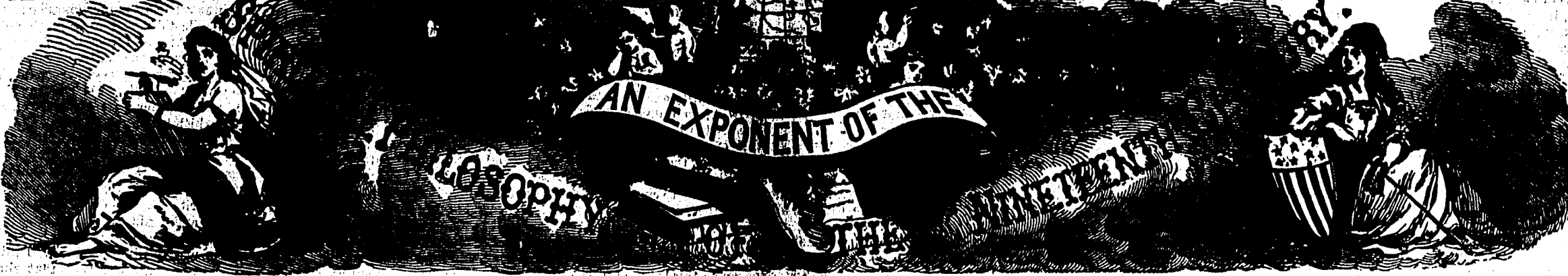


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The Spiritual Rostrum.

Rational Proofs of Man's Immortality.

An Address by
JOHN FRANKLIN CLARK,
Delivered before the American Spiritualist Alliance, at Republican Hall, New York,
Sunday, Oct. 5th, 1884.

(Reported for the Banner of Light.)

Probably the most important question that presents itself to the human mind, and the one most difficult to answer in the affirmative, at the same time confirming such answer by the presentation of such evidence as will convince and satisfy the human reason, is, SHALL I ALWAYS AND FOREVER RETAIN MY PERSONALITY AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS?

In treating this question during the brief time that is allotted to me by the rules of your Association—a full discussion of which would require hours, where but minutes are allowed—I shall endeavor to present for your consideration a few reasons why we may infer that we, as individuals, are indestructible, self-existent, central units of the substances of being, and in so far as I am able, present such evidence as shall convert such inference into an established fact, which later on it may be possible we shall be able to perceive as an incontrovertible truth.

If in the statements that I make I may appear to be somewhat or even decidedly dogmatic, you will please bear in mind that within the limits of time imposed upon me I can only state to you conclusions that I have arrived at through long and careful processes of reasoning; and while I may not be able to present to you very much of absolute knowledge, and while some of the postulates I may present may appear somewhat startling, I assure you that I shall make no statement that I do not at the present time believe to be true, and for which belief I have some rational grounds.

I have learned that the easiest and most direct way to gain a correct apprehension of any complicated object is to take the most perfect specimen that I can find, take it down and reconstruct it again; and in my investigations of the subject under consideration, I have pursued the same course, selecting man as the highest form of being of which we have any absolute knowledge, and I have become convinced that whenever we shall attain to a perfect knowledge of ourselves, we shall have a like knowledge of everything outside ourselves.

Through a careful mental analysis and consideration of myself, I have been compelled to adopt the conclusion that there are two primal substances of being, both of which are self-existent and uncreated, which we will designate as spirit and matter, which, united, develop and constitute nature; nature being the ego evolved by the union of spirit and matter on the primeval plane of being.

We might designate these two primal substances of being as, imponderable and ponderable substances. The imponderable has not dimension, cannot be weighed or measured, is unitary in form, and cannot be divided. The ponderable possesses dimension, can be weighed and measured, and is parted or divided in form.

I will now state three truths axiomatically, by which I will prove logically and rationally the self-existence of these two substances:

First. Something cannot be produced by or from nothing.
Second. One substance or thing acting by, through or upon itself cannot produce another substance that is essentially different from itself.
Third. Nothing can be evolved, developed or produced from a substance (or substances) that does not exist potentially in such substances.
Let me here state that we have no knowledge of either imponderable or ponderable substance per se as they exist on the primeval plane of being; the only knowledge we have of them, and probably the only knowledge we ever will have of them, is what we obtain from their united manifestation of their inherent qualities or potentialities, and this manifestation is always in the form of the ego of being, the I am of the objective existence. We have no acquaintance with the substances of being themselves; it exists only in that ego.

Now to prove our proposition: We know that the substance called matter exists because of its manifestations with which our every-day life makes us familiar, and that it is ponderable. We know that the substance called spirit exists, from its manifestations as thoughts and ideas, for these produce effects, therefore must be something, necessarily therefore substance, and being without dimension or weight is imponderable.

Now these two forms of substance are everywhere present so far as we know, and as by our first axiom they could not have been produced from nothing, we are justified in assuming that they are self-existent and uncreated. They are here, and here to stay, and if any one denies their self-existent character, it lies with him to prove that the time was when they did not exist.

Next, the observed manifestations of these two substances demonstrate beyond the shadow of a doubt that they are essentially different from each other both in form and method; the imponderable being unitary, the ponderable parted; the imponderable homogeneous, the ponderable heterogeneous; therefore by our second axiom we prove that both substances are self-existent.

The truth of our third axiom is proved by the first, for if substances could evolve and develop something that did not exist potentially within them, then something would be evolved from nothing. It is quite proper to speak of these primal imponderable and ponderable substances as the primal substances of being, but I prefer to treat of them under the more familiar terms of spirit and matter, spirit being the imponderable and matter the ponderable substance, and nature the ego evolved by their action and reaction on the primeval plane of being.

Turning now to ourselves, we find these substances, as manifested in us, giving expression to intelligence, power, motion, life, sensation, affection, progression, development, organization, will, reason, love and wisdom; in such an unmistakable manner that they are cognizant to all people of any considerable degree of culture.

