



HYPNOTISM

A person under the influence of hypnosis seems to be asleep. However, he retains certain powers such as the power to walk, talk and understand what is being said to him by the hypnotist. At the command of the hypnotist, the "patient" may lose all feeling in an arm or leg so that a pin can be thrust into that member without causing pain.

Hypnotism first claimed the attention of scientists in the late 18th century. Dr. Franz Mesmer, of Vienna, used it to cure certain nervous ailments. He called his ability or power "animal magnetism." The world at large called it "mesmerism." For many years afterward, the practice of mesmerism was looked upon as a great mystery and was generally associated with stage performances, fraud and superstition.

Now, however, hypnosis has a firm basis in science and is used extensively by psychiatrists and psychologists in the treatment of nervous disorders and is also used by dentists and surgeons as an anesthetic in cases where, because of heart or other physical disorders, common and convenient anesthetics such as ether cannot be used.