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SPIRITUALISM

AND



IN SANITY.

BY

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Modern Spiritualism," etc.

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In answer to these questions I have received either written replies or published official reports—generally both—from 66 superintendents, but of these only 58 are available for the purposes of this exhibit, the remainder not furnishing the information required. The information obtained from the 58 reports and written replies is here given in a tabulated form, and every fact and figure bearing upon this question—favorably or adversely—in the reports and letters received is here presented :

THE INSTITUTIONS—WHERE LOCATED—THE TOTAL NUMBERS OF PATIENTS DURING PERIODS STATED; AND THE NUMBERS OF THOSE WHOSE INSANITY IS ASCRIBED RESPECTIVELY TO RELIGION AND SPIRITUALISM.

	Year.	Whole Number Admitted or Treated.	No. from Religious Exc'mt.	No. from Spiritualism.
Maine Insane Hospital, Augusta, Me	1875-6	374	4	6
Vermont Asylum for the Insane, Brattleboro', Vt.	1875-6	222	3	
New Hampshire Asylum for the Insane, Concord, N. H.	1876	208	3	3
State Lunatic Hospital, Taunton, Mass.	1876	583	7	1
Worcester State Lunatic Hospital, Worcester, Mass.	1876	829	10	
Shady Lawn Insane Asylum, Northampton, Mass.	1876	23	3	1
Boston Lunatic Hospital, Boston, Mass.	1876	248		
State Lunatic Hospital, Northampton, Mass.	1876	470	9	1
Butler Hospital for the Insane, Providence, R. I.	1876	198		
Connecticut Hospital for the Insane, Middletown, Conn.	1875	616	4	
Retreat for the Insane, Hartford, Conn.	1875	233		
New York City Asylum for the Insane, Ward's Island, N. Y.	1875	401		
New York City Lunatic Asylum, Blackwell's Island, N. Y.	1875	412		
Bloomington Asylum, New York.	1875	287		
State Lunatic Asylum, Utica, N. Y.	1875	1,004		
Monroe County Insane Asylum, Rochester, N. Y.	1876	250	4	
New York State Asylum for Insane Criminals, Auburn, N. Y.	1876	88		
Sanford Hall Insane Asylum, Flushing, N. Y.	1876	48	2	
King's County Lunatic Asylum, Flatbush, N. Y.	1876	751	8	
State Homeopathic Asylum, Middletown, N. Y.	1875-6	231		
Private Insane Asylum, Pleasantville, N. Y.	1876	6		
New Jersey State Lunatic Asylum, Trenton, N. J.	1876	487		8
Western Pennsylvania Hospital, Dlxmont, Pa.	1875	170	4	
State Lunatic Asylum of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg, Pa.	1876	167	1	
State Hospital for the Insane, Danville, Pa.	1873-6	620	9	1
Insane Department of Philadelphia Hospital, Philadelphia, Pa.	1876	383	7	

