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THE HOMŒOPATHIC PRINCIPLE APPLIED TO INSANITY.

21

A PROPOSAL TO TREAT

LUNACY BY SPIRITUALISM.

BY

JAMES JOHN GARTH WILKINSON, M. D.,

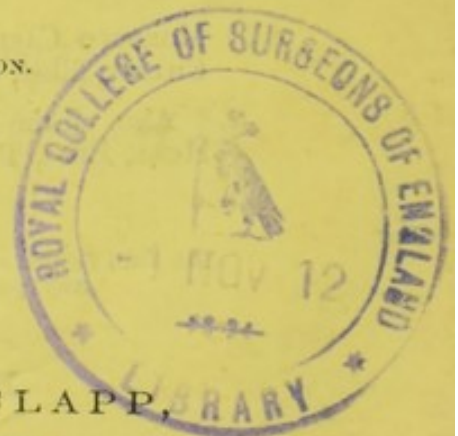
AUTHOR OF "THE HUMAN BODY AND ITS CONNECTION WITH MAN;" "WAR, CHOLERA, AND THE  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH;" "EMANUEL SWEDENBORG: A BIOGRAPHY;" "UNLICENSED  
MEDICINE;" "PAINTING WITH BOTH HANDS;" ETC., ETC.

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"There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding."

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## A PROPOSAL

TO TREAT

# LUNACY BY SPIRITUALISM.

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THE world has heard of Spiritualism in all the countries of Europe, as well as foremost in America; and it is a well-known fact that Spiritualism has the power of producing mental excitement at first in nearly all cases, and in many instances, real insanity. My practice has furnished me with several such instances; and it has seemed to me that the occurrence of these temporary disasters will lead to an important discovery in the treatment of the insane.

The principle of Homœopathy is now securely established by millions of experiments, I may say, daily millions, on both sides of the Atlantic, among those who have been at the pains to investigate it. Like is found to cure like in all hitherto known cases, where the similars are brought together. "One fire puts out another's burning." In the old school of medicine, where this law is unrecognized, the facts of the law are scattered everywhere, and the most inspired practitioners act upon them instinctively. Vaccination is the sign-post of all these facts; a similar communicated disease extinguishes the susceptibility to the virulence of small-pox. *Similis simili curatur.* Thus both

Schools of Healing agree in the remedy; but with one it is a law, with the other, an isolated fact.

That law is true, and so far forth, universal. Rising from the broadest basis of facts that ever yet confirmed a medical principle, it can have a sweep of deductive power such as the human mind never before conceded to any remedial law. We may think from it, and have it along with us, wherever the incurable stands; sure that it is the way, or rather one way, of a certainly approaching relief. This law will be one of our angels in disintegrating the fetters by which the sane have too much confined the limbs of the insane.

Let me digress for a moment to say, that this is not the only law, or the best law. Our Lord has given the two laws of medicine; and in so doing, has shown us that this, of Homœopathy is only one. He and his given ministers cast out devils by Divine Power of Love, and then the Kingdom of God comes upon you, if you are emancipated from Ill in this wise. We of the medical guild set evil against evil; poison against disease; Satan against Satan. And our Lord tells us that in this way, also, Ill comes to its end. There are then two modes of the extinction of disease; the redemptive or Divine, and the Homœopathic, or human. And numberless sub-modes branch out from these main stems or trunks. The Homœopathic mode is such a stem; because it has a universal principle, which no other mode of medicine pretends to.

Now, then, the lunatics are before us; the very matter and bloodshed of the pity of mankind; the prisoners for whom prayer should be unceasing; for their minds are dungeons and noisome cells, from which no lapse of ages has hitherto brought escape. And the pertinent inquiry is, What agent is Homœopathic or curative to Lunacy?

