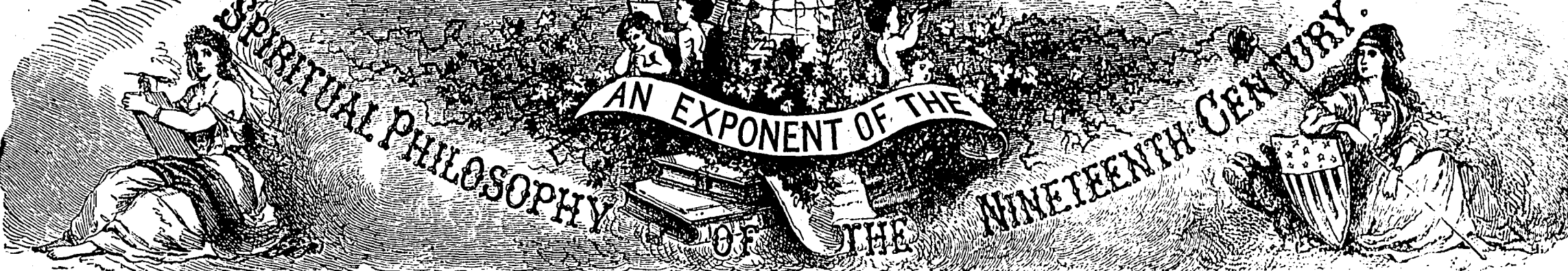


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The Rostrum.

THE MESSAGE OF SPIRITUALISM.

A Lecture Delivered through the Mediumship of
MR. J. W. FLETCHER.
At Steiway Hall, London, Eng., Sept. 21, 1879.

(Reported for the Banner of Light.)

What message does Spiritualism bring to mankind? In the consideration of any subject, and before it can be either accepted or rejected, there must first be understood its facts, its claims, its work, and to a certain extent the result growing out of it. It is useless for us to say we do not and will not believe a matter we do not understand, or to say that we have entirely accepted a theory of which as yet we know nothing. That belief only is worth having which comes from deep thought and study. If this method had been adhered to with regard to Spiritualism, there would not have been so many of the mistakes which have already occurred. For there are so many in the world disgusted with the theories hitherto presented to them, that they turn away from all that the past has held, from all that they have previously been taught to believe in, and seeing a new theory, a new philosophy, a new religion, without considering any of the requirements of the fresh lesson, they accept apparently at once all that it may demand of them—accept it in name before they have apprehended its teachings.

If you were to ask the world in general what is meant by Modern Spiritualism, you would probably be told that it meant simply a knowledge of the life beyond the grave; and there are many who have called themselves Spiritualists for years and years, with whom this is the only basis of belief. But what would you think if a man informed you that over the sea there was a land filled with plenty, offering food and warmth and shelter to a whole nation of starving people, and no one went there? Or what would you think of a man who made some great discovery, and lived on without attempting to utilize it? You would say that both the man and the people were no better off than they were before the information was given and the discovery made. The world is no better off because certain valuable elements exist in it, unless use is made of those elements: knowledge is only a power for good when it leads to higher things. How many are there to-day who call themselves Spiritualists, and who have progressed no further than the apprehension of this one fact of immortality? They have learned the lesson that beyond the grave there is life, and think that is all that it is necessary to know. And they have sat down contented to let the world move on as it will, having settled for themselves the question of the life hereafter.

And in view of this matter, organizations have been made, societies brought together, just as narrow in principle, just as self-conceited, after having accepted this fact, as any human institutions that ever were formed. They have assumed that they are Spiritualists because they accept one of the principles of Spiritualism, and have endeavored to foist upon this theory all their preconceived ideas; hence you have, at this hour, in a million Spiritualists, persons representing almost as many different ideas. It is a great trouble that thus far in the history of Spiritualism there has been no settled code of belief. Spiritualists have admitted into their ranks these who were wholly unfitted by education or experience to take care even of themselves, and the troubles that followed were a logical result, the weaknesses of poor human nature asserting themselves over and over again, and showing how long is the journey to that spiritual perfection which it hopes some day to attain. Therefore when men and women say simply, "We believe in immortality," they have made great spiritual advances, but they are yet far from being true and thorough Spiritualists. It is the life that makes the man. And these facts that are given—the proofs of spiritual existence—are only the stepping-stones toward that life. You may believe what you will; but the thought that inspires you and the act—it is these that benefit or harm both the world and yourself. Is there a greater responsibility resting with Spiritualists than with other people? Yes; from the moment you are brought in contact with the teachings of Spiritualism you have taken upon yourself a new dignity and a new office. You are suddenly brought to see all things in a different light; brought to realize that God will save not the few but the many; that heaven is not constructed simply

