

HYPNOTISM AS A CAUSE OF CRIME

Played Sinister Part in Recent Reynolds-Hibbins Mur- der Case.

BLOODSHED NOT REMEDY

Mrs. Abigail Scott Duniway Believes Enforced Propinquity Would Prove More Effectual Than Appeal to Unwritten Law.

Lecturing before the Society of Bible Spiritualists last night, in A. O. U. W. Hall, Mrs. Abigail Scott Duniway spoke by invitation on "The Powers of Thought," illustrating some of the dangers of hypnotism by the recent Reynolds-Hibbins murder case. In part, she said:

"It is related of God's servant, Job, that, when suffering under dire affliction, the old man, in answer to a taunt, exclaimed: 'Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?'"

"This afternoon, seeing in the papers that I was to lecture here this evening, I recalled the fact, previously forgotten, that in answer to a request from your president, by telephone, I had said that I would try to attend the meeting and possibly take part in a discussion on the power of thought for good and evil. I did not expect my theme to be dignified by the title of 'lecture,' but since it has been so announced I will give you, briefly, some of my ideas upon one particular line of thought, known in these latter years as hypnotism.

May Be Power for Good.

"I think it will hardly be denied, in this era of demonstration, that hypnotism, like every other attribute of mind or thought, is a power for good, that in the keeping of unscrupulous persons may and often does become a power for evil. Believing, as I have learned to believe, that all evil is undeveloped good, and that it is ignorance of evil, of which the human family is so often the victim, I do not scruple to investigate, and as far as I am able, analyze every line of thought that current events is stimulating.

"I have been especially stirred by a recent event, resulting in murder, wherein a woman otherwise of blameless character was so far led astray by the evil designs of a man who had evidently made her the victim of hypnotism, that I restrained with difficulty a desire to submit to the newspapers an attempted analysis of this mysterious power, which no one in any way connected with the tragedy or trial seemed to understand, except, possibly, the evil-intentioned man who paid the penalty for his crime through the loss of his physical life.

Under Powerful Spell.

"I am convinced that nothing but the lingering power of a Svengalian spell would have induced his unfortunate victim to throw restraint to the winds and, regardless of the presence of others, cast herself upon the clay-cold body of the villain who, even in death, held her will, or thought forces, spellbound. The letters written by this woman under the influence of this spell show her to have been not a bad woman at heart. Not a word did she pen in those letters against her wronged and outraged husband, and not a motive did she disclose from first to last other than blind obedience to a hypnotic power, as potent while it lasted as a virulent case of typhoid fever or confluent smallpox.

"Quite frequently this form of hypnotism is dual in character, affecting two victims simultaneously, as in a case of 'love at first sight,' when a youth and a maiden, with no legal barrier between them, joyfully accept each other for better or for worse at the marriage altar; and, shielded 'till death doth them part,' by its mysterious power, they are ennobled to endure all the trials, as well as enjoying all the pleasures of life, till a ripe old age, in each other's company. It is the greatest of blessings.

Other Side of Picture.

"But woe to the man or woman who enters the marriage relation when one or both the contracting parties has not been enthralled by this power of thought. If, among the ships that do not 'pass in the night,' comes along an 'affinity,' who professes and does not scruple to use hypnotic power to entice a man or woman—for both the sexes may be subject to its spell—causing an innocent victim of the disease to forsake and for a time forget husband or wife, children and all else previously held sacred for the sake of an ephemeral impulse, so ruthless while it lasts as the thought power that enthralled it.

"Do not understand me as condoning the weakness of any man or woman who catches this unclean contagion. But I do most solemnly protest against the maudlin sentimentality that has become a part of our unwritten law, which excuses the woman in the case as weak, while all the villainy is charged up to the man. Any married woman understands the advances of a hypnotic practitioner long before they become serious; it is her duty to parry them in such a way, by the power of her own thought and action, that the most designing villain will skulk away abashed.

Remedy for the Evil.

"But, in a case like the one under review, where both parties have fallen victims to hypnotic disease and have lost the divinest of human attributes—self-control—it would, in my opinion, be far more salutary to lock them up together and give human nature a chance to effect a lasting cure by repulsion, which, in time, would surely come to their relief, than for an injured or innocent husband or wife to stain his hands in the blood of one and leave the other an incurable sufferer from a disease that, like alcoholism, can only be effectually cured by creating a chemical change in its victim, induced by compulsory overdoses of opportunity.

"I also deem it wise, while this theme of the power of thought is under discussion, to consider another case, wholly unlike the one just cited, of which the papers are full. In this case, also, maudlin public sentiment is endeavoring to shield a woman from the consequences of an act of which no man could be guilty, and which calls so loudly for a jury of women to sit in judgment upon it, that I do not wonder that papers like *The Oregonian* are analyzing her act and slowly coming to the conclusion, reached long ago by thoughtful mothers of men, that men are in no position to deal justly by a woman who uses the baleful influence of perverted sexual power to place public men in compromising positions.

No Excuse for Woman.

"It is no excuse for a woman guilty of such conduct to say that she is weak. I blushed anew for my sex when I read in the evening papers that two organizations of women had stood sponsors for liberty, pending trial, of a woman who could be guilty of such an act. But, when I read their indignant denial I was overjoyed that the press should so readily correct the rumor and the accursed organizations so hastily demand it. *The Oregonian* manfully exposes the salacious wiles of a woman, who, lost to all sense of honor or decency, lends herself to schemes with which men are powerless to cope.

"This is the evil side of hypnotism, or the power of thought perverted. Its cure is knowledge; its preventive is understanding. Properly controlled and understood the power of hypnotic thought is infinite for good. In the hands of the unscrupulous it is like dynamite. In the hands of the ignorant it is like a lighted match to a powder magazine. But when used with wisdom and discretion it is like the ether that pervades all space, or the electric power that lights and moves the world and runs the universe."