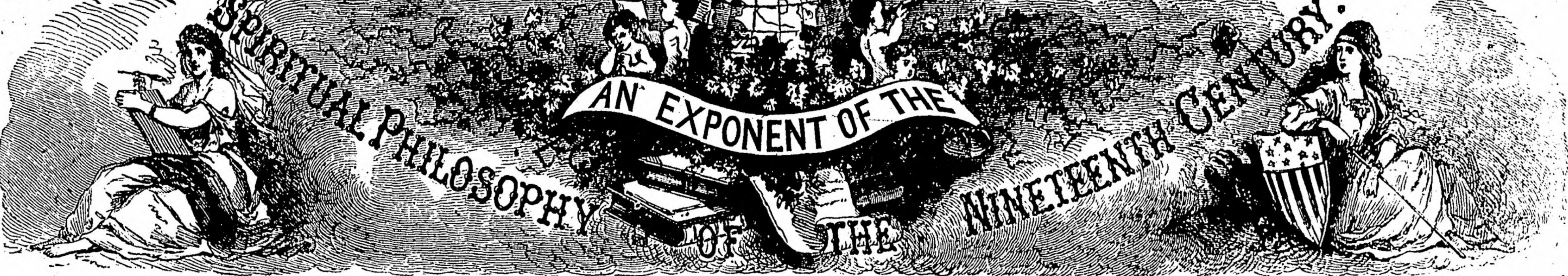


BANNER OF LIGHT.



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For Spirit Message Department see Sixth Page.

AN OPEN VISION.

BY JOHN WETHERBEE.

(Our exuberant brother, John Wetherbee, has had a dream, which blossomed under the influence of his waking pen into a bunch of verses. He has a humorous way of telling his experiences, whether real or imaginary, and this instance is peculiarly his; he need not have put his name to it for the sake of recognition. Our brother is addicted to levity, but he has nevertheless a profound respect for the "shadows" that pass over us from the spirit-world. This effort being some what mixed, he printed it in the "Commonwealth," from which we copy it, for the sake of some of the spiritual points in it, which are good, and we wish they had appeared in a more sober setting; but in that case it would hardly have been his.)

John Cox and I were on the crowded street,
Seeing the people passing to and fro;
He was expecting, so was I, to meet
A Mrs. Plummer, whom I used to know.

She had emigrated to parts unknown;
I had not seen her for many a year;
Cox said she most bewitchingly had grown,
And told me, also, she was staying here.

When I knew her, her name was Fanny Fox,
She married Plummer twenty years ago—
And now, as widow, had her eye on Cox,
And she was willing that it should be so.

As maiden she was slim and rather fair,
Of ready speech, and bright as morning sky;
She had some draybacks, such as reddish hair,
And slight strabismus in her soft blue eye.

She had some property, but not enough
To neutralize with me her hair and eyes,
For I was made of sentimental stuff,
Lucky for her that some thought otherwise.

I let her slide; so others seemed to, too,
And she was maiden twelve long years and more,
When, close on thirty, but labelled twenty-four,
She took with Plummer, who was fifty-two.

He died and left her rich—just then said Cox,
"Look! here she comes!" I saw, with some surprise,
A splendid woman, scarce a trace of Fox,
Or reddish hair, or strabismic eyes.

A score of years had turned her red hair gray,
In correlation silver-set her face;
Thus placed in better light her features gay,
She shewed the staidness as an added grace.

Has one ne'er seen an eye so slight oblique
It gave a coaxing look to beauty's pride—
An added fascination, so to speak?
Well, such was Fanny's from her autumn side.

Time usually makes its mark on women's faces,
Its record, also, otherwise than there—
With the ripe fruit, or wrinkles in places;
But this fair woman was exception rare.

Treading on the heels of the harvest moon,
Comes the joyous time, called "Indian summer,"
Surpassing oft the balmy air of June—
It now seemed present—as Mrs. Plummer.

Her skin was soft, her face was full and fair,
So lighted up with hope and pleasure;
In short, so youthful, fresh and debonaire,
I envied Cox this double treasure.

Her hair, I said, was glossy silver-grey,
Hanging down in curls, in rich profusion;
With brinks and twists, some carelessly astray,
But all her own hair, no substitution.

She wore it short in front, carelessly curled,
As present fashion and taste had taught her;
It listened in bunches, the way 'twas twirled,
Like moonbeams reflected in rippling water.

Now, having seen Mrs. Plummer's tresses—
The silver setting to a face so fair,
I nipped seemed young girls and their carresses,
And spoiled my taste for cheaper shades of hair.

The experience which is here related,
When I awoke, I found was but a dream;
But based on facts, in part, as they are stated,
And fancies too, which may be what they seem.

It was a dreary place, all sand and rocks;
How I came there this record does not tell;
But I was talking with the late John Cox—
The grave had closed on him, I knew full well.

How "sand and rocks" became a crowded street,
How other changes that in dreams occur,
How one without surprise the dead can meet
As things of course, 'tis needless to refer.

It did not seem irrational or queer
To thus confabulate in common speech
With this old friend, who had been dead a year—
Strange things these dreams, and sometimes wisdom teach.

Cox spoke of death as one would emigration;
Told me of people living "over there,"
Advised me to quit this rough location,
But adding, "I was safe most anywhere."

In this connection, many things he stated,
Did time permit and my memory recall;
But Mrs. Plummer's story, here related,
Has interested me the most of all.

For she, as well as Cox, had long been dead;
Her flesh and bones were turning into clay;
That radiant face and silver-mounted head
Seem now her portrait as she looks to-day.

It was, upon reflection, I feel impressed,
A spirit-picture that this dream unfolded;
Spirit-ladies, then, are elegantly dressed,
And very handsome there as they grow old.

SPES EST VALES.

BY JOHN G. SAXE.

There is a dogma of the ancient sages—
No noble human thought,
However buried in the dust of ages,
Can ever come to naught.

With kindred faith that knows no base defection,
Beyond the sage's scope,
I see, after the final resurrection
Of every glorious hope.

I see as parcel of a new creation,
The beatific hour
When every bud of lofty aspiration
Shall blossom into flower.

We are not mocked; it was not in derision
God made our spirits free;
Our brightest hopes are but the dim prevision
Of blessings that shall be.

When they who lovingly have hoped and trusted,
Despite some transient fears,
Shall see life's jarring elements adjusted,
And rounded into spheres.

The rays of happiness, like those of light, are
Colorless when unbroken.—Longfellow.

Spiritualism Abroad.

National Jubilee Conference of Progressive Spiritualists at Darlington, Eng.

The London Medium and Daybreak—J. Burns, publisher—comes to us for Sept. 6th, increased to double its usual size, and giving a full report of the proceedings at the above-named place, held in the Lecture-Room, Central Hall, on Tuesday and Wednesday, July 30th and 31st.

The opening session commenced with the singing of a hymn by the audience, and an impressive invocation by G. R. Hinde, after which the Secretary, Mark Fooks, read the call for the meeting, and N. Kilburn, Jr., of Bishop Auckland, was elected Chairman by acclamation. An address followed from the President, in which he favored organization for the promulgation of the central idea of spirit communion on which all were agreed, and desired Spiritualists to show the good of their faith in their daily example.

