

MIND MAGIC.*

BY THE AUTHOR OF "WHAT IS THOUGHT TRANSFERENCE?"



THE most superficial observer of natural phenomena cannot fail to have been impressed at times by the subtle influence which the human mind is capable of exercising.

Call it by whatever name we may, credit it with whatever attribute our imagination may dictate—there are few, if any, prepared to deny the fact that there exists in many persons—highly developed in some, in

others hardly appreciable—a mysterious power, which renders them capable of exerting an apparently magical influence over those with whom they come in contact.

Those who possess this qualification to any great extent are able without any effort on their own part—or with a very slight exercise of the will—to attract and control the minds of those with whom they come into contact; to mould their wills and actions in conformity with the dictates of their own.

Very often without the slightest prevision, in many instances in spite even of their own inclination, men are attracted towards and fascinated by those with whom they are brought into contact: whereas in other instances this power manifests itself in a negative form, and feelings of the strongest aversion and repugnance are entertained towards those whom perhaps they have never before met, and with whom, notwithstanding, this dislike at first sight proves so dominant an idea that they are totally unable to counteract its effects, although unable to analyse its cause.

It is this power of fascination, this spell which one person by the apparent influence of his mind holds over a weaker nature, which, although capable of being degraded to an evil purpose, yet lies at the root of the success of all those who are brought into active personal contact with the public. The preacher, the barrister, the orator, if devoid of this power, signally fails in his career; but by means of this mind domination he is able to hold his audience in thrall, to subjugate them to his influence, so that they become like an instrument upon which he can play whatever tune his fancy may dictate, at one moment kindling their spirits, by his fiery enthusiasm, and the next melting them to tears by the passion of his pathos.

To a greater or less degree the truth of this assertion can be proved by every one; for there are few who

have not at some time or other of their existence either exercised or become influenced by this power.

But remarkable as this peculiarity appears to be when it occurs in the ordinary routine of every-day life, it is still more mysterious when exercised under conditions which still further develop and intensify its power.

By the researches of those interested in the subject of "Thought Transference" (an article on which has already appeared in these pages—September, 1884, page 621) it has been demonstrated most clearly that persons of certain organisations, and possessing great strength of mind and will, are capable of exerting an influence upon the minds of others, the effects of which are most mysterious, and calculated to impress those who have never before witnessed such experiments, with amazement and even dismay.

By the exercise of this will-power to the greatest extent, the minds of those under the influence of the operator or willer are rendered entirely subservient to its control and obedient to its wishes and commands. So strong a sympathy is capable of being established that the will of the one becomes merged in that of the other, and at times, and under varying conditions, the slightest unspoken wish of the operator is reproduced in the mind of the subject.

The truth of this statement—incredible as it appears—may be verified by any one possessing to any extent this power of mind and concentrativeness of will, who will comply with the simple preliminaries the experiments need; and of phenomena of this description there is a very plentiful crop.

Nor is this magical power of the mind limited even within these extended bounds; for, in cases which, although certainly of more exceptional occurrence, are yet continually recurring amongst persons possessing this sympathetic ability to a larger degree, the influence and domination of one mind over another is of so marked a character that time and space are entirely annihilated by it, and the same mystic influence is exerted as in the case when the persons affected are in each other's immediate presence.

That this is no mere creation of the fancy, no extravagant myth of a disordered and deluded imagination, which is unable to withstand the piercing light of investigation and reason, has been constantly demonstrated by men of the highest standing and most unimpeachable veracity who, in the pages of our most intelligent reviews, have borne testimony to many remarkable cases of this wonderful "volitional power."

Nor is this faculty confined to man; but it exists in as remarkable a manner in the lower branches of the animal world. The fascination which the lion, leopard, and tiger exert, not only over smaller animals, but also over man himself; the weasel's charm over the rabbit, and the rattlesnake's power of fascinating its victims, influencing them at an incredible distance, riveting them to the spot and entirely depriving them of their will, till they fall an easy prey to its mysterious charm;

* The writer of this paper is alone responsible for the statements and views therein expressed.—ED.

the power of the fox, and other animals, that will crouch at the foot of a tree and gaze upon their intended victim, until it falls senseless at their feet, are but examples of this remarkable power, all tending to prove the existence of some mystic faculty by which the weaker will becomes subject to the more powerful will of another.

