

AGE OF PROGRESS

The development of Spiritual Truth is the achievement of human freedom.

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WHOLE No. 66.

Colloquial.

A. is an anti spiritualist, a champion of the orthodox faith, and a persecutor of all who favor the proposition that the spirits of the departed revisit earth and hold communion with mortals.

B. is a believer in the truth of the spiritual philosophy, and supports the above named proposition. They meet and converse as follows:

A.—Friend B., I have long desired to have an interview and a serious conversation with you, on the subject of what I conceive to be a dangerous fanaticism, which I learn you have embraced in all its length and breadth and depth of irrationality and folly. And, in the commencement, I tell you candidly, that it is not my purpose to seek evidence, at your hands, of the truth of the glaring absurdity which has taken possession of your mind, but to discharge a duty which I feel to be obligatory on me, of endeavoring to convince you of the grossness of the error into which you have been led, and to bring you back, if possible, to truth, reason and soberness.

B.—It appears, then, that you intend to do all the talking and let me do all the listening. You come to me determined not to listen to any arguments, on my side, to prove that I have not embraced an absurdity. You have prejudged my case, found me guilty of embracing a false philosophy, and come merely to apprise me of the facts and to command me to abjure a faith which I know to be defensible upon the soundest principles of ratiocination, without the privilege of being heard in my own defence. Since this is the manner of your coming to me, I must be excused from listening to you. When you get ready to meet me on fair ground and equitable terms, holding yourself, as I do myself, open to conviction, I shall be ready to listen to you respectfully, and to answer you candidly and as rationally as I may. Till then, good-by.

A.—Hold! I must not lose this opportunity to endeavor to save you from the perdition to which I see you hastening. Come, sit down and listen to me, and, in turn, I will hear what you have to say in defence of the strange position which you have assumed.

B.—That, though still somewhat supercilious, sounds more rationally. Speak on—I listen.

A.—You know I can have no incentive to seek this interview and to remonstrate with you, against the entertainment of such ungodly sentiments with regard to the religion of Christ and the sacred book of God, as I understand you do entertain, but your own eternal welfare. Hence I think you should listen to what I say to you, if not with deference, at least with the respect and confidence which is due to disinterested friendship.

B.—I know you are a member of an orthodox christian church, in good standing with your brethren, and as zealous towards God as Saul was; and I have no doubt you are as honest in the manifestation of your zeal as he was. But you must understand that the honesty of a man's faith and purpose, and the heat of his zeal, can weigh but little in the estimation of a man's mind, against the existence of facts which have been made indisputably evident to his senses. But, to the point—let us get at this subject which so boils in the cauldron of your imagination. Out with those awful thoughts—those terrible ideas, "that roar so loud and thunder in the index."

A.—[soliloquising] I must have a care—he has talked rationally enough, till now; but this seems like raving. It may be that he is partially demented, as has been reported. If so, I may be in danger.

B.—What's the matter? Are you dreaming? or can you not agree

with yourself what point you shall commence at? Come—I begin to be impatient for the opening of your budget.

A.—Well, you shall hear; but I fear you will offer but a slim justification for the wild ideas which you hold and teach. It is currently reported of you, that you pretend to be visited by the dead, who have lain in their graves for many years, and that you continually affirm that they communicate information to you respecting their condition in the spirit-world; the geography, topography, areology and pomology of heaven; the daily employments of spirits and angels, and the whole economy of God's government. You declare—so I am told—that you see the dead alive, clothed in the apparel which they used to wear when you knew them on earth, and that they condemn the bible and the religion of Christ, as false, giving you a new fangled faith, which repudiates the idea of the eternal punishment of the wicked as cruel and ungodlike, thus, as it were, bidding a bounty for sin and wickedness, and sending souls to hell blindfolded with your damnable heresy. Now the purpose of my visit is to endeavor to show you the fallacy and dangerous tendency of such mad-brained notions. I have come to remind you, that God, in His infinite wisdom, has given us all that is necessary for us to know of a future state, and of His government, in that blessed volume which has come to us from His own omniscience, through Moses and the Prophets, Christ and the Apostles. I have come to warn you that all pretended revelations from heaven since the spirit said through John, at the close of the Revelations: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book," are from the devil, and eternal damnation will be the consequence, to those who teach and those who receive such infernal heresies. I come to impress upon your mind the important truth that the days of miracles have passed away—that God, through Jesus Christ, who was God himself, incarnated in human flesh, has given all the evidences of immortality and of His will respecting man's duties towards Him, that are necessary for all coming time, and that Death is "that bourne," of which Isaiah speaks, "whence no traveller returns." Remember, I conjure you, that God, by the mouth of His holy prophet, has said that "no traveller returns." Then how dare you listen to the voice of Satan, when he tells you that travellers who have passed the bourne of death, are returning continually? How dare you to believe your own hallucinated mind—your own illuded senses, when they falsely tell you that you see, hear and feel the countenances, voices and touch of the dead, in opposition to the word of the GREAT I AM, who tells you that there can be no such thing? Would to heaven the suspicion of insanity, which is entertained of you by the community around you, were true; but I see nothing in your manner which confirms it. Could your trembling soul, when arraigned at the bar of God plead insanity as a shield against that wrath which burns forever and ever, it might be saved from the eternal torment which awaits it; but I see no such hope for you; and I must exhort you in the name of Jesus who died for your redemption—in the name of that God who took upon himself the nature of man, that he might suffer death for your salvation, to turn away from this monster, spiritualism, and renounce it forever; and if you refuse to listen to this exhortation, remember that your blood will be upon your own head.

B.—You seem to rest—is it because you have exhausted your physical faculties, and stop to recuperate; or have you discharged the whole contents of your mind on this subject? If the former, I will wait till you get breath—if the latter, I will proceed to reply.

A.—I rest to hear what you have to offer in justification of your pretended faith, and of those God-offending doctrines which I greatly fear will not only ruin your own soul, but be the cause of sending many others to endless misery.

B.—Are you not a Calvinist? and do you not believe in the doctrine of election and reprobation, according to the creed to which you have subscribed?

A.—I am, thank God, what is called a Calvinist, and I believe in the truth and full force of the creed of which you speak. Why do you ask this?

B.—I was thinking how you expected me to send an invoice of souls to the Prince of darkness, whom God had determined to take to His own abode; and how I am to save my own soul, by renouncing my faith, if God has doomed it to eternal burning. But I will proceed to answer your objections, notwithstanding that you put on an air of sanctimoniousness, and a supercilious mien, which might well excuse me from holding any farther conversation with you. But it is my pleasure to hear and to answer you; and I therefore brook your discourteous, not to say ungentlemanly manner.

You say it is reported of me that I pretend to be visited by the dead, who have lain in their graves many years, and to receive intelligence from them of their condition, and of many things relating to the spirit land. Your information is false, so far as it respects the dead. I have never pretended that any person arose from the dead and visited me. I have declared, and still do declare, that men, women and children who have passed into the spirit world, frequently come to me and hold converse with me. Their bodies, which died and were buried, have never come out of their graves, that I know of; nor could they have come out, save by the hand of some resurrectionist; and then they could not have been made to speak, without the working of a miracle, which spiritualists hold to be impracticable, even with God himself.

A.—Hold! hold! I cannot hear blasphemy. I cannot sit here and hear you deny that God can do any thing. If He cannot work miracles, how did He create the earth, the sun, moon and stars out of nothing?

B.—I did not interrupt you—why do you interrupt me? I told you that God cannot work a miracle, by which I mean that he cannot do any thing contrary to the laws of nature. Do you think God can lie, be a fool, or annihilate himself? If not, there are three things which He cannot do; and the working of a miracle is a fourth thing which He cannot do; for it is as much impossible for Him to violate His own law as it is to do either of the three things which I have named; for the laws of nature which He would have to violate, in order to work a miracle, are laws of His own enactment. And, hence, He could not, as you pretend to think, have created the earth, sun, moon and stars out of nothing; for this, sure enough, would involve a miracle.

You say you are informed that I pretend to see the dead alive, clothed as they were when I knew them on earth. This, too, is false. I never pretended to see the dead. I do see the spirits of those who have left their mortal bodies; but these spirits never died—never can die. Hence they are not the dead, but the living that I see and converse with. Do you believe what is recorded in the New Testament?

A.—Yes, and what is recorded in the Old Testament, too, every word of it.

B.—Then you believe that Peter James and John saw the spirits of Moses and Elias, on the high mountain, with Jesus, when he was transfigured before them, and heard them talk with him, do you not?

A.—Certainly I do. The word of God says so, and He cannot lie.

B.—What—do you already acknowledge that there is something which God cannot do? Is not this blasphemy? But we will pass this. What you say is true; and it requires no defence. Now tell me if those three disciples of Jesus were men, angels or Gods?

A.—Who ever pretended that they were other than men? They lived as other men lived, and died as other men died; so they could not have been angels nor Gods.

B.—Then if those three disciples were only men, such as I am, and they saw the spirits of men who once dwelt in this earth, but who had been in the spirit world, the one fifteen hundred and the other nine hundred years, and heard them converse in human language, is it incredible that I see the spirits of friends who have been in the spirit world not a hundredth part as long as they had, and receive communications from them in various ways? And if I am hallucinated, and my senses deceive me, now, were not those three disciples hallucinated, and did not their senses deceive them, then? And besides this consideration, you have now hundreds of living witnesses, whom you can see and converse with, face to face, and whom you dare not accuse of want of veracity, or want of sanity, who will testify that they have witnessed all that I claim to have witnessed.

You say you believe what those three disciples are said to have seen and heard, although there was no one to corroborate their story, and it was not written till the lapse of more than the life-term of a generation from the time the phenomenon was said to have happened; and altho' it has come down to us through sixty generations and through many re-writings of the manuscript record, and many translations of the printed book in which it is contained; all these hands through which it has passed being those of peccable humanity, liable not only to err honestly, but to cheat. Only see what a labyrinth of uncertainty your faith has to go back through, to reach a fact at the remote distance of eighteen centuries; and yet you believe it without hesitation, whilst you will discredit and condemn as false, hallucinated or insane, a thousand living witnesses, whom you can hear give their testimony to the witnessing of similar phenomena now, and all around you. Which looks more like hallucination, your faith which is founded upon an account in an old book, of a fact said to have happened so long ago, or my faith, which is founded upon the evidence of my own senses, corroborated by the testimony of a thousand living witnesses?

A.—But my faith is founded upon the word of God, which cannot be falsified by the lapse of eighteen centuries, or eighteen million centuries, whilst yours is founded only on the senses and testimony of fallible humanity. What say you to this circumstance?

B.—I say that you have no evidence that the account of what the disciples are said to have seen, is the word of God, any more than you have that what I say is the word of God. Nay, you have greatly more evidence that my account is the word of God, than that the other account is the word of God. You have, in me, a living witness; and I am one of God's children, in the full possession of my intellectual faculties, and am of truthful repute; and you have the corroborative testimony of many others, equally sane and truthful, to similar facts. If what I say is true, it is the word of God, for God is truth, and all truth is His word. Hence, if the story of what the disciples witnessed is true, it is the word of God; but, if not true, it is not the word of God.

A.—But the record of what the disciples witnessed, is from the bible. Is not the bible the word of God?

