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OUTSIDE THE GATES: THE STORY OF A SPIRIT'S WOE.

GIVEN THROUGH THE MEDIUMSHIP OF
MISS M. T. SHELHAMER.

CHAPTER V.

For awhile I tarried; long enough to see Kate fling herself by the side of the criminal with a great cry of love and tenderness, a cry that revealed the depths of her heart to be still womanly and loving and warm; long enough to know that, through the ministrations of this spirit and by the teachings of a lovely woman who weekly visited the prisoner in his cell—a woman sent to the jail by a liberal Unitarian society, to take a flower and a kindly word to the imprisoned human beings there—a work of redemption would be wrought in the heart of this poor and sinful man that would develop his impulses of goodness.

Then I turned to go. My charge drew near and whispered, "God bless you! you have given me faith in Him and love for my fellow creatures." From the moment when you first spoke so pityingly to me and said you was a sufferer, too, and could sympathize with such as me, I loved you; I longed to confide in you then, but could not till afterwards. God bless you forever!"

I gave her a parting embrace—why should I not? was she not my sister woman, and was she not nobly redeeming the errors of the past?—and departed with a feeling akin to peace in my heart that had not for a long while dwelt upon its own sorrows, and constantly the words rang through my soul, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my children, ye have done it unto me." How sweet and holy they sounded, and how beautiful their application to the blessing called down upon me by my repentant friend!

I thought, "I will go to the sorrowful country again, but I will not grieve hopelessly over the past; I will strive to help others who are in woe; I may even find a blessing outside the gates."

Once more I found myself in the old place; but again the golden bars gleamed brighter in the clear beyond; the air grew less heavy, and now I could see further into the haze that wrapped its folds over all the place. Glancing down, as I moved along, I discovered a tiny flower occasionally appearing at my feet. "Ah!" I thought, "this is not such a gloomy spot after all. The darkness seems to be more within ourselves than in our surroundings." I glanced at my garments; they had assumed the appearance of a dark gray, and were fresher and brighter than before.

Now I took a genuine interest in those around me, and as I approached them I found that I could read their condition and their sorrows, and that I had no need to ask an utterance of them. One woman had lived a life of deceptive practices; after winning her confidence I revealed my history to her, and showed her how I had found relief and comfort, and bade her do likewise by taking interest in her fellow sufferers. Another was wrapped in such a contemplation of her own pride and what she considered to be her virtues—but what appeared to me as follies—that I could make no impression on her. One man had been respected and loved by his earthly family and friends; but he had been a defaulter to a large amount in the establishment in which he was employed; and when his crime was discovered he took his own life. Here in the spirit-world he was fully alive to his wrong-doing, and his soul was wrung in torture. The knowledge of the ignominy he had brought upon his innocent family, lashed him into frenzy. I plied him from the depths of my heart, and for a long time sought in vain to win his attention. At length he gave it to me with an air of suffering; but as I proceeded to talk to him—inspired as I believe by some good angel—he grew interested and even animated; and when I closed by advising him to confess his error and his pain to those he had wronged, and to send a private message of love and contrition to his wife and children, he consented to do so if I would show him how.

In the border land, "outside the gates," I have seen the defiant brawler, the reckless gambler and the bold and lawless woman of shame; those who still hold their old hardihood are not yet prepared for spiritual ministrations; they are neither teachable nor tractable; but many from all depths of former debasement are ready to be operated upon by higher influences, as their contrite, repentant attitude attests, and they are promptly attended to by invisible but constant protectors and guides.

On my return from that visit to the lovely medium, with my new-found charge, I met in the twilight of earth the figure of a female whose face was buried on her arm, and who stood with her back toward me. Her whole attitude one of shame and despair. I approached, and laying my hand on her arm, whispered, "I am a friend; let me share your sorrow; perhaps I can help you to find peace." She trembled, and shrank from my touch, but did not lift her head.

Again I essayed to draw her toward me, but without success. I could see the agitation of her mind, and read her interior condition.

"Come, my friend," I repeated, "let me share your burden. You are sad because of past errors. You feel that you were unfaithful to a holy mission; that yours was a high calling, and you were not equal to its fulfillment. You now mourn because you prostituted sacred gifts to base ends. Do not shrink from me; I do not condemn you; a higher judge than I must alone bring you judgment. I pity, and would help you. Give me your confidence."

At my words the woman raised her face, and fastened a penetrating gaze upon me, as if to read my sincerity. She must have been satisfied, for she demanded, "Do you know who and what I am?"

Assuring her that I had never seen or heard of her before, she continued: "You have truly stated my condition of mind. It is two years since I left the body, and I am still restless and miserable. I linger here, or around my old home, but with no thought but the everlasting regret that fills my soul over the life of the past. You look like one who has suffered; I will tell you of my past. Do you know what it is to be a medium?"

She paused, and then said, "I have been a ball from a cannon, so short and sharp and swift were her words."

"I know something of the trials and the conditions of mediumship," I softly answered. "I have had mediumistic powers myself, and I have a loved sister on earth who is a mouth-piece for the angels."

"God grant that she may ever be kept a pure instrument for angelic power, and be saved from the temptations and snares that sometimes beset such as she," ejaculated my companion. "If you are acquainted with the laws of mediumship, perhaps you know something of the influences and the conditions that sway its subjects; acted upon by unseen intelligences, they become very susceptible and sensitive, and are open to the control of the influences who come about them. I was a medium on earth—one well known in a certain quarter; I was sought by all classes of persons, who through interest or anxiety or curiosity wished to learn something of the invisible world through my occult powers."

"For some years I successfully practiced my profession as a reliable and honest medium for the spirit-world; but after a while I found my powers failing; I could not always receive intelligence from my controls when I most needed it. I was told by other mediums that my development was changing, and that soon I would become a medium of remarkable power. Ah! then the temptation fell upon me to supplement my genuine gifts with fraudulent practices. I let it become known that I was developing wonderful powers, and in a little while I opened my house to the surging public."

"I cannot repeat all the miserable artifices I used to deceive those who came to me for light—for light I oh! my God! I and I gave them darkness and deception! I coined money, I made many friends, who, had they known me as I was, would have scorned me."

"But I parted with my self-respect; I lost the dear spirit-friends who had formerly guided me; I failed in health, and at last I passed from the body."

