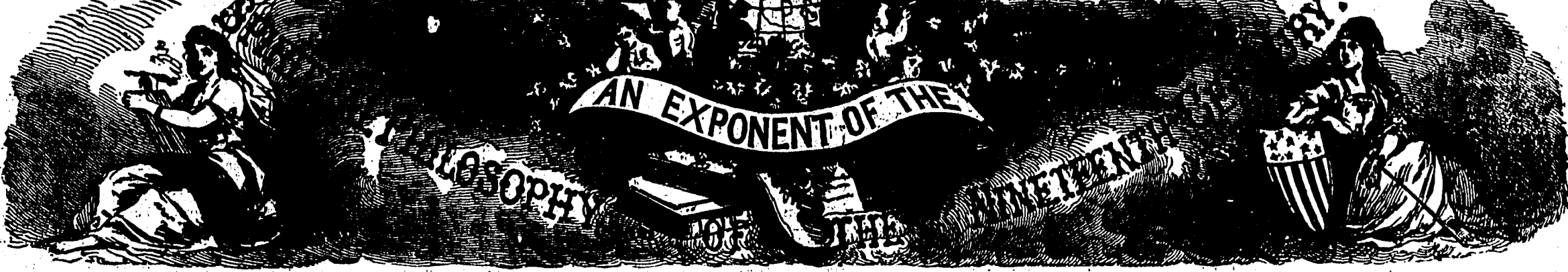


BANNER OF LIGHT.



VOL. LVIII.

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OUR AGENTS.

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The latest conundrum in the credal line is whether Mr. Beecher has finally come out for purgatory. We all know that many of the English Church clergy have openly expressed regrets that, in reforming the Roman Church for Anglican purposes, so essential a doctrine as that of a belief in the purgation of souls after death was thrown out of the creed finally adopted. Mr. Beecher does not seem to hesitate any more than they, but comes out in a recent Sunday discourse and says, "I hope there is some intermediate ground, or, if there be not, a graded heaven, in which men shall have some opportunity of unfolding; for as men live so they will die, and many of them will need a good deal more illumination and a good deal more practice before they are fit to be associates in the general assembly of the Church of the First Born." He declined to subscribe his belief to the doctrine that every man necessarily joins at once in that great assembly. But it would wholly vanish as a speculation from the mind if the healthier and more natural belief taught by returning spirits were adopted, that life, both here and hereafter, is but a process of development and growth, in which very process all necessary purgation of the human spirit is included. That is a natural theory, and therefore easy of acceptance. The spiritual philosophy is thus casting the old creeds to disappear, one part after another.

Literary Department.

Written for the Banner of Light.

AFTER MANY DAYS.

BY M. T. SHELHAMER.

AUTHOR OF "OUTSIDE THE GATES," "HERE AND BEYOND," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

MANIONS NOT OF EARTH.

For three days the sweet still face rested upon the flower-draped couch in Mrs. Jones's darkened parlor, and then the mortal remains of Susie Raymond were conveyed to their last resting-place beside those of her husband.

There had been a quiet service, the Unitarian clergyman had been invited to make a prayer, and Mrs. Jones herself had spoken tender, earnest words of the life of her friend, of her faith in God, and of the knowledge she had gained of immortality. This was in accordance with Susie's request, and while the simple service was in progress, raps were heard distinctly throughout the room; first in one spot and then in another—upon the floor and high up on the ceiling—as though invisible guests were attesting their approval and endorsement of the proceedings.

The few friends who were present marveled, and did not hesitate later to speak of what they had heard. The Orthodox element in town was shocked, and felt that a sacrilegious outrage upon the fitness of things had been perpetrated, by a woman—and one unordained by the church—daring to speak at a funeral; and they even wondered if the very ground opened to receive the remains ought not to be considered an unhallowed spot.

But let us leave these earthly scenes, and the gossiping, undeveloped mortals, who have yet many lessons to learn of life, and follow the arisen spirit to her heavenly home.

Conscious of her transition, she did not shrink nor fear, but as her mortal senses became dulled, a new power—a quickened sense of perception—seemed to fall upon her. She heard the bird's song, and interpreted it as a welcome from the land of the blest. Suddenly she felt herself rising, as if out of some confining case, and, giving a little start, she moved forward. Her eyes unclosed, and she beheld herself surrounded by a sea of light. It was like the sunshine, only intensified, glorified—softer, more beautiful—indescribable!

She looked down at her feet, and, as in a mist, beheld her faded semblance. How cold and pitiful it looked! There was no touch of life about it; she recognized but a worn-out garment. Susie felt a touch—a something warm and tender, and vibrating with human life, enrolling her—and looking up, found herself wrapped in the embrace of John—her John—so natural, so like himself, yet so strong and grand! There were other forms near, but as yet she did not recognize them. Instinctively she felt them to be sympathetic friends, but she had no thought, as yet, for any but John. Over the rapture of that first meeting we must draw a veil, for it was too sacred and holy for aught but angelic eyes to view.

Out of the gladness and ecstasy and peace that fell upon her in this hour of blessed reunion, there came a flash of remembrance, and turning again to the scene below, Susie's gaze sought the earthly form. Gentle hands were moving it now, and her boy clung wildly to its robe, entreating them not to take his mother away.

There was a swift throb of pain as her mother sensed the anguish in that young breast, and flinging herself beside him, she sought to gather his form in her arms and hold his head to her breast. There was a ringing in her ears, a stifled feeling of unrest disturbed her, she distinctly heard the words spoken by Mrs. Jones: "Charlie, dear, mother is at peace now; you will pain her if you grieve so. Remember, you promised to be strong and brave. We must prepare this poor body for its rest. But she is free forever—!" and then a deep, sweet, subtle sensation seized her, and she sank into unconscious slumber.

When she awoke she could not recognize her surroundings. She was lying upon a raised couch of white flowers. Their perfume was like that of roses, save that it had a spicy scent that seemed to pass into her very life and give her strength. There was no covering above her, but a delicate haziness veiled the sky and gave a most bewitching roseate hue to the atmosphere, which was soft and balmy. She moved, and as she did so she perceived John sitting at her feet. He smiled in his old way, and extended his hand to raise her. Standing by his side, she gazed around. She seemed to be in a pleasant garden. Beds on beds of flowers, more beautiful than she had ever seen, shining walks, banks of green shrubbery, plashing fountains, and other beautiful objects were around her.

