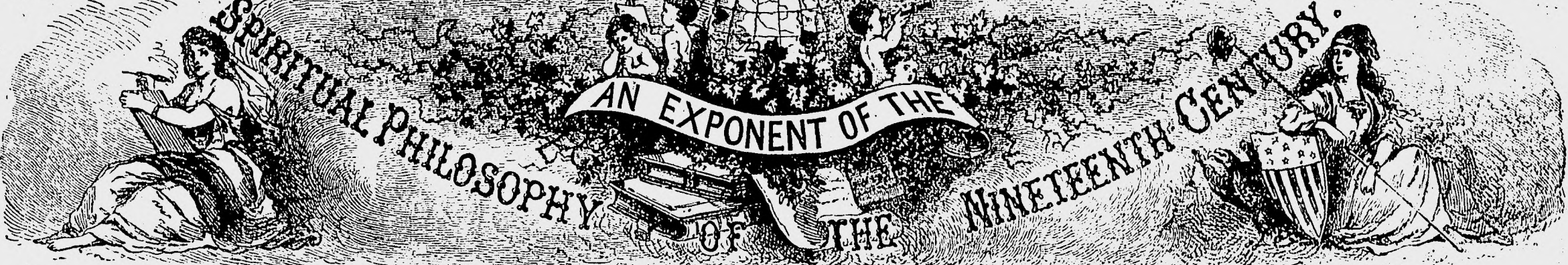


BANNER OF LIGHT.



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NO. 6.

Free Thought.

WETHERBEE'S "NIGHT THOUGHTS."

"Yes," said good Mr. F. (and he had rounded sixty). "why were we made?" He was an Episcopalian, repeated the liturgy, and read his prayer-book; but he was a good and sensible man for all that. He evidently had his doubts of a future; every man has, that anchors to the Bible as the revelation of a future life for man. Oh, if the Bible were only proved! but, alas! it is not, and so proves nothing. It is cumulative evidence only. If Lazarus had really risen, after being dead four days, and had got a glimpse of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, as active personalities in the kingdom of heaven, then the Bible would have been an institution. The modern Spiritualist is the only one who can appreciate the Bible. The true commentator of that book has not yet put in an appearance. When he does he will be a believer in Modern Spiritualism, and he will make a transparency of it. I am so sure of this, that the old book now at my side, on whose fly-leaf is written the names of my ancestors, is now dressed in new leather and gilt at a cost of forty dollars. To conform to present views, the word "Holy" is omitted; it reads: "The Bible, 1751." It is no fetish, but a book, nevertheless, of intrinsic value. I feel that its day is yet to come. I have left off whetting my penknife on it, and have redressed it, to command again the respect it had lost, by having, in its general sense, in an ignorant age, claimed too much, viz., a supernatural origin. It is of intrinsic value if rationally received. It will be, when the interpreter comes, and we have invested forty dollars to make it last, if possible, to that time. With our hand now on it, as it lies in the starlight, we feel that many an old and loved relative of the long ago is in connection with it through it. It may be a fancy, but I feel as if, when I lay meared for in its brown and faded covers, it asked me, or they through it, for this much of decoration. I have done so for so much for what it has been, but what it will yet be—a record of the persistence of spiritual manifestations of the continuity of the spirit-world to this.

But to return. If there were not a future life to complement this, who would have accepted this life had they a choice? I never met a thoughtful man of mature life, who, with his experience, would not have preferred to have stayed out of life, if there ever was a beginning. Life—how little we know of life, at least essentially. Hear what Lecky says:

"An impenetrable mystery lies at the foot of every existing thing. The first principle, the dynamic force, the vivifying power, the efficient cause of those successions which we term natural laws, elude the utmost efforts of our research. The scalpel of the anatomist and the analysis of the chemist are here at fault. The microscope, which reveals the traces of all pervading, all-ordinating intelligence in the minutest globe, supplies no solution of the problem. We know nothing, or next to nothing, of the relations of mind to matter, either in our own persons or in the world around us."