	Year.	Whole Number Admitted or Treated.	No. from Religious Excite- ment.	No. from Spiritualism.
Friends' Asylum for the Insane, Philadelphia, Pa.....	1876	122		
Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, Philadelphia, Pa.	1876	268		
Insane Asylum, College Hill, O.....	1876	95	2	
Western Ohio Hospital for Insane, Dayton, O.....	1875	826	20	
Longview Asylum, Carthage, O.....	1876	767	5	
Cleveland Hospital for the Insane, Newburg, O.....	1876	763	13	2
Northwestern Hospital for Insane, Toledo, O.....	1876	158	8	5
Michigan Asylum for the Insane, Kalamazoo, Mich.....	1876	856	8	2
Wisconsin State Hospital for the Insane, Mendota, Wis.	1876	181	6	
Northern Hospital for Insane, Winnebago, Wis.....	1876	530		
Iowa Hospital for the Insane, Mount Pleasant, Iowa...	1874-5	1,016	7	1
Hospital for the Insane, Independence, Iowa.....	1874-5	464	17	3
St. Vincent's Institution for the Insane, St. Louis, Mo.	1874-5	427	7	
St. Louis County Insane Asylum, St. Louis, Mo.....	1870-5	721	28	1
State Lunatic Asylum No. 2, St. Josephs, Mo.....	1873	126	20	1
Northern Hospital for the Insane, Elgin, Ill.....	1875-6	755	16	1
Illinois Central Hospital for Insane, Jacksonville, Ill...	1875-6	995	13	2
Bellevue Place Asylum, Batavia, Ill.....	1876	50	2	1
Illinois State Hospital for Insane, Anna, Ill.....	1876	146	8	3
Indiana Hospital for Insane, Indianapolis, Ind.....	1876	489		
Minnesota Hospital for Insane, St. Peter's, Minn.....	1876	253	16	
West Kentucky Lunatic Asylum, Hopkinsville, Ky....	1876	341	6	
Alabama Insane Hospital, Tuscaloosa, Ala.....	1876	85		
Central Lunatic Asylum, Richmond, Va.....	1871-6	537	49	
Eastern Lunatic Asylum, Williamsburg, Va.....	1876	377	4	
Western Lunatic Asylum, Staunton, Va.....	1876	423		
West Virginia Hospital for the Insane, Weston, W. Va.	1876	478	11	
Insane Asylum of North Carolina, Raleigh, N. C.....	1874-6	115	11	
Maryland Hospital for Insane, Baltimore, Md.....	1876	168	1	
Texas State Lunatic Asylum, Austin, Tex.....	1876	109	8	
Nebraska Hospital for the Insane, Lincoln, Neb.....	1876	133	9	1
Insane Asylum of California, Stockton, Cal.....	1876	1,201	36	15
		23,328	412	59

From the above table it will be seen that of 23,328 insane persons now, or recently, in 58 institutions, 412 are reported insane from religious excitement, and 59 from excitement caused by Spiritualism.

Assuming that in December last there were 30,000 insane persons in the various institutions in the United States (an increase of about 450 since July 1876), according to the above figures there should be of this entire number 530 insane from religious excitement, and 76 from Spiritualism, and whether we regard the relative numbers in the above table, or as esti-

mated in all the institutions in the country, we find there are seven inmates insane from religious excitement for every one insane from Spiritualism. It will also be seen that while there are 87 asylums, there are only 76 insane Spiritualists within their walls—not one to each institution.

The following table presents the statistics of this subject for long terms of years, of thirteen institutions, as taken from their official reports; the other reports being deficient in like information.

	No. of Years.	Whole No. Admitted or Treated.	From Religious Excitement.	From Spiritualism.
Worcester State Lunatic Hospital, Worcester, Mass...	44	11,302	385	65
Connecticut Hospital for Insane, Middletown, Conn...	9	1,272	24	
State Lunatic Asylum, Utica, N. Y.....	32	11,831	217	32
Pennsylvania Hospital for Insane, Philadelphia, Pa...	35	7,167	212	
Western Pennsylvania Hospital, Dixmont, Pa.....	19	2,941	70	7
State Lunatic Asylum of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg, Pa.	25	3,989	10	4
Longview Asylum, Carthage, O.....	17	3,579	134	12
Western Ohio Hospital for Insane, Dayton, O.....	20	3,818	196	12
Iowa Hospital for Insane, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.....	16	3,028	112	12
Eastern Lunatic Asylum, Williamsburg, Va.....	8	554	20	
Alabama Insane Hospital, Tuscaloosa, Ala.....	15	1,205	54	1
Indiana Hospital for Insane, Indianapolis, Ind.....	28	6,701	459	82
Minnesota Hospital for Insane, St. Peter's, Minn.....	10	1,449	71	2
		58,875	1,994	229

Here we have records of 58,875 patients, of which number the insanity of 1994 is ascribed to religious excitement, and that of 229 to the excitement of Spiritualism. According to these figures, 30,000 of these patients (the present number of inmates of our asylums) would show 1016 insane from Religion and 117 from Spiritualism, and the relative numbers of those whose insanity is ascribed respectively to the excitements of Religion and Spiritualism in former years and at the present time, appear as follows:

In 30,000 patients in former years, from Religion 1016; from Spiritualism 117.
 " 30,000 " at present time, " 530; " 76.

