." It is a feeling unworthy of the present enlightened age, and I presume very limited in its influence. We need not fear that we shall ever discover any truth which God intended to conceal from us. Our powers of investigating and comprehending truth were given us with the intent that they should be successfully exercised. Truth—all truth—is essentially good. It is good in itself and good for man, though he may pervert it to evil by his own wickedness. If the power ascribed to animal magnetism is a reality, it is already discovered, and the knowledge of it cannot be annihilated. If the *good* reject it and refuse to employ and direct it to benevolent objects, the *wicked* may cultivate and pursue it in order to pervert it to their own unholy purposes. I have little faith in the declaration of some of its enthusiastic advocates, that it can be successfully exercised only when undertaken from good motives and for benevolent ends. All truth and all human power, so far as I know, may be *abused* as well as *used*, and I have yet seen no evidence to satisfy me that animal magnetism, if a reality, is an exception to the general rule. If, then, there is such a power and agency as that which is ascribed to animal magnetism, it is, I humbly insist, not only the *right*, but the *duty* of the virtuous to investigate it thoroughly, that they may not only use it themselves for purposes of benevolence, but may discover and apply the means of counteracting the arts and machinations of the depraved to pervert it to the accomplishment of their own guilty designs. If there is evidence sufficient to raise even a slight presumption of its reality, we should seek the light of further evidence on the subject, and follow wherever that light may lead us, without fear

or faltering. I am not so enthusiastic as to expect that any discoveries which may be made in relation to this power, if it is a reality, will effect any great revolution in human affairs. I do not believe that it will furnish a *panacea* for the cure of all maladies; a rail road conveyance to the acquisition of all knowledge; or a remedy for all the nameless "ills that flesh is heir to." I ask only a sober examination of its evidence, its capacities and its uses.

I have never, amongst all the objections, heard any one of the objectors say, "I have faithfully and repeatedly tried the experiment on others, and submitted to its trial on myself; I have also witnessed repeated trials of it *upon* and *by* others of different ages, sexes and temperaments; and all without success, and without perceptible effect." Such an objection, if made, would be entitled to grave consideration, but until made, I am not called upon to meet and examine it.

I now proceed to consider the last oracular objection to which I shall refer under this head. It is this. "I cannot," say the objectors, "believe the reality of animal magnetism, because its pretensions are an assumption of the essential attributes of Jehovah, — Omnipotence, Ubiquity, and Omniscience." Let me again ask the objector to be more specific. Which of the essential facts and phenomena of animal magnetism assumes these, or either of these attributes of the Deity? Who claims to possess them? Does he usurp the attribute of *omnipotence*, who expressly disclaims the power to operate, with equal efficacy, on all, and even to produce any perceptible effect on some? Does he usurp the attribute of *ubiquity*, who exercises the power to discern some external objects by unknown means and to a *limited* extent, though the precise limits may be undefined and may vary with varying circumstances? Does he claim the attribute of *omniscience*, who distinctly admits his *utter ignorance* of the nature, essence and efficiency of *means* in the production of their *effects*?

Man, with all his ignorance, and dependence, and weakness, and frailty, and folly, and sin, can do some few things by the aid of his *acknowledged*, though *limited and derived* powers. He can fell forests, erect palaces, build cities, level mountains, mould the refractory rocks into forms of gracefulness and beauty, guide, direct and disarm in some measure the lightning, and subject the elements of nature to his will. He can subdue the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the leviathans of the ocean, and compel them to minister to his necessities and pleasures. He has power, too, over his fellow men. There is power in the *eye* of man when it beams with benevolence or burns with indignation—a power acknowledged and felt wherever it is seen, and which has caused even the tiger to quail and shrink

from its steady and determined gaze. There is a mysterious and fascinating, but mighty power in the *eye* of female beauty—a power which has charmed the ferocity of the savage, subdued the strength of the valiant, softened the audacity of the bold and unrelenting, melted the heart of the cruel, and compelled the proud despot to kneel before it and sue for favor. The conqueror has power to levy and command armies, ravage nations, subject them to the sway of his sceptre, and bind them in fetters of iron and bands of brass. Even in our own boasted land of freedom and equal rights, man exercises the power to hold millions of his fellow men in abject slavery, to subject their bodies, and, if it be his pleasure, to crush them beneath his heel. All these things man has the acknowledged power to perform and actually does perform, but if he claims a power to cause a fellow man, less vigorous than himself, to fall asleep, he arrogates to himself the attribute of *omnipotence*!!

