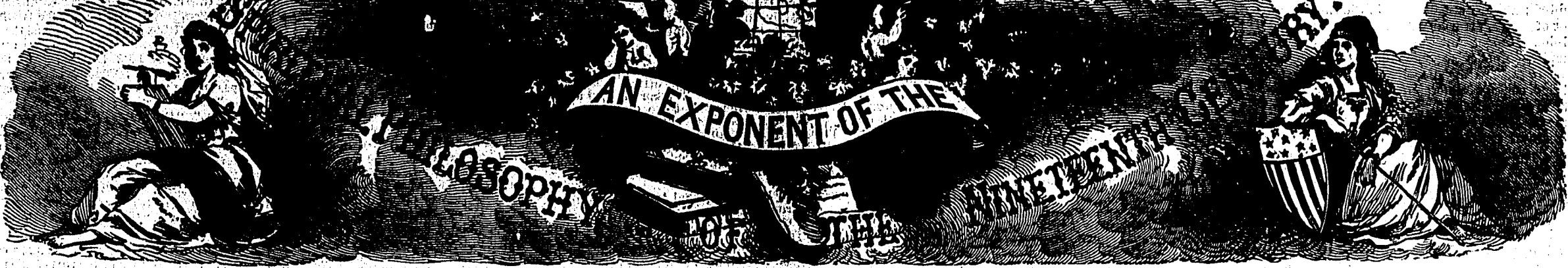


BANNER OF LIGHT.



VOL. LVI.

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CONTENTS.

FIRST PAGE.—*The Rostrum: The Sunset Glow: Its Material and Spiritual Significance.*
SECOND PAGE.—*The Soul of the World. Poetry: An Invocation. Letters from New Jersey, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Michigan, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. New Publications. Questions Answered Through the Trance-Mediumship of W. J. Oelville. Advertisements.*
THIRD PAGE.—*Poetry: A Mother's Thought. Banner Correspondence: Letters from New Jersey, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Michigan, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. New Publications. Questions Answered Through the Trance-Mediumship of W. J. Oelville. Advertisements.*
FOURTH PAGE.—*The Indian, and a "Sixth Sense," "Marvelous State-Writing, Our Advertising Columns, The "Truth" Not in Accordance with the Fact, etc.*
FIFTH PAGE.—*All Sorts of Paragraphs. Movements of Mediums and Lecturers. New Advertisements, etc.*
SIXTH PAGE.—*Message Department: Invocation; Questions and Answers; Spirit Messages given through the Mediumship of Miss M. T. Shelhamer from Joseph F. Johnson, Sarah Hackett, Mark F. Linton, Mabel Clough, John Chandler, and Mrs. Sarah M. Thompson. Thoughts from a Spirit's Standpoint.*
SEVENTH PAGE.—*"Mediums in Boston," Book and Miscellaneous Advertisements.*
EIGHTH PAGE.—*Spiritual Meetings in Boston. Society of the Perfect Way. Berkeley Hall Meetings. Boston Spiritual Temple. Keene, N. H. The Fletchers in Washington, D. C. Cleverly Caught! etc.*

The Rostrum.

The Sunset Glow: Its Material and Spiritual Significance.

A Discourse given through the Trance-Mediumship of
MRS. CORA L. V. RICHMOND,
Before the First Society of Spiritualists of Chicago, Ill., Sunday Evening, Oct. 26th, 1884.

[Reported for the Banner of Light.]

INVOCATION.