"You do not know how I suffered; how I longed to be free from the fetters I had myself forged; how I loathed the deceiving influences who helped me to go on in my evil course, and whom I had myself, by my own folly, drawn around me. It did not make me happy to see my friends deceived; I was not without conscience, and the terrible weight on my mind sent me untimely from the body."

She paused in her recital, but I encouraged her to proceed, knowing that the effort would relieve her sorrows. "Since then," she continued, "I have wandered aimlessly back and forth, regretting my past mistakes and doing no good. Twice I have seen the sweet little innocent who was my messenger spirit in days past; but I could not bear to look at her, and I turned away. Oh! how I have longed to throw myself at the feet of all mediums and spirit-friends, and beg their forgiveness for my sins. For God's sake be true to yourselves! For your own future peace of mind do nothing in the name of the spirit-world that does not emanate from its inhabitants! Be faithful to your holy work! And oh! that all would heed my words. I know not any who are impure or dishonest; all may be true for aught I know. I was unfaithful to my gifts, and I am wretched!"

she might work a redeeming power for souls in bondage.

At length she consented to accompany me; and with her I retraced my way to the medium whom I had visited before. To this medium my companion repeated her unhappy tale; she was received kindly, and gently invited to come again. Not to enlarge, I will simply say that this unhappy spirit became a constant visitor to that beautiful medium, through whose ministrations of love she gained magnetic strength to begin a new work for humanity.

After a period of trial she became a "cabinet spirit" for a genuine and noble-hearted medium, whose materializing powers were grandly employed by a wise band of intelligences for demonstrating the truths of immortality to eager humanity; and in aiding inexperienced spirits to manifest to friends, in giving loving messages for those spirits who could not express themselves, and in speaking words of counsel and admonition to those who come to her for instruction, she is performing a grand work, and is nobly atoning for the mistakes and errors of her earthly career.

[To be continued.]

The Spiritual Bostrum.

"Spiritualism in High Places."

By "Phoenix," Given through
MRS. CORA L. V. RICHMOND,
Before the First Society of Spiritualists of Chicago, Ill., Sunday Morning, Jan. 4th, 1885.

[Reported for the Banner of Light.]

It was said in the olden times that out of the mouths of two or three witnesses truth should be established. But evidently this does not apply to that kind of truth which is contrary to the popular and accepted ideas of the day. The usual current of human thought is to accept blindly that which is stated by authority, and when authority denies anything, no matter how high it is written upon the stars or revealed in the earth itself, it cannot be true.

It is astonishing how different an ordinary fact seems to appear when viewed from a position of eminence. Royalty gazing upon the sun makes the day bright, even though it were cloudy; a man in an exalted position attesting an absurdity has at once a thousand followers. If Mr. Jones or Mr. Smith declares something to be true, the most important fact of the universe, no one believes it; but if it is witnessed by His Imperial Highness, or some small professor attests it, it is feebly maintained in the latter case; in the former it is the gospel. Authority rests in rank, in position, and in the ability to make the world believe that one has knowledge.

It should have been, according to the experience of all history, well known by this time that anything worthy of man's belief is the least likely to be accepted in high places; that anything that is undoubtedly true is denied at every step, and that the most important discoveries, whether in morals, science or religion, have been met at every inch of their progress with the most violent abuse and persecution. It should have been known by this time that almost the exact measure of the value of a thought is inversely to its popularity in the beginning of its existence, and that one may have the correct geometrical measurement of a truth by the standard of condemnation it receives in human minds.

But such is the nature and weakness of humanity that if one's ideas of truth, or if that which one has believed is on the verge of acceptance in high places, straightway there seems to be something that feeds the individual vanity. One thinks he owns for the time being the truth that is being accepted. So the thought is, "Now I am justified; now I am avenged for all persecution; now the truth that I always defended is being accepted." I question if one sufficiently cares whether it is the truth that the individual thus believing is to advance, or himself; whether he feels most anxious for the benefit of humanity in accepting the broad benefits of the truth, or most anxious to justify his individual, personal acceptance of it. Such thought naturally suggests itself when one is apologizing for having accepted that which one believes to be true. Such thought is naturally suggested in declaring that the sun shines when it has been frowned upon by those in high places; and Galileo comes up before the mind, when declaring that the earth moved, yet in the presence of authority allowed those who opposed it to have their own way—but still the world did move.

Spiritualism has been accepted. Its advent in the world has not been kept under a bushel. Its manifestations have been accessible to all, and not limited to those who have accepted them. There have been greater varieties of its manifestations than any other subject calling for human attention. The man of science has had his own way in pursuing his investigation; the literary man could test for himself; the man of religion—the most, or he should be the most intent upon accepting it—has been favored with manifestations of an unanswerable nature; but the truth is, that not the acceptance of men in exalted positions is necessary for Spiritualism or for its growth in the world. For thirty years one by one, individual lights in the world of science, art, philosophy and theology, and all human positions, have accepted Spiritualism; but just as soon as one in authority accepts it, the sky is gone up from the world. "Oh! this is but his idiosyncrasy; he is in his dotage; he is merely suffering with senility, or it is only something to pass away the time," then he is added to the list of those who, in accepting Spiritualism, have enrolled their names on the list of those who enter the condemnation of public opinion.

When the tide reaches the full measure and overflows, then in high places, in the remotest bayous and swamps, there will be acceptance in the popular view. When you look for the authority of kings, potentates, and science, especially those occupying exalted positions, professors and politicians, you must expect to be ignored; but if the tide has risen so high that even the smallest inlets, bays and streams are filled to overflowing, you may then be tolerated; yet make no account of it for yourselves, for it is still a drop of water in the sea, and the brightness of this day's sun is known in the palace of the Emperor or of the Queen, or in St. Peter's, or any place in Europe; it is written in the royal pen that the sun shines to-day, then you had better never have been born, for other days there will be when the royal will declares that the sun does not shine, even though the day be bright with the radiance of its glorious light, and other days when those in power will deny the existence of knowledge and inspiration.

