PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

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The subject chosen for this paper may doubtless impress some members of this society as one entirely too comprehensive to be dealt with by other than a profound student of psychological effects, by one who has had large experience with men and affairs and a sufficiently trained mentality to give good reason for the hope that is in him.

Therefore, I feel it incumbent upon me at the outset of this effort to offer the society an apology for asking their indulgence in so weighty a field of thought. But before receiving my friend Doranti's card with attached invitation to prepare a paper, I had determined some time in the near future to read a paper before either the State, County or District Society on my chosen subject to-day, not because I felt that I could enlighten any of my fellow-society members on the principles of psychology nor that I had any new truths for them to ponder over, but was actuated solely by a desire to learn, not to minister, but to be ministered unto, and if in the reading of my paper here to-day, I can stir into expression the ideas (and I know they are here) of the members of this society along this line, I will feel that my effort has been worth while.

Dr. Weir Mitchell has said that no man can be a good physician who is not a good psychologist. It is psychology that shows clearly why psychotherapy works, why it has worked through all ages. We are all psychologists in degree. No man can long observe phenomena of the human mind without forming certain conclusions, which very conclusions may entitle him to be classed as among those possessing psychological peculiarities. I, myself, studied psychology while in college, but will say that except for some classifications and divisions of the mind, I have retained very little of what I learned at school, but the substance of my remarks here to-day have been correlated from my own experience and ob-

servations in ten years of practice of my profession. I dare say the inspiration of most all papers read before medical societies have been experience of the author, and I am here going to describe one of my own cases under the head of hypnotic influence, which I will briefly take up.

The scientific man who acknowledges himself to-day a disbeliever in hypnotic influence is confessing to an ignorance which has been inexcusable for the past thirty or forty years. Hypnotism, or, to the medical profession, psychic therapy, has had three periods.

In its ancient period it was unknown and yet was unconsciously the salvation of medicine. Without it the inane therapy of useless and usually harmful agents would have shelved medical research for centuries. In its medieval period or the period of beginning; scientific medicine, its entity was only faintly recognized, yet it continued to act as the conservator of treatment. In modern medicine, it has been isolated, analyzed, applied, but its scientific administration is not yet, but is a reservation for the final period of its evolution; until then Mrs. Eddy will keep her halo. Proof of the power of thought to produce physical results is common, how long have we heard of the fear that turned a man's hair white in a night. Every doctor knows that intense anger has so effected the mother's milk as to seriously disturb the proper digestion of it by the infant. And the United States government, a while ago in a series of experiments, demonstrated that certain emotions produced corresponding derangement of certain organs. If there is in the mind then this very evident power to create adverse physical conditions, may it not also create favorable conditions? The processes of the body are all under the control of the nervous system and the nervous system is a very real live structure of living tissue. It is through the nervous sys-

tem that life persists and illness is remedied, whether by means of mind or medicine or food. Digestion, assimilation, elimination of waste, tearing down and building up circulation and respiration, take care of themselves in health because we are not conscious of the active busy nerves. Now the emotions effect these processes. Fear parches the mouth, by arresting the flow of saliva, tightens the throat of the unsophisticated physician who assumes to address a scientific body on psychic phenomena. Grief destroys appetite by checking digestion, assimilation, the demand for food. Joy and pleasant associations quicken the appetite, give strength and firmness to heart beats. We blush or perspire under certain emotions. The heart hesitates or even fails under sudden shocks of grief or joy. Fright so effects the secretions as to produce a sudden movement of bowels. Worry, hate, fear, self-consciousness of the wrong sort are all mothers of unnumbered ills. In order that the thought cure may be effective, our diagnosis must be correct. We do not give a thirsty boy dry bread, nor do we prune our potato vines as we do the grape vines and just so great the difference between the treatment demanded. The remedy according to the case may be surgery, antiseptics, internal medicine, diet, rest, exercises of mind and body or mental suggestion.