B.—None the more certainly so for being called by that name. The book which is called "the bible," contains many beautiful truths, all of which are the word of God—not because they are in that book, but because they are truths. There are many self-evident falsehoods bound up in the same volume with those truths. This circumstance does not make the falsehoods true, nor the truths false. If we find wheat and chaff in the same bag, I have no right to contend that the contents is all chaff, nor you that it is all wheat; nor would any name or character given to the bag, or inscribed on it, make its whole contents either the one thing or the other.

A.—Well, proceed. I shall not dispute with you about the bible—it has taken care of itself, against thousands of more able skeptics than you are; and I have no fear that you will confound it.

B.—You pretend to have been informed that spirits teach us that the religion taught by Jesus Christ is false, and that the bible is totally fabulous. You did not happen to think of it, or you would have repeated what you affirmed in a conversation with another spiritualist, not long since; which was, that all the insane hospitals and mad-houses in the coun-

try were filled with insane spiritualists. These, sir, are the reckless and wicked falsehoods, which you pious members of the orthodox church, manufacture continually, to bring odium upon a cause which God approves, and in which angels and archangels labor continually. Spirits do not teach that the religion of Jesus Christ was false. On the contrary, their teachings corroborate every thing that he ever taught, though not every thing which he is falsely represented to have taught. Nor do spirits or spiritualists condemn the bible as fabulous; although they do teach and know that there are many fables mingled with the glorious truths which it contains. The whole vitality of the bible consists in the spiritual phenomena and spiritual teachings which it contains; and these prove conclusively that either they themselves are false, or that modern spiritualism is true.

You sneer at the idea that I can see spirits, clothed as they were when I knew them in the flesh. Your ignorance of the spiritual philosophy makes many truths appear ridiculous to you. You cannot understand that spirits have the power to clothe themselves with electric garments, the likeness, in appearance, of any they ever wore, or that they ever saw, or of any that they can see in any incarnate mind. Instantly, with the power of their will, they can produce the resemblance of any manner of apparel.

Your affirmation that the mad-houses are all filled with insane spiritualists, is beautifully shown up by the last report of the Insane Asylum at Utica. In this report there is but a single case, among four hundred insane persons, which was produced by religious excitement; and that was not produced by spiritualism. Indeed, there can be nothing so well calculated to keep the human mind on its true balance—nothing so solacing and happyfying to mind, as the messages of truth and love which beatified spirits bring us continually. They present to our acceptance a God with full and perfect deific attributes, rendering Him worthy the eternal adoration of free, truth-loving and elevated souls; whereas the God which orthodox christians have received from Judaism, and to whom they offer their hollow-hearted oblations of prayer and flattery, is so repulsive in His character, that rational men prefer annihilation to an eternal existence, under such a monarch, who may get angry again, as He is said to have done in times past, and whelm the whole spirit realm in one boundless ocean of fire and sulphur.

You have alleged that all the phenomena which purport to be produced to us by the spirits of our departed friends, are the works of the devil. Now, allow me to ask you who the devil is, and where he came from?

A.—Read your bible attentively, and you will not be at a loss to know who the devil is, or where he came from. And let me warn you that the time is near at hand when you will know him intimately, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," unless you repent and turn from your ways of wickedness. To answer your question directly, the devil was an angel in heaven, who rebelled against God, as you do, and who, with his hosts of rebellious spirits, waged war against God, with a purpose of dethroning Him, but was met in battle by the loyal angelic hosts, and defeated and hurled into the bottomless abyss of etereal torment, into which he is constantly laboring to lure the souls of those who will listen to his lies, as you do. This is the history of the devil. Does not John tell you all this?

B.—Yes, one of the Johns tells a story much like it: but you are making as bad a mistake in this as you did when you mistook Shakespeare for the Prophet Isaiah. But answer me this: Do you not believe that God created the heavens and the earth, and all things therein, in six days, like those in which we are commanded to labor every week.

A.—I have already told you that I believe every word of the bible; and this that you have named, is in the bible. Why do you ask me again?

B.—I wished to be certain that I understood you rightly. Well, then, God made the devil, within those six days; and what did he make him for?

A.—He made him an angel of light and purity; but he rebelled and fell.

B.—Did not God know that he would do so? and could He not have made him so that he would not have rebelled? If He did not know, He is not Omniscient; and if He could not have made him otherwise, He is not omnipotent. Which horn of this dilemma do you choose?

A.—Of course, God has all wisdom and all power; but He followed the counsel of His own pleasure, and did every thing for the advancement of His own glory. The devil was necessary to exemplify the infinite contrast between good and evil—between God and His opposite; and who has a right to question God's wisdom or goodness?

B.—I admit that you have all there is of the argument in favor of the existence of a devil. Now let us compare these two deities of orthodox christianity, and see which is the less reprehensible one of the two.

You represent your God as having created man with a predetermination to damn nine-tenths of his whole race, and to consign them, as fast as they leave this state of existence, to eternal and ineffable torment. You represent him as having provided a place of torment for their reception; and you affirm of him that he created a being, whom you call the devil, with powers but little inferior to his own, and so constituted him that he would delight to labor continually to lure the souls of men and women into the place of endless torment which he has prepared for them. Now who can blame this devil for doing what he does, even providing that he really does decoy infinite millions of souls into that gulf of endless misery? He did not create himself, nor provide for himself the disposition which prompts him. God—according to your faith—did all this, and rendered it impossible that the devil should do otherwise than act out the nature which was implanted in him. Can you not now see that the God whom you worship, is infinitely more demoniacal than the devil, who is His involuntary instrument? Do you not see that your principal Deity is made up of despotic tyranny, malignant hatred and fiendish cruelty, and that your secondary Deity, or devil, is a mere passive instrument in his hands? And do you not perceive that it is this character which your religion gives to the God you worship, which has been filling Christendom with Atheists, for the last thousand years, and so disgusted intellect with religion, that few hoped for, or even desired immortality?

These abhorrent features in your religion, and their consequences upon the hearts and minds of humanity, are the causes which have rendered necessary the present effort of the hosts of the spirit-world, to redeem man, in the rudimental state, from his condition of ignorance and misery; to show him that God is not the cruel tyrant that He is represented to be; that He is an ever affectionate Father, full of love and kindness; and that He will eternally draw his human children—all of them—closer and closer to Him; and that no one of them can possibly alienate himself from His all-embracing love, so that he will not finally come up and arrive at the estate of an archangel.

This is what spiritualism teaches; and inasmuch as your religious faith makes its God so much worse than its devil, I cannot so much wonder that you attribute the beautiful teachings of our spirit friends to the latter.

A.—It is now getting so late that I must not insist on protracting this interview any farther. At some future time I shall be pleased to meet you again, when I hope to be able to convince you of the fallacy of all the positions which you have assumed.

B.—I shall be ready to listen to you, when it suits your convenience.

Lecture No. 8.—By Edgar C. Dayton.

MISS BROOKS, MEDIUM.

[REPUBLISHED.]

THE RAPPINGS.

The subject of spiritual intercourse, is one of vast and inconceivable moment. It is a subject which acknowledges the principle of an unceasing and eternal progression, and follows the soul upward and on-

ward, until it is apparently lost in the vortex of immortal wisdom and glory, which flows from the Omnific Mind, and permeates the immeasurable universe.

For ages, the human mind has entertained the most profound and solemn reverence for the Bible. It has been regarded as intrinsically holy, every sentence being a direct reflex of Deity. Those minds who have rejected the Bible as the fixed and immovable standard of all thought and action, are called infidels and heretics.

Every age is bringing forth from some hidden source, laws and principles heretofore hidden from the knowledge and comprehension of men. It is but a brief period of time since the rappings were discovered, and by that simple sound the world has become aroused to an investigation of those pure and holy laws, which prove that the souls of men live in a better world. Yet many, very many, well and scientifically developed minds, abhor those raps. But what is it that often makes the heart beat quickly when that familiar rap is heard at the door? Why do the impulses of the heart bid the comer-welcome? Because that single rap, perhaps was made by a fond friend who claims a place within the affections and sympathies of those with whom it seeks to associate. Perhaps it is a father or a mother, brother or sister, son or daughter, who seeks the cottage door, for a quiet and affectionate interview with their child, sister, father, mother or friend. They open their inmost heart to the loved one and drink at sympathy's pure fount.—Then why detest the familiar raps, whether made upon the door, table or otherwise? What is there so inherently evil in the raps made upon the table, when they manifest the same intelligence and affection as they do when made by the physical hand, upon your door. Is it because your thoughts seek the lonely grave, when contemplating the souls of your departed friends? And does the grave contain bitter fears, which fill your soul with dread, at the happy thought that your friend still associates with you, breathing into your soul lofty themes of thought, and portrays to your understanding the beauties and glories of its immortal home? If this is it, then reflect and study deeply the immutable laws of your own being, which are the controlling and ultimating influence of the eternal mind, when borne to higher spheres of development.

When you listen to the raps, produced by an invisible agency, and that invisible intelligence proves or identifies itself to be your departed friend, and if your soul quails with fear at this simple sound, think that the same emotions of the interior qualities are manifested by the little rap, though now more perfectly and wisely unfolded, and that the spirit will not harm you, but yearns to tell you of its eternal individuality, to remind you of a happy reunion in the spirits' immortal home. For into the deepest bosom of the undeveloped spirit, there flows a sweet and tranquil light which seems the very elements of life itself; so pure and so holy, yet exhilarating in its breath; and as this light sinks down into the deep recesses of the heart and expands its influence through the interior qualities of the mind, the germ of the spiritual being unfolds and expands, and is ultimated into a more glorious perfection. The soul, like the flowers, if smothered or confined in darkness, ceases to expand and unfold its interior properties; but when brought forth to the radiating and cheering influence of universal nature, its petals begin to open and unfold in all the freshness and beauty of its immortal birth.

The immortal soul feels not the cold and withering influence of earth, but grows purer and more beautiful as it advances through the stages of development, to eternity. Those simple raps are the same familiar sounds, seeking for a place at your side, to tell you that the object you mourn as gone, still-lives in a future world. They tell you of the sweet breathings of peace and joy—of those internal influences which are the legitimate unfoldings of the harmonious and spiritual powers.

Silent but deep and powerful are the developments of progression; sweet and pure are the whisperings of those bright beings which fall upon the faint and sorrowing heart; and holy is the influence they impart to the weary and oppressed. The spirit, after its transition from the human organization, advances upward and retreats from the unrefined material to the refined essence of all interior elements; and its

form is in a perfect correspondence with the nature of the substance from which the mind originated; and the force of the impelling power by which it is evolved, is the beautiful and harmonious blending of the sublimated emanations proceeding from the Divine Mind.

There are spirits whose capacities and qualities inherently attract them to the study of scientific principles; and they are actuated by an innate desire to endeavor to make discoveries in the fields of philosophical truth. Hence the highest and holiest thoughts supersede those which are lower and undeveloped; in consequence of which, such a spirit's advancement is more rapid and perfect than the spirit who confines itself to mere outward or common-place realities.

If there are principles and laws, upon which the immortal mind can operate and produce demonstrations and proofs, by which the human mind may recognize the identity of a friend long since departed to the realms of goodness and truth, is it a subject to be ridiculed and trifled with? or is it not worthy the most profound solemnity? If immortal spirits return to your homes, where oft their voices have been heard in glee or sadness, and manifest inherent affections, and active and profound sympathies, towards the loved ones yet dwelling in a world of affliction and sorrow, imparting to them pure and holy affections, should they be repulsed and called evil? or should they find a place within the human heart, where they may confidently enstamp upon the human mind the unfoldings of an eternal progression, and infuse into your soul the glory and purity of its love and everlasting happiness?

