

BANNER OF LIGHT.



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NO. 7.

Written for the Banner of Light.
WHEREFORE?

BY GRACE LELAND.

Why these dim, entangled pathways,
Leading through the maze of grief?
Why the storm-cloud, darkly brooding,
Following sunshine glad but brief?
Why the stumbling, from the blinding
Of the weary, burning tears?
Why the spirit's dumb despairing,
Overcome by doubts and fears?

Why the homeless little children,
Knowing not a father's care,
Knowing not a mother's blessing,
Breathing ne'er sweet childhood's prayer?
Why the sacrifice, ne'er ending
Till the good has been attained?
Why that every path of progress
Must with martyrs' blood be stained?

Hush thy murmuring, Soul, be patient!
He whose searching eye can scan
All the vast, eternal arches,
Sees divinely—not as man!
In the great and holy purpose
Of the Infinite, the Good,
Lie a mercy and a wisdom
Here but dimly understood.

Thorny pathways, dim, unlighted,
Lead to yonder fields of bliss,
And the grave is but the gateway
To a better world than this.
Storms are passing, but the sunshine
Waits in Heaven divinely fair;
From earth's tears are bright flowers springing,
That will bloom in beauty there!

And the rest—though ye discover
Only pain and anguish sore,
Well ye know that God the Father
Loves His children evermore.
What ye blindly term the evil
Is but good that hidden lies,
Working out its winding progress
Upward toward the smiling skies!

The Lecture Boom.

The Living Temple.

Mrs. Corn Daniels lectured to a good audience on the above subject, at Music Hall, Boston, on the afternoon of Sunday, April 12th. We give below a synoptical report of her remarks:

"The perfect world by Adam trod
Was the first temple built by God;
His fiat laid the corner-stone,
And heaved its pillars one by one."

A distinguished French Abbé in his report on his explorations among the ruins of Central America, had made known many remarkable facts concerning the early religious customs and beliefs of that people; he had found a key to the hieroglyphics which covered the crumbling relics of their ancient splendor, and among many other sentences had translated the following, which was written in one of their chief temples: "And then the Most High created man; he was the child of whiteness, the son of light, and he became the temple of the living spirit."

From the earliest ages man had possessed a desire for a place of worship, some location set apart from all things else, and devoted to the use and symbolization of the gods he worshipped. This might be thought to be unnecessary, but by reference to the history of the ancients, we should find they had gods in form, and must have a place wherein to deposit them, or they would have worn out in process of time, and contaminated by the constant contact of every-day life. The first temples were found among the Egyptians, and to so great an extent was this idea carried among them, that all public edifices were dedicated to some God.

We had every reason to believe that this idea of worshipping in temples belonged to, and was handed down from the barbarous ages of the world, and owed its origin to that portion of the earth's history when outward life was the symbol that represented to mankind the Divine Mind. This we could see clearly marked in the sacred scale of the Egyptian, sliding from the veiled Isis—mother of the faith—down to the beast and bird; in the Roman's faith in Jupiter, the controller, Mars and Minerva, Venus and Apollo, with their various attributes of valor, wisdom, or pleasure. We also, by reason of our knowledge concerning the more remote religions of the earth—those of the Chinese and Japanese—had every reason to believe that they had temples to represent to them the idea of a potent deity.

For three thousand years from the ordinarily reckoned birth of time, (according to Hebrew belief,) God had no fitting temple among his chosen people. He was represented among them by certain itinerant altars and tabernacles, and by the ark they carried on its staves from place to place, but these represented to them but poorly the God they worshipped. The Egyptians had their temples, wherein the initiated entered to perform their devotions, while the uninitiated remained outside, and brought daily to the doors of the sanctuary they might not enter, presents for the gods they adored. But not so the Hebrew; reference to his life of wandering, of bondage, of flight and final freedom, showed that differing characteristics and differing circumstances had developed in him another form of worship, whose outward manifestation did not fully appear till Moses borrowed its insignia from the Egyptians. They had not a temple for three thousand years. If God needed a temple, and consecrated therein to dwell; if the Most High demanded precious stones and molten brass, like that which adorned the temples of Egypt, then there was no worship in the world for three thousand years, save the casual

altars of Abraham and Moses, reared anywhere at time of need.

All this time were we to suppose that God had no interest, or presence, in the world? that there were no spoken utterances save those given from Sinai's trembling crown? It was a fit subject for discussion among those who believed in the necessity of temples wherein to worship, as to whether God was compelled to absent himself from the hearts of his children because no place was set apart where he could commune with them.

When the Christian era dawned, not one of all these mighty temples in the world—save those at Jerusalem and Samaria—were recognized as sacred by the new-comers. Indeed, it was never said, except to Moses, that there should be a temple set apart for the Most High. Moses was skilled in all the veiled mysteries of Egypt; the name "Jehovah's shrine," which he gave to his altar, was borrowed from them, and so determined was Moses that no one should ever discover the source of his information, that he commanded that none of his followers should ever say "Jehovah"; and to this day no true follower of the Israelitish church would pronounce the name.

Taking this idea to be the true one, all temples and shrines, and all the ornaments which adorned the Jewish or Christian churches, were borrowed directly from the Pagan; even to the threefold God of the Trinity, representing that triad of deities of the past, the Jehovah of the Hebrews, the Jupiter of the Roman, and the Osiris of the Egyptian. How could we in the blessed light of this progressive age, when God the spirit speaks and acts daily in the world, bow down our heads and bury ourselves under these wrecked monuments of a darker age, hiding the glorious sun of truth from our gaze, without stifling our mental, moral and spiritual powers? Must we then consent to believe that God had no temple for three thousand years? that he was not able to enter human hearts and breathe therein divine inspirations till a man arose to blend the cedar of Lebanon with the gold of Ophir in a material habitation dedicated to his praise? Had no one any spiritual perceptions? Were all compelled to borrow from Pagans their ideas of religious communion? Must we cling to the old temple of Ephesus, of which it is said,

"The aspiring youth who fired the Ephesian dome
Outlived in fame the pious fool who reared it."

and ourselves strive to elevate shrines of pomp and wealth, which at best bore no physical comparison to the gorgeous piles of Greece and Rome? If God must have outward temples and shrines, why should we dwindle down into insignificance and erect buildings without ornaments, calling them places of worship? Let us do away with that idea and build in the true sense of the middle and remotest ages fitting temples for the Most High, which should be true representations of all that was glorious and beautiful in earth or sky.

Let us borrow in our symbols the broad shield of the sun, and hang it over the lofty dome; let the sphynx stand guard at the entrance; let the charmed serpent, the sacred bull, the winged Isis be there, to image forth the mystic powers of the Divine; let us rob Minerva and Venus of their symbolic utterances and unite them all in a portrait of our God! Or let us take for our model the temple of Solomon—the fruit of three thousand years; a temple not erected till the children of Israel had been enslaved, had wandered in the desert, had fallen away from their God to worship the golden calf, had been punished, and finally reached the land of their destination; a temple which was seven years in its construction, and then was not so fine as the one reared by Solomon for the expression of his own temporal kingdom.

Or let us fix our gaze on that wondrous work of Michael Angelo's artist soul—the dome of St. Peter's in Rome. Let us revert back to the ages, and with all our golden store erect an edifice of which we can truly say, "Here is the sacred temple of God, and here is the only dwelling place of the Most High"; instead of rearing the thousands of domes that rise on every hand (with as many varying significations) in his name to-day.

Even amid all the severity of the Protestant church, yet lingered the idea that God needed a house on earth in which to dwell. This temple, this place of worship, had been the bugbear of all religious systems in all ages. The Hebrew declared the necessity of mysterious, measured aisles, golden candlesticks and choice paraphernalia. Why? To enchain the sense of all, and attract them to the temple of the Most High; and this idea is the same to-day in the Catholic church, and really so, in a great measure, in the Puritan branch of Christianity, which at the same time is ready to almost condemn Michael Angelo for contributing his labors in the building of St. Peter's.

If it was necessary for God to have these temples—if he needed them at an earlier time—who should say that those of Egypt and of Rome were not his also, and if they were, what became of the Christian ostracism?

We must confess that the place where we worshipped to-day had some relation to the ancient temples of the sun—that our vast edifices of wood and stone, with their stained windows (but poorly representing the jewels of olden days), had either some connection with ancient ideas, or that we were but repeating a mockery. We either confessed by their erection that our God loved only one day in seven, or else we were driven in shame to allow that we had utterly failed to perceive the real significance of God's true temple on the earth—that we had altogether mistaken the Deity—that mortar and bricks were not essential to his habitation on earth.

Protestantism denied the heathen, Pagan and Roman Catholic shrines, but still it borrowed from them, and built miniature St. Peter's in every town and parish in this land; indeed, some were ready to copy even the ritualistic formulas of the Hellenic nations. The temples of to-day were a farce, a sham, to what they should be, if they really would represent what they are pro-

claimed to be the images of—the habitations of the Most High. If God needed them, he must be very angry at their poor quality; and if not, he must be pained at seeing the degradation of his children! Did any one think he would leave that glorious temple whose pillars were before the world was; whose dome was in the upper sky; whose paintings more glorious than the summer sunset dyes; whose carpet more gorgeous than the green robe of spring studded with early flowers; whose amber walls caught and reflected the radiance of the remotest star—to come and abide within a few feet of brick and wood—to reside for a brief season in a narrow box constructed by man, where no light of truth could enter, but where all sat as in the grave, with no hope in their hearts and no light in their eyes? It was true that to-day [Easter Sunday] flowers adorned the churches all over the land, as an outward symbol of triumph over death, but really they were like the flowers scattered in a sepulchre.

These were not the temples whereof the spirit spoke, when it said to our inner ears: "Behold, the Lord is in his holy temple—let all the earth keep silence before him!" Was it among those dim vaults, from whence the happy faces of childhood were excluded, and the lame and blind kept out for fear of contamination—there where masked in hideous faces, theology pictured God in the agonies and death-throes of supreme sacrifice—was it there God called on us to worship him?

They who believed in the necessity of church edifices were like a boy, who, having constructed a box, went forth to capture the sunshine, that he might carry it home for his especial use; but when the cover descended, lo! it was all darkness in that box, while outside the glorious sun was shining, bathing all in its refulgent, life-giving rays. Just so man made a box, a church—wherein to imprison the light of God's presence, but within its closed door reigned darkness profound.