I hope I have made my reasons clear for speaking to those who are interested in the influence of the mind over disease and health. Mind cure, like medicine cure, has its limits. To keep that fact in mind will keep a good thing from discredit and not deprive us of its benefits. If any cure whatever is wrought by suggestion—mark this—it is not by belief that the illness was imaginary, it is because thought, belief, resolution, expectation, good cheer, so long as our conscious life dwells in the body, send from the brain currents of force that play along those tangible nerves, but no mental influence will do what is not provided for in this nervous system and its

laws. To do more is as much out of the power of mental suggestion as to put out a fire or heal the broken limb of a tree.

Hypnotism, psychologically speaking, has been classified as a dissolution of the objective and subjective minds, with the suggestion or assuming the functions of either, at his will, but the fallacy of its being the exercise of a superior will power over a weaker one has long been dissipated in the fact that it takes a reasonably strong mentality to receive suggestions under hypnotic influence. It used to be called mesmerism, after one Mesmer, a Frenchman, who having a strong dominating personality, with the tact of compelling people to do his will and being a queck practitioner of medicine, together with Father Hell, a French priest, found he was able to relieve a number of his neuresthenic patients by suggestion going through considerable mystifying movements with them, but both he and Father Hell (who was the one who brought the religious element into it, as seems to be so necessary to inspire confidence in all movements even to the present day) were superstitious enough to believe that powers were derived from a magnet Mesmer carried, also, it being in the days of astrology, the planets were supposed to exercise their influence in his behalf. Mesmer's results were such that the French government appointed a commission to investigate his methods, but they reported exactly what he told them about the loadstone and planets. He afterwards discarded the loadstone, as he lost it for a while, and found it did not detract any from his powers, but it remained for a German named Loeb to classify after scientifically studying the phenomena of Mesmer and placed it on a scientific basis, renamed hypnotism.

The hypnotic phenomena which came under my observation and care were that of a woman aged 59 years. She was the mother of eight or nine children, and always had lived in peaceful harmony with her husband and children. The family was in very moderate

circumstances, but she was possessed of some education. Her husband was a kind of a local Christian preacher, with a great many hobbies, which he took up very easily. About four years ago he sent for some books he saw advertised on hypnotism and after reading and discussing them for some time told his wife he believed he was possessed of hypnotic powers and was going to experiment on her and the family. She consented, and proved to be a very susceptible subject to his chicanery, the rest of the family not paying much attention to his efforts. After repeatedly putting the spells on her as she described it to me, she conceived the idea that he was striving to get rid of her so as to get another wife. Now this may have been a case of delusional insanity or pathological instead of psychological, but she was under my observation for so long and I could find no other indications that I believed it purely psychological. In fact her mental faculties in every way that I could test them seemed to be above the average for one of her station of life. She believed so fully in her husband's power and his intentions toward her that she finally left him and several children and came to me with her troubles. I tried to disabuse her mind, also her husband, when he found what he had done, made promises to her, and really thought lots of her. So acting under my advice, she returned to him, but in a week or two developed a neurasthenic condition. I went to see her, at which time her husband with tears in his eyes told her he had nothing to do with it. Her tongue would become coated with a grayish coat, her breath offensive, pain in epigastric region, headache, quickened pulse and numerous other marked symptoms. She again left her husband and coming to town, placed herself under my care. I realized a peculiar case, and tried some psychistry on her with almost instantaneous and marked success. My methods were entirely suggestive, and while I do not lay any claim to possession of qualifications for a good suggestive therapeutician,

and, as a whole, only believe it when scientifically applied, robbed of all the mystifying fakisms, with which it is usually associated, yet I am sure of my results in this case. She rented a house in town and finally her children came to her and she lived in perfect health and contentment, although it seemed to distress her that she could not live with her husband. Her husband, after a few months, paid her a visit, and acting under my advice, she again endeavored to stay with him, occupying separate beds, but in two or three days she was back in the same condition. This was repeated a great number of times, always with the same results. This seems to be a case of hypnotism vs. hypnotism, but it being my only experience along this line, I deemed it worthy of mention to strengthen my contention that there is great good to be derived from suggestive therapeutics.

