

The Medium, or An
Individual in the
Hypnotic State.

By

A. A. Allen,

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The Medium, or An Individual in the Hypnotic State.

Most people to-day are free to think and speak as they please. Although superstition and mysticism have largely contracted the views^{and} obstructed the vision of the thinking class, they are now nearly emancipated from those old dogmatic ideas. Still there is a small cloud hovering in the distant horizon.

Science and reason have broadened the minds of all, and aided greatly in a partial removal of that ugly membrane, blinding the sight of the superstitious, so that clearer eyes read more accurately phenomena of all kinds. From the nature of hypnotic phenomena, people are apt to investigate it through the spears of superstition.

Hypnotism being connected so closely with the affairs of life, and also being so little understood, a great many instantly connect it

with the supernatural, closing their eyes to reason and common sense.

The word medium is used here to designate the person upon whom the hypnotist is operating. It is used to apply to the person whether in a state of hypnosis or in the hypnotic sleep. Hypnosis means simply the changed condition of a persons mind either in a state in which he is conscious of any of the different things surrounding him, or in a state in which he is conscious only of the hypnotist and his suggestions.

A great many views are prevalent even among scientists as to who are most liable to hypnotic influence. Some maintaining that only a people of a certain temperament can be hypnotized, while there are others of equally good authority, asserting that people of a directly opposite temperament are more easily effected. However it has lately been proven beyond a satisfactory doubt that

There are but few people of rational
 minds who cannot be hypnotized.
 It is true some people are
 hypnotized with greater ease than
 others, still we can draw no hard
 and fast lines, saying that people
 of this temperament or state of
 mind can be hypnotized, while these
 people of a different state, or degree
 of intelligence cannot be hypnotized.
 Excluding, however, the class of
 people called idiots, to whom the
^{word} medium has never been applied. They
 have never been hypnotized, and it is
 to be hoped they never will be. The
 ability of the medium to concentra-
 -ate his mind, at least to a certain
 extent, seems to be an essential
 requisite. Further than that it
 seems to make practically no differ-
 ence whether the individual is
 a male or a female; whether he is
 an athlete or a laborer with
 muscles of iron; or a student or a
 philosopher with a mind thoroughly
 trained and perfectly under his

control: or whether he is a weak, irritable, nervous individual he is liable to hypnotic influence, the degree varying with conditions not yet known.

Statistics show that less than two percent of the several thousand people experimented upon at Nancy by Liébault and Brechain remained uninfluenced. They used a method based upon the theory of suggestion while carrying on these experiments.

Although almost every hypnotist has a different method of producing hypnosis, based probably on different theories, a few circumstances may be found common to all. These circumstances then are the cause of the phenomena.

Some of the first hypnogenic processes used with success were the fixing of the medium's eyes on some shining object and having him gaze steadily into the eyes of the hypnotist. Both of these methods have proved quite effectual, and the latter is used yet to some extent.

The methods most widely used are taken partially from the method used by Braid. It has been quite successful; the essential features of which produce a tiring of the eyes, an over irritation of the optic nerve and suggestions that such and such a state exists - or is about to exist. The eyes turn very quickly when rolled high up, as if looking straight up when the head is in the natural position. Another thing very tiring to the eyes, because it is so very straining, is to look at some object held close to the root of the nose. Many hypnotists employ one or the other of these processes with success.

Another part of the hypnogenic process is the passing of the hands before the mediums face in the form of a circle, and always in the same way. The hands are passed close to yet never touching the individuals face. According to the old theory of a fluid connecting the medium and the

Hypnotist through which the will power of the latter exerted its influence upon the mind of the former; this passing of the hands was supposed to circulate the fluid, and greatly aid in the operation. Although this theory has been destroyed, the passing of the hands still play a conspicuous part in the methods used by hypnotists.

The position suggestion assumes in the hypnogenic process is of vast importance. The school at Nancy based all their decisions in explaining the phenomena on the theory of suggestion. They say that it is now the idea that the medium is going to sleep than any thing else, and it undoubtedly has a great weight. The Christian Scientist depend wholly upon suggestion for the cure of all diseases with considerable success. And when the hypnotist declares in firm, decided tones that such a state exist or is about to exist, we cannot help seeing the invaluable service rendered to him in his manipulations. His every motion may

carry with it many suggestions. In ordinary life a person by simply yawning may stimulate the desire to yawn in half the people about him. Laughter and tears produce the same effect. As there are, in human nature a great many degrees of susceptibility to suggestion, so there are a great many degrees of susceptibility to hypnotic influence.