There was another class of people to-day, who said, "I'll have none of your churches; I'll go to the shrine of Nature, and there present my offerings, and catch my inspirations from the voices of the air; my organ shall be the song of Orpheus among the swaying pines; I will lie down under the open sky and learn of God. Poor mistaken misanthrope—did he not know this was a sort of self-worship only, when he thought he communed with God? God spoke whether he was there or not; the winds blew over the flowers, the waters flowed the same when he saw them not—Nature did not swing her censor before one intruder into her sacred presence, and the song of birds rang out all day as clear as when his ear heard it. Mistaken man! Neither in the depths of the wilderness nor in the aisles of the Cathedral should he find God; not where mountain waves dashed on the resounding shore, nor amid the dim cloisters of the calm monastery.

Where then was the true temple, fashioned of God, attuned to all sacred harmonies, having shrine and priest, organ and choir all especially appointed; with lovely chambers and vaulted ceiling, graced with all the precious gems of light and beauty; having Love and Justice, Truth and Harmony for its corner-stones; the temple where no imperfect thing could enter in? whose walls were adorned with thoughts and prayers, like living panoramas painted by the hand of God; whose fountains of baptism were formed of the tears shed by mortals on the graves of their loved and lost. This living, true temple was MAN! the soul was its priest, its oracle, its choir! How many of those present knew aught of this temple? We built sacred edifices, carpeted the aisles thereof, adorned their walls, searched the globe for wonders to improve their appearance, and for musicians and organs to join in the worship of God; but of the living temple fashioned by him how little did we know. Did we listen to the choirs of living melody poured out from the avenues of its senses? Did we know all its mystic recesses? Were there not chambers in it that till our day had always been closed? Did we recognize that this was not only the place where God occasionally visited, but where he dwelt forever? Did we comprehend that all its utterances, its prayers, its praises were given to him? This living temple was made that it might become the fit representation of God's glory on the earth; and yet we veiled its lovely windows with thick curtains of bigotry, we defiled its shrine with disease, we allowed rank corruption and death to roam at large within; we permitted ingratitude and sin to enter and take up their abode like serpents, and fears and doubts to flit to and fro, like bats amid ancient ruins, scattering away the lovely messengers of peace. Chiefest of all we allowed dark Death to rule supreme, and with his wild attendants hold high carnival in the place made for the Most High. Speculation, love of gold, injustice to man, ambition, all unholy desires abounded, till this temple made for the worship of God became the sepulchre where lay entombed the hopes of years gone by.

Oh spirit, within the windows of that glorious temple look forth and see the glory of the hour; see how the Osiris, truth, no longer stands veiled, but is free to the gaze of all. See how its beauties adorn the earth! Man is the temple—God is the living spirit. He bids us arouse from the darkness of error, the grave of doubt, and behold how he abides forever in the temple which he has reared for his occupancy. See angels waiting to awaken the soul, (as the sun awakens the flowers), and gulf it through those mysterious aisles; listen to their words: "Behold! the Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him!" Cease your loud organ peals, your mocking hymns, your wailing sounds of despair and sorrow—cease defiling this temple with material money-changers, and hear the voice saying: "I am the temple—all must worship me!"

The lecture ended with a solemn invocation of aid from those holy angels whose celestial forms more fully represented the living temple, that we might be better fitted to shadow forth God the spirit on the earth.

Recent Writings of A. J. Davis.

"ARABULA" and "THE STELLAR KEY TO THE SUMMER-LAND," the latest inspirational productions of Andrew Jackson Davis, being fairly before the public, we propose to show the thousands of the Banner of Light readers what has been said, pro and con, by the journals of the day on their character and merits. They have each been greeted with a very wide reading, whether by those whose views they at present meet at all points or not. More striking works have not been presented to the public in this generation. Their popularity proves the awakened state of the public mind to subjects which but a few years ago would have failed to interest it, and shows that true spiritual doctrines and ideas are everywhere supplanting the old fictions of theology, with their conditions of a cramping obedience. The bonds of superstition are loosed. The heavens are opened. Angels are ascending and descending continually.

The Hartford (Conn.) Daily Times says of the "Stellar Key" as follows:

"To all who are fond of the fanciful and speculative doctrines of such 'seers' as Andrew Jackson Davis, the idea of a zone teeming with spiritual existences from this and the other planets of our solar system—a zone located in the nebulous distance of the milky-way, and as real as the globe on which we live, is certainly full of fascination. Although in this chrysalis state, we can but feebly grasp it, the mere thought is exhilarating, clears the mental and spiritual horizon, and lifts one up on wings for a brief moment to walk among the stars."

Mr. Davis, to meet the wants of what he calls the "atheistic logic of the times," elaborates his reasoning and arguments on the inductive method—cites the best known scientific authorities, and rules out the evidence of clairvoyance as being of no account to inductive reasoners and positivists.

The result or conclusion of the argument appears to be that spirit is matter or substance; i. e., in fact, the most substantial of all things—that body is merely spirit materialized, and spirit, body refined or spiritualized—that all elements are originally spiritual and eternal, and that all matter, in its last analysis, takes on its original or spiritual form."

Says the Anti-Slavery Standard of "Arabula": "We do not undertake to criticize the mystical portion of this book, the part which 'Spiritualists,' probably, will prize most, because we do not understand it. But since all sorts of reproaches are cast, by representatives of the principal religious sects, upon the character, the tendency, and the procedure of Spiritualism, it seems only fair to testify to the high moral excellence, purity, nobleness, of the ideas of reform and the plans for reform incidentally touched upon in this book."

A curious feature of this book is the 'New Collection of Gospels' it contains. The compiler's idea seems to be that every clear and high expression of truth, every striking statement of ideas suited to make purer and better hearts, belongs in that same category of 'good news,' or 'glad tidings,' in which the writings first called 'Gospels' belong. So he gives us grand and spirit-stirring thoughts from old Indian, Persian and Chinese prophets, and also from St. Gabriel (Derziavien), St. John (G. Whittier), St. Gerrit (Smith), St. Theodore (Parker), St. Emma (Harlow), St. Charles (Davis), St. Ralph (Waldo Emerson), St. Selden (Johnson Finney), and others. We suppose there must be plenty of fools to take down all this bosh, or it would not be printed and bound; but the thought is not an inspiring one when one inquires concerning the upward progress of the race in common sense and—other kinds."

The San Francisco Bulletin goes off on this strain of remark respecting "Arabula":

"A good deal that he writes is unintelligible, a good deal is maudlin, a good deal is the dearest commonplaces; but now and then he starts us with a truth so full of point and pungency that we hardly know whether to consider him a humbug or a man of genius. His last work, now lying on our table, is one of his best as well as worst. It is strangely blended of sense and nonsense, of piety and blasphemy, of philosophy and folly. There are passages of real beauty sandwiched between the most incomprehensible polysyllables and the most nauseating twaddle. The author publishes what he calls a series of new gospels from divers saints not found in any Christian calendar."

The New York Home Journal gives over a column of review and extract from the "Stellar Key," of which this excerpt is a fair sample: "A notable curiosity in current literature is 'A Key to the Summer-Land,' a book recently put forth by Andrew Jackson Davis. Emanating from the acknowledged leader of the Spiritualists—a body which has grown astonishingly in numbers during the last score of years—and representing one of the prominent movements by which the present age is striving to attain a complete self-consciousness, and to solve the problem of human life and destiny, the work has a value as a sign of the times, far beyond its merits as a contribution to science, reason, or revelation. Blunder as are its claims, both in method and material, viewed from a strictly scientific and logical standpoint, the student of the history of ideas and human development will find in it abundant suggestions for thought and reflection. The author sets out to show the location in space, the laws and characteristics of the realms inhabited by disembodied spirits. He aims to demonstrate by the light of the most advanced physical science the possibility and probability of the exaltation of spiritual abodes or zones in the interstellar regions; and he summons clairvoyance, spirit-communications, and a sort of intuitive sense to prove the certainty of the existence of these spheres and their exact location. This task is not accomplished in the present volume, but as this is only a part of the series in which the author designs to execute his purpose, it would be unfair

to pronounce upon his success before the appearance of the entire work."

The confused correspondent of the Orange (N. J.) Gazette confesses to this extent:

"Whether all this proves something or nothing is to be determined by those who read and make a study of that which teaches us 'there are more things in heaven and earth than are spoken of in our philosophy.' I must, but admit that there is something about Spiritualism as yet unexplained by me, and that I, although open to conviction, have never understood. Those who would learn, and profit by what they learn or read, should secure 'The Stellar Key' and be prepared either to recommend or condemn the teaching of Spiritualism."

The Lyceum Banner (Chicago) says of "Arabula":

"We can only say to our readers, be sure to read Arabula and then listen to the voice which will say to every sincere, earnest soul—I am Arabula; I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall have light and life; he that loveth me keepeth my commandments."

The Cape Cod Gazette, of Sandwich (Mass.) remarks on both publications:

"A glance at the name of the author and publishers of these works reveals their character. They are both devoted to the inculcation of Spiritual or Harmonical Philosophy. In the first, The Arabula, which seems to be a revelation made to Mr. Davis, is a collection of 'New Gospels,' according to Saints Confucius, Galah, Theodore (Parker), Ralph (Waldo Emerson), Emma (Harlow), and several others. The other volume, A Stellar Key to the Summer-Land, is designed to furnish scientific and philosophical evidence of the existence of an Inhabited Sphere or Zone among the suns and planets of space. These evidences are indisputable, being adapted to all who seek solid, rational, philosophical foundation on which to rest their hopes of a substantial existence after death. So says the author."

Says the Tri-Weekly Publisher of Haverhill (Mass.) on the "Stellar Key":

"Whether the reader subscribes to the ideas advanced or not, he can hardly fail to be interested in the subject and the able manner in which the author treats it. The fact is too prominent to be winked or sneered out of sight that a great change has taken place in the minds of the mass of the people, in relation to the important subject of man's future destiny, within a few years past, and the topic can never cease to be of the most intense interest, whatever conclusion may be arrived at from the investigation of new theories, based upon scientific and philosophical foundations."

The Springfield (Mass.) Republican remarks on this wise:

"Andrew Jackson Davis, the Spiritual seer, has written many volumes on the 'Summer-Land,' which his admirers find to be very pleasant reading. His latest work is called 'Arabula' and is called A Stellar Key to the Summer-Land. It is published by William White & Co., Boston. It has engravings of celestial scenery, supposed to have been drawn from recollection by Mr. Davis, who has a way of making the most remarkable journeys among the spheres. The Summer-Land is a wonderful zone, spanning through the milky way, and must be a very agreeable place of residence, as Mr. Davis describes it. We wonder he does not spend his winters there."

The Boston Cultivator says of "Arabula": "Those of our readers interested in this kind of literature, will welcome this new volume of one of their most eminent writers."

The Liberal, of Chicago, says of "Arabula": "This volume contains many good and suggestive ideas, mixed, we must candidly say, in our opinion, with much that is worthless. An attractive feature of the book is the modern 'gospels,' or parables on the gospels."

