THE NEW MESMERISM.

V.

Some Counter-experiments. — Evidence of Drs. de Cyon, Louis Olivier, and Lutaud. — Fact and Fiction in Hypnotism. — Hysteria at the Salpêtrière and Hypnotism at La Charité. — M. Luys's Testimony to the Dangers of Hypnotism. — Letter from a Trained Subject. — Hypnotism and the New Magic. — The Library of Marvels. — A Modern Sorceress.

PRESSURE on space will not permit me to reproduce the protocols of the various sittings in Paris, at which I tested the unreality of the hypnotic phenomena presented to me at the Charité. I retain for reference and for verification the original documents, signed by the various witnesses who were present, and who minutely watched all my counter-experiments. I had very numerous sittings, and carried out in the methods which I have above described; numerous and complete counter-tests, selecting always and only the patients who had been presented to me, and the subjects who had been operated on by Dr. Luys and Colonel de Rochas. It will suffice here if I say that never by any accident did any one of these subjects show any power of discerning the effects of magnetised from non-magnetised iron; that the pretensions of Dr. Luys that they could distinguish between magnetic photographs, so-called, and non-magnetic were in every case ascertained to be unfounded; that the communication of sensations or thought by contact never took place in any case unless the subjects knew precisely what was the nature of the comedy to be played, and then they played it more or less well; that the cat performance and the drunken scenes came off six times when the subject supposed that the tubes contained alcohol, but when they really contained divers substances, none of which were alcoholic; that the scenes produced were acted in the same way under the influence of an empty tube, of a tube of alcohol, and of a tube of valerian. In order that there may be no doubt of the accuracy of these statements, I reproduce the letters of three of the eye-witnesses.

Dr. De Cyon, the well-known physiologist, writes, January 28th, 1893:

I can testify that the experiments at which I was present took place exactly as you have described them. The methods which you employed to demonstrate the trickery on the part of the subjects—notably the changing of the dolls and the substitution of the glass of water and of the magnet—are of such simplicity that one finds a difficulty in believing that the physicians who have made themselves the apostles of this new superstition are acting in good faith. I have myself made numerous experiments on Dr. Luys's subjects and on those of many other physicians; and I have always succeeded with the greatest facility in unmasking their frauds, which really can only deceive those who wish to be deceived. Either dupes or accomplices—there is no other alternative for the adepts of the doctrines which are now tending to discredit medicine and to throw it back many centuries. I am entirely in agreement with what you have said as to the morality of the subjects who lend themselves to these grotesque experiments. All this concerns much more the *police des mœurs* rather than clinical medicine.

Dr. Louis Olivier, D.Sc., Editor of the *Revue Générale des Sciences pures et appliquées*, writes January 19th, 1893:

I am quite ready to relate what I saw at the sittings which took place in your room in the Hôtel Continental. There was no agreement between the phenomena manifested by the hypnotised subjects and the production of the current of magnetisation, etc. You repeated the experiments of Dr. Luys and those of M. de Rochas, avoiding all suggestion, either involuntary or unconscious, which might vitiate the results. You took care to hide from the subjects the nature of the drugs tested, to which M. Luys attributes an action at a distance, the moment of the closure or opening of the current of your electro-magnet. Under these conditions there was no longer any relation between the nature of the medicinal agent and the symptoms manifested; when the circuit was opened without their knowledge, the subjects said they experienced the varied sensations which they ordinarily attribute to the passage of the current. They were unable to distinguish the open from the closed state of the current. You repeated M. de Rochas's experiment of *envoûtement*, employing without the knowledge of the hypnotised woman two dolls, one of which remained carefully separated from the sleeping woman. The latter uttered shrieks when I pulled the hair of the doll which she had not touched, etc. These facts appear to me decisive for the settlement of a question which I ought to say has been decided by the vast majority of the French scientific public in a sense absolutely opposed to the results proclaimed by MM. Luys and de Rochas. It is well that it should be known in England that the opinion of these two experimenters finds no support in the French scientific world.

