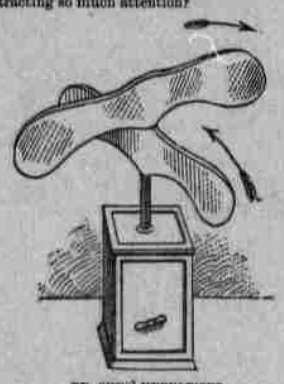
THE MODERN BLACK ART

Examples of True and False Mesmerism.

MANY ARE THE PRETENDERS.

One of the Rare Cases In Which Popular Opinion Has Triumphed Over Skeptical Science—How Snakes Charm—The Hypnotizing Machine—Amusing Fakes.

Mesmerism is a vague, unscientific term, which has no fixed meaning in the popular mind. Hynotism is but little if any better. Odyllic potency is entirely too scientific, and animal magnetism is a phrase covering too much ground. We might call it the "snake charm," but it is not confined to snakes or even to people of snaky dispositions. What, then, shall we call this occult and mysterious power just now attracting so much attention?



DR. SUYS' HYPNOTIZER.

Let us first see what it is, and as no description is practicable examples must be employed. Some years ago an Ithaca (N. Y.) gentleman named Reynolds acquired the power to an extraordinary degree and convinced the most critical audiences in that college town. Among others a venerable professor in Cornell university attended one evening's performance with the avowed intent to show the absurdity of the thing. He consented to be a subject and in a few minutes was crawling under a table in pursuit of imaginary $20 gold pieces. He was convinced.

Reynolds would make people pick grapes from phantom vines, climb frantically up the sides of a door or window case to escape the rising tide of the viewless ocean, and would, by a few passes, make a man so rigid that he would lie stretched like a log between two chairs, upon which his head and feet alone rested—so rigid indeed that two men could stand upon his unsupported stomach or back without bending it. This power is now supposed to have been the secret of these extraordinary performances by the camisards and convulsionaires of France. A philosophic historian noted for his caution records that he saw one woman in a trance and "rigid as seasoned oak" receive 50 blows of an iron bar wielded with all the strength of a stalwart soldier. Can the mind conceive of a more pitiable spectacle—a community mad with religious fervor and a military governor striving to cure it with stripes and bruising and death?

India furnishes scores of examples. Every one has heard of the wonderful tricks done by her native conjurers, which are now supposed to be mere hypnotic delusion. Here is a familiar case as related by Dr. C. W. Dill of Boston:

"It was on the street in Madras, and the fakir was a tall bronzed native. He gazed around the circle until his piercing black eyes met those of each attentive spectator. Then he uncoiled a slender rope and threw it up in the air. It caught on some invisible hook and hung down. Next the Indian laid a handkerchief on the road, and making motions over it something underneath began to move. The handkerchief was taken off, and there lay a tiny infant. Blowing gently upon its face, the fakir made it grow, and in a few moments the babe was on its feet, a babe no longer, but an agile and bright faced lad.

"The Indian motioned upward, and the boy began to climb the rope. Soon he was out of sight, though the rope continued to sway with his struggles of ascent. The magician then shook it and pulled it sideways, and we could hear a faint scream of protest from the clouds. Then there was the sound of a falling body, and the child lay crushed at our feet. The Indian quickly made a pass, and the lad was alive and ready to go skyward again."

Wonderful, wonderful indeed! And the explanation is scarcely less so. Next time the doctor took with him a quick pencil artist and a photographer. The artist saw the miracle, as did all the others, and sketched it, but when the photographic negative was developed it showed only the fakir and the crowd—no boy no rope! The fakir had hypnotized the crowd and made them think they saw a marvel, but he could not hypnotize the camera. The ever faithful lines of light recorded only what actually occurred.

CONQUEST OF THE CORNELL PROFESSOR.

Unquestionably, if human testimony is of any value whatever in relation to the marvelous or semimiraculous, there is a mysterious force of awful potency which some people can exert on some others. The testimony may be called universal, for since history began there has never been a people, savage or civilized, but testified to many such instances. The people's religion has had little to do with it. Ancient Israelites and modern Hindoos, the bard headed Scotch of the highlands and the volatile Greeks and Sicilians, have agreed to the letter, and now the scientific men of England and America, after standing out long against the alleged "superstitions of the unlearned," concede far more than the unlearned ever claimed.

