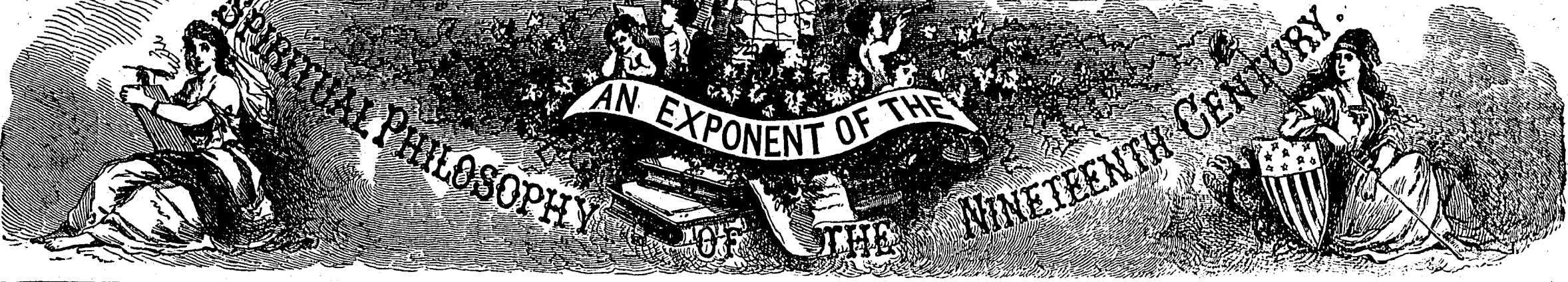


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Original Essays.

SPIRIT STRATAGEM.

BY ALLEN PUTNAM.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:
Many years ago there was published and widely circulated a marvelous account of such deception practiced by spirits for alluring a mortal on to the loss of his life, as was very hard to reconcile with prevalent perceptions of what truth and honor require of both mortals and supernals; and which, almost necessarily, brought in question the truthfulness of either a large number of mediums or that of their controllers.

The prominent points presented in that old account may be stated thus: In vision, a medium saw and heard a large band of spirits in earnest consultation, whose leader indicated desire to bring about the death of a particular Spiritualist, residing somewhat east from Boston, and who was known to be in the habit of consulting mediums extensively in reference to the results of his worldly schemes and projects. This clairvoyant medium heard the leading spirit question his attendants as to the most feasible method by which the offensive man's death could be effected. Some of the band advised one method, and some another for awhile, but none that was acceptable, till a spirit stood forth and said, "I will accomplish your wish." "How?" said the leader. "I will," replied the spirit, "go myself and force every medium whom he shall consult to predict that he will be successful if he will prosecute a certain enterprise which he has in contemplation, though in doing this he shall be killed."

The deluding course—the stratagem—advised by this spirit was approved by his superior, who directed its suggestion to go forward at once and put the beguiling plan in execution. He accordingly went and forced all the mediums consulted upon the matter to predict alike and favorably. Among those consulted was the very one who, in vision, had previously learned that supernals had resolved upon forcing false predictions through mortal lips, and his own mouth gave forth the same as flowed from the mouths of the others. The beguiled man trusted the concordant predictions, undertook his contemplated enterprise, and in the prosecution of it lost his life. Such, as nearly as memory retains them, were the chief points of a narrative read many years ago.

The above statements, if credited, will probably lead many, if not most, minds to infer either that clairvoyance was faulty in its perceptions, or that the disembodied host seen and heard was a band of demons, and to feel that such features of Spiritualism are very revolting. A stronger probability is that most readers will regard the work referred to as pure fiction, having no basis on facts, and never having been met with before in all their reading.

A few extracts from I. Kings, chap. xxii, with a few connecting and explanatory clauses, may cause recollection of the above account by many to whom it seems new, strange and incredible.

Ahab, "the king of Israel, gathered prophets together, about four hundred, and said unto them:—
"Shall I go up against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king."

Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, was then a guest, and was willing to be an ally of Ahab. When the band of prophets had given their response, Jehoshaphat asked Ahab if there were not another prophet. Ahab replied:

"There is one man—Micalah—by whom we may enquire; but I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil."