Infinite God, thou source of every blessing! thou divine life and light, thou eternal sun of splendor, around whom all souls must move like worlds and systems around the central sun of being! Oh, God! we would praise thee for every gift, for all blessings—like for that which seems brightness, and the shadow which also brings its blessing; for the storm as well as the calm; for the cloud as well as the azure sky; for whatever in the shadow expresses thy life and thy love; even so would we praise thee, that in nature there is no voice that is not thine. The sound of the spring-time breeze, or the roaring of the tempest; the sound of the falling rain upon the weary earth, or the ocean with its loud anthem of praise, each proclaims thy presence, each is a voice that tells of thy law and thy love. We praise thee alike for the winter and the summer, for the snow and the sunshine. Even thus in the world of man's nature he would praise thee for joy and for sorrow, for every blessing, for all the amenities of life, for each exaltation, each triumph over darkness; he would also praise thee for the shadow, for the pain that strengthens and purifies, for that darkness that may reveal the light, and his dependence upon the light; he would praise thee that every experience is but a portion of thy loving kindness, and that if the shadow of death or of sorrow come upon him, it is that he may turn to the higher, diviner light of the soul. Oh God! we praise thee that through the mists and darkness of time, through material temptations and the infoldment of the earth, man perceives the glimmering light of immortality; faint and feeble it may be, but the herald of a diviner dawn, the glory of a grander morning, the light of eternal splendor. As in all past time thou hast given unto man the evidence of thy presence and power, revealing thyself in the visible universe, and thy ministering angels in messages of light and love unto man, so even now in the midst of all material striving, when nation is against nation, and man against his brother, still thy voice is not silent; the power of thy spirit is not quenched; innumerable altars reveal thy presence, innumerable souls proclaim thy praise. May there be at this hour the voice of praise in our midst; prayerfully, and within each life, may there be an aspiration for truth and love, that shall bring each of us nearer and nearer unto thee, and may that sunshine of perpetual love, that glory and abundant life, that blessing of immortal power, be with each and all of thy children evermore. Amen.

DISCOURSE.

And autumn sunsets gleaming with splendor like the gates of far-off Paradise.
Tradition suggests and poetry reveals the fact that the reddening sky at eventide always betokens a bright to-morrow; that if the sun goes down in cloud or shadow the rain is sure to come. And always when the tinted gold and crimson and wondrous coloring of cloud and sky have revealed peculiar refractions of the sun's rays, there have been poetic fancy and imagery that have filled artists and poets alike with dreams of some far-off realm and higher light leading up to the Infinite.
The meteorologist has no explanation other than the usual one for the splendors that appeared in the sky twelve months ago and in greater or less degree of brilliancy until this night. They seem to have endeavored to explain them, at least some astronomers have, on the hypothesis of volcanic dust, that thrown up from eruptions on the earth, formed a thin film or stratum of peculiar atmosphere. This theory seemed plausible twelve months ago, volcanic eruptions having then recently occurred; but no one expected that this glow would continue, or at least the astronomer (Prof. Proctor) did not; but the phenomenon recurring again at this time, without having been continuous, must entirely destroy the theory. Nor can it be supposed that, as was suggested, meteoric flakes are in the atmosphere in sufficient numbers to retain or continue the effect upon the sun's rays witnessed one year ago during the winter, almost entirely disappearing in the summer, and recurring now again.
You will remember that before this society we have given several discourses, not only upon the physical, but upon those subtler and more occult forces that are connected with the physical, and which are the cause of the perihelion

lion of the planets, and that disasters, storms, and various commotions physically, politically and socially were predicted as following in the line of the perihelion.

The sunset glow can only be explained in one way; its increased splendor in the iridescent hues that follow long after sunset, in a flame-like appearance which never before has been equalled, even in the description of poets or the skies of artists, not Turner in his most daring attempt at coloring, nor any poet in his most presumptuous attempt at description, could ever possibly portray these changing, fluctuating, vibrating hues, that clear and crystalline, have filled the air and the western sky with wonder, like the *aurora borealis*, that sometimes mounts to the zenith, and, according to the vibration, are red, iridescent, yellow or white. These sunset glows have peculiar magnetic and electrical qualities, and are accompanied with rare clearness of atmosphere, proving that they are not the result either of the usual moisture which produces refraction, consequently coloring the sky, nor any perceptible substance which could by any possibility be traced to the presence of star or volcanic dust.

The electrical property betokens or indicates a suggestion of another kind, and we are now here to affirm that which is the most plausible and, to us, the only true theory of explaining the splendid rays as they have appeared for the last month, and for at least three months last winter, i. e., that in the progress, not only of your planet but the whole solar system through the heavens, there are not only new belts of meteoric lights (aerolites) and other substances that are continually encountered, but new electric belts (i. e., space-centres for greater electrical activity), since all electricity is vibration, and since certain atmospheres necessarily must tend to invite electric vibration more than others, so the whole solar system, incident upon the perihelion of the planets and upon that other revolution and larger cycle of the sun's motion around the more distant sun supposed to be in the direction of Aloyone, if not Aloyone itself, must necessarily lead your solar system, your sun and its attendant planets, into new inter-solar belts. These inter-solar belts invite different magnetic and electric vibrations. Consequently, having entered another inter-solar belt, the magnetic atmosphere of the earth, as well as of all the planets belonging to the solar system, must be correspondingly affected. This will produce not only an effect upon the sunset and upon the sunrise, or that period which precedes the sunrise, which has a more perfect glow than the sunset, because of the continuously increasing dawn, but presents the prophecy of new vegetable, animal and human life. We do not mean now spiritually, but physically, that the new electrical vibrations must necessarily affect all forms of life that are subject to the sun's rays, and that, even in the daytime, the sun's disk describes a most singular appearance at the present time, proving that somewhere between the earth and the sun there is a new atmosphere; that that new atmosphere must have its corresponding effect in tempering and changing the vibrations of light that reach the earth; that all vegetable life is peculiarly sensitive to the action of the sun's rays, and that animal and human life must be strangely affected by the existence of more electrical vibrations, or fewer electrical vibrations, or electrical vibrations of any new kind; that, therefore, this new inter-solar belt having been entered, these new vibrations are reproduced continually, and are revealed by the peculiar action upon the rays of the sun, which are only visible to you at sunrise and sunset, owing to the position of the sun's rays with reference to the earth's atmosphere.