for your benefit and for that of a select few with you, but that all who are honest and true of heart have the same right as you to a home in the heavenly mansion. And you then begin to understand that all the laws of Spiritualism are universal laws—all its lessons universal lessons. There is no law that applies to those inside the church that does not apply to those outside as well. There is no law by which a certain number are clothed in glory and power, and others shut out from the same privileges, whose claims deserve equal consideration. For it is of no consequence what expression you find for your religious belief, provided only that you are honest in this, the best and highest your heart may know. And if you ask now what constitutes a Spiritualist we answer: "The right doing of any man or woman for the sake of right—the living up to an honest conviction, whether in secret or in the face of the world."

But what message does Spiritualism bring to science? We hear continually that Spiritualism has something to say to science. What is that "something"? In all past time the theology of the church has assumed science to be its worst enemy. It held that the man who followed scientific pursuits, who applied the lessons of science to daily life, was to be looked at askance; and every advance made in science has been made against, rather than with, the approval of the church. Theology has again and again flung obstacles in the path of progress, has hidden science stand back, with the charge that its teachings were of "the devil." And the scientific man has therefore turned from theology, saying, "Well, I can demonstrate the facts of science, I can understand the teachings of nature, but I cannot demonstrate theories of theology; and because I believe in science, theology shuts the door against me." But is it possible that the more a man knows of Nature the less he must believe in God? Theology taught that stars were only lamps in the sky; but the time came when it was found that they were not lamps, but worlds, following out their vast and ordained courses. But did men love God the less for this new knowledge they had acquired? No; they saw more of his sublimity, more of his power; the great system of creation was more plainly revealed to them than before. Geologists were told that the world was made in six days; but turning to the story of the rocks within the earth, they perceived that it was made not in six days, not six thousand years ago, but that from age to age this world had been progressing until it reached its present form of development. Should men who have gained scientific knowledge of the stars lose their belief in God? In the God of theology, perhaps yes; but the great God of nature has been drawn nearer to them, and they to him; for they have read not in the pages of a printed book, but in the pages of nature, of works not made nor marred by man, but eternal as God himself.

What is science but the interpretation of Nature? and what is Nature but the outward expression of God? So that instead of the scientific man losing his perception of God as he advances in his researches, he should gain an ever clearer realization of him. If he turns from God in the study of his work, it is because he has no real desire to learn of him who is the inner life of all things. But then steps in Religion, and says: "Because you have realized these truths, we, who will not admit them, say that you shall not mingle with us; you shall be outside the pale of our religion." So the man of science has either to turn aside altogether from accepted religion or to leave his science behind him when he enters the church door. But surely if a thing is true outside the church, it is also true inside the church. If the lessons of religion, and of the other departments of science are true, surely they have a place in, and belong to, the church. For a thing that is founded on fact has kinship with fact in religion and with all beside.

What, then, does Spiritualism say to science? Simply this: that as science declares the facts she presents to the world to be capable of demonstration to all intelligent minds, so we as Spiritualists say that the facts our philosophy, our religion is based upon, are also capable of demonstration to all intelligent minds. We claim that we have so many facts we propose to demonstrate to the world, and also that they are as worthy of the world's consideration as anything else the world contains. Ay, more; for they demonstrate the lessons of that higher life of which hitherto the world has had no definite knowledge. We say to the man of science, "Your science should be a part of your religion. If you can see God in every grain of sand, in every star of heaven, may you not also see his love in every human being?" It were madness indeed were he to say, "Because I have not seen these things I do not believe them to exist." We demand that each intelligent mind shall consider them; and we, as inhabitants of the spirit-world, purpose to work and labor until this thing is felt and heard in every part of the earth, and presented to each human being clearly and distinctly. It is not our desire to attack or to overthrow anything, but we come with the desire to make you realize more truly the life that awaits you beyond the grave, when your mortal existence has run its course. And we say that that life is as capable of scientific demonstration as any other fact in Nature. Science turns from this and says, "We have no time to investigate Spiritualism." Very possibly; but you have time to condemn it, and if you gave one half the time to the study of it which you now spend in denouncing it, you would act very much more wisely, and your judgments would have to be reversed. It is the easiest thing in the world to say "I do not believe," or "I will not study this; it is beneath my notice." But everywhere you find Spiritual-

ism stealing on and leavening thought; and why? Simply because it is ordained of God, and in all past ages has been endeavoring to manifest itself. In former times its adherents suffered for the crime of their belief at the stake or in the prison cell. But now there is a great work both for Spiritualism and for Science to accomplish, and we hold that knowledge within ourselves which shall bring all the teachings of science and of religion into harmony, and the union of these two is the result for which we are laboring.

