

HYPNOTISM.

Condition of the Patient Subjected to It.

IS FREE WILL SUSPENDED?

The Right Rev. Mgr. O'Brien, D.D. Rector of St. John's College, Sydney, has an able and interesting article on hypnotism in the first number of the Australian Catholic Record. As Mgr. O'Brien proposes to define the position of the church in relation to the practice, in a forthcoming article, we extract the leading features of the paper:

Hypnosis may for practical purposes be defined as a state of artificially induced sleep in which the mind is prepared in a most unusual way to receive and act upon the suggestion of others.

It is clear from the experiments of Braid, and hundreds of men since his time, that the induced state of hypnosis has nothing to do with any magnetic or electrical fluid. To prove this Dr. Ernest Hart, editor of The British Medical Journal, undertook to make several experiments. The most delicate electrical instruments failed to show any electrical difference either in the state of the hypnotist or in that of the hypnotic. Insulation of one on the other, or of both, did not in the least affect the result. But what may be considered a proof positive is that in many cases the state may be induced by command or by intimation of the will of the hypnotist, by letter, or telephone, or other means, although miles may intervene between the operator and the subject. Braid and many after him believed that in order to induce artificial sleep it was necessary that the subject, or hypnotic, should, while gazing at a bright object, submit his will to that of the hypnotist, and that the hypnotist should exert his will-power in order to control that of the subject.

HYPNOSIS ENTIRELY SUBJECTIVE.

Dr. Hart asserts that such is not necessary, although in this he is opposed by many eminent authorities. He says he has clearly proved that the will of the hypnotist has in reality little to do with the result. For example, he relates cases in which not only did he not exert his will in order to induce sleep, but he actually set his will in direct opposition to the result to be obtained. He sat before the patient holding a silver coin six inches in front of his eyes; he allowed the patient to believe he willed that he should go to sleep, whereas the doctor set his will in opposition to the desired result; the patient in a few minutes fell into hypnosis.

Dr. Moll, following Florel, distinguishes three stages: 1. Drowsiness, in which the subject can resist suggestion only with great effort. 2. State of charm, in which the eyes are closed and cannot be opened; the subject cannot resist the suggestions of the hypnotist. 3. Somnambulism, a more profound state of hypnosis, on awaking from which the subject remembers nothing of what he did or said during the hypnosis.

The important thing here to be noted is that the hypnotic in the second and third stages cannot resist (according to the highest authorities) the suggestions made by the hypnotist. He is an automaton; his will power is either entirely or almost entirely destroyed or suspended. For good or for evil he has handed himself over to the hypnotist, and this power seems absolute. Let the hypnotist suggest murder, suicide, or violence of any kind; let him suggest the most abominable action from which in his waking state the hypnotic would recoil with horror, the deed is done as suggested, nor could the subject act otherwise. It must be

likewise well borne in mind that in the third stage the subject on awaking remembers nothing of what has taken place while in the state of hypnosis. Who does not see what a terrible instrument is placed in the power of the unscrupulous to gratify passion of every kind, and in many cases to escape detection?

IS FREE WILL SUSPENDED?

Some medical men have asserted that the question of the submission of the will of the hypnotic to the will of the hypnotist has been much exaggerated. Suggestion, as used in relation to hypnosis, means the supplanting of the will of the subject, its place being taken by the will of the hypnotist. Some medical men hold that the crimes which hypnotics seem prepared to commit at the suggestion of the hypnotist are well known to the subjects as crimes, and in reality the subjects only seem prepared to commit them. In other words, hypnotics are not deprived of will or conscience. Take an example. B is in a state of hypnosis; he is induced by A to take a knife (a roll of paper) and smite C when he enters the room. B takes the roll of paper and when C enters rushes to strike him, and actually does so. In acting thus the subject knows he cannot really injure C. So in other examples he seems prepared to commit crime because he knows that he will not be allowed to do so. If he pours what he is told is poison into the cup of wine, he does so knowing that if it be poison he will not be allowed to administer it. If he seems prepared to commit suicide, say by throwing himself from a window, he knows he will not be allowed to do so.