If spirits who have become released from the trammels by which they were bound while in the human form, teach you of laws and principles in antagonism to your faith—if they tell you of their motives and desires, and prove to you the eternal individuality of all objects and forms animated by life and intelligence, and of the infinite and divine progression of the spiritual nature, should they be called undeveloped and demoniacal because they kindly tell you what they believe to be true? If immortal minds who have preceded you to the spirit land, return to you and tell you of the necessity of a social reform, and give you laws by which you may work this reform, should such intelligences be traced to an evil source, or should it not prove the legitimate expression of noble and truly qualified minds?

I know that spirits hold that there are inconsistencies in your Bible: I know they deny the divinity of Jesus Christ: but may this not be true? I know that contradictory communications are received: but does this disprove the identity of the immortal soul, or the evidence of a spiritual existence? The teachings of Jesus Christ were high and holy, and had they been cherished in every bosom, there would not now be so many flattering voices and corrupt hearts. There are some who proclaim from the altar the glory and sublimity of Christ's teachings, whose exterior is fair, but the interior is the very dregs of corruption and wrong. Then, again, from the sacred sanctuary, there are minds who give vent to thoughts which proceed from a true and noble source; and they feel that they are doing their duty to mankind and to their God. Such minds impart a holy influence upon their followers; but they have no right to condemn any doctrine in opposition to their faith; for truth is the word of God, whether it comes from a true or undeveloped mind.

Then, if the simple rap is heard and it tells you of the holy gratitude of the soul, and tells you to base your belief upon the principles of nature and the universe, which bear perfect assimilation to the truths of God, shun it not, but receive what is given you generously and kindly. If you comprehend what is given, then it is truth. If you cannot comprehend it, then it will do you no good. Consequently, seek for other truths which you can appreciate and comprehend. The gentle yet irresistible power of the disembodied soul, has been made manifest, and there has been an effect of harmonious and pure aspirations produced, and the desolated bosom now seeks the elements of an inward life for consolation and solace.

Philosophy is given you which is based upon reason and intellectual investigation; and when the human soul shall become sufficiently refined to be able to receive and realize the truth that the soul exists

hereafter, then shall the everlasting beauty which tints every thought and impulse with hope and peace, be realized, and God shall be found to reside within and above all things, as the Father and Ruler of all.

Yours,

EDGAR C. DAYTON.

S. B. Brittan's answer to Mahan.

CHAPTER IV.

THE AUTHOR'S "TEST PRINCIPLES" EXAMINED.

In this chapter it is our purpose to review the several propositions by which Professor Mahan proceeds to try the claims of the Manifestations to a spiritual origin. He is somewhat methodical in his general manner of treating the subject, but his perception of natural causes and metaphysical distinctions is confused and unreliable; his statements are often ambiguous, and his reasoning illogical; while his conclusions are, for the most part, carelessly and abruptly drawn. In his estimate of the phenomena, he neither follows ontological principles, nor does he strictly respect the dogmatic authority of the speculative, scholastic theology. He exhibits a desire to preserve friendly relations with the world and accredited science, on the one hand, and the church and popular divinity on the other. These counter attractions keep him about as far from Heaven as he is from *terra firma*. To determine the nature and source of the phenomena, he proposes to apply his own arbitrary rules, which are neither clearly expressed nor understood. This is a complete inversion of the true order. The facts of Spiritualism are not to be tried by the standard of this or that man's opinions, nor can we reasonably expect to determine their source and significance by a vague statement which, at best, is but the sepulcher of an idea.

With this brief introduction, let us proceed, *seriatim*, in the examination of the author's "test principles." That the reader may as far as possible perceive and comprehend the grounds of his argument, we will quote in full, and in their proper order, the several propositions which constitute his platform.

I. No facts occurring in the world around us, are to be referred to any supernatural or *ab extra* Spirit-causes whatever, which facts can be accurately accounted for by a reference to causes known to exist in this mundane sphere.

It is difficult to infer the author's intention, or his real position from this statement. He talks about natural, supernatural and spiritual things, in such a vague way that we are left without any definite conception of his idea or purpose. He speaks from a cloud, and leaves us to guess where he is and what he is there for. A dark, crooked and unfrequented path may be quite as safe as any other, if the traveler finds it necessary, above all things, to elude pursuit and to escape observation. There is certainly no approach toward the light in the foregoing statement, and for the present we are left to feel after the author in the dark. His first proposition is quite too indefinite, as it appears to the philosophical mind, either to serve the author's purpose, or to convey any distinct impression of his meaning. He uses terms so loosely, that scarcely a single idea is precisely expressed. How many things, for example, the Professor is disposed to include in "this mundane sphere," we know not; the province of natural law is nowhere defined; and the *ab extra* Spirit-causes—such as are allowed to exist in foreign parts, but not permitted to show themselves about here—are neither named, numbered, nor located. This leaves us ample room to conjecture what we please, but as this wide field is not yet "fenced in," we can scarcely hope to confine the proprietor to his own premises, though we may venture on the experiment.

The last part of the proposition under review may be supposed to materially modify what precedes it; but the qualifying clause, probably, was not designed to limit the general scope and purpose of the whole, so much as it obscures the meaning. If we are right, number one of the author's "test principles" may be more clearly expressed thus: None of the phenomena cognizable by the senses, as exercised through corporeal organs, are to be referred to supernatural causes, or to any spiritual agency superior to the unintelligent forces of the natural world, and the powers of the human mind in its mundane relations. Nature, in these days, has become a powerful institution, especially since the advent of Odyle.—Nevertheless, our author manifestly believes that Nature has limits somewhere—that certain things which men attempt to conceive of or talk about may reasonably be supposed to transcend the capacity of what are usually denominated natural forces, and hence are to be comprehended in the

writer's realm of the "supernatural." He does not pretend to deny that certain *ab extra* Spirit-causes do exist, but he totally rejects the idea that they produce any such mysterious effects as are now constantly occurring on the natural plane of our existence. It is true that such causes were once operative within "this mundane sphere." In primeval ages God ruled the world; wonders were performed by ministering Spirits and Angels, and men inspired from supersensual and divine sources. But, according to this professed Christian philosopher, no facts in these days are to be referred to *ab extra* Spirit-causes. All such causes have done operating in this region. The Spiritual Powers have leave to retire, and busy themselves in shaping the embryotic forms of new systems, and in training the adolescent worlds that are not yet qualified to take care of themselves. As for this world, it is supposed to be able to go alone; the children of men can inspire themselves now, or go without inspiration, and Nature is so far developed as to work the greatest wonders without extra force or spirit—without God!

Thus far, if our author's Theism does not attempt to limit the Divine existence to the past, it aims ostensibly to circumscribe his present dominion. Prof. Mahan is chiefly disposed to venerate the God of history and tradition. He doubtless believes that the Deity we read of had directly something to do with the government of the natural world, at one time; but that for all practical purposes he was long since virtually superseded. It is no mistake of ours that the enemies of Spiritualism entertain such irrational and irreverent ideas of the Supreme Being and his administration. But we are deeply surprised that men claiming the authority of a Divine commission to expound the spiritual mysteries of Judaism and Christianity, can for a moment imagine that nature and man are not constantly dependent on superior and more Spiritual Powers. If they are not, what does this author mean by the Province that "controls natural laws?" and pray what, in his judgment, is the use of prayer?

But let us pursue this point in our inquiry a little further. If men cater for the enemies of truth, in the name of Philosophy, and under the garb of Religion, we desire to know precisely where they stand, and what they are doing. The world has a right to see them in their true position. Now, where is this author, with respect to his real views of natural and spiritual things? Does he comprehend in his idea of Nature all that is positively essential to the being and preservation, the orderly operation and harmonic development, of the entire economy of physical existence? If he does include so much, then Nature and God are essentially one in his philosophy, and the author himself is a Pantheist. If, however, his definition of Nature comprehends less than this—more especially if it only includes the forms, functions and relations of external objects, the conclusion is irresistible that a supra-mundane, intelligent, and Divine power—an *ab extra* Spirit-agency, is constantly acquired and universally exercised throughout every department of the natural world. Indeed, without this perpetual infusion of spiritual principles into physical forms, all things would die. The light of each central sun would be extinguished; vast systems of worlds, like withered leaves and untimely fruits, would shrivel and fall, and all space became one boundless sepulchre!

II. No facts are to be referred to any particular supernatural, or *ab extra* Spirit-cause, unless they are of such a nature, that they can be accounted for upon no other supposition.

Here the writer again recognizes the distinction between the natural and supernatural, but does not attempt to define their respective limits. This proposition suggests an important question, and the answer seems likely to reduce our author's second "test principle" to something less than a cipher, so far as it is presumed to be adapted to his present purpose. Now, this is the question; "Is the human soul or Spirit comprehended in Nature? Does it appropriately belong to the department of natural things? or, is it supernatural? For all the purposes of this criticism, we are quite indifferent respecting the decision. Our reverend friend may answer *ad libitum*. He may assign the human Spirit a place in either one or the other of the two great departments of Being—we care not which—and he will be equally sure to expose the fallacy of the second principle in the foundation of his argument. If he is pleased to decide that the Spirit in man belongs to the supernatural creation, he will therein recognize the presence and action, "in this mundane sphere," of beings gifted with supernatural powers; and accordingly, he must admit that the operations of the human Spirit, through the body and on the objective forms and substances of the natural world, are so many illustrations of a power that is above Nature. This point in our argument may be briefly comprehended and clearly illustrated by the following examples:

1. Men are known to possess and exercise in this world—in a greater or less degree—certain occult powers, supersensual perceptions, and "Spiritual gifts," which demonstrate their relation to a transmundane existence.

2. Man, in his interior or spiritual nature, is supernaturally endowed and instructed.

3. Admitting the truth of the foregoing propositions, it necessarily follows that many things which men are accustomed to do and to experience, during the continuance of the life on earth, may be properly referred to what our author denominates supernatural or *ab extra* Spirit-causes.

On the contrary, if it be affirmed in answer to our question, that the human Spirit is more properly included in the natural creation, it will plainly appear, that in referring certain occult phenomena to the agency of human beings, in a spiritual state, we do not refer such phenomena to supernatural, or, *ab extra* Spirit-causes. This, also, will admit of a syllogistic demonstration, thus:

1. Men have souls or Spirits in this world, and are capable of exercising, under a variety of circumstances, the mysterious powers of the spiritual and immortal nature.

2. The human soul belongs to the natural creation.

3. Therefore, in referring the mysterious phenomena of our time to the Spirits of men, we assign natural causes for their occurrence.

Now, President Mahan will not attempt to question the truth of the first or major proposition in either of the foregoing examples. Indeed, a large portion of his book is essentially devoted to an illustration of the idea we have thus briefly expressed. The second or minor proposition must be accepted in one case or the other, for the obvious reason that the human Spirit is necessarily either natural or supernatural. Finally, if the first and second propositions be admitted, the acceptance of the third—the conclusion, is rendered inevitable.

III. When particular causes are known to exist, all effects within and around us are to be attributed to such causes, effects resembling and analogous to those known to proceed from such causes, effects especially which occur in circumstances where such causes may be reasonably supposed to be present.