Why, you stand in wonder how as you look upon the wide ocean, and hear one nation whispering to another across its thousand miles of wave. Scarcely has a battle concluded in a distant land before word comes of the death and calamities that it has occasioned. One continent whispers to another of its successes and failures; but we are assured that the time will come when yonder world shall communicate with this one, and yonder planet which seems so far away, shall tell the conditions of its life to you, just as now one country communicates with another. For there are on some of those planets the same forms of life, but much lower and less fully developed than those on this planet of yours; and on others, on the other hand, greater spiritual development than here. And by-and-by, and not in the far future, you shall learn that all, from the least to the greatest, are working under one law, and by one power. There is only one standard, and that is truth. And whatever man may say of his religion, if it will not bear investigation—the fullest light which science, the knowledge of God's creation, can turn upon it—you may be very certain that he has it from no divine source.

To turn to another branch of our subject: What message does Spiritualism bring to the criminal?

By criminals we do not alone mean those who may be inside prison walls. For there are as many criminals outside as inside the doors of the jail. There are certain laws of men, and when these are violated punishment falls on the transgressor. There are laws also of God, which when they are broken seem not to be followed by punishment, always or apparently; but retribution, notwithstanding, the future inevitably holds in store. There are many in this world who think they have kept the laws of this world, and that with regard to God's laws, even if they have violated them, it is no great matter. But we assure you there are many, ay, many whom the world applauds and praises, who every day violate the laws of God; while the laws of men they are very careful to observe. The great Father has placed in each human heart the silent voice of conscience that tells each one what is right and what is wrong to do. You do not need any other voice; the voice of conscience points out that which is right and that which is wrong. And in the light of this fact, when you realize the law of God in your own hearts, you are held responsible for what you do though all the world may praise you for your deeds. There are many inside the prison walls guilty of no other crime than that of breaking men's laws. They have violated no law of God in their own hearts, but have opposed that which man has instituted, and have therefore incurred punishment.

But as a man thinks in his heart, so is he toward God; and that man, no matter who he be, who lives falsely to himself, is guilty of a crime in the sight of God. Virtue and truth are sold in the market and are counted as nothing when weighed against success, and the one thing the world cannot forgive is failure. No matter how grand and how true your motive, if you have failed, all society shrugs its shoulders, and you are forgotten the next moment. And in this maddening rush after earthly success, many a noble soul has gone down the tide, because in aiming to do his work he was obliged to sacrifice all that was truest in himself, and so lost the crown he should have gained. Ay! seek ye not the riches of this world, where "rust and moth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal." The world's greatness is left behind. Seek the riches of the spirit, which clothe the soul in a garment of rarer splendor than human eyes have ever known. But what of those who are confined for actual crimes within the prison-cell? What message has Spiritualism for them? This: that even though they have made many and sad mistakes, there is yet a possibility of retrieving all, and of entering into the enjoyment of a truer and better life. How does the prison act upon him now? A man has committed a crime, and as he passes the prison-door, he looks for the last time on the world, home and friends. For when he comes forth, no matter if guilty or not guilty, he returns to the world disgraced forever. What are your prisons to-day? Are the men reformed who come out from them? No; they leave them with hearts more savage and embittered than when they entered. Their whole treatment is one which tends to increase rather than to check the individual tendency to crime. You see some poor, miserable lame creature tottering down the street; you pity him, you can see his deformity. But yonder prisoner in his cell has a spiritual deformity, and that has brought him to that cell. Which needs the most your pity? and should it not rather be pity than condemnation? Was it not the sick that needed the physician, and not they that were whole, and is it not so now? If these prisoners are all they seem to be, how much more do they need your tenderness and love than men of more favorable organizations and circumstances! Once, in company with our medium, we witnessed, in a prison, a sight we shall not soon forget. In company with him, and with kind-hearted people who brought with them their bright-faced child, we went one day into a prison to see the prisoners within. And as we