Now, according to our third axiom, each of these entities must potentially exist and be enfolded in the primal substances of being, spirit and matter. I will now define my conception of these primal substances:

Spirit I conceive to be homogeneous in form, unparticled in character, unlimited in extent, of infinite tenacity and elasticity, easily penetrated when expanded in its primeval condition, capable of being condensed in forms composed of aggregated matter, and, when so condensed, each centre of condensation becomes a sensorium of involuntary, intelligent action, and a centre of attraction and repulsion, the nature of which is determined by the form and molecular structure of the matter into which it is condensed, and it possesses inherently the principles of intelligence, power, motion, life, sensation and reason which unite their manifestations for the unfoldment and development of still higher and more interior principles.

Matter I conceive to be atomic in form, heterogeneous in character, coextensive with spirit, in which its atoms float, and as possessing inherently the principles of affection, progression, development, organization, will and love. These two substances, in their primeval state, have not an objective but an essential being, and contain, potentially enfolded within themselves, all forms of being that ever have or can exist.

The union of these two primal, self-existent substances evolves an Ego of Being which we term nature, and in nature they become one in purpose and design, and, as nature, attain to expression on the several planes of being above the primeval, the number of these planes and the variety of expression on each several plane being well nigh infinite in the conception of the human mind as developed on this earth.

So far as it is possible for us to perceive by the light of observation and reason, every recurring expression of nature is on a plane in some degree higher than the preceding one, beginning with the primeval condition in which nature is essential in form, and all its principles potential in being, up to the plane of human being, where, in the human form, nature has attained to self-conscious objective existence and the voluntary exercise of its most interior and highest potentialities.

If we would understand nature we must discover and become acquainted with the principles that are inherent in nature, for causes reside in principles. We cannot understand nature nor comprehend its action by the study and investigation of the local and limited forms of objective being that we come in personal contact with. Our views of nature must be general, not special. Special observation may supply us with facts in regard to special classes of objective existence, all of which are modified by and are the result of their special environments and associations, but only broad and general observations that look upon all that is as an unitary whole can enable us to discover the principles by and through which nature advances to higher planes of being, by such an infinity of progressive stages that they are wholly undiscernable by us on our present plane of abode, except as we divide them into classes the several stages of progression in each of which are myriad in number.

As every form of being is a part of nature, and all conditions of being combined constitute nature, it may be laid down as an axiom that nature is a unity, and that its principles are unchangeable, always acting the same, under like conditions, and it also may be stated as an axiom that nature is ever expressing itself in new and higher forms of being, on higher

planes of existence, and that this must ever continue, until it attains to existence as an organized unit of being, wherein both of its primal substances shall be unitary in form and homogeneous in character, and this can only occur when matter shall have progressed to that condition wherein it is no longer subject to molecular change.

If the primeval condition of nature is in the essential form, then it is self-evident that there was a time when the objective and manifest forms of being did not exist, and that they have been evolved; therefore that all worlds, whether existing to-day as suns, planets, or moons, had a beginning, and necessarily that there must have been a time when the first world was evolved, and therefore that whatever the number of worlds that have since been evolved may be, that number is limited, and hence the field occupied by the great universe of worlds in space is limited. Now this is important, for if the number of worlds be limited, then it becomes impossible to so locate them in space but that all of those on the outermost verge of the evolved universe will have no worlds lying beyond them in one direction—consequently we are forced to choose between two alternatives; that is, either that that principle in nature known under the name of gravitation is not universal in its action, or else there can be no such things as fixed stars, or worlds that remain stationary at the same point in space—for it follows that if gravitation be universal in its operations, those worlds that were attracted in one direction only would yield to that force, and move toward the attracting point, and all worlds would soon rush together en masse.

Now, having assumed that nature is unitary in form, and given good reasons for that assumption, we cannot admit that one of its fundamental principles is limited to any specific part of nature in its operations, hence the ground taken that those worlds called stars are stationary at one point in space, or that they are drifting in straight lines as Prof. Proctor teaches, is untenable.

Again, if worlds are evolved by nature, then the various stages of evolution are the same for every world, the only difference being found in the duration of each stage, which will depend upon their varying magnitudes.

You perceive that this is a vast subject, and that it requires hours where I have minutes, but the subject upon which I am speaking can only be effectively approached by this road.

We must now for a brief space turn our attention to our own solar system. By the best informed minds, it is at present generally conceded that the substance composing the several planets of our solar system were at some time in the far distant past a part and portion of the sun; that the outermost planets were the first to which the sun gave birth, and that the planet Mercury is the sun's last child. It is also conceded that the satellites of the several planets were outbirths from these planets. I believe these conceptions are true, though my veins differ very greatly with those expressed by scientists as to the manner in which the formations took place.

Now this is what we behold here: We behold the planets revolving around the sun from west to east in well-defined orbits, carrying their satellites along with them, while the said satellites revolve in well-defined orbits around their parent-worlds. Thus we see a satellite has two orbits, its primary orbit around its parent world, and an induced orbit around the sun, and all are held in their courses by two forces called centrifugal and centripetal, centrifugal force being that which always acts to force a body in a straight course in the line of motion, and the centripetal that force which draws a body constantly toward a central point; this last force in the movement of worlds is known as gravitation; as the body acted upon by both these forces cannot obey either implicitly, owing to their opposing character, it moves in a course midway between the two, and thus moves in an orbit approaching to the circular.

Now every man, evolved by nature passes through the same stage, beginning with the prenatal life, and so forward to the change called death; and so it must be with worlds, if they are evolved by nature, their stages must be the same; hence our sun must have a parent-world that gave it birth and around which it revolves, and also our earth, when it gave birth to the moon, must itself have been in its sun-stage of existence, and the moon when born must have been a little sun. Thus the stages of world-life are: first a sun, then a planet, then a moon, then a comet, then disruption into serollites, and final absorption back into the sun of the system around which they revolve, which is always their grandparent world. Thus there is a substratum of truth for the old myth of the sun devouring his children.

There is no escaping the conclusion that there is one great central sun of the universe, which has given birth to a vast number of suns that revolve around it in well-defined orbits, and these suns have again produced suns which revolve around them, and are carried by them around the central sun, and so the process has gone on until it has extended to our own earth.

If you have grasped the idea that I have tried so briefly to convey as to the order of the universe, you will perceive that the first worlds to reach the planetary condition were the very last and smallest suns thrown off by those suns that are the furthest removed genealogically from the great central sun; hence, in our own solar system, the first worlds to arrive at their planetary stage of being were the satellites of the outermost planets of our system, and these same satellites are now in their planetary stage, and constitute the large comets of our system.