Micalah, however, though hated, was sent for, and when brought into the presence of their majesties was asked the same question that had been put to the four hundred; and, in harmony with their response, said, "Go and prosper; for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king."

Micalah was advised by the messengers who called him to the king, to let his words be like those of the other prophets. They proved to be so; but not by his own intention; for, in response to the implied intimation that it might be wise policy on his part to prophesy in harmony with the others, he said:

"As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me that will I speak."

That declaration indicates that he believed that the words of his prophecy were given him by his LORD. Their truth or falsity was no concern of his as a prophet, for, as such, he was only a mouthpiece of the LORD. This prophet may

not have been on terms of cordiality with the others—he seems not to have been present with them when they were consulted; seems also to have incurred Ahab's distrust. Probably he was more true in uttering his perceptions of events future than was pleasing to that wicked king. For some reason not stated, Ahab, apparently, was distrustful that Micalah was holding back something, or was deceiving him, even when his prophecy was like that of the four hundred. For the king said to him:

"How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the LORD?"

Thus adjured, the prophet, now obviously himself dictating the words his lips uttered, described a previous vision, saying:

"I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills as sheep that have not a shepherd; and the LORD said, these have no master; let them return every man to his house in peace."

Such a statement implied that Israel was about to lose its king. And Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?"

Roused by that allegation Micalah continued: "Hear thou, then, the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left: and the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And he said, I will go forth and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also. Go forth and do so." Micalah added: "Now therefore behold the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets."

Micalah was sent to prison, not for the false prophecy which the lying spirit forced through his lips, but for narrating mediumistic perceptions which subsequent events verified. Ahab, lured on by the lying spirit, went up against Ramoth-gilead, and was slain in battle.

Thus authority which carries in itself full conviction to the minds of a large class in the Christian world, that whatsoever it states is absolutely true, such authority clearly teaches that some LORD, backed by a "host of heaven," once resorted to stratagem and falsehood for the accomplishment of a particular purpose against a mortal. We move that a committee, consisting of firm believers in the plenary and infallible inspiration of the Scriptures, be appointed to investigate and report upon the doings of that LORD and his aids at that time. We cannot serve on it, for we are not of that class. We credit the truth of the allegations of stratagem and lying, but have little faith that the parties perpetrating them were residents in eminently high spheres of morality and spirituality. Their doings bespeak them very like some of the unseen intelligences who to-day work upon men with much williness, and sometimes accomplish their ends in very mysterious ways.

Be that biblical account pure fiction, or be it veritable history, or a mixture of the two, one learns from it that resort to craft and falsehood by unseen operators upon men and mundane affairs, was either fancied or believed long ago. Therefore should the supposition be now made that some invisible operators in modern assemblies and séance-rooms at times play the trickster, the assumption will be nothing new in kind. Belief that mere exit from the mortal form revolutionizes character is not warrantable. There may be great diversity of methods resorted to by the several managers and executors of the vigorous movement now being made in spirit-realms to force man's cognition of the action of supernals upon men and human affairs. Those workers are not all demure saints, nor is their leading purpose purely religious, but, in the main, broadly educational, involving trust that intercourse between dwellers in the material sphere and those in the spiritual ones will enlighten and aid both classes. Courses of action to which their traits and inclinations habituated spirits while they were in mortal forms, they are prone to slip into after their departure, when their augmented powers enable the wily ones to be more persuasive liars and more adroit deluders than before. Also the stratagem of noble aims is able in his specialty on the other than on this side of the sphere-dividing line. The mortal intriguer who undertakes to entrap a spirit's assistant or spokesman is very liable, in the end, to find himself the baffled party. Some dwellers beyond the veil are competent to outwit the wildest human opposers of spirit advent.

The story of Ahab and Micalah testifies to the fact of spirit utterance—even forced utterance—through the lips of mediums; but with equal clearness it shows that such utterances may be false. Omitting to give it direct application, we will ask, who doubts that a quiet glee may spontaneously creep out from the soul of a reflecting Spiritualist, and diffuse its radiance over his face, when he sits down in slippered repose and ruminates upon a recent exposition at Music Hall?