It is safe to say that almost all authorities now agree in admitting that in the second and third stages the will of the hypnotic is suspended and he acts on the suggestion of the hypnotist, not being free to do otherwise.

It has been proved beyond all doubt, that not only will the hypnotic act on the suggestion of the hypnotist, but he will believe every statement made by him, no matter how absurd. A cup is filled with vinegar, the subject is told it is champagne; he drinks it with pleasure. A cup containing mustard is handed to him, he is told it contains honey; he swallows the mustard with evident relish, and smacks his lips. He is told he is in water, and he begins to shiver.

INTELLIGENT PERSONS MORE EASILY HYPNOTIZED THAN THE DULL AND STUPID.

Some people imagine that only those who are weak in body and mind are hypnotizable. Experience proves that those of weak intellect are bad subjects of hypnosis; idiots cannot be thrown into the hypnotic state; children of tender years can with difficulty be hypnotized. All medical authorities are agreed that intelligent persons are more easily hypnotized than the dull and stupid. The reason seems to be that healthy intelligent persons are capable of greater power of concentration of thought; they can more easily direct their thought in a given direction than children and people of weak intellect. Thus the disposition to hypnosis, instead of being a sign of weakness of will, is rather an evidence of power of will.

There is a similarity in one respect between hypnosis and the ordinary dream-sleep. In natural sleep no situation in which we find ourselves seems to surprise us. Now, we are in a boat; we see around us the heaving waves and listen to their noise as they dash against the side of the vessel; next instant we are on a mountain thousands of feet above the level of the sea; the transition from one position to the other causes us no surprise. So in hypnosis at the suggestion of the hypnotist the subject is now joyful, now sorrowful; he believes he is in water; and the next moment he imagines himself on the edge of a high cliff; he is at one moment a king, the

next a beggar; in a word he is all and everything that the hypnotist suggests, and no change of condition or place causes him the slightest surprise.

DANGERS OF HYPNOTISM.

In the deeper stages the will of the hypnotic is superseded by that of the hypnotist. But few at the present time deny this. Let it be supposed for a moment that the hypnotist is actuated by evil intent, then there is no crime to which the hypnotic is not exposed. Liegeois, who made a special study of hypnosis and its legal aspects, gives a long list of cases where the worst crimes were committed during hypnosis. If we do not hear of many more, it is because the patient does not remember what took place.

A patient, during hypnosis, might be induced to execute a will in favor of the hypnotist or his friends, and this will, being on the face of it duly witnessed, might be acted on as a valid document. We can well believe how difficult it would be to prove the fraud. A deed of gift might be executed in the same way.

A number of medical experts assert that in many cases hypnosis is very dangerous. Take the case of a patient suffering from heart disease; it is quite possible, they say, that to induce hypnosis might be fatal.

Also it might be fatal to cause sudden fear or terror in the patient. It was only a few months since that a fatal case arising from this cause occurred in Hungary. A hypnotist named Nenkar was giving a seance at the house of a wealthy banker. Several friends were present, and in a moment of weakness the banker consented that his daughter should submit herself to be hypnotized. While in the hypnosis Nenkar suddenly cried out: "You are in consumption." The girl gave a piercing shriek and fell to the floor. Dr. Von Vraysay, chief of the Vienna First Aid Society, who was present, rushed to her assistance, but the girl was dead.

Nor are the dangers to be confined to the time of hypnosis. Crimes, especially against others, may take place by post-hypnotic suggestion. Thus many cases of theft and personal violence have been traced to post-hypnotic suggestion. Of course, those dangers are intensified in the case of the trained hypnotic, that is, the case of one who has habitually by hypnosis surrendered himself to the will of another.