"Oh! how lovely!" was her thought, and John, understanding, said, "I knew you would like it. But we must examine it together; let us move on," and gently supporting her form, they advanced among the beauties of the place.

Susie felt surprised at the ease with which she moved; she did not walk, nor did she seem to touch the ground that yet appeared solid to her. She passed on with a graceful, gliding motion through the atmosphere, a foot or two above the ground. Noticing her surprise, John said, "You are guided by my will now; soon you will be able to use your own to transport you from place to place. We can walk in the ordinary way when we choose; upon our

ground, which is as solid to us as earth once was, but this will give you a new experience."

The grounds were indeed charming, and surpassed anything in beauty she had ever beheld. She had read of the lovely gardens and extensive domains of the rich, and longed to see them, and in their early days of married life her husband would laughingly promise her a "big garden with plenty of flowers," when he should build his house, but she had never dreamed of anything like this.

Susie was passionately fond of flowers, and she paused long, examining one specimen after another and inhaling their odor. Then there were shrubs and vines and grasses to inspect, trees to consider, and their singing inmates to become acquainted with. The fountains, too, were works of art not to be ignored, and the sound of their sparkling waters was music in her ears. Delicate pavilions and dainty arbors revealed the taste and care of the one who had constructed them, and each one had to be admired and praised. The haziness of the atmosphere cleared, and the soft, brilliant rays of sunlight streamed from a glorious sky. Time was as naught to these wanderers, and John had infinite patience with the lingering gaze of his beloved.

But by-and-bye they came to a house, white and glistening in snowy column and archway. Traces of elegant workmanship were visible on every part of its walls. They entered from the wide veranda and found themselves in a spacious hall, gleaming in many colors, each one softly blending in the other in exquisite harmony. This entrance was a poem in itself, but from it opened a number of apartments, each one beautifully finished and adorned with the most useful and graceful of appointments.

There was one for musical and intellectual pursuits, one for social gatherings, one for more private receptions, one a gallery of beautiful works of art, and various others for useful purposes. The entire structure was capped by a dome—was it of glass or crystal, or what, so clear and transparent did it appear?—yet in the different apartments this was delicately tinted in various hues, so that the light streaming into the art-gallery was dainty, soft and tinged with a roseate hue; that of the concert-room bright as with fire, invigorating in its tints; that of the reception-room quiet, violet, deliciously sweet.

Too enraptured to speak, and almost fearing to move lest she should be rudely awakened from an enchanted dream, Susie gazed and gazed upon all this marvel of color and form. But the words of John aroused her to a realization that this was her home, as he said, "My darling, at last I have brought you to the home I have wrought for you. It is true, dear, this is our home; with the help of good friends I have planned and prepared it for you. Do you remember that I used to tell you your home should be as beautiful as love could make it? How I longed for money, to furnish what I dreamed of for you. Over here I have taken up every plan and idea of a dwelling that I had on earth, and elaborated and improved upon it, as spiritual means only can allow, and this home is the result."

"Oh! John, this is beautiful, too beautiful for me. I am so plain, so unworthy, I shall not feel at home here."

"You will, my darling, do not fear. You have contributed as much to the erection and furnishing of this home as I. It is wholly yours."

"I? Oh! John, how could I?"

"By your life of fidelity to truth, your self-sacrifice, your devotion to the needy. Have you not always aided the unfortunate?"

"I have only sought to do my duty."

"And he who seeks to do his duty faithfully, and without complaint, provides the material for the building of his mansion in the skies. Oh! my wife, when I remember that my earthly plans were ruined, only to be fulfilled in beauty here, I can only wonder at the mystery of God's ways."

"But," he continued after a moment's pause, "let me not forget to tell you that by cheerfully giving up our little store to avert the threatened calamity of a friend, willingly, hoping not, nor looking for return, we did that which went far to earn us this bright home. We loaned to the Lord, and in his own good time he has repaid. 'After many days,' Susie, the gift has returned to us."

Afterward they received a call from some old friends—Charles Weston and his wife. Susie did not know that the latter had passed from earth, but she had now been a resident of the higher life two years. The couple were bright, active, with no trace of weariness or age upon their persons, and were evidently full of harmony and peace. They invited her to their home, and she was not loth to respond to John's proposal to go at once.

They found a bright little cottage, running over with flowering vines. It was prettily yet simply furnished, evincing good judgment and cultivated taste in its arrangement. Its grounds were like a vast grove, the trees scattered, but large and umbrageous, rising from beds of the softest, most beautiful moss. Here and there a bed of bright flowers flashed out from the setting of green, and a small, clear lake or pond shone at a little distance.

"We are plain people, and our home is just suited to us," said Mrs. Weston with a smile. "I used to think a large house such a care, and I quite longed for a little country home. Beside, Charles says he will never seek for anything grander till the debt he owes you is repaid."

"Yes," spoke John Raymond, "and I tell him he is ridiculous. It has been paid over and over again. See what it has brought to us in our spirit home. If we had selfishly used it for our own aggrandizement, and had seen you

suffer without offering the assistance we could give, our home here might have proved a poor hovel indeed."

"Then"—turning to Susie—"you cannot dream how he has helped me in my studies and plans; what invaluable aid he has been in preparing our home; how he sustained me when I left the body; drew me from terrible thoughts to a contemplation of the beauties of life; conducted me to his home here, and taught me how to return to you."

"Oh! dear, dear friend, do not, I pray you, consider yourself in debt to us; it is we who are under obligations," broke in Susie in an eager voice.

"Not so, my dear; souls who love and are in harmony, cannot really be obligated to each other; they cooperate in all things. But you have a boy on earth who must not be defrauded out of his rights, and the debt must be paid." And Mr. Weston smiled.