Dr. Lutaud, the editor of the *Journal de Médecine de Paris*, writes:

I have read with most lively interest in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL your notes on the New Mesmerism, and I hasten to state that you have reproduced very faithfully the opinion of all those who were present at

the Paris experiments, and that your judgment, although severe, is absolutely just.

I pass now to the consideration of the underlying substratum of fact on which this huge structure of imposture and credulity is built. As I have already sufficiently indicated on this and on previous occasions, the artificially induced sleep known by the old-fashioned Latin name *somnambulism*, or, subsequently, as mesmerism, and rebaptised in Greek hypnotism, as though it were a new thing, is a subjective phenomenon of great interest, and of some complexity. It is, perhaps, not altogether unworthy of the attention which has been bestowed on it by French and German physicians. On the other hand—and here I can only venture to express a purely personal opinion, which will be taken for just what it is thought to be worth—I at least am of opinion, after carefully watching the course of events at the Salpêtrière and Bicêtre, and studying the enormously voluminous literature which owes its origin to the school of Nancy, to the Paris school, and to Belgian and Austrian writers, that the importance of these studies has been vastly exaggerated. I am disposed to think that it is rather the picturesque eccentricity of the phenomena and the striking *mise en scène* to which human automatism lends itself, which has attracted so much attention, than any real medical or physiological importance of the subject. Hypnotism, even as practised at the Salpêtrière, has, so far as I can see, taught us little, if anything, of the functions of the brain or of the organs of the mind which we did not know before. I find little in the writings of Charcot, of Bernheim, or of Janet but an excessively detailed development of facts and principles, already soundly, clearly, and usefully laid down by Carpenter and Braid. With a lucidity, clinical power, and picturesqueness which are beyond praise, M. Charcot has described, pictured, and exemplified a most striking series of hysterical phenomena. He has shown that nearly all, if not quite all, hypnotics are neurotic persons to whom the general classification of hysteria or neurasthenia may fairly be applied.

Of the intrinsic correctness of his classification of the stages of hysteria in its larger forms I am sceptical. Nor do I think it a permanent nosological classification which will last in medicine. These various stages, so regularly produced in classical order, appear to be performances originating partly in the auto-suggestion of an originally morbid patient, and then perpetuated by imitation, by suggestion, by ward training, and by habit in others. I am persuaded that they are artificial, that I even venture to predict they will cease to exist when the succession, so to speak, of M. Charcot's trained patients is broken, and when the habit of performance in the wards and theatre of the Salpêtrière is given up, as I am inclined to think it will be given up, before long. Such patients and such stages of the greater hysteria are not found elsewhere, unless the patients are led up to them by training or by imitative instincts; they are non-natural; they have no real existence in medicine, and will take no enduring place, so far as one can judge, in the history of medicine. It was natural enough that one extravagance should lead to another, and the follies of La Charité can but be regarded as the offspring—illegitimate, perhaps, and repudiated—of certain extravagances into which even men so able, so lucid, and so thoughtful as the school of the Salpêtrière have allowed themselves to be led. Already there are, happily, signs of a reaction within the school of the Salpêtrière itself. I believe that journalists and the public are now excluded from these performances; the *grande hystérie*, with all its stages, is much more rarely seen, and there is reason to hope that it will die out now that the first excitement of this scenic display has weakened, and the performance is felt to be monotonous and wearisome. Thought transference is not now spoken of there, and the proceedings at La Charité are ignored with an intentionally contemptuous silence.

What remains, then, of practical value and of medical utility as the residuum of these long studies? What are their mischiefs? Are these adequately balanced against their benefits? First as to their mischiefs. I will again let Dr. Luys speak, for although he is the most enthusiastic apostle of the presumed benefits, he is perfectly outspoken as to the resulting injuries.