And of the "Stellar Key":

"This is a representative Spiritual work. In a very different sphere of thought from ours, and considering much that any but Spiritualists must consider matter for meriment rather than serious thought, it ought to be read by those desiring to know the ideas of phenomenal Spiritualism. The book contains a picture of the 'Summer-Land,' a sort of brilliant white zone poised in the clouds—something like a rainbow."

The Universalist, published in Boston, gives extracts from "Arabula," and comments thus:

"Whoever has the leisure, patience and taste to beat up a mountain of chaff for a few kernels of wheat (which after all own no kindred with that chaff) may find an object for the exercise of his intellect in a very remarkable book, just published by that remarkable man, Andrew Jackson Davis. Arabula, or the Divine Guest, is the title of it, and while we make out no special purpose in it beyond exhibiting the capacity of Mr. Davis for writing bald-headed interminably, we trace what seems to be the 'experience' of the author through various mental conflicts until he finds Arabula. When at length he so far conquers his 'selfish intellect' as to come fully under the influence of this 'Divine Guest,' he is favored with almost continual revelations and visions which are detailed with tedious and pompous particularity."

This is the language which the New York Herald holds in relation to these remarkable books, which is characteristic yet readable:

"Among other whimsical questions propounded by Charles Lamb to Coleridge, while the latter was studying in Germany, was the following: 'In a future state will the mind acquire knowledge by laborious investigation or by some awkward process of intuition?' This, at least, was the purport of the question. It is obvious from this, as well as the other works of the Poughkeepsie Seer, Andrew Jackson Davis, that he prefers, even in the present state of existence, 'some awkward process of intuition.' Nevertheless, in the present volume he professes, in approaching the revelations of ideas and essences, to ask for such facts and illustrations as can be seen and admitted by philosophers and skeptics of the most materialistic habits of thought. 'We seek,' he says, 'for data in the recognized fields of positive knowledge, for scientific facts and recent discoveries in matters which shall serve as stepping-stones for the millions, whereby they can, intellectually and rationally, gain a clear vision of spheres celestial and heavenly.' There are, therefore, interspersed throughout the most rhapsodical passages of the volume ample evidence of the fact that Mr. Davis is not so unfamiliar with the latest scientific works as his early disciples used to claim that he was. We have not forgotten their attempts to make it out that he was almost wholly illiterate, in order to render more marvellous the 'revelations' with which he favored the world. Under the guidance of the erudite George Buel, we have been told that Mr. Davis accomplished a most extensive course of reading. Whether he ever profited or not in his youthful days by a rare little collection of books in the rear, if we mistake not, of a tanner's shop in Poughkeepsie, the fruits of his extensive reading, as well as his own peculiar

methods of mental and spiritual training, are, as we have intimated, visible in the 'Stellar Key.' The object of the book is to furnish scientific and philosophical evidences of the existence of an inhabitable sphere or zone among the sun and planets of space. 'These evidences,' says Mr. Davis, 'are indisputable, being adapted to all who seek a solid, rational, philosophical foundation on which to rest their hopes of a substantial existence after death.' The book is illustrated with diagrams and engravings of celestial scenery. If we were sure that they were from 'photographs taken on the spot,' they certainly would fortify our belief in the glowing descriptions of the text. Mr. Davis has become a most voluminous author, and the large number of his avowed disciples must secure a large sale for his works.

Children's Department.

BY MRS. LOVE M. WILLIS.
Address care of Dr. F. L. H. Willis, Post-office box 39,
Station D, New York City.

"We think that we do really see
About our little heart as it is,
Or may be that they will, and we prepare
Their souls and ours to meet in happy air."
(Lionel Hunt.)

(Original.)

A WONDERFUL INVENTION.

Guzkow was a Jew from Poland, and he followed the calling of Shepherd to a nobleman. But he loved nothing as he loved music; it seemed to fill his whole being. As he cared for his flocks he sought to gratify his love, and made reeds and flutes from the wood of the different trees that grew about him.

He soon made an important discovery: it was, that the different kinds of wood produced different tones, and he became so expert in detecting the sounds produced by the different kinds of wood that he could tell from what trees they came.

He played with such skill on his self-manufactured flutes, that he attracted the attention of people, and was soon called upon to delight the nobility by his sweet music, instead of tending flocks. Men never tired of the sweet melody that he produced; but it was found that he was pouring forth his life in sweet sounds. It was said by wise physicians that he must stop his playing or die.

He resolved to atone for his loss by finding some new method of gratifying his love of sweet sounds. He gathered pieces of wood from different trees, making them smooth and round. These he bound on to four sticks of wood, seemingly in the most irregular manner, for some were long and jutted beyond others, and some were short, but all were seemingly in great confusion. The whole looked like a small raft, and it was placed on a table to be played, and was struck with two ebony sticks.

From this rude contrivance Guzkow produced the most wonderful melody. It was said to entirely charm those who heard it, as if it was the music of heaven.

The Emperor of Austria heard it, and determined to take Guzkow under his special patronage, and he only occasionally allowed him to give concerts in some of the large cities. At such times he was accompanied by a full orchestra. At first the sound was of some one striking wood, then the orchestra rose higher and higher and drowned all sound, till gradually growing softer the instrument rose clear above all sounds like a warbling bird. The orchestra rose again higher and higher, but now above them all the wonderful bird-like melody was heard, liquid clear like a sky lark. It is described as far surpassing Paganini's violin.

The musician had a very marked countenance. His eyes were dark and large, while his face was very pale. He looked haggard and wild, as if his thoughts were too great for expression. In accordance with the custom of the Jews, he covered his head with a black velvet cap, but his long glossy black ringlets fell beneath it down his shoulders. He wore a long flowing black robe. His soul seemed forever striving to express the divine harmony of sound, but his frail body could not long enough contend with the inharmonies of earth, and he had to finish his melodies in the spiritual life.

(Original.)

MARCH WINDS.

BY COUSIN JULIA.

"Hurrah! hurrah for the March winds!" shouted Frank Percy, throwing his hat into the air. "I'm so glad they've come. Won't my kite sail up to the clouds, and maybe get caught on their jagged edges. Come on, boys, and let's have a regular kite-flying time."

"Yes, yes," they answered, "let's go home and get them. Hurrah! hurrah!"

And away scampered Charley and Harry Fenn, their shouts not a whit less boisterous than Frank's. Poor little Tom Campbell was far behind in the race, and though he flew nimbly over the ground, was unable to overtake them. He was small and delicately formed, and unused to outdoor amusements, which would probably have strengthened him. But there was a world of patience and perseverance in his little body, that sometimes led his tortoise-like paces to accomplish more than the boasting hare's. His weak, squeaking voice echoed the glad cries of his runaway companions, with a break in them now and then as he stumbled and fell in his eagerness to catch up with them.

"Never mind," said the brave little fellow to himself, "I'll have the prettiest kite, for auntie bought me a new one the other day, and now I shall have a fine time to try it."

Breathless and exalted, with flashing eyes, crimson cheeks, and hair disordered, Frank rushed into his mother's room, screaming at the top of his voice, "Where's my kite? where's my kite?"

"Why, Frank, what's the matter? Speak in a lower key," said his mother. "You must not enter my apartment in so turbulent a manner."

"Excuse me, mother. I'm in a great hurry, for we boys are going to have lots of fun with our kites, and I want mine. Where is it?"

"Can't you wait until to-morrow?"

"Why, mother," laughed the merry boy, "I guess you never were a kite-flyer. Don't you see how the wind blows? It will make our kites go up beautifully."

"Ah, my son, you are just like the March winds. Eager, impulsive, rash, you follow the bent of your inclinations without a moment's reflection. Only yesterday when you discovered a poor harmless rabbit near the house, you gave chase to it, and a dozen dragoons could hardly have overtaken you. In what a plight you returned—your coat and pants covered with mud, and torn by briars, and your hat bent and curved as if belonging to a ragabash. Indeed, I scarcely recognized my Frankie."

"Well, mother, I should not have got in that plight if I had looked, but I was in such a hurry that I didn't see a large stone on the edge of a mud-puddle, over which I stumbled and fell into the splash."

"That's it, Frank—you should move more slowly."

"But if people don't go ahead, what's to be done? It wants a few rousers to start Johnny Go-slow. And I'll tell you what 'tis, if I hadn't walked into Dick Hood the other day I should have lost my kite forever."

"Perhaps if you had requested him, in a gentle manner, to return it, he would have done so; but you demanded it in a loud, angry tone of voice, and with a manner far from conciliating. When a little girl I read a fable, which I have never forgotten. I will repeat it, hoping that you, too, may remember and profit by the moral. The Sun and Wind were one day boasting of their strength, each contending that he was superior to the other in that respect. Whilst thus disputing, a traveler appeared, warmly clad in a cloak. The Wind proposed that each should exert its greatest powers in dressing the man of his outer garment; to which the Sun assented. Accordingly the Wind commenced blowing furiously upon the poor pedestrian, but every blast only made him wrap it more closely around his neck; the Sun then tried his powers. He bent his warmest rays upon the chilled traveler, who soon became uncomfortably warm, first loosening it from his neck, and then throwing it off altogether."

"That does very well for a story, mother. What makes March so much more windy than the other months? See how it bends the tops of the tall pine trees, and tosses up the dead leaves, and twirls them about in the air."

"March, my son, was named from Mars, the God of War."

"Ah! that's it. 'Tis the war month. It wars on all creation, from the seventy-six gun-ship at sea, to a straw upon the ground."

"Don't interrupt me, Frank, if you wish to learn the derivation of the name. The Saxons called it *lenc month*, or length month, because the days begin to exceed the nights in length. That Saxon word is now termed *Lent*, which means spring—hence spring month. They likewise bestowed upon it the title of *lilyd month*, which means stormy; and so it bore its appropriate appellation of the Storm month. It is indeed a rude, blustering month, sweeping everything before it, like a certain little boy I know of. Yet, though March is noted for its incivilities, it faithfully performs the duties assigned by the All-Wise Director. These winds are useful. They dry up the superabundant moisture of the earth, and prepare it for the tillage of the husbandman. Now is the time for the tapping of the maples. The Sun is traveling northward, warning the earth, till every little rootlet feels its influence, and sends up the sap for the expansion of the buds into leaves and flowers. This king of the forest is a generous monarch, and freely pours out his golden wine."

"Mother, let us go to Grandfather Percy's next week to a maple-sugar feast. Oh I must go."