"It will not hurt the boy to pass through a season of hardship; it will develop his strength of character and show of what stuff he is made," rejoined John. "But we are spirits, and must work according to the laws of the spirit. We have no need of money. I do wish, however, you would extend your dwelling, sir—throw out a wing or two; although I must own the place is charming as it is."

"And we could not improve it, to my mind. Beside, we live out of doors, in God's great temple. This is my greenery—the drawing-room where I welcome and entertain my guests. And some of them just need the quiet of these groves to refresh their souls." And Mrs. Weston waved her hands, as if to take in the entire scene of light and shade, water and sward, as the company smiled at her enthusiasm.

It was true, as she said. Many a weary spirit, fresh from its turmoil of pain and sorrow on earth, had found rest and recuperation of life-forces here in this pleasant spot, for the Westons were ministering spirits, who believed in sharing their blessings with those who needed them, and who went about doing good.

Delightful association was now established and maintained between the inmates of the Raymond home and the Weston cottage, and only peace and benefit resulted to each heart from the companionship. A new life had now come to Susie, and she felt like a child grasping the first glimmerings of the wonderful existence opening before her.

Beautiful as was her spirit-home, she learned of far grander ones beyond; homes inhabited by exalted souls who had advanced, step by step, through line after line of unfoldment, and year after year of experience, until they had attained a height of knowledge and grandeur of person that bewildered her to contemplate. Yet she knew the same avenues of progress over which they had passed were open to her and hers, and she had only to study and labor and wait for her development.

She was introduced to wise, good spirits, who became her teachers and guides, and from whom she learned the wonderful lessons of the spheres. She came now into close contact with human nature in various departments of being, and gained more of instruction from a reading of their characters than from any books she had ever seen.

Life was a constant source of wonderment to her; but in its variety of study and employment she only found an exhilaration of mind and a calmness of spirit that enabled her to attempt and master the most difficult of lessons.

Susie Raymond had "lost" her parents at an early age. Her father had passed on when she was a girl of ten, and her mother followed him four years later. She had, of course, a remembrance of them, but she had often wondered if she should know them again. Now she had found them, and the reunion was a joyous one. They were quiet, unassuming people, working for others rather than for themselves.

They did not live alone, but were members of a large establishment, a fine, spacious mansion, that sheltered a large number of little children. These were waifs thrown off from earth-life—neglected and scorned here, but guarded tenderly "Over There," and given such lovely surroundings and gentle care as would quicken and inspire only the best attributes of humanity within them. Susie's parents were recognized as wise and beneficent guides there, joining with other bright spirits as "care-takers" of the little immortals under their charge.

Susie loved to visit them and to join in their labors, and it was no rare thing for her to take troops of those children to her own bright home, and delight them with a sight of its beauties.

John's parents also had a home at no great distance. They, like her own parents, had been an harmonious, true-mated pair. They were together in the other life, and were settled in a long, low, rambling building, more like a ship's cabin than a house. The father had been a sea captain, and had lost his earthly life while on a voyage across the water. His wife, a gentle woman, had lived only five years longer, when she, too, passed away, leaving her boy of six to buffet with the world.

Captain Raymond had made his spirit-home after his own fancy, and here it was by the side of a broad sheet of water, the ripple and hum of which were music to his heart. His wife had added to and glorified it with her woman's skill, and it was a haven of rest to the storm-tossed—rough and uncouth some of them were—but brave and big-hearted mariners, whose mortal flame went down beneath the waves, whom the proprietor found and brought to rest, for he loved to do this service for the sons of the sea.

CHAPTER VIII.

SPIRITS AT WORK.

Dwelling in lowly cots, the embodiment of simplicity itself, or in stately mansions that revealed the luxurious taste of their inmates, Susie Raymond found happy, peaceful souls, each one busy with some chosen employment. None were idle, although she knew of conditions where the spirits lived selfish, indolent lives, seemingly contented with their own ignorance and folly. She had visited these, with others, and had felt a great pity and a desire to help them; but she had first to learn how to do them good. On her own plane of life all were industrious, happy and harmonious, and it was a pleasure to enter their homes and learn of their labors. She came to know that grandeur of style and a pretentious mansion did not seem the same to all spirits. One—like John—who delighted in ample proportions and much space, would have an extensive domain; but another, preferring a miniature dwelling and tiny garden, would find as much contentment and joy in his diminutive home as she realized in her more spacious habitation. The surroundings of a spirit are the outgrowth of the soul's condition itself. They are the tastes, attributes and influences of the inner man externalized into objective form; as the creations of the artist are but the embodiment of the ideal within him. We are all artists; each one has his ideal of beauty, of grandeur and of happiness. An educator is busy within every soul, laboring with its possibilities and stimulating its powers. By-and-bye, when the development is wrought, we shall express our best thought and reveal our highest ideal in the creation of beautiful and enduring surroundings.

Time, with a spirit, has not the significance that it presents to mortals, who have to measure their seasons for activity and repose, labor and recreation. Those who have eternity in which to grow do not sigh over the lapse of years, but only count them by the results achieved. Space, too, is unmeasured by miles; the ability of a progressive spirit to traverse great distances with the rapidity of thought and by the exercise of the will, renders the marking off of yards or leagues unnecessary.

One of the pleasures of Susie Raymond's new life was to traverse space and visit different localities. Sometimes her route was passed over spirit highways only, and her interest in the information she thus gained of the occupations and modes of life of different spirits in various places was unbounded. Sometimes her way led over the pathways of earth—countries she had never seen—and that contained great charm for her. As to mortals, so to spirits, the experiences and observations gained through travel and through contact with different states of society, enlarge the mind and develop the thinking qualities.

Susie was never alone on these excursions, nor were they arranged for amusement only. Intelligent friends were her companions, who found many opportunities of giving or receiving information on their way, and who utilized their powers in shedding a magnetic, uplifting, stimulating influence upon spirits or mortals who they perceived required such ministrations.

It is not to be supposed that all this time Susie and John neglected any duty; nor did they forsake the dear child who remained on earth. Their visits to him were frequent and tender. Sometimes they could make him feel their loving influence, and he would say: "Mother is here, and father too, I think; I know they are helping me," but more often the assurance of their presence, added to a message of cheer, would be given him through the mediumship of his kind protectress, Mrs. Jones.