If there ever was a "backwoods notion" ridiculed without mercy, it was the belief that serpents have power to charm. But the fact is now conceded. It is set forth in the latest works on ophiology, and the method of it is explained by Charcot Suys and other specialists in Paris. And finally, as if to surfeit us with marvels, Dr. Suys has actually invented a charming machine, if one may call it such, a sort of double acting rotary hypnotizer, which, he thinks, operates on the same principle as the serpent's eyes.

It is a little piece of clockwork which causes two mirrors or bright disks of metal to revolve rapidly in opposite directions. This device, says a recent eyewitness, was placed before the patients where they could regard it steadily. They were bidden to rid their minds of engrossing thoughts and fix them on the glitter of the whirling glass. In a short time all of them succumbed to the same spell that a bird falls under when looking into the diamond blaze of a serpent's eye. They were completely hypnotized and were ready to respond to the verbal directions of the operator.

It should be added that all these patients were susceptible and had previously been hypnotized. Otherwise the doctors think not more than a third of them would have succumbed to the influence. Everybody has heard or read queer old stories of the effects of mirrors on animals, and there is no longer reason to doubt their truth. Another fact is equally certain—that for every real hypnotizer or mesmerizer there are at least ten amateurs or pretenders. And this it is which has created so widespread a prejudice against mesmerism, so called. Of the fakirs who travel through the country giving "shows" at "one night stands" it is safe to say that 19 out of 20 are "fakes." And yet they give a man the worth of his money, for their performances are, as a rule, very amusing.

Among the most noted of these is Mme. Anastasia de ——; but, on second thoughts, it is not well to advertise her by name. One of her great tricks is "sewing a man together." Of course the "gentlemen from the audience" who "volunteer to come forward," etc., are her own employees properly disguised and known in the business as "horses." If, as often happens, a real volunteer goes forward, why, there is the usual come off, "Many people are not susceptible," etc. For her great trick she has a "subject" whose ears have been "pierced," as the ladies say, at the point where there is very little feeling and which is ordinarily "pierced" for earrings.

The needle and white thread are put through this and then through the loose skin on the "horse's" wrist, then through his other ear, etc., and through it all he feels about as much pain as a pin scratch would produce in a sensitive part. Then Mme. Anastasia de ——, etc., lays her hand upon her heart and calls upon any and all physicians present to say if—etc. So much for the madame. But the master in this line, a genius who really deserves praise and has been 'on the road' for 20 years, is a well known New Yorker whom it is safe to call Dr. Jay.

He has at least 20 "horses" in his employ, and some of them have been his "horses" for a dozen years. Of course they have some other business, for Dr. Jay only employs them for an hour or two at night. He not only puts pins through the ear, as Mme. Anastasia does, but runs a needle through the tongue and does many other wonderful things. But his chief talent consists in amusing the audience. He is an artist in that line. He waits till preceding performers have left all in good humor. Then his "subjects" are got into the "hypnotic trance" and told that the tide is coming in to where they sit on the rocks. They climb up on their chairs, then throw off their coats, vests, shoes and socks and sprawl all over the stage as they (supposedly) swim ashore, while the audience goes into convulsions of laughter.

INSENSIBLE TO PAIN.

And such is mesmerism "as she is practiced." It simply requires good "horses" to make it a first class burlesque, and, using the accepted slang, it is on the whole "horse play." The subjects dance about, break chairs, pound each other and savort around in all sorts of wild ways. The "mesmeric medium" might as well be off the stage. And it is a point worth noting that in private conversation every "hypnotizer" and every "horse" of this class declares that there is nothing in mesmerism. To a "horse" who held forth at a New York city resort a reporter of The Herald cited the fact that there was a real man named Mesmer who practiced a real art.

"Oh, come off!" was the response. "We know all about that. The man it was named for was a fakir, and he introduced it in a dime museum, and if you'll go to my room I'll give you the year and date."

And this is the curse of science. Each step in advance must be on disputed ground, and for one honest, earnest inquirer there are many "fakirs" and impostors, while the great army of the queer and crazy rush in and try to make this mysterious power sustain their theories about attendant spirits, the return of the dead, witchcraft and second sight. But hypnotism is now beyond all that. Men of science declare that it is a reality, but most of them deny that a man can be induced to commit a crime against his will or do any other of the queer things alleged in court. In short, they say a man's nature cannot be changed by it, and if he commits a crime when hypnotized it is because his instincts are criminal. And such would seem to be the common sense view of it.