What this occult power really is, has long puzzled the minds of scientists. This is the power on which the spiritualists have founded their remarkable theories, and which has latterly received the attention of many anxious to investigate the mysteries of the invisible and dabble with the secret lore of psychical mysteries.

And yet, although in a subject of this magnitude no greater error can be committed than to jump to an immature conclusion, there is undoubtedly an *à priori* probability, which further investigations seem only to increase, that these phenomena of the mind, this mystic manner by which a community of thought and action is established between two minds, so that the volitional power of the agent is transferred to the subject, are mainly due to the existence of a magnetic fluid impregnating all organic bodies, which, although not analogous in every respect to electricity, yet resembles it in many particulars.

This hypothesis, received at first with discredit and derision, was virtually corroborated by Reichenbach, who announced the discovery of a subtle force to which he gave the name of Od, and which he stated permeated all nature, and manifested itself in a luminous emanation at the poles of magnets and crystals, and wherever chemical action is going on.

The human body, according to his statement, was surrounded by this subtle force, which was visible to certain persons called "sensitives," and manifested itself more particularly at the tips of the fingers in a kind of luminous vapour, and possessed positive and negative poles as in magnetism, being negative on the right side and positive on the left.

It was, however, Dr. Mayo who, by his marvelous corroboration of Reichenbach's theory, virtually demonstrated the *modus operandi* of this newly revealed force, and established an objective proof of its existence which had hitherto only lived in the brains of its progenitors.

The experiments which he conducted with Herr Caspari are of so mysterious and at the same time so interesting and conclusive a character, that it is remarkable they are not more universally known.

Taking a gold ring in his hand, he attached to it a piece of silk by which he held the ring suspended over a piece of silver at a distance of about half an inch, when, after a few uncertain movements, the ring began to oscillate to and from the operator.

Removing the silver, he then suspended the ring over the finger of his left hand, when it assumed another motion; and, again, having held the ring over the thumb of the same hand, he discovered that this rotary motion was reversed.

Astonished at these eccentricities, they made them the subject of crucial experiments, and after awhile with the following result:—

A ring, a fragment of shell-lac, or any other substance suspended by a thread or piece of silk, the other end of which was wound round the first joint of the fore-finger, they termed an Odometer. The materials on which they experimented with the odometer they termed the Od-subjects, and consisted of gold, silver, lead, zinc, copper, coals, bone, charcoal, sealing-wax, &c.; but the material which proved most efficacious as an odometer consisted of a piece of shell-lac about an inch long, and by this means the following results, selected from a great number of experiments, were adduced:—

Odometer suspended from the fore-finger held over heap of sovereigns. Result—longitudinal oscillations.

Experimenter, continuing above experiment, takes with his unengaged hand the hand of a person of the opposite sex. Result—transverse oscillations of the odometer.

Then, the experiment being continued, let a person of the sex of the experimenter take and hold the unengaged hand of the second party. Result—longitudinal oscillations of the odometer.

The first experiment being repeated, and the longitudinal oscillations established, touch the fore-finger which is engaged in the odometer with the fore-finger of your other hand. Result—the oscillations become transverse.

Hold the odometer over the tip of the fore-finger of your disengaged hand. Result—rotary motion in the direction of the hands of a watch.

Hold the odometer over the thumb of your disengaged hand. Result—rotary motion against that of the hands of a watch. Hold up the forefinger and thumb of the disengaged hand, their points being at two and a half inches apart. Hold the odometer in the centre of a line which would join the points of the finger and thumb. Result—oscillations transverse to the line indicated.

These experiments are of so simple a character that they are capable of being verified by the youngest reader of this Magazine, and as Dr. Mayo in his admirable work on "The Truths Contained in Popular Superstition" (which work it is remarkable has not obtained a more general acceptance than appears to be the case) remarks:—"The interest of these experiments is unquestionably very considerable. They open a new vein of research, and establish a new bond of connection between physical and physiological science which cannot fail to promote the advancement of both. They constitute a mass of objective and physical evidence to give support and substantiality to the subjective results of Von Reichenbach's experiments. They tend to prove the existence of some universal force, such as that to which he has given theoretical shape and form under the designation of Od.

Neither do these experiments (which may be amplified in a hundred ways at the will of the experimenter) at all exhaust the phenomena revealed by the odometer.