Showing a diminished number of cases from both religion and Spiritualism at the present time.

An important fact should here be noticed, which is, that as

the knowledge of Spiritualism has extended, and the number of its adherents has increased, the records show not only a comparatively but an absolutely less number of cases in which Spiritualism is assigned as the exciting cause of insanity, and it is a question whether the greater comparative decrease in the number of cases ascribed to religious excitement may not justly be attributed, at least in a great degree, to the influence of Spiritualism in disseminating more correct, rational, and consequently less revolting ideas, of the nature and extent of future punishment.

Seventy-six insane from Spiritualism at the present time, out of a total of 30,000 inmates of our asylums, are within a fraction of 1 in 395, and *one-quarter of one per cent.* of the whole number in the asylums, instead of 33½ per cent., as asserted by Dr. Forbes Winslow.

In 42 of the published reports of institutions for the insane which have come to hand, there are tables showing the previous occupations of the patients admitted or treated within one or more years, and from these I find that out of a total of 32,313 male patients, 215 are set down as clergymen, while in same reports the total number of male and female Spiritualists is only 45. Insane clergymen are here in the proportion of 1 to every 150 inmates, while the proportion of insane Spiritualists is only 1 to every 711.

If we estimate the number of Spiritualists in the United States as low as 2,000,000—which I believe to be less than their actual number—we are entitled to a representation in the lunatic asylums of 1333, while the number actually there, according to official reports, is only 76. Thus we are taxed for the support of these institutions without fair representation; but as we are taught by our religion to exercise charity toward all men, we are willing that clergymen, and the members of their congregations, shall have the lion's share of the advantages these institutions afford. Their needs are greater than ours.

Dr. M. Ranney, Superintendent of the Iowa Hospital for the Insane, in which, in 1874-5, more than 1000 patients were treated, says, in his letter to me, that there is not at the present time one Spiritualist under his care.

According to the Report of the Worcester State Lunatic Hospital, Mass., in which, in 1876, 829 patients were treated, no Spiritualist has been a patient in the institution during the last three years.

Dr. John Curwen, Superintendent of the State Lunatic Asylum at Harrisburg, Penn., in which during the past twenty-five years 3988 patients have been admitted, says, in his letter to me, that "We have not had for a long term of years any cases caused by Spiritualism."

In the State Lunatic Asylum at Utica, N. Y., 11,831 patients were admitted during the past 32 years, the insanity of 32 of them being ascribed to Spiritualism, but all these were admitted within the period of five years from 1849, when Spiritualism was in its infancy, and comparatively little understood, and since 1853, or for 23 years, not a patient has been admitted in whose case Spiritualism was assigned as the exciting cause of the insanity.

Dr. B. A. Wright, Superintendent of the Northwestern Hospital for the Insane, at Toledo, Ohio, writes me: "The cause of the mental derangement of eight patients (in 1876) was religious excitement. Many more act as though religious excitement had been the cause of their insanity, but this is not so stated in the committing papers."

Dr. J. B. Cooker, now or recently City Physician of New Orleans, in a letter to Rev. Dr. Watson, of Memphis, says: "I have been in charge of the Lunatic Asylum of the parish of New Orleans some seven years, and out of a large number that have been admitted and discharged in that time, have never had one case of insanity on account of Spiritualism, but several cases of insanity of other forms of religious belief."

The following is an extract from a letter received from Dr. C. H. Nichols, Superintendent of the Government Hospital

for the Insane, at Washington, D. C., in which 931 patients were treated in 1876 :

"I see a paragraph, attributed to Dr. Forbes Winslow, is going the rounds of the newspapers, stating that there are ten thousand lunatics in the United States who were made insane by Spiritualism. My observation leads me to suppose that there may be *one per cent.* of truth in that statement."

