

hollowness in the stomach. This was the influence of suggestion producing a flow of saliva and gastric juices without his knowing how it came. In this the will had nothing whatever to do with the phenomena; they were subjective. It was quite easy to make anyone sleep; this was a subjective state produced either by the mental condition of the patient, or by his induced physical condition. Hypnotism was accepted by all the world. Somnambulism was also accepted. Professor Benedikt had ridiculed the idea that persons hypnotized would obey orders of a very complex kind. It was known that a simple order such as to jump out of the window would be followed by an endeavour to do it. They had seen dozens of times, no doubt, that a mesmerist could impose his announced will upon a hypnotized or mesmerized subject. No one who had real knowledge of the facts would deny that. Now because Professor Voisin said he could by word of mouth produce post hypnotic effects which were more complex operations, surely it was not philosophical to say that because it was more complex it was impossible or untrue. For anyone to say such things were impossible was to say that which was beyond their knowledge. To have that knowledge it is necessary to see the things such as had been shown to him by close observers—not by M. Voisin, but by Professor Charcot and his students, men of the closest observation and the most extreme scepticism. It did not follow that hypnotic suggestion might not be more harmful than useful, or that it might possess therapeutic value, but he could assure them if they investigated the phenomena it would be seen that they were real.”

In regard to the fraudulent simulations of nervous phenomena one cannot but recall the extraordinarily successful deceptions which have been practised upon hospital physicians, even those of the greatest distinction. Many will remember the famous case of a patient in a Metropolitan hospital who cleverly simulated a form of paralysis a few years ago, and took in the very elect. This ingenious person went from hospital to hospital imposing upon a succession of eminent neurologists, meanwhile doing justice to the excellent dietary provided by the various charities for so “interesting” a case, the patient laughing in his sleeve at the acute diagnosis of a disease which in reality had no existence. Further, it is a fact well known to ourselves that a distinguished surgeon at one of our hospitals pretended to have an epileptic fit in one of the wards, and while the bystanders, lay and professional, were commiserating his condition, which they regarded as only too real, he became suddenly well and laughed in their faces.

I am, yours truly,
A UNIVERSITY GRADUATE.

London, December 13th, 1894.

Obituary.

JAMES WILKES, Esq., LATE COMMISSIONER IN LUNACY.

We record with regret the death of Mr. James Wilkes, at the ripe age of 83, who for so many years held the office of Commissioner in Lunacy, to which he was appointed upon the recommendation of Lord Shaftesbury in 1855. He received his medical education at the General Hospital, Birmingham, and at King's College, London, and became a Member of the College of Surgeons in 1835, and a Fellow in 1854. In 1841 he was elected Medical Superintendent of the Stafford County Asylum, where he remained until his appointment to the commissionership. He resigned his office as a paid commissioner in 1878, but up to the time of his death retained a seat at the Board as an honorary member, and, while health and strength remained, attended regularly and rendered valuable public service. In this, as in all stages of his career, he was remarkable for the highly conscientious and painstaking discharge of the duties which devolved upon him.

XLI.

13