

emotion, by its occasional alternation with hysteria, and by being frequently more or less artificial,—that is, induced voluntarily or by slight external causes. Those inclined to this condition, and who too easily yield to it, soon lose control over themselves, so that it is possible the cataleptic state may be induced in them by others, so that they become, as it were, puppets in the hands of a showman. The celebrated Mesmer first turned this faculty to account in producing the artificial or induced mesmeric trance. He has since had many imitators, “but,” as Dr. Chambers says,\* “the unfortunate subjects of it have brought to their masters so much ‘gain by their soothsaying’ that deception has largely adulterated the real phenomena, and it is difficult to get a genuine patient.”

The artificial catalepsy of the mesmeric trance differs from the true in that, although the subject of it is apparently motionless and unconscious, he can be made to execute movements and articulation in accordance with the commands so given. This state or condition is called “clairvoyance;” not, as we now know, that the subjects of it are able to see particularly clearly, but that all the faculties of the mind are so concentrated and oblivious to external objects—so isolated, and at the same time, so sensitive to impressions brought within its range,—that the brain is in a condition to elaborate and amplify suggestions and impressions of so slight a nature that, at other times, it would not take cognizance of them at all. So much so, that a word, a look, a sign, a glance, an inflection of the voice, &c., which under ordinary conditions would convey little meaning to them, in this exalted nervous state reveals much. In this way the credulous or superficial observer imagines it is possible for the intelligence to forsake the brain and concentrate itself in some distant part; and believes that the clairvoyants, though with bandaged eyes, can read writing when touched with the tips of the fingers, or when placed on the soles of the feet; can discern diseases in others; describe scenery in places never visited by them, and even prognosticate coming events. This faculty is soon acquired by practice, so that charlatans have little difficulty in obtaining and training their subjects.

\*Reynolds' System of Medicine, Vol. II., page 119.