Mr. James Burns then delivered an address, reviewing the progress of the spiritual movement in the United Kingdom during the last seven years. He referred, in introducing his subject, to the gradual development of knowledge in the various departments of Nature—such as astronomy, geology, physiology, phonology, etc.—which had been the necessary precursors of the coming of Spiritualism among men. He then proceeded to trace the development of spirit communion in England, and its lessons, under nine distinctive headings, or stages. After recurring to the fact that "two or three ages ago" the manifestations of spirit intelligence "were regarded as witchcraft, and carefully stamped out" by cruel persecutions, he said the first difficulty to be assailed in disengaging from the dominion of authority the facts of man's spiritual existence, and establishing them upon the basis of their own inherent validity, was the foregone conclusion of science, with its self-sufficient postulates as to the law of gravitation, the properties of matter and natural forces.

"The levitation of a table, the spirit-rap, explode the infallibility of scientific opinion; at which event the rejoicing is mutually participated in by the Spiritualist and the Religionist. The latter rejoices to see his old enemy, science, come in for his share of defeat, and looks upon Spiritualism as a useful ally of religion, if kept in proper check and leveled exclusively at the hard head of materialistic skepticism.

"This is the first stage of Spiritualism, and the ground upon which it was almost exclusively advanced seven years ago. The man who admitted the facts, even though he was insane enough to attribute them to the 'Devil,' was considered a useful ally. * * * The second stage of investigation discovers tests of identity, and arrives at the certainty of continued individuality after death. This stage opens up a much wider field, and leads to other important questions more revolutionary in their character, and therefore more tenaciously opposed by conservatism and superstition, and less likely to be faithfully investigated and freely endorsed. * * * No sooner is an inquirer satisfied by adequate tests that he is in communion with a 'real' and trusted friend, than he is desirous of gaining some information relative to the spirit-world and those who inhabit it, and thus he enters upon the third stage of the subject. Even the seemingly trivial question, 'Are you happy?' leads behind it queries of the gravest importance: In what does happiness consist? and what are the circumstances that conduce to it? What is heaven and what is hell? This enlarges the inquiry into a fourth stage—the progressive life of spirits after death."

After speaking of the revelations of spirit intelligence concerning the after state, that they are human still, and accordingly subject to all the influences and means of growth which distinguish man as a rational and finite being, and that the church ideas concerning salvation and kindred subjects are erroneous, he says (as reported) that the religious party, now feeling the wound, which they so gladly hailed when inflicted on the scientific, at once denounce the Spiritualist as an "infidel," an "atheist," "the anti-christ," etc.

A fifth stage is now reached, and the Spiritualist holds of the religious records and points out that he is the legitimate successor and true follower of the religious chieftains of the past, and is engaged in performing the same duty for his age and country as the former Spiritualists did for theirs. He denies that this spiritual power is peculiar to any dispensation or sect calling themselves after any presumed leader or supposed dispensation, but that the spiritual powers of man are universal, as are his other powers, manifesting themselves in the various departments of knowledge, and the law of development. * * * At this point of development the Spiritualist begins to feel the want of association, and hence he organizes religious meetings, Sunday services, and convenes lectures for the maintenance of the truths of Spiritualism, and to rebut the errors and insinuations of his religious opponents. Those who have been enabled to travel thus far have almost lost sight of the physical phenomena as an end, yet regard them as valuable means—as the necessary first stage by which minds of a certain class, utterly ignorant of the subject, must approach the higher truths of Spiritualism. Having taken such a bold stand, and found that the vexed problem of 'Salvation' means progress, growth, unfoldment, the Spiritualist is ready to enter upon the sixth stage, and discuss the knotty point designated in theological language by the term 'Sin.' This is, in other words, the relations of earth-life to spirit-life, or the spiritual consequences which man contracts during his sojourn in the flesh."

The inquirer, pushing further his explorations for knowledge and scientific facts of various kinds, now reaches the seventh stage of investigation as a spiritual student:

The theorem may be thus stated: the conditions of earth-life as congenial or otherwise to spirit-growth. To work it out, he is forced to become an anthropologist, and study man scientifically. * * * The laws of marriage and parentage, of diet and hygiene, of work and repose, of thought and action, are eagerly canvassed by him, and he is carried onward to the eighth stage of his progress, and becomes a philanthropist and reformer. He finds that the Creator, in forming the universe, has supplied man with all he requires for his development and consequent happiness, and that all should enjoy such opportunities as they require for knowing the truth and practicing it in their lives. But this position, however desirable it may appear at first sight, is a most uncomfortable one. Having assumed it, the Spiritualist is not only scorned by the scientist and per-

secuted by the Church, but he is denounced by the world as a dangerous innovator, setting class against class, interfering with lucrative trades and professions, and even fomenting social discontent and revolution. It need not be a matter of surprise that but few Spiritualists reach this stage, or have intellect and courage enough to maintain the fearful contests which it involves. * * *

United with these eight features of Spiritualism, and yet overreaching, enriching, and directing the whole to useful issues, is a ninth stage—that of reason, liberty and faith. It embraces religion in its highest meaning, being absolute and trusting reliance upon the institutions of the universe—or, as some would phrase it, the wisdom and goodness of God—for supplying everything that the human soul can require in its eternal pilgrimage. This kind of Spiritualism knows no other God, and appeals to no other revelation; but, in a spirit of true humility, bends all its purposes in harmony with the divine will as expressed in the laws and constitution of being. This presented, Spiritualism is not only a science, a philosophy, but a life, the details of which each man must work out for himself; and hence the necessity for the widest freedom of thought and action. But this freedom would soon degenerate into licentiousness, and this faith evaporate into fanaticism, unless the principle of reason also held sway."

After referring to the "bolsterous scorn" which greeted the first convention, seven years ago, even from Spiritualists themselves, he says: "British Progressive Spiritualism was founded on the immutable rock of truth; and, having inherent vitality, it grew in strength as it struggled with opposition, like a young oak consolidating its fibres as it wrestles with the winds. It is now the form in which Spiritualism makes itself most prominently visible in this country."

"The history of the last seven years is a spiritual history. It is not to be counted in events, dates, and chronological phenomena, but is read in the onward roll of spiritual life and energy, which, though invisible, underlie and create all external manifestations and phenomena. The progress gained has been an attempt to establish the nine degrees of Spiritualism as a veritable fact in the working of the movement, and the effort has been so far successful. Seven years ago the battle was for principles—freedom, truth; now our business is to discuss means. We have become quite practical, so much so that there is no desire to refute principles, but an earnest wish to apply them to the enlightenment of the people and the progress of our movement. Our work is educational, and demands cooperation, mutual aid, organization."