We quote him, for all must feel the truth of what he says; yet how many of the scientific lights are disposed to condemn, *a priori*, the claims of Spiritualism, as if they covered the whole ground, because they could analyze matter. Yet Tyndall, when he forgets himself, and "in wandering mazes lost," says: "Let us be modest; if he does not say, 'Let us pray,' and there he is right, in both prongs. Stick to it, Professor! There are more things both in heaven and earth than are dreamed of yet in science."

How naturally, at evening, we look starward! Our friends are not there; but the stars tell of other worlds, and with me, the thought of the other world or life. The Milky Way over our heads, the plane of the earth's stellar movement, with the rest of the earth's family, the eye of science resolves into stars, and their number is beyond compute. The human mind weighs, analyzes, locates all. The fact that it does so much in this short mortal span is the testimony in favor of the future. Who wonders, then, that our religious friend should say—

"An undevout astronomer is mad!"

It could not be, in the order of things, that we could arise out of nonentity into the grand perceptions of an astronomer, and learn on the starlit heights of science, the fields of exploration to be so extensive but untrodden. It would seem unnatural, a waste and a sin, to permit one to reach such Pisgah heights, then to rub him out, like a chalk-mark on a black-board, and just having a glimpse—so to speak—of what ought to be, shut the door in the face of arisen thought, as if it said, "Oh, man! the future is not the promised land to you." If there is an Intelligence that is the Life of matter, the Parent of that force that brings out of the invisible all that is animated and visible, it must include justice, and that word forecasts a life beyond this. Admit justice into the human problem, and the life is proved.

How reluctantly the world opens to the proof of this other life! "If they did that," said Holyoke, "why don't they do more? I am," said he, "not a believer, as you are; I think it must be mind-reading." This was said on witnessing some spiritual manifestations. It was certain that no deception was practiced; it claimed to be a disembodied intelligence; there was no mistake about the intelligence, or the quality of it, in this case; the only doubt in Holyoke's mind was its source. "It might be mind-reading," said he. That conclusion, so often offered as a solution to these communications, is a great strain. Now if

it were mind-reading (which is another word for unconscious cerebration—the last explanation of the skepticism that admits the manifestations), "they would do more." On the occasion referred to we got a name, a fraction of some circumstances, and something which might be considered a test, but not enough to fully satisfy this party; it was good as far as it went. If it had been mind-reading, why not have filled us full of our own knowledge? Our mind was overflowing. The very fact that it gave us what it did, and stopped when we wanted more, proves it to be not mind-reading surely. This communicator claimed to be a man who knew us both in the form; he gave us a word or two indicative of the man; it (?) or he, might have told us many things, for our mind was full of them; Holyoke then could have said mind-reading surely; but it faltered too soon for mind-reading. Unless some better solution is offered, we stick—saying, the thing itself claims to be a spirit, a disembodied man; and, in the name of that "Justice" which requires and forecasts another world; in the name of the religions of the world (poor and thin as they all are) which count on a future from revelation plus instinct; in the name of the Bible which we have ridiculed, which is full of the same claim; in the name of the rationality of the idea—we respond, "Yea verily, for our head is level." If it is not true, it ought to be, and we give it the benefit of the doubt, and can certainly say to any solution offered as yet—from cheat to unconscious cerebration—disproved. To our friend, who says of the spirits' claim, "not proved," we say, Shall we refuse the only, and, if you choose, even the little light there is on the subject of the "To-morrow of Death" in the world, because it does not shine brighter, and shine in just the way we wish? We are on the wrong side of the curtain to prompt. Two or three times in the world's history they seem to have said to a stupid world, "We will not cast our pearls before swine," and have waited for another and wiser generation. The indications are now that the manifestations have come to stay, and are already beginning to confound the wise. (?) We, for one, have no hesitations to make proselytes; we are satisfied that we are right, and are happy, and are trying to be wise. We are aware that the aspect of the subject is as yet crude; it carries with it many poor associations. We think it will work itself clear in time. We are in no hurry; it is bound to the front; in time all will be born into it, as they are into gravitation and the Copernican system—"born again." In the true sense, Blessed are those whose resurrection is this side of the grave, for they have the life that now is, and that which is to come.

MRS. WILCOXSON ON MEDIUMSHIP.