JEROME JACQUIN.

Oyster Prospects Are Good.

The past few weeks have been busy ones with the oyster planters, and lovers of the oyster will be glad to hear that the prospects of a large set are good, and the bivalves should be plenty the coming season. It is estimated that over a million bushels of shells have been laid down here, the largest planters being H. C. Rowe & Co., 130,000 bushels; Ludington & Co., 75,000; F. Mansfield & Sons, 70,000; C. Parmalee, 40,000; Lancraft Bros., 100,000; Chipman & Co., 55,000; Bishop & Co., 35,000; B. M. Rowe & Son, 30,000; Gunn & Co., 25,000; Jeremiah Smith & Sons, 100,000; C. D. Parmalee, 45,000; M. Coleman, 20,000; Isaac E. Brown, 25,000.

Many of the large dealers here have beds at Stratford, Norwalk and Bridgeport, and reports from these sections are equally encouraging. The value of the shells delivered at the beds is about eight cents per bushel, which gives some idea of the importance of the oyster industry, a poor set meaning a sure loss to the planters.

Clams are very scarce at the grounds around Savin Rock, Oyster Point, Crane's Bar and South End, and the few dug are small and lack sweetness. Large quantities are being brought here from Martha's Vineyard in sloops. These are planted in the Quinnipiac river and dug as required for the trade. Lobsters are very scarce and the trade is so unprofitable that but few pots are placed. Crabs, on the contrary, are unusually plenty, and large catches are made in all the bays and inlets.—New Haven Letter.

Wonderful Growth of Electric Travel.

Only twelve years have elapsed since the first crude suggestions of the practical working of an electric railway were made, and four years ago a list of a dozen would comprise every such road in the world in even passably successful operation, whatever the method of application. The first large commercial electric railway was, after many difficulties and discouragements, opened in the early part of 1888 at Richmond, Va., and since that demonstration was made the industry has grown until there are now in operation or under contract, on the general lines laid down at Richmond, not less than 350 roads in the United States, Europe, Australia and Japan, requiring more than 4,000 cars and 7,000 motors, with more than 2,600 miles of track, a daily mileage of nearly 500,000 miles, and carrying nearly a billion passengers annually. Fully 10,000 people are employed on these roads, and there has never been an authenticated report of death on account of the electrical pressure used. Over $50,000,000 are invested in this industry in this country alone.—Frank J. Sprague in Forum.

Mr. Cleveland's Washington Church.

It is understood that Dr. Sunderland's church, the old First Presbyterian, will again number Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland among its pewholders. It was Dr. Sunderland who married Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland, and Mrs. Cleveland during her former residence in Washington was an attendant almost every Sunday and quite active in the charitable and social work of the church. The First Presbyterian is one of the oldest and also one of the least pretentious of all the churches in the national capital. It is a plain, red brick building, without any steeple, and its architecture is scarcely ecclesiastic, but a sign on the front of it speaks more eloquently than towering spire or jingling chimes. It reads: "The church is open from 9 until 5 daily. Come in and pray." This injunction will be obeyed by large numbers of sinners, it is fair to say, especially when Mrs. Cleveland is worshiping in the pew which bears on its gate a silver plate thus engraved, "The President."

Revived By the Watermelon.

A singular story comes from St. Elmo. On Thursday while the baggage team and wagon that runs to Portersville was on the road some distance from the station, a thunderstorm arose. Lightning struck a tree near the road, splitting it in two. The same bolt jumped to the wagon, knocked down the mule and the boy driver. The boy, in falling, struck his head on a Georgia watermelon, the force of the fall breaking the melon, and the boy's head sinking into the cavity in the melon. The mule lay stunned some minutes, and, recovering, got up and resumed his way. The boy having fortunately fallen with his head into the melon, the water in it had the effect of reviving him, and he shortly regained consciousness. The only damage to the wagon was a split spoke.—Mobile (Ala.) Register.

Domesticated Partridges.