He then gives a rescript of the services of Emma Hardinge in England, saying, among other things: "Her great work on 'The History of Spiritualism' has been universally read, and a committee placed over one hundred copies in public libraries, and her lectures in London were printed weekly and disseminated throughout the empire, thus giving her an audience of thousands. The Davenport Brothers have visited our shores, and demonstrated incontestably the fact of spiritual manifestations. The Children's Progressive Lyceum movement found refuge amongst us, and has proved the most durable of all. In every district forms of organization. Mr. J. M. Peebles came to us and showed that Spiritualism could supply Sunday exercise and religious teaching of the highest order. Sunday meetings, not only in London, but in all parts of the country, have since become a feature of the movement. British mediumship has achieved some of the grandest results which have occurred in the history of Spiritualism. The phenomena attending the sittings of Messrs. Home and Williams are familiar to all. Mr. Home has assumed a position in intellectual mediumship of which the learned and gifted are glad to avail themselves. The visit of the great healer, Dr. Newton, gave an impetus to that form of mediumship, which is quickly being exercised all over the land, and more publicly in London by Mr. Ashman, Mr. Perrin and others."

After referring in high terms to the work accomplished by Dr. Willis, Miss Lottie Fowler, Mrs. Jennie Ferris Holmes and other American media, and the results attending the course of lectures at St. George's Hall by Gerald Massey, the poet of the people, "of the success of which the most firmly established movement might be proud," Mr. Burns remarks, in passing, that "a countless number of lectures have been delivered under the auspices of the Spiritual Institution in almost every section of the country," and says, in conclusion:

"In this rapid summary one agency must not be overlooked which has turned to advantage all the others. The Progressive Library was an inexperienced but promising child—a babe in arms at the date of our first Convention, seven years ago. Its first public work was to promulgate the report of that convention, and in the course of the second, from which sprang 'Human Nature,' like Minerva armed out of the brain of Jupiter. This monthly magazine gave expression to the various grades of spiritual truth which came under the notice of liberal writers, more particularly recognizing Spiritualism as a department of Anthropological Science, and studying it in connection with other sciences. It was the product of the venerable J. M. Spear for America. It was suggested that the 'London Spiritual Institution,' which that aged apostle and Mrs. C. H. Spear attempted to form, should be added to the Progressive Library. The removal of that Institution to 15 Southampton Row, soon followed, which gave Spiritualism a home, and an open door through which have since streamed thousands of inquirers to ask questions, procure documents, and witness phenomena of various kinds. The desire for inter-communion and organization became so urgent that upwards of two years ago 'Daybreak,' a monthly paper, was turned into a weekly under the title of 'The Medium and Daybreak.' It has been the most successful and widely circulated of any publication devoted to the subject in this country, and exercises a marked and beneficial influence on the movement to which it unreservedly belongs. It is a kind of weekly parliament, in which all who have anything to say for the benefit of the movement have full liberty to speak. News are promptly recorded, and the facts and teachings of Spiritualism heralded abroad with accuracy and dispatch. The career of 'The Medium' has been more particularly characterized by its efforts in leading to organization, and for the encouragement it has extended to all who work for the consolidation of the movement."

The other publications, which do not so particularly identify themselves with the movement as expounded in the foregoing remarks, are the 'Spiritual Magazine,' established in 1860, and a continuation of the 'Spiritual Telegraph,' published at Kington in the early days of the movement. It has done a very important work in connection with Spiritualism. 'The Spiritualist' was established nearly three years ago, and is a monthly publication recording facts as they occur at seances, and publishing a careful selection of matter calculated to establish the facts of Spiritualism in the minds of non-Spiritualists. 'The Christian Spiritualist' is now in its second year, and its nature may be surmised from its title.

Such is a brief and therefore imperfect review of recent progress, but withal eminently satisfactory, presenting results which few could have hoped for seven years ago; nor should we overlook the labors which have been undertaken by those who claim to be outside of the pale of our movement. The onerous investigations of the Dialectical Society's Committee constituted an epoch in the progress of the movement. The Committee's labors have been valuably supplemented by the published experiments of Mr. Crookes and the pamphlets issued by Mr. Sergeant Cox, 'M.P.' and others. By these auxiliaries the well-informed public generally have been led to accept the phenomena as fact, which is the first and indispensable stage in spiritual progress. Well may we call this our jubilee, for surely there is scope for rejoicing and encouragement to work with heart, soul and intellect for the more perfect furtherance of those truths so dear to us all, and so indispensable to the progress and happiness of mankind."

Reports of progress in their localities were then made by Messrs. John Chapman and—Meredith for Liverpool; the Chairman for Bishop Auckland, and Messrs. Spencer and Cameron for Leyburn, after which the meeting adjourned.

The afternoon session was devoted to the consideration of an article of the regular business arranged for the Convention, which read as follows: "Official moral approval of the Conference of the conduct of public mediums relative to charges for admission to seances, and the manner of conducting the same." The following resolution, introduced by D. Richmond, was, after remarks by Dr. Anderson, J. Burns and Messrs. Richmond, Kilburn and Meredith, unanimously adopted:

"That under existing circumstances, this Conference is in duty bound to extend, and hereby does extend, its approval and moral support to public mediums engaged in the propagation of Spiritualism who are obliged to charge for admission to seances, and also to declare that, a fairly conducted seance, that is, according to custom or stipulation, whatever may be the result, removes any further responsibility."

The following items of business recorded in the programme of the Convention were then fully discussed by the meeting: first, consideration of the present standing of the "National Progressive Spiritual Institution," and, second, suggestions for its future improvement and pecuniary assistance. The importance of the Institution and the good work accomplished by Mr. Burns were borne witness to by a majority of the speakers, and the following series of resolutions passed, providing ways and means for the aid of the Institution, and its organ, the Medium and Daybreak:

Resolved, That the following be recommended by this Conference to all Spiritualists for practical use, in aid of the National Progressive Spiritual Institution in London, including the Medium as its organ.

1st, That collectors of funds be nominated by the Secretary of the Institution (volunteer collectors may be accepted in any and in every district on the earth; and that collectors so appointed are authorized to receive weekly or other contributions, and also gifts, anonymous or otherwise; which funds should be recorded under date in a suitable cash-book.

2d, That remittance to the order of the National Institution be made as frequently as prudent, which, on receipt, should be recorded under date to the credit of the sender.

3d, That the Secretary of the Institution report quarterly, (or oftener, if he think it best), through the medium, or privately, the amount or total of funds raised or received from all voluntary sources, and such other items of information as he might deem right, which would enable the collectors to meet their subscribers and donors, and to inform them of the prosperity (or otherwise) of the National Institution.

4th, A guarantee fund of annual subscribers may be established in correspondence with the Secretary of the Institution.