Picking up a copy of the Youth's Companion of Oct. 24, published by Perry, Mason & Co., of Boston, my attention was arrested by an article entitled "Our Medium," by one "Alma," and, upon reviewing the effort of this foster-mother of the rising generation, the question arose in my mind, if this same Youth's Companion would admit any article bearing singularly upon the ministerial profession. The leading points in Alma's story (it may be true, and it may not) are these: A new German servant-girl, named Gretchen, is taken into the family. She is fifteen years of age, with fair, delicate features, clear blue eyes, and a countenance free from deception. "We all liked her before she had been in the house twenty-four hours," except Aunt Ann, who "took an instinctive dislike to her." (Who was Aunt Ann?) Well, as the story goes, a number of articles were lost, just as Aunt Ann predicted; and doubtless Aunt Ann's dislike and predictions commenced at the moment in which it was discovered that young Gretchen was "a medium." However, the story is well dressed up, and, as we said, may be true; for just as wicked deceptions are constantly unearthed among all classes and ranks of people, not excepting the Almas and their publishers. But the finale of the story is this: Gretchen is required to sit as a medium. She is questioned concerning the lost articles. She implicates little Jack, and tells where the money and missing articles may be found. Jack is sent out for a policeman. Gretchen suddenly awakes from the trance, begs for mercy, and is acquitted, for the reason that the things were not actually stolen, but hidden. And Gretchen had done it all to make the girls—three in number, and who were interested in the matter of mediumship—believe that "the spirits told her." And Alma closes by uttering these memorable words: "I have never had any faith in mediums since!"

This story is evidently put forth to make a lasting impression upon the youthful minds whose education, in all that pertains to the virtues of life, is assumed by the proprietors of the Youth's Companion, and is of the same shallow material which is so freely used by a certain class of writers when assailing Spiritualism.

The pranks, if such, of a "childish-looking girl of fifteen" are made to settle a question which absorbs the minds of millions of people and the first scientific ability of the British empire to an extent unsurpassed by any other revelation of modern times! We ask Alma to adopt the same rule of judgment in the treatment of all other deceivers of this trifling age, and, faithful to the task adopted, be heroic enough to bring forth old offenders, and in all cases, thus, there is Rev. A., who has defaulted—run off with the school fund, and robbed hundreds of children, the wards of the State and government. There is Rev. B., who has been treasurer in a lottery scheme for "a benevolent object," and

has stamped with all the money to parts unknown. There is Dr. Huston, and Dr. Richards, and lots of other reverend doctors of morality, who have been caught hiding the wolf under sheep's clothing—why don't Alma report them to the children, and then warn the little innocents in these cheap words: "I have never had any faith in ministers since." And, on the same ground, Alma might continue to review the whole field, and say of recent cashiers, and swindling corporations, and Methodist Book Concerns, "I have never had any faith in banking or bankers since. I have never had any faith in railroads, or in benevolent societies, or in Methodists, or in Presbyterians, (or in anything else, as the case may be,) since!"

The point at issue is, in reality, this: Any publication so disposed may select a heterodox and unpopular movement as the special imposture of the age, and, without any deference to the action of Scientific Committees, who report in the affirmative; without any respect for the sincere convictions of millions of people—said publication may throw out to its readers, young and old, the bait which has culminated in Salem persecutions and Popish inquisitions during all the dark ages. Let us have fair play and sound justice, and let us refuse to support any family journal or "Youth's Companion" which panders to a spirit of religious intolerance. We do not deny the existence of impostors in our ranks; but there are plenty of Aunt Anns, as in the case of a Philadelphia Gretchen, who compelled the poor girl, in that case, to say she did it—the girl seeing no other escape from daily execution, and, on confession, was sent to the House of Correction. Many a poor child has, in similar cases, been forced to lie, or maintain a dogged silence and submission, rather than bear the cutting assaults of her tormentors. Alma may have given us the main facts in that special case, but the closing sentence reveals the purpose with which it was given. Did Alma ever think of the injustice thus practiced toward thousands who are more or less intimately related to, and connected with the readers of the "Companion"? And does Alma stop to consider what a precedent this is for the rising generation to follow? And furthermore, how easy it would be to turn the tables upon the other side of the house, and, in the adoption of a rigid test—which might be called the police-test—insist on a grand confession, "turn State's evidence," and get clear!