It is certainly true that scientific institutions in every age have denied new facts, and time will be when the hand and heel of royalty will be placed upon the neck of those who discover a new truth; when, while accepting superficially, they will secretly strangle the new Christ that is to set men free. Do not deceive yourself; it means no more if a prime minister shall hold a séance with a medium for physical manifestations to-day than it did thirty years ago when Mr. Home held séances in nearly all the great cities of Europe, and in many court circles, when no less than five or six of the nobility attested at one time to the surpassing nature of manifestations in their presence. It means nothing that individual members of the royal families of Europe attend séances, the church in Russia, the church in England moves on just the same, the tide of royal favor rolls meaninglessly on, and the individual attesting to Spiritualism publicly was and is publicly avoided by royalty.

It means no more than it did a few years ago, when men of science like Mr. Zöllner, Mr. Crookes, Mr. Wallace investigated the phenomena of Spiritualism, declaring their acceptance of the facts; others did the same, and these were declared, as were even Mr. Zöllner, Mr. Crookes and Mr. Wallace, to be "dreamers who had erratic ideas"; who "had turned the period of life when men are responsible for their thoughts." Therefore it is only set down as an idiosyncrasy when a man accepts a truth so high that it cannot be employed for the ordinary drudgery of human life, and for the plaything of courts and kings.

The great power of man's acceptance of truth, however, moves on without these authorities. At last there comes a time when neither sage nor priest nor royalty nor nobility nor political position will have power to stay the progress of an idea; when others than those in scientific authority can assert facts compatible with human intelligence and be believed, can attest to facts which are perfectly clear and perfectly plain; and as this comes to be true, those who have knowledge will hasten to avail themselves of the truths already in the world, and will all straightway declare: "I have always known these to be true."

Those who have this new unfoldment, aware of the truth, should not feel that they are chosen, in some way selected to be martyrs for the truth, but that truth has been given to them—that there has been a favor bestowed upon them. In the light of this intelligence and this comprehension, one can afford to be patient as well with those in power and those who follow after authority, as with others ignorant or blind.

There is no doubt that royalty at the present time is a social rather than a political power. There is indeed the Premier; although occupying the centre, the political centre of his world, he cannot possibly sway the opinions of the masses of his people.

There is no doubt that there has been individually that which secretly and silently is working its way in all the high places of all lands. I mean that which in substance declares, "While I condemn publicly this belief, I privately think it to be true." It is a part of the fiction of social life; it is the falsehood of everyday existence, that a man's convictions may not be worn upon his countenance, nor taken to his club; that he must, if he has convictions, conceal them, if he is known as a suitable member of the superficial society of to-day; for the only correct standard of social existence in modern times is to have no ideas. This being true, how can it be possible that Spiritualism, which reaches to the foundation, the very basis of all ideas, that demands earnest thought, that requires careful and conscientious study, that entirely overthrows all usages and customs if they be false—how can it be possible that Spiritualism shall be accepted in high places unless it becomes a thing which social life admires, (which Heaven forbid) unless society becomes—what it certainly is not to-day—full of deep, earnest thought and purpose in the direction of truth? I am not sure it is desirable that there shall be for constant everyday use and discussion, among those who sip and smirk and dance attendance upon favor, so beautiful and bright a thing as Spiritualism. I am not sure that it would be at all conducive to the earth's progress toward the highest and best, to have it bandied about in the London and New York clubs and places of masculine resort, and discussed with all flippant themes, from the latest opera to the latest beauty or favorite of the race-course; where all religious feelings and conscience are made subservient to the latest fashion in the out of a coat or the tying of a cravat.

I do not believe that it is intended that that which underlies all human existence shall be the subject of social discussion. I think the doubts that have been thrown upon the public manifestations that every little while produce such a shock to the sensitive nerves of our English friends, and such discussion here through the exposure of a medium, are intended, that they may cast doubt upon men's minds that are fully bent upon controlling this subject themselves, who are not capable of seeing beneath the surface; also flippant ones, that too readily accept that which is wonderful, and talk as though mediumship were a performance, like that of the latest race-horse.

It seems to me in this introduction of Spiritualism in places where it meets with apparent popular favor, there is a tendency to parade it as one of the champions for fashionable approval, placing it side by side with the court beauty, the prima donna or the favorite of the concert-room. There are plenty of such subjects to fill the minds of the majority of those who through the fashionable resorts in fashionable seasons. Not but that there is a deeper life. Every individual turns his most superficial gaze toward the public, unless he indeed should be engaged upon serious business, like the business of ruling a nation or governing a kingdom or doing battle for reform; but even here, when he appears in society he does not appear with his professional raiment. No prime minister or diplomat is engaged upon a familiar line or that of statesmanship; no man of science is engaged in scientific research at the opera or dinner-party, nor even the clergyman in writing his sermon; why should one who is seeking for the very source of knowledge bring his sacred theme there? We must accept the world as it is. He who lives for that which corrodes and rusts, must receive rust and corrosion in turn. Whenever people assemble there is usually superficial life, and during half the hours when they are alone, but there comes an hour for deep meditation and serious thought; when sorrow lays its hand upon them; then they turn to these gifts that have been given by Infinite Wisdom.

But we must not drag into places unsuitable that which belongs nearest the Throne of Life. It is in the individual life, more than in the proclamation in high places that Spiritualism works its way, slowly yet surely in the world. I have no doubt, as one draws near the close of life, when one meets with adversity, when one inquires into death's estate, there is something in Spiritualism that must afford the relief that only it can bring; I have no doubt that there are those in high places (as high as the thrones of Europe, as the Premiership of England or the Imperial Kingdom of Prussia, that would be glad to know, not simply to

believe, that Spiritualism is true. I have no doubt nearly all in high life, not to mention those who rule the destinies of kingdoms in lowly places, would be glad to know what will be their destiny in the world that is to come.

When the answer comes to this question it is not coming in the chime of bells like that which comes from Westminster to herald in the popular Christmas time; it is not coming in the thunder of cannon like that which ushers in the popular New Year of the calendar, the New Year which you all praise and all bow down to as the commencement of something. But, for all the figures in the almanac, God has not made any change in the world of time. The sunshine and storm come according to the laws of nature. For convenience man makes marks upon the dial and studies the light and movements of the planets, that he may measure his rising and going to his labor, and the days and hours and weeks of human life; but in the great cycles of the earth and of God's eternity there is no need for petty marks like these. Man is ushered into the new existence by the birth of thought, of aspiration, of intuition, of all that marks the spirit within.