During the discussion, the following pithy sentences fell from the lips of Mr. Burns, regarding the strictures laid upon his course by those not agreeing with some of the ideas advanced or methods followed by him, which have the true ring in them:

"It seems very curious that I should be made answerable to people who hold so little 'stock' in the concern. Who amongst you was it that planned this Institution and gave me the distinguished honor and privilege of directing it? Which of you found me talents, stock and connection? Verily, with the aid of my spirit friends and a few private helpers I have done all this myself, and to them alone and my own conscience am I to any degree amenable. Those who have got their eyes only a few inches above the church or chapel pew find fault with the Spiritual Institution and the Medium because the half-and-half views of those who are more sectarian than Spiritualists are not advocated in that publication and represented in the Institution. To such I have to say that neither Spiritualism nor its agencies are the product of either church or chapel, or of Christianity even, but the work of the angel-world. I am their servant, not the servant of sectarianism, even in its most diluted forms. The whole plan and workings of the Spiritual Institution have been imparted by the spirit-world to aid them in effecting their benevolent designs on mankind. Our duty is simply to supply them with the conditions—the means of paying for the necessary accessories in working out their plans. The Spiritual Institution is just like any other spiritual manifestations. The spiritual ideas imparted are of no avail unless there are the necessary conditions whereby they may manifest themselves. To supply these conditions I have given my all—time, talents, opportunities, health, and self-sacrifice even—so that I have nothing more to sacrifice, and I am ready to call round on my better situated brethren, barefooted, if necessary, and ask them to do their part and duty in this work. * * *

I do not take the least umbrage at the criticisms and suggestions that have been advanced in this discussion. I am happy to think that they come from friends—not only to Spiritualism, but to me, personally—and the warmest supporters of the Institution. I thank them for their remarks, which have given me an opportunity to make statements which may be of wide use. * * *

My past acts are the best defence of my personal motives in the matter. I do not want to gain wealth. If I had £10,000 per annum I would spend it all in human progress. What I have I give freely, and hope thereby to merit the cooperation and cordial aid of those who by talent and means are far better able to promote this work than I am myself."

On the evening of Tuesday, two seances occurred, one in the lecture hall, at which all attending the Conference were present, many mediums being controlled; and the other a smaller one, held after the adjournment of the first, at the residence of Mr. Hinde.

At the Wednesday morning session, after singing and an invocation, the Secretary stated that he was in receipt of letters from Rev. Fred. R. Young, of Swindon, regretting his inability to be present, owing to the occurrence of his church festival, and from R. H. Fryce, of Lamoore, and Mrs. Lavina Jones, of Bradford-on-Avon, giving expression to the same feeling at being obliged to remain away. The following was then unanimously adopted by the meeting:

Resolved, That this Conference earnestly calls the attention of all Spiritualists to the paramount importance of private and family circles, believing that, to all who desire to arrive at a knowledge and realization of spiritual truth, the family and private circle are as necessary to success as are the class-room of the scholar and the laboratory of the chemist, in their respective departments of learning."

During the discussion previous to its adoption, remarks were offered by Messrs. Kilburn, Richmond, Shackleton, Burns, Meredith, Stones, Cameron, Gardiner, Fooks, Hinde, Mrs. Fawcett and Mrs. Makdougall Gregory—much valuable information regarding the spiritual experiences of the parties being related by them.

In the afternoon, after due deliberation, the Conference adopted severally the following series as its view concerning the matters embodied:

Resolved, That, as the next step in progress after the family circle, this Conference earnestly recommends the order of weekly conferences as a means normally to develop and unite Spiritualists. By canvassing and conversing about the facts and the principles of Spiritualism, etc., the mind is developed and the power of expression increased, preparatory to more perfect cooperation or assistance efforts to support and extend the cause in the lecture-room, etc.

Resolved, That, as a third degree of society, progress, the Conference most cordially approves and recommends to every district services in public halls or meeting-rooms, open to attendance by the general public.

Resolved, That this Conference with great pleasure calls the attention of all Spiritualists to the subject of healing mediums as a most desirable effort to be sought after and cultivated, not only for the blessings which it affords to the afflicted, but also as a means of extending a knowledge of Spiritualism to mankind.

Resolved, That this Conference most cordially approves of Lyceums and picnics for the young and for adult Spiritualists.

Resolved, That this Conference calls the attention of Spiritualists in every district to the great importance of establishing branch progressive lyceums, and of holding seances, or depots, for the sale of Spiritualist literature.

The report, which certainly exhibits a hopeful view of the activity of liberal sentiment in England, ends as follows:

"After a public tea, a seance took place in the Lecture Hall, at which some physical manifestations were witnessed.

At eight o'clock a numerous and attentive audience met to hear Mr. Burns deliver a lecture

ABOUT SPIRITUALISM.

Syllabus.—Spiritualism as a Matter of History—Its Origin. Spiritualism as an Element in Nature—Its Facts and Phenomena. Spiritualism as Science—Its Means and Methods. Spiritualism as a Reform—Its Tendencies. Spiritualism as a Philosophy—Its View of Existence. Spiritualism in Relation to Religion—Its Influence on the Individual.

The lecture seemed to be received with great attention and respect, and as it presented a general review of the whole question, its influence was likely to be of a beneficial nature.

The utmost harmony and good will prevailed during the whole course of the conference, and many excellent observations were made by the speakers, which a report of a practical limit could not contain. All felt that it was a well-spent effort, and highly enjoyable and profitable to the present, and it is hoped that the perusal of the report will in some measure contribute to the instruction of others, and the progress and consolidation of the movement.

The question of holding a conference next year was opened by Mr. Chapman, and as it was considered appropriate that if the Liverpool friends thought well of it, they should call a meeting at their convenience.

The above is but a meagre abstract—when the amount and character of the literary matter spoken and business transacted are taken into consideration—but is all our space will allow. The Medium and Daybreak offers in connection with its report a brief editorial commendation of the movement, from which the following (and closing paragraph of our summary) is an extract:

"The proceedings at Darlington are of the most suggestive description, and the most advanced and useful directions for the development of the movement that have ever been offered. If acted upon, the cause of Spiritualism must be greatly and permanently promoted."

Recreation.

A great neglected need of our day is that of recreation. Play is the counterpart of work. It is a recuperative process. We are too apt to think that play is appropriate for children only; though in fact it is a fault of those who have the care of children, that they discourage rather than encourage play in them. The father and mother tell their young son to be a man, and the young girl to be a lady, when they ought to be nothing but children, to have their childlike ways and thoughts encouraged rather than repressed. The girl and the boy at twenty should be playful, hilarious, childlike; and, indeed, this should be the case with persons at thirty and forty and fifty years of age. A youthful, playful spirit imparts elasticity and vigor to the body, adorns the character, and keeps the heart young; and such spirit can be cultivated. They who never take pains to have cheerful society, to find occasion for a laugh, or for engaging in amusements and recreation, will necessarily grow demure and sedate, if not morose, and be old before their time. It would be vastly better for all concerned, if it were customary with us for the old and young to mingle together in their social recreations. The former would thereby be made younger and happier, and the latter would be saved from many mistakes and follies which harm them.—Dr. H. N. Austin.

The strongest argument in favor of the co-education of the sexes is afforded by the way in which the young women acquit themselves in the colleges to which they have been admitted. Oberlin, Antioch, and Michigan Universities, all bear testimony to the good scholarship, modesty and fidelity of their female pupils, and their excellent influence upon the manners and morals of the other sex. A single fact like this outweighs a world of fears.

THE HARMONIAL CYCLOPEDIA: A Repository of Useful Knowledge Concerning Things and Ideas PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE. Prepared expressly for the Banner of Light, BY ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS.

ARTICLE V.