went along the corridors, dreary-looking, and damp, and dark, and looked in here and there at the poor, hungry creatures, wearing out their lives more like caged animals than men, the child peered into one cell where there was a boy hardly older than her young brother at home, to whom, as he came nearer to the grating, she said: "Brother, may I sing to you?" and the boy said "yes;" and as her little voice rang out like the voice of an angel through the corridor—it was but an evening hymn she had learned at her mother's feet, but the tones were so sweet, and life was so dull there!—forth from the cells came eager, restless faces to watch the singer, and listen and catch every note of that soft, unwonted music. The parents called the child to them again, and the warder pointed to a man in one cell, who he said was so hardened that all the eloquence of the priest fell as naught upon his ear. He turned away from all; he was the most desperate prisoner they had. The little child came near to the cell he occupied and looked at him. He reached out his hand to touch her, and said: "Sweet, pretty child, sing me the last verse again." And as her voice sang forth gently and clearly the lines—

"There let my way appear
Straight into heaven;
All that thou sendest me
In mercy given;
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!"

the poor wretch cast himself down upon the floor, and with tears streaming down his cheeks, sent out such a prayer as never came from pulpit or from preacher, "Oh, God! let love come back to me!"

Ay! there was hope for him, for God was there; and through the lips of that sweet child his angels had spoken to him. Yes; these men are human still, though it may need the voice of a little child to touch their hearts. And Spiritualism comes with this message to all who are wearing out their lives behind the prison-bars, comes with this one word, "Hope; though life be lost here, this is not eternity. There is still a life beyond, where God is. Mistakes may be many, wrongs you may have done; but no wrong is eternal. And that man or woman, who, having committed a great sin in the world, lives to overcome that sin, stands heaven-crowned. There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety-and-nine just persons that need no repentance."

What message does Spiritualism bring to the world? What answer can be made, when to-night, far away in another land, death and destruction march on so many who are dear to this country of yours? When we see the shadow of war, followed only by another shadow blacker than the first, can we say of these things that they are right? No; in no way is war justifiable, save in self-defence. War for the sake of power, for the sake of conquering the weak, has wrecked the lives of thousands; but this is not glory. And that nation which has built itself up by the destruction of others, is like the house upon the sand. We see now other troubles and destructions coming in many ways; and we say, let your prayers and thoughts and desires be those of peace and love, that these destructions, these legalized murders may cease in your midst. What sight is more horrible than to see tens of thousands of men standing before each other simply for the purpose of slaying each other, that their rulers may reap some short-sighted and momentary advantage they call glory? Not thus shall the kingdom of God stand in your midst! And there is the returning wave of judgment to come which cannot be averted!

The message of Spiritualism to the world? It is that each should work for others in forgetfulness of self—to lay aside all in which the good of others is not concerned. There is not a single reform in the light of heaven which does not belong to Spiritualism; not a single good work that can be accomplished but Spiritualism has some connection with it. You, who quietly stand aside and allow sins to be committed, are responsible for your share, even though your part be merely that of silence. Each human being is responsible for the wrong that is done in, so far as he is able to protest against that evil and change that wrong into right. By-and-by we shall ask with reference to the sin of intemperance, what these poor creatures with ill-formed bodies and stunted spirits are doing in a world in which they have no right to be; and we shall try to see if Spiritualism can show any remedy for this misery.

In conclusion, we repeat, as we cannot repeat too often, that a man's riches consist not in the things he may possess: the riches of the soul are greater than all the wealth of earth. Strive earnestly to attain that fullness of spiritual power, that when you come to cross the shining pathway and stand before the portals of heaven, your misdeeds may not arise to tell you, "Thou art not ready to enter here." Live truly, live nobly, strive ever for the best, and do your utmost to hasten the advent of those bright days—the hope of the world—when wickedness shall cease in your midst, when the Comforter shall come with blessings in his hands and words of love upon his lips, and bring peace to abide for evermore among you.

How much listening at the portals of an unknown world may be done by the untutored races, we do not know; but that the bereaved Indian mother feels the continued life of her child has been observed in some touching instances. There was a Chippewa woman we once saw talking about her duties, stripping deer-skins and slicing sturgeon, gathering wood and fetching water, in a strange, dull way, that was noticeable even amid the Indian impassivity, as something different. The youth who was in training for medicine man said, when asked about it, that she had lost her little girl, and would not believe it was dead, but thought it was laid by the test, so that she was always hearing it call (in that low, unobtrusive way the Indian babies have) and turning to look for it.—Springfield Republican.