The objectionable features of this proposition are so well disguised that the statement appears fair at first sight; but on reflection, we discover that it is rather specious than sound. Effects are the outward signs or sensible expressions of their specific causes. Subtile elements and silent forces are thus revealed to us in the pictorial illustrations of wide-spread natural symbolism. The fallacy in the foregoing proposition consists in the assumption that similar effects proceed from the same causes. It is important to observe that similar effects do not indicate the presence of identical but of analogous causes. What if a large proportion of the spiritual phenomena resemble, in some of their essential features and aspects, other facts—already ascertained to depend on mortal agency, or on the dynamics of imponderable substances. This is precisely what we might reasonably expect to find, inasmuch as all material and spiritual creations are intimately connected with each other, and co-related to the same Infinite First Cause. But when we enter the wide sphere of subordinate causes, and their specific effects, we find them innumerable and infinitely diversified. And here it is only by a close observation of the several particulars wherein they are either similar or dissimilar, that we are enabled to make a scientific classification, and to trace outward and sensible phenomena to their interior and invisible laws.

It is well known that the facts of Spiritualism are plainly distinguished from those which more appropriately belong to the department of physical science. Moreover they have so many peculiar and striking characteristics, that they were at first almost universally rejected, without so much as a respectful notice. Especially did the scientific classes and the clergy not only dispute the real facts, but they boldly denied the possibility of their occurrence. Professor Mahan knows this perfectly well, and yet he assumes that such facts are easily accounted for without going beyond the sphere of external nature, and the unaided operations of the human mind on earth. If they are, indeed, so extremely natural (using the word with the usual limitations,) why have they encountered such a general and determined opposition? Are the people generally, including our teachers of science, art, literature, morals and religion, so sadly perverted that they can not recognize the normal manifestations of natural principles? Nay, we can not believe this. The human faculties are essentially adapted to the perception and comprehension of natural facts and laws. The truth is, the spiritual phenomena embrace a number of

distinct classes of facts, each of which will admit of a precise description. Not one of these has been satisfactorily accounted for by those who have attempted to theorize on material grounds. Very few among the theorists have possessed either the ability to reason, or the disposition to be just. They have thought that Nature was out of order; they have vainly presumed to revise her laws by their scientific and theological standards; and—as if determined to rival the heathen in folly and absurdity—they have even insisted on referring the facts to "some undisclosed law of Nature, as the superstitious Athenians blindly consecrated a temple to the worship of "the unknown God."

IV. Even those facts for the occurrence of which no mundane causes at present known, can be assigned, are not to be attributed to any *ab extra* causes whatever, or to the agency of disembodied spirits. When such facts are similar and analogous, in their essential characteristics, to other facts which once appeared equally mysterious and unaccountable on any mundane hypothesis, but for which science subsequently discovered actual mundane causes. Such facts manifestly lie in the track of scientific discovery, and we must suppose them to be the result of mundane causes, which are yet to be discovered, though at present unknown to us.

The position of our author, so far as it is defined in his fourth test proposition, is a most singular one for a Christian minister to occupy. He assumes that if any new facts occur, the causes of which are as yet unknown, we most pertinaciously resist all attempts to refer them to spiritual sources, so long as we can trace a distinct analogy between them and any other facts which have been accounted for on purely natural principles. They may differ from all merely physical phenomena in many essential particulars. On the other hand, these facts may conform in all respects to the known characteristics of certain intelligent beings, whom we have long and intimately known, and to whom they plainly manifest the relation of effects to causes; but we are required to reject all such claims.—The author says, "Such facts manifestly lie in the track of scientific discovery, and we must suppose them to be the result of mundane causes, which are yet to be discovered." The "unknown cause" may claim to be a Spirit, and talk to us as friend with friend; it may take hold of the great forces of material nature, and suspend the consequences of their action; it may exhibit a mysterious insight into the secrets of the dead; it may paralyze our mortal bodies, leaving them apparently lifeless, and at the same time bear our unshackled spirits upward and away into the "heaven of heavens;" it may dissipate the midnight darkness, and even come visibly to us in human and angelic forms, clothed with the immortal splendors of their deathless estate. All this have thousands experienced; and yet, Rev. Professor Mahan would have them reject the evidence of their own senses, and uproot, from their inmost souls, a conviction that is strong and deep as the love of life. According to this author, it is most important for us to purge our souls of all that we know of heaven, of our immortal life, and of spiritual and divine natures. This done, only one thing remains. We must all wait patiently to discover "mundane causes," having dismissed the radiant throng from our presence with less ceremony than is due to mortals.

V. To establish the claims of Spiritualism, its advocates must show, (1.) that the facts which they adduce are wholly dissimilar and unanalogous, in their essential characteristics, to any facts resulting from any mundane causes, and (2.) that the occurrence and characteristics of these facts can be accounted for, but upon one exclusive hypothesis, the agency of disembodied Spirits. If similar and analogous facts do arise from purely mundane causes, it is a violation of all the laws and principles of science and common sense, to attribute these phenomena to any *ab extra* cause whatever.

This whole statement is utterly preposterous. In order to sustain the claims of Spiritualism, we certainly can not be required to show that the facts are in no way analogous to any other facts that ever occurred on earth, and were found to have been produced by unspiritual causes. The author's assumption that this is properly demanded at our hands is absurd to the last degree. There is an obvious analogy between the phenomena of animal and vegetable life. Now, if we are disposed to insist on the reality of animal existence, must we first prove that animals are in all respects unlike plants, and that they in no way resemble anything else in God's creation! We presume not. In fact, should any man seriously offer such a suggestion, among men of ordinary intelligence, he would be laughed at. And yet the first President of Cleveland University gravely proposes what is still more repugnant to reason. He would not only have us prove that different genera have no likeness; but he insists that there shall be no resemblance in the phenomena produced by beings of the same genus and species. According to our author, the Spirits of departed men must say and do things which are "wholly dissimilar and unan-

alogous, in their essential characteristics," to any thing that men were ever known to say or do before, or we have no evidence that they are Spirits or men at all. And such is the false philosophy and slipshod logic which Spiritualism encounters in Theological Seminaries and Universities! Precisely here, on the very ground of the author's objection, may the claims of Spiritualism stand unmoved forever. It is because the Spirits say and do so many things that clearly display their individual habits of thought and action, and illustrate the attributes and incidents of their life on earth, that we are forced to acknowledge their presence and to respect their claims.

Our author concludes his statement of "test principles" with the following brief paragraph, in which he complacently assures us that they are all correct and unanswerable.

The validity of these principles will be universally recognized as self-evident. Their applicability, as fundamental tests of truth, to our present inquiries, is equally manifest and undeniable. Their validity has been universally acknowledged by Christians, in reference to all miraculous attestations of the claims of Christianity to a Divine origin and authority.

On the several propositions discussed in this chapter, Professor Mahan founds his argument. In an important sense they constitute the law by which this mock trial of Spiritualism is regulated. These are the "principles" which are said to "be universally recognized as self-evident." Is it not rather "self-evident" that they are all false? If "their validity has been universally acknowledged by Christians," it follows that a cordial acceptance of these principles "as fundamental tests of truth" is one of the conspicuous signs whereby Christians may hereafter be known and distinguished. But if what this Christian divine says of all Christians be true, we must express our unfeigned regret that they are weak in faith as they are deficient in good sense. We have only a word more at this time. So long as such principles are employed in testing our faith and, consequently, our claims to discipleship, we must be resigned to occupy a place with those whose reason and moral courage have rendered them infidel.

For the Age of Progress.

FRIEND ALBRO:—The spirit-author of the following lecture, desired me to hand it to you for publication, if you should deem it worthy of a place in the columns of the *Age of Progress*.

Very truly yours,

J. J. F.

Buffalo, Jan'y 4, 1856.

Lecture

On the Effect of Material Circumstances upon the Mind, and the Necessity of Guarding the Soul from their Deleterious Influences.

MISS BROOKS, MEDIUM.

When we look through the material world, everything seems to be a living entity; an unexplainable something, seems to whisper of that great source, from which all things had their existence. The activity and energy which move the entire universe, seem to be impermeated into the smallest particle within the limits of existence; and from youth to age, every object seen, either by the external or internal vision, makes its impression upon the mind. Every word spoken, either in kindness or anger, stamps upon the living mind its like; and, consequently, there are bright and dark spots upon the human soul.

As the vision extends far into the universe of its God, it there receives its true conceptions of the wisdom of the skies, and the hopes which shoot in electric darts from the highest heaven. Elemental shafts of light shoot athwart the soul's heaven, leaving the traces of divine beauty upon its unlimited expanse; and as the solar orchestras move on, and which seem as chords in the lyre of creation, some breathing forth some liquid cadence, and others the sweetness of an æolian lute, when swept by the wind; others eliciting discordant strains; so are human hearts' orbs in the mental world, varying in beauty and refinement. Some, genius-like, penetrate the heavens; others seek the mineral universe; others strive to penetrate the future; and others confine themselves to the things of earth; and thus no two individual worlds are alike. Though atoms are accumulated by laws of affinity, yet the worlds evolved, may vary greatly, in a state of refined development.

The attributes of the soul are drawn together by the same infinite principle; and identities and individualities of being, vary in their spir-

itual as well as physical natures. But the same source originated these identities, which throng the universe. The same power that inscribed on the brow of creation, PROGRESS, also stamped upon the mind the impress of its divinity, and of its continuous life, beyond the narrow casement of its finite existence.

God created man, and infused into his spirit the breath of his eternal love, thereby making him a constituent in the Great Constitution of Mind, or Spirit. This deific power enables man to penetrate into those deeper beauties, which nature unfolds to the human understanding.— It fills the soul with its ten thousand emotions, when circumstances incident to human life, sweep in mild vibrations across the heart; or roll in terrible elements, around its centre, shattering the temple of the heart, which once aspired to the holier inspirations, descending in mighty volumes, from the inner library of universal nature, to sip the nectar from creation's fount, and catch the drop of love which trickles down the spiral pathways of heaven. Every thought is a circumstance of the mind, and thoughts commingling in verbal utterances, sometimes convulse, and send forth their awful effect upon the mind; yet these uncongenial comminglings of thoughts, can be arrested, if the music of the soul can be called out from the struggling heart, by the simple, yet infinite, power of kindness.

As the stately oak lifts its proud form above its forest mates, it, too, may be shivered to atoms, by the unrelenting storm, or by the lightning's electric shafts. In a moment, that proud form may be stripped of its natural grace and beauty, by the effects of divine causes. The little flower, which speaks of God, in its feeble efforts to rise in glory, with the pride of the forest, may likewise perish, by the effects of natural or physical law. And as the human heart which pulsates with the joys and pleasures of to-day, may be pulseless on the morrow; or the heart of pleasure of to-day, may be filled with sorrow on the morrow, and it is said to proceed from circumstances; yet CHANGE is the great circumstance of life. As the worlds in nature sometimes seem to fall back upon their own existence, neither progressing nor receding, but apparently suspended; so does the mind, by this constant motion of change, at times, seem to sink within itself and, struggle on, sighing in its own heart-realized sufferings; yet that heart eventually rises from its stand-still position, and beats on more rapidly, muttering in each little throb: "Yes, with all of sorrow's deadening influence, my soul appears from its dark clouds, shining more brilliantly in its own acquired wisdom;" and all change is recognized by circumstances.— Outward, or physical interruptions, in the harmony of mankind, are but the effects of an infinite cause—CHANGE.