They are in the final process of world-extinction. We may lay it down, then, as a law of world-movement, that a world must revolve in an orbit around the condensed body and within the sphere of its parent-world.

Now do not understand me, when speaking of a world, as meaning only its condensed central portion, which is all that we can see with our material eyes. The term world embraces much more than that, for it includes all that sphere of rarefied and expanded substance governed and controlled by its sensorium, and I can demonstrate that the earth's sphere, or our world, is at the very least five hundred thousand miles in diameter, and probably more than one million, while the world of our sun is over twenty thousand millions of miles in diameter.

I would not have you suppose, either, that this present great universe of worlds is the first that was evolved by nature. It certainly is not the first, and there is a strong probability that it is the sixth, and it is questionable in my mind whether nature during the existence of the five preceding universes attained to expression upon the human plane of being.

As these suns that are furthest removed genealogically from the great central sun were the first to attain to the planetary stage, it is evident that the whole great universe of worlds must have been evolved to its furthest genealogical limits before the planetary stage of world-life was reached, and therefore that at that time it was a universe of worlds all in their sun-stage of existence.

Now up to this point, that of a universe of suns, what are the principles that have attained plainly and unmistakably to a manifest existence? Most certainly intelligence of the very highest order has been displayed, also power, motion, affection, development and progression. Now do not mistake my meaning in the use of the term affection. I mean by it that inherent principle in the primal substances of being, that, when developed into activity, causes these substances to combine in the building up of forms. I do not mean love. That is a principle which does not attain to expression until a much later period in nature's unfoldment.

Then, up to this point, we behold that all that has been done has been accomplished by the activities of the principles named, and that they all attain to activity and manifestation through and by nature, which is an ego of being, evolved from the union of the two primal substances of being, spirit and matter, and therefore necessarily the ego of universal being.

Now this ego of being, nature, which began with only an essential existence, has progressed and developed, until it has acquired an objective existence as a universe of sun-worlds, and as yet it has furnished us with no evidence, not the slightest scintilla, that it possesses consciousness, nor indeed that it possesses anything beyond the principles it has unfolded and used in attaining to its present condition. But by the continued use of these qualities only it carries forward its development, until it begins to exist in the perfected mineral, and then, having prepared the conditions, it unfolds and makes active the principles of life and organization, and attains to existence and manifestation on the vegetable plane.

Nature, actively using all its unfolded qualities, prepares the conditions for the manifestation of the principles of sensation and will, which find expression on the animal plane, and nature now begins to exist as an animal.

Each and every animal organism is a product from the ego nature, which builds it up and maintains it, and each of these animal organisms evolves an ego of its own, and in this ego is unfolded the principle of consciousness, and for the first time in the whole course of its existence nature becomes conscious by and through the egos of its animal organism.

Through this active consciousness the principle of mind is unfolded, for we only know of mind through conscious thought. On this plane nature presses forward in development. Ever improving its animal organism by advancing the molecular condition of its ponderable or matter substance, it seeks a union between intelligence and mind, and the product is reason, and the quality of this reason will be in an exact ratio to the perfection of this union. It also strives for a union between affection and will, and the product is love, and, again, the quality of this love will be in an exact ratio to the perfection of this union.

We see this exemplified in the love of the animal ego for its young. The union of affection and will for a time is very thorough, and while it lasts they will sacrifice their lives in defense of their young; but it is ephemeral and soon vanishes. The union is dissolved.

And now, the conditions having been prepared, nature makes another advance and attains to existence on the human plane, as man and woman, and in this form it evolves an ego, which ego unfolds and manifests the principle of self-conscious consciousness and individual personality. In this human ego of being nature strives to bring together and unite the unfolded principles of reason and love, and the product of this union is wisdom.

As man and woman, nature has attained to a permanent union of its principles of intelligence and mind, will and affection, and hence the principles of reason and love are always manifest in some degree on the human plane, and it is the constant effort of nature to perfect these unions, and also to effect and perfect a union between reason and love, thus developing and perfecting the principle of wisdom.

We find the two classes of principles—those pertaining to spirit and those pertaining to matter—all attaining to expression, manifestation and union in the unfolded and developed principle of wisdom. The potential principles

of being have attained to unity in the ego of man. We cannot but perceive that every step from primeval being up to man has been an advance in the molecular condition of matter, and, therefore, that all forms serve the purpose of factories for the elevation of matter to a higher condition, fitting it for a closer and more intimate and perfect union with spirit; and as nature, existing as man and woman, takes an entirely new departure in advancing from that point, we might rationally conclude that the human organism serves the purpose for the final perfecting of the form of matter, evolving for its ego an organism constituted of matter progressed to that degree where it is incapable of further molecular change, which organism becomes manifest when the ego leaves the material organism.

The new departure that nature takes after attaining to existence as man and woman is this: that from thence onward all development and progress is attained by the conscious voluntary exercise of its powers through its individualized and personalized egos as men and women, while up to this point all advance has been gained by the involuntary and unconscious action of nature. There are strong arguments that can be presented to sustain this view, but time does not now serve us. I have not said anything about a Creator, Deity or God, for I have not, in my investigations, met with one; nor should I know to what use to put one; but if you desire to call spirit and matter, or the ego evolved from them, nature, by either or all those names, I have no quarrel with you on that account.

I will now state as postulates certain conclusions that my investigations have led me to, not based alone upon the few ideas I have in this brief address been able to present to you, but the result of long, patient and careful thought:

1st. There are two forms of substance, both of which are self-existent, and from unions of these two substances all things are evolved. We term them spirit and matter.

2d. These substances, in their primeval condition, have an essential being only. Spirit is homogeneous, unparticled, of great tenacity, and knows; matter is heterogeneous, particled, floats in spirit, and feels.

3d. Spirit and matter, in their entirety, constitute nature. Therefore nature is the all in all, and no form of being can be above, below or outside of, nor anything but a part and manifestation of nature. Nature is the Ego, the I Am, of primeval being.

4th. Spirit is positive, matter is negative. Spirit acts, matter reacts. Spirit is interior, matter is exterior. Spirit is masculine, matter is feminine. Spirit knows, matter feels.