Spiritualism, therefore, does not come like the beggar, asking alms at the door of royalty; it does not come like a suppliant, seeking place or position from those in power; it does not come as a mendicant, craving the crumbs that fall from the table of feasting and rejoicing, but as a lowly blooming flower, as a snow-drop rising in the midst of sorrow. You find it unware upon the table of your cloister; you find it in your lowly room, wherein you go to pray; you find it in your hour of need, it is already there. Unto peasant or queen will it not be enough to say, "I am life eternal?" It only comes to those in want of its presence. If not accepted in courts 'tis well; there will be a higher court in your hearts. In the acceptance of it in every life, the royalty of the sovereign will of the individual is its shrine. You will be made more glad, you will wear it as a crown, because it is yours, and when you go forth among your fellow beings there will be, perchance, another light in your eyes, a deeper and diviner meaning in the words you speak; but you will guard the treasure well lest the bloom be brushed from your tender buds. Gather up these treasures from those before whom you should not cast pearls of too great price, for it was said in olden times that not all who say "Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven," and is it not true that not all who say Spiritualism, accept its innermost meaning, or understand what it is to bring?

There are, perhaps, nine-tenths of the Spiritualists to-day who would give more to see it announced that a crowned head had been converted to the acceptance of Spiritualism, than to know that a hundred hearts had been made glad in silence by its useless approach into their dwellings; there are, perhaps, three-fourths who would care more for an article of praise in favor of Spiritualism in the secular press, than to know that there are thirty, forty, fifty, and perhaps a hundred thousand in this city who to-day are made joyful and glad by the light of its presence at their firesides. The love of popular favor, and the praise of that which praises last and least, the idea of being known as among those who are acceptable in the glamour and flattery of daily life, seizes hold upon the mind and imagination.

Value the scolding and abuse that is traced in the daily press; it is an indication of the true metal that is beneath the dross of life. Value the scurrility that is heaped upon you, because it shows the superficiality of human thought, and value chiefly the absence of that fulsome praise which begins with dishonesty and ends the choicest words to praise the man who has, perhaps, most robbed his kind. How one can covet such measure of praise as this, may well be a surprise. Those who look upon the real side of life know that it only requires that dishonesty shall be clothed expensively, and hypocrisy shall wear fine raiment, its golden glitter shall be placed in most exalted position, and all men will fall down in praise.

It is in the absence of popular praise that an idea is to be judged true. It is greatest honor to defend an unpopular cause. It is not the believing of that which is simply an echo of popular opinion that is to herald the advance of the angels. When they were seen by the prophets of those who stood upon the wall and beside the gates of Jerusalem to welcome Christ when he entered, who of the priests came out from their temples to receive Him with homage? who of their followers scattered the palms placed before him? who of those that heralded the dawning of the day in their lives, were among the exalted? They received him not save with hisses, scorn, stones and persecution. That, being Spiritualists, you are permitted to live in one of the indications of the progress of human thought generally, and not that there is less persecution, but only that it takes another form.

Remember, then, that while it is positive that crowned heads do accept the fact of spirit-communion, and among the nobility are those who regard it as a pleasant and favorite pastime to hold séances, while those holding high social positions will be taken in to witness manifestations that you have known to be true for thirty-five or thirty-six years, that it still will not alter your status in any court of the world, in any tribunal of superficial human judgment, or any society that is governed by superficial rule.

Those who accept a truth and find in it their daily life, their daily existence, must be content without those things that are but indications of superficial favor, must be satisfied to live on the broad of life instead of hanks that are found in the stables of kings.

Remember, then, truth borrows no lustre from such homage, can gain no brightness from such following. The man of science who accepts it as is as highly favored as the humblest individual to whom it comes, for he was blind in being blinded by magnifying his own knowledge and power. If he can be so fortunate as to have truth make an entrance into his mind he should be thankful that in the simple truth he is exalted, seeking less to magnify his own importance, as being the recipient of truth from heaven. Between the man of science, as he may call himself, and the ordinary mortal is this difference: the man of science espouses truth condescendingly; the ordinary man feels that the truth may have condescendingly come to him. These two standards are to be measured in the world. You can still judge when it has ever been proven true that no man of science, whatever be his theory or self-importance, can withstand the onward march of truth. Let him alone and he is swallowed up, with all other ignorances, in its light, while the lowliest peasant, the simplest laborer, whose mind is clear and unclouded with self-importance, may be exalted to the degree of a prophet in the light of that truth; glorified because of his humiliation.

I do not deny that some men are qualified from experience to observe a certain order of facts to which their trained minds for many years have been turned; that certain order of facts cannot be among spiritualists—all who study the gifts of the spirit know these are facts which cannot be formulated; they come from the only one realm that spiritual gifts can

12. They say that I am growing old. But my hair is silvered and there are crow's feet on my forehead, and my step is not so firm and elastic as before. But they are mistaken. The hair is not me. The knees are weak, but the knees are not me. The brow is wrinkled, but the brow is not me. This is the reason I live. But I am young—yonder, that is, I was before. —Guthrie.

A clergyman who had been removed from his position at St. John's Church in New York City last year because he was "too liberal," has been elected rector.

any publisher who inserts the above Proclamations in his respective journals, and calls attention to them, shall be entitled to a copy of the BANNER OF LIGHT for one year, provided a marked paper be forwarded to this office.

DREAM is a common frequently occurring Hallucination. A reliable specific method of treatment is **P.S. HBAR**. It has been proven that it is effective in all cases.

Message Department.