Conception.—This term is applicable to the formation of a distinct thought within the mind. You first feel; then you perceive, or intellectually recognize the feeling; lastly, your mind develops a definite idea. In this process nothing but the final act is entitled to be called a "conception." And considering the vast sum of feelings which never attain to perception, and considering also the thousands of millions of perceptions which never grow into a definite existence within the mind, one may say that the human brain frequently commits the sin of abortion. A conceptualist is a person gifted with mental productivity; one who forms distinct, positive, radical ideas; inclined to aphorism and epigram, impelled to write laudatory sentiments and proverbs, and to provoke definite thought in others.

The term, however, is more frequently applied to the first formation of a fetus in the womb. Nothing can be more wonderful than such a conception, unless it be the more interior mental conception which prefigures and comprehends the perfect naturalness of the constantly recurring miracle. In religion a monoistism is taught called "Miraculous Conception"—that is, as theologically defined, a conception "without sin"—which, to tell the plain truth, is no better than sin without conception. For is it not written (see Gen. iii.) "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception?" What, then, shall we say of these many Christian women whose family consists of husband and relatives, having children adopted from the community or hospital? Do not these lady Christians perform the miracle of sin without conception? The Romish dogma is solemnly proclaimed "Conception without sin," which is miraculous, beyond parallel, unless we except the greater miracle of popular credulity. For what can be more absolutely wonderful, incredible, astounding, miraculous than the fact that intelligent men and women in the nineteenth century profess sincerely to believe in a doctrine so contrary to everything known in thousands of generations of human experience? A theology which needs such a prop is weak in its very foundation. But here we are called to remember that Nature

"Count nothing that she meets with base,
But lives and loves in everything."

In the light of which principle we conceive of a conception that is perfectly "sinless"—namely: When the human heart conceives that its love is the foundation of the Kingdom of righteousness; or, when the human mind conceives that wisdom is the practical form of love; or, when a human being conceives that the harmonious growth and practice of love and wisdom is heaven, here or hereafter.

And there is yet another "miraculous conception" to which I would call your feelings and perceptions—namely: When a true-hearted, faithful, well-balanced woman reproduces the divine image, and likeness in the physical constitution and mental attributes of her offspring. Anything less than this perfection manifested in reproduction, must be defined and denominated as a sin without conception, and as an abortion, also, if not physically it surely is in the grand sense, to which the principles of love and wisdom incessantly point, and in which they sublimely converge and concentrate.

Creation.—The human mind is obedient to the inherent laws, both physical and moral, upon which its existence is founded. These laws incite neither beginnings nor terminations in the realm of the infinite.

The positively knowable is that the mind constitutionally rejects all ideas of creation—or, the elaboration of something from nothing. True, in a popular religious work, it is recorded: "I form the light, and I create darkness; I make peace, and I create evil: I, the Lord, do all these things." But who does not at once perceive that this language is employed by a medium who believed himself inspired to declare the mind of God? What mind, then, and obedient to its own inherent laws of reasoning, can admit that an Almighty maker created evil out of nothing? Or, that He "created darkness?" Or, who believes that a wise and good Deity would create either darkness or evil? Light, darkness, cold, heat—these are not creations; are not entities or things—they are strictly different forms or conditions of motion among atoms. We are thus forced to reason against the theological doctrine by fundamental laws fixed in the constitution of the mind. There is a law of necessity which insists upon philosophical opposition to the theory of special creation.

"It must be so, Plato; thou reasonest well;
'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us."

And get the faint begins! Its reasonings start from a point of departure from an assumed foundation, behind or beneath which all thinking is impossible. Thus we begin, so to speak, from the confines of the infinitude of the "unknowable," and thence reason ourselves into an education, which positively precludes the doctrine of special creation.

Why the mind cannot think of something proceeding from nothing is, because the mind itself is substance, and therefore obeys the laws of substance. To hear a sound consumes one-fifth of a second; to see an object, one-sixth of a second; to feel, one-seventh of a second. By experiments it has been ascertained that, on an average, no mind can think a thought in less than one-twenty-sixth of a second; while one-seventieth of a second is the average time consumed in the act of willing. This rule is not without exceptions.

The chemical and mechanical laws and conditions under which the mind exists and acts, render all conceptions of "something from nothing" impossible, simply because it is absolutely unthinkable. Persons can learn the absurdity thoughtlessly, and can as thoughtlessly impart it through schoolbooks and Bible classes to their children, and so perpetuate the hypothesis of a supernatural creation from generation to generation. But the inherent laws of mind—the Divinity that stirs within us—incessantly proclaim the eternal existence of those antipodal entities called Mind and Matter.

Calumny.—There are social cynics who think evil, and that continually, of persons concerning whom they secretly see something either to envy or covet. Jealousy and malice are the guests of their unhappy hearts. And there are social assassins who delight in stabbing the character of persons who are faithful to their obligations and successful in the pursuits among men. Your integrity and success constitute the chief offence in the sight of your enemies. The slanderer is a calumniator of the most dangerous type. To neutralize his poison within you, and to overcome the evil he has done you in society by living a righteous life, is the hardest trial as it is the truest answer. Anything less divine in your spirit and treatment will make him glad and you sorrowful.

Books.—No production of the human mind is so universally read as "The Arabian Nights' En-

tertainments." Why? Because its sumptuousness of imagination in the realm of beauty, its simplicity of style, and its unobtrusiveness of spiritual things and invisible beings, excite at once the feelings, the thinking faculties, the curiosity, the intuition, and the religious sensibilities. The great work of Bunyan, "Pilgrim's Progress," is also exceedingly popular because it possesses and excites many of the same elements.

Books, written without true inspiration, are ephemeral. A true book, whether novel or bible, is a revelation; it makes a fresh disclosure of life and truth to the common feelings and reason; and sincerely reading it, is like drawing a deep breath in the sweet atmosphere of good souls.

The Bible, with all its details and desultory miscellany, has fascinated and fed simple religious natures for centuries. So Shakespeare has been the fountain-source of literature to the poetical and the scientific. The cultivated Chinese, clinging to Confucius, the spiritually minded of all nations to Plato; the rightly religious of the East to the Koran; because, to explain in a word, in the writings of these dwell that wonderful influence called "inspiration."

Sweet harmonies and the personal magnificence of inhabitants in celestial lands, constitute the indescribable charm which seizes upon you like an enchantment. Oh! the glory and beauty of inspired books! They are the sunny streams which burst from diamond fountains; they are forest trees full of song-birds, or love-letters, written by the immortal hand of truth. The classic streams and tranquil groves, haunted by spirits from the starry realms, are like books of inspiration. There is no loftier sphere than that where thought is free to soar and mingle with what is eternal and divine.