Miss Fannie Newman, living near Lexington, has a genuine curiosity in the shape of six partridges, which are as tame and docile as possible. Some time ago her brother in plowing a field came across a nest containing a number of partridge eggs, and gave them to his sister, who placed them under a hen, and in due time they were hatched out. A motherly little bantam hen has taken the birds under her wing, and, from the fuss and noise she makes over them, seems to take delight in her downy charges. It is a pretty sight to see them together.—Carrollton (Mo.) Democrat.

RIDER HAGGARD'S HERO

The Original Allan Quatermain Lives In South Africa.

HIS NAME IS FREDERICK SELAUS.

The Novelist's Account of Him Not Exaggerated, but He Never Had a Wife—Another South African Fighter—Gouvela the Terrible and His Frightful Fate.

What reader of Rider Haggard's works has not learned to know and love old Allan Quatermain, the hero of so many of the novels that a decade ago took the literary world by storm and won for themselves an impregnable place in the popular favor? Who that followed him through the vicissitudes and triumphs of the numerous stories in which he figured could refrain from a sigh as he laid down the book after reading the last chapter of the story bearing the old hero's name for a title, realizing that the author had done with him forever? It was like losing a dear old friend, and one parted from him with great regret.

But, though Haggard found it advisable for literary reasons to kill his hero off, it will be pleasing for many of his friends to learn that the original of the character is still alive in South Africa, and that he is just such a man as the novelist has depicted and has had almost as many and dangerous encounters and narrow escapes. His name is Frederick Courtenay Selaus and he is an Englishman by birth, having gone to South Africa in 1871, when only 19 years old. Mr. Selaus has never been married and is still very much alive. Until recently he practically lived far in the interior, where white men had never been. Hardly a year went by without his exploring some unknown territory and returning laden with trophies of the chase and bringing carefully drawn sketch maps of the country explored. Twice he has been granted awards by the Royal Geographical society for the excellent work done by him in that line.

When Mr. Haggard was in South Africa a dozen years ago, he was a great friend of Selaus. He lived with him, camped with him, hunted with him, and when he wrote his novels he put his friend in them as their hero. His description of Quatermain is merely a photograph of Selaus with a few

FREDERICK COURTENAY SELAUS.

years added to his age. The little details of thought, manner and prejudice attributed to Quatermain are all Selaus'. The short stories of adventure told in the course of the novels are all veritable adventures of Selaus, and, finally, at least two-thirds of Quatermain's pithy sayings originated with Selaus.

And lovable as Quatermain is no one can say that he is an unduly flattered portrait of Selaus. For over 20 years the latter has hunted, traveled and explored throughout South Africa and yet is thought not to have an enemy or even an ill wisher throughout the country. The natives fairly adore him, the whites have nothing but good to say of him, while one and all trust him absolutely and completely.

In the course of his life in Africa he has had many hairbreadth escapes. He has published a book recounting many of his hunting adventures. Others he has omitted, because, as he says, no one would believe them. Yet they are true, even though often apparently impossible.

Another and far different South African character was Manuel Antonio de Souza, called Gouvela, whose life and death would have furnished a fitting subject for Haggard in his best vein. Gouvela was for 20 years the governor of the large Portuguese province of Gorongoza, south of the Zambesi and west of Mozambique, succeeding his father in that dignity and as chief of a tribe of about 800 warriors.

At the beginning of his career Gouvela inaugurated the very astute policy of assisting his weaker neighbors against the stronger in their battles, and when by his aid they had overcome their enemies he made the victors pay him tribute, incorporating the remnants of the vanquished forces into his own tribe. Thus he became lord paramount of the country for miles around.

But a dismal fate befell him. Owing to disputes between the Portuguese and British over the possession of Manicaland Gouvela's allies deserted him, and his tributary tribes revolted. At the head of the rebels was McCombie, chief of a tribe to the north, and him Gouvela resolved to attack, though he could muster but 1,500 men, while McCombie had 8,000.

The odds were not so great after all, for Gouvela's men were well armed and had two machine guns. But his time had come. McCombie's men cut off his supplies, and he must either attack or flee. All his life the bold plan had served him best, and he marched in the night to attack McCombie and marched straight into an ambush. Expecting to surprise, he was surprised. Expecting to attack, he was attacked. The first rush of McCombie's men broke on the machine guns. In a twinkling the whites in charge were slain, the Kaffir gunners scattered or killed, and Gouvela's chief reliance rendered useless.