This is a suitable subject for all observers of the phenomena of nature, for it cannot be put aside, either by a superficial explanation or by supposing that the sunsets are no different than they always have been. Correct observers, poets, philosophers, reporters and students generally have noted the changes of appearances in the phenomena of nature according to their peculiar occupations and activities. The whole world has recorded simultaneously that these changes in the sunsets have transpired, and that they seem to be permanent; that they do not occur at all times, not even when the atmosphere is correspondingly clear. Therefore their occurrence cannot be owing to any condition that arises from the earth alone, but rather to the condition of inter-solar atmosphere, because in all space there is no vacuum, but belts and girdles of substances into which the earth enters, and which of themselves must change and form atmosphere, and alter the sun's rays.

This subject to astronomers will of course form no permanent theme of discussion, except as the phenomenon itself becomes permanent. Then it may afford an opportunity for additional study concerning the nature of the action of the sun's rays, and what there is in space to change or alter the appearance of those rays before they reach the atmosphere of the earth. Phenomenally, therefore, you may expect that whatever electricity does in the development of human life, or in the perfection of all forms of organic life, will be accomplished or will accompany the existence of these new electrical vibrations. You may expect also that certain forms of life that belong to man, and accompany his existence, will be more perfected, while those forms of life in nature that are not essential to man's existence, and do not derive, therefore, their protection or support from the consciousness of man will cease, as it is evident that in those jungles and wildernesses whose borders man has approached this animated life has been essential to his existence has gradually perished, not only by his destruc-

tive hand, but by the encroachment of the atmosphere of civilization and a higher existence. So the approach, as is betokened in the presence of this electrical vibration of a higher and more rarefied inter-solar sphere, of an atmosphere that has a tendency to develop a degree of physical life more exalted than that which has existed heretofore, will necessarily lessen the existence of those forms of grosser life that cannot be included in the new nature of man and his progress upon the planet, while all life that has any or the slightest relationship to man must necessarily become more and more perfected. We would like to pursue this subject in the scientific aspect of this present thought to the very extent of material science and observation; it would be a most interesting theme of speculation at least; but this is not the object solely of our present discourse.

To ascribe the cause of the sunset glow, to point out the correct theory concerning it, and predict its probable results upon existence here, would in themselves, perhaps, be sufficient topics for human interest, but beyond this the spiritual student has something to inquire into. No physical expression exists but as the result of some spiritual cause.

The Swedenborgians ascribe every form of nature in their doctrine of "correspondence" to some spiritual attribute; which does not necessarily resemble the form that it typifies, but which gives the life and suggestion of that form; so they say that for every flower there is a spiritual blossom, for every form of substance on earth there is a real form that is spiritual. With us we would not make the correspondence or resemblance so literal as they, but we would certainly declare that for every natural phenomenon which the forms of life express, there is not only spiritual causation, but there is a causation that lies in the realm of human consciousness, and everything that belongs to the earth or is related to the earth, whether it be the sky that surrounds you, the atmosphere that forms a portion of the earth's vitality, or the organic substances that you meet with, must necessarily be related to, impelled by, and, in a deeper manner than you are aware of, governed by the consciousness of man. We mean by this that according to your needs the unfolding of material life, the things you shape itself to your requirements; that on build habitations, plan cities, make desert places fertile, change the course of rivers, build railways, plow the seas with your steamboats and your sailing ships, and in the end make matter entirely subservient to your will and bidding, by first studying the law, which seems to be organic, that governs matter, and then overcoming that law by the superior power of mind or intelligence. So far as man's spiritual condition is concerned, it may never have occurred to you to associate physical surroundings, the circumstances of life, the natural productions of the earth, with the spiritual condition of man; but when you consider that everything in nature must yield to man's subtle power, and that the higher the power and the more subtle it is the more it expresses itself upon surrounding things, it must be evident that if creative mind is expressed in the forms around and above you, and if the higher intelligences, angels and archangels, by the wondrous suspension of the usual laws of nature, as they are termed, sometimes manifest a conquest over nature, that your presence here upon the earth and your expression of intelligence must continually modify, change, alter, and finally perfect to your comfort, enjoyment and expression of happiness every form of life that surrounds you.