The Doctor's estimate is very nearly correct. Instead of there being one per cent. of truth in the wild assertion of Dr. Forbes Winslow, there are only three-fourths of one per cent.

Dr. J. W. Ward, Superintendent of the New Jersey State Lunatic Asylum at Trenton, writes :

"We have eight cases said to have resulted from Spiritualism, but whether Spiritualism was the cause, or the result of insanity, in these cases, it is difficult to tell. Friends in giving histories of cases are very prone to mistake hallucinations, etc., expressed after insanity is established, as the cause of the malady itself."

Dr. D. R. Burrell, Resident Physician of the Brigham Hall Asylum at Canandaigua, N. Y., says :

"Statistics in regard to religious excitement and Spiritualism, *as causes* of insanity, are of little account at present. Friends often speak of these as causes, when they are merely *results*, as you learn upon obtaining, after weeks or months, a fuller history of the cases. Many of the so-called 'religious' cases I have met did not think of religion, or become religious, until after they were touched with insanity. Cannot the same be said of Spiritualism *as a cause*?"

Dr. H. R. Stiles, Superintendent of the State Homeopathic Asylum for the Insane at Middletown, N. Y., writes :

"All of us have a touch of supernaturalism in our make-up. Is it surprising, then, that when bodily and mental disease, conjoined, have slackened the rein which common sense (the will of our daily lives,) holds upon this lingering relic of supernaturalism, the confused mind, not comprehending its changed relations with the outer world, seeing and hearing many things which seem strange, and (in its then

state) fearful, and foreboding, naturally revives, what it has heard of spiritual influences, and the patient rants and raves about and attributes his troubles to Spiritualism? But these delusions generally appear *after* the insanity is recognized, so I am inclined to acquit religion and Spiritualism of this blame to a large extent. At least my own personal experience does not induce me to charge it upon them."

Dr. B. D. Eastman, Superintendent of the State Lunatic Hospital at Worcester, Mass., in his Report for 1873 says of the causes of insanity assigned by the friends of patients, as stated in the tables in the published reports, that "tables of this character are very unsatisfactory. The friends of patients, from whom the statements of causes usually come, sometimes purposely practice deception, and often display great ignorance by assigning as a cause some comparatively trivial circumstance attendant upon the beginning of insanity, or some symptom of the already fixed malady."

It can readily be understood how appropriately these remarks must apply to persons who exhibit insane symptoms, and who previously have been more or less interested in Spiritualism. Its unpopularity, together with the impression so prevalent that Spiritualists must necessarily be to some extent unbalanced in mind, render it more easy and natural to attribute the mental aberration to this cause than to any other, and thus, doubtless, a certain proportion of the small number of inmates of our asylums upon whose warrants of committal Spiritualism is inscribed as the exciting cause, are in no degree indebted to their belief for the cause of their affliction.

Dr. John P. Gray, editor of the American Journal of Insanity, says in his Report:

"Every great religious movement, indeed, from John Knox and John Wesley to Moody and Sankey, has been accompanied with its per-centage of insanity, but that only shows that there is in every community, at any given period, a certain amount of constitutional or incidental morbidity ready to be developed into insanity by every suitable occasion, and re-

ligious excitement only stands prominent among the number of moral influences."

These remarks also apply to Spiritualism, though not to the same extent.

Dr. J. Ray, the eminent authority in medical jurisprudence, and who has made a special study of insanity, remarks in the *American Journal of Insanity* for October 1867 :

"It is to be regretted that the prevalent tendency is to ignore them (the facts of Spiritualism) entirely, rather than to make them a subject of scientific investigation. It is surprising that physicians, especially, with such well-recognized affections before them as catalepsy, somnambulism, ecstasy, and double consciousness, should jump to the conclusion that all the facts of Spiritualism and animal magnetism are utterly anomalous and impossible."

