

very great importance in the interest of the general public, and, we may add, also in the interest of the medical profession. He asked the jury to remember that hypnotic practice is a very serious business, only to be employed by practitioners with very great caution. Dr. Kingsbury denied he had hypnotised this old lady, although there were entries of his own in his diary in which he stated that he had done so. Mr. Carson did not suggest that hypnotism in 1894 had anything to do with the will of 1897, but what he did state was that if the patient had been hypnotised in 1894 she would remain an easy prey to hypnosis at any subsequent time, and mere "suggestion" would be sufficient to influence her in a given direction. We must dispute the statement of Dr. Kingsbury that the morals of patients could not be affected by hypnotism. Any open-minded observer who knows anything of mind must admit that in the hypnotic state the moral senses are more or less suspended, and that the dangers of hypnotism are thereby very much aggravated. A great deal of evidence on the subject of hypnotism brings clearly before us that the hypnotic subject is morally paralysed, and Dr. Kingsbury is evidently wrong in denying what is now largely accepted, though denial was the only obvious course for him. The hypnotised subject is the mere tool, not the accomplice, of the hypnotiser, who makes him or her sign documents, or commit wrong acts, and is in a state of moral suspension as surely as the epileptic in his automatic states, or the man who commits a crime in a state of somnambulism. This notable case, which has excited so much interest, comes opportunely to check effectually any disposition which may still linger to employ hypnotism as a therapeutic agent. This is but one of many alleged abuses which may be suggested by suspicious people; and medical men in their own interest will do well to give hypnotic practice, except in rare instances and in conjunction with *bonâ-fide* medical and nursing witnesses, a very wide berth. The summing up of Mr. Justice Barnes was strictly technical, and gives no indication of his views of the merits of the case. The jury could scarcely have decided otherwise than they did, because the evidence for the defence—*i.e.*, against Dr. Kingsbury, was distinctly weak. It is most unfortunate for our profession that such cases should come into court, for the public are apt to believe the worst of a medical man who extracts so much financial assistance from his patient. All the same, it will do good, if it impresses on medical men the necessity of the most scrupulous disinterestedness in their dealings with patients.—*The Medical Press*, July 27, 1898.