We beg pardon of Alma for the suggestion, but in our experience we have made some startling discoveries, one of which is, that Aunt Anns are sometimes a little tricky themselves; and another is, "It is a poor rule that cannot work well both ways." Truly, M. J. Wilcoxson.

Oct. 7th, 1873.

Mr. Weiss's Parting Gun.

In his farweld compliments to the Evangelical Alliance, at the Convention of the Free Religionists in New York, Mr. Weiss let into the Alliance and its associates after the following eulphatic fashion:

"What the people wanted, he said, was redemption from degraded politics, a reconciliation of labor and capital. He alluded to the gaudy saloons attracting young men, and regretted that they were permitted to exist. Our great enemies, he said, were authors of immorality, advocates of the theory of dogmatists that God had made man imperfect. The Creator is level with the creature until man appears. In man the Supreme Hand falters, and he becomes a bungler. The creature does not fit into place as other things do. To this the dogmatists reply that no mistake was made, for the Creator did not intend to make a creature that should have a knowledge of good and evil. He did not compromise himself by originating vice, because he knew man would do it for him. Nineteen hundred years ago it was discovered that virtue could not save man, and the Deity came to rescue him from his own failure. The whole scheme, with its monstrous assumption, was appalling. No morality without religion is the cry of the dogmatist; but, said the speaker, God's religion is morality. What is dogma doing to purify the State? We have enjoyed free doctrine to a great extent. Protestantism has done in America its best. Has the propagation of Evangelical faith checked the evils, according to this republic? Who are the sinners? How many infidels and heathen are implicated in the crimes which form the principal news items of the day? Very few and scattering are the ungodly sinners. The doctrinal system, which has an exclusive patent, works badly. It may save sinners, but it has had very bad luck in reforming them. Our great swindlers, great defrauders and gamblers are orthodox members of the Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist and other churches. They go to church, stand there trembling as if looking for officers, unite in prayer, and take the sacrament; they speculate with other men's property, and rob the widow and orphan. Evangelical Christianity gives way at the pinch. In the name of heaven, said the speaker, stop calling men to Jesus, if this is the result of the journey. Call an alliance of morality with no religion; let there be mutual aid and knowledge; let the great scheme of atonement be mutual redemption."

ILL-TEMPER. A single person of sour, sullen temper—what a dreadful thing it is to have such an one in a house! There is not myrrh and aloes and chloride of lime enough in the world to disinfect a single home of such a nuisance as that; no richness, no elegance of man, no beauty of face can ever screen such persons from utter vulgarity. There is one thing which rising persons hate the reputation of more than all others, and that is vulgarity; but, trust me, ill-temper is the vulgarst thing that the lowest born and ill-est-bred can ever bring to his home. It is one of the worst forms of impiety. Perverseness in a home is not only sin against the Holy Ghost, but sin against the Holy Ghost in the very temple of love.—*Thoreau Park.*

Men are often capable of greater things than they perform; they are sent into the world with bills of credit, and seldom draw to their full extent.

Literary Department.

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THE TWO COUSINS; OR, SUNSHINE AND TEMPEST.

Written Expressly for the Banner of Light.

BY MRS. A. E. PORTER.

CHAPTER VII.

Who is Miss Brown?

I could hardly wait for morning, so eager was I to see Leslie Leigh. Would she know me? If so, would it make her worse or better? The Doctor is willing to risk the interview: I am hopeful, for I will be so gentle and so cautious. It was not strange that I had visions of Leslie Leigh that night, and saw her beautiful face, and heard her voice calling upon me for aid.

I passed through Ward Five, as usual, on the next morning, and was met by Mrs. Johnson, who always had some little bit of gossip to communicate to me. She was as good as a daily newspaper to her companions. She knew, in some way, almost everything that took place in the house, and when she did not know, she could invent with all the skill of a sensation reporter for the New York press.