Public Free-Circle Meetings.
Are held at the BANNER OF LIGHT OFFICE, 225 N. BROAD ST., every TUESDAY and FRIDAY. The Hall (which is used only for these meetings) will be open at 7 o'clock, and services will be held at 8 o'clock. A collection will be taken at the conclusion of the service, except in case of absolute necessity. The public are cordially invited.
The messages published under the above heading indicate that spirits carry with them the characteristics of their earth-life to that beyond—whether for good or evil; that these who are not on the earth appear in an undeveloped state, eventually progress to higher conditions. We ask the reader to receive no doctrine put forth by spirits in these columns that does not comport with his own reason. All expressions of much of truth as they perceive no more.
It is our earnest desire that those who may recognize the messages of their spirit-friends will verify them by informing us of the fact for publication.
Natural flowers upon our Circle-Room table are gratefully appreciated by our spirit-friends, and therefore we solicit donations of such from the friends in earth-life who may feel that it is a pleasure to place upon the altar of Spirituality their floral offerings.
We invite suitable written questions for answer at these meetings from all parts of the country.
[Miss Shelhamer desires it understood that she gives no private sitting at any time; neither does she receive visitors on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Fridays.]
Letters of inquiry in regard to this department of the BANNER should not be sent to the editor, but to the following: L. W. Wilson, Chairman.

SPIRIT MESSAGES,

GIVEN THROUGH THE MEDIUMSHIP OF
Miss M. T. Shelhamer.

Report of Public Seance held Dec. 12th, 1884.

Invocation.

Honor and praise we render to thee, O! our Father, for thy manifold blessings of goodness and of love. We would come into nearness with thee at this hour; we would receive of thy bounty, and participate in thy spiritual food which thou hast bestowed upon us. We would be baptized in the rich fullness of thy perfect peace, and receive from thee and thy ministering ones such an influence, such a holy inspiration as shall lift our souls above the petty cares of external life unto the pale of spirit activity.

O! our Father, we turn to thee, asking instruction and light; we desire to know more of truth, to understand more fully thy laws and thy perfect ways. May our souls expand and become receptive to whatever thou hast bestowed upon us. May we feel that we are indeed thy children; that it is our duty, as well as privilege, to learn of thee, and to receive lessons of truth from those angels who whom thou hast appointed thy ministers. To this end we will be obedient to the laws which thou hast bestowed upon us, and with our spiritual friends; may we grow in sympathy and soul communion; may we not only be ready to receive the truths from on high, but be willing to dispense them unto others, that those who are ignorant of thy ways, who understand not the laws of spiritual communion, may come and partake of this blessed feast of the soul, and realize that above the shadow there is perfect light; that beyond all pain there is peace and rest; and when all suffering is ended, sweet release will be given to every spirit. O! our Father, we ask thy blessing to rest upon all thy children, whosoever they may be found. Amen.

Questions and Answers.

CONTROLLING SPIRIT.—We will now consider your questions, Mr. Chairman.

Ques.—(By E. T. Dayton, O.) A young man in this city suffered loss of a leg, by amputation above the knee-joint. Great pain resulted from what seemed to be a cramped condition of the amputated part, i. e., the bending the knee shut by being crowded into a box used in burial. In exhuming the limb, the workmen found the box, which the sufferer—who was over a mile away—immediately reported to the attendants, with the subsequent work as it progressed, in exhuming the box, straightening the amputated limb and placing it in a larger box for reinterment. The pain soon after ceased, and the young man dropped into a quiet sleep. How may this phenomenon be accounted for?

Ans.—What your correspondent is pleased to call a phenomenon may be classed under the head of what may properly be called psychomagnetic law. Spirits claim, or at least those spirits who have been given attention to the subject, that (or at the dissolution of the body,) at any time when a limb is amputated from the body, a certain amount of magnetism of a spiritual character remains in the amputated limb (or the deserted body), and that this magnetism is necessary to the spirit as well as to the one who still remains in the body; that not until decay sets in will this magnetism or magnetic aura free itself from its confines and seek its proper place, whether it be to the spirit or to the earth.

In the case under consideration, we may explain that those magnetic elements necessary to the comfort of the spiritual limb, being confined in a narrow space, were unable to free themselves as they should, therefore the young man found himself unpleasantly situated; he did not feel comfortable; it seemed perhaps that something belonged to him which he did not possess, although, if questioned on this subject, he would probably not have admitted this. The limb having been straightened and placed in an easy position, the magnetic elements were thus allowed to free themselves in a natural manner, and the spiritual limb of the young man could obtain them, consequently the even flow of the magnetic current was established and no further pain or inconvenience experienced.

Q.—Is there much change in the appearance of things on first entering the spirit-world, and is that change always a help to the advancing spirit?

A.—To some spirits there seems to be no change upon entering the spirit-world, or at least upon passing from the body. They claim that all spirits who pass from the earthly tenement of clay do not immediately enter the spirit-world; many of them remain right here where they left their physical conditions; they do not ascend higher, or descend lower, in any degree, but they gather around their old haunts and mingle with past associations; they are of the earth earthy, although not inhabitants of a mortal form. To such spirits there is but little change by passing from the body; they do not differ from what they beheld before; their experiences are very much the same as formerly. If controlling a medium and speaking to you they would declare no change had come to them, or at least that by passing from the body they had not experienced anything different from what they had formerly done. To other spirits a great change may come, for indeed there are differences in degree.

Some spirits find themselves so situated that they perceive but little change; the atmosphere around them partakes of the quality of that which they formerly knew, and the scenes and incidents passing around them. Others, of a highly progressive nature, pass speedily beyond the physical confines of earth and enter the spirit-world proper. If they knew nothing of the spiritual life before passing onward, the change is to them great and startling; if they were familiar with spiritual conditions, understood something of the nature of the surroundings and the qualities of spirit-life, then they are not startled by the change, but they accept of that comes to them as natural and adapted to their wants. We claim that the change called death is of advantage to every spirit. This may not seem obvious at first, for an individual who is steeped in degradation and misery, and perhaps, perhaps, but to the spirit-world from the physical conditions of earth will find himself perhaps unhappy, restless, dissatisfied, and seek to get away from himself and the conditions which he has gathered around him.

Other spirits, who may not have been situated exactly as the former, but who from some cause are disturbed, restless, miserable, do not feel that they have been benefited by the change, but they return to earth; all their sympathies, perhaps all their inclinations, and all things that bound them in fraternal association, draw them back to their friends and their interests seem to be centered in earthly life. But these spirits are helped by the change, and they are helped by the change from the very lowest class of spirits; and every spirit who emerges into a higher life. We affirm that the change brings to every soul an impetus to progress onward. He who feels this prompting within him at first, but he will do so eventually, death brings to him, the first step, opens the broadest pathway through which he may enter a more progressive state of being. He will not be content with his earthly surroundings, but he will seek to get away from earth, and enter a higher life, and he will be helped by the change, and he will be helped by the change.

capabilities. It is also true that when a man emerges from the mortal condition he starts upon a higher plane, even though the first conditions around him seem dark and turbid, because the clear light will stream upon him from a higher source of being.