Read a book that compels you to think. It is criminal to waste hours and memory over pages filled with words without inspiration. A fable that will make you think, is better than a fact mechanically told, or than a sermon, full of gain and artificial grace, but destitute of that essential spirit which giveth life. Avoid books and shun preachers who exhaust your fancy. When you meet a person, although your best neighbor's friend, who darkens your hopes, who deplores your generous attempts, and who depopulates your brain of thoughts—then beware! Beware, also, of books which save you the labor of thinking. Shakespeare, Milton, Bacon, Spenser, Huxley, Darwin—these men make you feel and think; therefore they are your friends in books; they do for you what sunshine, seed, storms, fools, industry, do for the gardens and harvest-fields. Have certain hours and seasons dedicated sacredly to reading and growth. Go to your best book as to an angel full of speech; open your heart, swing wide the door of your reason; and welcome whatever of good you find in the white leaves of books.

Ancestry.—Genealogical trees usually flourish most luxuriantly in poor soil. It is hazardous to sound the stream of families. The source is frequently too near the discoveries of Darwin. Family and personal pride, resting on the foundation of ancestors, is destitute of principle. It is well, for scientific ends, to look into the past, as it may be justifiable in order to settle property questions in dispute, but never to establish one's title to respectability. Let blood "tell" in present merit, not in the reputation and success of a long-departed progenitor.

The investigations of anthropologists have already exposed the flimsy foundations of family genealogies. Manhood is preceded by youth and childhood, and the whole superstructure rests on infancy and the protoplasmic cells of yet earlier months; so the present races of the human family come from barbarians and savages, our only ancestors in the far past, about whom the least that is said is the better, except for the advancement of science and the equal distribution of common sense.

The time is coming when to be known as the descendant of so-called "nobility" will be as much of a disgrace as to be known as one who "never worked." To be received in society as worthy because of those who bore you, is as false in principle as to expect a situation in paradise because of your belief in the catechism's definition of a redeemer. False foundations are crumbling before the Darwinian army; and woe to all family pride and ancestral trees which pray for recognition and fresh fertilization. There's a long spine within the constitution of animal life—an extension of vertebrae far down the back of human history—which is too remote from the head of the race to admit of fashionable adornments. This great rear organization, to speak candidly, is the main root of your ancestral tree. Humility begins with this fundamental discovery, made partially palatable by the scriptures of Wallace, and subsequently strongly enforced by the facts of Darwin, that

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them as we may."
Ancestral halls begin to smell mouldy, because the minute animal formations of progress are creeping out from the stale blood of royal families. It will soon be more essential to have a character than to have had a royal grandmother. I think personal excellence will pass for more than the received opinion that you are really the son of your own father. It is now vexatious to proud persons to be referred to as the husband of the celebrated Madame G.—T.—or as the wife of the distinguished General W.—J.—; because individualized existence and intrinsic merit have steadily appreciated in the value, until the long-looked-for right has come "uppermost," compelling the pride of ancestry to die "amid its worshippers."

Aphelion, spiritual.—In astronomy this term signifies, the opposite of the word perihelion—"the point in a planet's orbit which is most distant from the sun." Here, however, the phrase is employed to embody a rather startling thought; that there is a point in the orbit of humanity which is most distant, as there is in its orbit a point of closest proximity to the sunshine and warmth of the spiritual universe.

In this vast orbit, let it be remembered, mankind revolve and evolve until they approach the point of perihelion. At this place, and at this moment, the heavens are opened. Its inhabitants are seen and regarded familiarly as our next-door neighbors. There is a consequential flood-tide in the religious world. The Kingdom of heaven seems to be at hand. Prophetic tongues say, "Verily, this generation shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled." A Pentecostal era is upon all susceptible souls, flooding them with songs, exhortations, healing, and power to speak in unknown tongues. Bright and powerful ambassadors of God's overshadowing grace float in with every breath. With Charles Wesley, the happy ones sing—

"Angels, wherever we go, attend
Our steps, whatever we bid;
With watchful care their charge defend,
And evil turn aside."

The spiritual flood rolls on, on, on, until even the cold and indifferent of society awake and shout for joy. Visions, trances, inspirations, revelations become frequent among the nuns in convents, and great excitement prevails wherever there are impressive religious souls. The conviction becomes universal that the "Second Coming"

is at hand; that the "Great Day" is soon to boil over the horizon; that old things are to pass away, and "all things become new." Prophet and patriot, saint and sage, are now called from their stony homes. They are remembered as the

"Leaders of men who bore the world
Onward, through error dark and fell."

Aid they do return! They assist in the rise, progress, development and expansion of Spiritualism. The times of ancient miracle, the holy season of sacred inspiration, have at last returned. And so it seems that now the wide-open windows of heaven will never be closed again; that the beautiful shower will forever continue, attended with flowers and rainbows immemorial; but, let a change come quietly creeping over the feelings—a change unaccountable and unweelcome—a sort of autumnal and wintry sensation, spreading like a dumb chill over the soul, excluding spiritual enjoyment, lessening the frequency of angels' visits, clouding the eyes of seers with slumber profound, rendering finer sensibilities obtuse and unresponsive.

What cause produced all this change? The answer is, that mankind in their orbit have rotated and thus advanced to the aphelion point; which is a position in the heavens most remote, physically and mentally speaking, from the central society of the Summer-Land. Already the dark internal period produces sad poetic questionings:

"Why come not spirits from the realms of glory
To visit the earth, as in the days of old—
The thrush of ancient wit and song—
To cheer more distant I, 'tis his earthy grove cold?"

We would now ask: If, as many believe, the flood-tide of intercourse with the spiritual universe never ebbs—if there be no "aphelion" as well as perihelion on the orbit in which the race revolves around the zone of the Summer-Land—then, why do all branches of history, and especially of religious history, refer to eras of "general materialism," to "dark ages," when the Kingdom of God seemed to be "shut up?" to an age of "broken lights?" to periods "dark and fell?" Why do we find in the religious history of every nation this aphelion state in spiritual experience,—pointing to a previous period of remembered and worshipped brightness and glory—when angels were literally seen, when miracles were openly performed, and when heavenly wonder were evolved and multiplied on every hand?

In the Divine Drama of History and Civilization, (by Rev. J. Smith) the existence of a thickly populated spiritual world is acknowledged; and also it is admitted that there is a heavy dark veil hanging between the spiritual world and mankind. The angels, he confesses, are not seen as in ages ago, and simply because the great obscuring veil is hanging there, which of necessity renders the future a mere matter of religious faith or intellectual conjecture. In view of this condition of the world, he asks: "Is it not a fair and reasonable supposition to believe that it is possible, for that veil to be withdrawn at any moment, when it may appear fitting to the Creator?" This gentle suggestion of the bare possibility of such a future return of spiritual intercourse, gives emphasis to the thought under consideration. Look, for example, into the religious history of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Persians, Chinese, Japanese, Greeks, Romans, Spaniards, French, English, Americans. You find a period of greatest general spiritual illumination—of which there are in all ages, individual examples and links—succeeded by a subsidence of the experience into a period of general spiritual darkness and gropings—which is the aphelion state of mankind; or rather of some particular portion of the race, which had been in perihelion as regards general religious awakening and manifestations of spirit-power.

Delightful and fascinating as is the conviction that a present blessing will always abide with us, in full blossom, nevertheless, is it not wisdom to anticipate and provide for the approaching seasons of autumn and winter, when no man soweth, when birds fly southward, and when flowers refuse to grow in our beautiful gardens? Perhaps a sincere belief in the possibility that our present riches might "take unto themselves wings and fly away," may have the effect to make us more wise and respectful in the use and enjoyment of our present celestial possessions and privileges.