One of the windows commanded a view of the carriage entrance at the rear, and she could thus chronicle the arrivals and departures, while she kept one ear open at the grating to hear all that Miss Love's visitors might say. This morning she met me with a face as long as a coffin, and said with a voice like Mr. Chadband's:

"Oh, ma'am, did you know there was a death in the house last night? Some poor, lone woman died, and they put her in a coffin at midnight and buried her away. I didn't hear any bell nor any prayer. That is the way here, ma'am; nobody cares for us living, and everybody is glad when we die."

Her manner and words annoyed and oppressed me, and I could see that such was the effect upon the patients in that room—all but Mrs. Ellis. "I never mind Mrs. Johnson," she said; "she is out of her head, you know. I don't care who lives or dies; I hide my time and wait. I dreamed last night about him, and he said he would come on a white horse with blue trappings."

As she spoke I held the key in my hand which was to admit me to the next ward. The dark woman in the faded dress noticed it, and came to me with that sad face and sadder refrain: "I want to go out! I want to go out! let me go; I must go home!" Mrs. Goodman brought her crocheted work and wanted help about it, and another wanted me to read a ballad to her, and thus my time was occupied, though I felt impatient to see Leslie Leigh. At last I left abruptly, and passed on to the Sixth. Miss Phelps met me at the door. Miss Brown, dressed in black bonnet and shawl, was surrounded by a number of ladies who had just returned from a ride. She saw me, but did not speak, and passed into her own room. I wondered why I should dislike this person. She had done me no wrong, and her reticence was not to be blamed; it might be a desirable trait in a nurse. But I could not reason myself out of my repulsion to her.

She was forgotten the next minute when I saw Leslie Leigh seated in a rocking-chair, shivering in a sweet, low voice. She wore a blue cashmere wrapper loosely tied with cord and tassel, a narrow thread lace about the neck, fastened by an open brooch in front. She wore her hair as formerly, in natural curls. Auntie Dick was seated in a low chair near her favorite, trying to make a bouquet of rosebuds for her.

"There, darling," she said; "John Stoll sent them to you."

"We will put them on baby's grave."

"Yes, so we will," said the old woman, who never dissented from anything which Leslie proposed; "yes, we will when we ride out."

"Hush, now," said Leslie, "and I will sing."

It was comical to see the signals and queer faces which Auntie Dick made to keep the others still, that Mrs. Leigh might not be disturbed; but Leslie heeded no one, as, with the rosebuds in her lap, she sang:

"Sleep and rest, sleep and rest;
Father will come to thee soon.
Rest, rest on mother's breast;
Father will come to thee soon.
Sleep, my little one; sleep, my pretty one; sleep!"

I sat down quietly, a little on one side, and took up my crocheted work. When Leslie had finished singing, she laid her delicate little hand on the rough, red arm of Auntie Dick, and whispered, "Auntie, will you stay by me all the time—all the time?"

"Will I, darling? I haven't nothing else to do in this world. I am going to live a hundred years to take care of you. Hark, now! I'll sing." And Auntie broke out into an old-fashioned Methodist hymn, of which I could only catch the words, "I'll never—no, never—no, never forsake!"

I moved a little, so that Leslie could get a better view of my face; and went on with my crocheting; but I felt that her eyes were upon me. For half a minute, at least, they studied my features. It was impossible for me to avoid looking up. I met her eyes; there was an expression of mingled doubt and inquiry. I held out my

hand, and smiled. A light came into her eyes, and a smile upon her face; then she rose, laid her head upon my shoulder, threw her arms round me, and burst into tears.

"My darling child!" I said, "I have come to see you."

"And to stay with me?" she said, clinging closer to me. "You will not go away?—please not. I shall be better if you stay with me."

"Thank God I have come, then," I replied.

"I know you will be better, Leslie, very soon, and we will travel away somewhere together."

"Together! yes, yes—together! You will go with me, will you not?"

"Yes, yes, when you are better."

"Will you stay by me now?" she said, as she offered me her rocking-chair.

