

of sensation in various parts of the body, — losses so complete that one may thrust a needle deep into the flesh without pain to the patient. In the days of witch-hunting the witch-hunters would test the women suspected with a pin, and if they found places where pain was not felt, considered they had proof of witchcraft or diabolic possession, so that many a hysteric was hanged or drowned. The history of man is full of psychopathic characters and happenings; insane men have changed the course of human events by their ideas and delusions, and on the other hand society has continually mistaken the insane and the nervously afflicted for criminals or wretches deserving severest punishment.

Especially striking in hysteria are the curious changes in consciousness that take place. These range from what seem to be fainting spells to long trances lasting perhaps for months, in which animation is apparently suspended and the body seems on the brink of death. In olden days the Delphian oracles were people who had the power voluntarily of throwing themselves into these hysteric states and their vague statements were taken to be heaven-inspired. To-day, their descend-