Q.—(By D. L. P., Malden, Mass.) If it is wise and proper for the inhabitants of this world to find out the exact locality of continents, islands, etc., and also of the heavenly bodies (so-called), why is it not wise for spirits to attempt to give a precise location of the spirit-world, as asserted by "Spirit John Pierpont" in the BANNER OF LIGHT of Sept. 20th?

A.—Merely because of the imperfect methods of communication as yet established between the physical and the spiritual world. When you have mediums sufficiently unfolded in mental powers so as to portray accurately, in every instance, and transmit the teachings of spirits, then it will be wise for mortals to try and ascertain all that they can, not only concerning the location of the spiritual world, but of the conditions of life in that world, and all other things pertaining to man's immortal welfare; but at present it is not wise, in our opinion, for mortals to seek for this precise information, or for spirits to attempt to give it. To illustrate: I may come to you through this medium, and declare that the spiritual world is located so many thousands of miles from the earth; and another spirit, quite as honest and desirous of imparting information, may come into communication with you through another medium, (who perhaps is differently unfolded than the one I now control, and perhaps not adapted for this kind of work), and give to you different statements concerning the same subject; you then become perplexed, and do not understand why there should be such a discrepancy concerning a matter upon which spirits should be accurately informed, and confusion ensues in your mind. You might go to half a dozen mediums, seeking a solution of the problem, and get a different answer from each one, consequently your mind would not be enlightened upon the subject. That is why we have answered the question to which your correspondent refers as we have; but we think the time is coming when mediums will have no difficulty in correctly making statements not only concerning the location and the distance of the spiritual world, but also many other matters of general interest which will impart instructive information to the seeking mind.

Let us add that, in our opinion, it matters not whether the spiritual world is five thousand or five hundred thousand miles from the earth; if an individual so lives while in the body that he may, upon entering the spirit-world, be in a condition to receive an intelligently conveyed instruction in the spirit-world, if he be so conditioned as to be able to unfold in spirituality and power it will take him no time to ascertain this, and all other questions and matters of which he desires to learn; but if one so lives that his mind will be distressed and disturbed when he passes from the body, it will be long before he will ascertain where and how he is situated, much less the distance of the spiritual sphere from this planet of earth.

William E. Dodge.

This is my second coming to this place, [*] Mr. Chairman, but I feel it my duty to announce myself to your office, as I find that we are going to do so. You may remember that shortly after my physical decease I announced myself on this platform, and requested my friends to give me an opportunity of manifesting to them.

I then declared myself in readiness to answer the question of the clergyman who, at the funeral ceremonies over my remains, declared he would give much to know what experiences had taken place with me during the three days which had elapsed since my departure from the body. I gave a brief synopsis of the three days subsequent to my passage from the body. I have not succeeded in giving the information to my friends which I desired. They do not look for me to come from the eternal world. Perhaps they would not believe I did rise in their midst, and speak with a tongue of warning and of exhortation. I am shut out from them, but I wish to be heard.

I have been trying to collect myself since I was released from the body, and to live a life and its consequences. Much that concerns it has appeared to me day after day, and I have been learning its lessons. Some of them have been very hard. Could I live over the past with my present knowledge, I would think differently, and plan and labor better. I shall not speak of my mental experiences on the other side. They concern only me and my God. I have learned new truths, and have seen the husks of old ideas and dogmas drop, one by one, away from me. I have been compelled to accept of other opinions than I held before, but I am aided by wise spirits, who cast me not out of their company, and I desire to be a willing and an able student.

I am interested in whatever promises good results to humanity; I hope to do more practical good for mankind now than I ever did.

I would like to impart to my earth-friends the spiritual lessons I have learned since I passed on, so as to reach their souls. I am sure they would break away from the cramping bonds and fetters, and come out into the light of spiritual truth.

Under a band of progressive teachers I am studying the laws of moral philosophy. I am desirous of gaining more information concerning the best plan or scheme for a good moral religious education that will benefit those who are now depressed and ignorant, bound round by the chains of error and superstition.

By religious education I do not by any means mean a theological or ecclesiastical scheme of instruction, but a plan by which the highest ethics and principles of a noble life are inculcated in the minds of those who are in so much need of instruction; a scheme such as was enunciated by the lowly Nazarene, who, when he was reviled, cast not a stone upon the revilers, but gave them gentle words of love, and a benediction of peace. I think such a scheme may be successfully established on earth without in the least conflicting with the teachings of Spirituality.

I would like to communicate with my friends. I desire very much to have a private interview with my son, and I would like to speak to those with whom I was formerly associated in the outlining of certain plans for the benefit of youthful members of the colored race, and of others who are depressed and cramped for lack of education. I am desirous of giving what I have learned in the spirit-world to those friends, so they may utilize it in the special departments in which they are interested; and I would like to see it utilized, also, in behalf of all the youthful members of society, needy, lowly and depraved they may be. I wish to see the young people taken from the dens of iniquity and placed in conditions where they may develop something purer and nobler in their nature. I think if I am supplied with a mediumistic instrument I can detail to my friends the ideas and plans which I have in mind.

I would like to speak to them concerning the spirit matter. Perhaps I can detail more fully now what I think of the spirit matter, of procedure in relation to this thing, and could when in the body. Then I was narrowed by certain opinions; now I am freed from them, and I feel that the association I have had with lofty souls in the spiritual world has fitted me more fully to enter into this labor and to perform its functions.

Of course I cannot be expected from this public platform to outline my views, but I am willing to come day after day, if necessary, to give the private ears of my friends and give them personally what I have learned, and to interest to them, and what I am sure, is greatly so to me.

I would say that I am gaining knowledge and growing happy in the spirit-world. I think it unnecessary to say, after what I have repeated here, unless it be for the satisfaction of those who care to know that my experience in the spirit-world during this brief time has been of great value to me. By obtaining broader knowledge and being fitted with a more expansive mind than when in the body.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for patiently listening to my few remarks—which are after all

directed particularly to a few friends who do not understand much of Spirituality, but in whose mind I hope to awaken a new interest in this blessed truth. I was known as William E. Dodge of New York City.