His followers, broken into several detached parties, their white leaders dead, themselves surrounded by five times their own number, must have realized that their chief, who had so long led them to victory, had now led them to death. But not a man flinched. With a courage not rare among the more manly tribes of Africa they fought until the very last, dying in their places to a man.

How Gouvela met his death is unknown. Only after the battle was over the rising sun saw his body surrounded by a horde of savages, more like demons than men, who howled with rapture and frenzy as they tore his bleeding heart from his yet breathing body and devoured it, that they might gain the skill and courage that had for so long rendered him invincible. Of all Gouvela's force one man alone escaped, and he only did so because he had been wounded and sent to Masdkessi to recover two weeks before the battle.

An Obstacle.

A theological student who had preached one Sunday in a city at a considerable distance from the school which he attended wished to take the early train back on Monday morning.

He was delayed in starting, and had to stop on the way to get a check cashed, so that when he reached the upper end of the station the train which had stopped at the other end had already started out.

It would pass him, however; so he waited, and when the baggage car came along he threw his bag on board, and with sensible precaution decided to wait for the last car before jumping on himself.

The bystanders watched the proceeding with interest, and broke into laughter as the rear car came along. There, on the lower step of the rear platform, stood a man who must have weighed fully three hundred pounds, an effective hindrance to any attempt toward boarding the train.

The young man fell back and waited for the next train, while the obstacle continued in his position on the steps quite unconscious of anything except the cigar he was smoking.—Youth's Companion.

The Original Four Hundred.

It is generally thought that the saying that the only people in New York worth knowing can be numbered by 400 was originated by Ward McAllister, but it can be found in the Bible. Acts v, 36, which speaks of Theudas boasting himself to be somebody, to whom a number of men, about 400, joined themselves, who were scattered and brought to naught. The verse referred to reads as follows, "For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody, to whom a number of men, about 400, joined themselves, who were slain, and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered and brought to nought."

Another verse worth mentioning in this connection is from I Samuel xxii, 2, "And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him, and he became a captain over them, and there were with him about 400 men."—Keystone.

Colds in Summer.

To talk of guarding against cold in summer seems absurd, and yet it is as necessary as in winter. Where the climate is changeable a hot day is often followed by a cool evening or a sudden rainstorm chills the air, or a cold wind springs up, grateful after the heat but dangerous to those who are thinly clad unless they are protected from it by proper covering.

Cotton is a good conductor of heat and allows it to escape rapidly from the surface of the body. As soon as the surrounding air becomes cooler than the skin it steals the heat which the body requires for its own needs. A fresh supply of heat must be produced, and thus the system is overtaxed to supply the demands of the robber. Flannel is a bad conductor and guards the tender body more faithfully, retaining the heat. —Elizabeth R. Scovil in Ladies' Home Journal.

Fifty Feet of Rattlesnakes.

Charles Everitt and a party of friends were enjoying themselves in the woods near Stroudsburg, Sunday, when they suddenly found that they were in a den of rattlesnakes. On every side were big black rattlers, making the air ring with the weird music of their tails. Everitt and the others pitched into the snakes with clubs and stones and succeeded in killing thirteen. Double that many more escaped. When the rattles were counted on the dead reptiles it was found that they numbered 142, while the total length of the snakes was over fifty feet.—Port Jervis (N. Y.) Union.

Visitors to Burns' Monument.

The visitors to Burns' monument during the late Glasgow fair week fairly broke the record in point of numbers. Fully 2,000 persons paid for admission to the monument during the week, being about 200 in excess of any previous year. It is estimated that about one in three of those who go out to the Banks of Doon go in to see the monument, and, according to this calculation, no fewer than 6,000 strangers made pilgrimages to the spot during the week.—Ayr (Scotland) Advertiser.

Travels of a Needle.

Mrs. J. Campbell, of this place, when a girl nine years old, ran a needle in her right arm just above the elbow. Little was thought of the occurrence until a few days ago, when she suffered great pain in her left arm. The family physician made an examination and found the pain was caused by the needle, which was removed. During the twenty years intervening the needle traveled up the right arm, across the shoulder and down the left arm.—Philadelphia Press.