Therefore when it is claimed that in the physical realm about you there would be no violence, no storms, no disasters, were the spiritual expression of man free from hatred, from blame, from anger, from warfare, it may seem like a transcendent flight of the imagination; but however it may seem, it is no more a transcendent flight of the imagination than it once was to the ancient people that the earth is spherical, that it revolves around the sun, supported by certain centripetal and centrifugal forces that act in compensation; that all the stars move in their places, held by these invisible, yet all-potent powers, to their orbits and office, and if that which governs worlds, and is confessed to be material law, is so palpable and invisible, yet all potent, that you each confess it is the only power that governs the movements of the heavenly bodies, does it require any great stretch of the imagination to suppose that not only these forces represent intelligence, and that sometime you will control it absolutely? Even as now you master the power of steam in the engine, and it obeys your bidding, you will control the atmosphere of earth, will produce vibrations that shall cause the rain to descend, or disperse the cloud, according to the convenience and requirement of man; and as now the winds and tides are subservient to your ministration and your interest, as the lightning is your errand and message-boy, as the various elements of the atmosphere combine to light your cities and bear your burdens, so one day you will intelligently sit in the midst of all these surrounding elements, knowing that whatever is expressed is the conscious action of your mind and will.

Is it too much, then, to suppose that the state of mind upon earth, has its expression in the objects around you, and that there would be no serpents possible if there were no venomous tongue of slander; no wild beasts, if there were no angry passions with which you destroy yourselves and others; that if cities did not exist with reeking poverty and shame, there would be no corresponding pools of slime far out in the wildernesses; that the tangled briars that everywhere seem to meet you when you wish to extend your so-called borders of civilization, are

but typical of the tangled labyrinth of human thought and intention; that the rank weeds growing spontaneously in the sun's fierce rays are but the expression of the rank weeds that spring up in human minds beneath the fierce rays of the sunshine of prosperity; and that the thought that is around you, but does not touch you, is the result of a condition that is expressed, but never yet overcome in human life? As across the bare and barren wastes there springs sometimes a blooming splendid oasis in the desert, a fountain in the wilderness, a beautiful garden, where all else seems weeds and darkness, so in the midst of this wilderness of human life, the oases of affection, religion and inspiration come to reveal to you the future and possible destiny of man.

Has it never occurred to you that as cycle after cycle of unfoldment have recorded the material history upon the physical earth, there must be somewhere a corresponding record of the spiritual unfoldment of man? and that as you trace the past history of earth in the stratifications that seem infallible, there is somewhere a spiritual record far greater, far more unswerving, of the mental and spiritual unfoldment of man—nay, that human life has made its impress, not only upon the visible universe but upon the invisible, yet all the more palpable realm around and within? If a pebble dropped into a lake makes undulations that reach the shore, and stir every grain of sand upon that shore until, as is poetically said even in science, that vibration may be felt upon the remotest star, why is it not more than probable that the thought, that the mental state, that the condition of the spirit, shall cause sensible vibrations upon these occult yet most palpable substances, until they, too, shall bend, until they, too, have undulations that reach even to the furthestmost world? If an arrow hurled swiftly through the air produces a hissing sound, and where it strikes, if it be a tree, or flower, or earth itself, leaves its wound, why is it not equally true that the venomous word or shaft of angry thought will not only hiss serpent-like through all the atmosphere of human being, but perchance cause the rose to wither in your garden, the lily to fade by your side?