All this time Charles Raymond continued to make his home at the Jones's. His place in the store of Mr. Jones—a small dry-goods establishment—was faithfully filled. His days were spent at his post, attending to the duties that came to him; but his evenings were occupied with his books, for he had not lost his desire for knowledge nor given up his studies with his school-leaving. His friends helped him with his lessons as far as they could, and his progress, though slow, was steady and sure.

So the months rolled away; the boy continued to grow in stature as in mind. He was now a tall, though somewhat delicate youth of fourteen years, and Mr. Jones thought him sufficiently advanced to be promoted to the position of salesman in the store, with the weekly payment of a small sum of money over and beyond the expenses of his board and clothing. This much elated the boy, for now he could purchase books that he had longed for but had not dared to think of, so far off did they seem—works that would open to him the knowledge he craved.

Thus diligently step by step did he study and wait, winning his way, and climbing up the ladder of knowledge. He felt within his soul that there was work for him somewhere. He was not to measure cambric and ribbon always; there must be something nobler and more expansive sometime. In the meanwhile he would do his best by his employer, remembering that his mother had once said to him, "He who is faithful to the smallest duty imposed upon him, and does his work conscientiously, however humble it may seem, is doing God's work as truly as though he had power to move the world."

Working early and late upon the hearts and minds of Charles and his friends, good spirits knew that they should find a centre of power here that would radiate in usefulness for miles around. Mrs. Jones had been very averse to exhibiting her mediumship to the public. She shrank from the contumely and scorn that would fall upon her from certain quarters, and the curiosity, if not impertinence, that would

restorative, and soon after the following occurred:
[Continued on eighth page.]

From England. Cloth. Price 75 cents. Postage free.
For sale by COLBY & RICH.

The stirring editorials, "Personality and Identity," "Evolution," "Is God a Person?" In last three issues of *Mental Science Magazine*, 161 La Salle street, Chicago, are each in 16-page pamphlets. Single copies, 5 cents; per dozen, 50 cents; the three, 15 cents.

Message Department.

Public Free-Circle Meetings.
Are held at the BANNER OF LIGHT OFFICE, 100 North
Street, Boston, on every Tuesday, Wednesday and
Friday at 7:30 P. M. The hall (which is used only for
these meetings) will be open at 7 o'clock, and service
commences at 7:30. The meetings are held in a
pleasant, airy room, and the atmosphere is
most congenial, allowing no access to the conclusion of
the service, except in case of absolute necessity. The public
are cordially invited.

The meetings published under the above heading indi-
cate that spirits carry with them the characteristics of their
earth-life to that beyond—whether for good or evil; that
those who pass from the earthly sphere to an undeveloped
state, eventually progress to higher conditions. We ask
the reader to receive no doctrine put forth by spiritists
which does not comport with his or her own
reason. All express as 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 in-
forming us of the fact for publication.

Natural flowers upon our spirit-table are grate-
fully appreciated by our angel visitors, therefore we solicit
donations of such from the friends in earth-life who may
feel that it is pleasant to place upon the altar of spiritual-
ity their floral offerings.

We have suitable written questions for answer at
these meetings from all parts of the country. Those who
wish to ask questions should distinctly understand that they
give no private sittings at any time; neither does the re-
porter of these meetings. Questions for answer should be
submitted to the reporter of these meetings. The reporter of
these meetings should not be addressed in the medium in any
case.

LAWIS B. WILSON, Clairvoyant.

SPIRIT MESSAGES.

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

Report of Public Seance held Nov. 3d, 1885.

Invocation.

Father of All, we come before thee with hearts
bowed down, offering to thy acceptance our aspira-
tions of praise and all that the soul contains of knowl-
edge and of grace. For we are grateful for the light
bestowed upon man we thank thee, O our God. Oh! thou
who art the divine and tender parent of all man-
kind, we look to thee for guidance and for cheer; we
would press onward to the right, to the light, to the
duty manfully and with joy, fulfilling the mission thou
has assigned to us, gathering up from the roadside of
life whatever of experience, bearing whatever of dis-
cipline thou shalt lay upon our souls. Oh! we would
that mankind might be wiser, more loving, more
and thy goodness. We would that humanity might
realize that life is continuous; that there is no cessa-
tion of being, no suspension of the vital activities of
the soul. Oh! we ask that the immortal spirits may
be given power and opportunity to go forth from their
homes of light unto every weary heart on earth, bearing
their influences of peace and love, bringing the good tid-
ings of great joy concerning the immortality of the soul.
Oh! may there be forth from every place like unto this,
that knowledge which will bear conviction to the
hearts of those who mourn, that will teach mankind
there is no death—what seems so is the dropping away
of the outer shell, to give the inner life greater scope
of unfoldment and expression upon a fairer, and a
brighter shore. Oh! our Father, we ask thy blessing
to rest upon all mankind; may all realize that in-
deed their father, a parent of good, too wise to err,
too tender to be kind. Trusting in thee, may we
press onward joyfully, willingly performing every
task, and looking forward to the grand fruition of im-
mortal life. Amen.

Questions and Answers.

CONTROLLING SPIRIT.—We are ready for your
questions, Mr. Chairman.

Ques.—I often happen that when a person
falls into a trance, state, between sleep and
wakefulness, he hears voices, sometimes very
clear and distinct, as of persons in conversation
with himself or others. Is this on account of
his close proximity to actual presence in the
spirit-world?

Ans.—When the outer senses of man are so
entirely dulled that he takes no cognizance of the
surroundings of mortal life, then the spiritual
powers of his being are in the ascendency.
At such moments, when the outer senses are
arousing from deep slumber, when the outer
put off its cares and the inner life is allowed to
unfold, and even to express itself, the spirit
can come into close communion with the den-
sities of another life; it is even possible for the
spirit, under these circumstances, to pass out
from the body and to enter the spirit-world. It
self, taking notice of the surroundings of that
life, and coming into connection and associa-
tion with certain of its inhabitants; therefore
when one feels that he is maintaining a con-
versation with beings not of the mortal sphere,
in such circumstances as this, he may feel that
his spiritual faculties are in operation, and
that he is really in communion with those who
have gone before.