I begged her to sit, and told her I would remain awhile, and came in every day while I stayed in the house. She sat down, but still kept my hand. A slight movement attracted my attention. Auntie Dick had moved a little away from us; and such a sad expression rested upon her face that I was startled. No words could have expressed more clearly the feelings, *forsooth*, than did her face. Leslie saw it, also, and, laying her disengaged hand again on Auntie's, she raised it, large and rough as it was—uncleanly, as was everything about the old woman—and said, "My dear Miss. Either you must love Auntie; she has been my best friend; I should have died if Auntie Dick had not been here."

Such a look of gratitude and love beamed from that large-featured, rough face as made it almost angelic. She looked as she tried to speak, and the tears came into her eyes; but it was some time before she could say, "No, ma'am; it is me that must thank her. I can't tell you, ma'am, I can't tell you, ma'am—I never can, if I should try a hundred years; how she has raised me from the dead, and made me willing to live. God sent her to me, just as he sent angels in the old times, you know."

While Auntie Dick was speaking, the Doctor came into the room. He had felt a little anxiety about my meeting Mrs. Leigh, and came to see the result. He was much gratified, and passed on to the attendants' room, where he had a long conversation with Miss Brown.

When that was concluded, he came to me, and said that Uncle Fred had sent for him, to show him his machine, which was now completed, and asked me to accompany him. I was aware that it was a kind reminder that Mrs. Leigh might have had excitement enough for that day, and I therefore bade her good-by for the day, promising to call again the next morning.

The superintendent of the work-shop met us with a smile. "Mr. Walton has been looking for you, sir." The old man sat at a table, looking intently on a machine before him. It was in motion. Every wheel, pulley and cog seemed to be in order, for it was moving softly, and looked to me something like a clock with very complicated machinery. When Uncle Fred saw us, he folded his arms, leaned back in his chair, and smiled.

"Found at last!" he exclaimed—"found at last! This is only a model, Doctor—a little working model; but the principle is the same. By this principle I shall draw the heat from the sun, and make the cold, barren places of the earth like the garden of the Lord. I am an old man. I have worked for the world. Now my task is done. Let men of science work out my invention for the good of the race."

The little machine buzzed away a pretty toy, but, for aught I could see, a useless little machine; yet such a look of satisfaction rested upon the face of the maker, that it was delightful to look upon him. He was pale and very weary.

"Doctor, I bequeath my machine to you. You will hand my name down to posterity. Mr. Smith—turning to the attendant—"take me to my room. I will sleep awhile."

They told me that he laid himself down, folded his hands, closed his eyes, and said, "I shall have nothing to do to-morrow but enjoy the work of my hands—nothing to do—nothing to do," and, thus murmuring with his lips, he fell into that dreamless sleep where busy hands are forever still.

I saw him afterwards in his coffin—an old man with a noble head, and a face on which a great calm appeared to rest. I remembered what he had said about my crowning him, and I made a wreath of ivy and laurel, and laid it beside him.

The next day, they gathered all his tools and put them away, and laid the useless little machine in some out-of-the-way corner; and thus ended seventy-five years of one man's life.

Was this all?—or was it but the play of a child—seemingly nothing but play, and yet giving strength of muscle and vigor of body for the future man? Is any life a failure?—or are we all only accidents of creation, driven by some blind

The Secular Press on "The Mystery of Edwin Drood."

This book, so long announced, is now before the public—completed, according to the claims of its visible author, T. P. James, of Brattleboro, Vt., by the direct spirit action upon his organism of the materially enfranchised Charles Dickens. The work has held, since its inception a peculiar place in the popular mind. . . . Those readers of the great English novelist-king who have often paused before that line of stars which marked, in Chapter XXXII. (original series), the place where "THE DAWN AGAIN" streamed in upon the great soul of Dickens—the dawn, this time, of an eternal day—and wondered *what* he would have written to complete the journey

"Copies of the book entitled 'Nature's Law in Human Life,' an exposition of Spiritualism, have been placed in the Keene and Walpole Public Libraries. The opinions of distinguished persons, *pro* and *con*, are here placed side by side, and the reader is left free to decide whether the subject has any merit worthy of public attention. David Plumb, author, editor and minister, says of the work: 'There is so much in the question of Spiritualism that cannot be scouted but demands honest and earnest inquiry, that this book so full and so impartial on the subject as the one under consideration, is entitled to be cordially received and widely read.'"