We know it is true that the personal contact of some people with flowers will cause them to fade and wither; that it is also true that others produce a blossom almost by their touch, and all flowers seem to love them. We know, aside from care, skill and attention, there is something in the very presence of some people that affects little children; they turn away distrustfully from some, while others win them by their very presence, their voice, their manner and gentleness of eye, or that other subtle presence which is not known by any material token. We know that into this room there might come some person who would affect you all as the presence of a thunder-cloud, casting a gloom over the whole assemblage; while another, like a sphere of brightness, would irradiate your countenances with smiles; you would feel their genial sphere though no word was spoken.

If you, possessing a soul and all spiritual attributes, are conscious of all these subtleties, then there are a million billion more that you are not conscious of at all, that, like the unskilled in colors or in music, you cannot detect. As only the artist can see the varying lines and tints along the horizon, as only the musician can detect in an orchestra of three hundred the slightest deviation from concord or harmony, so only the skilled, awakened and inspired perception can know the numberless vibrations in all the atmosphere and from the realm of the soul; and those numberless vibrations, forever affecting matter, forever encroaching upon material life, forever shaping and molding them to the bidding of the Infinite, will by and by be your conscious possessions. The story of Prometheus Jove will no longer be a fable, for you will behold, sitting enthroned amid clouds of splendor, an angel of some mighty world, moving the lightning, controlling the thunders and bearing the messages of the angels hosts and the burdens of the world. As now, enthroned amid material science, your Edisons, Morrises, Humboldts seem like Olympian Joves; as now those who gaze across the seas of space by lenses like that which Herschel gave must be the prophets, revealers and masters of the science of the universe, so, in a deeper and diviner sense, those who stand amid the lightnings and thunders of the spiritual universe, who see all around you the play of those elements that you are to finally govern and control, who behold that you make for yourselves the world or atmosphere, the glory or shadow in which you live, see, also, that these will one day be controlled by you.

As upon the countenance is reflected the angry thought or gracious love, so upon the atmosphere around, upon that impalpable life-substance that moves and glows and kindles in every atom, there must be a corresponding reflection of shadow or light, until souls are not only moved, spiritual expressions are not only governed, but the very air is suffocating or clear, according to your spiritual state. Then, still further, as the physical universe is observed to move in cycles; as materially you note certain changes in the physical universe; the revolution of planets around their suns, the revolution of the earth upon its axis, the cycle approach of certain manifestations or phenomena of nature, as, for instance, the meteoric showers that are supposed to occur once in about thirty-three years, and other cycles that occur more frequently, some continuous, and atmospheric aurora, especially in winter, this last denoting the existence in the air of vibrations from other and further planets, or possibly from your own, as some assert, so in all the realm of spiritual as well as mate-

rial expression there are cycles of unfoldment; and as in the physical universe during the perihelion of planets there must be produced certain results, without any speculation or supposition whatever, then in the atmospheric condition of these planets there must be a corresponding exaltation and a defection or deflection of the condition in other planets, those in perihelion absorbing more magnetic power, which, from the sun's rays, must be more directly manifest. So the earth in sympathetically being deprived of magnetic or electric vibration has correspondingly suffered; but it is the depletion which precedes the flood-tide, it is the ebbing which precedes the inflowing.

As in the physical universe there must be culminations of events, occurrences, circumstances, inventions, arts and sciences, so in the world of religion there have always been cycles of manifestation and expression of spiritual power, recurrent periods for the outpouring of the presence of God, and its manifestation among the sons of men. In the present instance everything betokens the advent of a new life and light; and not more glorious are those wonderful sunsets in indication of a new period of physical progress and advancement which the world or earth is about to enter, because it has dipped into the shadow of magnetic poverty, and soon enters the wealth of magnetic affluence; not more certain is this than that spiritual lines of light along the mental horizon are shooting flames of invention, and splendor, and scientific research, that are like crowns of glory around the sun: The aspiration of man's spirit that denotes the outpouring of new vital life from God; the awakening of a new dispensation; the abrogation of creeds, formulas and ceremonials, the drawing near of all worshippers unto the Temple of God, these are the indications of an approach of a new spiritual atmosphere from planets of splendor that in their far distances from the earth seem to have not the remotest connection or association with you; still, after ages of time you feel the pulsing pinions and rays of spiritual life as you do the rays of material light from those distant splendors, and the power which now envelopes and encompasses the earth is the new day-dawn of the heavens. Those golden, crimson skies give promise of a more wonderful glory in the summer time, more beautiful productions of earth, greater abundances of harvest, brighter vegetation, more varied expressions of human life. So in the spiritual heavens, where the firmament reveals myriads of new stars, and the descent unto the earth of spiritual ministrations is more manifest and abundant, the new day-dawn of life appears, a new spiritual sunrise, a splendor before unknown, a glory that reveals the advent of a new cycle. Many are prepared for this; many look for it in unexpected ways; many seem to think that it is already here, and many in selfishness consider themselves perhaps the centers of this expression; but even the thought that is in the world is an indication that the spirit of man is reaching for a new strata of atmosphere, a higher and diviner and more perfect expression; a wider orbit of spiritual unfoldment, a broader and deeper knowledge of the power of God.