The Homœopathic books enumerate many substances of a material kind, which are thus Homœopathic. Such are, for example, Belladonna, Stramonium, Agaric, Hyos-

cyamus, Iron, etc., etc., etc. These drugs undoubtedly combat bodily symptoms, and parry the fatality of bodily disease. They tend, when skilfully chosen, to keep lunatics in good health. And where the mental disease is transient, they obliterate its functional effects in the bodily organs; while time, which is the long slumber of every mind, enables the deranged faculties to recover their composure. But no drug can touch the mind, if it be *per se* aberrant. And no drug can hasten the day of health and sanity, when the mind is broken. In a word, although medicinal substances are beautifully homœopathic to disordered cerebral and bodily conditions, no medicinal substance is homœopathic to deranged mental states depending upon purely mental or affectional causes, whose cessation, moreover, is not worked by lapse of time.

Drug can be curative to body; mind can be curative to mind; and spirit can be curative to spirit. The higher, also, or spirit, can restore the lower; but not by homœopathic, but by redemptive energy.

Now, in looking over the known world to find the cure of some very common forms of insanity, our first homœopathic question is, What agent is there that in experience does sometimes clearly produce insanity? It is not necessary that it should always produce it, because agents operate differently on natural classes of individuals; thus, opium is a narcotic, though it does not send some people to sleep; and wine an exhilarant, though it makes some melancholy, and others furious. In looking for our insanity-producing agent, my attention was directed by great cries proceeding from varied quarters, in the direction of Spiritualism, which some at one time feared would turn the brains of all the world; and I said to myself, alone in the human wood, "That is one of the Lord's plants for curing insanity. There is a concurrence of divers witnesses, a concurrence beyond collusion, to the fact that it can, and does, produce insanity; the homœopathic law,

that a moderate dose of that which will cause, will cure, is God's law: therefore Spiritualism will cure Insanity." And then I said to myself, This is all as clear as day; and its advent is sure as the punctuality of the wheels of time: and now, the only problem is, how to apply the cure to the disease which shall vanish under its love? There is another problem, How to get the truth and the benignity adopted; and the Lord, by human means, will manage that too.

It was also clear that Spiritualism contained or involved in its possibility both the above methods of healing; and was capacitated, rightly applied, to evolve each in its proper order. For, in the first instance, it can produce a delirium of excitement, unfreezing all the deeper natural emotions, with all their scars and disorders, and ventilating them into flames. This is the homœopathic principle, in which the evil is evoked, in order to be recognized and cured. The delirium is not due to the Spiritualism, but to the disordered machinery which it urges into creative motion. The second effect is the redemptive principle, in which the spirit influx imparts in peace and sanity, by the higher way, the good opposite to the evil which has been led forth by the lower way. It is due to the subject to state thus much respecting the true part which Spiritualism has to play. And it is also well to bear in mind, that the spiritual power is capable of the highest abuse, if it be employed without religion.

Here it will be necessary briefly to explain what Spiritualism is, so far as relates more immediately to the objects of this paper, and to the year of our Lord in which it is written.

Spiritualism began in its present form, in this country, about twenty years ago, under the guise of Mesmerism. This extended itself far and wide, and, catalepsy and convulsion being frequently produced by it, convulsive diseases were, and are, often cured by its application. Mesmerism

ran its course, and is still running it, being now an established medical practice. But out of Clairvoyance, or Mesmerized Sight, arose a second spiritual wave, — of minds impressed, and speaking by impression, or, as it used to be called, Prophesying. This, too, has continued, and propagated its influences through an ever-widening circle. Then came the third and greater wave, of Spirit-rapping and Table-moving. The table tipped to the letters of the alphabet, and spirits spelt out messages to those around the board. By-and-by, instead of the table, the hands of certain individuals were chosen to communicate the messages of the spirits, by involuntary writing. A pencil is held in the hand as if for writing, and the hand is moved involuntarily, and after a certain number of trials, which are requisite in order that the patient may acquire passivity and faith enough, words and sentences issue from the unconscious hand, the import of which is often very astonishing to the penman. Any one may try this experiment for himself, and a small per centage will become involuntary writing-mediums. A still larger proportion, perhaps eighty out of every hundred, will in time become drawing-mediums. This is an interesting phase of Spiritualism, as we shall see presently.