Q.—[By S. B. Mosher.] It is said that spirits
cannot pass through the earth. If that is so,
how can the spirit free itself from its body, if
buried?

Ans.—Many strange assertions are made in the
name of spirits. We have never heard an intelli-
gent spirit, who understands the law of spiri-
tual control over matter, make the affirmation
that spirits cannot pass through the earth. It
is true that a spirit who feels himself confined
by physical ties and who is unable to realize
that he is not still encased in a mortal form,
who believes that he must continue to indulge
in those pursuits and pleasures which belong to
earthly life, and who, for a time, is unable
to pass through any solid substance such as the
walls of a certain room, or through the earth,
but when such a spirit becomes freed from his
material limitations, and desires to rise above
the physical life to gain a knowledge of spiri-
tual existence, and try his powers as a spirit, in-
dependent of matter, he can rise above the physical
and pass out through the walls of a room or
through any material substance without hindrance.
Spirits whose bodies are laid away be-
neath the earth, and who are not connected with
them, are not obliged to remain in the tomb
or connected with the body, for just as soon as
the physical severs its tie and is ready to yield
up the spirit, then the immortal part can soar
aloft, independent of earth and earthly matter.
This has been the experience of many spirits,
and all intelligences who understand these
laws will confirm our statement.

Q.—Was the real body of Jesus raised after
the crucifixion?

Ans.—We do not believe that the mortal body
of Jesus was raised from the dead. What we
have studied concerning the life, death and
subsequent events connected with Jesus, as-
sures us that the bodily form was removed
from the sepulchre by the friends of the Na-
zarene, who desired to give it interment in what
they considered a more sacred place; but the
spiritual body of Jesus was so wonderfully en-
dowed with power that he was enabled to re-
turn to earth, and manifest to his friends his
self certain elements and particles which ren-
dered that spiritual body somewhat opaque
and visible to the sight of mortals. This is the
record, as we have found it in the spirit-world.

Bessie Cranston.

I lived thirty-six years on earth, and I was
called away about a year and a half ago. I
have tried to come back before. I wanted my
friends to know about these things, but the
door was not open for me. I have tried to
come and manifest through a medium in San
Francisco several times; I thought I would be
able to do it—I came so near writing out my
thoughts, and I shall still try, because I do
that I know I can get very close to friends who
knew and loved me—whom I wish to reach.
I send them all my love. I am so well satisfied
with what I have found, that I do not care to
come back and take up the earthly life, yet I
do like to come and look after my friends, try
to help them all I can, and make their lives
pleasant. I know I shall meet them all after a
while, when they come to the spirit-world, so I
am waiting, trying to do the best I can, and
trusting, at all times, to help them do their best
in living on earth. My name before marriage
was Bessie Willis; it is now Bessie Cranston. I
was from Capay, Cal.

Mrs. Lydia Bliss.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to send a word of
love to my friends. I want them to know all
about me, and I would like to have a good long
chat with them, but I don't know when the
time will come for that, so I came around this
way, and thought if I could just step in and
say: "I am all well—not tired out now—and I
send you my love, it would help me to get
older, what could give something more. I was
a little old, but a good many years on earth.
I didn't know how completely torn out I was
until I got out of the body, and then I felt
so bright and smart, it seemed as though I
had cast off a great big load. That is, all I

want to say. I send my love, and I am getting
along very well indeed. I was from Norwich,
Conn. My name, sir, is Mrs. Lydia Bliss.

Charles Higgins.

The man who pushes through a large crowd
and finds himself able to get what he wants is
considered a pretty lucky sort of a fellow, and
I think myself, at this moment, for I have
been kind of elbowing my way through a good
many people who are standing around. I sup-
pose you don't see them, Mr. Chairman, and
you can hardly take that in, but it's true. I
am Charles Higgins. I have quite a number of
friends in Brooklyn, N. Y. I have been round
there a good many times, trying to get in a
word edge-wise. I could tell that way or any
other way, but I think there's a door open, I go
and look and find only a solid wall, with not
even a "peek-hole" for me to see through. It's
exactly like that.

I don't mean to say I am shut out entirely
from everything that is pleasant, and from all
friends, because that isn't the case. I have a
good many friends on the spirit-side, and we
have some very pleasant social times together.
We join in word and I am sure, perhaps I
ought to be satisfied and not be looking around
here for the left behind; but I have a kind
of feeling that it would do me good to hunt up
my friends on this side, and I want them to
feel that it would be good to hear from me. I
have been gone over quite a little while, and
the affairs I left have all been settled up. I
am quite satisfied with them. Perhaps they
are not just exactly as they would have been if
I had arranged the matter, for no two men
work alike, I suppose; yet, take it all to-
gether, it is about as well as one could expect,
so I don't trouble my mind about that. I had
the faculty of throwing things off my mind
when they got weighty—it came natural to me.
I would like to have a good solid talk with
my friends, and it seems to me they might like
together, hire a medium, and have a little
meeting all to themselves, so I can have a
chance to come. I shall be ready and willing
to look in, that day, any time.

I have only a good report to make. I have
been passing through strange scenes. At first
I floundered a good deal, and hardly knew just
where I was, but I got settled all right after a
while, and found myself in a very good country,
with plenty of friends to give me a hand, so I
think my lot is cast in pleasant places, and I
am not disposed to grumble.

If any of my friends want to hear from me,
they know what to do—just hunt up a medium
and give me a chance to speak. They know
very well I was not backward in doing that
thing when I was here, and if I can get just the
right kind of a talking machine, I'll not be
backward now. I'm much obliged to you, sir.

Maria Lawton.