5th. The principle by which nature advances to higher planes of being is, condensation of spirit and aggregation of matter, and its mode of action is through major to minor centres.

6th. Spirit is condensed in each separate aggregation of matter, and the form of the aggregated matter is determined by the spirit condensed within it, which acts as a sensorium for the form in which it is condensed, and the degree of condensation of spirit in a form is in an exact ratio to the molecular condition of the matter aggregated in the form.

7th. The intensity of the action of spirit is in an exact ratio to its density, and the intensity of the reaction of matter in an exact ratio to its molecular development.

8th. Nature only attains to consciousness through the union of its substances in an organized form. Spirit, in its primeval uncondensed condition, does not reason nor think, it simply knows and acts. Matter, in its primeval unorganized condition, does not will nor love, it simply feels and reacts. This action and reaction constitute an ego of being which may properly be termed the soul of the universe, or nature, or the deific principle. This ego possesses neither volition nor consciousness, but acts and reacts involuntarily. Spirit knows what to do, matter feels how it should be done, and the ego thus potentialized directs and accomplishes the development.

9th. All forms of being and the egos evolved by them are temporary and transient, wherein all the matter constituting them is capable of undergoing further molecular change. All transient forms of being, whether it be a world, or forms evolved thereon, endure and are governed by the ego that is evolved from the union of spirit and matter condensed within them, until they cease to elevate matter to a higher molecular condition, and to increase the density of spirit. When that point has been reached, then the spirit condensed within such form is reabsorbed into the sensorium of the form that gave it birth, and the ego of that form ceases to exist, and the matter constituting the external and objective form, that has surrendered up its sensorium of spirit, is gradually disintegrated, and again enters into new and higher forms under guidance of a denser sensorium.

10th. Whenever nature succeeds in attaining to a state of being in which spirit is condensed into a form that is composed of organized matter that is not capable of further molecular change, such state of being becomes permanent, and cannot be dissolved or in any way destroyed.

11th. Such an union of its substances nature attains to in the human form; the organism of which refines and elevates matter to a homogeneous condition, and therefore nature in the personalized and individualized form of man and woman is immortal, and the Ego of Being evolved by this perfected union of spirit and matter constitutes the I Am, the consciousness of personal being, of self-conscious self-existence which must always continue to exist because the union of the two substances, spirit and matter, in the form that evolves this ego is a permanent union in an evolved unit.

The rational evidence, then, that we have of

[illegible]

800 in this minute would require all
parts of the globe (supposing them to
stand millions to count) incessantly
670 years, or more than 3,000 times
during which the human race has
have been in existence. — *They Times*

Full length, between three and four years, that all could see it, and while so held the control shut off the light, showing that the

Asked if she might speak to the general public, the child was told that persons with disabilities should

11-11-79

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 We do not read anonymous letters and communications.
 The name and address of the writer are in all cases
 indispensable as a guarantee of good faith. We cannot under-
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 When newspapers are forwarded which contain matter for
 our inspection, the sender will confer a favor by drawing a
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 Notices of Spiritualist Meetings, in order to insure prompt
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 to LUTHER COLBY.

SPIRITUALISM is the Science and Philosophy
 of the Universe as viewed from the Spiritual Stand-
 point; and it is identical with Spiritualism.—SPIRIT S.
 B. BRITTON.

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 tion to the BANNER OF LIGHT is plainly marked
 on the address. The paper is discontinued at
 that time unless the subscription is previously
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 paper or two, by sending in the money for re-
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 subscription. It is the earnest desire of the
 publishers to give the BANNER OF LIGHT the
 circulation to which its merits entitle it, and
 they look with confidence to the friends of the
 paper throughout the world to assist them in
 the work.
 COLBY & RICH, Publishers.

Wonderful Manifestations of Spirit Power.

We shall print in the next number of the
 BANNER OF LIGHT a very interesting account
 of the materialization of spirit forms at two se-
 ances recently given by Mr. William Eglington,
 one of the most convincing physical mediums
 in the world—as our readers, or many of them,
 already know. Those attending the seances in
 question designated them simply “marvelous,”
 says Florence Marryat, who wrote up the ac-
 count for *Light*.

But the evidences of spirit materialization in
 London are not more marvelous than were
 those we witnessed with some twenty-five per-
 sons in this city last Sunday evening at the se-
 nance of the well-known Berry Sisters. This
 was absolutely a test circle, as several skeptics
 present stated that they were there to as-
 certain beyond peradventure whether the least
 collusion, or the employment of confederates,
 could be possible. Mr. Albro, the genial agent
 of the Sisters (Gertrude being the medium in
 the cabinet on this occasion) readily granted
 the gentlemen every facility possible to carry
 out their wishes. Accordingly they thoroughly
 explored the room set apart as the cabinet, press-
 ing the carpet to ascertain if any tap-door was
 under it, and otherwise critically examining
 every part of the room; then, coming to the door
 which led into the entry, they locked it, sealing
 it in such a manner that if any part of the pa-
 per, which was privately marked, should be dis-
 turbed during the evening they would have rea-
 son to suppose that the door had been opened.
 After the seance they critically examined the
 marked paper, and found it intact, the gentle-
 men declaring that it had not been disturbed.

The seance proved to be the most convincing
 and therefore the best we have ever attended
 under the management of Mr. Albro. It would
 be a very long story to place before our readers
 should we write up in detail what came under
 our observation in the course of the evening,
 as we sat very near the cabinet-opening and
 saw plainly what was transpiring in front of
 the curtain; but we do not feel that it is neces-
 sary to do so, as many of the forms that ap-
 peared and were recognized by the relatives of
 the deceased were similar to those which have
 heretofore been described in these columns.
 Suffice it to say that the most astonishing man-
 ifestation was that of a spirit dressed in white
 garments, holding an infant in her arms. A
 lady in the audience, who resides in Hartford,
 Ct., was called up and recognized at once the
 spirit to be that of her daughter, and said that
 the mother and child had passed to spirit-life
 some time ago. This very peculiar manifesta-
 tion caused some excitement among the spec-
 tators, and the spirit withdrew. Mr. Albro
 now said: “Will you have the kindness to come
 out again and show Mr. Colby your baby?”
 The spirit at once responded to the call, and
 we critically, by a strong light, examined the
 face and features of the little one, and have no
 hesitation in saying that it was a veritable liv-
 ing child. Others who had a near view of it
 expressed a similar opinion.

