

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

The Hypnotic Trance at the Royal Aquarium

MR. GEORGE KNAGGS, M.R.C.S., has furnished us with the following particulars regarding the case of hypnotism which he has had under his observation at the Royal Aquarium for the last three weeks. Walter Johnston, aged 29, was placed under hypnotic influence on January 21st. His pulse was 87, respiration 19, temperature normal, weight 9st. 3lbs. The rapidity of the pulse was probably due to nervousness, for it has since been ascertained that it usually has been slow. He has now been in a condition of "trance" for about twenty-two days, during which time the pulse has varied from 45 to 68. On a few occasions the respirations have sunk to only six per minute, but usually have been higher. The temperature has varied from 96.4° to 98.6°F. He early developed a slight conjunctivitis, which

rapidly subsided under treatment. The skin of the buttocks and on the inner aspect of the thighs became inflamed. These conditions, however, were relieved by the use of an air cushion, and greater care in the adjustment of the urinal. Constipation has been a trouble, and it has been necessary to use enemata and laxatives. He has been massaged daily, and has been supported by milk and a little bovril. On February 10th he weighed 8st. 9lbs., and on February 12th the pulse was 58, respirations 12, temperature 98.2°F. Under any circumstances we think it undesirable that the phenomena of hypnotism should be made the object of public exhibition at places of amusement.

Reference

British Medical Journal, February 1896, 422.

Researched by Henry Rollin, Emeritus Consultant Psychiatrist, Horton Hospital, Epsom, Surrey