

MISCELLANEOUS.

65. *Animal Magnetism in London.*—In a former Number of this Journal, (August, 1838,) we mentioned that animal magnetism was gaining numerous proselytes in London. The impression which it made there, seems to have been principally due to the ingenuity of two accomplished actresses, Elizabeth and Jane O'Key, though something must be ascribed to a very considerable degree of credulity (or as our phrenological friends would say a large development of the organ of wonder) in those who witnessed the exhibitions of those women at the University Hospital. The tricks of these actresses have now been fully exposed by the experiments of Mr. Wakeley, the editor of the *Lancet*, as will be seen from the following statement:

Experiments on Elizabeth O'Key.—After some of the often-repeated experiments had been performed by Dr. Elliotson, with various results, it was proposed by the Doctor that the metal, *nickel*, should be used, the effects of which he said had been found by him to be, and would now prove to be, quite astounding. A piece of nickel was produced by the Doctor, of about three-quarters of an ounce in weight, and of an oval form, and also a piece of lead, of nearly the same shape and smoothness, but somewhat larger. Elizabeth O'Key was then seated in a chair, being, as was stated, in the "ecstatic delirium." A piece of thick pasteboard was placed in front of her face, and held in that situation by two of the spectators. By this contrivance it was rendered impossible that she could see what was passing either below or in front of her. Mr. Wakeley being seated directly opposite to the girl, and at a short distance from her, received the lead and nickel from Dr. Elliotson, in order that he might rub the two on her hands in such a manner that from merely touching the substance, or from its form, it would be impossible for her to decide which of the two was being used. Dr. Elliotson had, as has been stated, previously described the effect of the magnetic nickel to be of a most extraordinary character, and said at the same time, with much earnestness, that the lead might always be applied with impunity, as no magnetic effect ever resulted from the application of that metal to the skin.

The substances were then applied to the hands of the girl. First the lead was applied to each hand, alternately, but in a manner which might have led the girl to believe that both metals were used. No effect whatever resulted from these applications. After the expiration of a considerable period, the nickel was employed, having been received from Dr. Elliotson, who for some time had held it in his hand in order to charge it strongly with the magnetic influence. By this proceeding the metal was necessarily heated to the temperature of the skin. Mr. Wakeley had previously thought it right to hold the lead in his hand, and heat it in a similar manner. In consequence of this obviously necessary precaution, no indication was offered to the mind of the girl by which it could be guided, during the experiment, by the mere temperature of the substances which were employed.

The nickel was now used, precisely as the lead had been applied. There was a pause. The expected results did not appear. After, probably, a minute had elapsed, the lead was again used; and then again; and after the last application of the nickel, the lead having been repeatedly employed during the interval, the face of the patient became violently flushed, the eyes were convulsed into a startling squint, she fell back in the chair, her breathing was hurried, her limbs were rigid, and her back and abdomen assumed the position which are produced in an attack of opisthotonos. In this state she remained during nearly a quarter of an hour. Certainly that time elapsed before the condition of the patient appeared to warrant a repetition of the experiment. A short conversation then ensued between Dr. Elliotson and Mr. Wakeley, as to the cause and reality of the symptoms. The Doctor contended that the effects clearly resulted from the application of the magnetised nickel, but that they had not come on with their usual rapidity. Mr. Wakeley expressed a contrary opinion, and wanted to know of what value the experiments could be if there were nothing

like certainty in the results, and if the effects were to be attributed to one metal so long after another had been employed, as on that occasion. Ultimately it was determined that another experiment should be tried with the nickel, Dr. Elliotson suggesting that that metal, in its magnetised state, should alone be employed.

Mr. Wakley was now again the operator, and before the experiment was tried he stated, privately to Mr. Clarke, that instead of using nickel only, he would not on this occasion employ any nickel, and desired Mr. Clarke to take notice of the fact, that he would put aside the nickle, unperceived by any other person, the moment that it should be handed to him by Dr. Elliotson, and before either of his (Mr. W.'s) hands should be allowed to come in contact with those of the patient. The experiment was then again performed. Mr. Wakley had taken the nickel from Dr. Elliotson, and put it on one side, when it was taken, unseen by any other person, by Mr. Clarke, who placed it in his waistcoat pocket, and walked with it to the window, there remaining during the performance of the experiment. Mr. Wakley employed both hands, but his fingers were so held that it was impossible for any person excepting the operator to know what he was holding. Presently, on applying the substance which he held in his left hand to the right hand of the patient, the pasteboard being again held before the eyes of the girl, Mr. Herring, who was standing near, said, with much sincerity of feeling, in a whisper, but loud enough to be heard at a short distance, "Take care; don't apply the nickel too strongly." Scarcely had these words escaped from his lips, when the face of the girl again became violently red; her eyes were fixed with an intense squint; she fell back in the chair; a more evident distortion of the body ensued than in the previous paroxysm; the contractions of the voluntary muscles were more strongly marked, producing a striking rigidity of the frame and limbs, and the shoulders were thrown back to the utmost, the spine displaying as complete a bow as in an attack of opisthotonos: in a word, the severity of all the symptoms appeared to have undergone marked increase. Dr. Elliotson again observed, that "no metal other than *nickel* had ever produced these effects; that they were most extraordinary;" in fact, that "they presented a beautiful series of phenomena." This paroxysm lasted during upwards of half an hour, and was admitted by all who were present to be much more violent than the one which had preceded it.