Physical natures, varying in refinement of all the elements instituted in being, come in contact, and produce convulsions. Hence, discord follows; and this is but the result of a want of understanding one another. As elements of light and heat come in contact and produce their effect, so it is with the mind, when antagonistic principles come in contact.

There is an angel of the soul—a guardian of the heart's deepest affections—which stands on the verge of human being, waving its white robe in the etherial dews of the skies, gently playing upon the quivering chords of each heart, while it breathes a soft and quiet melody, sung by the angels of the heavens. It comes not to create discord, but to express, in outward demonstrations, the harmony natural to dissimilar minds, which is an element extending throughout the entire world. It is the angel of kindness, clad in the living form of harmony.

Man is the infinite, portrayed in finite being. He is a living form—human, dependent, and arrayed in the attributes of God. He is a mirror in which are reflected the beauties of heaven. And mind, in all its forms of being, is governed by the law of CHANGE. All the joys and sorrows of human life, are but the effects of the material and rudimental, coming in contact with the celestial and spiritual. Man is a dual form. He has the physical and spiritual, through which the truths of his existence flow. The physical identifies and individualizes the spiritual man; while the mind gives expression, through the finite form, to the divinities within the soul. Refined and unrefined faculties of

mind, come in contact; and discord proceeds therefrom. Throughout all the diversified departments of being, are displayed a uniformity and harmony, which blend the two natures infinitely together; while harmonic laws out-roll themselves over the expanded universe of animate existence, breathing in its own loving soul, the unity of truth and harmony of God and heaven. The material mind must, from the divine law, conceive and execute plans for the promotion of its own individual self; while other minds construct other material plans of life; and they differ in beauty and purity, while one mind envies the other; and thus the dew-flowers of the soul, planted there by the hand of God, are crushed. They droop, externally, while the human heart turns away, when it beholds their sickly appearance, without dropping the refreshing dews of sympathy, upon their almost closed petals. Then, how essential it is that whatever may betide another, physically or mentally, man should not desert such a heart, but should stand firm and unflinching, though the wind-swept shadows of sorrow should move in fearful strife, around their sphere of being.

The flower sends forth its buds, to manifest the beneficence of its creator; and when it thirsts, the rain drops descend; and the wind sweeps off those drops, when it is too heavily laden by the water from the clouds. Harmony bursts from each bud and leaf, and represents the true form of natural life; but when we come to the ultimate of finite life and intelligence, more discord seems to strike the living chords of being, eliciting harsh strains, which angel hands would fain attune to the living harmonies of the skies. As intelligence seems more perfect, strife and envy appear to be greatest, and man rushes blindly on, to grasp the clouds which float in the aerial realms of imagination.—And when his hand has clasped the sought-for boon, it dissolves in his grasp; and he sinks back within himself, saying, "Life is but a fitful dream." Now and then, golden clouds float joyously in the heavens, and the heart of man is light and free. He looks again, and those beauties are gone, and the entire heavens seem robed in a darkened pall—all seems chaotic, and life a dark vacuity. But still something struggles deep within the mind, and man, in his life, discovers he has only been dreaming. The unconfined soul then tears off the rudimental robe, and portrays the living entities of mind upon the expanded canvas of nature; and as earth wheels on, in its stupendous beauty, every star, flower and leaf, is a reality to the awakened dreamer. He no longer grasps for the rudimental, but asks for immortality, and then heaven displays its infiniteness in every thought of the soul; and truth, the emblem of eternity, encircles the heart with radiant hope; and man begins to live his true, natural life. He can not be satisfied with the past, but asks for the demonstrations of the Present.

Then Nature out-rolls itself, upon the celestial heavens, from whence flow the perennial streams of love and purity, from the great original Fountain.

Inspiration kindles its burning eloquence upon the sun altar of Truth; while God sets the immortal page of nature with types, shrines and volumes, from the angel-peopled home. He is the maker, for he works with master-hand. Why should man love to drink the dregs of discord, rather than sip the sweet nectar, borne down by angel hands, from the climes of joy and harmony? Why should man withdraw behind the cloud of sorrow, as if striving not to behold the amber-hued beauty of heaven, which arches over the soul's highest hopes? Nature is radiant with the smiles of God! and how often doth she stoop to kiss away the tear, and whisper in her own gentle voice, in thy heart: "Oh! man is something of heaven—an embryo God is struggling there, to find its way from the narrow casement of outward existence, to seek for those immortal strains, which descend, in dewy fragrance, from the climes of Immortality." An archangel is roaming wildly in the human form, as if searching for the deeper truths which throng the shores of eternity. Every lineament of the countenance, expresses the work of some infinite Power, which the human vision has never discovered, except as it displays itself in the changes of creation.

Human life is not eternal. It must return to its finite source, while the soul goes heavenward. Then why deprive the material self, com-

bined with the soul, of that true enjoyment which it seeks to find and realize, by grasping for that which is evanescent as the clouds of ether, which ride on the sweeping gale! God impregnated physical forms with his spirit; not that the material should roll in misery, but that the human heart should plant its own Edens, by the organic laws of harmony and unity. He desires not thus to aggravate man; but would shower upon him the beneficence of his love, which should be infused into the human mind.

All misery is but the effect of a misdirected soul. It is Deity in man, struggling to find its like; not in the outward expressions of life, but in that deep and holy meditation which is based upon the standard of Nature. The human heart can save itself much sorrow; but it refuses to lay up the wealth of the skies, and but continues to grasp for the physical sustenances, for coming life. If an enjoyment presents itself, cast it not idly by, though it may be dear-purchased; for who can tell but the desire for that enjoyment, which may have been thrown aside, breaks the threads of human life, and the heart lies dead and cold, by the stroke of its own hand. If a joy dance gladly by, on the current of outer existence, grasp it and fold it to the heart, and cast it not by, as if it were a bubble cast upon the ocean of your existence, by God, to aggravate man, whom he has created, infinitely and physically.

The faculties of mind must expand and enlarge, by the principles infused in progression's onward course, and unfold in harmony and truth; and while radiant nature overbends the earth, it reflects in image-forms of the Maker, his works and beauties. While we trace from mind and matter, to its definite ultimates, we ever behold universal order and uniformity, in every process of ultimatum.

Mind is governed by influx and reflux; by inspiration and exhalation of thought, concentrated in the soul, by the elements of infinite attraction.

As the sun, in its definite and specific position in the solar heavens, throws off particles of its own illuminated nature, and those atoms congregate in the regions of immensity, attracting other atoms from the surrounding empires of being, and which eventually, by organic process, unfold a new world; so does God, the Central Sun of Infinity, in his organic beauty and perfection, throw off atoms of intelligence, which congregate in the realms of the mental universe, attracting from every world of physical life, and from every region of the Elysian land, their like attractions of particles of intelligence, and unfolding from those divine atoms, a human soul.

As the sidereal heavens roll on in majesty and glory, no idle discord sweeps like a mighty wind over their homes of immortality. No hand can unstring the vibrant chords of the solar harp, but every element of nature strikes its strings, and harmony echoes therefrom. But the two-fold nature of mind does not thus harmonize; and man thoughtlessly exclaims: "It is the result of circumstances." Yes, and so it is; for it matters not what appellation is used to determine a fact. But what is circumstance? The legitimate effects of man's actions—the results of change—the omnipotent principle of man's two-fold nature—one confined, the other unconfined—both seeking their mode of enjoyment; and if the outer self is more refined than the inner self is developed, then selfishness in its wildest movements, controls the man; but if the true angel of the soul is clad in its own magnetic beauty, though it may study its sustenance and pleasure, outwardly; it seeks these with harmony, and according to the laws of mind. Then, when inevitable circumstances come, whose tendency seems to depress the feelings, let God speak within you, and his infinite power will learn you how to brook each event, incident to your external, animate existence. It is not much that artificial life can give; for such must perish. Like the desert sand, it is swept away by the simoons which move across its surface. Let circumstances come as they may; shrink not back, afraid to face them with a true, manly courage; for why do angels descend and meet the discords of earth, if it be not their mission to lighten the heart?

In every circumstance, there is a cause, a field of investigation and

study for the true scholar of nature. The demonstrations of material circumstances are not devoid of interest; they test the friendship and confidence of one soul towards another, and reveal the true development of each human heart. Outward circumstances form new ties of affection; they travel deep into the heart, and test the purity of the mind. They unfold the mental capacities, and exhibit the extent of the sensuous nature in man. No, they are not without force and meaning; and could the human soul read the immortal page of exterior and interior nature, it would behold truth in every speaking forth of the outer man, which ever reveals the true characteristics and developments of mind.

Then ride bravely over the tide of life, and the light of heaven shall reflect its changes in the rainbowed form of beauty, while eternity threads its way through the ærial regions of the universe, and space becomes a living mirror of Deific purity, wherein man, if he but look, will find his own image miniaturized in divine perfection and infinite glory.

M. F.

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Table D'Hotel.

FROM OUR OWN PEN, SIX YEARS AGO.

An association of gentlemen and ladies—There! now we have done it! Will the reader be charitable enough to excuse the blunder of one who graduated in the Adamic school of etiquette, and therefore forgets to place the ladies in front? If Adam had put off his nativity to the present age, he would probably have had more gallantry than to suffer himself to be created before Eve. As it was, his impoliteness cost him the loss of a rib; which ye would say was good enough for him, if we had not just committed a violation of the code of etiquette equally unpardonable. We will commence *de novo*, as the lawyers have it, and see if we can not do better.

An association of ladies and their husbands—well done!—resolved to do their eating at one general table, so that the expense of living might be less and the variety of good things greater. When dinner time came, the table was loaded with such a variety of viands that no one could fail to find whatever was most pleasing to his appetite. Things went on very harmoniously for a few meals; but there were spirits among them, as there are everywhere, who could not be satisfied with having their own palates pleased, but must dictate what should be served up to others. Roast beef and potatoes, says one of these, is a suitable dish for a human dinner; but I must protest against the practice of serving up swine's flesh at this table. It is not only loathesome to every refined taste, but it is an abomination in the sight of the Lord.

To this another of the same class replies; I have not the smallest objection to a nice bit of roast pork, or a good boiled ham. Indeed, I consider them to be among the best dishes which our worthy steward provides for us; and—begging the pardon of my Israelitish friend on the opposite side of the table—I have no fear of offending the Lord by eating pork in any way, as it is evident that there must have been at least one male and one female swine in Noah's ark; and every rational mind must be convinced that the Lord preserved this race of animals for the food of man, since they are totally unfit for any other use. And again,

was there not a swine, and most probably a very fat one, among the animals in Peter's great sheet? and did not the voice which accompanied it declare that they were all cleansed? I would fain have no more growling against the appearance of pork on this table. It is a savory dish; one which has been continually eaten for six thousand years, without ever proving prejudicial to health. There is one practice, however, which I conceive it my privilege and duty to denounce in the most emphatic terms; and I hereby give notice that, if it be not discontinued, I shall be compelled to withdraw myself from this table. I allude to the disreputable practice of stuffing human stomachs with turkeys, geese, ducks and chickens. I can not abide the sight of christians gormandizing on any of God's creatures that go on two legs. It is constructive cannibalism, to say the least of it. Here the *pro-pork* and *anti-poultry* orator ceases, lifts a flitch of roast pig to his mouth, and casts a savage glance at a specimen of the genus homo, yept dandy, who is loading the plates of all the ladies in his vicinity with the choicest bits of turkey, goose and chicken.