"Perhaps, I would like you to see the operation of tapping the trees, and boiling the sap, and note the swelling and expansion of the leaf-buds, and the few hardy wild flowers that dare show their faces. The Trailing Arbutus, one of the earliest, as well as most beautiful, is now pushing aside the dead leaves under which it has lain all winter, and peeps out to see if any of its old neighbors have returned; the Liverwort watches beside a dissolving snow-bank, and now and then an Anemone or Wind-flower may be seen on a slight elevation, nodding to the winds, perhaps thanking them for expanding its delicate petals, and telling them—

"To go it, I know it, mother. I've heard them a thousand times; but please defer the rest of your sermon till I come back. I must go now. Where's my kite? Oh, here it is."

"Oh Frank! Frank! Where do you pick up so many low phrases? How I wish I could see the buds of gentleness and meekness springing up within you."

"Have patience, mother, and you'll see them some fine day all nicely blown out, and as large and red as hollyhocks."

"Frank, you are incorrigible."

"Well, I don't know what that is, but it must mean something good. Good-by, darling mother; and with a kiss upon each of her cheeks, the wild and wayward, but kind-hearted and generous boy rushed from the room, slamming to the outer door, and with a hip, hip, hurrah, that set the dogs barking, stumbled over little Tommy, who was just mounting the steps with "the prettiest kite." The other boys were close at hand, and their merry shouts as they bounded up the hill were distinctly heard by Mrs. Percy. Frank's grandmother, who had been an amused listener to the conversation between mother and son, remarked with a smile, "that he reminded her of the colt and the lightning. A man offered his horse for sale, enumerating amongst other qualities his wonderful fleetness. 'Why,' said he, 'when he was a colt, there came on a tremendous storm one day, when the lightning chased him around the pasture, but was unable to overtake him.' I think this strong March wind will find its match to catch Frank."

"Oh dear!" exclaimed the anxious mother, "I wish he was less wild and noisy."

"Do not be uneasy; daughter; he will become more quiet and gentle by-and-by, as surely as mild April succeeds boisterous March."

THE SECRET.

BY LUCY LARCOM.

What selfishness asked for
Was vain;

What came from that asking
Brought pain.

Heaven's manna in keeping
Was spoiled;

All beauty self-seeking
Hath soiled.

Complacency blazoned
Dull dross.

No gain came of hoarding,
But loss.

Gain! none save the giver
Receives.

Yet who that old Gospel
Believes?

Nor pauper, nor beggar
Then be;

Nor niggard of bounty
Most free.

But one way is Godlike—
To give.

Then pour out thy heart's blood,
And live!

SLEEP.—Many children, instead of being plump and fresh as a peach, are as withered and wrinkled as last year's apples, because they do not sleep enough. Some physicians think that the bones grow only during sleep. This I cannot say certainly; but I do know that those little folks who sit up late nights are usually nervous, weak, small and sickly. The reason why you need more sleep than your parents is because you have to grow and they do not. They can use up the food they eat in thinking, talking and working, while you should save some of yours for growing. You ought to sleep a great deal; if you do not, you will in activity consume all you eat, and have none, or not enough, to grow with. Very few smart children excel, or even equal, other people when they grow up. Why is this? Because their heads, if not their bodies, are kept too busy; so they cannot sleep, rest, and grow strong in body and brain. Now, when your mother says, *Suave Maris*, or whatever your name may be, it is time to go to bed, do not worry her by begging to sit up "just a little longer." But hurry off to your chamber, remembering that you have a great deal of sleeping and growing to do to make you a healthy, happy, useful man or woman.

Correspondence.

Letter from Emma Hardinge.

Correspondence of the Banner of Light.

A thousand kindly greetings to my ever remembered friends across the water, and most earnest congratulations on the glorious anniversary which will be celebrated the 31st day of this month throughout the length and breadth of the great New World. Lack of interesting matter, or at least such as would enable myself and American friends to meet on common ground, restrains my pen when my heart and memory are most full of America; but when I read in the first March issue of the Banner that it was proposed to celebrate the Twentieth Anniversary of the birth of Modern Spiritualism, I felt it would be hereby to the grateful throbs which in one heart at least will beat in unison with millions of American Spiritualists on that great occasion, if I failed to send you my word of greeting, and assure you that if depth and earnestness of feeling can compensate for paucity of numbers, Emma Hardinge's celebration of the birth of our glorious cause, in England, will not be an unworthy addition to the sum of earnest gratulation that must animate so many hearts on this momentous occasion.

In turning the page of history, I have lived with the Swiss patriots in their day of self-earned and magnificent independence. Again and again, by voice and pen, I have thanked God with American freemen for the liberation of the New World from the rusty fetters of effete monarchism. It was my happy privilege to add the dusky children of Africa, in California, to their first anniversary celebration of the immortal emancipation act. And again it became my honored lot in many an assembly of the reunited States to rebuke the jubilant voices that proclaimed the bright day of peace after the dark red reign of the great American conflict was ended. On all and other occasions of equally momentous human interest, in sympathetic memory or personal congratulations, I have lived and rejoiced with my fellow mortals in the various epochs at which the Genius of Liberty has gained successive triumphs for humanity; but I can neither recall from the pages of history or experience, any period so fraught with spiritual freedom, joy, revelation, consolation, and important though astonishing significance to the whole human race, as the anniversary of that wonderful day when the first scientifically constructed telegraph between the natural and spiritual worlds was put into successful operation.

It is only by a careful analysis of what we have gained, thought and learned, and remembering how much some of us have lived since the commencement of the "Rochester Knockings," that we can begin to form a just estimate of the value of the mighty change that Spiritualism has wrought for all mankind. The array of doubts, fears, hopes and despondencies that formerly veiled the close of our mortal existence is dispelled, and the fact of the soul's immortality is settled. The questions of all life's issues are resolved in the general philosophy of the communications which are rendered to us concerning the conditions of the life hereafter. If we do not know in detail the exact nature of those conditions, we do know that it is necessary to inform us of the general results of our life actions and the characteristics of our future existence. Our beloved dead are restored to us; an intelligible and open communication is established with them, and all doubts, fears and anxieties concerning their welfare are forever dispelled. The beneficent and satisfactory element of eternal progress has been made clear to us, vindicating the justice of the Almighty toward the lowest of his creatures, and opening up the glorious vistas of illimitable advancement for all.

A perfect world of new ideas has been silently infused into our minds, irradiating all our perceptions, revealing the purposes of life, death, sorrow, pain, health, happiness, and every thought of man, with an entirely new and eminently beautiful view of Divine love and wisdom, so that in our own great mental change we perceive the inauguration from within of the promised new heaven and the new earth, whose kingdom is to be found in the heart of humanity. Besides various sciences, we have started upon a new phenomenon, our world's conquest over Death, and the fear of the grave, restoration to long lost friends, an explanation of life and its purposes, a solution of a thousand spiritual problems, and sources of strength, comfort and instruction innumerable, the combination of all these influences in Spiritualism must and does really affect our conduct.

Only very recently a gentleman returned from America assured me that my love and devotion to that country was misplaced; that he had heard me infamously slandered, and by some of his names included those who had deemed my best friends, and on whom I had actually heaped benedictions; that my untiring efforts to assist, as far as possible, the poor and needy, were not so much forgotten as remembered in causes of slander and charges of self-interest against me. He added, "Your name is generally forgotten, your services slighted or sneered at, and all your years of labor thrown away. As the gentleman gave me the proofs of the truth of some of his assertions, in a remarkable manner, I am justified in repeating them; but I do so in no unkind or even irritating spirit of complaint, but simply to illustrate the force of my faith in the use and beauty of Spiritualism. History affords us abundant evidences that human hearts have been incited even to the death by the world's ingratitude and the unenvied tongue of slander. I can remember the time when my own pen would have been sharpened into a sword, to strike back at any and every slanderer who would have written in mortal anguish the memory of seemingly momentary wrongs, wasted on an envious and ungrateful world. Now the unenvied tale awakens in me nothing of pain for myself, though many regrets for others. Confident that in the spirit-world nothing is lost, no really honest or kindly endeavor wasted, that no misconceptions can exist, or no ingratitude trample past service out of sight, that here and hereafter angel witnesses know us, and deal with us for what we really are, not for what we seem to be, or what we represent us, I heard and dismissed the unkind relation with as much indifference as a Spiritualist can ever feel for the faults of another. A sigh for the past, indifference for the present, and triumphant assurance for the future, is mine; and all that because I am a Spiritualist. And this, and a thousand fold more than these hasty lines can record, have grown up to me from Spiritualism, and measurably to some ten or twelve millions of my fellow creatures besides.

Surely then we have cause to rejoice on the Twentieth Anniversary of "the Rochester Knockings." And if twenty years have done so much for us, what may we not hope in a hundred for all mankind? Perhaps not with the same startling phenomenal interest, but with a far better instructed and assured faith than ours, the next generations will carry the work of Spiritualism forward from the circle and the Sabbath meeting, through the spring bud of the century, the Children's Lyceum into the whole world. Already I can see the leaves working far beyond my own home and hearts into that of hundreds of my fellow creatures, whilst they again report the same progress for the radiating circles of which themselves are centres.

Truly might the astonished crowd assembled in the little spirit house at Hydesville, on the 31st of March, 1848, have cried, "Behold the beginning; who can predicate the end? or when and where will the work cease?"

In words like these, my American friends—for I know I still claim many an one by this sacred name—I rejoice with you, with a joy that I believe the ages of eternity can never dim; and I believe that if ever mankind had cause to believe in the promise, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth," that cause was made manifest in the stupendous opening of the gates that in the simplicity of a germ seed was sown twenty years

ago in the humble but divine movement you celebrate the 31st of this month.

And now, in closing, permit me to say to the well-wishers of the glorious cause everywhere, that we are not sleeping at our posts here in England, although but few of the army are in the field, and still fewer are the sentinels who have courage enough to shoulder the musket in defence of their belief. Some new mediums are being developed in private circles, where extraordinary although (to the practiced American Spiritualist) not very interesting phenomena transpire. These circles still hold its doubtful and dismal sway over the minds of the marvel-seekers, but the medium power is there, and I live in hope of seeing it emerge into the light of critical investigation. I have amongst us a lady (in strictly private life, however) who is an excellent medium for voices. On one occasion I observed some Indian spirits present, and had scarcely mentioned the fact, when the war whoop was given with startling power and graphic tone. It was repeated several times, although I venture to assert that neither the medium nor any one present had ever heard it but myself and my mother. The Indian spirits in this circle also danced, giving the sounds of their feet enshroued in moccasins with great power. At my request, an Indian boy, who purported to speak for the rest, sang a war song. I could not translate the words, but the tones and style were unmistakably those of the Creek Indians. This band of red men's spirits claim to have come over "in the big ship" with me, to be my warriors in "fighting darkness with the sword of spiritual light."

