

two of the young were born dead, the others survived only a short time. G. A.

METHODS EMPLOYED IN PRODUCING HYPNOTISM, FROM A THERAPEUTIC STANDPOINT.*

BY PROF. BERNHEIM, OF NANCY.

Translated from the *Revista de Ciencias Medicas*, of Barcelona.

The hypnotic state is that particular psychical state susceptible of being provoked, and which increases susceptibility in various degrees; that is to say, the aptitude of being influenced by an idea accepted by the brain, and of realizing it.

In order to demonstrate this I proceed sometimes in the following manner, with very responsive individuals:

I commence the hypnosis, or suggestion, rather, by movements or sensibility. I raise the subject's arm; it is catalepsy; I provoke contracture. Then I add analgesia, after which I induce hallucinations, or make him do acts which he cannot stop. All these suggestions are realized in a perfectly waking state; the individual retains his memory. Then I merely say, "Sleep," and he goes to sleep, as the result of a special suggestion, not necessary for the performance of the preceding acts. In regard to the procedures for provoking hypnotism, it may be said that they are as numerous as the hypnotizers themselves.

The individual sleeps (or is hypnotized) when he knows that he ought to sleep, when he believes that he is going to sleep, and when he experiences a sensation that invites to sleep. It is his own faith, his psychic impressionability which puts him to sleep.

Gestures are merely useful to re-enforce the suggestion by serving to concentrate the attention of the subject upon something plain.

Experience shows that the simplest and most effective medium of impressing the subject is speech. Some, though exceptionally, are so easy to impress that a single sentence is sufficient to provoke all the phenomena of hypnotism, with or without sleep. From the very first and without having witnessed any experiment, I would raise the arm of such a subject, and

say: "You cannot lower it"; and, indeed, he could not. I would say to him: "Your body is insensible," and stick him with a pin, and he would show no signs of pain.

I might dwell upon the grave social and medical interest presented by the study of such extremely suggestible natures, which are by no means rare. Delivered up without resistance by their organization to the annoyance of all conscious or unconscious suggestions which they may encounter, these natures are frequently irresponsible, and become either heroes or criminals, or alternately the ones or the others. They are fortunate, indeed, if the early suggestions of a well directed education can prevail against later injurious suggestions. It rests with the teachers to discover in childhood these highly suggestible natures, and to build up in their minds a resistance proof against future bad suggestions.

When I have to deal with a very timid person, or one who has been frightened, I generally wait and do not try to coerce him. I simply tell him that hypnotism would be useful to him, and I show him the happy effects, and then wait until he (or she) requests me to apply hypnotism.

Hypnosis is generally easy; the subject is lying or seated upon a large chair. I let him concentrate himself for several moments, while I tell him that I am going to put him easily into a quiet, gentle sleep, like natural sleep.

I gently put one hand near his eyes, and say, "Sleep." Some close their eyes instantly, and are hypnotized; others do not close their eyes, but gaze fixedly, and present all the phenomena of hypnotism; others blink, opening and closing the eyes alternately. As a rule, they do not keep the eyes open a long time. If they do not close them spontaneously I keep them shut for some time; and if I still find resistance, I add, "Your eyelids are heavy, your limbs are asleep, sleep is coming; sleep!" It is rare for one or two minutes to pass without the occurrence of hypnosis. Some subjects remain motionless and inert from the beginning; others try to recover, waking up, and opening their eyes every moment; I insist, keep the eyes closed, and say, "Continue to sleep."

The operator should be cool and self-possessed. If he doubt his own power, or seem

*Abstracted from a communication read at the International Congress of Experimental Therapeutic Hypnotism.