"From the social point of view these new states of instan-

taneous loss of consciousness into which hypnotic or merely fascinated subjects may be made to pass deserve to be considered with lively interest. As I shall have to explain to you later, the individual in these novel conditions no longer belongs to himself; he is surrendered, an inert being, to the enterprise of those who surround him. At one moment in the passive stage in this condition of lethargy or of catalepsy, he is absolutely defenceless, and exposed to any criminal attempt on the part of those who surround him. He can be poisoned and mutilated. Where a woman is concerned she may be violated and even infected with syphilis, of which I have recently observed a painful example in my practice. She may become a mother without any trace existing of a criminal assault, and without the patient having the smallest recollection of what has passed after she has awakened. Sometimes, in the active condition, the state of lucid somnambulism, and even in the condition of simple fascination, the subject may be exposed to the influence of suggestions of the most varied kind on the part of the person directing his actions. He may be induced to become a homicide, an incendiary, or suicide, and all these impulses deposited in his brain during sleep become forces stored up silently, which will burst forth at a given moment with the precision,

Fig. 1.—Esther in the normal state.

accuracy of performance, and automatic impetuosity of acts performed by the really insane.

"Gentlemen, bear this well in mind; all these acts, all these phenomena unconsciously accomplished, are no mere vague apprehensions and vain suppositions; they are real facts which you may meet with this very day of ordinary life. They are apt to develop, and to appear around you and before you in the most inexplicable manner."¹

In many places Dr. Luys cautions his pupils against the dangers that may arise if hypnotic patients fall into the hands of unscrupulous persons. The hypnotised patient he describes as malleable, and flexible, and obedient in a completely passive fashion. "You can," he says, page 193, *et seq.*, "not only oblige this defenceless being incapable of resistance, to make you a manual gift, but to sign a promise, a bill of exchange, to write a holograph will in your favour, and to hand it you without his ever knowing what it contains or even that it exists. He will accomplish the most minute legal formalities calmly and serenely, so that the most experienced officers of the law would be deceived. Here is Esther. She

will write and sign before you a deed of gift in my favour good for a thousand francs. Her writing is as good as in her wakeful state, perhaps firmer and less hesitating. You could make her swallow, as you see, a bread pill, thinking it to be a peppermint lozenge; if it were a capsule containing morphine and she was to be awakened the victim of poisoning, she would know nothing of the origin of her symptoms. If I tell Marie to throw herself out of the window she rushes to the window like an arrow from a bow, pushing aside violently those who try to stop her. If she were found dead in the street, who could say whether it were suicide or homicide?" "It is not necessary that an individual should present the classic stages of the greater hypnotism in order that he should be made to receive and to execute a suggestion; the slightest and most superficial condition suffices—simple fascination. The hypnotic under the influence of suggestion is capable of becoming a dangerous lunatic of a new kind, and," says M. Luys, not without a certain inconsistency, "no one is obliged to allow himself to be hypnotised, and the fact of having delivered over to another even for a single instant his moral liberty suffices, in my opinion, to create a certain measure of responsibility." He is careful to recommend to his pupils always to give the suggestion to the

Fig. 2.—Esther suddenly and profoundly alarmed by the luminous radiation of a bottle cork.

persons whom they hypnotise not to allow themselves to be hypnotised by anyone else in order to avoid such subjects becoming the object of exploitation by interested persons.

This recommendation, highly significant as it is, cannot be considered to be of any great value. A subject accustomed to be thrown into this state cannot protect himself, and is at the mercy of any scoundrel or impostor who chooses to adopt the various methods of impressing the imagination which are the stock-in-trade of all hypnotisers. It is a mere idle fancy, easily disproved, that the hypnotiser has in himself any power special to him. All of M. Luys's subjects who passed under my hands, and every subject indeed who for many years has come under my notice could be hypnotised, as I have already stated, by me or by anybody else whom they thought capable of hypnotising them, or by any object whatever—a candle, a bell, a spoon, a coin, or a tuning fork—to which they were taught to impute hypnotising power. In the substituted jargon of other schools this is called mesmeric power or magnetic power; all empty phrases for concealing the fact that the condition is one of a subjective character, capable of being induced by many kinds of external stimulus. M. Luys's porter, his ward servant, myself, or any of my friends proved to be as capable of

¹ *Leçons cliniques sur les principaux Phénomènes de l'Hypnotisme dans leurs Rapports avec la Pathologie Mentale.* Par J. Luys. Paris: Georges Carre, éditeur, 58, Rue St. André-des-Arts, 1890.

hypnotising as he is himself. The dangers which M. Luys so vividly described are not therefore to be conjured by the simple expedient on which he relies. I may add that the newspapers in France abound with sad stories, and others are current in hospitals of the most distressing and grossly immoral results of this abominable practice of training responsible beings to resign their responsibility, and to become the passive agents of the will of others.