Since the majority of our cases of neurasthenic states cannot be assigned to any definite cause, but are the manifestations of a diseased condition whose seat and nature are merely speculative, being probably partly of psychical and partly of physical origin, with no known pathology other than the indefinite pathology of cells undergoing fatigue. I think if the confidence of the patient can be obtained, psychotherapy is indicated, and more than any other remedy possesses the power to subdue the nervous suffering, at least it is worth the effort, and I consider it wholly in line with our sane, practical methods of applying allopathic principles. We have sat idly by and allowed a clever New England woman to reap a rich harvest financially, and obtain a following unprecedented for a woman, solely by applying to the frailties of mankind principles of healing which were known and applied, though as I stated before, unconsciously by Galen and Hypocrates, the fathers of our profession. Mrs. Eddy, of course, is woefully, unscientific, she has nought of the truth, and very probably herself does not realize the underlying principles of her success,

which has caused her name and book to be known in almost every civilized country on the globe. But she struck a popular chord which found a ready response in the human heart, when she surrounded the art of healing with a sacred cloak, her contention that all is mind and no matter, that the beautiful music we hear, the trees that we see in their gorgeous costume with which spring adorns them, the beautiful streams that leap from the mountain home to wind in silence through flowery vales, have no place in our economy, but are mere matters of the mind, we know to be a fallacy. As you think, so you are, is her motto. We are willing to admit with Mrs. Eddy that thought is a dynamic force, but to be applied to control material conditions must be robbed of the assumed divine inspiration and scientifically applied to human needs.

There is no denying the fact that the Emmanuel movement recently started from Emmanuel Church, in Boston, is fraught with great good. It is a scientific move in the right direction, and originating as it does in the birthplace of Christian Science and from such an intellectual center as Boston, where multitudes are following in the wake of that false prophetess, will do more to stamp Mrs. Eddy's cult out of existence than the combined forces of truth-seeking scientific bodies the world over, if that were the only excuse for its existence it would be reason enough, but it is more than that, it is showing to the world that Mrs. Eddy and her disciples have no monopoly on mental therapy, but that what little real good does come from her teachings (and it is more than ever balanced by the harm she does) have been known to science for ages past, and that scientific men are better qualified to apply these principals of healing. The movement would not receive much credence from the medical world were it not endorsed and actively participated in by the leading phy-

sicians of Boston, which include some of the foremost practitioners of the world. The great difference between this movement and Christian Science, leaving out of the question Mrs. Eddy's false teaching about mind and matter, is this—Mrs. Eddy claims thought to be so powerful as to cure a broken arm or heal a gangrenous limb, it has no limit in her theory, and diagnosis is not considered. We know that all good resultant from the practice of our art, depends upon a correct diagnosis and proper treatment of the same. Now the physicians of Boston who have associated themselves with the thought-cure movement, are eminently qualified and do make a correct diagnosis of all cases. Those amenable to treatment by mental suggestion are given that treatment by themselves or turned over to some lay worker in the movement who is just as competent if he or she has the confidence of the patient to administer the treatment as the physician himself. Beyond this, the ministers of Boston who instituted the plan do not attempt to go.

"So far as I know and I have taken pains to find out, there is no such thing as cure of organic disease by mental influence," said Dr. Robert C. Cabot, in an address at Boston, "but in the treatment of all functional disorders which form two-fifths of all diseases, mental agencies are of great importance. I do not believe tuberculosis has ever been cured by mental means, but I have in mind tuberculosis patients who would get well if their worries could be removed."

I hope I have cleared the way for speaking to those who are interested in the influence of the mind upon matters of health and disease, the subject is in the air and the magazines, and treating this voluminous subject so briefly as I have, I have had in mind several kinds of people, but particularly those who believe in getting at the root of a matter and not believing that one key unlocks all doors.