"La Puella."

We have received from Mrs. H. Bernard Burton, under date of Guise, France, Sept. 16th, an account of her voyage from New York to Havre, (which we have not room to publish,) and her subsequent journeyings in the new Republic, from which we make the following extract concerning "La Puella":

"At Rouen we found comfortable quarters in an English hotel, where one or two of the waiters addressed us in English. Dinner at Hotel d'Hotel was served at six o'clock p. m., and after our repast, and in the pale moonlight, our little company visited the statue of Jeanne d'Arc. In the centre of a square called 'La Place de la Puella,' stands that monument as witness of spirit communion, spirit guidance and spirit-power. As we looked upon the solitary form of the woman with the sword in her hand, and the fagots at her feet that were to be the instrument of her new birth and passage to the 'better land,' her spirit seemed to be near us, and we felt the thrill of her 'immortal eyes,' that seemed to shed tears for France. The place seemed filled with angel presence; we felt that we were indeed in a holy ground."

Troy, N. Y.—Commendatory Resolutions.

DEAR BANNER EDITORS—Having just given the last of a course of ten lectures before the Spiritualists in Lyceum Hall, and feeling the utmost satisfaction because the same have been delivered according to agreement, the subscriber and his wife held a meeting immediately subsequent to the last speech, and the following resolutions were considered and unanimously adopted:

Whereas, The Spiritualists of Troy, having, month after month, for several successive years, listened to a succession of our most talented and inspired speakers, of both sexes; and

Whereas, During the delivery of our ten discourses, they did neither sleep in their pews nor leave the hall until the last song was sung, giving respectful attention at every meeting, whether interested or not; therefore,

1. Resolved, That our gratitude and best wishes go out toward these patient, long-suffering and kindly citizens from this date henceforth; and

2. Resolved, That, after they have lived longer and listened to others who shall succeed us, and after we have sojourned for a time in the foreign country of the native Jerseymen, it will be our pleasure and privilege, if circumstances permit, to return to Troy, and still further reward these people by delivering in their presence a few more of the same sort.

A. J. DAVIS, Chairman.

MARY F. DAVIS, Secretary of Our Meeting.

Troy, N. Y., Sept. 26, 1872.

CUT THIS OUT.—A tea made of chestnut leaves, and drunk in the place of water, is said to cure the most obstinate case of dropsy.

A tea made of ripe or dried whortleberries, and drunk in the place of water, is a sure and speedy cure for a scrofulous difficulty, however bad.

A tea made of peach leaves is a sure cure for a kidney difficulty.

If you look daily into the matter, it will be seen that whatever appears most vagrant and utterly purposeless, turns out in the end to have been impelled the most surely on a preordained and unwavering track.—Hawthorne.

Free Thought.

RECKONING WITH MY REVIEWERS.

EDITORS BANNER OF LIGHT.—In your paper of the date of August 10th, my Definite Proposals are rather freely assailed by a New York correspondent whose nom de guerre is JUSTITIA. The person who therein attempts to subject my propositions to the ordeal of critical analysis, evidently writes in the private interest of certain individuals, and with but slight reference to principles and progress. With what propriety he assumes to deal justly, either with the undersigned or with the subject, will appear in this review of his contribution to your editorial columns. In such a case what are the simple demands of justice? According to Webster commutative justice consists in fair dealing in our mutual intercourse; impartiality of judgment between man and man; equal distribution of right in expressing opinions; fair representation of facts, respecting merit or demerit—in criticism, narration, history, or discourse. As your correspondent does not appear to respect these principles he employs a misnomer in his personal appropriation of Justitia.

After a brief introduction, expressive of the faint praise that, in the poet's conception, has nothing to do with our salvation, Justitia proceeds to enumerate a number of spiritual and other progressive publications, all of which were long since suspended. The extinction of most of these occurred from fourteen to twenty-three years ago; and your correspondent is not only exercised respecting the causes of their untimely departure, but he cannot discover either the necessity or the propriety of supplying their places. The implied inference appears to be, that if all these early periodicals died for want of tangible means of support, all others are likely to share the same fate, with the possible exception of the Banner of Light. But this conclusion does not necessarily follow; and precisely here Justitia is unjust in neglecting to recognize the difference of time, the change of circumstances, the vast increase of numerical strength, and the relative measures of moral and material means at command in the earlier and later stages of our movement. It is a well known fact, that most of the periodicals named were started with little or no foundation in the shape of financial securities. It is not such an experiment that we propose to repeat. It is also to be remembered, that a number of the papers mentioned lived and died when there may have been one Spiritualist where there are now believed to be one hundred. With these facts in view, with what show of reason can Justitia infer, from the early mortality among spiritual periodical publications the inevitable doom of all that shall come hereafter.

If I clearly apprehend the ultimate drift of your correspondent's reasoning, it leads to the singular conclusion, that since the early periodicals devoted to Spiritualism are dead and buried, we must never have any others of a similar, but improved character. Hereafter, in respect to all similar conceptions of the human mind, we must take care that they never reach the crisis of partition; or, otherwise see that they are born in a state of apoplexy. Now as I have no personal interest in strangling new enterprises at their birth, especially when they promise well, I cannot reason after the fashion of Justitia. In my judgment the fact that many good things are either lost, stolen, broken or worn out, is the best possible reason for supplying their places with other things adapted to the same or similar ends. The strongest incentives to the continued propagation of the domestic animals naturally spring from a desire to perfect the several species, and from the known limitations of individual usefulness and life. I should most certainly elude the self-evident fact that men and women keep on dying if required to furnish the most forcible reason for repopulating the world.

It is no part of my business to consider the personal claims of any one in this relation, since I do not believe in the recognition of any such claims at the sacrifice of the public interest. Nor is it proposed to waste words on any question involving an assumed priority of individual rights in an open field, inasmuch as the existence of any such superior prerogatives is altogether hypothetical and visionary. In saying this, let me not be unkind of the just claims of the least of all my brethren. Whether in the relations of public or private life, I would neither intentionally disregard the greatest nor the smallest service of the highest or the humblest man, woman or child. All honor to Messrs. White, Colby and Company, for the deliberate purpose, the calm and undeviating course, the fraternal spirit and the untiring industry they have uniformly displayed. Among the true friends and honest representatives of Spiritualism, I know of none who have more faithfully followed their highest convictions. We may not hold in less estimation the services of many who cannot be named in this connection; and the writer must still cherish the memory of several risen souls, whose living thoughts and noble services appear to have been quite generally forgotten, even before the grass had become green upon their graves. I cannot number those who have boldly stood by "the truth against the world." But honor to all who, from first to last, have labored unselfishly for any just cause.

In saying this, in all sincerity, I do not propose to stuff myself. A sane man will never pluck out the eyes of his understanding that he may grope in darkness and stumble over other people's idols. No one who unites intelligence and moral courage will refrain from the exercise of a just discrimination in whatever most concerns the well-being of society. Painful as the duty may be, it is sometimes the function of justice to condemn. The relative merits of persons, in their public relations, and the comparative value of things, call for the fearless and constant exercise of an honest judgment. And shall the righteous claims of reason and conscience be disputed in the interest of morbid sensibilities and an empty ambition?