He can harness the winds and the vapors to his ships and his cars, compel them to do his bidding, and cause them to transport his person and his wealth “to the uttermost parts of the earth and of the sea.” He can rise from the dust, poise himself in mid air, *ride on the wings of the wind*, and behold the earth and its inhabitants rolling beneath him. With his “visual orbs” he can penetrate the realms of space, number the stars that appear in the firmament, and call them by their names. He can watch the planets in their courses, weigh their masses, measure their distances, and foretell their places amidst the heavenly constellations at all future periods of time. He can gaze on the galaxy, wander through the wilderness of suns that glitter through the abysses of space, pass from Sirius to Orion; from the Pleiades to regions beyond the uttermost visible star, and there wonder and adore in the midst of the magnificence of this immeasurable temple of the Most High. All these things man has the acknowledged power to perform and actually does perform, but if he pretends to discern by unknown means, a few external objects on earth, which are beyond his own or others’ ordinary ken, he usurps the attribute of *ubiquity*!!

From the silence and secrecy of his closet, he can utter without even an audible whisper, his behests of business, his ardors of affection and his agonies of unrequited love; and the strength of the horse, the power of steam, the skill of men and the energies of governmental agency are forthwith wielded to speed his utterings to their destined object, however remote. From the deep recesses of his own mind, he can send forth his invisible thoughts, embodied in visible forms—*his thoughts that breathe in words that burn*—the glowing emanations of wisdom and virtue—to enlighten, and instruct, and cheer the millions of the civilized world. He can transmit those thoughts,—invisible,

intangible, inaudible as they are—to the unborn millions of all future nations, and ages, and kindred, and tongues. On the wings of imagination he can fly back to the source of the stream of time—to the period when light first dawned on the infant creation—and listen to the song of the morning stars and the shout of the sons of God. He can, by the same power, summon around him the departed spirits of the sages and patriarchs and prophets of the ‘olden time;’ behold their venerable forms and catch the accents of holiness and inspiration flowing warm from their lips. He can hear the indignant denunciations of Isaiah, the tender and pathetic wailings of Jeremiah, and the melting harmonies of the harp of David. He can pass on to the final consummation of all things, join in the hosannas of saints and angels in the realms of bliss, and bathe and revel in the effulgence of uncreated glory. All these things he can do by the aid of his acknowledged powers,—weak, frail, dependent, sinful as he is—but if he claims the power of communicating a single volition from his own mind to that of his brother in his immediate presence, he is guilty of robbing the Almighty of his attributes and usurping *omniscience*!! I have now done with objections.

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In removing these objections I have been led into such a series of remarks, and have made so many suggestions relating to the principal objects I had in view, that little remains to be done. I shall therefore only announce as distinctly as may be, a few affirmative propositions applicable to this inquiry, and then relieve my readers from their wearisome task.

The first proposition as to the manner in which the claims of animal magnetism are to be met and discussed, is, that it should be done with unprejudiced, impartial and candid minds, and with a sincere love of truth. Prejudice is always a *great* and sometimes an *invincible* obstacle to the acquisition of correct knowledge on any subject. The mind which is prepossessed by it, views facts and evidence through a distorting medium, and weighs them in an uneven balance. The very first requisite, therefore, to successful investigation is *impartiality*, and a sincere disposition to view every fact in its simplicity, and to give to every kind and degree of evidence its due weight and importance. But this state of mind is not all that is necessary. There must be,

Secondly. An active desire to ascertain where to learn facts, to seek evidence, and to follow wherever, and to whatever conclusion that evidence may lead. A mere *passive* state of mind, however impartial and candid it may be, is not enough. The maxim, that ‘truth is great and will prevail,’ is correct only in a restricted sense. It is often unable to prevail over obstinate prejudice, and it possesses no inherent energy and activity by

which it can force its way into the passive and indolent mind. It must be loved and sought and wooed in order to be won.

Thirdly. The lovers of truth in this matter should make the investigation of it a common cause. They should therefore be solicitous to receive and communicate, fully and freely, all the light and evidence which they respectively possess. The insulated experiments of a few individuals, pursuing their investigations in secrecy and silence, may do something; but if they *hide their light under a bushel*, and refuse to communicate or receive aid, their success will be comparatively small and their progress slow.