I venture to think that many have seen in some of the English periodicals accounts of Mr. D. D. Home's last exhibition of phenomenal power, which consists in the extraordinary fact of his body being elongated. He appears during the process to be in his normal state, laughs and jokes over it, invites witnesses to place their hands on his feet to note that they are flat on the ground, and that the motion is in no way influenced by any muscular action of his own. The process appears to go on chiefly in the trunk between the ribs, and extends the body until his head rises up against the wall by measurement from five to eight inches. The phenomenon takes place in brilliantly lighted rooms, and conveys the most undefinable and strange aspect to the elongated medium. I have seen this remarkable phenomenal act three times, and on the last occasion it was succeeded by Mr. Home's being shortened, and without the least appearance of any voluntary contraction of the joints or motion from him. I ascertained his actual height, and I may say fairly shortened, until it appeared to be a stumpy little man of about five feet high.

I am sure it will gratify the friends of this amiable and long-suffering champion of the cause to learn that his recent persecution at the hands of Mrs. Lyon—the woman who adopted and then as suddenly repudiated him—has only affected his health and mediumship most beneficially; both are wonderfully improved, and the aspect of the suit in Chancery which has been filed against him, and which is expected will shortly be tried, is so great that "lady" and "lady" are so diametrically on the martyred medium, that those best acquainted with the facts of the case anticipate an equal triumph for himself and the cause he represents.

The "Spiritual Church," of which I have been the speaker during the winter months, is still in session, and will continue to hold meetings until May, when I have required a recess for the summer months. Up to this period, the success of the meetings has been our most sanguine expectation, considering that every possible obstacle, whether of a financial, organic or personal character, has had to be overcome. Little means, less of interest, less still of numbers, no experience, no suitable hall, nothing, in fact, to start with that could reasonably promise us success, was the capital of the "Spiritual Church" in its incipency, but still we live and move and have our being, and expect to continue in life during this season and to take a new lease next autumn. At present I am the only speaker of the said Church. Our worthy and indefatigable Secretary is Mr. Thomas Slater; our Chairman, Mr. Luxmoore, a gentleman of position, great heart and progressive mind, and our Committee, Mr. Robert Cooper, one of the most faithful and well tried soldiers of the cause. And thus our Church works; and if its machinery is simple, it is at least harmonious, our attendance equal, and sometimes a little beyond the capacity of our hall, and composed of some of the best minds in the country.

Two most successful week-evening meetings have already been given in a large and crowded hall, and another takes place next Wednesday.

And so the ball moves; and though at present I stand alone in the public field, I trust my cry of "come over and help us" will yet be responded to.

I have not spoken of the shadow side of the picture. Nevertheless, I can confidently assert that it exists. The noble truth which so faithfully supports me, represents a large class of progressive minds outside but not within the pale of Spiritualism. Of the real character of most of the believers in the phenomena, I can only say that the Rev. — Edwards, and Emissaries, of American celebrity, represent a large portion. There are some, however, who rally round us who are able to ask other questions than, "Do you believe in Christianity?" and "What have you to say to an exorcism speaking in Church?" But the number is small, and my audience are for the most part "floating population." Yet still they come, and the work goes on, the cause advances, my letters and visitors thicken upon me; and I feel confident that any good test medium that could be induced to come here, give manifestations of intelligent communion with spirits in the light, and wait for the spirits to do the work without helping them, would be well supported, and add hundreds of willing converts to the cause. I send enclosed a small bill of the Spiritual Church, not for publication, but as a reassurance to those whom it may concern to know the fact that I am still laboring at my post, and now, as ever, the faithful servant of the spirits, and the co-worker and well-wisher of all true Spiritualists throughout the length and breadth of the earth.

With every kind wish and cordial greeting, I am, dear Banner, yours for the truth,
EMMA HARDINGE.

6 Vassall Terrace, Kensington,
London, England, March 19, 1868.

Saint Louis Letter.

Correspondence of the Banner of Light.

Spiritualism in St. Louis—Robert Dale Owen—The State of Missouri—Its Rivers, Land, Climate, Fruits—Southern Missouri—Mineral Riches—Advantages of coming to Missouri—Here is Freedom, Growth and Power.

It would be hard to deny that Spiritualism is a settled fact in St. Louis. Personally I write in the independent mood. Not the less valuable will be the statements which I make on the subject.

The audience I saw at the Philharmonic Hall last Sunday, was singularly thoughtful and intelligent in appearance. There are many highly respectable people connected with the organization here. On their platform, great freedom of thought, largeness of ideas and comprehensive views, have voice and scope. Whatever else it be, Spiritualism is a great advance on the old theories; and I am not without hope that real intellectual progress and great good may come through its organization in St. Louis. I am in favor of the largest and freest thought. Immaturities, crudities and absurdities will fall away, when Spiritualism has completed its structure, like the scaffolding that drops from the finished building, only the better to show the excellence of the material, or the elegance and symmetry of the architecture.

ROBERT DALE OWEN.

Redelivered lectures last Sunday—in the morning on the Law of Kindness; in the evening a narrative argument, in support of the reality of spiritual manifestation—a solid, sensible, thoughtful man, whose oratorical graces consist for the most part, in the sincerity of his manner, and an earnest belief in what he utters.

THE STATE OF MISSOURI.

But I must tell you something about this great State, of which St. Louis is such a noble part. It contains almost sixty-eight thousand square

miles, and lies in the centre of the United States. The Mississippi river sweeps along its eastern frontier for four hundred and seventy miles. Within its banks the mighty Missouri river for nearly five hundred miles is in Missouri. Then it separates Kansas and Nebraska from the State and Iowa, before it stretches far off into the Northwest.

The State is divided by one, and washed by the other, of the two great rivers of the world.

Missouri is unequally divided by the river of the same name into two parts. That portion of the State lying north of the river is generally a fine rolling prairie country, and contains perhaps twenty-five thousand square miles of territory. Here millions of buffalo, in former times, swept over these ranges, and covered these rich prairies with their immense herds.

These prairies are intersected with numerous streams and skirted with timber. They are not level like those of Illinois, but consist of successive undulating hills, and the summits of them are called divides.

There are rich and fertile lands, situated in the best climate of the United States. Here the cold winters of New England, or Minnesota, do not affect us. Summer lingers along into a charming and beautiful autumn, and autumn wanders into December, which is not bleak and dreary as on the New England coast, but bright, fair and sunny. And for these reasons, myself a New England man, I long to have Eastern people come and enjoy this climate, and reap the splendid advantages of this country.

Here fruits of all kinds grow, including the finest varieties of grapes, and every description of fruit, and tobacco that took the foremost prize in the World's Fair, if I do not mistake. There are no government lands for sale in North Missouri, for they were taken up long ago. But there are millions of acres unoccupied and ready for the settler, at low prices, compared with those in the East. And there are several hundred thousand acres of railroad lands, in alternate sections, along the track of the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad, which I understand can be purchased for moderate prices on a long credit. For many a special information about them may be obtained of George S. Harris, Land Commissioner, Hannibal, Mo.

SOUTHERN MISSOURI.

All that country south of the Missouri River goes under the title of Southeast and Southwest Missouri. This is the larger portion of the State, and wonderfully rich in minerals. Copper, lead, zinc, tin, as well as coal, which underlies so large a portion of the State, are abundant. Fortunes have been made, and greater fortunes will still be made from the wonderful mineral wealth of Missouri. The country south is very much more broken and rocky, and is not uniformly so fertile as North Missouri. It is a numberless rich valleys, and is almost everywhere, except in its flint hills, richer than the State of New York. Many streams, and some large rivers, like the Osage, flow through this region, and mighty springs leap forth with force enough to carry the machinery of a common mill.

There are many counties in the extreme Southwest, where cattle and sheep can be raised at great profit, and cattle grown. Indeed, Missouri is remarkable for the variety of her productions, for the excellence of her soil and climate.

ADVANTAGES OF EMIGRATING TO MISSOURI.

First. Here is a new country, where, for small outlay, one may secure a farm that in coming years will grow to great value. Here, thousands can come from crowded cities, where nothing more than a living can be hoped for, and enter upon an agricultural life, at once free and independent. And then here is to be the great centre of population—where the human mind will be freed from the cramped and narrowing influences of an old state of society like that in the East.

I greatly admire an article in the Banner of April 11, which touches this point, and is entitled "The Great Field of the West." You say in it, "The Western man already shows a broader, larger and healthier development than his brother in the East." The culture, thought and scholarship which Germany has introduced into the West, would astonish New England people. We demand more of a public speaker than you. People from New England after being here a while lose their mere New Englandism, and launch out into a broader life of free thought. But our modes of business, ignoring pennies; the wide sweep of our lakes, prairies and rivers; our immense herds of cattle and our slight interest in million bushels of grain that we produced in the Valley of the Mississippi in 1867, indicate something of the new state of life that is springing up in the West.

We are receiving the best blood of European nations, and mingling it with the best blood of the English races. And from all this we shall deduce a style of intellect and manhood superior to anything the world has ever seen. We shall control in the great West the nations of the East, and overcome the undue influence of the South. We are right when he said that while the Northern and Southern States were quarrelling with each other, there was a mighty power growing up in the West that would control them both. It is not boasting, but simple truth to say it. Here in the great centre we can reach one hand out to California and the Pacific States, and another to the swarming millions that inhabit the Atlantic slope.

Our political power increases every day, while that of the older States must relatively decrease, and yield us the supremacy of the control of the Union.

But I must close my letter, already long, which perhaps is none the less interesting since it gives variety to the columns of the Banner.

MARTIN W. WILLIS.
1621 Washington Avenue, St. Louis, April, 1868.

A New Word Needed.

MESSRS. EDITORS.—Although I sometimes find fault with general conditions, and complain of the needs of my own sex in particular, I think you will give me the credit of not complaining on my own account; yet even to me—fortunate woman that I am—I may truly be said, "One thing thou lackest!" for ever since my early memories I have occasionally felt the need of something which I could never by any possibility obtain, and for the simple reason that, to my knowledge, it has never yet had an existence!

Now you will probably say that, such being the case, I have no reason or right to complain; but I am not alone; others, also, are sensible of the same want, and the time is coming when this something will be felt to be so necessary that some one will create it. This I could myself easily do, with the advice and consent of the proper authorities, but, unless thus sanctioned, I might create hundreds, and not one would answer any purpose whatever.

The little nonentity of which I write is a personal pronoun of common gender, and when the word, Male, is stricken from the Constitution of the United States, with its corresponding pronouns, then this necessity will appear so great that the word will be added to our language, which can no longer wait do without it.

We have now the pronouns, he, she, it, the last being of the neuter gender, and applying only to animals and inanimate things; therefore we need a pronoun which may signify either he or she, in order to avoid repetitions which must otherwise occur, if we would speak grammatically. But the usual method is to set grammar aside on such occasions, and use the pronoun *they*, which will apply to either sex, but, being in the plural number, will not apply to the individual of whom we would speak.