Incredible as it may appear, but as will be immediately verified on investigation, the substitution of a woman's hair in place of the silk medium produces an

entire reversal of the oscillations, and a transverse motion will ensue, as if the operator had grasped with his disengaged hand the hand of a person of the opposite sex. Precisely the same change is produced if a woman take the odometer in her right hand, using a man's hair as the suspending cord.

This remarkable property of Od is not merely confined to man, but if the hair of a horse or a mare be substituted for the suspending medium, the same marked peculiarity will be found to exist. Indeed, from careful experiments which I have conducted in the presence of several witnesses, I have found that the same contrast exists in most animals even where its existence would have been least expected.

Indeed, so incredible are the results which an hour's experiments reveal, that were it not for the fact that their verification is so simple as to be capable of being tested by the veriest dabbler in psychical studies, we might well hesitate before claiming the existence of a force which has hitherto remained undreamt of by the majority of people.

It has often been stated that all things and beings, even to the atoms of which they are composed, have stamped upon them the influence they have been under in periods long past, and that clairvoyants are able by personal contact with an ancient ring, a lock of hair, a mastodon's tooth, or other object, to establish a *rapport* between themselves and their objects, although perhaps by a very large percentage of readers this statement would be treated with almost pardonable ridicule. Yet carefully-weighed experiments that I have personally conducted have gone far to convince both myself and several onlookers in whose presence the investigations took place that the same irradicable property may be revealed.

Taking as Od-subjects a fragment of the vertebræ of a saurian with a piece of silk as a medium, I have found it take up precisely a contrary motion to that exhibited by a portion of an ammonite extracted from the same coprolite beds.

In fact, taking all these objective proofs into consideration, which a thoughtful mind will readily demonstrate on experiment to be no mere exhibition of charlatanism or legerdemain, or even the result of an unconscious muscular action, it will be seen that, after all, the existence of a species of spiritual effluvia, incredible as it appears on the first blush, is no mere

dream of the imagination, but a fact which is capable of being verified by a series of the most severe and crucial tests.

Once grant that this power exists, and we begin to arrive at the solution of many of those problems which have hitherto been considered inexplicable.

The mystery of the divining rod, the believers in which claimed the occult power of detecting the proximity of veins of metal and of underground currents of water by means of a forked hazel twig—so long regarded as a remnant of the Dark Ages, and subjected to endless ridicule by a host of writers from Sir Walter Scott in "The Antiquary" downwards—now appears in a more plausible guise.

The eccentricities of table-turning, and exhibitions of so-called spirit manifestations, now receive the garb of scientific dress.

The ancient belief in fascination, charms, and the evil eye or *mal occhio* (which belief is still largely cherished in the south of Europe) is immediately accounted for.

In fact, as a writer on the subject remarked: "May we not discern in this a clearing up of some of those mysteries which have so long baffled thoughtful inquirers? May we not see in this an explanation of those unaccountable predilections which at times seize us? of that 'love at first sight' so long derided and yet so true? Plato sought to explain this mystery by the notion that souls were united in a pre-existent state and that love is the yearning of the spirit to reunite with the spirit with which it formerly made one, and which it discovers on earth."

Whatever views we take of the subject it is a large one, and will amply repay our thought and labour.

The public mind is so accustomed to regard its present knowledge of natural laws as perfect, that any apparent infringement of the laws of nature is immediately regarded as beyond the realms of credibility and common-sense. It should, however, be borne in mind that we are after all but on the threshold of any thorough knowledge of any of these natural forces, and if such a power as magnetism—the very existence of which for so long remained unknown—can assert itself without the possibility of any doubts as to its existence being now raised, why should we be bigoted enough to deny that other recondite influences may exist of which at present we are unaware?

GEORGE D. DAY.

A NOCTURNE.

FROM THE GERMAN OF REINICK.

EARTH in heavenly rest is sleeping,
Moon and stars their watch are keeping
Where a garden, bright with flowers,
Slumbers through the midnight hours.
Good night!

There, with moonbeams shining o'er it,
Stands a cottage, and before it,
On a leafy linden spray,

Sings a bird its tender lay.—
Good night! Good night!

In her bower the maid lies dreaming
Of the flowers around her gleaming,
Heaven's own peace within her breast,
Angels, watching, guard her rest!
Good night! Good night!

A. L. MACKECHNIE.