George B. Cordwell.

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. I am glad to find myself in Boston, for I like the place; it seems home-like and familiar; and then there are those in this city who remember me and whom I would like to reach; there are friends in what you now call the Highlands whose ear I hope to get at, because if I can do so and convince them of my presence, I may perhaps succeed in giving some information which will be agreeable and important to them.

I wish to say that I am satisfied with the spirit-life. I so, like the gentleman who preceded me, think differently upon certain matters than I did when here. I feel as though I had been going through a course of training; although I am the same man, yet in many essential points I am not the same that I was on earth. Perhaps you will say I have only developed what was within, but hidden. That may be, and I think my friends would not fail to recognize me if I could give them a personal interview; but I feel larger and fuller in every way than I did on earth. It seems as though my hand, upon which you have laid your finger, has grown looking back from his present condition to the stage of infancy.

Some years have passed since I went from the body, and I have not been standing still all this time—which may account for my difference of feeling in coming back here to-day. I have been going onward, meeting with new friends, re-meeting with old friends who passed on before, and entering into new associations, gaining new ideas. Every moment of my time has been filled with some kind of occupation, so that in looking back I fully realize that it is years since I left the body.

I would be quite an old gentleman now were I here. When I am old and stand beside you, my looks do not appear gray, nor am I aged in my personal appearance, for every time I have stepped forward—learned a new lesson, gained a new point, or become stronger in spirit, met some old friend and tried to lift him up—I have seemed to feel the weight of years dropping away from me, to grow strong, to do better, and to sense a fresh feeling of vigor running through me.

Since I passed out I have met many friends, and among them my dear wife Susan, who desires to join her love with mine in sending it to our friends. She lived to a ripe age in the body. When she passed out I was ready to give her welcome. We have together visited our earthly friends and tried to impress them with a knowledge of our presence. We could not do as we would like, yet we are not discouraged; we hope that the time will come when the brightest light that Spirituality has to reveal will shine in upon their lives; we are quite content to wait until that good time comes, when the door is wide open.

I will not take up more of your time, sir, but I thank you for permitting me to make myself heard in this way. I am George B. Cordwell.

Clara Underwood.

My name is Clara Underwood. I have relatives in Worcester, Mass. I have friends and relatives in other parts of the State. I want them all to know I have come back, for it seems to me it is such glorious news to give, that those who die can get back again and travel over a road that leads straight to their friends on earth, that every one ought to possess it. I have tried to tell it to my friends; I have visited their homes and whispered to them; I have placed my hand upon their heads and tried to tell them many times to make them understand that I had not died, but was with them. Somehow I have been unsuccessful, and many times I have retired disappointed and sad to think that the veil between the earthly life and the spiritual was so thin, and yet my mortal friends could not see beyond it.

I bring them all my love. I wish them to know I am happy in my spirit home. I am not weak, though, as I was here; all the enfeebled conditions of the body were left here with the physical form, and I am strong and happy and active now, and can travel from place to place, and from point to point, as I desired to when on earth but had not the power. They can realize, perhaps, what a sensation of relief and release, of happy enjoyment, comes to a spirit when it is freed from a weak, enfeebled body, and is able to pass out here and there and almost everywhere, and grow stronger and stouter in the journey, and know that these things we last and that there is no closeless pain to come to one because of the effort she has made. I have been like a little child, trying to learn its lessons, and every time I do learn something I feel so pleased, for I know I have mastered a difficulty and taken another step on the road of knowledge. It is not an easy road; we have to learn day after day our lessons; but when we do enter upon the study, determined to conquer, to gain and to grasp all that there is to know, then we find the way grows broader and clearer, our perceptions become stronger, and we learn better every hour.

I do not explain these things very well, I presume, but it is difficult to do so, I mean in human language; not but what we use language in the spirit-world, but sometimes intuitively, so to speak, we can grasp the information we desire at almost a moment's breath, and we are not obliged to make use of terms and sentences as you do here. I would like to tell my friends ever so many pleasant things, if they could come to me, but they are not permitted to do so in their homes, but they are not permitted to do so, I presume, for me to reach them in this way.

Some of my friends are very liberal in their religious ideas, tolerant of everything they do not understand and which seems to point out a line of truth; but others of my friends—some who are very dear to me—do not accept nor will they tolerate any idea or opinion which conflicts with their own conceptions of religion. I think these the hardest to reach, and yet they are the most in need of enlightenment. By coming here I hope to find a way to get to them and give them what I know they ought to receive before they pass from the body. I am very grateful to you for permitting me to enter.

Caroline Y. Cook.

I am from Greenfield, N.Y. I have friends and relatives there. I have personal matters and material concerns which affect me, and which certain friends attempted to arrange and settle after my decease. I am anxious to come into communication with some of those friends. I wish to give a private message to friends by the name of "Young." I hardly know how I should proceed in so doing, but I thought if I could come to some spirit or mortal friend direct me to some place or person, I would be glad to go, where I could give what I desire.

While I am here I wish to send my love to my friends. Tell them that under the circumstances (I wish you would emphasize that, please) I am satisfied with what has been done in relation to my affairs; but if I could get them a private message I think I could put some new ideas into their heads which perhaps would be of advantage.

I wish also to know that I do not regret leaving the body, and I am satisfied with my spirit-life; its condition is pleasant, and I feel many around me who are happy and contented, and I see many bright spirits who are kind to us from distant places and tell us of still grander beauties beyond, and they assure us that we study to unfold our minds, to grow purer and holier in spirit; we shall pass on to those distant places and take up a more celestial abode. I am interested in these things, and I wish to find all that is worth gaining. I am quite satisfied with what I have here, and I look for something more beyond, if I can gain it in a spiritual way, with the guidance of those above me.

This is all I have to say, except to express my sympathy and affection for all who are dear to me. I am Caroline Y. Cook.

Caroline A. Leachman.

I wish to find my husband, my name is John Leachman, he is in San Francisco. My name is Caroline A. Leachman, and I am a good wife and mother, but I am a widow.

this way before, and my husband does not know, I suppose that I can come to him, I have been with him for years, trying to guide and influence his life.