Spiritual Phenomena.

SEANCES WITH HARRY BASTIAN.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light.

Will you kindly permit space in your excellent paper to publish an account of the wonderful manifestations which took place in this city, recently, through the mediumship of Mr. Harry Bastian? The seances were held at my house, the cabinet and arrangement of the room under my own supervision. The circle was formed as usual, the medium taking his seat in the centre. On the floor was placed a guitar, music-box, bell, fans, and flowers. Soon after the light was extinguished, the guitar was lifted from the floor and carried to the ceiling, then floated down, touching the heads of those in the circle, resting with each one for a moment, while upon its strings unseen hands were discoursing sweetest music. The music-box, weighing ten pounds, was taken in the same manner, and wound, while passing to-and-fro. The bell was rung furiously, and put in the hands of different persons. Flowers were brought, and taken again, as requested mentally by several present. Hands were felt by all, sometimes clasping those of the sitters warmly, at other times patting and caressing, and some were kissed upon the cheek, and forehead. Names were whispered, and whole sentences given. One instance I will cite: The guitar was laid upon my knee. I asked who placed it there? The reply was, "Lizzie," (the name of a sister who passed away five years ago.) I then asked, "Can you play for me?" This was your guitar; play as you used to." The reply was distinctly heard by all, "I cannot—a string is broken." This proved true when brought to the light. We sang the Old Folks at Home, and in the chorus a spirit-voice joined us, so loud as to be heard above all the others. Every word of the verse was sung correctly, the voice strong and clear to the end. As there had been some opinion expressed that possibly Mr. Bastian was a ventriloquist, he kindly submitted to the test of holding water in his mouth. But as the voices continued speaking, quite unimpaired of the condition of the medium, that question was satisfactorily disposed of by those present. The manifestations described above were not all that occurred at these seances, but are sufficient to show that such things do take place, and that they cannot be accounted for by any law or principle except that of spirit-power.

In the light seance nearly every spirit was recognized, some only showing their faces at the aperture, others coming from the cabinet in view of all in the room. One lady came several times, bowing to a sister present. Once as she passed into the cabinet, the sister made a request mentally. Immediately the door opened, the form came out, and raising her hand, the spirit pointed her finger at the sister, in response to her request. Two little children came and stood in the door, one looking over the shoulder of the other. They were recognized by the father. At another seance a gentleman (father of a young man from Medina) came so plainly materialized, that strangers to him made the remark, "I should know that face anywhere!" The son was completely overcome, as his father conversed with him, sending messages to his wife and daughter, all being plainly heard by the circle. Two other little ones came, whom the mother recognized—making five different ones besides an infant not recognized.

There were many faces, both old and young, male and female, gentlemen with side whiskers, others with full beards, while others had only a moustache. Remember, the medium and cabinet were thoroughly examined before each seance.

The last seance was on Tuesday evening, Dec. 16th, and one to be remembered by all, the forms coming more distinctly than ever before. My sister came in full form to the door; and as she moved back my mother-in-law came first at the aperture, looking toward my wife; then immediately opening the door she stood as fully materialized as if in the earth form, her hair as black, and combed the same as when she wore it last. Her black eyes and peculiar features were marked and distinct. Bowing to us, she retired into the cabinet, but instantly returning, raised her hand to her head, and kissed toward my wife (by mental request), and returning again to the aperture, showed her face, the whole forehead brilliantly illuminated, dazzling, and perfectly beautiful. She remained a moment, then with a bow to each of us, disappeared. Another form came in the same way at this seance—a young lady, who passed away quite young—would have been seventeen years old had she remained in earth-life. She came two or three times, bowing to her mother, who was present. A perfect angel form, beautiful beyond expression, with the light of purity and love from the heavenly spheres illuminating her brow. The face of a gentleman came next, and bowed to one in the circle, (a prominent citizen of this place) but as he was not recognized was requested to show himself again, which he did. When asked if it was Charlie, he came again, and said, "Look at me." Then he came to the door, and stood for an instant in full form, then moved back to the aperture, and said, "I did the best I could." His friend says, "Please come once more; say something that I may know certainly that it is you." Immediately a crash was heard like the report of a gun, the door opened, the form came, and raising his hand to his breast, fell back into the cabinet. His labored breathing was heard distinctly by all. He was recognized as the one named—An officer in the army—who was shot at Port Hudson in 1863, and died in this gentleman's arms. He requires no further proof of spirit-return.