Our language has probably always been destitute of this necessary word—this word which will be so gladly accepted and adopted whenever it shall appear before the public. In the absence of any proposal, what if we were to name the word *huma*, which is not in our language, if in any, (and which is suggestive of the use to which it is to be applied), as the much needed pronoun of common gender, which is to be the grand distinction between itself and the pronouns now existing, so that whenever and however needed, there may be a word which will designate the human being irrespective of sex.

M. S. L.

Message Department.

Each Message in this Department of the BANNER OF LIGHT was spoken by the Spirit whose name it bears, through the instrumentality of

Mrs. J. H. Constant.

while in an abnormal condition called the trance. These Messages indicate that spirits carry with them the characteristics of their earth life, beyond which they are free. But those who leave the earth sphere in an undeveloped state, eventually progress into a higher condition.

The questions propounded at these circles by mortals, are answered by spirits who do not announce their names.

We ask the reader to receive no doctrine put forth by spirits in these columns that does not comport with his or her reason. All express as much of truth as they perceive—no more.

The Banner of Light Free Circles.

These Circles are held at No. 138 WASHINGTON STREET, Room No. 4, (upstairs), on MONDAY, TUESDAY and THURSDAY AFTERNOONS. The circle room will be open for visitors at two o'clock; services commence at precisely three o'clock, after which time no one will be admitted. Donations solicited.

Mrs. CONSTANT receives no visitors on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays, until after six o'clock P. M. She gives no private sittings.

Circle Room—Reserved Seats.

It has become necessary, owing to the increasing interest manifested by people far and near to learn what disembodied spirits have to say through our medium, that we shall hereafter reserve three seats in our Circle Room, for the accommodation of strangers, up to within five minutes of closing the door. It is often the case that people visit us from a distance for the express purpose of attending our Free Public Circles. They arrive at the office just too late to procure a seat, and are obliged to retire, wondering why they cannot be accommodated. So numerous have been these cases of late, that we have determined to accommodate such visitors, if possible, especially those who notify us in advance by letter.

Invocation.

Come near unto us, oh Holy Spirit of Infinite Truth, and sweep away our ignorance, even as the glory of this day hath swept away the shades of yesterday. Oh our Father and our Mother; we lift our souls toward thee, feeling that thou wilt embrace us in the arms of thy love, and that in our conscious being we shall understand thy nearness unto us. Oh grant that the descent of the holy spirit of truth may be so tangibly realized this hour that every soul shall feel its presence. We thank thee, oh life of the past, for all that thou hast done for us. We thank thee, oh Lord, for the churches, with all their light and all their darkness. We thank thee, oh Lord, for all institutions of learning, with all their glory and all their philanthropy. We thank thee, oh our Father, for all the science of life, for the glory that is shed through this age, for the glory that has been shed in past ages, and for that which is to come, the prophecy of which falls into the present. Oh our Father, we would bear in the arms of our love and our faith all the sorrowing ones of earth, and ask thee to bestow conscious blessings upon them. We thank thee, oh Lord, for all that thou art, and all that thou art not, as near as the sunshine to the earth, and thy holy spirit envelopes our being, we know. Thy tender mercy never forsakes us, yet our prayers go out like the exhalations of all else. Everything prays perpetually. Thou knowest this, oh Spirit Eternal, and as thou dost receive the prayers of the earth, of the air, of the skies, of the water, of all things, oh Lord, thou wilt hear the earnest prayer of the soul, and answer that which will send light and strength and comfort to all that which shall cause it to rise higher and come nearer and still nearer to thee. Oh our Father, we would lose our darkness and our ignorance in thy glory; even as the shades of night are lost in the glory of morning, so would we lose all our darkness in thee; and coming nearer and still nearer to truth, we would abandon our errors, lay down our mistakes, flee from our superstitious, and rejoice in all the glory of truth. Oh grant that truth may envelope us, may become a mantle unto us, even as this fair white mantle of snow that hath crowned these northern lands, making them glorious in their purity; so, Lord, may thy mantle of pure truth encircle our being, and cause us to rest secure in thee.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; may thy kingdom come, and thy will be done here, even as it is done in heaven; give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; leave us not temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. Jan. 30.

Questions and Answers.

CONTROLLING SPIRIT.—We are now ready to attend to your queries.

Q.—I was asked many years ago, "What has your lying Bible to do with God Almighty?" Now I would ask most respectfully, What has the Bible to do with God Almighty, any more than any other written work? I used to be told I must believe it all as the word of God; I had no right to investigate or question its truth, because it is too sacred. If there is any part you do not understand, you must get some one to explain it to you. But this is a serious matter of the Simon-pure Orthodox stripe. Then of course it would be all right, as they were supposed to know all about God's business, what he had been doing and saying for the last six thousand years, more or less. Now it seems to me any written work that we are to receive as truth, if it can't be understood, is always better calculated for deception than for instruction. Will the intelligence please give us some light on the subject?

ANS.—During the reign of the lower faculties of human nature, it was doubtless necessary to work by force—some kind of force—it matters not whether it be the force of mystery or the force of arms. But when the moral and spiritual faculties began to gain the ascendancy over the lower organs of human life, then men and women began to rebel against force, whether it might lie in mystery or in arms. In proportion as the human race advances out of the lower into the higher, out of the animal into the moral and spiritual, they become superior to the law of force. It is rendered inferior to them. They put it under their feet, and they say, "Whatever we cannot understand is of no use whatever to us. Intelligence teaches us that we are all sovereigns of ourselves. We have a kingdom of heaven and a kingdom of hell within ourselves. We have all the requisites for gaining knowledge within ourselves. No one outside of us can gain knowledge for us. Somebody else may gain what may be termed a belief, a faith, but no one can gain knowledge for us. That must come from our own individual experience, if we ever possess it." Your correspondent betrays certainly a great lack of reverence for the Bible. If he reverences all else in Nature, he certainly displays a great lack of reverence for that record. Well, he has the right to stand precisely where he does; and if there is any one at fault because he stands where he does, it must be the Church. It must be the class of people who have covered the Biblical writings with mystery. Instead of making it their business to render them plain, so that a child and the wayfaring man, though he be almost a fool, could not err therein, they have made their business to render it mysterious, obscure, dark, so that none are able to understand save those who style themselves Biblical scholars—those who have received the blessing of the Church; those who stand within the arms of the Church; those who are so-called teachers of theology. They, and they alone, are supposed to understand the mysteries of the Bible. Your correspondent asks, "What has the Bible to do with God?" It has just as much to do with God as anything else has, and no more. It is the record of certain phases of mind—not the mind which belongs to this age, certainly, but the mind which belonged to the age in which the record was written. If mind is the gift of God, the record is also; and all that which is mysterious, imperfect in the Bible, may be attributed to human ignorance, human weakness, human imperfection. The little child speaks words that are peculiarly adapted to childish years. Are the words, the thoughts, the acts of the little child not God's expression? I would not dare to say they were

not. Nor would I dare to say that anything, however imperfect, was not the expression of God. The little rivulet cannot be the ocean; the majestic river cannot be the dewdrop. And yet in Nature all are God's. So it is with regard to the realm of mind. The further we advance in mentality, the more we believe in a God everywhere. I do not believe that the soul is bound to obey the *ipse dixit* of any religious writer whatever. I do not believe that God calls upon the soul to believe in anything it cannot understand. So long as the Bible is a mystery to the soul, so long the soul cannot feed upon it. But when it becomes plain, when its pages are illumined by truth, then the soul can receive it. When the soul is receptive to the truth that is without, and the truth that is without is stripped of mystery and darkness, then the two must meet and mingle. There is no escaping it.

Q.—Some time ago, in answer to a question here, relative to the inhabitants of our earth, it was stated in reply that there were many such who are yet unknown, and their territory yet undiscovered. As our maps and explorations cover nearly all the surface of the globe, please give us some further information as to the locality of these unknown inhabitants.

A.—To begin with, your correspondent has made a very great mistake in supposing that our maps cover nearly all the surface of the globe. Hundreds of years ago the savage, looking out from his cave, and seeing the sun and the stars, would have told you that this was all. He never dreamed that there was anything beyond the range of his vision. He had never heard of it. No sound from the far-off lands had ever reached him. His senses had never been appealed to. He knew nothing concerning the great world which lay beyond. To a certain extent you are all savages. You have gone a great ways beyond his standpoint, but you have a great ways further to go. So have we all. As we stretch out to the farthest future, when thousands upon thousands of miles of undiscovered territory shall be teeming with civilization, no doubt the same question will be asked, perhaps in different form, "Is there anything beyond?" And if there are any to answer, the answer must be still, "Further on there is more." Why, this earth is something more than a nut-shell—something more than a mere bubble floating in the sunshine; and yet when compared with the millions of worlds by which it is attended, it would seem to be nothing more. North and south, east and west, there are thousands upon thousands of undiscovered conditions of human life, both in land and water. Can I demonstrate my assertion? No. Time must do that. And time surely will, because the march of intellect is not in a half-bushel. It stretches out into the endless future, and wants to know what there is beyond, and step by step it will gain knowledge. By-and-by perhaps the earth will enlarge and stretch out, and capacities of the human mind. At all events, you will find, as mind grows in wisdom with regard to the things of this world, the boundary line will become—not exactly where it is now.

Q.—Am I to understand that the world will grow like a human being?

A.—Not exactly, no. The knowledge of it will grow.

Q.—Then this spirit of exploration toward the North Pole is the same that led Columbus to this country?

A.—Certainly. The desire to know all that there is to be known, the desire to stretch out the capacities of the human mind to their utmost extent, is perfectly legitimate, God-given. You must exercise your talents—or certain minds must—whether they will or no. There will always be Columbus not content to sit down in the chimney-corner, willing to look at the stars through the crevices in the roof, and be satisfied with that. Great as the desire is beyond the present, will always be among you.

Q.—What relation does mesmerism bear to Spiritualism?

A.—It bears a very intimate relation, so intimate that you can scarcely tell where to divide the two. Mesmerism, or the mesmeric aura, may be called one of the most essential agents by and through which the disembodied or the embodied spirit acts upon any other spirit. Without it we could do nothing; without it words would be held in their proper place, without it vegetation would become extinct—all the kingdoms of the earth, the mineral, the vegetable, the animal and the spiritual, would all be nonentities.

Q.—A lecturer (Dr. Willis) at Music Hall, Boston, a few Sundays ago, stated that a shower of fresh and various flowers fell upon his bed, on which he was lying, at midnight, in severe weather in midwinter, and that the stems of the flowers appeared as if twisted off and not cut, and as if torn by a current of electricity, leading to the conclusion that they had been conveyed to him from a warmer climate, where they grew. It has hitherto been supposed by many that such and other productions were immediate formations, composed by spirit-power from the elements of our atmosphere. I would ask which process is the true one.