What good can be effected by hypnosis? Some assert that from a medical point of view it is a valuable agent in the cure of certain disorders, especially those affecting the nervous system. Others hold that the good effected is little or nothing. We are now in a position to consider the teaching of the Church in relation to hypnotism, which Mgr. O'Brien promises to do soon.

Personals.

Over twenty thousand copies of Dr. Conan Doyle's novel, "The Refugees," have already been sold.

It seems a strange fact, but nevertheless true, that Mons. Worth, the eminent French milliner, had a great dread of the 10th of March, and he died on that day.

It is stated that the only lineal descendant of John Knox, the so-called Scotch "Reformer," is a member of the Congregation of the Holy Cross at Notre Dame, Indiana.

Jerusalem was very full of strangers this Easter. Large numbers of English and American tourists who had been sojourning in Egypt were in the Holy City on Easter Sunday, amongst others the Archduchess Stephanie of Austria. The Holy Sepulchre is about to be illuminated with electric light.

The death of Cardinal Desprez, Archbishop of Toulouse, reduced the number of French Cardinals to six, and the death of Cardinal Bonavides, Archbishop of Saragossa, leaves the



It isn't much trouble for a really healthy man to be good humored. Jollity and exuberant health are a proverbial combination. The healthy man who is always laughing about him has no trouble with his digestion. It has been said that laughing makes people healthy. The truth is that health makes people laugh.

There isn't any other thing so essential to health as regularity in the action of the bowels. Most all sickness starts with some derangement of the digestive functions. Good digestion means good pure blood, and that means strength. When let the bowels become clogged with refuse matter, and the whole system is deranged. Impure, poisonous matter gets into the blood and plants the seeds for all sorts of sickness.

Whenever there is a stoppage of the intestinal action, help should be given immediately. Usually a mild, gentle laxative is all that is necessary. A violent, wrenching, griping cathartic is never needed. Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pills are the most pleasant and successful remedy for occasional or chronic constipation, or costiveness. They are tiny, sugar-coated anti-bilious granules that even the smallest child can easily take. They act in perfect accord with nature and produce no griping or other disagreeable feeling. They should be taken at the first indication of digestive trouble. They stop sour stomach, belching, "heart-burn," flatulence and sick headache. They cure constipation permanently. You can stop taking them after the bowels are thoroughly regulated. Their help lasts. You do not become a slave to their use as with other pills.

number of the Sacred College at sixty. The proportion of "foreigners" to Italians is larger than it has been for centuries, 33 Cardinals being Italians, and 27 of other nationalities.

Lady Thompson, widow of the late Sir John Thompson, was the recipient the other day of a mark of most tender regard on the part of Queen Victoria in the form of a letter written entirely in her Majesty's hand accompanying two photographs—one of the room in which Sir John was sworn in as a member of the Privy Council and the other of the room in which he died—which she had prepared for Lady Thompson.

The Comte de Paris in his will asked his executors to distribute alms "to the poor of Eu and its neighborhood, among whom I spent the happiest years of my life; of the 1st Ward of Paris, where I was born; of Dreux, where I hope to be buried; of Amboise, of Cannes, of Twickenham, of Mortlake, and of whatever place I may die at." The Comtesse de Paris has executed this injunction, and an Orleanist paper says that she spent a large sum in doing so. Following the rule of the Comte de Paris when he helped poor neighbors, she has given her alms the form of useful presents. The Comte's car was always open to a tale of distress, and his charities were liberal and unostentatious, according to the example set by his admirable mother.

Leo XIII. is not by any means without his sense of humor. Some cardinals were talking in his presence lately with reference to his successor when the Holy Father smilingly informed them that, in his opinion, Cardinal di Rende would be the next Pope. As that cardinal is one of the youngest members of the Sacred College the prelates present understood by this that His Holiness wished them to understand that he was going to live a number of years yet, and that in all probability, many of the elder cardinals would pass away before him, so that Monsignor Di Rende, being a young cardinal, stood a better chance than they imagined of being chosen the next head of the universal church.