

solution of the problem of its *modus operandi* than we were in the time of Jenner. Before his time inoculations had been successfully practiced. By a method of dieting the system was brought into such condition that when exposed to the contagion of small-pox the patient acquired the disease in its milder form of varioloid and subsequently became relatively immune. It is reasonable to assume that the change wrought in the system by Jenner's vaccine and by the old inoculation methods were analagous to what we observe in the effects wrought on the system by the various methods of protecting the animal organism against bacterial diseases. It is a singular and striking fact that whereas many diseases of the lower animals have

been successfully guarded against by inoculation procedures, it is only small-pox and possibly rabies in man in which corresponding endeavors have been successful. And it is in these two contagious diseases, together with measles and scarlatina, that the causative microbe is as yet conspicuous by his absence.

Phthisis, diphtheria, erysipelas, septicæmia and their congeners prey upon defenceless mankind and count yearly their victims by hundreds of thousands, while over the diseases of his domestic animals—chicken cholera, hog cholera, anthrax, pleuropneumonia—man has become to some extent the master, being more solicitous for his wealth than for his health.

### WHAT IS MESMERISM?

IN the Illustrated News of the World for July 5th inst., Sir Andrew Wilson gives another of his admirable series of "Science Jottings," of which the following is an abstract:

The air of late has been full of discussions respecting mesmerism and its use in medical practice—or, what is much the same thing, its applicability to the wants of social life when that life has to be ministered to for the relief of the ailments which beset it. In these latter days, mesmerism is no longer known under that name. It is now designated "hypnotism," and, as such, figures boldly both in medical journals and in lay newspapers. Some time ago I became personally interested in the subject, and consented, at the request of my friend Dr. Bramwell, of Goole, to initiate a discussion on the question of mesmerism in medicine in *Health*. That symposium has proved to be of great interest; because a number of eminent medical men have contributed to it, and because of the variation in opinion which the symposium has been the means of eliciting. Now that Sir Andrew Clark and others have delivered their opinion, we are certainly free to discuss the matter everywhere, for it is clear that the question whether, as a nation, we are to permit our-

selves to be hypnotised will only be thoroughly settled by our first of all understanding what hypnotism is, and what it professes to do in the way of curing disease.

I made the remark in these pages on May 3rd that "It is impossible to hypnotise everyone; and as far as my experience of it goes, only in the case of the intellectually sensitive—shall I add weak?—can hypnotism hope to secure its most characteristic effects." Dr. Bramwell and Mr. Lloyd Best, referring in the *New Review* (for the present month) to these words, state that Beaunis, a Continental authority, is "of the opinion that everyone is more or less susceptible to the hypnotic influence." I maintain fearlessly that both Dr. Bramwell and Beaunis are in error. For, personally, although I have been many times tried by different hypnotisers, I have not been in the least degree effected. Again, I know others who are in a similiar position to myself. They have not been mesmerised after repeated trials.

But "What is this hypnotism?" is a query the public are beginning to ask, and to which an answer must be afforded. I shall attempt a reply based on general grounds, such as, I trust, may be "understood of the people." A human brain is