The involuntary writing and drawing mediums tend continually to another state. As the hand and arm are a better vehicle for spirit to work on than the table, so the mind is a greatly better medium or vehicle than the hand; and the mind is conscious and voluntary. The next stage of spirit development lies in the mind being impressed, and, of course, willing to be impressed, and knowing its impressions. This is a great advance; and the passivity of will and understanding, just that which is called Faith, is the highest energy of which either is susceptible. The submission to the higher is the crown of the head of the lower. When this takes place, the river of spirit is poured



through the mind, which has all its integrity of conscious life busily engaged in making way for the current.

So far has Spiritualism gone at present as a mental and spiritual condition.

Keeping our one end in view, it is now to be observed, that the spirit-drawing and painting, and spirit-writing, exert upon the mind which employs them a fascination and a power often the most unbounded. The source whence the communications proceed, and often their tenor and substance, are such as to enchain the attention of the medium. The privilege of speaking with the unseen world exalts the conceptions, and sometimes the sense of importance of its recipient. Excited attention, played upon by unexpected influences, carries the mind off its balance, and control of reason grows feebler, until a paroxysm of artificially induced insanity sometimes concludes the experiment. This is a very rare result, but a valuable one for my purpose. Where there has been no organic disease, I have never yet known any permanent state to result from these crises of excitement: they pass off in a few days, or a few weeks, and leave the medium calmer than before; past all likelihood of excitement from similar causes. No similar inoculation of dread, of vanity, or of exclusive heavenly mission, will any more excite the faculties of awe, of self-importance, or of credulity, which have been cured by the natural cessation, or wearing out, of their excitability. Great quietude is usually left behind after the attack; and the state exhibits the peculiar purity and peace that belong alike to bodily and to mental convalescence.

Unless the crisis has been very great, and the excitement uncontrollable, experience shows that repression is not the most ready mode for the removal of the symptoms. Let the state rather work itself out, and the exalted ideas which fever the mind come out upon the paper, or by the mouth, as the case may be. Watch the patient, and direct the

manifestations ; but do not seek to extinguish them rudely, or at once, or the whole train of impressions will simply go on inwards, instead of deploying upon the canvas. One friend of mine, now as cool, calm, and little exclusive and exaltée a person as you can meet, is a case in point of these remarks. When the spirit-writing and drawing first seized her, dreadful and ominous messages about those dearest to her, and awful commands to herself, were written out through her hand. Shapes, thick-coming, fantastic, bewildering, yet all-fascinating, poured through her conceptions, and struck the inner canvas of the eye, and reëchoed from the roofs and vaults of the inward ear. She was nearly past control. I forbade the spirit-writing and drawing. What happened? The pictures were drawn, as she averred, upon her tissues and membranes; her frame was scribbled over with the spirit-hieroglyphics. She took her pencil again, and in letting forth the evil, saw it for its true worth; used the ointment of good sense to it, and grew convalescent in letting the stream of these disordered impressions, which checked would have been madness, run away. All she wanted was, the presence at her side of some one who had gone through the same states; who could predict them, and thus command her faith, and enable her to control them. This also, and not the routine method of repression, is what is wanted for the insane: The root of insanity in the doctor, made into medicine by his good sense, is the homœopathic curative agent for the Lunatic Asylum. Intellectual experience can do nothing here, even in its most humane acceptation, beyond preventing the lunatic from bodily mischief; padded rooms are the formula of the highest conception yet generally known, of treating lunatics. Spiritual and affectional experience work by another law, and have the keys of all mad prisons in their pockets; the keys which open the mad doors outwards.

Thus we have seen, somewhat dimly (for the subject,

like a vast aura, is only caught in breaths), that Spiritualism (meaning thereby, involuntary writing and drawing, and also writing and drawing by impression or internal dictate and imprinted conception) produces in persons, sane but excitable, transient and harmless crises of mental derangement. They are harmless, that is to say, unless the person happens to be placed among lunatics while the mind is still entire, in which case confirmed insanity will sometimes result, particularly from the method of repression. In a word, we have here found psychical conditions just answering to vaccination and small-pox in material disease. For we have a grave and soul-desolating malady, insanity, for which no cure but time is attempted. Next, we have a similar malady, far lighter, occurring in a different tribe of persons. The problem is, how to vaccinate the former set of sufferers with the matter of the disease of the latter, so as to carry off the insanity, gradually, and in a mitigated form, through a new eruptive state.

