

A

LECTURE

ON

ANIMAL MAGNETISM,

BY

REV. DR. BEECHER,

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

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PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISEMENT.

THE "PRACTICAL MANUAL" has been acknowledged by those who know how to appreciate it, as an excellent work, and well worth the attention of magnetisers and of all enquirers after truth. It, therefore, stands in need of no addition to make it perfect. But no objection can be made to a good auxiliary. It is therefore in this latter capacity that we add the following letter, by Rev. Dr. Beecher, of the Presbyterian Church. We present its contents to the readers of the Manual as so many more facts in favour of Animal Magnetism, facts too declared by a man whose character is too well established to allow his veracity to be questioned, and who is too shrewd an observer to be easily duped!

Philadelphia, February 6th, 1844.

ON ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

BY REV. DR. BEECHER.

In October, 1842, on my way to the Synod of Genesee, I spent the night at the house of Mr. Hall, at Byron. In the evening I called on Rev. Mr. Child. On entering the room I found his son, an intelligent boy aged ten years, then in a cataleptic fit, sitting in his father's arms, and his feet in warm water.

In a few moments he recovered. He frequently had from three to six fits a day. Had received the best medical attendance in the region. Was no better: daily worse. Had lost entirely the power of speech for several days. Great fears were felt that he would never recover. There was a sore on the back corner of his head and on the spine, occasioned by a fall some months previous. When the fits passed off he became hungry, and not at all drowsy; and during the interval appeared preternaturally bright, and engaged in sports with companions as usual.

After I had conversed a few minutes I said, "I would have him magnetised;" to which his father replied, "I don't believe in it at all," and the mother added, "If you'll put *me* to sleep I'll believe, and not without." I replied, "I would try it: it may do good, and can do no harm." During this conversation I made a few passes in front of the child, chiefly with one hand, and without any particular concentration of the mind or will, and mostly with my face toward the mother. In less than a minute the father said, "He is in another fit! No, he isn't, I declare: I believe he is asleep." Much surprised, (for I had never magnetised one,) I said "It surely cannot be what I have done; but if so I can awaken him;" then with a few reversed passes he awoke. "Well, this is strange," said I, "but I can put him to sleep again, if it is *real*." I then seriously repeated the passes with both hands for one or two minutes, and placed him in the perfect mesmeric

sleep. I then fixed my eyes on a lady on the opposite side of the room, the boy not yet having spoken for three days, and said, "Henry, what do you see?" in a full decided voice. He replied, "Azubah." I then looked his mother in the face, saying, "What do you see?" He gave a name unknown to me: I looked to his father, who replied "it is her *maiden name*." I then took vinegar into my mouth, and said, "What do you taste?" "*Vinegar*," speaking with great tartness, and at the same time making many contortions of the face. The mother now whispered to one of the children, who left her seat, and I said, "Henry, what is she going for?" "Sugar, and I love it." She went to the closet, and brought the sugar. I put some into my mouth, which seemed to give him the same pleasure as if I had put it into his own. I then said, "what kind of sugar is it?" "Museovado." "What is its color?" "Well, sir, a kind of light brown." A small glass jar with a large cork was now placed in my hand, when immediately I observed the olfactory nerves affected, and the muscles about the nose contracted at the same moment. I said to the girl, "What is it?" to which the boy answered, "Hartshorn." "How do you know?" "I smell it." I myself neither knew nor smelt. I then took out the cork and applied it to my own nose, when he instantly placed his fingers on that part of the nose next the forehead, and said, "I feel it here," just where I myself experienced the burning sensation.

During all these experiments he sat on his father's knee, with his head down on his breast, and reclining against his father.

I now asked him, "What is the matter with you?" "My brain is sore." "Where?" "At the bottom of it." "Where it joins the spinal marrow (medulla oblongata)?" "Yes." "What occasioned it?" "I fell from the great beam in the barn." His mother here asked him, "Why did you not tell us before?" "I feared you would not let me play there." "Can Doctor A. cure you?" "No." "Why not?" "He don't know any thing about it," (very decidedly.) "Can Dr. C?" "No." "Why?" "He don't understand it." "Will the medicine you now use do you good?" "No." "Of what is it composed?" "There is turpentine in it." "Does the Doctor give it you for tape-worm?" "Yes," "Have you any?" "No." "Would you like to walk?" "Yes." "Well walk." He arose promptly, stepped between the chairs, and said, "Well, sir, where shall I go?" "From the wall to the door, and back," This he did, avoiding every obstruction, and at my direction returned and sat again with his father. I now, without notice to any one, placed my fingers on the organ of Benevolence, thinking at the moment, it performed the office of Veneration, and said, "Would you like to pray?" With some lightness he said, no. Some questions were asked by

His mother and myself about the Bible, &c., but no Veneration appeared. I then recollected the true office of the organ, and said, "Have you anything in your pocket?" He took out a knife. "Give it to me for my little boy," which he did promptly. I removed my hand. "Have you any thing else?" "I have a pencil." "Will you give me that for my other boy?" "It has no head." "Never mind, give it, won't you?" "I shouldn't like to." "Well, but you will?" "I couldn't come it!" (*with peculiar emphasis.*) Azubah said, ask him where the head of the pencil is. "Where is it, Henry?" "Well, sir, in the parlor." "Where?" "On the window." Azubah: "Why, I picked it up and put it there to-day!" (*He certainly did not know this.*) I then said, "Henry, can you get it?" He arose and went into the parlor in the dark, and took the pencil-case head from the window, to the very great surprise of us all. Indeed, we were all so astonished, that it seemed a dream during these and subsequent proceedings. He spoke with a promptness, boldness, and propriety, in advance of his years, and beyond himself in his natural state; and so perfectly evident was it that he was in a somnambule state, that no sceptic, I verily believe, *could* have doubted.