[To the Chairman.] I know you have a great
number of places in Boston where spirits come
and manifest, because I have been around to
ever so many of them, and tried to make my-
self known, but I have never succeeded. It
seems hard, because I have friends here whom
I love; and right in this city there are those
who think of me, and who wonder what comes
to the dead—if they have any conscious knowl-
edge of the friends they leave on this side. I
have tried to answer their questions, but could
not; yet, in one sense, I may say I could, be-
cause I had the power of impressing the minds
of my friends, giving them thoughts and sug-
gestions—ideas, something near the truth—but
they did not know that these were really an-
swers from the other side; so, thinking they
were only the workings of their own minds,
they put them away. I bring my love to them
all, and would like to have them know that I
come and watch over them. Sometimes it al-
most seems as though they must know I am
there. I have touched them, and they seemed
to feel as though there was some presence near,
but they did not know it was I, a spirit; they
believed they were only full of fancy.

There is one very near to me whom we call
Little Johnnie. He is a medium, delicate and
sensitive, and sometimes those around him won-
der what will be his fate. I am watching over
and caring for him, and I know that he is sen-
sitive to the whispers of the spirits. He does
not know what it is, but he feels guided—and
he has a trust in this unseen power, which
helps us. In our own lives, we are all posi-
tive, and who feel that they can take care
of themselves, might take a lesson from him,
in his simplicity and truthfulness, because they
could be guided more clearly in their ways,
and be led into quieter paths than they have
sometimes found. Perhaps now I will be able
to do as I have tried to do so long—in other
ways more quiet and private, and speak as I
wish. I am Maria Lawton, of Boston.

Charles Hammond.

I am Charles Hammond. My home was in
Philadelphia. My friends would think me an
old man, but I am not; in my spirit-home I
was not aged, and was, as you would say,
young in life and in its joys. I can call my-
self in the maturity of life—able to bear the ex-
periences that come, and ready to look forward
to many long years of active work.

I did not come so much for myself. Perhaps I
could have come before, had I wished, on my
own account, and sent a word to friends; but
I came to speak for my wife, who has recently
joined me in the spirit-world. She is so sur-
prised, so pleased and contented with her new
home, that she wants to tell the friends she
left here, and she does not know just ex-
actly how to do it. I come to say these things for
her, to give her love with my own, and to tell
all who are interested that we are satisfied
with the spirit-life and its conditions. My wife
did not pass away in Pennsylvania, but here, in
this State. Perhaps some of our friends will be
glad to know of our return. Tell them that
Abigail and Charles give greeting, and are
happy to hear from all who like to talk with
their friends, if their friends would care to have
them.

A. S. Nettleton.

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. I felt very
well before I stepped up close. I did not have
any bad feelings, but as I tried to take hold
and make myself known, I felt very uneasy and
all crumpled up, so to speak. I was crushed by
the cars at Meriden, Conn., and after lingering
a little while in great distress, I slipped out of
the body. Now I don't feel badly at all, in
one sense, after I got out, because I didn't take
any mangled form with me, but mentally I did
not feel altogether quiet and reconciled. I did
not wish to die. I had no special thought of
what the future was to bring to me; my atten-
tion, my general thoughts and plans were con-
centrated and concerned with this life, so I don't
think I was in just the sort of condition to go
out, at least I was not resigned to the situation.
Why, I wanted to be back if I could have a body
whole and strong, and adapted to my use; I
took me a little while to get satisfied and come
to really believe that all things were right, and
that what had come to me was in the order of
things. I think I can say that now, in looking
back, I don't know that I have any strong de-
sire to come and take up material life again.

I have been out of the body three years, long
enough to look around and see my position; so,
in coming to my friends, I do not come to com-
plain, or to show a spirit of dissatisfaction—I
nearly come to settle them in my regards, and
then to open a way for me to come in more
than one private home.

I have friends here whom I would like to talk
with. I want to shake them by the hand and tell
them of this life on the other side, how differ-
ent it is from what I thought, how many
strange things I have seen, and of the people I
have encountered; there are many things I
would like to speak of. I would mention a
few, but I have no opportunity. It is something
different from that of a hotel clerk's. I trust
some friend will be ready to respond to my call;
I think I can be of use in coming in this way,
not only by convincing my friends there is no
death, but by bringing to them something from
the other dear ones who have stepped away
from the earth-life. I don't know as I could be
engaged in any better business, although I have
a special private business of my own on the
spirit-side, that is independent of anything
connected with earth.

My greetings I send to friends in Hartford. I
know very well I shall be recognized, because
there are parties there who are interested in

Spiritualism, who no doubt will remember me.
A. S. Nettleton.

C. H. Higginson.

I suppose, Mr. Chairman, it is proper for
each man who steps in to record his name.
Mine is C. H. Higginson, and you may put me
down as from Trenton, N. J. Not that I have
lived in Trenton all these years that I have
been in visible to mankind, but I have been in
that city more or less of the time, looking after
those who are dear to me, and taking notice of
the changes coming into their lives. I have
seen them, I know the events that have taken
place, and I wish them to understand that
wherever they go, whatever changes come over
them, I believe I shall have the power of know-
ing, at least, something of it, and of taking an
interest in their welfare.

I would like those connected with me by
family ties to understand something of this
spirit return; to know that their friends who
pass from the body are living still, and that
they have entered another world fully as real
as this earth is to you. It is so hard for man
to comprehend these things until he has had
them by actual experience. To believe that
there is a world beyond, and that we have
with it, with its own laws and habits, with
natural scenery and surroundings, as real
and palpable as those of earth—that man will
inhabit after passing from the mortal, is some-
thing hard for the mind to entertain; but when
you experience it actually for yourself, and
find that everything is as real as before the
change, you are forced to admit that there is
a little world beyond, and you come to believe there
may be others just such worlds, inhabited
by intelligent people, who are moving along in
a rational way, growing wiser and better con-
stantly. I am studying these things—trying to
understand them.

I do not want to bring to my friends such les-
sons or thoughts as will confuse their minds,
or puzzle them still more concerning the great
mystery. I would rather drop, here and there,
a few words, one of affection, with assur-
ances that I am interested in them, and that
I have an active, conscious life. This may
lead their thoughts on and on to a considera-
tion of something more, until they are prepared
to know and understand those lessons which
appeared so strange to me when I went over
the river, and which are now a part of my un-
derstanding.

I shall try to communicate nearer home than
this. There is one I would like to reach—to
whom I am attracted and attached—in New
York City. It seems to me I shall be able, after
a while, to find a mediumistic opening there,
through which I may come and communicate.
I will endeavor to do that, for the sake of my
friends and for myself.