Fancy will bring before him some bright, jovial spirit, who, having found a very flexible mortal, a facile tool for any spirit, concludes to exercise his mischievous propensities through it on some stage in the outer world. He is a spirit of culture and refinement, who wants none other than an elite company of witnesses. Consequently, veiled in the form of his tool, he goes boldly to prominent D. D.s, M. D.s, Prof.s and magistrates many, and persuades them that he can outdo them all in crippling that prowling monster, Spiritualism. Such a helper they have long desired, and to this one they give cordial welcome and flattering commendation.

Fancy helps our loungers in dressing-gown to

a vision of hosts of religionists, scientists and their affiliates, flocked about their protégé, in wide-mouthed wonder, gazing upon the feats he performs in revealing the occult ways by which faith in dreaded return of departed loved ones has been generated and spread world-wide. That work is done—the curtain drops—the actor is seen no more.

But fancy has not finished her task with the lounging ruminator; she helps him to a perception of the exultant smiles and congratulations which the assembly manifests as soon as propriety permits free expression of satisfaction at having found a little Bishop, who, in one short hour, has done more to paralyze Spiritualism than had all the Doctors of Divinity, Medicine and Science with their compeers, since the day—almost twenty years ago—when Harvard Professors, trying their hand at it, became so tongue-tied that they have never yet been able to tell their promised tale of the result.

Nor is this all: fancy keeps at work and shows the lounging meditator a report—wonderful for minute detail and exhaustiveness, speedily made, printed and sent abroad with the greatest dispatch possible, so that the world should not lose an unnecessary moment in learning, not only how Spiritualism had been suppressed in Boston—how the new-found assailant of it had outdone all our local giants of Theology and Science in such warfare, but also the exact methods by which victory had been obtained here, and can be in any other city or land.

Heads that devise plans which bring about occasional presentations of such phases or adjuncts of Spiritualism as the secular press everywhere hastens to put before the eyes of those who seek to ignore a class of facts because, for more than a score of years, they have proved unresolvable in the retorts of prevalent science, know what they are about when thus attracting the world's attention and jogging its memory, and the modes of such planners often make merry the hearts of those who trust them.

426 Dudley street, Boston, Mass.

HEREDITY.

BY J. DILL.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

The law of reproducing after its kind is so fixed and universal that it may be regarded as one of the constants of nature. All the researches of Darwin and those who have adopted his hypothesis have not been able to produce one instance of the change from one species to another in the processes of generation. Another law is equally universal, that nature never produces two things precisely alike; modifications in form, in color, in quality or in something, though often the difference is very minute, always exist between every two productions of nature. Yet those modifications are always within the range of not only the species, but of the variety. Such differences in their extremes are ever within the terms of the kind. In all the historical and in all the geological periods no exception to this rule is found.

The Rev. Mr. George Henslow (in the *Scientific Monthly*), in a paper on *Genesis, Geology and Evolution*, says, "Fresh difficulties were still in store, which must be overcome if the former theory of creation is to obtain any longer—horticulture, floriculture, agriculture and the breeding of animals have risen rapidly to become important and flourishing occupations. From their pursuit it was soon discovered that kinds producing their like *never did so absolutely*, but that offspring appeared always to differ from their parents in some trifling if not considerable degree." [All true so far.] "This property in Nature, to which also the human race is invariably subject, man has seized upon [still true] and by judicious treatment can almost mold his cattle to whatever form he pleases, or stock his fields and gardens with roots of any form or flowers of any shade of color required." The latter part of this last sentence is a careless statement and gross exaggeration, and the facts of the case will not carry the reverend author to his conclusion. That plants, animals and man will improve under culture and judicious treatment is what I contend for, but the limit of improvement is within the species, and no instance can be cited in which the change has exceeded that limit. It may yet be done. A century ago the transmutation of metals was believed in, but the age of alchemy has gone by.

But it is the effect of heredity on man that we propose to consider here. The judicious farmer or stock-grower will take more pains to improve the quality and value of his crops or cattle than of his children. Man is as susceptible of improvement in form, in heart and in brain, as the cow or the horse, and similar influences will affect all in one way or another. No one would expect to see a superior horse proceed from the lowest grades of his kind at a single step, but by patient care and judicious (not natural) selection great improvements will be perceptible in a few generations, and when conditions of climate, food, and that intelligent care which associates higher and more refined ethereal forces to develop symmetry of form, strength of muscle, and a higher organization of brain, with all its concomitant results to make a beautiful and useful animal, combine, we see the perfection of the equine race; so of all other domestic animals.