Contrast these wise and cautious words of one of the most experienced specialists in this country, with the unsupported assertions and blind generalizations of Dr. Forbes Winslow and Rev. Dr. Talmage.

Deeming it of importance to the full and complete presentation of this subject that the testimony of some of the oldest and most highly respected investigators and advocates of Spiritualism in this country should be included, I addressed to them the following questions :

1st, For how many years have you taken an active interest in Spiritualism ?

2d, During that period, in how many instances have you known Spiritualists to become insane ?

3d, In how many of these cases—so far as you have knowledge—was the belief in Spiritualism the exciting cause of the insanity ?

Their replies, in substance, are as follows :

Epes Sargent has given his attention to spiritual phenomena nearly thirty years, and says :

"You ask in how many instances I have known Spiritualists to become insane ? I have known but one instance. I have

read reports of such cases in the newspapers, but I have never had them so verified that I could accept them as facts to be remembered. . . . My own belief is, that Spiritualism, by bringing all the phenomena of apparitions, second sight, clairvoyance, witchcraft, etc., within the sphere of the *natural*, will do much to allay excitement, and cure superstition on all such subjects, and thus help to prevent the insanity which finds its development in morbid and gloomy religious views, or in a dread of the *unnatural* in any form."

Robert Dale Owen says :

"I engaged in the study of Spiritualism, and cognate subjects, more than twenty-one years ago, and have taken an active interest in the matter ever since. During that time I do not recollect, among all my acquaintances, a single Spiritualist who has become insane. I, myself, after a dangerous illness in the summer of 1874, was during nearly two months insane: cause, insomnia and overtaxation of the brain. My family, and Dr. Everts, superintendent of the hospital in which I was, testify that the subject of Spiritualism did not occupy my thoughts, and had nothing to do with my malady. In the 'Debatable Land,' (pp. 523-524,) I have given two examples, which came to my knowledge, of the cure by spiritual influence of insanity, one of the cases being of six years' standing.

"Since then, a third case has come within my personal knowledge; that of a mother who lost a favorite child by a sudden and terrible accident, occurring almost under her eyes, and whose incipient insane symptoms were arrested, and she restored to her right mind, by communications from her child, embodying incontrovertible evidence of his identity."

Rev. Dr. Watson has taken an active interest in Spiritualism for twenty-four years, and says :

"I have never personally known a single case of a Spiritualist becoming insane. . . . I have been in the Northwestern States by invitation to lecture, as far North as Minnesota, and have made inquiry, but have never been able to find a person who has been made insane by a belief in Spirit-

ualism. Yet those who oppose it continue to publish falsehoods in regard to this matter."

Hudson Tuttle has devoted twenty-six years to the promulgation of the truths of Spiritualism, and has no personal knowledge of any case where insanity was caused by it, but gives it as his opinion that "religious excitement is a prolific cause, while Spiritualism leads directly away from insanity."

Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten says :

"My connection with Spiritualism has extended over a period of eighteen years, and I have known of two instances where Spiritualists became insane."

Prof. J. R. Buchanan says :

"I have been interested in the spiritual phenomena many years, my first experiments having been performed in 1841. In the thirty-five years since, I do not now recollect that any Spiritualists of my acquaintance have become insane ; which is the more remarkable, as the refined and spiritual temperament, which sympathizes with Spiritualism, is of course more sensitive than a coarser organization of mind and body."

Prof. William Denton replies :

"I have taken an active interest in Spiritualism for about twenty-five years, yet during that time, although I have heard of persons becoming insane through Spiritualism, I have never *known* of a single case."

Dr. J. M. Peebles writes me :

"For twenty-five years I have taken an active interest in Spiritualism, studying in America and Europe. During this term of years I have met with but three cases where pronounced Spiritualists had become insane, and in neither of these was the belief in Spiritualism the producing cause of their insanity. In one of these cases, certainly, mental disturbances of a serious character were hereditary, and in the other cases the excitement was caused and the self-balance evidently lost by overtaxation of the mind, nervous debility, and financial losses."