Mr. Bastian has been with us holding seances five times since last May, sometimes giving a

London, N. Y., Dec. 10, 1872.

1. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 1929, 22, 101.

$$\frac{d}{dt} \left(A + B e^{-\lambda t} \right) = -\lambda B e^{-\lambda t}$$

1. *Environ. Biol. Fish.* 1993, 35: 1-14.

ever else may doubt Spiritualism, I am fully convinced of its reality. My cup is filled to overflowing. My j

To the Editor of the Banner of Light :

pleasure in communicating to my earth-friends, as I know how anxious I have always been to receive such tests as should leave no doubt in my mind of continued existence and an individualized life. I shall

make very strong efforts to accompany my coming with
such tests as shall be satisfactory and convincing. No

MADE IN SPIRIT LIFE IS FIRM AND COMPLETELY ESTABLISHED.
 Boston, N. Y. Dec. 18, 1900. CHAS. A. WARDEN.

References

and families, with no shadow or light to mar the
 sun's radiant prime; and when his career is ended
 and may his spirit coolly hail its release, and may
 his loved and loved spirits bear him to his arms to
 the home which his deeds during his mortal sojourn
 will have made for him. May the sweet satisfaction

1. The Editor of the Banner of Light:

It was the first time the Order, as an Order, had ever been addressed by a woman in their Temple since the corner-stone was laid. Masons who were present openly declare with astonishment that in that funeral oration were given signs, tokens and symbols understood only by the Order, and addressed to them.

stood only by the Order, and which no woman in her normal condition could have an opportunity of knowing. Very respectfully yours,
 Mrs. S. W. VAN HORN

MRS. S. W. VAN HORN,
Cor. Sec. First Society Spiritualists.

AN IMPORTANT WORK.

And turned away, some even stigmatizing him as a "blasphemer" and an agent of "the Evil One." To all such, as well as to thoughtful inquirers generally, the editor addresses the following weighty considerations:

answers the question, often asked, "why some are not healed." The profound yet rational suggestions herein set forth, relative to the philosophy of the action of these subtle psychical forces as therapeutic agents, we are confident are worthy the attention and study of all

We cannot here take room for even an outline of the argument, but wholly agree with the author that the

Thomas Carlyle was 84 years old on the day chosen to celebrate Dr. Holmes's 70th birthday. Carlyle is twenty per cent. the older, and yet Dr. Holmes deals to the more beautiful life.

cure of disease; and I deem this work an important addition to the literature of the subject, and of great practical value to every one who would learn how to successfully use this most efficient sanitive agency."

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THE SUN
For 1880.
THE SUN will deal with the events of the year 1880 in its

[illegible]

In his comments on men and affairs, TIME'S believes that the only guide of policy should be common sense, inspired by genuine American principles and backed by honesty of purpose. For this reason it is, and will continue to be,

[illegible]

These are the principles upon which THE SUE WILL be conducted during the year to come.

The year to come is one in which no patriotic American can afford to close his eyes to political affairs. It is in the hands of the press to exaggerate the importance of the political affairs which it has in store, or the necessity of resolute action on the part of every citizen who desires to preserve the Government that the founders gave us. The debates and actions of Congress, the utterance of the press, the existing conditions of the Republic, these are the parts which, however unimportant they may seem, are the parts which are of greatest importance throughout the country. The year to come, if intelligently conducted, will be a year of history, and the clerk men

the twenty-fourth Presidential election, to be held in November. Four years ago next November, the will of the American people, as expressed at the polls, was thwarted by an ambitious and unscrupulous politician, who, in the person of James Buchanan, still holds the offices they state. And this is the man who, as stated in the issue of the 18th of August, 1882, "appeared in 1852. The first decade of years spent with a corrupt, extravagant and profligate Administration, entrenched at Washington, first seized something toward the bottom of the mine and breaking its power. The same man, now, in the person of James Buchanan, is again in the place of power, from which they were driven by the indignation of the people, which they succeeded, the editorial staff was during the

Thus, with a habit of pharisaical good humor in looking at the misdeeds of life, and in great things a steadfast purpose to maintain the rights of the people and the public

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