Ella Day.

I come, hoping to get to my mother and my
sister. My mother's name is Mary, so is my
sister's; but we always called her May. They
are together, and they live in Washington; but
while they have the company of each other
and fondly attached, yet they feel lonely.
I often think of them, and of the changes, con-
dition, and of the dear ones who they think
have left them. I hear their talks, and try to
answer, and give them some word or signal
that they are not alone; that there are around
them dear, loving friends, who wish to make
themselves understood; but I do not succeed.
I have tried to come through mediums in Wash-
ington, and I have even been at other places,
hoping something could be given that might be
of comfort to them for the present, but I have
failed. I have failed. So come here to-day, hop-
ing that I may accomplish some good result.

My name is Ella Day. I was young when I
passed away. I call myself young now, al-
though quite a number of years have elapsed
since I went out of the body. I was just emerg-
ing from school-life, and the occupations and
pleasures that a young girl finds, when I was
called to my spirit-home. It was hard for me
to go. My mother did not feel reconciled; she
felt sad, and she came one time around; and
then other changes came to her life and her
home, and greater sorrows—so it seemed to me
—fell upon her, until it appeared as though she
had clouds and grief all around her life. But I
could see and sympathize with her, and try to
make her know it. I have often thought if she
and May only realized what a great circle of
friends there are awaiting them in the spirit-
world, and how much they love them, they
would only be happy in thinking of the home
they would reach by-and-by; but they do not
know, therefore they cannot anticipate the joys
before them.

All our dear ones join me in great love; they
send greetings, and they want our loved friends
to know that they are living together in social
and pleasant association.

I had hopes and plans. I was just beginning
to get out what I wished to do, and how I
should use my time and my power, and how I
or sister speak of them, and say how sad
I should be cut off then, because they
think I might have developed some power and
have made myself useful. I want them to
know that all the powers that were mine then
are mine now, and I can develop them by my
own will. I have the advantage of wise teach-
ers and good instruction in the spirit-world,
and I have been guided in utilizing my powers,
and I have been able to do so much for my
around my home, with its pretty ornaments,
they will say I have lost nothing in the change
from earth to heaven.

Royal Rich.

I have not a great deal to say, Mr. Chairman.
I just dropped in here to tell all the folks I
have come round, and that now I am feeling
pretty good. This is a different kind of a drop
from that I had before, which sent me out.
I fell from a tree, and the shock, together with
the fall, was too much for me—for my body—so
I went to another world, lower than I live,
and I don't know what I did there, but I
didn't go to another life. I held on right here
and kept looking round, and trying to get hold
of things, and do my work as I used to before
the change—it all seemed so natural. I ap-
peared to be just the same that I was before,
and could not realize that I would have to let go
of earthly things, and take up with something
altogether different. But I've found it out
now, and I don't find any fault; it is all right,
and I thought I'd let the folks know just how
it was.

It is only a little over a year since then, and
I haven't, of course, grown very big in spirit
yet, but I am trying mightily, and I think I am
getting ahead very fairly.

This is a good world. I see many pleasant
little farms and pretty places here, the same as
you have on your plane. You'll think it's
kind of strange to talk about the farms of peo-
ple you have never seen, and don't know what
they're all true. I say so, because I have seen
them, have gone over them, and taken a hand
in what was going on there, and I like it very
well, much better than things you have here,
because there's a different way of getting at
things, and the hardest that comes we don't
call toll or hard work generally.

You'll excuse me, sir, if I don't talk very
long. I have been coming in this way before; it
is all new to me, but I thought I could get
back and just say a few words, it might wake
some of the people up. They don't know much
about these things in the parts I came from; it
seems to me it is time they did. I am from
Warren, Mass. You may call me Royal Rich.

Agnes Coburn.

I did not realize that such a long while had
passed since I went from the body until I came
here. Time has slipped away very swiftly to
me. I have not minded the passage of months
and years, but I have minded the things of my
life, so much that it is now interesting to me
that I have forgotten how you measure days and
weeks; and in coming back and realizing that
years have gone by since I walked here with
my friends, the thought comes that perhaps
they will not really recognize me, or perhaps
they have forgotten about my love—but it
seems to me they cannot, because the spirit
never forgets its friends. I have loved and sym-
pathized with all the friends I have known, and
I keep them all in my mind, all through my ex-
periences that come to me, and I know that my
friends care for me; they were tender and
true, and although they have tried to fight with
the hard vicissitudes of life many times since I
went away, while I have been pressing for-
ward, gaining so much of enjoyment, yet I
think they still remember me with love, and
will be glad to hear from me to-day. My lot
has not been all pleasure; what has come to
me has had to earn, as every spirit does; it seems
to be a law of life that we shall work for what
we have; that which is ours we must pay for
in some way, but the work comes as so interest-
ing and the studies we pursue are so interesting
and we forget that it is labor, and just go forward,
taking up one after another pursuit and re-
joicing when we find it fully accomplished. In
this life no work is half done; we are not satis-
fied with ourselves, and are restless and un-
happy unless we have accomplished every task.
When we look it over and find it has been neg-
lected and is not fully completed, we feel im-
pelled to set about righting it; we cannot leave
it until it is perfected; so what we have and
what we learn become wholly ours, and, be it
much or little, it is good in itself.

My friends, in looking over their own lives on
earth, and finding so much that is sad and hard,
may think it scarcely worth while to push on
and try to make the best of what comes to
them, and do their work faithfully and well,
but I tell them it does pay in the end. When
we get to the spirit-world and look back over
our past lives, as we must, and as I was obliged
to do, we find that we have found every task
fully accomplished, everything we undertook to
do performed well before something else was
taken up. I ask them to go forward patiently,
doing their duty as best they can, believing
there is something brighter in store by-and-by.
I bring them my love, and ask for theirs in re-
turn. Shadows sometimes settle around them,
but above the shadows there is the clear sun-
light, and they must see it after a time.