In the present social state all the children that are born are merely accidents. Neither parent feels the responsibility of the position, or seeks contact with the other with any higher aim than the gratification of passion. In fact, that motive too often prevails in the matrimonial pairing; and where it is not the leading motive it is associated with others equally low and unpropitious.

Adhering to our thesis, it may be confidently affirmed that every thought, every passion, every habit, every impression, every idiosyncrasy is a force which may, and often does, affect the offspring, physically, mentally and morally. Abundance of facts may be adduced in support of this proposition from the most reliable authors, and the general observation of mankind in every community and in every age. Darwin gives a great many instances of this kind, and other authors have collected well authenticated facts to show the effect of maternal impressions, during the period of gestation, upon their offspring. In marks, malformations and even monstrosities—Dr. Daniel H. Tuke, in his "Illustrations of the Influence of the Mind upon the Body," cites the following cases:

"A woman aged twenty-four, of good constitution, and the mother of two healthy children, went to a fair and entered a show place where was exhibited a collection of living and stuffed animals and monsters preserved in spirits. Amongst others was a hydropic child, and in the moment she saw this she wished to leave the place, crying out, 'How horrible it is! Just like a child.' Her companions, however, she saw, and she went on, but her mind was ever afterwards filled with a vague remembrance of the child. Eight months afterwards she had a child, stillborn and hydrocephalic."

"A woman, during the second month of her pregnancy, saw a cart passing containing three men condemned to death. One of them, faint, had his head inclined to the right; his appearance indicating the most complete mental prostration. This lady gave birth to a child having the head inclined to the right shoulder—a morbid contraction which was permanent."

"Madam H. is the mother of four well-born children, experienced early in her fifth pregnancy various nervous sensations to which she was a stranger; such as spasms and tonic contractions of the muscles. Toward the third month Madam H. had a strong desire to eat musk—a longing not gratified until the end of a week. When, however, she saw them, it was the place of death, and ever afterwards she felt a vague remembrance of the scene. Her child was born with a mark upon her forehead, a mark of the size and appearance of a musk seal."

"He states a case, reported by Dr. Child, from the *Lancet*, too long to quote in full, of 'maternal impressions.' A woman at a penny show saw a horse fire off a gun at a rabbit, and a dummy thrown out with the back of its head bleeding. It frightened her very much, and as she was in the second month of her pregnancy, the impression continued with her till the child was born, having the head of a rabbit, with the wound, and instead of nails had claws like a rabbit."—*Lancet*, Nov. 7th, 1863.

Another case, stated by Malabranch, is given of a woman, two months in pregnancy, who saw a criminal broken on a wheel. On the birth of the child it was found that every limb in its body was broken, like those of the malfactor, and in the same place. The poor child lived in a hospital till it attained the age of twenty."

Dr. T. Smith, in the *Lancet* of Aug. 17th, 1867, in a paper on "Mother's Marks," observes, "One cannot doubt that these marks occasionally appear on children in connection with mental impressions received by the mother during pregnancy," and gives this case: "The child was admitted into St. Bartholomew's Hospital in 1865. She was then about twelve years old. The left upper extremity and the greater part of the corresponding side of the trunk and neck were deeply stained with dark brown pigment, from which grew an abundant crop of dark, brown, harsh, lank hair, varying in length from one to two inches. The skin was rough and harsh; the arm was long, thin and withered, the scapula was abnormally prominent. In fact, the upper limb, shoulder and back, bore a strong resemblance to the corresponding part of a monkey. The mother stated that when three months pregnant with the child, she was much terrified by a monkey attached to a street organ, which jumped on her back as she was passing by." Dr. Smith concludes, "I need hardly say that such a case does not stand alone. There are many well-authenticated cases where marks and even bodily deformities in the fetus can be fairly attributed to strong and persistent impressions of the mother."

