

on the side of the head, or in the tongue. This wide distribution and variability, so alarming to the patient, is much less alarming to the physician, who recognises in these very facts the elements for a favourable prognosis.—*British Medical Journal*, Dec. 15th, 1877.

Professor Gairdner on Spiritualism.

Mr. W. Irving Bishop, an educated and able young American gentleman, who is now visiting Scotland, has, at the request of many of the Professors of the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, and many other influential citizens of these towns, been giving several "Exposures of Spiritualism" before very large audiences. By means of a careful study of the mode in which the most famous professional conjurors amuse and deceive their audiences, through a knowledge of the automatic and reflex action of the brain, and by great perseverance and practice in performing the "tricks," he has been able to rival the most celebrated mediums in befooling an audience. His peculiar anatomical construction enables him to do feats which no ordinary man could do. He offers to pay one hundred pounds, and a well-known American physician adds a thousand to this, if Mr. Bishop cannot do any "manifestation" whatsoever done by any medium, or Spiritualist, after he has been allowed twice to see it done by such a "medium." His offer has not yet been accepted, either in America or Europe. Dr. W. B. Carpenter has been greatly interested in Mr. Bishop's performances, considering that they confirm many of his views in regard to the action of the brain. Professor Gairdner, in a lecture to his class, on the subject of Spiritualism in connection with Mr. Bishop's "Exposures," of which this is the concluding part, says—

I have never gone into this matter professionally, or even as a scientific man, but have always on the other hand held that the duty of a physician towards these things was to have as little as possible to do with them. But, still, in my career instances have come to my knowledge, and it was in consideration of all these that I was led to attempt to formulate a few nights ago the state of my mind upon the subject by saying—and it is something like a distinct, and I think not an untrue and unintelligible definition—that I call the state of mind of people inclined to Spiritualism *a diseased condition of the faculty of wonder*. I hold that the faculty of wonder, or reverence, if you like to call it so, is an innate and necessary part

of the human mind. Nay more, it is one of the most essential, one of the most beneficial of all our endowments—that faculty by which we grasp, by which we strive to a certain extent to comprehend, and, if we do not comprehend, submit ourselves to, and even delight in the unknown—by which we strive to apprehend that which we cannot comprehend. You will easily see that the higher aspect of this faculty of wonder is the basis of the whole of our religious aspirations. Therefore it cannot be that I mean to denounce it—to speak ill of it. But like all our other faculties, this part of our mental constitution is liable to abnormal action—in fact, to get into a state of disease. What I said of this faculty is, that when it is rightly applied by a thoroughly healthy mind to the connection between the spiritual and the material world, it does or should find abundant opportunity for its exercise within the realms of strict law. I do not mean here to touch or raise the question whether there are what are called miracles connected with the spiritual world any more than in the physical world. That is beside my argument. My argument at present is simply this, that within the realm of law, clearly understood as such, there is food for the faculty of wonder in all its legitimate aspirations far more enduring, far greater, and far grander than anything that can be developed in the way of those communications of table-turning, table-rapping, or anything of that kind. And the instance I gave was just one out of endless instances—to try and conceive of the manner in which the spirit of man, that which he knows to exist, and, in fact, to be himself—his *ego*—communicates through his nerves with his muscles—how it is capable of being so minutely directed that along the lines of nervous communication it will arrive at a particular muscle or particular group of muscles, and perform all the complicated muscular acts which we know to be the physical and tangible results of the manifestations of our spirit. In other words, the most commonplace appearance of a spirit that you can name—the most every-day manifestation in the world, and that which we are most certain of in our own consciousness—is, when you come to think of it, an absolute and perfect mystery, which only becomes comprehensible to us because we know it to be a fact, and because it lies within the divine order of things. It is physiological. What Spiritualism or Spiritualism appears to require of us is, that having got our every-day consciousness of this matter for wonder—having got all this marvellous adaptation of spirit to matter—having a set of thoroughly organised and thoroughly known channels by which the spiritual world is revealed in the material, and by which the Great and Supreme Spirit is enabled to reveal Himself to every one of us—having, I say, got the absolute proof and evidence in our own souls and our own bodies, of a set of laws appertaining to this matter, what Spiritualism requires of us to do is to cast aside the whole of these laws, and to admit a set of interferences, not exceptional, not for grand and very, very exceptional objects, but a set of every-day constant interferences with the law of the action of spirit and matter

—as such, known to all of us—interferences which are not only not in accordance with that law, but which are absolutely subversive of the ordinary results of that law. Just let us suppose this :—Suppose it proved, once for all, that the spirit of a departed person—a disembodied spirit, a spirit that is wandering in space, a spirit which is not limited by the conditions of material investment—has the power to appear to you, and to reveal to you what is being done or written, or has been done by some friend of yours on the other side of the globe, or who has passed beyond the grave, and that it has had access to documents no mortal could have seen, what appears to be the necessary consequence of this doctrine ? This, among others, that no scrap of writing—that no single act that a man does could be concealed, or at least could be perfectly sure of being concealed, from his neighbour—from any man who may have the greatest possible interest in knowing it, perhaps for a nefarious purpose. You write a document of the most private character ; you shut it up in a locked drawer ; it affects the character of many persons ; it would be treason to morality to publish that document in the newspapers. There is nothing to hinder, so far as we know the laws of this newly-invented spirit world*—there is nothing to hinder any disembodied spirits who are about getting access to the paper, and having it published in the newspapers. But here I say on the other hand—and this is the result of experience—it has been shown that this cannot be done.” Having alluded to the incident of a £100 note being left in a sealed envelope in the Bank of England, the owner having promised to give it up to any Spiritualist who could tell the number, but for which no application was received, Professor Gairdner proceeded—“It was in some way or other impossible, apparently, for the spirits, greater or less, although it was asserted that they were able to reveal the secrets of one man’s heart to another, to read the number of that note in these circumstances. I say that it was not only, in fact, impossible, but I say this, that had it, in fact, been possible, it would have shown a state of matters which, humanly speaking, would have been subversive of the Divine order. It would have entirely destroyed that system of law by which we know that, in a way which is absolutely wonderful and absolutely inscrutable, spirit does communicate with matter, as we know, every day of our lives in this world. The state of mind of the persons who come prepared to believe these things—who come to the investigation of them with previously established ideas, who regard doubt or hesitation as I would say, a sin, but let us rather say an error, and a sure way of keeping manifestations back, while open-mouthed credulity is the only frame of mind in which to come to the