Mr. Wakley now suggested that the girl should retire into an adjoining room, where her sister was waiting, as he was anxious to make a statement to Dr. Elliotson in her absence. The girl objected to depart, and therefore her sister was called from the adjoining room, and the gentlemen retired into that room. Mr. Wakley then said to Dr. Elliotson, "that he felt it to be his duty to state, that the Doctor was entirely deceived respecting the character of the experiments and the cause of the symptoms. That all present had been witnesses of the violent effects which appeared to result from the application of the nickel to the hand, and had heard Dr. Elliotson state that such extraordinary symptoms could be produced by no other magnetised metal, whereas he had not used nickel on that occasion; he had not even *approached* her with it; but that on the instant that it was handed to him by Dr. Elliotson he had put it aside, unobserved, and had merely rubbed upon the skin of the girl a piece of lead and a farthing, which he had respectively held in either hand, but that the metals were so held that he has certain that no person could discover what he was applying."

Dr. Elliotson replied, that "he saw the nickel used; that Mr. W. must have touched her with that metal without knowing it himself; that he was certain of the fact, and that he was positive that the effect could be produced in no other way."

Mr. Wakley then said that there was a gentleman present who could confirm the accuracy of his statement—a witness in fact, who had the nickel at that moment in his pocket, and had stood with it at the window during the whole of the time that he was applying the lead and the farthing to the hands of the girl.

Dr. Elliotson again declared that this was impos-ible, when Mr. Clarke produced from his pocket the piece of nickel, and said that it had really been there.

during the whole of the experiment, and that it had not been near the girl during the entire trial.

After a somewhat lengthened conversation Dr. Elliotson suggested that the experiment with the nickel should be tried once more. This proposition was consented to; and during the performance of the experiment Dr. Elliotson remained in the other room, while Mr. Wakley, Mr. Herring, and Mr. Clarke, went to the patient to renew the operation. Again was the nickel handed privately to Mr. Clarke, and the lead and farthing were applied as before, with the pasteboard held in front of the patient's face. In three or four minutes there was a re-appearance of the flushed countenance, the staring eyes, the rigid limbs, the bent back, and the distorted frame although *no nickel had been used*—nothing, in short, but the lead and the farthing.

A report of these results was conveyed to Dr. Elliotson and the gentlemen who had remained with him, when Dr. Elliotson said that the occurrence was most extraordinary; that he could not at that moment account for it; and that he had no doubt that an explanation could soon be found which would remove all appearance of anomaly in the results. He would, he said, again suggest that the nickel should be re-employed; and as this request was so urgently made, Mr. Herring, Mr. Wakley, and Mr. Clarke, again visited O'Key, for the purpose of proceeding with the trial, but instead of using the nickel, the lead and farthing were again employed, with the same results as before. There was another fit. Afterwards, when the girl had recovered from the apparent paroxysm, Mr. Wakley suggested that the magnetized nickel should be rubbed over both hands freely, on the skin, in different places, but not exactly in the manner in which the lead and farthing had been employed. No effect was produced by this application of the nickel.

On hearing a further report of the effects which appeared to arise from the use of the lead and the farthing, and the absence of effects when the nickel was really used, after the other experiments had been concluded, Dr. Elliotson candidly admitted that he "could not explain how the thing had occurred; it was most extraordinary, but still he had not the slightest doubt that the whole would yet admit of a satisfactory explanation."

Mr. Wakley, on the other hand, contended that what had been done was, in his opinion, perfectly conclusive with reference to the character of the supposed phenomena, and that he did not consider that a single additional experiment could ever be necessary, in connection with such an inquiry.

Similar experiments, and with similar results, were again made on the 17th, and Jane O'Key, the other sister, also subjected to scrutinizing trials with mesmerized water, sovereigns, &c. &c. It is sufficient to remark, that on proper precautions being used, all the experiments totally failed.—*London Medical Gazette*, September, 1838, and *Lancet*, September, 1838.

66. *Animal Magnetism in Paris*.—Animal magnetism has met with as severe a blow in Paris, as from the preceding article, it will be perceived, it has in London.

During the discussion which ensued on the report of the last commission appointed by the Academy of Medicine, M. BURDIN, a member of the Academy, offered a prize of 3,000 francs "to any one who could produce a person capable of reading without the assistance of eyes, or of light, or of the touch. The decision was to be left in the hands of a commission to be appointed by the Academy; but only one candidate for the munificent premium appeared. A Dr. Pigeaire, of Montpellier, wrote that his daughter, a girl of fourteen years old, could accomplish the feat, when placed in the magnetic state by her mother. A commission, consisting of MM. Double, Husson, Chomel, Morreau, Louis, Dubois (d'Amiens), and Gerardin, was therefore at once appointed to inquire into the case, and Dr. Pigeaire came up from Montpellier to Paris.

"M. Burdin allowed, at the request of Dr. Pigeaire, that the book from which his blind-folded daughter was to read, might be placed in the light, and that touching it might be permitted, so far as that sense was not made supple-