The medical profession are not agreed upon the subject of maternal impressions upon their embryon offspring. Dr. Fisher says he "made it a practice of asking his patients whether they expected deformity in the child, which one thousand two hundred admitted, and the result was only two cases of malformation. Hunter had two thousand cases of similar expectations, not one of which was realized. We have no meter by which to gauge the intensity of the impression necessary to produce such a result, and it appears that, to produce such result, the impression should be made during a particular period of gestation: say from the second to the fourth month. Besides, the cases cited by Fisher and Hunter are merely negative, and amount to nothing."

Dr. Tuke, in closing his remarks upon this subject, says, "Although, however, we may not be prepared to accept the evidence in favor of the production of special marks in the child, answering to definite mental images in the mother, we must admit that the mental condition in the latter may, through the blood, affect the nutrition and, therefore, the vitality of the former."

I may add here several cases that have occurred in my own neighborhood, well attested by respectable physicians and accounted for by the mothers. Mrs. C. dreamed that her child would be born club-footed. This was early in her pregnancy. The dream affected her much, and the result verified her dream. Mrs. H. was alarmed at a monkey which broke from its keeper and entered her window. Her child was neither man nor monkey, but a compound of both. It lived to be twenty years old.

Mrs. F. H., a lady whom I well knew, was horribly disgusted, early in her pregnancy, by seeing a man with a bad hare-lip. It deeply impressed her for weeks. The impression by degrees wore off, but when the child was born it had a hare-lip. During her second pregnancy, at a similar period, the fear grew upon her that she might again be subject to a like mortification, and the original impression came back upon her with full force, and she gave birth to a second child disfigured in the same way.

A colored woman of my acquaintance, whose husband removed with her to M., in Ohio, (her case was reported to me by her brother-in-law, about 1830,) when in the third month of her pregnancy, went to see a menagerie that came to the village, where she was much interested in the elephant. While standing near, he threw his trunk around, and bit her, which frightened her so much that she left at once for home. When the child was born its nose extended like the proboscis of the elephant.

Dr. Brice, father of the late Paymaster-General, told me of the case of a woman, during her pregnancy, who wished to see a disgusting idiotic girl. She walked five miles to see her, and found her in the yard, where her appearance so shocked her that she at once turned away and went home. Her child was a singularly disgusting idiot.

I might cite other cases of persons known to me, but do not deem it necessary at this time.

Like instances are common among domestic animals. Some forty years ago an intelligent observer proposed the theory that no animals were capable of domestication that did not in the domestic state become var-colored—that is, lose the fixed color of their feral state and have progeny of diverse colors. We can only account

for such change of color by some impression made upon the dam during the period of gestation. Jacob, it seems, understood this effect, and used it so successfully that he made serious inroads upon the flocks of his father-in-law, under the contract between them.

Sheep furnish notable instances of this kind. In new countries, where the forests are removed by burning the wood upon the ground, leaving a great number of black stumps, the proportion of black sheep amounts to a large percentage in a flock; while on the Western prairies and on old farms, where no stumps or black objects remain, black sheep are very rare. The sheep is one of the most timid of animals, and most easily impressed by fright. The natural color of the sheep is white, and where no such influences exist to change it, that color is maintained.

The ass is so stolid that a change of color seldom occurs. Horses are timid, and their progeny show the effects. So with cows. Hogs and goats seem easily impressed in this way, and so with domestic fowls. But it is probable that atavism, or descent from ancestors, has much to do in changing the colors of these animals.

If the popular idea of the cause of these effects is well founded—that is, that they were produced by mental impressions upon the mother during the period of gestation—Dr. Tuke's explanation that it is the effect of a change in the circulation of the blood, giving insufficient nutrition to an organ, is not very satisfactory, if intelligible at all.