* The preceding portion of the lecture shows by extracts from the works of spiritualists, and especially of Allan Kardec, that according to these authorities lying, mischievous, and impish spirits everywhere abound, and are permitted to play their pranks freely for the delusion of those who are willing to be deluded ; whereby the thorough-going spiritualist finds no difficulty in explaining, according to his theory, proved instances of absurdity or imposture.

investigation ; the state of mind of such persons—who, I believe, may be numbered in thousands, and possibly in millions, in this country and in America—is, to my idea, a diseased state of mind. I admit fully that many of these persons are apparently able to conduct their own affairs. I freely admit that many of them are very moral and well-intentioned persons. I am equally inclined to believe that this Mr. Allan Kardec, within certain limits which I cannot attempt to define, was a truthful man. But that does not hinder me from believing that there is disease at the bottom of these things, and it is a disease of the faculty of wonder, by which that faculty, intended for the noblest purposes in the organisation of the human mind, is perverted to some of the lowest of all purposes, and even to the abetting of trickery. One other thing I had on my lips to say the other night, but I did not say it then, and I am not quite sure that I should do so now ; therefore I can only indicate it very slightly. It is that this conclusion as to the diseased nature of these manifestations, so far as the mind of the recipient is concerned, was impressed upon me at a very early period during the epidemic of manifestations—of electro-biology as it was called then—in 1851 in Edinburgh. I had a dear friend, since dead, and dead under circumstances that no injury to him or any one else can be brought about by telling the story. He was of a bad constitution originally. He had entered on the study of medicine, and with such ardour had he taken up the branch of physiology that I regarded him as likely to be one of the greatest physiological inquirers of the day. I had not only respect for him as one of my pupils, but I felt for him a feeling of regard and love. He was drawn into the vortex of Dr. Gregory's drawing-room exhibitions, and his case appears in Dr. Gregory's book ; I knew it was disease ; I felt it was disease. He was made to go out of himself ; he was made to wander here, there, and everywhere ; he was made to converse with all the philosophers of ancient Greece—with Aristotle, with Socrates, and with Plato, and to tell what they said to him. He then took a somewhat serious illness, and I became his medical attendant, and for a time he was under my care alone. The persons who had obtained this strange influence over him still kept coming about him, but at last I had to forbid their presence. He got over his illness, and became so far better, and they then again attempted to catch him, but failed. Their power had gone, or almost gone, and only the poorer class of manifestations could be produced, and ultimately none of them could be produced, and for a considerable time after that he continued in better health. But the essentially diseased character of the whole thing was plain from this, that within a year or two he showed manifestations of actual insanity. The poor fellow excited my sympathy, and I made an effort to save him. I took him to London, got him to apply himself to histology, and tried to excite all his better and scientific predilections. But the morbid tendency was too strong, and ultimately he ended his days within the walls of an asylum. I do not mean to say that Dr. Gregory made him mad. That

would be wrong. I do not think that was so, because he was better for a good while after that, but I mean to say that the tendency of these things in a constitution hereditarily predisposed to insanity is to insanity, or as Shakespeare has put it in the mouth of *King Lear*, when conscious that he is himself upon the giddy verge, "That way madness lies."

Mrs. Weldon. The Sane Patient of the "World" Newspaper.

During the last few months, the air has been rife with public clamour against private asylums and "mad doctors," or "body snatchers." Mrs. Weldon, who escaped between the signing of her certificates and her removal to an asylum, gave in an address, delivered in St. James's Hall, extending over two hours and a half, a detailed narrative of the attempt to place her in an asylum last April, her flight, and her determination not to rest until the Lunacy Laws are amended. A gentleman who had been in an asylum, placed there, he asserted, by his brother, an M.P., because they differed in politics, entered upon a tirade against the Russians, and was with difficulty brought back to the question by the meeting. Mrs. Weldon gave a song, and after a resolution had been passed, thanking her for her discourse and expressing the opinion that the Laws of Lunacy required amending, the audience separated. The meeting was orderly, and Mrs. Weldon had no occasion to use a rattle, with which she had provided herself, to call her audience to order.

Letters appeared in the "World" last autumn and have now been reprinted, from a gentleman well-known and respected as an author, endeavouring to cast ridicule on the present system of confining alleged lunatics. Having been one himself, and confined for some time in an asylum, he attempts to describe what he has seen and suffered, but it is relieving to find him able to say: "The especial experience which I have to tell has nothing especially painful. I have nothing to write of dark rooms, or strait-waistcoats, or whippings, or to reveal such secrets of the prison-house as will make each particular hair to stand on end by the telling. My lines were cast in pleasant places. The private asylum in which I was confined for many months, which in the retrospect seem like one dreary dream, is, I believe, highly recommended by Her Majesty's Commissioners as a delightful sanitary resort, quite a place to spend a happy life."

The charge which really underlies this series of papers is expressed in the following sentence:—"Villainous con-