Another very satisfactory manifestation was
 observed: that of a female spirit, who appeared
 and called to the curtain a gentleman from the
 audience. While he was talking with the
 spirit, who he recognized, a spirit-child, whom
 we had seen at a previous seance, came from
 the cabinet—both spirits in plain sight—sprang
 into the lap of a gentleman on our left and car-
 ried him for some minutes. We asked her if
 Lotela (Miss Shelhamer's little Indian control)
 was in the cabinet, and if so we desired her to
 manifest her presence to the company, espe-
 cially as we wished to introduce her to a friend
 of ours, a very curious case to see her mate-
 rialize. After these interesting manifesta-

tions had taken place—that of the appearance
 of a nun, who crossed herself and counted her
 beads in the most devout manner, and that of
 the spirit-mother coming to our friend, and
 also the mother of the lady who accompanied
 him—Lotela came to us as natural a child-in-
 dian as one could be in physical life. She said
 she had just left her medium's home to per-
 sonally greet us; that our medium's late ill-
 ness was a necessity—so she was told—that she
 would be the better for it, and that the man-
 ifestations in the future at our public circles
 would be of a very high order, more so than
 usual, although they had been very satisfactory
 in the past—not only to the spirit-world, but
 to the inhabitants of this sphere of life also.
 We then called our friend, Mr. Thaxter, to see
 Lotela, as she sat, Indian fashion, at our feet.
 He said he was fully satisfied that the face was
 that of an Indian, when she observed that he
 was “a bright spiritual boy.”

In the course of the evening three children
 came to us at one and the same time, so palpably
 that every one in the room could easily see them.
 But this was not all: A spirit materialized and
 dematerialized in presence of the whole com-
 pany, demonstrating in the most conclusive
 manner the fact of materialization. It was a
 beautiful manifestation of spirit-power that is
 not often seen. Thus ended one of the most
 wonderful spiritual seances ever given in Bos-
 ton.

The Indian Question—Important.

In the midst of the criminalization and recrui-
 tion of the pending Presidential campaign,
 and the dreary dearth of commanding political
 principles in the discussions on party platforms
 and in the party press, it is refreshing to find an
 account in a few of the newspapers of a very
 important philanthropic meeting that has been
 held in behalf of the reformation of the national
 Indian policy, says Mr. Wm. J. Potter in *The*
Index. This meeting took place at Lake Moh-
 onk, New York, in the last week of September,
 and continued three days. It was called by
 Albert K. Smiley, one of the United States In-
 dian Commissioners, who is the proprietor of
 the Lake Mohonk Mountain House and its
 twenty-five hundred acres of forest grounds.
 In his capacity as commissioner, he has himself
 made frequent visits to the Indians, and has a
 thorough knowledge of the Indian problem;
 and the object of the meeting was to bring to-
 gether in conference as many as possible of those
 persons who, either as Indian Commissioners or
 agents or educators, understand the practical
 condition and needs of the Indians, and also
 prominent representatives of that class of citi-
 zens who are now philanthropically interested
 in the civilization of the Indian as the only so-
 lution of the Indian question. It was, there-
 fore, a conference that was important by its
 weight of character; and its voice can but have
 great influence in molding public sentiment,
 and even in affecting congressional opinion, if
 Congressmen, after the Presidential election is
 over, can be induced to give heed for a few weeks
 to the elementary principles of common sense
 and justice in legislating upon Indian affairs.

Among the members of the Conference, which
 numbered about sixty persons, were Gen. Clin-
 ton B. Fish, Gen. E. Whittlessey, William McMil-
 lann and William H. Lyons, who are also on
 the Board of Indian Commissioners with Mr.
 Smiley; Dr. Rhoads, Henry S. Pancoast, Her-
 bert Welsh and Philip C. Garrett, of Philadel-
 phia, who represented the Indian Rights Asso-
 ciation; Gen. Armstrong of Hampton, Va., and
 Capt. Pratt of Carlisle, Pa., who have had ex-
 perience as practical educators of Indian boys
 and girls; Gen. R. M. Milroy, who has been a
 wise and successful Indian agent in Washington
 Territory; and Alice C. Fletcher, who has just
 completed most satisfactorily the difficult and
 delicate task, as government agent, of settling
 the Omaha Indians upon lands in severalty,
 with individual deeds of ownership. In addi-
 tion to these were several officers of associations
 for doing educational missionary work among
 the Indians, and other noted men and women
 specially interested in obtaining legislation for
 righting the Indian's wrongs.

The work of the Conference was carefully
 laid out with a view of confining the discussions
 to a logical order, and bringing them to a clear
 and definite conclusion. The whole subject
 was divided into two parts: first, Indian citi-
 zenship as the solution of the Indian problem;
 second, criticism of the present national system
 of managing the Indians. Each of these parts
 was again subdivided, and hours allotted suc-
 cessively for consideration of each of the sub-
 divisions. Under the first head were consid-
 ered: proofs of Indian capacity for citizenship,
 and, as necessary for securing and maintaining
 citizenship, the ownership of lands in severalty
 with a personal and protected title; the ballot;
 education in all its branches, industrial, intel-
 lectual, moral and religious; also, for accom-
 plishing these ends, the reformation of public
 opinion and the reformation of national legisla-
 tion. Under the second head, the discussions
 covered the matters of government treaties
 with the Indians, the reservation system, gov-
 ernment aid and agencies, law and courts. It
 was clearly shown that the custom of making
 treaties with the Indians as if they were a for-
 eign people, the granting to them large tracts
 of territory without showing them how to cul-
 tivate it, the taking care of them through
 agents (and often dishonest agents) as if they
 could not take care of themselves, and their
 anomalous position in respect to the national
 laws and courts, are great obstacles in the way
 of Indian civilization. Yet it was also admitted
 that, in order to prevent suffering, these obsta-
 cles must be gradually removed, while the In-
 dian is being prepared by education and super-
 vision, through carefully chosen wise agents, to
 pass from the present system to that which is
 proposed.