I see clearly that this is going a step beyond Vaccination, because the pock of insanity is already caught, and Vaccination is generally used only as a prophylactic; but then syphilization, in which syphilis is cured by inoculation of syphilis, contains the very principle, and is known to be an effective power. But, not to dwell upon objections, where they are as plenty as all the first thoughts of my readers, and yet one collective experiment will sweep them all away, I will now ask how the spirit-writing and spirit-drawing, also spirit-speaking and spirit-playing (on musical instruments), can be applied to the great fortresses where insanity holds out from age to age against all the siege of science, and all the love of all the Howards.

A large proportion of insane patients are sane in considerable regions of their minds, and unsound in others; and these are the persons with whom I would begin the treatment. You will be pleased to observe, ever-gracious reader, that these same insane have very venerable affin-

ities, antecedents, and allies, in the brightest parts and principalities of this world's history. The ancients felt this, and regarded mad folks with a kind of divine awe, if not with a Christian pity. For these insane we are now thinking of, set the unseen against the seen, live in faith against sight, and cherish the heart and the fancy as more than a counterpoise to the whole world. They are unsound in not recognizing both spheres; yet it must be said, that they act upon the laws of existence beyond circumstance more than we. They are like a distorted ray from the beginnings of all religions. Nay, if any one of the immediate persons of the Christian revelation were here in London to-morrow, unless he had changed with the times, any two mad doctors I know would be consistently likely to consign him to an asylum; and when he got there, his narratives would be more acceptable to those inmates of whom I am now speaking, than his conversation could possibly be to the existing society of this metropolis. Miracle and vision, and take no thought for the morrow, and blessed are the peacemakers, and if ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, would not produce the negative and the struggle in Hanwell, that doth await them in the avenues of modern cities. And the unmistakable fact is, that numbers of patients now immured for life in lunatic asylums, for holding to spiritual allegations and experiences, are neither more nor less than mediums, whose powers, often brought about by calamity, have been misapprehended and truncated; and the whole being has been artificially subverted by unwitting society, in the destruction of those spirit-gifts, which are at once the sign of the disease, and, when rightly led forth and instructed, the waters of the rock of Christian cure.

Here, then, is a basis to proceed upon: the patients are mediums presumptive, by the very fact of their delusions, of their huge faith, of their fiery tenacity, and of their self-circumscription. Now, how to develop their mediumship?

How to let their disease run out, and instruction, the eye of the attention of love, inform their wandering eye, and steady it, by the works of their own hands ?

The employment and the amusement of the insane have, of late years especially, received attention from humane individuals ; but both employments and amusements hitherto, though of great use, have been foreign to the point of insanity. Let involuntary drawing be introduced then as a normal employment into asylums. And let the class of patients upon whom the Spirit-Cure is to be tried, be those who are only functionally deranged, and especially those who are suffering from disappointed affections, affliction, and, in general, mental and affectional causes. Cases of organic disease are not promising ; but mere delusions, fixed ideas, monomanias, and the like, can and will be cured by Spiritualism. And now with regard to the drawing-process.

Provide the patient with paper and pencil, and let him be requested, if he pleases, to place his hand in the attitude of making strokes. In a short time, it will move involuntarily, if his will be passive, and do not stop it ; and circles, ellipses, or other primitive forms will be described. Perhaps human faces, trees, or houses, will come ; and no matter what,—let it come. Let each drawing be kept, dated, and numbered, as marking a progress of state.

Many patients will be unable to draw at first ; the pencil will stick in its centre, and do its own dot ; but then other patients will succeed at once, will go on from little to more, and will radiate faith in their power around them. The slow will catch the infection of doing from the quick. But this leads to another consideration.