I feel now that I was truly an ignorant creature when I went out of the body. I did not know where I was going, or what lay beyond me; I had no realization of an active life apart from earthly affairs, and I had no promise or hope of anything stirring or uplifting in the life beyond. I was not a believer in a God, but I had no defined idea of anything apart from the body. My husband's religious opinions were alien to my own, and he did not know I could come to him, look over his affairs, and watch his training of our little boy, and try to guide him, but I have done so. I have seen his son go out into the world, and commence his labor for himself, and I have still followed my dear ones, and wished to communicate with them.

My husband feels alone now, and he thinks he is getting along in years, and sometimes very gloomy thoughts enter his mind. I try to banish them, I want him to feel cheery and bright, and to know that God is good; that beyond the shadow there is sunlight and peace. I want him to feel that his wife is waiting for him in a land of gladness, and that he will surely pass to a brighter condition when he leaves the body, for I have seen him wrestle with temptation. I know he has more than once overcome evil, has risen above the trials that have beset his way. I have seen him stand firm when others thought he would fail; I have seen him go on bravely, after day, when those around him have succumbed to the tempter, so I know that what I say is true, that his condition above will be brighter and happier and more restful than it has been here. I bring these things, hoping that he will learn that I am with him, that spirit influence has guided him for years, that he is never alone, and even though our son is far away from him, and interested in the affairs of his own, and even though those who were once dear to him have passed out to other places, or have gone to the higher life, yet he is not forsaken by the friends of the past; those who have stepped from the body rather than around him, time after time, to make him feel a holy and an uplifting influence, and if he knows this and can realize it, it will give them power to come more clearly to him, and to make themselves known. My daughter Katie is with me in the spirit-world, and we are happy together. She sends her love to her father and brother.

David C. Densmore.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I want to express my thanks for being able to come here again. I have availed myself of this channel, as you know, at other times, and always because I felt that a word was needed from me by my former friends, by some one who had turned to me for some word or light from the spirit-world, or by some individual who was in need of a little personal instruction. Perhaps I do not come altogether with an unselfish motive, because it does me good to control this medium and to make my hand stronger and better fitted for my work; and I always felt it my duty as well as privilege to take hold of every opportunity that promised me a higher unfoldment or greater information than what I possess.

I send my love to my friends. I greet them in a fraternal spirit, for I feel in harmony with them all. Some may say I was not always in harmony, but I think that I always wished my fellow-men God-speed in their good works, and desired to see them benefited; and now that I have stepped from the body with the same hopes and earnestness with its cramping conditions, I feel my soul expand in love and good-fellowship to all creatures.

I want my friends to know I am not dissatisfied with the dispensation of things, especially with those that concerned me when on earth, and that interest, perhaps, which has followed after me in the spirit-world. I feel that all things have been for the best. I feel that what I established by the agency of spiritual power here on earth performed its mission, and that I did a mission which was important in an humble way, and which carried light and comfort to many hearts; and I still feel that it continued its work just as long as it was needed. I do not feel sad or sorrowful, or complain that the work has been abandoned and the field of usefulness formerly employed closed up, for I think it has performed all that it was called upon to do.

My friends may think that I have grown very contented since passing from the body, and so contented that I am not thinking of returning to have a higher power, that whatever is of the spirit and guided by higher intelligences will succeed—will go on and flourish. I believe that all good works are started by higher powers than those of earth. I believe that all needed reforms receive an impetus from spiritual realms, and that through intelligent, mediumistic sensitives on earth, these works, these reforms are pushed forward by those who are beyond and above us.

I think more than one individual in whom I have taken an interest, since passing from the body, those who are agitating some question of moral, social and political reform, and have seen them agitating the waters of thought around them, and creating commotion in the minds of their fellow-creatures. They sometimes think they are doing all this work themselves, and they feel it to be a thankless task; but I can assure them they are not alone in the work; they are pushed forward by those who stand outside of the physical arena of life; they are helped by those who are in the spirit-world, and who are able to ventilate these questions of importance and arouse the public thought upon them. They may take all the credit, if any there be, if they wish, but all the same, spiritual upholders and advisers are by their side doing the greater part of the work.

Well, friends, I feel that we have need of all the labor of all the assistance we can get from higher sources, and from those around us; it seems to me that we ought to cooperate and perform the work of the spirit-world in harmony, and toward each one doing his own part and filling his place to the best of his ability. There is enough for us to do; there is a special department for each one; you cannot do my work nor can I do that of another. I can only perform my own.

Every medium has his or her special phase of mediumship to work, his or her particular labor and mission to perform, and he can do none other; at the same time another medium cannot perform his, and there is no need of rivalry and envy and jealousy, or any unpleasantness between mediums, workers, and Spirituality. There is a place for each one of them all, and a work for each one to do. This should be remembered and attended to.

I am not here to preach, but I come to give my love to my friends and tell them I am satisfied with all that has taken place; at the same time I am not growing idle; I cannot bear to keep still, so I have been round here and there, where I feel there is something to be done. I am interested in a spiritual publication—I mean on the spirit side—which affirms that there are publications and press-work in the spirit-world, and that the work of the spirit-world is a publication in the other life that bears to various quarters news of spiritual import, and gives not only inspirations to those who are out of the body, but also bears an influence to many who are on earth. In this labor I am assisted by my friend Pardee and other co-workers of the higher life. We are happy to get in our labor; but while we are interested in this work, it is by no means follows that we do not have something to do in connection with the work on the earth.

We are looking to a time when we shall establish an agency through the agency of human beings, to pay branch of our former labor, and when that time comes, our duties and avocations, our social and fraternal relations, and our spiritual and communicative relations with departed spirits will be widely established, and those hungry, starving souls of earth, who are now crying out for food, will be fed from the upper country, who are now crying out for guidance, will be guided by the angels of the spirit-world, who are now crying out for help, will be helped by the angels of the spirit-world, who are now crying out for light, will be lighted by the angels of the spirit-world, who are now crying out for love, will be loved by the angels of the spirit-world, who are now crying out for life, will be given life by the angels of the spirit-world, who are now crying out for peace, will be given peace by the angels of the spirit-world, who are now crying out for joy, will be given joy by the 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