As to the capacity of the Indian for civiliza-
 tion, and hence for citizenship, there was no
 question among these men and women, whose
 testimony on this matter is to be regarded as
 that of experts. The fact was brought out
 that, in several instances where the conditions
 had been favorable, and even sometimes in the
 face of great difficulties, tribes or portions of
 tribes are already far on the road to civiliza-
 tion. Commissioner Lyons, for instance, said
 of the Flathead Indians, a part of the Sante
 Sioux, who for the last nine years have had
 homesteads in Flathead, Dakota, that they
 “have already good farms, excellent houses
 —in some of them a melodeon—clean and nice
 housekeeping. The merchants of Flathead
 trust them the same as white men; the banks
 likewise. They are already civilized—that is,
 Americanized—good citizens; and yet some of
 them were of the bloody Sioux who engaged in
 the New Ulm massacre.”

Not was there any essential difference of
 opinion in the Conference as to what needed to
 be done. The resolutions were clear and point-

ed. They recommended the adoption of mea-
 sures that would gradually abolish the tribal
 relation and the reservation system, and the
 granting of lands in severalty at once to all In-
 dians who are ready to take them. It was also
 resolved that the bill which passed the Senate
 at the last session, known as the Coke bill,
 would, though susceptible of some amendment,
 be a good law for effecting this object, and that
 the House of Representatives should be urged
 to pass it at the coming session of Congress.
 Another resolution declared that all adult male
 Indians occupying lands in severalty should be
 admitted to full privileges of citizenship, in-
 cluding the ballot, by a process analogous to
 naturalization, on evidence of adequate qualifi-
 cations presented before a court. Strong protest
 was made against the Indians being re-
 moved from one reservation to another, entail-
 ing much loss and suffering upon them, be-
 cause their lands happen to be wanted by white
 settlers; and education, especially industrial,
 was urged as the sovereign remedy necessary
 to accompany all other measures, and the gov-
 ernment was called upon to increase its approp-
 riations for this object. It was equally urged
 that the issuing of rations for the support of
 the Indians, though now often a necessity on
 account of the bad policy of the government, is
 a demoralizing, pauperizing custom, and should
 be rapidly as possible be made unnecessary by
 training the Indians to self-support.

There was abundant evidence offered to show
 that the experiments already made in respect
 to education and self-supporting industry have
 had a most encouraging success. The testimony
 of Miss Fletcher and of Gen. Milroy, direct from
 their devoted labors of many years among the
 Omahas and the Puget Sound Indians, was es-
 pecially valuable on this and all other points which
 came up for discussion. Miss Fletcher struck
 the key-note of the solution of the Indian prob-
 lem when she said, “The only way out for the
 Indian is right out into the midst of our civiliza-
 tion.” And Gen. Milroy gave the philosophy
 of the method in saying: “The Indians have
 capacity enough, but they lack culture and the
 desire for accumulation. One word is the key
 to Indian civilization and to all civilization—
 Want. Increase the Indian's wants, and you
 increase his civilization.”

It is to be hoped that the results of this excel-
 lent meeting will not be entirely lost in the tur-
 mul of present political strife. It is a sign of
 a new era for the Indian in our country. Here
 is no party question. It is a question of simple
 justice, honor and enlightenment to a wronged
 race. And, whether or party shall succeed in
 the approaching national election, Congress
 should be beset by petitions to put such
 recommendations as the Conference has made
 into laws.

A Poet Required.

The life-long friend of the poet Whittier, Mr.
 Charles F. Coffin of Lynn, having procured a
 life-size portrait of the former from the pencil
 of Edgar Parker, presented it to the Friends'
 School of Providence, R. I., of which Mr. Coffin
 was a pupil nearly fifty years ago, and after-
 wards became a teacher. This speaking like-
 ness of the poet was unveiled with appropriate
 ceremonies on Thursday of last week. On one
 side, in one corner of Alumni Hall, is the mar-
 ble bust of John Bright, and on the other the
 bust of Elizabeth Fry, the Quaker prison-re-
 former, both of England. The scenes and pro-
 ceedings of the day and the evening previous
 were but a faint anticipation of the universal
 desire to honor the name of the favorite poet
 of New England in all possible ways. The even-
 ing before was given to school exercises ap-
 propriate to the occasion; on the following day an
 eloquent oration was delivered by President
 Thomas Chase, LL.D., of Haverford College,
 Pennsylvania, upon the poet's life and works.
 It would afford us sincere pleasure to transcribe
 passages from it if our space permitted. We
 can only say of it that it was a worthy and
 sympathetic estimate of Whittier as man and
 poet, and abounded in reflections that give de-
 light to all the poet's friends in the person.
 Especially did the orator seek to impress the
 fact of the seership of Whittier, and the spiri-
 tual character of his sweet and noble utterances
 in verse.

In accepting the portrait in the name of the
 Friends' School, Mr. Augustine Jones, the
 Principal, said: “We shall not find in this
 countenance, approaching fourscore years, all
 the fire of youth, but we may behold what is of
 far greater worth, the rich maturity of ripe,
 full life and character. We have rounded and
 perfected manhood. We have the repose con-
 sequent upon a great life-work completed and
 well done. Here the interior life, the soul, the
 man, is revealed.” He spoke of Whittier as one
 who, besides being a poet, had practical wis-
 dom, far-reaching, prophetic insight into men.
 He said: “The beauty and glory of the homes,
 lakes, rivers, and mountains of New England
 are enshrined in his verse”; and “the royal
 law of Scripture—‘Thou shalt love thy neigh-
 bor as thyself’—runs like a golden thread
 through all his work.” A letter from the poet
 was then read, which we only regret that we
 cannot publish here. But there are a few sen-
 tences in it that deserve particular attention.
 “I have reached an age,” he writes, “when
 flattery ceases to deceive, and notoriety is a
 burden, and the faint shadow of literary re-
 putation fails to hide the solemn realities of life;
 but a genuine token of love and good-will has
 no limitations of time, and is never out of place.”
 Again: “Although I am a Quaker by
 birthright and sincere conviction, I am no sear-
 tarian in the strict sense of the term. My sym-
 pathies are with the broad church of humanity.”