If maternal impressions, like these and many others that might be cited, produce such effects upon their unborn offspring, those impressions evidently acted as a force, and what force—electric, chemical, luminous, electrical, or magnetic? Clearly no one of these. The mind is a force differing from them all, which, when greatly excited, modifies the force of heredity and the form of the fetus, in some respects. These cases, however, are only exceptional, and if the popular theory is well founded, what a large number of children are born whose mental capacities and moral proclivities, for good or for evil, have been influenced by the condition of the mother's mind or affections during the period of gestation. How important it is that all the conditions thrown around the expectant mother, while in that delicate and susceptible state, should be favorable to the development of a human being that will be an honor to the parent and a blessing to the world. The father has grave responsibilities cast upon him during that interesting period. It is a time when the mother is naturally sensitive and subject to a depression of spirits, to anxieties and fears. If the unborn infant partakes of any of these influences, they will act as clues upon his spirits or his mind during his life. Anger, distrust, or any low passion, may be inherited in this way, and a peevish, petulant, ill-natured child may be the result. It is a time that demands the patient support, sympathy, and encouragement of the husband. Instructive and devotional books should be fully supplied, read, and discussed, in such a way as to secure the interest of the mother. Social intercourse of a cheerful and instructive character should be sought and enjoyed, with agreeable and beautiful natural scenery, flowers, and whatever will keep the mind elevated and in a joyous active mood should be indulged. Let the husband thus daily and patiently cherish his wife, and who can doubt that it will tell favorably upon his children? Parents who practice thus in their families will imitate the sagacious and prudent grower of horses and cattle, who is so successful in improving his stock and who is so well paid for his care.

If these conceptions are granted, how important it is that it be universally known and practiced. Every social and public influence should be exerted to impress it on every mind. The press, the pulpit, the medical faculty and the statesman, each from his own standpoint should labor earnestly, incessantly and intelligently, until the duty is received as a religious, moral, sanitary and political creed in every house, and by every man, woman and child.

Papillon, in his paper on "Heredity and Race Improvement," says: "In other times it may have appeared difficult or ill-advised to import into questions touching the reproduction of man, figures and estimates not unlike those of zoötechny, where selection has been long practiced. But now such scruples must give way before the dictates of necessity, which tells in the most unmistakable way that we cannot afford to commit one blunder more."

It touches a point here of great delicacy and importance; that is, the prudent and proper mating of the sexes in matrimonial alliances. Ill-mated pairs cannot hope to be honored in their children. Antagonistic forces will be summed up in them, that they can neither be happy in themselves, nor desire to make anybody else happy. Conflicting characteristics will be inherited, that either parent would wish to avoid, and regret to see reproduced in the offspring. According to Darwin, natural selection tends to improve, but according to practice, fashionable selection tends to degenerate the human race. Run over the families of the distinguished men of modern times who have risen to eminence as statesmen, jurists, orators, poets and scientists, and how large is the proportion who were the sons of farmers, mechanics, and some even of common laborers. A Webster, a May, a Corwin, a Ewing, in our own country, (and many others, could be cited, and every country in Europe can number them by scores. There are some families in which distinguished ability has been perpetuated for several generations. The Adams family is an instance, and in all these cases a strong good sense on the part of the parents secured a succession of worthy and vigorous-minded children. What! will it be asked, do I hold that the weak minded should not marry and have children? Yes, if both weak and wicked, the State should interdict the union, for its safety. But it is better that the State should provide for the education of all its youth, not only by the cultivation of the intellect, but also of the body and the heart, and thus work out unimpaired minds and true hearts. The restraint from doing wrong is no argument of liberty, for every well-regulated State punishes its criminals, but to encourage the perpetuation of evil by permitting the worst to reproduce themselves is a great wrong to the whole body politic. Heredity is a force, and too often a very active force, that not only transmits evil by descent, but also by commutation.

The rush to be rich, to the neglect of the proper rearing of children, is one of the evils of our civilization. Fathers too often throw the whole responsibility of the moral and mental education of their children upon the mothers. If the mother is endowed with a due sense of her responsibility and seeks to meet it with judgment and discretion, the duty may be well discharged. But too often it happens that the mother is wanting in qualities both of head and heart for her position. The liabilities to err are so various that

The contention before society is not one of Spiritualism, but of *personal liberty*, the right of free inquiry without the officious assistance of policemen, however active or intelligent; the right of the individual to examine controverted subjects for himself, without legislative "dry nursing" in any form. Let this be generally enforced at the present juncture.—WILLIAM VOLCKMAN, in *Medium and Daybreak*, London,

1 floor), Boston, Mass.