However, let the Hypnotist manipulate, as he pleases, his methods for producing a sensory stimuli of a gentle, monotonous and continuous kind, and let him be as suggestive as he may, his success will be little if the individual to be hypnotized act not in unison with him. If the medium to be resisted every effort of the Hypnotist the chances of success are very small, and the number of successful Hypnotists would be very small. But if on the other hand he wishes to be hypnotized almost any one can play the part of the Hypnotist, this is especially true if the individual has ever been hypnotized.

Being hypnotized is a good deal like yielding to the influence of a habit. The more often one is hypnotized the easier it is to hypnotize him each succeeding time. The peculiar feelings and fantasies ^{which} one experiences the first few times while in a state of hypnosis gradually fade away and like the feelings experienced while smoking the first cigars finally disappear.

The phenomena of hypnotism bear a marked resemblance to that of thought transference. In thought transference the like mobile elements of operator and subjects ^{act together}, thus stimulating in the one the thought concentrated in the mind of the other, while in hypnotism we may think not only of the suggestions of the hypnotist, but also of the action of the mobile elements of his soul upon those of the medium's.

The exact condition of the medium is not known, and, owing to the many different states in which he exists, it is difficult to investigate with much accuracy.

He may be awake and conscious of every thing about him, or he may be in any of the intervening conditions between that and the one in which he is asleep and unconscious of every thing except the suggestions of the hypnotist. He may remember distinctly all that occurred during hypnosis or nothing at all. He may act immediately upon the suggestions of the hypnotizer or he may falter as if undecided, finally yielding to the greater impulse. He suffers the cold of a winter's day, sees the falling snow, or enjoys the pleasures of a slight ride in a torrid climate. In fact he hears any sound or noise; sees any sight imaginable; tastes any flavor; smells any odor; or performs any act with which he is familiar at the will of the hypnotist. His actions being limited, however, to those things with which he is acquainted, as is also the case with his hearing, seeing, etc.

A few illustrations may not be

out of place here.

The medium's eyes are closed and he is told that they are fast and he can not open them. He tries hard to open them, exerting every muscle with out avail until the hypnotist says, "right, now you can open them," when he does so with ease, and smiles at his previous inability to govern the muscles of his eyelids. All of the different muscles of the body may be effected in the same way.

The hypnotist makes the motion of falling snow with his hand, and says "see it is snowing". The medium looks in amazement for a moment, and then his features change into a recognition of the fact and he says "why it is snowing".

A sleigh is next suggested, and, after a moment's hesitation, as if doubting his own eyes, he sees it, and, when told to get in, he steps up like stepping into a sleigh and then sits down on the floor. He looks pleased and says "give me the lines". After taking the fictitious lines and whip from

The hypnotist, he waves the whip in the air and says "get up-here". He undoubtedly enjoys this ride, probably as much as any he ever had, at least, his actions say as much.

Another individual after being hypnotized is given a pack of cards and told to play a certain game. The medium sits down and if he knows the game he will play it through all right. The cards are then taken away and he plays the game from the suggestions of the hypnotist that he holds certain cards in his hand and that certain ones are on the table. However now he must look to the suggestions for every move, while before he was simply told to play, with no other suggestions. Accordingly his actions would be like those while in the normal state in the first instance, but in the second he seems to be a sort of a combination of himself and the hypnotist. Sometimes a medium recognizes the different people about him after he supposes himself to be another

individual. A medium in this condition while having a number of people, with whom he was acquainted, pointed out to him, he walked up to another, called him by name and says, "Hello; when did you come?"

The actions of the medium depend largely upon his personal peculiarities.

Strong healthy persons of sound minds suffer no deleterious effects from being hypnotized a few times. But if they were hypnotized day after day as the cigarette fiend ^{and} smokes his cigarettes, he might be drug into the grave more quickly than the smoker.

It is the hysterical people, principally, and those whose minds are filled with superstitions and fantasies who suffer bad effects. They are made more hysterical and sometimes lose their minds altogether. Yet this class of people is small, and, if they were the only ones to suffer from the effects of hypnotism, the Law might remain silent and no great damage be done to the human race.

But since the suggestions of the hypnotist may be impressed upon the mind of the medium with so much force that he will be unable to resist the command given in these suggestions even days and weeks after it is given, another aspect of grave importance is added to the question of hypnosis.

It is this aspect which demands legislative attention in order to keep the medium from falling into the hands of villains and murderers, committing their deeds and suffering the punishment.

Some have laid great stress upon the supposition that, if the hypnotist should fail to get the individual out of the hypnotic sleep, he, the medium, would be in an awful fix. This supposition is groundless for if a snap of the finger, a sharp noise, or a stimuli of a kind opposite to that which produced the sleep fail to wake him, he will pass into a normal sleep and awake of his own accord.