

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

Extracted from a 1913 issue of *The Practitioner*

MENTAL SUGGESTION BY INDIRECT TRANSFERENCE

BY L. FORBES WINSLOW, M.B., L.L.D., D.C.I. PHYSICIAN TO THE BRITISH HOSPITAL FOR MENTAL DISORDERS,
AND LATE PHYSICIAN ON MENTAL DISEASES AND LECTURER ON INSANITY AT CHARING CROSS HOSPITAL

For a long time psychotherapy was under a cloud. In my opinion, the subject has a great future in store. I admit, I was a sceptic myself until about 16 years ago. I had attended séances, but always regarded them with a certain amount of suspicion. However, a case of hypnotherapy – using indirect transference – made such an impression upon me that I determined to try the same treatment in other cases of abnormal nervous conditions. I have found the results to exceed my highest expectation. I do not profess to be able to explain the rationale of this treatment beyond that of suggestion, but I let the results speak for themselves. A few months ago, I read a paper before the members of the Psychical Research Society, and I had an opportunity of demonstrating some cases successfully before the members present to their evident astonishment and interest.

Folie du doute

In the year 1897, I sent a lady to the Continent, suffering from *folie du doute*, she was accompanied by an attendant and a lady companion. She got worse, and I was summoned to Milan to see her. I found the disease had made rapid progress, the want of control and lack of confidence in herself having greatly increased. Being in the neighbourhood of Turin, where Lombroso resided, I decided to take advantage of the opportunity and consult him on the case.

He at once advised hypnotism, but at the same time assured me that no direct hypnotism would be of any advantage in such a case, inasmuch as, from the nature of the disease the patient could not be prevailed to get her mind off itself, and without this no good could ensue. Lombroso advised indirect hypnotic suggestion, as practised in Paris by Dr. Luys at La Charité Hospice. After a considerable amount of difficulty, I found a subject over whom I was able to exercise the power required in the treatment of the patient. After three months' treatment, as suggested by Lombroso, the lady completely recovered and returned to her home.

The *modus operandi* consists in hypnotizing a subject and having seated him in a chair opposite to the patient, join hands and then make your suggestions, without in any way directly influencing your patient, or putting him in a state of hypnosis. We must infer that there is a natural sympathy between the recipient and the patient, also with the operator who makes the suggestions.

Dr. Luys used a magnetic rod with three handles. This was moved for a few minutes in front of the arms of both the patient and the recipient, following the line of the limbs forming a certain circuit of magnetization, working with the North Pole of the magnet. Lombroso used the same process, and in the first few cases I did the same. However, I came to the conclusion that the transference was equally as effective without any assistance from the magnet, which I feel only acts as a suggestive agent.

The recipient will probably show by his feelings and possible

contortions, very frequently, that he has experienced the neurological condition of the patient; you then wake him. I have known many instances in which the recipient has, in every way, described the exact symptoms of the patient. On the moment of awakening all the symptoms leave the recipient and in most cases the patient.

Dr Luys has testified to this in Paris; I can do the same in London, my transference experiments having been made in the presence of many medical men.

In fact I do not know any possible nervous complaint it which indirect transference might not be tried with every hope of success. The summary of suitable cases might be stated as being those cases suitable for direct psychotherapy, but, for some reason or other, it is thought desirable to use the indirect treatment. This is more rapid in its work, less liable to suspicion, and less likely to be rebelled against by the patient and friends, which is often found when direct hypnotism is suggested.

Deafness in cab drivers

As hon. physician to the Cab Drivers' Benevolent Association I have to examine the old men for the annual pensions.

Deafness is a disease common in those who have to face all the elements during tempestuous weather. Of course, this is a serious disability for a cabman to possess.

One of the men on the committee, a very earnest man and eager to do good to his fellow sufferers, became stone deaf. He had to retire from the committee, and came before

me for examination as to his unfitness for work and his eligibility to our pension. He had been for four years attending one of the hospitals for diseases of the ear and throat.

The idea occurred to me to try transference in his case. The man made a complete recovery, and three months after the treatment made a speech at the annual dinner of the Cab Drivers' Benevolent Association, expressing his gratitude to me for being the means of his restoration to health.

The case, being well known to many, caused a certain amount of amazement in the circle he moved in. In fact, he gave up for the moment the idea of a pension, and desired to return to his work. This I would not allow him to do, as being over 70 he had well earned his pension. This was one of the first cases of deafness I treated by this means, but I have used it equally successfully in many cases since.

I in every way desire to endorse the remarks of Dr. Luys when he says, "These are indeed strange phenomena which upset what we know in neurology, and in some respects approach the marvellous. But whatever one may say or think they are real facts."

"The transference was equally as effective without any assistance from the magnet. The magnet, in my experience, only acts as a suggestive agent"

1868-2013
Supporting general
practitioners for
145 years