In connection with this part of the subject, and to throw a light on the active dangers associated with the practices of some of M. Luys's trained subjects, I think it right here to put on record a letter which I have received since reaching England from one of them (Jeanne), and in which she describes the activities of herself and another subject of M. Luys's, whom he presented to me at his clinic (Clarice) who is figured and described in his lectures, and to whom I have already referred:

MONSIEUR LE DOCTEUR.—Ayant eu l'honneur Samedi dernier de servir de Sujet à une Seance d'hypnotisme chez vous, Monsieur le Docteur, j'espère que vous voudrez bien m'excuser, Monsieur le Docteur, la liberté que je prends de vous faire parvenir une petite nomenclature—des expériences et des phénomènes—que Mr. le Dr. Luys obtien, depuis bien tot 7 ans, sur moi.

1. On obtien sur moi tres facilement—
Les trois états classiques,
Léthargie, Catalepsie, Somnambulisme.
En Léthargie
Anesthésie complète.
Tous les différents effects et contracture—au contacte—des différents
Métaux.
Les contractures Neuro-Musculaires.
Le jeu du Diaphragme.
En Catalepsie.
Prise du regard—le point fixe—autométisme—les attitudes—Effects
des Couleurs.
Suggestions par gestes,
Effects des Aimants.
Cessation du battement du poux.
Raideur cadaverique.
Somnambulisme.
Tous les phénomènes de l'hyperesthésie de la peau.
Les attractions.
Effects de médicaments à distance.
Suggestion—instantanée et à échéance
Changement de personnalité!
Mnémonie.
Vision.
Vue absolue à travers tous les corps opaques sans aucun secours des
yeux.

Double vue—transmission des pensées.

Voilà Mr. le Docteur les phénomènes qu'on obtien très facilement sur moi—sans jamais les rater. Mr. Le Docteur Luys n'hésitera pas à le confirmer d'ailleurs j'offre de le prouver—quand on voudra.

Je travail en ce moment comme Sujet (passif) à la Charité avec Mr. le Dr. Louys—et comme Sujet active avec mes sujets—chez moi tous les jours de 2 heures à 6 heures—et dans tous les Salons de la haute Aristocratie Parisienne en soirée hypnotique ou Spirite.

Anciennement Mdle. Clarice que Samedi Mr. le Docteur j'avais aperçue dans votre Salon—à été employée par moi—pendant 8 mois comme mon sujet. J'ai été force de la confier pour un fait—assez sérieux. Cette petite dont les aptitudes sont absolument aussi nûles que le Cabotinage est grande, profité des visites chez moi de quelques toutes jeunes dames du plus grand monde qui dans l'après midi venaient me consulter et naturellement en cachette de moi, pour grossir ces gages de sujet, cette petite fille, sans conscience vendait de la morphine au morphinomane et de l'opium aux opiomanes, une de mes clientes, Mme. la Vicomtesse de . . . devenue absolument opiomane par l'opiom procurai en secret par Clarice à manqué payer cela de sa vie. Par un hasard ayant decouvert le verite j'ai mise Clarice immédiatement à la porte. Voilà pourquoi j'ai été desagréablement impressionnée voyant cette triste personne s'ingérer avec aplomb dans le salon de Mr. le Docteur tous ce qu'elle m'avais vu faire étant chez moi.

This letter will indicate some of the characteristics of the favoured patients and trained subjects of Dr. Luys, and a full investigation of the story of which a corner of the veil is thus lifted might be very useful in the interests of social morality.