The dear friends who have passed to the spirit-
world—those who went before me and the few
who have come after me, all know each other;
they are happy, and they send back words of
cheer to the dear ones who remain. Laura is
here to-day, sending her love with mine. She
would speak for herself, but she cannot. She
says to the dear friends: "As you wrapped
around my form the beautiful mantle of lace
which you felt was so fair and bright, and none
could have but myself, so I come to you wrap-
ping around your lives the mantle of love, deli-
cious and fair. May it prove to you a covering
that will bless and beautify your lives." In our
spirit-home we rejoice in all that has come to
us, in sorrow and pain as well as in joy and
peace, because we feel that all together make
up the rich mantle of happiness that is ours on
high.

My friends are in Boston, and I think they
will see my message. I am Agnes Coburn.

Charles Fitch.

To those friends of mine who are mentally
asking for a message from this place, from some
one whom they know I come to-day. Perhaps
they will not expect to receive a word from me,
because I do not know as they have sent any
special thought to me personally, but I know
they have requested other friends, mentally,
speaking their names, and calling upon them to
come and send a message, but the anxiety of
those friends, of both lives, operates as a bar-
rier between them and the consummation of
their wish. I have attempted a little while
mediums of this and other sorts, and I find that
wherever there is great anxiety on the part of
the spirit or on the part of the mortal friends,
it interferes with the delicate conditions neces-
sary, and prevents the spirit from coming, or
at least from giving what he wishes to do in a
satisfactory and clear manner; so these par-
ticular spirits who have been requested by their
friends to manifest, having tried, and finding
they cannot succeed, have wisely refrained
from attempting for the present, and I am
glad they have requested me to speak for them,
and for myself, if possible; so I say to those friends
who have been sending out their thought in this
direction: "Have patience; after a while, when
your anxiety subsides, when you become a lit-
tle more receptive yourselves, after you study
the spiritual philosophy a little more closely,
and learn something of the laws and conditions
belonging to it, you will get what you desire."

Now it is so important as you may think
that you should get these messages, and I find
that you have an outside source, from a dis-
tance place, like this Banner of Light Circle, be-
cause you have the elements and powers right
within yourselves for receiving all that you re-
quire from spiritual life. You believe, to an
extent, in the return and communion of spirits;
you sometimes think (and now I am addressing
myself to two particular friends, and they have
asked me to speak for them, and they will un-
derstand) that you have mediumistic powers. This
is very true, and if you will sit with the friends
who understand you, be patient and hopeful,
and not too much filled with anxiety, not too
imperious in your demands as to what you pre-
fer from the spirit-world, you will, I am con-
vinced, after a while receive intelligent com-
munications from those who have gone beyond.

When I was here, I talked with my friends
freely, and told them just what I believed was
true, and I told them just what I believed was
true, and I told them just what I believed was
true. I did not ask them to take as a dictum,
but to make the most of it until they could
find something better. They know that
I was characteristic, and I express it here,
because all who are present are strangers to me,
and I was never in this circle-room in my
life before.

Now, my friends, who will read what I have
said, I want you to place reliance on my judg-
ment, and to follow me, and follow my advice
in sitting for the spirit communion. Do not
send out so much of your positive magnetism
to any such place as this; do not spend your
time in heartily wishing you had the power of
frequenting materializing circles and places
where the spirits do congregate, that you
might receive what you hear others are daily
getting; but go to work among yourselves, and
establish such rules and conditions as will
bring to you this coveted blessing in your
own homes, and your neighbors and friends need
not know of it, and you can take as much as
you desire, and if you can succeed in bringing into
midst returning spirits who are pleased to
come, you will be doing a good work.

I bring many kindly remembrances. Al-
though I have passed from the body I do not
feel that I have laid down the burdens of life
nor that I should be privileged to step aside
and take no active part in its concerns. I rat-
her desire to be one of you, as well as one of the
spirit-world, and to shoulder the burden of earth
and heart to heart, with any friend of earth
who desires to work for the enlightenment of
others.

I have felt, as have those dear spirits who
have been so anxious to come, this cry going up
from the hearts of my friends, asking for news
from this place, if only a word, something that
would brighten their pathway and give evi-
dence of the interest of these spirits in their
welfare. I can almost rebuke them for ask-
ing that, because how can a heart that loves its
friends devotedly, and knows that those friends
have shared its sympathy and have
showered their affection upon it, even though
they are removed from the earthly body—for a
moment question the affection of those friends
because they are unseen, or for a moment
doubt the interest, the watchful care of those
dear ones who have gone to the other side?

There is no need for any answering response
in this direction. Let my friends turn to their
own hearts and ask, if the conditions were
changed, if they had been removed away from
the sight and sound, the hearing, perhaps, of
their friends, if the way had been such that
they could not send out any intelligent com-
munication to those loved ones, would they have
forgotten, or would they have ceased to love?
They know the would not. Let them, then, re-
frain from sending up such thoughts to the dear
ones who have gone on as these: "You may not
remember us with love; you may not care for
that which concerns us now; oh! give us no re-
sponse, that we may realize your spiritual guid-
ance." There is no need of it. Whenever
there is an opportunity the token will be given,
but whether that opening comes or not, the
guidance is theirs, the tender love shall enfold
them always.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you will please
announce me as Charles Fitch I know my mes-
sage will be understood.

Report of Public Seance held Nov. 6th, 1885.

Questions and Answers.

Ques.—Is it possible for the human mind to
conceive of anything that does not exist?

Ans.—The mind is capable of reaching out
and seeking the solution of infinite things; it
is competent to reach upward beyond its mat-
terial confines, and grasp the knowledge of that
which lies beyond the senses; but that it is
possible for it to conceive of anything which
has no existence seems to be out of the ques-
tion. Imagination, to the poet or artist, is only
the exercise of that inner faculty which be-
holds the ideal and desires to give it expres-
sion. The man of literature, dealing in what
he believes to be imagination alone, may spread
before you a prose poem, a word-picture, which
you receive and enjoy. You do not believe that
it has any foundation in fact, and perhaps its
author may not believe this, either; yet in the
realm of spirituality there is a foundation for
this ideal expression. It has been affirmed by
exalted intelligences that somewhere in the fu-
ture, the artist, the poet, the

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