Letters were read, also, from Oliver Wendell
 Holmes, John Bright, Matthew Arnold, John
 Boyle O'Reilly, President Eliot of Harvard
 University, George William Curtis and James
 Russell Lowell. Dr. Holmes, a brother poet,
 wrote that he held “no living countryman of
 his in higher esteem.” Mr. John Bright wrote:
 “It is a great gift to mankind, when a poet is
 raised up amongst us who devotes his great
 powers to the sublime purpose of spreading
 among men principles of mercy and justice and
 freedom. This our friend Whittier has done in
 a degree unsurpassed by any other poet who
 has spoken to the world in our noble tongue.”
 President Eliot says: “You cannot do him too
 much honor.” George William Curtis wrote:
 “No purer character or more spotless life than
 his could be commended to the admiration and
 emulation of youth. The tenderness and sweet-
 ness of his song are not greater than his gener-
 ous humanity and his devoted patriotism; and
 the traditions and spirit of his religious faith
 have given a certain antique simplicity to his
 career, which personally endeared him to his
 countrymen. In his poetry, his life, his admira-
 tion and pride.” Minister Lowell, also a brother
 poet, wrote from London that Whittier is a
 friend whom he has “loved and respected for

forty years”; and sent some verses in sonnet-
 form, as a testimonial of his good-will rather
 than as an adequate expression of his share in
 the universal and affectionate esteem in which
 Whittier is held.

A man and a poet who is thus honored not
 only by his own countrymen, but by the fore-
 most men and women of other lands, may well
 rest assured of the perpetuity of his fame, since
 he lives in their hearts. Such a fame is imper-
 ishable. It has been our own privilege for
 many years to be allowed to call the Quaker
 poet our friend, and we cannot refrain from
 sending him through these columns, in addition
 to what others have done, our sincere personal
 congratulations on the reception of this richly
 deserved tribute to his private and public worth,
 his genius as a poet, and his gift as prophet and
 seer. May he live many years among us to en-
 joy the ripened fruits of his fame, and to wit-
 ness the growing power of his teachings in the
 hearts of his countrymen and the world.

The following is the sonnet written by James
 Russell Lowell for this occasion:

TO J. G. WHITTIER.

New England's poet, rich in love as years,
 Her hills and valleys praise thee, and her brooks
 Dance to thy song; to thy grave aylvan nooks
 Thy feet allure us which the wood thrush hears
 As made their lovers, and no treason fears.
 Through thee her Merrimacs and Agiochooks
 And many a name uncouth win loving looks,
 Sweetly familiar to both England's ears:
 Peaceful by birthright as a virgin lake.
 The lily's anchorage, which no eyes behold
 Save those of stars, yet for thy brother's sake
 That lay in bonds, thou blowest a blast as bold
 As that wherewith the heart of Roland broke,
 Far heard through Pyrenean valleys cold.

A Generous Spiritualist's Requests.

In November, 1882, Mr. James Shaw, a resi-
 dent of Castlemaine, Australia, passed to the
 higher life. Previous to his decease, fully re-
 alizing that great benefit would accrue to man-
 kind from a knowledge of Spiritualism, he exe-
 cuted a will by which he bequeathed his prop-
 erty to aid in a general diffusion of that knowl-
 edge through agencies established for the pur-
 pose. Mr. Shaw was at the time in possession
 of property to a considerable amount; but since
 his decease the gradual extinction of the gold
 field has greatly depreciated its value, and the
 total has proved to be much less than he ex-
 pected would be derived from its sale.

The will directed that after all just claims
 had been paid the amount remaining should be
 entrusted to Mr. E. Finlayson of Castlemaine,
 one-fourth of it to be transmitted by him to
 each of the following parties: W. H. Terry of
 the *Harbinger of Light*, Melbourne, Australia;
 James Burns of the *Medium and Daybreak*,
 London, Eng.; Colby & Rich of the BANNER OF
 LIGHT, Boston, U. S. A.; the Castlemaine Ly-
 ceum, Castlemaine, Australia.

The great financial change that befell Castle-
 maine gave rise to obstacles that prevented an
 immediate carrying out of Mr. Shaw's plans;
 but at length these were surmounted, and the
 settlement of the estate brought to a close, with
 the result of \$424, or \$106 to each legatee, about
 one-half the amount which Mr. Shaw had an-
 ticipated, and which would have been derived
 from it but for the reason we have stated.

The publishers of the BANNER OF LIGHT ten-
 der their thanks, in behalf of the cause they
 represent and the work in which they are en-
 gaged, to the generous donor, and congratulate
 him upon the happiness he must experience in
 his present abode from seeing his wish in re-
 spect to the disposal of his property at length
 accomplished; and we can but think that, from
 the position on the plane of immortal life he
 now occupies, he is grateful to the spiritual
 guidance that led him to the act; one which,
 as remarks our Australian contemporary, “will
 not be without its influence upon those Spirit-
 ualists who are possessed of a goodly share of
 this world's blessings.”

THE SPIRIT MESSAGE DEPARTMENT the
 present week contains a verbatim report of the
 messages and answers to questions which
 were given through the media instrumentality
 of Miss M. T. Shelhamer, on Tuesday after-
 noon, Oct. 21st, on the occasion of the first se-
 nance held after her recovery from her recent
 severe illness. The topics treated of by the
 controlling intelligence cover varied ground,
 from advice as to mediumistic development,
 and the course of the soul in passing through
 the spirit-life, to the process of dissolution as
 known to the spirit-world, and the powers of
 after-communion possessed by the most exalted
 invisible intelligences; FRANK LITCHFIELD
 of Cohasset informs his friends and neighbors
 that “this is a pretty good life,” the best part
 of which, to him, is that no one within its
 scope is cramped or limited, as on earth, by in-
 imical conditions; “RED WINE” brings words
 of cheer for “a brave who is afar off toward
 the setting sun”; MARTHA, mother of the suf-
 ferer referred to, supplements the red man's
 message with an earnest adjuration to her son
 to be patient under trial and seek to gain from
 his present afflictions the full measure of spiri-
 tual and interior unfoldment which his angel-
 guides hope for in his case; RACHEL HARPER
 wishes to communicate with her mother, Alice
 Harper, in Philadelphia, Pa.; JANE CARTER of
 Boston sends love to all her friends, saying:
 “The best greeting I can give them is that
 there is life and power beyond the grave, and
 the best tidings and message I can bestow upon
 them is that love, sympathy and all the affec-
 tions live forever, and that they operate and ex-
 pand in the glorious world beyond”; HORACE
 D. KENT of Kentville, Ind., seeks to send con-
 solation from the spirit-world to strengthen
 and encourage his invalid wife; and FATHER
 PREPONT returns his own and the thanks of
 the Band of which he is President to the do-
 nators of floral tributes and to all who attend-
 ed the seance in question, for the harmonious
 sympathy which they brought with them,
 which aided so much toward making the re-
 sults of the sitting satisfactory to all concerned.