The specimen above named, as soon as he could masticate a piece of gizzard, which he had put between his grinders, sufficiently to make it pass through his shirt collar, arose and made a motion that the champion of roast pork and boiled ham be fined a dozen of champagne for his want of gallantry in mentioning the *male* before the *female* swine. This motion was carried *nem. con.* with the exception of the pork champion himself, who may be reasonably suspected of having given a negative vote. As soon as the champagne has circulated with sufficient currency, the ladies' man launches out into his highest strain of eloquence in defense of all the tribes known to ornithology, calling upon the last speaker to acknowledge the preference shown to the feathered tribes, when there were seven times as many of each species taken into the ark as there were of his favorite grunters. Having, as he flattered himself, annihilated all opposition to roast turkey, goose ragout, and chicken pie, and conclusively established their right both to appear on the table and to be eaten without let or hindrance, he turned his prowess against codfish and potatoes, and gave that favorite dish of the Puritans such a bastinadoing as nothing of a less meek and pacific nature could have borne. He concluded by denouncing it as totally unfit to associate even with Indian dumplings or dutch cheese, and emphatically asseverating that either that dish or his own all-important self, must henceforth be among the missing at that table. Here an elderly gentleman from Cape Cod arose in favor of the highly esteemed dish of his countrymen and ancestors; but what he would have said in its defense, or what dish he would have denounced in his turn, we shall never know, for the steward got possession of the floor before him, and he had to solace himself by looking contemptuously at every other dish on the table, and gorging to satiety with the grossly insulted favorite of the Pilgrims.

The steward, who had listened with as much equanimity as he could command, to so many ill-tempered tirades against the various dishes which he had served up to the association, every one of which was a particular favorite of some one or more of the company, thus mildly expostulated with the malcontents: Ladies and Gentlemen—You have no idea—you *can* have no idea, how deeply my feelings are wounded by the bitter denunciations which have been uttered at this table, against so many of the savory viands which I have, with my best skill and utmost exertion, provided for you. It has been my constant endeavor to consult and please the palate of every member of the association; and in so doing, every rational lady and gentleman must confess that it would be impossible to avoid having dishes among the variety which will not suit the taste of all. My aim is to please every one with a favorite dish, in which I think you will all acknowledge I have succeeded. Why, then, in the name of common sense, should so many of you make yourselves miserable because your tastes differ? Has not one as good a right to be pleased as another? Or what right, I would respectfully ask, has one to forbid the appearance of a dish on the table which is agreeable to another, merely because it is not his own preference, when at the same time he is regaling himself with his own favorite dish? I sincerely hope, ladies and gentlemen, that every one, hereafter, who finds something which he relishes himself, will confine his attention to the indulgence of his own gusto, and suffer others to do likewise in peace. Here the steward closed his remarks, which were unanimously voted by the company to be rational and sensible; and before they arose from the table, a resolution was adopted by general acclamation, that the steward should have

full license to cater for any variety of tastes, and that no one who could find any thing on the table to please himself, should find fault because others were pleased likewise.

Now, respected reader, we beg you to consider our sheet the table d'hôte. Look upon us as the catering steward. If we serve up a dish which does not suit your taste, leave that for those who are fond of it, and take something which you do like. If we cook a dish in opposition to human slavery, and it do not suit you, pass over it, and take some other. If you happen to be a dealer in brandy toddy and gin cocktails, and the Ethic Preacher should feel it his duty to denounce the traffic as demoralizing, and the practice of tipping as pernicious—which he doubtless will do, for he does not intend to spare any of the prevailing vices—do not get angry and leave our table; but let your sons and daughters have the benefit of his lectures on that subject, and take you something which you like better. Consider that we have a great many tastes to please, which necessarily requires a great variety.

A Happy New Year!—Lovisa to her Friend.

MISS BROOKS, MEDIUM.

From nature's veins doth rise springs of life, while earth's inner shrine doth beam with the beauty of another year. From the lowest elements of time to the highest radiant powers of mind, doth matter, from year to year, unfold millions of beings, while change takes from the earth its past. Wisdom penetrates the secrets of the earth, and demonstrates to man the Infinite Mind which inspires the human soul, and proves that there is an infinite sphere, encircling the mental selfhood. Creation chants from inward inspiration, through the orchestra of being, the harmony and truths sublime of Deity, while the frailest flower is an essence vast in being, and sends up its unuttered praise to God.

Another year, the canvas on which much infinite loveliness has been portrayed, has already gone to its shadowy home in the past. And nature, the picture-world of being, or a landscape outwrought by divine power, still continues to reveal the limitless perfection of God, and the murmured accents stealing from realms on high. The stars, flowers and minerals join in one grand choral orchestra, to bid farewell to the ebbing year, and welcome the coming one, freighted as it is with the breath of love and the wisdoms of heaven. And science, like some pure beauty, outbreathing on the very air the deep powers of the unconfined mind, is filled with a living essence, which makes each atom a music note in nature's great epic, unfolding, over human life, harmony in everything. Each mind is garmented with different hues and tints of beauty and refinement; yet Deity in gladness dwells in the humblest breast; and from their bright home do the angel throng sing a joy to each beating heart, in the coming year; and as moments sink into oblivion's wave, may the millioned veins of humanity flow with new life, and God's image be realized by the lowly of earth, as well as in the angel-developed soul.

May the great heart of humanity beat in beauty with the cherubim of truth, as the glowing tide of inspiration flows from its angelic spirit. From the midnight of error to the perennial morn of truth, the golden age of science and religion has sent its thrilling rays of light into the coming year; and now the pure white brow of nature is be-gemmed with the diamonds of immortality. Dark, ghastly terrors of the dead, strike like lightning bolts against the quivering heart no longer. The booming peel of intolerance no longer rolls over the world; but its iron chain is torn from each fettered limb, and immortal balms are scattered by angel hands, on the long parched desert of human woe.

From the harmonic stand-point of science, God's mighty spirit quickens the mental faculties, while the old graveyard is clothed with light, and the long dearly-cherished ones do not rise in ghastly forms, from the cold sepulchre; but their silver-crescent beauty is seen from heaven's home, where the dissonance of sin never reigns, but where all is harmony and peace. They are souls clothed with immortality, revealing, through harmonic nature, the soul's true identity, beyond the sculptured marble which stands at the head of a loved friend, in the old

familiar burial ground. The threads of life are spirals of light, upon which the soul floats to view the truths upborne from earth to the life divine. The worlds which swim in the blue ether, or in the atmospheric ocean, reveal the beautiful hereafter, while the space which mind long thought devoid of life, is thronged by the deathless spirits of a once noble humanity. In the universal realms, angels watch, through lone midnight, the loved of earth, while the starry hosts, in sleepless glory, send down their mild beauty upon every spot, whether joyous or lonely, of the rudimental world. Error has staggered in its lone and mournful way, through past ages; and the cry hath rent the air: Shall I live again?

Eternity has ushered in another year; and the celestial heavens shine through the mind's unstained sky. Like a dying dove, time has folded its wings over another year, while each human heart is beating on in its homeward way, and, starting, finds its lost ones by its side, on eternity's bright shore. Eternity has given birth to another year; and immortal light-beams play on its shores, while soft music steals from the immortal train, as they move gladly around earth's limited expanse. Another year, and from heaven's eternal fountain shall earth drink the beautiful, and bathe its weary form in the ocean of wisdom and science, which extends from God to humanity. Another year, and how many unkind words shall error register upon the outer heart? How many heart's strings shall be idly played upon, and how many shall lie bleeding with the arrow of wrong piercing its sensitive nature? How many tears shall flow, and how many sighs escape the lips? How many faces, beaming with hope and health, to-day, shall burn with the hectic flush of sorrow, on the morrow? How many shall be called home, by the breath of sorrow and woe, from unfriendly hearts withering the flowers of the outer being? Or, how many forms, bound with grief, shall assume their natural beauty, by the kind and soothing power of sympathy? How many hearts, filled with vice and crime, shall beat with purity once more, by the simple word of kindness? Oh! may the angel of kindness write upon the heart's tablet, the very breath of love towards all; and may angel artists pencil on the soul the true identity of mind in the human form.

Crime and iniquity should not be loved by man; and if he sees them in his brother, hate the iniquity in him, but love the God-image within the soul, and parry the thrusts of wrong by the brilliant beauty of the heart's interior kindness. Let elemental harmonies thrill the soul, and borrow from each angel face the expression of immortality; for in the soul all the beauty of life, whether infinite or finite, lies. Within the depths of the heart, heaven is; and mind can only find that heaven, by the law which should govern the mind. It is the divine law of kindness. Whatever bosom knows and feels the sweet strains of wisdom knows that there is an eden of eternity in every soul, and that creative life adorns the mind with divine faculties. The noble outer nature may be prostrated into its primal dust; but God's image, even then, is not lost; for eternity to mind is given, by the great and infinite God.

Another year echoes from angel lips; and its moments will reveal celestial spheres to man, while the pallid cheek of humanity blushes with the beauty of truth. And with music pulsing through each heart, the dual unity of love and purity shall speak from the soul, and banish from earth its load of woes. Take sorrow from every bleeding heart by the hand of love, and cherish them tenderly, as if they were borne from some tropic land, and would die if the winds of another colder clime should reach their inner life.

But a few brief years ago, the angels, with gentle rappings, opened the way to life celestial. And as time rolled on, other channels of beauty eternal were unlocked, until, at the present day, men no longer despairingly pillow their heads upon the sod, but seek the angels thro' an earthly mediation, to find their friends who have gone before. And the present year is ushered in, laden with wealth from the skies, and thrills with heaven's warm glow.

In the realms of the sky, nature, in her own circling glory, whispers of charity, peace and hope to all, and brilliantly refines the earth, where, in the first morning of age, time and truth were wed. A con-

stant influx is descending from the heavens, filling the soul of man with inspiration and eloquence, which opens to him the true revelations of immortality.

Science is unfolding true religion, and is striving to fix in the mind of man a true and comprehensive conception of Deity, that he may realize the constitutional manifestations of God's inner nature, when nature ultimates its forms of being into myriad forms of intelligence, that mind may receive the evidences of its eternity, and of its present, converse with the angels.

Another year, and truth shall leave its footsteps upon the desert of the heart, upon the eden of the soul, and upon the universe of wisdom. In the grand department of nature, emanate brilliant suns of truth; and from creation flow myriad streams of wisdom, which, in the coming year, shall overflow many human souls with the kindness and love of the skies. And, my friend, time has faded your dark locks.—Time has dimmed your external vision, and age is inscribing upon your countenance every sincerity and kindness of your soul. Angels forget not their venerable friend, in the ushering in of another year, which may welcome him to the *happy new year* of his immortality. Gentle souls hover over him in his labors for truth; and as the external beauty fades, interior glory is moving through the soul, with heavenly power, while the God-image in the mind reflects its divinity, even now, upon the brow of eternity. No sense of weariness, and no breath of sadness shall reach his immortal soul. Affection, like flowers that bloom from the universe of God, shall unfold his spirit, till the urn of joy shall overflow with hope's pure dew. The outer being is only a faint reflection of thy soul's deep interior wisdom; and whichever way you go, the Eternal Image burns within the heart, while truth inspires thy being, as the sun inspires the earth. Upborne amid the sky, where angel hosts chant their anthems to Deity, is every pure exhalation of thy heart; and as it beats on, performing its revolutions in the world of truth, change, the glad angel of eternity, shall fold its wings over thy finite form, and take the spirit 'neath its pinions, and fly away to the spirit land. Then toil, my aged friend; for immortality shall make thee young again. Thy soul shall bloom again in its youthful beauty. The chord of creation is touched by a living spark, and the human soul grows young again in thought. There is joy, joy, joy for thee in heaven. The swelling tide of wisdom and eternal happiness, shall flow in quiet waves over thy soul, bearing thee still nearer and nearer its future home. Then let hope reflect its rays in the golden ocean of love, and, like a sunbow, overbend thy soul's sky, making thy spiritual nature a shrine upon which the angels may lay the flowers which they cull from the edens of eternity. Let inspiration be kindled in thy soul, and burn, brightly hued with its immortal charms. As another year has come, we bid you joy and peace, as you go up to another brighter world; and we, angels of eternity, will chant choral songs to Deity, as thy outer form fades and thy soul unfolds its spirit pinions, to soar to upper spheres.