Another ramification and extension of the proceedings at the Charité was disclosed to me by the presence at one of the sittings of a Madame W., who was apparently much interested in the proceedings, and presented me with her card and invited further acquaintance. I called with M. Crémière and found her installed at a library and reading room. It was the headquarters not only of a profound hypnosis and the grand hypnotism, but also of the new magic. Here I was introduced to the literature of occult science, and a "methodical bibliography" of the same was presented to me, being a critical study of the principal modern works on the subject, by a group of occultists under the direction of Dr. Papus, President of the independent group of esoteric studies, director of *L'Initiation*. The book is interesting in itself, and all the more interesting because Madame W. informed me that

Papus, or Dr. Papus, as he is described, is in fact M. Encausse, whom I find described on Dr. Luys's journal as "Chef de Laboratoire de la Charité." To those who wish to follow out curious relationships into which the Chef de Laboratoire of Dr. Luys has entered, this little *bibliographie* will be singularly interesting. It has in itself a good deal of picturesque and surprising information which make it quite worth the reading of anyone who is curious in the ramifications of occultism so called, and the vagaries into which the apostles of mesmerism and hypnotism often allow themselves to wander. The absolute key to occult science is, it appears, to be found in the book entitled *Le Tarot des Bohémiens, le plus Ancien Livre du Monde à l'Usage Exclusive des Initiés*, par Papus. Papus is also the author of *La Science des Mages, et ses Applications Théoriques et Pratiques*. This is a little pamphlet, price 50 centimes. In the press is announced to appear immediately a series of books of which the first is entitled *Erotique, comment on devient Fée*. The author not stated.

Under another rubric are the works on hypnotism. Hypnotism, it is explained, studies the phenomena produced in certain persons by physical or psychical acts capable of fatiguing and of surprising one of the senses. Hypnotisers differ from magnetisers in that they deny the existence of any fluid. The *Leçons Cliniques* of Dr. Luys are warmly recommended, as are those of Colonel de Rochas, who is described as one of the rare French savants who occupy themselves in a scientific manner with the forces, as yet little known, of Nature and of man. Many new and very curious discoveries on the relations of hypnotism and of the ancient magnetism are brought to light in this work. Papus is also the director of a journal called *L'Initiation*, which deals with hypnotism, psychical force, theosophy, kabbala, gnostics, freemasonry, occult sciences. To read through the whole of this catalogue is like a nightmare. It may be recommended to the Psychical Society. They will learn that, under the name of "telepathy" and of "telepathic hallucination" certain French savants have approached the study of the mysterious phenomena of the communication of thought or of the vision of phantoms, and that "this study is part of occult science and of spiritism." Of course I brought this and some of the literature away with me; but as I understood that Madame W., the presiding spirit of this Librairie du Merveilleux, could also undertake to provide subjects for experiment, I requested her assistance in that direction. Most of the available subjects, however, it appeared I already had in hand, but she recommended us to apply to a Madame S., who, she said, was versed in the mysteries of *l'envoûtement*.

Here we came upon another and lower associated stratum. Madame S., who lived up in the outer circle of Paris, occupied a little box of an apartment attached to some baths—bath-keeping being her principal employment and sorcery a by-occupation. The *mise en scène* was novel. She was a striking-looking person with abundant and dishevelled grey locks. The room was pervaded by a number of black cats, of whom there were in all, I was told, nine who were her familiars. A toy demon held a prominent place on the wall, and a placard announced the price at which the magic cards were read and fortunes told. The tariff was moderate; the *grand jeu* was, I think, 3 francs, the *petit jeu* 2 francs. Madame S. told us that it was not her business to practice *l'envoûtement*, but to remove its evil effects. In this she said she was very successful. She recounted to us several instances of great ladies and of actresses whom she had freed from its evil effects, as Madame W. had already told us. "The process," she explained, "is very simple. Colonel de Rochas came to me to explain my power; but he was not at all satisfied. I do it without magnetism, and that does not please him. I do it by the power of my will; hatred, you know, is a power, and I oppose it. You hate anyone; you get a spell thrown over them; at a given time in the day or at a given place they suffer anguish, suffocation—they waste away. I remove the spell, and in three or four sittings I cure them. Send me anyone who has suffered from *l'envoûtement* of Colonel de Rochas or anyone else and I can cure it." This lady's methods were crude and suitable to her rank in life. I do not pursue the matter further; but I refer to it as an instance and an evidence of the abysses of folly and imposture to which the persons whom I met at La Charité under the auspices of Dr. Luys directed my footsteps. ERNEST HART.