Mr. Caffray, the noted slate-writing me-
 dium, having had a few days since a good opportunity
 to visit California professionally, will conse-
 quently leave Boston for San Francisco the pres-
 ent week. In another column will be found a
 communication from a responsible gentleman
 attesting the reliability of Mr. Caffray's medi-
 umship—which we fully endorse.

The local reader of the BANNER should
 not forget to attend the amusing as well as in-
 structive entertainments at the Tremont Tem-
 ple to be given by Prof. Carpenter, the mesmer-
 ist and psychologist, the first of which takes
 place on the 5th inst.

An account of the Spiritualist's reunion
 on the 11th inst. at Mrs. Williams's in New York
 will appear in the party issue of the BANNER.
 The press did not come to hand in season to
 give the present week.

Signs of Progress.

On the afternoon of Friday, Oct. 24th, the
 regular monthly meeting of the National Woman
 Suffrage Association of Massachusetts transpired at No. 5 Park street, the President
 in the chair. During the services it was reported
 that Tufts College will admit women as soon
 as it can accommodate them; also that the
 titles of doctor and master of arts had been
 given to a lady by the University of London.
 The opening of a dispensary in Bombay by a
 woman physician, the Government having
 granted her a plot of ground, was also a notable
 item of encouraging import. The following
 inventions by women were announced: A
 clamping device, a tug for harness, a weather
 strap, a dough-kneader and roller, and a fire-
 escape.

It was voted during the session to print two
 new leaflets, to hold a meeting in Boston on
 Nov. 6th, and another in Burlington during
 November. Dr. Salome Merritt has been elected
 first Vice President, in place of Mrs. Fenn
 Tudor, deceased. It was resolved that the
 members of the Association be urged to attend
 the primary meetings for municipal elections.

A woman has been admitted to the Massachu-
 setts Medical Society, and now women are ad-
 mitted to the Corcoran School of Sciences and
 Arts of the Columbian University on the same
 terms as men. News of an advancement in the
 cause comes from Spain, Norway, England and
 Canada. In England the Conservative party
 leaders have espoused the cause of the women
 householders in asking for the ballot. Forty
 thousand women are in collegiate and scientific
 study in this country.

Convincing Verification of a Spirit-Message.

A gentleman, a resident of New York, with
 whom we have been acquainted a number of
 years, has just notified us of the correctness of
 a spirit-message given at our Public Free Cir-
 cle of June 27th, 1884. The message was deliv-
 ered by the Indian maiden, Lotela, who was in
 control of our medium, Miss M. T. Shelhamer.
 The peculiarity consists in the name “Dick,”
 which was used by the spirit to convey her
 message to her husband, and was one always
 applied by him to her, to the exclusion of her
 given name. She speaks of her spirit-boy hav-
 ing been with his father on “his anniversary,”
 which was his birthday, June 18th, refers to
 past events, and speaks in unmistakable lan-
 guage of the children she left. In addition, the
 spirit-wife brought with her a damask rose “as
 a token of love.” This, the gentleman informs
 us, was his wife's favorite flower while on
 earth; he considers its being mentioned by the
 spirit, in this peculiar manner, as not only
 proof positive of the genuineness of the mes-
 sage, but as a reminder from his spirit-wife of
 what she has repeatedly said in regard to their
 happy reunion in the spirit-world.

Prof. Buchanan's Lectures.

The five Sunday evenings of November will
 be occupied by Prof. Buchanan, at Berkeley
 Hall, Boston, in exposition of the “Religion
 and Philosophy of the Future”; and on Wednes-
 day, Nov. 5th, at 3 P. M., he will give the Intro-
 ductory lecture of his course of instruction in
 Psychometry, at the same place, to which the
 public are invited.

In calling attention to this subject we would
 remind our readers that since the death of
 Prof. Hare and Prof. Denton, Prof. Buchanan
 is the only American scientist of world-wide
 reputation who has boldly, on all occasions,
 maintained and illustrated the claims of Modern
 Spiritualism at the sacrifice of his personal
 interests. The present is a rare opportunity
 for obtaining profound instruction in the mys-
 teries of the soul and cultivating that wonder-
 ful power, psychometry, which is destined to
 aid not only in the advancement of science, but
 in the healing art and all the practical business
 of human life.

The *Popular Science News* (Boston Jour-
 nal of Chemistry) devotes nearly two pages of
 space, in its November issue, to a considera-
 tion of “New Researches in Psychics”—the
 text for its liberal-spirited and honorable edito-
 rial being furnished by the four reports of the
 English Society for Psychical Research, con-
 cerning “thought-reading, clairvoyance, table-
 tipping, apparitions, haunted houses, etc.”
 We shall return to this article next week, at
 this time merely citing the following sentences
 as specimens of its outspoken manner. The
News editor remarks of the gentlemen compos-
 ing the London Society, and the conclusions
 they have thus far arrived at:

“The testimony of such men carries irresistible
 weight; and it will astonish many readers to learn
 that, after two years of the most careful research
 and experiment, they have reached the conclusion
 that there is a formidable array of evidence in favor of
 beliefs indicated above—beliefs which have hitherto
 been regarded by them with peculiar suspicion and
 distrust. . . . In our view (the conclusion) is a view
 derived from long and careful study—the observed
 phenomena preclude the dawn of knowledge which
 will prove of the highest advantage to mankind.”

[illegible]