Very affectionately,

LOVISA.

Tobacco.

FROM OUR ELBOW-CHAIR.

There is an old satirical calumny—whether in print or not we do not know—which was probably written by Sir ROBERT WALPOLE, more than a hundred years ago, when he burnt his papers in his first unscientific attempt at smoking, which has never been properly resented or criticised in this country. It thus maliciously and slanderously characterizes the staple product of our venerated mother of Presidents and Speakers of the House of Representatives:

"Tobacco is an Indian weed;
From Satan's garden came the seed;
It shrinks your purse and burns your clothes,
And makes a chimney of your nose."

This ill-natured satire is evidently of ancient date, because no poet, who wrote in the eighteenth century, could have failed to be aware that tobacco could be chewed or snuffed as well as smoked. It is evident also that the author of it was an Englishman, because no native

citizen of this country would have thus slandered so potent and so highly esteemed an aboriginal. If ever it have been published in this country, it must have been during our minority, when England was our mistress, and consequently, when no American author would dare to criticise it, for fear of her displeasure. We are now of full age, got our freedom suit, started out for ourselves, and don't care a darned cent for our old mistress, or any of her poets, dead or alive.

We shall now criticise this insulting satire, with the indignant resentment which becomes the dignity of an American freeman, and a gentleman of letters. Feeling ourself at full liberty to handle it in any way we please, we shall commence at the latter end and criticise backwards.

We would ask the author, were he alive—and let any of his descendants answer who dare—how he could make it out that tobacco, that queen of American vegetables, could make a chimney of any man's or any woman's nose? Every chimney has a flue passing up through the roof of the house, through which the smoke ascends and debouches into the open air. Dare any of the surviving descendants of the author affirm to the world that any human nose has a flue attached to it, which ascends and passes out at the top of the head to which it belongs? Nonsense! Such a thing never was known.

Again; who ever knew tobacco to burn any body's clothes? Never, unless it was first set on fire itself, and then it is the fire that burns the clothes, and not the tobacco. When did it ever shrink any man's purse? On the contrary, it has filled every man's purse in Virginia, that ever was filled there, and has filled thousands of hogsheads besides.

Again, and finally—for we shall not dispute whether it is an Indian weed or a squaw weed—how did this abusive author know that the seed came from Satan's garden? Is it at all probable that he even knew that Satan had a garden, or what kind of vegetables he raised in it if he had one? He had never been there. There was no postal arrangement between their Majesties of England and Erebus, through which he might receive such intelligence. There is, to say the least of it, great reason for suspecting that this insolent author was a calumniator and a humbug.

If this fellow had been a countryman of the glorious weed which he so grossly slandered, he would have sent us down something more respectful to "Old Virginnny," and more indicative of patriotic sentiment. He would probably have sung to us in a strain more like the following:

There is nought like tobacco for smoking,
When parties are sipping and soaking;
And O! how delightful to chew!
All your rooms od'rif'rous it renders;
It varnishes fire-grates and fenders,
And flow'rs your old carpets anew.

O how wicked it is in the ladies,
To wish such a treasure in Hades,
Which serves them for perfume and paints,
When the mouths of their husbands they scowl at,
And the spray on their shirt-bosoms growl at,
Then they look, O how little! like saints.

Now look where a husband sits puffing,
And his rib with him cozily snuffing;
O Lethel how blissful are those!
But now o'er the dough-trough she's bending,
With the yellow drop swelling and pending:
Good apron! rise! rise to her nose!

There it goes! and another is growing;
How many will fall there's no knowing:
But the household know nothing of this,
The husband spits close to the platter,
As he knocks his pipe over the batter,
But, happily, "ignorance is bliss."

Such troubles aye mingle with pleasures,
As gravel stones mingle with treasures;
But the weed must not answer for these.
Let us still keep up chewing and smoking,
(Though weak ones are coughing and choking.)
And spit on whatever we please.

A Spiritual Test.

The letter which we publish next below, is, as will be seen, from JEREMIAH J. DENSLAW, of Batavia, in this State, to LESTER BROOKS, the father of Miss BROOKS, medium. In the envelop which enclosed this letter, was another sealed envelop, which contained a letter addressed to the Spirit of Mr. DENSLAW's grandfather—THEOPHILUS CROCKER. This inside letter was not to be broken till it was answered by the spirit addressed, nor then, till the answer of the spirit and the sealed letter should be delivered into our hand. We received both, as required by Mr. D., but did not choose to break the seal without a witness present. We, therefore, invited Mr. HENRY G. WHITE to be present; and we gave him the sealed letter, after explaining to him the circumstances, and requested him to open and read it. He did so, and then read the answer to it, which the spirit gave through Miss BROOKS, by the raps. Let the reader judge whether the spirit knew the contents of the letter, or not.

MR. DENSLAW TO MR. BROOKS.

MR. LESTER BROOKS: Dear Sir: Will you please gratify me by letting the spirit of THEOPHILUS CROCKER—grandfather to my wife—make a full reply to the enclosed *sealed letter*, addressed to him, in the Spirit Land, through your daughter, who gives us so many eloquent addresses from the Spirits of the progressed, as published in the *Age of Progress*, whenever you can furnish the time, and forward the same to me.

Yours very sincerely and truly,

JEREMIAH J. DENSLAW.

BATAVIA, Dec. 30th, 1855.

P. S. I am prompted to this, as I am inclined to think, from the same spirit direction. I hold conversation with them some times—though not satisfactory always—by their skaking my arm. And grandfather now informs me, in this way, that he will write me in full, if the parties are all willing. Please, if you all consent to this test—for such I wish to make it—let friend ALBRO break the seal, and if the test is a good one, he is at liberty to make it as public as he pleases.

J. J. DENSLAW.

MR. DENSLAW TO THE SPIRIT OF THEOPHILUS CROCKER.

Will grandfather CROCKER's Spirit indite a communication through Miss BROOKS of Buffalo, to me, directing me in my efforts to progress; telling me what I can, or must do, to become more perfectly developed as a medium for Spiritual correspondence, &c? And explain to me the reason why I am unable, at all times, to give the unbelieving tests.—Will he also inform me, upon what principle Spirits talk through media. I can not see how it is possible, for one personality to use the organs of speech of an other personality, to talk with, &c., and, especially, independent of the other. Hence, I am anxious to know all about it.

Yours truly,

JEREMIAH J. DENSLAW.

BATAVIA, Dec. 30th, 1855.

THE SPIRIT'S ANSWER.

SPIRIT LAND, Thursday evening, 12 o'clock.

MY DEAR GRAND CHILD: Your progress mentally can be more perfectly unfolded, by seeking nature in her changing aspects, and strive to know and analyze the cause of her varying manifestations. Let your soul shine through the outer form, in acts of benevolence and charity, not only in the physical, but in the mental world. Weave for hearts below, the chaplets of higher affections, formed of flowers from the skies; for death withers not a flower. They are only transplanted in the Elysian soil, and their beauty is loved and cherished by angel souls.—Progress, then, will bring the flowers from heaven; and angels will cluster around, and, by divine law, unfold your mediative powers, in strength and beauty. Physically, your progress as a medium can only be facilitated by a passivity of mind and body, under all circumstances, as mind is governed by infinite laws and elements, as is the outer form. Your inability to always satisfy the unbelieving, is referable to natural causes. If mental conditions are inharmonious, spirits fail to operate harmoniously. Mental and physical conditions are not always in equilibrium;

and if one overbalance the other, it disturbs the spiritual forces, and the test may be imperfect.

With regard to an infinite personality using the organs of a finite body, independently of the spirit inhabiting that body, I can only briefly explain, in the following philosophy.

The omni-prevalent principle of motion, pre-existent in matter, is recognised in and by degrees of development. This motional element is visible in mind, varying in degrees of unfoldment. Mind has its specific relation to the body; the connecting thread of finite life being concentrated in the brain. Magnetism is an element of mind and being; and if one infinite or finite soul is more spiritually refined than another, that mind has greater strength of magnetic power, and has the power to tranquilize the mind of another, by calling into action the spiritual self, while the external senses are paralyzed and inactive. Hence a spirit whose development is on the same plane of mental activity and power, with a finite form, can act through the human brain, while the spiritual selfhood, still retaining its finite connection, is in the land of beauty and perfection.

One personality, identified in a spiritual form, can not act through another spiritual selfhood, because the same principles of being have the same equality of power, but not of development. They have not the same dual form to contend with that the finite man has. A spirit can speak through the human organs and vivify that form by its own peculiar characteristics, by paralyzing the functions of the brain, the result producing the inactivity of the outer human senses, while the soul of the man may be far from the body. The spirit can do this independently, because the form or brain is susceptible to their magnetic power, and by subduing the intense outer action of the mind, through the organic principles of magnetism, they can use those finite senses more beautifully than can the soul who waits to reanimate its body.

The spirit is the consciousness—the identity and infinite selfhood of man; and when the soul leaves forever its outer body, it finds itself to be wiser than when in the human form; because impressions have been made upon the soul, which the human senses could not reflect and realize, owing to their infiniteness and divinity of thought. These impressions remain in the unconfused mind, until their ultimatum into a more perfect outer form, where they shine forth in brilliancy and beauty. A spirit can use the organs of the brain, and utter truths in the native language of the skies, uncontaminated by sect or creed, by the paralyzation of the functions of the mind and brain, and by throwing the human senses into an inactive state and unconscious condition; and this fact is based upon divine and natural law, and is easily to be understood.

By organic law do spirits animate a human body, and infuse into that body its own spiritual elements, and use the outer functions of speech, as channels of their infinite mediation. They open the vast universe of mind and matter to the human vision, and display, through finite forms, the true character of God, whose power quickens every nerve of the outer senses, and unfolds the spiritual selfhood to the highest ultimations of intelligence in the material world.

I am in haste and can not do this subject justice at present. But be hopeful. The deep future will unfold all, and your brightness as a medium will begin to shine through the rudimental, while it brings to earth the olive leaves of love and the orange blossoms of wisdom.

Yours as ever,

THEOPHILUS CROCKER.

Spirit Land.