A.—They are both true. Sometimes, under certain conditions, those spirits who are conversant with the science of chemistry are able to form out of the atmosphere, and cause to grow, flowers of different forms—their own spirit-forms; a great variety of flowers they are able to create out of the atmosphere. And sometimes we are told that the guardian spirits of mediums bring them flowers from your earthly gardens. They are sometimes twisted from the parent stem by the electricity that is thrown upon them by the spirits who desire to possess themselves of the flower. You should understand that there are many chemists in the spirit-world, and they take great delight in making chemical experiments with regard to all the things of this world. They never allow an opportunity to pass without doing something toward informing themselves with regard to the nature of the earth and its relations to their spirit-home. They want to know how much power they can have over all things here, and how much, in turn, you can have over them; what they can do with the vegetable kingdom, the mineral kingdom, and the spiritual kingdom; what they can do with all things that are subject to mind or matter. So their experiments are constantly going on. This, referred to by Mr. Willis, is doubtless one of them.

Q.—I would like to inquire whether Emanuel Swedenborg's description of heaven and hell may be relied on as correct?

A.—Not exactly. It was as nearly correct as could be given him by his guardian spirits at the time. It was as nearly correct as he could perceive through his earthly limitations. It was partly correct and partly incorrect. A great many things there were about it that he found upon his entrance into the spirit-world, belonged to earth and the conditions of earth, not to the spiritual condition of either heaven or hell, as he had supposed.

Mary Staten.

It is very pleasant to know that we are remembered by those who are very pleasant to know that the dear friends who have their earthly life would be glad to hear from those who have crossed the river. And it is equally pleasant to know that the friends here consign us to some far-off heaven, and that although they mourn our absence, would shudder at the thought of our return.

I feel that my dear friends may be glad to hear from me. I feel that they are stretching out the arms of their love toward me, and would be rejoiced to know that I could return. So after various unsuccessful attempts I am here.

We are apt to think it is very easy to return and reach our friends before we die, but we very soon learn there are many obstacles to be overcome—that, unless we are very skillful, it takes us a long time, many of us, to overcome them.

I have learned many things since I came to the spirit-world, although I have been here but a few months. I had heard of spirit's returning before my death, but I had no definite faith in the return. I knew that many people believed in it, and if I had any belief at all, why I think it was in the return of the spirit after death. When we hear our friends talking of us, speculating with regard to the possibility of our return, it often stimulates us and gives us the very power we need by which to come back and manifest. It is only a short time since that I heard my friends talking with regard to my return. Some believe they know I shall come; it is only a question of time. But others do not so foolishly. And I am, right in the face of their unbelief and of their belief. And I know that I am here, just as clearly as I ever was anywhere in my life. To be sure, the conditions differ very

much from what they were in my earthly life; but, still, all that went away with me at death, all that survived the wreck of the body, is here today.

I am very anxious that Edward should know that I can come. I am very anxious to overrule all his unbelief, because I know he will feel more happy, and be better fitted to die than he could possibly be by any other process. And when his dear father and mother talk to him of these things, I do hope that, instead of turning away coldly, he will seek for himself, and after seeking earnestly, if he is satisfied there is nothing in it, then it will be well to say so. But I know I can convince him if he will only give me an opportunity myself. I do not expect to do a great deal by coming here. I only want to let them know I can come, and that I shall be ready to come now wherever there is a medium with whom I can come in rapport.

I want to say to dear father and mother: "Oh, I thank you so much for your kind thoughts and love in my spirit-home. It has helped me much."

And with regard to little Mary—I am constituted her guardian spirit, and shall watch over her, I cannot tell how long; it may be all through her earthly life.

I want all my dear friends to know I am happy in my spirit-home, and nothing would cause me to return here and dwell again, as truly as I love the dear friends I left. I cannot tell you how much better in the spirit-life than here, that no one, it seems to me, could wish to come back.

I am Mary Staten, Gloucester, Mass. Jan. 30.

Horace Kimball.

How do you do? [How do you do? I am glad to meet you.] So am I glad to meet you. We are even there. I tell you what, I've had the confounded time trying to get round here!

Now before I forget it, let me give you my name. That's the most important part. Just set it down—Horace Kimball, New Bedford.

My gracious! "Jordan is a hard road to travel." If you don't think so, just try it, and if you don't meet with brambles at every step, then I don't tell you the truth. It's a priest at this corner, and an Irishman at that, and a nigger at that, and so on; and they've all got to have their say. How long do you suppose I've been waiting, captain, general, whatever you are? You really can't say "You can't." Yes, I can. I've been ever since trying to come here—fighting my way little by little; never have lost an inch of ground; kept all I got. Never knew what it was to turn back; would be shot where I was, but no going back with me. You see I said before I did, "If there's any truth in these things, you'll see me back here before the cock crows in the morning, if I happen to die at night." But here I am, brought up to the rear end of the column. Well, there's no accounting for things in this 'n.

My gracious! "Jordan is a hard road to travel," was you? [I had not that honor.] Well, I had the honor of being there, if that's what you consider an honor.

You've got my name, haven't you? The next thing is my age. You want that? [Yes.] Very well—twenty-nine. My gracious! I don't know what I should say with regard to my present home. I do not know as age belongs to the spirit, does it? [No.] Because if it does you can add on what there is to add on.

Well, in the first place, I got a word to say to Uncle Simon—sorry I can't pay you the hundred and fifty, but I'm broke. That's just as the case stands. He has got the bill again me, and I reckon he will always keep it.

And Aunt Olive: "I am much obliged for the stockings and under-rig you sent me. Got 'em all right. Didn't have time, though, to send my thanks for 'em, 'cause I got a call to go higher before I got any chance to write letters to friends; but I got the things, and had 'em on." [You're a brother Dan in New York.] "I am much obliged to you for the recommendation I didn't get." He will understand it. I wanted a commission, you see. And, as he was rather in public life and had influence, I wanted to get him to use that influence to get a commission for me, you see! [Yes.] But he didn't get it, for some cause or other. I am not going to enter into particulars here. If he knows the cause it's all right. But in just my case, I got it, and I had it. Because if I got it, it wouldn't have done me much good—not a great deal.

And with regard to this new kind of life, just say that it's a life that's adapted to everybody that comes here. And it's particularly adapted to folks that come here short. Tell you what 'tis, those that come here thinking they are going out of this world rich, and going to pop into the other with riches, have an idea, you know, that they're a right in that direction, suddenly find that the world ain't so wide as they thought it would be. So it's particularly adapted to chaps that go out broke. Take the hint, will you? [Yes, I will endeavor to.] All right. Hope some of my folks will take the hint.

[You feel rather musical.] (The medium was drumming with the finger and whistling softly.) Yes, always was. There's no getting the music out of me. It's always there, and quite an unfailing fountain. [It serves you well now.] It serves me, you know, as something you can carry away with you.

Well, now, someone has mentioned in my letter? [Your Uncle Simon, your Aunt Olive and brother Dan.] Yes, the three parties most concerned. Dan will say, "For God's sake, has he turned up?" He's none of your folks, you know, not a bit. Oh, no. And Aunt Olive will be horrified; and Uncle Simon—well, he won't know what to make of it. It suited my purpose to come back, and so I come; fought pretty hard to get here. Now that I'm here, I feel as if I should reach where I intend to shall. If it don't happen to I, shall come and fire another; and if it does, and there is occasion for another, I shall be in for the chance to come again.

Got my name, have you? [Yes. You are sure you have given it right?] Why, man, do you suppose I am dreaming? [You know you said you would give your name before you forgot it.] Yes, I'll tell you why. Because I haven't been known by that name since I've been here; taken for your Uncle Simon, you know, because it belonged to the body. I laid it down with the body, and have taken it up to answer the demands, the bodily connections, you know. Do you suppose St. Paul is called St. Paul here? [I think not.] No indeed; he'd be ashamed of it. Some of the folks that come here are mighty glad to get rid of their names; but the worst of it is, they can't get rid of their colors. They always carry them with them. No matter if they are shot down here, they find they're not backing out; but the name they can lay down, and they are glad enough to do it. Not that I was, by no means. I liked the name pretty well. Good-by.

Harriet Buck.

I wish to come into communication, if I can, with my brother, William Buck, of Montgomery, Alabama.

I have a variety of strange feelings in coming here, and doubtless were you to know my sad history you would not wonder at it. I have an earnest desire to meet my brother, and other members of our family. My sister Lucy I wish also to meet. The condition of my friends has changed, greatly changed, since I was with them. But I want them to know that they are surrounded by those who have gone out through the open door of this visible world—that we are not any one of us very far away.

I died from exposure and fatigue, and various kinds of distresses that were brought upon me by the circumstances of war.

My brother feels very hard toward the people of the North for many things, and he may feel unpleasantly about receiving anything from me in this way. But I know that the platform here is liberal, and it is for all to avail themselves of it. I want to say to you, that I would like to come and reach my friends in this way.

I died while my brother was away. It was said that I died in consequence of fright and distress caused by Northern soldiers. Well, in part it was that. They plundered our house, they took all they wished, and left us nothing. Your humane Northern soldiers did that. You should have taught them better manners. It does very well to talk, sir, about Southern barbarities, but you forget, in talking of them, that your Northern soldiers committed exactly the same propensities, just as great an extent as Southern wicked men or women can. There are those here upon this spiritual side who have come here in consequence of the wrong-doing and violence of your Northern

soldiers. Seems to me that with all your institutions of learning, with your many churches, and with all the facilities you have for being good, and great—seems to me that the army should have been better morally educated than it seems to have been. I do not blame you. I only speak of the thing as it is.

Much advice might be given by our father and grandfather on a side that we would remain, if they will only give them the opportunity to come and speak with them face to face. They are very desirous of reaching William, and of reaching other members of the family. They see their distress. They know all they have passed through, and can do very much for them. But you know that a medium is necessary, some kind of a medium, in order for us to reach our friends. So I am here to ask that my friends will make use of the usual means, and see if good will not come of it.

I do not understand the philosophy of this. Yes, something of it. Some of our friends communicated here, at this place, years ago—I think eight or ten years ago. [Did that message reach your friends?] It did. [You think this will reach your brother?] I think there is no doubt of it. [We can send it directly to him, if you wish.] Perhaps it would be better for my friends who sent the other to send this. We have friends who are very largely interested in these things. They are well posted in all that comes from the spirit-world, and do not mean relatives; I mean friends outside of our family. [You have n't given your name.] Harriet Buck; age twenty-four. Jan. 30.