This sunset splendor that across the physical horizon bears no message unto the materialist; though to him it "is but the sign of a new vibration of atmosphere caused by the presence of some foreign substance in the air," it is to those who read aright a token, not of the destruction of the visible earth, not of the approach of the day of final judgment, that through fear man has interpreted materially, but the fulfillment of the divine vision that the new heaven and the new earth are appearing; that the old heaven and the old earth are passing away; that star after star, constellation after constellation are being revealed unto the enraptured gaze and mind of man, and corresponding spheres of spiritual glory, unknown, undreamed of before, are bearing their light toward the earth. Not only the manifesting spirit; not only the twilight glory within the dwelling that having gone out into the realm invisible hovers near you still; not only the evening stars of your own affection, that forever in the twilight hour seem to draw near and still more near; not only the Hesperus of your mortal being that, passing into the spiritual state, becomes a risen star of glory there—but angels and archangels who herald the advent of a new life; who bring an awakening and quickening power; who pour out upon the earth the flood-tide of their inspiration until all art, all mechanics, all inventions, all poetry, all expressions of the beautiful are but the feeblest portrayal of what that work and word will be.

The sun's splendor from the realm of life and light that ushers in the new dawn of spiritual truth, takes away the old hatreds and slaveries from the minds of men, and reveals to them the presence of living messengers of light; bright lines that belt the horizon with the new promise of dawn. The sunset, all glorious, sinks down into peaceful surrender of past time; is only given as a prophecy of newer and better things. Nations that may in the great shadow of oblateness and retributive justice pass out of sight do so to only give place to new nations that shall rise up in themselves and herald the springtime of new glory.

Freedom, whose pinions have been overshadowed, whose presence on earth has scarcely been dreamed of, much less discerned, draws near and more near, and the divine worship of God, achievements of love instead of hatred, the conquest over all human struggles and strivings by the might of the spirit—these are some of the heraldings of that day-dawn that doth appear.

Already doves of promise go out from the ark of human life to meet the new dawn; already they return with the olive branch as the prom-

Next January there is to be held in the city of Edinburgh, Scotland, a conference of artisans, capitalists and persons interested in the study of social problems to discuss from every point of view the questions connected with the distribution of the results of labor between the actual workers and those supplying the capital. A gentleman of Edinburgh has given \$5,000 toward carrying out the proposed programme.

Exclusive of roads and public lands, the per capita wealth of the United States was \$200 in 1880, and \$200 in 1890.

Fig. 1. Effect of temperature on the rate of polymerization.

to follow when the time comes. America took the lead in manifestations. The newer countries the freer its thought, the more spontaneous its action. In England, with all our boasts of freedom, we are limited, bound, shackled, crippled beyond all civilized nations and enlightened peoples, while England and the world other lands are among the nations of the world.

The Spiritual Outlook. *By Rev. Dr. J. W. Fox, D.D.*

[illegible]

Spiritual life in its moral, religious, social and political affairs is not one whit less advanced than are the most progressive departments of human life on earth. Indeed, it is far ahead in its disciplinary, its tutelary, its socialistic and its civil rules. Its methods of government and of restraint are all that the most enlightened and humanitarian soul could demand for his race. Were it not so, there would be no advancement for man, and the operations of death would prove anything but a blessing to his soul.

When intelligent man shall so learn to govern himself that he will be his own ruler and his own happiness; when he controls his appetites and his passions so as to make a pure temple of his body; when he learns to love his neighbor as his neighbor that persons will be sanctified; when through his pure and blameless life the avocation of the physician, the jurist, the lawyer and the jury will have disappeared, he will be able to establish a system of moral government similar to that of the heavens. In the spiritual world, and in the spiritual life, this thought, he will think, will be able to provide for and control the various classes; to guard the weak, to watch over the spiritual ones who come to him for help, to protect the innocent, to save the others, to leave them the people of his own spiritual empire, and to make of his spiritual life a life of peace and love.

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