AN UNFORTUNATE ROOSTER.—There are objections to Shanghais, no doubt, but we had never thought of this. It is very curious, but it is true. The way of it is this:

Mr. S., an old resident of Stillwater, on the Upper Hudson, introduced among his family of hens, a few Shanghais, including a rooster of formidable dimensions, who had "run to legs" a good deal. His crow was peculiar, and easily distinguished from that of the other cocks.—One morning he had waited to hear a repetition of the usual summons,

after being aroused by the shrill clarion once sounded, but he heard it not again. The other roosters were doing their best, but the pre-eminent chanticleer was still. Mr. S. went out to see what had caused the silence. He found the rooster lying on his back with both legs out of joint. After an examination he set both legs; the cock walked off and gave vent to his satisfaction by a lusty crow. In the very act he dropped as if he had been shot. He had crowed his legs out again. He was kept three or four days and then killed. "It was too much trouble," said Mr. S., "to set him up every time he crowed."—*Knickerbocker Magazine*.

Harmonial Circle.

MR. ALBRO:—The following was recently received, at the sitting of the above circle—Miss Brooks, medium. The communication has reference to some inharmony that had casually arisen, while the circle were assembling, yet has a general and pertinent application.

G. H. S.

"I regret, very much, my friends, your conversation to-night. Indeed, did we only visit the refined of your mental and physical world, I fear that many poor hearts would sink beneath the cold waves of an ungenerous humanity, uncared for. A man may err, yet the archangel is within the gross material, and if he should steep himself in iniquity, the divinity of God is still there. Hence, as men possessed with dignified understandings, you should strive to win the smiles of the archangel, while you should forget the imperfection of the outer being. The heart may beat as warmly in the erring man's bosom, as within the more truly refined outward self. Through finite forms is reflected the Heaven of Deity, and from the electric lyre of Creation many discordant notes emanate, while the harmonic beauty of the skies thrills every minute department of the human soul. God doth not say, in his manifestation of goodness, 'repulse the perverted soul;' for, by the immutable laws of attraction, all souls, whether finite or infinite, are joined inseparably together; and if *perfection* should be the standard of goodness, I fear that to-night the angels might go back to their homes in heaven, and say 'humantty is imperfect, and we will wait until it is ultimated into perfection, before we teach the human soul of the love of God and the angels!' Think of this, my friends, and not let *prejudice* lead you astray, but judge only from absolute *facts* of a man's actions and motives. Do away with prejudice, and base your reason and judgment upon facts alone, and it may be that the world will possess more of spiritual beauty than you now see. Sometimes angel advice is like a dew-drop on the flower—it trembles there for a while, then is swept away by the passing breeze."

One of the circle enquired whether he had done any injustice to the subject of his remarks, which had elicited the above, and it was replied:

"The only injustice either of you did, was, that when you saw discord, springing from the conversation, you did not stop. You only did yourselves injustice, for probably the object of the conversation will never hear the remarks made to-night: profit by experience. I have given what I desired, and the subject is—YOUR PREJUDICES!

—There is a great deal of cowardice these latter days. Men are afraid to give free and full utterance to the truth they feel rising up within them. Rising too from the deep well-spring of intuition. Reader, speak your soul's great thought, even if hell gapes to devour you. Truth will make you free, if you only let it speak itself.

—It would be much better to sentence men for criminal acts to prison, without reference to the time or period of confinement, and according to their behaviour restrain or set them free; allowing them always the surplusage of their earnings with fair interest, dependent however on goodness of conduct.

—The most delicate, the most sensible of all pleasures, consists in promoting the pleasure of others.

The Three Preachers.

There are three preachers, ever preaching,
Fill'd with eloquence and power.
One is old, with locks of white,
Skinny as an anchorite;
And he preaches every hour
With a shrill fanatic voice,
And a Bigot's fiery scorn:—
'BACKWARD! ye presumptuous nations;
Man to misery is born!
Born to drudge, and sweat, and suffer—
Born to labor and to pray;
BACKWARD! ye presumptuous nations,
Back!—be humble and obey!

The second is a milder preacher;
Soft he talks, as if he sung;
Sleek and slothful is his look,
And his words, as from a book,
Issue glibly from his tongue.
With an air of self-content,
High he lifts his fair white hands;
'STAND YE STILL! ye restless nations;
And be happy, all ye lands!
Fate is law, and law is perfect;
If ye meddle, ye will mar;
Change is rash, and ever was so:
We are happy as we are.'

Mightier is the younger preacher;
Genius flashes from his eyes;
And the crowds who hear his voice.
Give him, while their souls rejoice,
Throbbing bosoms for replies.
Awed they listen, yet elated,
While his stirring accents fall;—
'FORWARD! ye deluded nations,
Progress is the rule of all:
Man was made for healthful effort;
Tyranny has crushed him long;
He shall march from good to better,
And do battle with the wrong.

'Standing still is childish folly,
Going backward is a crime;
None should patiently endure
Any ill that he can cure:—
ONWARD! keep the march of Time.
Onward! while a wrong remains
To be conquered by the right;
While oppression lifts a finger
To affront us by his might:
While an error clouds the reason
Of the universal heart,
Or a slave awaits his freedom,
Action is the wise man's part.

'Lo! the world is rich in blessings—
Earth and Ocean, Flame and Wind,
Have unnumber'd secrets still,
To be ransack'd when you will,
For the service of mankind;
Science is a child as yet,
And her power and scope shall grow,
And her triumphs in the future
Shall diminish toil and woe;
Shall extend the bounds of pleasure
With an ever widening ken,
And of woods and wildernesses
Make the homes of happy men.

'ONWARD!—there are ills to conquer,
Daily wickedness is wrought,
Tyranny is swollen with Pride,
Bigotry is deified,
Error intertwined with Thought,
Vice and Misery ramp and crawl.
Root them out, their day has pass'd:
Goodness is alone immortal;
Evil was not made to last:—
Onward! and all Earth shall aid us
Ere our peaceful flag be furl'd.'
And the preaching of this preacher
Stirs the pulses of the world.

PRENTICE'S LAST.

Prentice of the *Louisville Journal* has received a present of a new overcoat from some "right-minded" tailor. In his notice of the gift he says: "It fits as well as if he had been melted and poured into it."

January 8th, 1856.

This is the forty-first anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans, in which JACKSON, the immortal, defeated the flower of the British army, under Gen. PACKINGHAM. This, considering the great disparity of forces engaged on each side, and the equally great advantages of discipline and long active service, on the part of the more numerous party, was a victory unequalled in the annals of military strife.

The plan of attack, by the veteran commander of the invading forces, was as well laid as the most thorough knowledge of the art of war could suggest. The defenceless condition of New Orleans and its approaches, was as well understood by the powerful foe as it was by the inhabitants; and the readiness—aye, the anxiety, of the authorities of that city, to surrender it and all the section of country in which it is located, to the advancing powers of Britain, was equally well known to them; and they were looking for almost unobstructed access to the "Beauty and Booty" promised them by their commander. Why did they not succeed? JACKSON was there, with a few hundred men whom he had disciplined and taught that the word *surrender* was never to be spoken or listened to, where he commanded, and with an additional few hundreds, which he picked up wherever he could find them, without discipline or equipment. But he had another thing there, the like of which has rarely been found in any age or in any country: This was a mind which seemed never to sleep, and which never shrunk from any emergency, nor failed to furnish resources in any extremity. It was a mind which had all but superhuman powers; which had a chord for every patriotic emotion; which dared to encounter any enemy of his country, in whatever shape it came, whether in an armed host, a lurking, sly-booted treason, or a false-hearted, self-serving corruption. It was a mind before which corruption quailed; whose presence intrigue dare not approach; and from which dishonesty could not long hide itself. This great mind, it was, which saved New Orleans; first from the cowardice and corruption of her own ruling spirits, and then from a powerful invading foe; literally without resources.

That towering and pure intellect went to its guerdon in just thirty years and five months from the day in which he achieved that double victory. But, in the interim, it achieved another victory, which as far exceeded that one in importance, as the sun exceeds the moon in glory. This latter was a victory which throws into the shade the achievements of any warrior that the world ever knew. Single handed and alone, that noble soul attacked and destroyed a monster, which, long ere now would have saved the people of this country the trouble of electing Presidents and national legislatures; for it was fast getting all the sinews of political power into its own possession. And so powerful had it become, that, in its last struggles for existence, it shook the country from center to periphery, as if it were a general earthquake. The reader will understand that the monster of which we speak, was the UNITED STATES BANK, which could have vanquished any opposing power, but the MIND OF JACKSON.

Man an Animal.

BY F. H. PORTER.

From the Orient.

Man is an animal, and possesses the faculties and propensities of the animal creation below him. Every passion and attribute found in the animal creation is found also in man. Not only so, but he finds himself in possession of all the attributes of the Angelic Host above him. So man, being the connecting link between the Angelic and the Animal, has the power to become either. If he would become as the Angels in Heaven, he has only to cultivate the attributes he finds within him. Do Angels possess love—so does man. Do angels possess benevolence—so does man. Are Angels messengers of mercy—so is man. If we would enjoy a foretaste of Heaven in this life, we should do as do the inhabitants of Heaven: learning to love by loving every being upon whom he has stamped his image. If we would be good, we should cultivate the faculty of benevolence we find within; and never lose a favorable opportunity to perform upon our brother or our sister an act of kindness, as

such neglect would regard our progress toward becoming an Angel in Heaven. We should live up to the suggestions of all of the higher faculties of our nature; and the Archangels around the throne of God can do nothing more. I have at times thought that here in this life was afforded a better opportunity for the cultivation and growth of these Divine attributes than would ever be presented in any other state or condition in the future.

Here we find cares and opportunities which draw out all the better feelings of our nature; and when we improve them, it always brings its reward in the consciousness that we are better for having done so. We feel more like Angels, and better fitted for the association of such beings. It makes us more God-like. Why should we not thus conform to God's eternal requirements? It is positively certain that if we live up to our highest privileges here, and strive to cultivate all of the higher faculties and attributes of our nature, our departure from this sphere and our emergence into the next, will be fraught with peace, love and harmony. But if we become like the animal creation by cultivating the baser passions and propensities of our lower natures, we shall become like the beast in our tastes, desires and conduct. I have sometimes thought there were cases where the animal passions had been indulged and cultivated that the animals were out-done in brutality. The exit of such persons from this world, and their entrance into another, is and must be sad and deplorable; imagination shrinks from the contemplation.

THE WEATHER.

On the 24th of December, and the night following, we had a very pretty little snow-storm for a Christmas present; and although but few inches of snow fell here, we had, up to the commencement of the present storm, (which was three days ago,) fourteen days of as fine sleighing as ever *slew* horses or jingled sleigh-bells.

On Monday last, the weather directory decided on having a holiday frolic. The wind volunteered to be the piper; and the way the snow has been waltzing ever since, is a caution to tender ears and long noses.

The mercury, in Farenheit, has been endeavoring to stow itself all away in the bulb, ever since the holiday-season commenced; and, on Tuesday night last, it well-nigh succeeded, as its degree of depression was 10 below zero. We are writing, be it understood, on Thursday, and it is snowing with all its might.

MORNING.

The morning itself, few people, inhabitants of cities, know anything about. Among all our good people, not one in a thousand sees the sun rise once a year. They know nothing of the morning. The idea of it is that it is that part of the day which comes along after a cup of coffee and a beef-steak, or a piece of toast.

A SPARTAN REPLY.

Dr. Robinson was asked by Gov. Shannon what the Free State men would do if commanded to deliver up their arms? "Well," said the Doctor, "I would propose a compromise—*keep the rifles and give them the contents.*"

Married,

On Thursday, the 8th inst., by Rev. G. W. Hosmer, Mr. CHARLES C. McDONALD and Miss SARAH E. CRANE, eldest daughter of Mr. George B. Crane, all of this city.

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