Fourthly. The great object, in the present state of the inquiry, should be to ascertain and establish facts, in all their nakedness and simplicity. All theories, all preconceived opinions, all speculations about causes, should, as far as possible, be discarded. Let **FACTS**, *numerous facts*,—*facts* in all their multiplied forms and varieties, be first settled, and then let those who will, form theories and systems to account for them. These may be useful for some purposes, but at present we are not prepared for them. All science consists exclusively in a knowledge of facts. We even learn the *laws of nature*, about which we hear so much, only from the *facts of nature*. Those laws are not, in general, revealed to us by instinct, intuition or inspiration, but by a slow and careful *induction* of numerous particular facts. Let *facts* then, at least for the present, be the exclusive objects of attention and research.

These are the principal rules which I have wished to enforce as to the manner and spirit in which the claims of animal magnetism should be met and examined. They are equally applicable to investigations on all other questions of natural science, and I should not have thought it necessary to allude to such obvious principles, had I not some reason to fear that they had been overlooked in their application to this particular subject.

I now proceed to make a few remarks as to the nature and sources of the evidence to be required to establish the reality of animal magnetism. From the preceding observations it may be perceived that *facts* are the only sure basis of knowledge, and should therefore be the primary objects of attention. The inquiry is, then, what is the nature, or what are the sources of evidence in support of the *facts* and *phenomena* of the magnetic influence? The answer is plain and simple. They are and can be only the three following.

First. *Our own personal experience*. If we have personally felt and exercised the magnetic power, by being effectually magnetised ourselves or by having magnetised others, under circumstances which preclude all suspicion of deception or delusion, we then have evidence, irresistible and conclusive to our own minds, of the reality of its agency. Any two persons can

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try this experiment. If successful, it will satisfactorily establish the affirmative of the question in debate. If unsuccessful, it will not conclusively prove the negative, because one or both of them may be destitute of the susceptibility or power of the magnetic influence. There is another source of evidence.

Secondly. *Personal observation of experiments upon and by others.* The effect of this kind of evidence will be proportioned to the number and character of the parties and the nature and variety of the experiments. They may be equivocal, or they may be such as to preclude all doubt. But our personal experience and our opportunities of personal observation must be limited, and consequently our knowledge of facts, derived from these sources may be less extensive than might be wished. There is, then, one other source of evidence to supply this deficiency. It is,

Thirdly. *The testimony of others as to their experience and observation.* This presents an extensive field of inquiry and if faithfully cultivated, it may yield much fruit. It is a very important source of evidence, and means should be adopted to enable us to reap all its benefits. This may be by conversation, by epistolary correspondence, or by a publication, for general information, of all well authenticated facts and phenomena which may be discovered. The testimony of witnesses thus obtained, as to facts, may be as satisfactory as the evidence of our own senses and observation, and therefore should not be rejected or disregarded, but diligently collected and faithfully applied.

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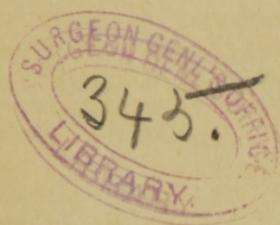
I would, in conclusion, recommend to those who are interested in this question, and who believe that the affirmative of it may possibly be true, to form themselves into a class or classes of convenient numbers, for the purpose of making experiments and keeping a record of all the facts and phenomena which may occur. The record should contain a statement of every experiment which should be made, whether successful or unsuccessful; of the ages, health and temperament of the parties, and of the simple facts and phenomena, if any, that should occur. The record of these experiments and phenomena, should, from time to time, be revised, arranged under appropriate heads, and a complete synopsis of them prepared, for easy reference. The report of the late commissioners of the Royal Society of Medicine in Paris on this subject, may be recommended as a model of the form in which such experiments should be tried and their results stated. A correspondence with other classes or individuals engaged in similar experiments might also be carried on with great mutual advantage. An authentic repository of facts may thus be formed, which will do more towards settling the question in debate than can be done by all the *logomachy* of a thousand talkers, whether objectors or advocates, in a whole century.

ENQUIRER.

POYEN (G.)

A letter to Col. ^{Wm}L. Stone

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