The process is so exciting, the attention so arched and tense, that with the insane, at first, the drawing mediums ought to be isolated from each other while at work. The product can be shown about in the Asylum ; but let the first stages of the manufacture be private. The result of

faith will propagate itself from the works with rapidity, and the more gifted spirit-draughtsmen will gradually be looked up to, and acquire a power over the rest. In a little time, from their peculiar experience, they will be able to manage their co-insane friends better than the adventitious attendants; until at last the grand mediums of the asylum, on both sides, male and female, will be enabled to control the whole mad kingdom with a glance; to direct it with skill; to supervise its details; to feel its wants. Then shall be realized that saying, "Who governs madmen must himself be mad;" — mad, that is to say, in the inverse sense of worldly sanity, divinely mad.

But who is to set all this going, in the first instance? It must be the Spirit-Mediums, of whom there are scores, and will soon be hundreds, in this metropolis. I will engage to find Sisters of Charity who will take the initiative, and do it all; and faithful brothers who will second those sisters. Once commenced, the work will propagate itself with that velocity which marks great spiritual movements in the outer courts of history. It will be as swift as early Christianity, when miracles paved the way of light: as rapid as Mahometanism, when a faith, though not of the purest, cut a scimitar-path through the mountains of infidelity: as quick as Joan of Arc in marshalling hearts, or as Cromwell in calling swordsmen out of the land. It will be very quick indeed; and the men and women who will work at its inauguration stand ready prepared.

Spirit-drawing has been mentioned especially in the foregoing paragraphs; but it is not necessary to limit the occupations and amusements of the Asylum to drawing alone. Writing, composition, especially poetry, will flow by the same involuntary gift; modelling also may be cultivated; or music, or working of patterns in crochet or other work; or speaking and singing: in short, any kind of art production which comes spontaneously, may be

given way to, and improvisation of all descriptions may be solicited. By this means the inward experiences and troubles of the whole of these patients will be brought to the surface; the patients will be taught that another spirit than their own is in the process; they will gradually transfer their madness to that other agent; and their pictures or products will become the scapegoat of their states. By the most ordinary law of transference, the internal malady will be drained away, and the whole mind will steam outwards instead of brooding inwards. Then will fear and suspicion, which are the two door-keepers of the madman's mind, die of the new permission to develop freely his madness on the canvas. And as these pass away, his guides will come nearer to him; and his co-patients also will begin to associate with him. Friendship will have a second birth.

All the mad-drawings and other productions must be kept, either in originals or photographs: in half a year they will throw upon insanity a new light; not the light of science, or philosophy, but of Spirit-Experience. The drawings of each generation of these mediums will be helpful for those who are to come. They will be one department of man's new archives, and man's only human because divine History, — the GALLERY OF STATES.

Spirit-Art, in its multiform sense, will also solve another knotty problem in the treatment of the insane. It will spontaneously give birth to its own natural system of punishment and repression, — curative punishment, and repression helpful to cure. For when once the mediums are accustomed to their Spirit-Outflow, either by drawing, music, song, modelling, dancing, representation, or any shape of art-action which can be improvised, the prohibition of this for a time will constitute a privation that will be felt severely; and yet which will be necessary every now and then. If they are forbidden to draw for a day or two, they will miss their gift, inquire why they may not

exercise it, and commence a new responsibility, and a new understanding and control, under the auspices of that inquiry. Changes of occupation, short of punishment, as for instance, from drawing to modelling, may become necessary. And in short, the Spirit-Cure will gradually and surely teach those who direct it, and those who suffer it, the true property and rights of punishment, by instructing them in the Control of States.

The spiritual treatment of the insane can be tried upon a single patient as well as upon a large asylum; and it is particularly applicable to private institutions for the insane. If any person who has faith for it will commence an asylum with such views, I cannot but think, if he make it known, that many patients will be committed to his care; and in that case, his establishment will exercise a contagion for good upon all the great asylums of the world. The same principles, also, with a proper change, are applicable to the treatment of Cretinism and Idiotcy, and perhaps to the Deaf and Dumb. With these latter, intellectual education is to a great extent precluded; but spiritualist education can perform more than the same results, in a shorter time, and without wearing out the sorry powers. The blind also may find the missing sense compensated by the affluence of new gifts, and indeed, of Second Sight.