Allen Putnam for more than twenty-four years has believed in and been a student of Spiritualism, and says :

"One or two cases—I think not more than two within my observation—have become insane where there seemed to be no obvious impropriety in ascribing their sad condition to the action of Spiritualism. . . . Had you inquired for my belief as to the number of nervous, irritable, desponding and obsessed persons who have been saved by Spiritualism from falling into insanity, I could have said more than two dozen."

Andrew Jackson Davis has been actively interested in Spiritualism for thirty years, and writes :

"I cannot truthfully say that I have knowledge of a single case of what, in my opinion, was insanity, where Spiritualism was the real cause."

Henry J. Newton says :

"I have been interested in Spiritualism twenty-four years, about ten years of which time I have been officially connected with organizations for its promulgation. . . . I have never known a Spiritualist to become insane. I am in possession of facts, through the testimony of others, where the insane have been cured of their insanity by Spiritualism, through mediums, or spirits acting through mediums."

W. H. Harrison, one of the oldest, most able and active Spiritualists in England, says in the *London Spiritualist* :

"With all our long acquaintance with the movement, we do not know of a single Spiritualist in Great Britain now incarcerated for insanity."

When a Catholic, or Orthodox Protestant, becomes insane, his insanity—unless of a decidedly religious cast—is never attributed to the influence of his religious belief, while on the contrary, if a Spiritualist, exposed like others to the many exciting causes of insanity, becomes insane, his insanity is at once, by most persons, ascribed to his belief in Spiritualism. "Spiritualism," say they, "drives people to insanity—*ergo*, he being insane, and a Spiritualist, his belief is the cause of his insanity." A deduction from false premises, as the statistics of insanity here presented prove it to be.

The charge against Spiritualism, of its tendency to unsettle

the mind, is nothing new. The same accusation has, in all ages of the world, been hurled against every reform movement, and against every reformer, and even Jesus himself did not escape this charge, for it was said of him, "He hath a devil, and is mad."

If Spiritualism were the successful recruiting agency for our insane asylums that persons of active imagination, like Dr. Forbes Winslow and Rev. Dr. Talmage, declare it to be, the physicians and managers of our institutions for the insane would be culpable in the highest degree for their failure to raise a warning voice against such an efficient cause of insanity; but while many other exciting causes of insanity are pointed out and commented on, in their published reports, by the medical superintendents of the various asylums, so few are the cases originating in this cause that in no single report or letter received by me does it appear to have been thought necessary to admonish the public against Spiritualism as one of these exciting causes. The numbers of cases are given without a word of comment.

In the comparatively few instances in which Spiritualists have, from some of the many exciting causes which produce insanity in others, become insane, I believe it would be difficult to find a single case in which the insanity has been characterized, in any considerable degree, by the misery and despair of mind that so frequently attend upon those whose insanity is caused by religious excitement. While the terrifying and dismal hallucinations of various patients insane from the latter are minutely described, there is not in any of the published reports a single allusion to any similar hallucination on the part of a patient in whose case Spiritualism is assigned as the cause.

An intelligent belief in Spiritualism favors those conditions of mind and body upon which sanity depends. Being both a religion and a philosophy, it is based upon demonstration, which annihilates all the terrors of false theology by proving the falsity of endless or vindictive punishment, while at the same time it proves to the satisfaction of every earnest seek-

er that there is a happier and better world, in which Divine Wisdom and Love has made ample provision for the needs of every soul ; where even the vilest outcast of earth shall, under the all-protecting care and guidance of the Father's infinite love, be ultimately exalted to companionship with the purified and blest. Strange indeed would it be if the belief in such a religion tended to insanity, and if should be a source of satisfaction and justifiable pride to every Spiritualist to know that official statistics prove the calumny to be unfounded and unjust