Justitia plainly intimates that, in the dissemination of truth and the diffusion of light, certain individuals possess "prior claims" and exclusive privileges. This is not a fact; it is a shallow but mischievous heresy. No one can show a divine commission, or justly claim a royal charter for monopolizing this business. Many a man has quitted his interest in God's moral vineyard; and we know of no one who has a warrant deed of the whole estate. It follows, therefore, that no one is guilty of trespass because he ventures to go to work therein. It is true that selfish people have largely monopolized the surface of the earth, thus inflicting a deep and lasting injury on the race. In the hot pursuit of the interests of national ambition, they may have placed temporary injunctions on the sea; but no one has been crazy enough to set up claims to the exclusive possession of the more ethereal elements of the world. Yet one may as well attempt to bottle up sunbeams and peddle them out to his neighbors, as to assume the possession of "prior claims" the exercise of exclusive rights, or the just inheritance of superior privileges within the realm of mind. Here, at

least, the rights of all are equal. The emphatic exhortation of the great Spiritual Teacher is addressed alike to all—"Let your light shine before men, that they may . . . glorify your Father."

Your correspondent desires to know if I am "unacquainted with the new enterprise of Mrs. Emma Hardinge-Britten," which he innocently presumes to "cover the whole ground" I have in view. My answer is, that, in respect to the matter referred to, I am fully informed, having not only purchased a copy of the first edition of the history of "Modern American Spiritualism," but I am also a subscriber to the Western Star. But does the existence of that luminary make it necessary to place every other light under a bushel? Must we put an extinguisher on the rising stars, and annihilate all the old constellations, that Hepernus may shine alone in her glory? Mrs. Hardinge-Britten certainly has strong claims to public consideration. Among her friends it is unnecessary to speak a word in their defense; but if they require to be vindicated anywhere, she had better not trust the business in the hands of so unwise an advocate as Justitia.

It is distinctly assumed that it can neither be necessary to institute an American Association for the investigation and advancement of the taboos sciences, nor proper to establish a National Spiritual Historical Society on the American continent. Strange to say, the only reason assigned in support of this remarkable assumption is the well-known fact that Mrs. Britten has not only published the initial volume of her "Modern American Spiritualism," but also, that she has the second volume in course of preparation, and a third in contemplation. Precisely what these facts have to do with my proposals, it will puzzle ordinary readers to discover. I cannot see how it is that the publication of a single historical treatise can forever supersede the necessity of further research. Much less can a rational man comprehend how a book shall be made to fill the place of a Scientific Association, composed of a learned multitude of living men and women, assembled from every part of the country to interrogate Nature, and to deliberate on the most significant developments of the age. With about as much propriety one might assume that, because somebody is already running a grist-mill, there can be no rational demand for an insurance company; or that I must not grow an oak in my door-yard because my neighbor has planted a corn-field.

Now there are several reasons why we may not presume that the work referred to will be the ultimate history of Spiritualism in this country. Some of these I do not care to discuss; nor is it necessary, since one alone will amply justify my conclusion. While the future historian may be materially assisted by the labors of Mrs. Britten, it is certain that the Spiritual Movement in America will not terminate until long after she will have completed her task, and we shall all have finished our earthly career. It will be perceived, therefore, that in proposing the organization of an American Society for the collection and authentication of materials for a comprehensive history, I was not looking merely to the present and the immediate future. On the contrary, the work I have in view can not, in the nature of the case, be a creation of to-day. The d'Aubigné of the Spiritual Reformation is probably not born, and certainly will not write before the next century.

The apprehension of several of your correspondents that the success of the enterprise, I have projected must inevitably ruin all the other parties engaged in the publication and sale of Spiritual papers and books, has no solid foundation either in fact or reason. Such a conclusion is not sustained by common experience in any other department of business. The publication of an uninterrupted series of choice books, of wider scope and variety, and covering all the principles and processes of reform, could not possibly interfere with the interests of any one except the enemies of truth. On the contrary, such a series would inevitably find many readers who at present pay little or no attention to spiritual literature; and the Banner of Light office would naturally become the Eastern center or depot from which they would be distributed throughout New England. The notion, therefore, that the publication of a Standard Library, covering all the phases and aspects of progressive thought and redeeming labor, would limit the sale of any valuable books already extant, or diminish the circulation of any weekly paper, must be classed with the vagaries of illogical minds, or take its place among the phantoms that haunt the presence and disturb the repose of the most timid natures. When Dr. Underhill assumes that success in the measures I have proposed, involves, as a "logical sequence" the certain "suppression" of existing books and periodicals, he assails the character of those publications in a most vital sense, by boldly assuming that they do not now exist upon their merits. Is this the Doctor's peculiar method of defending the claims of his friends, his opposition to our project will very likely contribute to its success.

In my brief reference to the imperfections of our literature, I certainly never had Dr. Underhill in my mind—indeed, I did not know that he yet remained in the flesh; but his letter, in your issue of August 24th, happily settles this question and relieves my mind. That the Doctor should wholly misrepresent the essential spirit of my remarks occasions no little surprise. I am quite unconscious of any "vitriol," or violent declamation against the persons with whom he is pleased to classify himself. Where is the evidence that the undersigned has denounced any one; that he graduated from the high school of Billingsgate, or that Definite Proposals involve a proposition to muzzle the press? So long as S. U. thus runs wild in his passion for hyperbole he should never think of criticism except as a cheap amusement.

Now I never meditated any arbitrary restraints upon the freedom of those who are proficient in spilling stationery. No one expects to prevent the publication of poor books, and we have no power to suppress even bad ones. The freedom of the press is secured by the laws. What more does Dr. Underhill want? Does he demand special protection for mediocrity? Must ignorance and egotism be tenderly fostered? If some people tramp round among the graves of polite literature and the fine arts, as a dromedary would tread down pinks and violets, must we express our admiration? If one man makes poor shoes, we never think of depriving a respectable workman. If the textile fabrics of one manufacturer prove to be coarse and rotten, we are not accustomed to shut up every first-class establishment that the poor products of unskilled labor may find a sale. In short, shall we put a premium on fustian and celebrate the reign of shoddy? Emphatically, no! Every branch of business—book-making included—must take its chance in an open market, and everything rest at last on its merits.

As my other proposals are not suspected of endangering any private interest, they elicit no notice from the correspondents who have found a place in your columns. Perhaps Justitia will allow me to question him briefly. Should we have the good fortune to find liberal Spiritualists and Reformers enough in the country to take up the stock of the proposed company, may I ask your correspondent if he would be willing to have it done? If he is willing, what good end does he expect to secure by thwarting the efforts of the enterprise? If he is not willing, pray what evidence have we that he is a friend of the cause?

It occurs to me that what Justitia knows about justice most distinctly appears at the very close of his letter.—He knows how to wear the name as a mask!

S. B. BRITTON.

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