Seance opened by Theodore Parker.

Invocation.

Our Father, and our Mother too, we thank thee for the holy benediction that rests upon our spirits this hour. It cometh near unto our inner lives, and seemeth to say unto us, "My child, I am here, I am here," therefore we will not doubt, but rejoicing in thy presence, will send out our song of thanksgiving unto thee. Thou who hast fashioned these fair blossoms (referring to a bouquet on the table), whose love hath blessed them and crowned them with artful beauty, thou who hast painted the flowers, thou who hast crowned the heavens with thy glory, thou art our Father, thou art our Source, and we lay upon the altar of thy presence our praises, all our prayers. We praise thee for another understanding, for all the sunbeams that have flitted across our way. We praise thee even for the shadow of death, for it giveth the victory over time, and by it we rejoice in the sunshine of eternity. Oh we thank thee that our lot was cast here, that our faces were turned toward thee from this place—even in our earthly lives. We thank thee that we saw darkness here, for by it we understand the light of thy kingdom of heaven. We thank thee that men did not always understand us when here. We thank thee, our Father and our Mother, that thou didst sometimes lead us through rough and thorny places. We thank thee that thou didst beckon us up Calvary's steep, that thou didst lay crosses upon our shoulders, that thou didst bind our brows with thorns. For, oh our Father, thou dost weep, and thy loving kindness thou dost never withdraw from us; and though sometimes the shadow was dense, yet beyond it we were ever in the light of thy face, were ever able to know that thou wert with us, even in the darkness.

We thank thee for the descent of the holy spirit of truth. It hath entered Church and State, palace and cottage; its rays have gilded even the tomb, and everywhere it seems to be speaking with its thousand tongues unto the hearts of thy children, calling them out of the darkness of the past unto the glorious light of the present. In some thirty different places, some-thing like the following: "And it was said and done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet." The question is, Did not Isaiah and his followers say and do these things expressly with a view to making his prophecy true? Had they not done thus and so, would not the prophecy have proved a total failure?

ANS.—There seems to be a total misunderstanding with regard to the ancient definition of the word prophet, or prophet. In ancient times, it had not nearly the same meaning as it has in our minds—nearly the majority of minds who think upon the subject at all—seem to define it entirely different. To them it means a forecasting of the future—a bringing of events, to a certain extent, into the present. All the prophets spoken of in the Bible were simply poets—persons who had the power of combining their thoughts in a beautiful, poetical form, having no reference whatever to future events—not the slightest. At least, if we have any reference to the coming of the Messiah, he who should save the people from their sins. I believe that this idea originated in ignorance, and nowhere else. And if anything may have been given in the writings of any other ancient or modern writer that would seem to foreshadow the future, I believe it is only in seeming.

Q.—In answering the question concerning the star that appeared at the time of the birth of Jesus Christ—as published in a former number of the Banner—the intelligence that presided seemed to hold the belief that the star did direct the wise men to the birthplace of Jesus Christ. Perhaps he did. For my own part, I do see so much cause to doubt much of the record you have concerning the man Jesus, that I may with truth say that doubt is in the majority with me. If I did not know from any other source than the Biblical record of the man that such a man had ever lived, I should doubt his existence altogether. But happily I know from another source that he did live, that he did figure among the sons and daughters of our race. But again I say, so far as the Biblical record is concerned, I am left in doubt, for there is so much of error mixed up with the small amount of truth therein contained concerning the man, that it is very hard, exceedingly hard to separate the chaff from the pure grain. I do not believe in any special interposition of so-called Divine Providence in the case of the birth of Jesus. I do not believe that the star was called into being simply to herald his birth, and that at his death it went out of existence again. I do not believe it. As all events, I do not believe that it had any special reference either to his birth or his death. The star might have appeared at such a time, or disappeared at such a time; that is nothing uncommon; but that it had direct reference to Jesus, I cannot believe.

Q.—Do you have better opportunities in the spirit-world for spiritual growth than you did in this world?

A.—Certainly we do. The spirit is more free. It is parted with just so much that was a clog to his action as he was in the body, that he is free, therefore it has just as much more freedom. Its capacities are enlarged, and what it could do very feebly here, it can do on a very large scale there.

Q.—Is it only by the cultivation of our moral and spiritual natures that we enter into the kingdom of heaven?

A.—Yes, the further we advance in moral virtues, the higher we rise in morality, the more of heaven we have. The higher we rise over the inharmonies that are attendant upon all the lower orders of existence, the nearer we are to heaven. When we shut out the discordant scenes of the outer world, and enter within the closet of our inner lives, and there hold silent and sacred communion with the great spirit that sustains and loves us, then it is that we may be said to be standing in the gate of heaven. When we are at peace with all the world and with ourselves, then we are in heaven. It matters not where we are located, whether on the earth or in spirit-spheres beyond the earth, it is all the same.

Q.—When one person treats another with abuse, and provokes him to say and do things that are not right, which will feel the greatest condemnation in spirit-life, the one who provoked to anger, or the one who did not restrain it?

A.—I should say that the one who provoked to anger would feel the keenest remorse, and for this reason: he would find that he had not only sinned against himself, but against the law of another. He had not only trampled upon his own highest law, but did the same by another; therefore to him it would seem that he would receive double condemnation.

Q.—How do you explain the word "seer," as used by the ancients?

A.—Seer is another term for clairvoyance, or the spiritual condition—a condition in which the spirit can enter the past and future, as well as the present.

Q.—Did not these seers, being as you say "wiser than they knew," actually foretell events?

A.—Perhaps so. At all events, they were not styled prophets.

Q.—Are we not to understand that the history contained in the Bible is as authentic as the works of Josephus?

A.—No, by no means.

Q.—Will you give your reasons?

A.—Yes. There is not a single book composing the so-called Holy Record that has not been sifted through and through priestly influence. Over and over again it has been revised and thoroughly changed, till its simple, original truths have almost entirely lost. Is it authentic then, after having passed through such a crucible? By no means.

Q.—I believe I am the unfortunate individual who had the controversy with Dr. Channing with reference to the star of Bethlehem, and I believe he acknowledged that there was such a star, that did come into existence at the birth of Jesus, and went out at his death. I would like to ask the influence if it is not as reasonable to suppose that a star came into existence as that an angel appeared to the shepherds and foretold to them the event that was about to transpire in Bethlehem?

A.—No. Angels appear to men and women every day in the present. But stars are not born into existence to suit the caprice of any one individual. Natural laws are not infringed upon. Angels watch over the coming of every little baby in this world, and to some loving, waiting souls they talk of their coming, and we are told that in some instances they shadow forth their future. But this is in accordance with natural law. The law governing angels and their coming, cannot be infringed upon with impunity. I do not believe in anything miraculous in Nature. And I know of nothing outside of Nature. When I attempt to step beyond the boundary of Nature, I am nowhere; I stand upon nothing. I have not even God as my supporter. Nothing defends me. So then if I live at all, I must live within the boundary of natural law; that law that takes care of the moon and the world; that law that fashions the world to my idea, and our souls; that law that no one can infringe upon. You may talk of breaking God's laws; but it is all in talk. You cannot do it.

Q.—Is anything impossible with God?

A.—Certainly to me there is. The breaking of his own law would be an impossibility. He would destroy himself and annihilate all the forms that are in being. I do not believe that God can step outside of himself. He must always live in his own being. To perform a miracle, according to my idea, he must step outside of himself; he must trample upon his own law; he must totally disregard all that which constitutes the law of life. No, I do not believe it is possible for God to create a world in six days, or in six thousand years, nor in six hundred thousand years. No; to me there are many things impossible, even unto God.

Q.—What is meant by election, as spoken of in the Bible?

A.—The Bible talks of a great many foolish things. It means simply this, and nothing more: A reflection of priestly ignorance, bigotry and sectarianism. It is that spirit which says, "I am more holy than thou art. There is a kingdom of heaven for me, but not for you." Feb. 3.

William Hickson.

[How do you do?] I am comfortably off, what there is left of me. [You have just arrived?] Just arrived; yes, sir.

I am a stranger, as high as I can reckon I am from Missouri. What I come for is just this: I want to tell my brother—my name is Hickson, sir—William Hickson—and I want to tell my brother Nathan that I am not disappointed in my expectations of the other world. He said he hoped I would not be. To be sure, there's a good many things different from what I supposed; but if there's any disappointment, I was happily disappointed. He had reference to this coming back in the shape of I thought I should. I was "crazy" Spiritualist, and I was just as sane enough now. I think I was sane then. We had a very quiet difference of opinion. I held to my way, and he held to his. And he said—the last thing he said to me was this: "Well, brother William, I hope that in all your wild fancies you won't forget what is due to your God." I don't think I ever did. I think I rendered just all he asked for; and I couldn't do anything better, could I? [I think not.] He was of a pious turn. He said that I was once, but I could not say I got to be Spiritualist, and I was just as sane enough now. I think I was sane then. We had a very quiet difference of opinion. I held to my way, and he held to his. And he said—the last thing he said to me was this: "Well, brother William, I hope that in all your wild fancies you won't forget what is due to your God." I don't think I ever did. I think I rendered just all he asked for; and I couldn't do anything better, could I? [I think not.] He was of a pious turn. He said that I was once, but I could not say I got to be Spiritualist, and I was just as sane enough now. I think I was sane then. We had a very quiet difference of opinion. I held to my way, and he held to his. And he said—the last thing he said to me was this: "Well, brother William, I hope that in all your wild fancies you won't forget what is due to your God." I don't think I ever did. I think I rendered just all he asked for; and I couldn't do anything better, could I? [I think not.] He was of a pious turn. He said that I was once, but I could not say I got to be Spiritualist, and I was just as sane enough now. I think I was sane then. We had a very quiet difference of opinion. I held to my way, and he held to his. And he said—the last thing he said to me was this: "Well, brother William, I hope that in all your wild fancies you won't forget what is due to your God." I don't think I ever did. I think I rendered just all he asked for; and I couldn't do anything better, could I? [I think not.] He was of a pious turn. He said that I was once, but I could not say I got to be Spiritualist, and I was just as sane enough now. I think I was sane then. We had a very quiet difference of opinion. I held to my way, and he held to his. And he said—the last thing he said to me was this: "Well, brother William, I hope that in all your wild fancies you won't forget what is due to your God." I don't think I ever did. I think I rendered just all he asked for; and I couldn't do anything better, could I? [I think not.] He was of a pious turn. He said that I was once, but I could not say I got to be Spiritualist, and I was just as sane enough now. I think I was sane then. We had a very quiet difference of opinion. I held to my way, and he held to his. And he said—the last thing he said to me was this: "Well, brother William, I hope that in all your wild fancies you won't forget what is due to your God."