At my request he returned to his seat. I touched Benevolence, and instantly he handed me the pencil-case. "For my boy!" "Yes, sir," I then silently, and without any willing, and with a feeling of curiosity to see and test the matter, touched Reverence. His countenance at once assumed a softened and solemn aspect. "Henry, would you like to pray?" "Yes, sir." "You may." He then commenced praying inaudibly. "You may pray aloud." He then prayed in a low, audible voice. On touching Tune, he sang a tune, though not in the habit of singing. On touching Combativeness and Destructiveness, he raised his clenched fist to strike me. He was ignorant of Phrenology, and also of my intention to touch any particular organ; nor did I in any case will the activity of the organ. I now took out my watch, and holding the dial towards myself, and above the line of his vision, his eyes being closed, and his head bowed forward, and my hand also being between him and the watch, "Henry, what time is it?" "Eight o'clock sir, which was exactly the time by the watch, though by the clock in the room it was fifteen minutes faster. "Henry, how long ought you to sleep?"

"Well, sir, I must sleep two hours and five minutes." "Will you then awake?" "Yes, sir." "Very well." This I did for the purpose of testing his knowledge of time, as stated by Townshend, an English clergyman, whose work on this subject I had read.

I then said, "Will you go with me to Mr. Hall's?" "Yes." "Well, now we are there, now we are in the parlor: who is here?" "Mr. and Mrs. Hall, Mr. and Mrs. Bardwell." "Who else?" He did not give their names,

but intimated that they were strangers. He described the room and position of things, all of which I found correct on going to the house shortly after. These persons were not in the habit of being there in the evening, but company having come in, they were all together at that moment. As this was in his own town, I did not deem it *proof*, and so said, "Will you go to Batavia?" "Yes." "Well, now we are there, now we are at my house—now we will go into my room: what do you see?" "I see a large table covered with black cloth, and with books and papers scattered over it." "How large is it?" "It is about five feet long." "How many bookcases?" "Three, sir." "What sort of a stove?" He could not or did not describe this, for it was so queer a thing as not to be easily described. Nor did I press him, for all his answers had been perfectly correct, and I was sufficiently astonished, for he had never seen my study, and no other minister, I am sure, has such a table (5 feet by 3½,) or left it in such confusion as mine was at that moment.

I may here say, that during the whole period of his sleep, he could hear the questions of others put to him, and would answer them if I were willing: but if I willed otherwise, or forbade him to speak, as I often did, he then would answer no one but myself, not even father or mother; nor could he hear their conversation with me, nor with each other.

I now left him for an hour, and went back to Mr. Hall's, giving him leave to converse only with his father. On my return, I found him in the same state. He utterly refused to speak to any one but his father, and told him that he should not have another fit till the following Sabbath (this was Monday evening,) which proved true; but when that day came, he had several.

At nine o'clock and three minutes, holding my watch as before, and standing eight or nine feet from him, I asked the time. He gave nine o'clock and five minutes. "Look sharp," said I. "Oh! three minutes," said he. We were now curious to see if he would awake himself at the two hours and five minutes; and as the clock in the room reached that time he did not awake, I said, "Henry, did you mean by my watch, or by the clock?" "By your watch, sir." "Very well." At the exact moment he opened his eyes and looked around, and this without any act or willing of mine; and what was very affecting and convincing, he could no longer speak at all, and was unconscious of all that he had said or done.

I have said that he had no return of fits till the following Sabbath. One day after that Sabbath, he came in to his mother much agitated, and apparently going into a fit, and making the passes, he solicited his mother to do it, who, merely to pacify him, passed her fingers over him, and soon he fell

into the mesmeric sleep, and escaped the fit. After this he was so highly charged by his sister, that when she was in the next room in the closet, he would instantly taste anything she tasted, eat what she ate, &c.

In ten days I returned and magnetised him again, and went through several of the above experiments. He always, while in the mesmeric state, declared that it benefitted him, relieved all pain, and would cure him.

After I left, at my suggestion he was daily magnetised: his fits left him, his voice returned, the sore spots on his head and back were removed, and he recovered rapidly, till the family could no longer mesmerise him. A man in the village was found who could and daily did, till he appeared entirely well. On omitting it he had a fit or two, and it was resumed; and when I last saw the father, he informed me that they considered the child cured.

I may add, I have since cured toothache, greatly relieved *tic doloreux*, and removed other pains and swellings, as well as headache. I am not, however a full believer in all which is affirmed of clairvoyants—what I *see* and *know*, I believe. In respect to many well-authenticated facts, I neither affirm nor deny. That there are many cases of gross deception and imposition, I fully believe. On such a subject, it can hardly be otherwise. This, however, is a reason why men of character and intelligence should *investigate* it, rather than otherwise. "But it is deception!" Well, then, let us expose it by a fair trial. "But it is the work of the devil!" How do you know? What is the evidence? What harm has it done? "Oh, bad men have used it for bad ends!" And what is there in the world that has not been so used? If it is the work of the devil, then we are not to be ignorant of his devices, and should make the examination for oneself, for ignorant and bad men will not expose his devices. From experiment and observation I have no doubt, that as a remedial agent mesmerism is yet to accomplish much good: and no harm can result from it, except, like all other blessings, it be abused.

THE END.