The phrase has often been used, Spirit-Drawing; and it will be said, How call you it spirit-drawing, when it is only imagination? I call it Spirit, because *that* is drawn through man's hands, and poured through his mind, which is not consciously in him before; with an ease the opposite of the workings of imagination; with a feeling of unself, which destroys authorship; with a truth to truth, which is like the objects of nature, and will bear examination and study by the medium; with a sense of dependence on a higher Being, which is a new position in art.



If you choose to say, it is your own spirit, I have no objections ; but only aver that it is a new and unused faculty, or power of faculty. And so, without fixing whose spirit it is, I call it Spirit. Of course, this is no place for discussing this problem at length.

But how many, viewing the wonders of the spirit pen and pencil, may say it is the Devil. Let it be judged by its works. If it effects a general madhouse delivery, the Lord and Heaven are the Doer. His name be praised. The Devil would like the credit of such a work, but he shall not have it. The routine and officiality which stood against such a result, would be his easy-chair.

Routine will indeed have a very changed time of it, from the moment when insanity begins to be treated on the spiritual plan. For then cure will be within hail ; and although the deep ocean has comparatively few duties, and the deck is lazy then, yet when we come near the coast, skill begins again, anxious nights, looking out ahead, heaving the line, and sighting the beacons. So with the coming cure. It will come in crises and exasperations preliminary to recovered sanity. Crises is a part of hope, and is the anxious side of it. And therefore routine will probably be unable to cope with such new hopes and fears, and will seek another berth.

And indeed when the new machinery is at work, the amount of supervision necessary, the constant call upon skill and sympathy, and the amount of presence of mind demanded, will be incalculable compared to the present conditions. All the madness will be on the move, struggling, fermenting, heaving with sanity. The asylum, no longer a swamp of incurables, will be a burning fiery furnace in which souls and minds are being purified. One of the busiest scenes probably on earth ! holding intercourse and commerce with the invisible ; as it were a collective apparition of the Saviour, stimulating and yet

stilling the transactions and the pulses of a newly established centre of the all-communion, and mart of many nations! Whoever is not prepared for hope, velocity, and the skill born full-armed out of the top-head of human affection, will have to clear out of the way of this movement, which will be too much for him; and he, too little for it.

Enough has been said to project the idea, which is an immortal idea, given for dominion by and by. It is at once a deduction of science, a fruit of experience, and a living inspiration. It remains to be added that the religious element, namely, Christianity, must be all-in-all in the working out of it, or it will fail, and make madness madder than before. The light which shines upon the darkness of the insane must be Christian light. The eye which supervises the unrolling of the twisted and blurred book of madness, must be steadied by a polar ray of the everlasting gospel. The man who copes with unloosed lunacy, must be armed in a divine armory to fight with principalities and powers. The leader who marches at the head of the advancing soundness of the still-vacillating faculties of many, must be a chieftain in the readiness of a wisdom not his own. In short, religious duties, not from routine, but of a New Church, in a New Hope and Light and Love, must precede all the operations of those who are about to be rescued; and to these preliminary duties, reference must be made continually in the ever-recurring crises which are the footsteps of the cure.

Gentle Reader: once upon a time, inoculation was thought so appalling, that it was tried upon condemned felons. Once upon a time, madness was chained to rings in the floor, and to staples in the wall. By very slow degrees, madness was respected for the sake of the human beings that were folded in its coils, and gentleness took the place of force. Madness grew milder as sanity

became more Christian. All we ask of thee now, is, to let madness have a further playground; to let it wear itself out in its own way, in comparatively healthful exercise. We commend this to thy better nature: to that which is more sane in thee than thy worldly *credo*; and so, with the Lord's help, we leave thee to adjust thy duty to the truth.

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