

HYPNOTIC MORALIZATION.

BY WILLIAM WILBERFORCE NEWTON.

NO little stir has been made recently in England by an attempt on the part of certain men of science to produce moral states of mind upon people when asleep. This latest psychological discovery, we know, is called hypnotic moralization, or a moral polarization or electricity induced when the patient is asleep.

In a very interesting essay upon this subject in the *Fortnightly Review* of November, 1885, Mr. F. W. H. Myers, the well-known writer (author of *Psychical Research, The Phantasy of the Living*, and the poem of "St. Paul"), uses these words:

"For my part, I believe that many questions which the religious world deems to be already closed in one sense, and the materialistic in the other, are really only just beginning to come within the purview of science. I maintain that we are but just learning to understand the first elements of problems which so many preachers have solved with a peroration, so many philosophers with a formula, so many physiologists with a smile or a sneer. It is, as I hold, to experimental psychology, to an analysis whose growing power we can as yet hardly realize, that we must look for a slow but incontrovertible decision as to whether man be but the transitory crown of earth's fauna between ice age and ice age, between fire and sea, or whether it may truly be said that his evolution is not a terrestrial evolution alone, not bounded by polar solitudes nor measured by the sun's march through the heavens, but making for a vaster future from a remoter past."

Into this world science is entering eagerly and enthusiastically, with plumb-line and measuring-rod, and with all the certainty of the inductive method. But this etherizing of men and women, and more recently, as the latest reviews have indicated, the treatment of vicious and depraved children, and then boldly planting a certain amount of will power in their brain, is an experiment that may work either way, for good or for evil. If I put to sleep some very bad criminal, and then project into his sleeping brain a certain amount of moral nerve force and will power, so that when he awakens he will become at once a philanthropist, the result is delightful. But if by exactly the same process the criminal hypnotizes or puts me to sleep, and then puts murderous thoughts in my brain, so that when I awake I am seized with a desire

to kill my neighbors, the result is the reverse of pleasant.

But on any hypothesis this problem of hypnotism, which is at present the leading subject with all those who are interested on the border-land of spiritualism, is an interesting one, leading as it does to that fact which is, after all, the basis of all true religion, the capacity of man to receive directly spiritual impressions, or the nature and the meaning of the Godward impulse in man.

Sooner or later in life we find out that in the matter of success in the struggle for survival we practically believe at times in imparted tone to our nature, and believe that this power comes to us from without. There are periods in life when we are brought face to face with some grave crisis or responsibility in which we are conscious of some outside power coming to us in a way which we can neither analyze nor describe. What this alien force may be we know not, but none the less does this element of determinism, this strange, mysterious something outside of self, move the will and give bulk and body to it.

We may use the language of religion or the language of poetry about this occult and subtle phenomenon, but to-day the language of science, we find, best explains the mental and moral process which has taken place. A definite bolt of conscious will power has been injected into our inner life: a silent moralization has taken place by the action of some stronger will upon us. Something has started us, and we feel that we are living, willing beings plus some newly added force made evident in our lives.

We can get a glimpse of this unknown will power upon us by a certain familiar yet subtle experience of our everyday life. Perhaps we are all familiar with it, though we may not all have been able successfully to analyze it or explain it. The experience referred to is as follows:

Suddenly some morning, it may be, one wakes up and finds that his mind will be fixed, will be intent upon some distant friend or relative; we think of the person in the house; we see his face in our mind continually. We walk the streets of the city, and in the midst of the city's throng we meet our friend, who greets us with his old familiar smile. Or we wait

at home, absorbed in our home duties, when suddenly the door-bell rings. We think for a moment, as by a flash, of our absent friend, and a moment afterward the friend crosses the threshold and embraces us.

Now the subtle and disputed point in this psychological phenomenon is that we are not sure whether we will our friend to appear to us, or whether our friend wills us unconsciously to think of him. Of one thing at least we are sure: some unknown, undiscovered principle of occult telegraphy has put our mind, *irrespective of our will* or our bodily organism, into direct mental communication with our friend. Time, distance, material obstructions, are nothing to this conquering principle of mental affinity. A common mental impulse touches two hearts and minds alike, and sooner or later forces them together.

From first to last, in itself and in its deductions, this problem of hypnotism, or the silent moralization of the human will,

is an interesting one. No wonder that the papers are full of it, that it furnishes a new clew to the illusive phenomena of spiritualism, and that medical experts are beginning to look upon it as a region which they may reclaim from quackery!

But perhaps the crowning interest of this subject is felt by the theologian of to-day. For this subtle phenomenon of mental polarization or mental telegraphy throws no little light upon the Christian doctrine of prayer. If you can pass a battery of thought and impulse through a human brain or a human life, cannot God do the same?

The silent power of gravitation rules the starry skies. Planets and systems are willed into obedience and harmony by some great dominating law. Is it too much to believe, in the light of science to-day, that a like moral law from a like Central Source of will rules all conscious spiritual intelligences, and that this moralization of all creaturely wills is from the Father of Spirits?

NOON IN A NEW ENGLAND PASTURE.

BY MARGARET DELAND.

WITH scattered birch the pasture's slope is crowned;
 The sunburnt grass that clings to mountain-sides,
 Cropped by small mouths of timid sheep, scarce hides,
 Like a scant coverlet, the hard dry ground,
 Through which, with stony ledge or rocky knee,
 The strong world breaks. The ragged ferns that fill
 Each dimple on the shoulders of the hill
 Rustle with faint sharp sound if but the bee
 Slips through their stems to find his mossy nest.
 With soft, thick, wilted leaves the mulleins grow,
 Like tall straight candles with pale yellow glow,
 Their stalks star-flowered toward the cloudless west.
 The crooning cricket with an endless song
 Jars the hot silence. The crumbling fence is grayed
 By the slow-creeping lichen, held and stayed
 By arms of wandering rose, that, tough and strong,
 Bind firm its slipping stones. The rusty brier
 And scarlet fingers of the bitter-sweet
 Cast a light shade that shelters from the heat
 A thousand voiceless little lives. Higher
 Than maiden birch or solitary pine,
 Poised in the brooding blue, on speckled wings,
 A hawk hangs motionless: so straight he flings
 His shadow to the earth, like plummet-line
 It drops through seas of air. As in a swoon
 Of light, the great world lies, and life stands still,
 Wrapped in a breathless hush; till up the hill
 Drift dappled shadows of the afternoon.