

BANNER OF LIGHT.



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CONTENTS.

FIRST PAGE.—Our Agents. The Spiritual Postum: Possibilities of Spirit-Culture.

SECOND PAGE.—Literary Department: The Spirit of the Storm. Original Essay: Materialization. New Publications.

THIRD PAGE.—Banner Correspondence: Letters from Connecticut, Iowa, Illinois, Vermont, Wisconsin, California, Ohio, West Virginia, and Massachusetts. The Reviewer: Zilla Kilt, or, Songs from Silence. September Magazine. Poetry: The Spirit-World. Science Must Become Free. List of Spiritualist Lecturers, etc.

FOURTH PAGE.—Treatment of Criminals. Prevision and Clairvoyance in the Last Century. Visit to Lake Pleasant. All Sorts of Paragraphs, etc.

FIFTH PAGE.—Summer Camp Meetings: Lake Pleasant. The Nautic Camping Grounds. New Advertisements, etc.

SIXTH PAGE.—Message Department: Invocation: Questions and Answers: Spirit Messages given through the Mediumship of Miss M. T. Sheeham from Joshua Seward, Bailey H. Strong, Alexander Vining, Sarah Clarke, D. Franklin Curtis, Mrs. A. J. Shelton, P. G. Conway, F. Conals, Gallagher, George Wilson, Mary Beale, John Nichols, Henry and Frederick Stone, Alice Hart, Fanny Brown, Charles Hook, William Anderson, George Fisk, E. Verifications of Spirit Messages.

SEVENTH PAGE.—"Mediums in Boston," Book and Miscellaneous Advertisements.

EIGHTH PAGE.—Onset Bay: Temple Heights Camp-Meeting: Queen City Park, Hingham, Vt.; Lake Umbagog Camp-Meeting: Lookout Mountain Camp-Meeting Association; Casseagade Lake, Nanticoke (Ct.) Camp-Meeting. The Parker Tomb Fund, etc.

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A young woman tourist at Catskill said to her brother, in the absence of somebody else's brother: "There is an impressiveness about this country, identified with the proper, dignified, promptness of the soul to soar to heights hitherto imagined unattainable—but where are you going, Almeron?" "I'm going for a doctor," "Who for?" "Not for me," "I'm not," "I'm not."

The Spiritual Postum.

Possibilities of Spirit-Culture.

A Lecture delivered at Lake Pleasant, Aug. 17th, 1886.

BY CHARLES DAWBARN.

(Reported for the Banner of Light.)

The study of human anatomy must have had a weird interest to the man who first dared to take to pieces a human form. It is true he was only doing in his humble way what nature had begun to do far more perfectly; but he was crying "Stop," to nature, that he might at least have time to learn his lesson before she destroyed the book.

It was a search for the secret of life and the mystery of death begun by that student and continued by his successors that has left little to be learned of the machine we are taught to call man. The skeleton stands as a toy to our children; as the outlines of a continent whose hills and valleys and rushing streams are surveyed and mapped to adorn an atlas.

I could linger long over the marvelous scene, for these organs and nerves, these arteries and veins, offer you study for a lifetime with an heirship to his heart's content for your oldest son. It seems like the eager search in the streets of buried Herculaneum—a new discovery possible at every corner; but the silence of death is around you as you work.

You have thrown open another house, and now comes the question, "What of the man who claims ownership here?" But the anatomist like your laborer with spade and shovel, can only tell you "the owner is missing." Hunt from collar to garret—everywhere lies furniture adapted to each room, but not a trace of the proprietor—and at last the anatomist acknowledges that neither the secret of life nor the mystery of death is entombed in all that structure.

Turn to the physiologist and marvel at his learning as he shows you each organ in the activity of life. Here flow the streams of a living world from rivulet to Mississippi, freighted with the needs of every hour. In every direction are nerves, bearing electric currents that are never at rest. It is telegraph, telephone, railway and macadamized road wherever needed, and all alike crowded by the ceaseless traffic.

The anatomist worked amidst such silence that every question aroused an echo; but here we find bustle and activity exhibited by matter, and guided by an intelligence that moves this world of atoms at the slightest expression of its will. So I ask the physiologist to introduce me to the owner. He points to the brain and says, "There is his private apartment." But the anatomist assures me he has searched through ten thousand brains without finding an owner to say "That is mine." So to the physiologist, like the anatomist, the secret of life and the mystery of death stand unsolved.

Leaving these mere workers in matter to their eternal search, I claim brotherhood with the intelligence that can turn anatomist at one hour, and the next stand professor of physiology. He measures the star, weighs the earth, and gives a task to the lightning. Pondering the unsolved problem, I once again make anxious question, "What of the secret of life and the mystery of death?" He takes me by the hand and says, "Come." When our feet touch the innermost, he points to the eternal atom moving to and fro in the kingdom of force, and tells me to learn its lesson.

Presently I discern that the owner has no home in all this structure, no palace in which he may sit enthroned and wield his sceptre. I find the human form standing as a mighty kingdom, with every inhabitant working for the whole nation. But, although intelligence wears the crown as king, I perceive that man is a limited monarchy, with every citizen demanding and compelling a hearing on any action that affects his welfare. Whilst mortal man does stand to me as wonder of wonders, I can discern clearly that he is only making an advanced civilization. He is a nation of grander development than are the other nations around him.

I now discover a beautiful truth, so simple that even a child in science may grasp the thought. In every being that exists there must be matter, force, and intelligence, each with its eternal atoms or ultimates. There is nothing more and can be no less, whether to the bacteria of microscopic discovery, or to the elephant whose ancestors were yet greater mountains of matter than himself. Every living being is thus built up of three eternal independencies. Man cannot conceive of existence under other conditions; but we must remember that although these three independencies are blended for a special expression of life, their union can be dissolved without destruction of the eternal atom.

So the thought I want to express is this: that whilst the atom is indestructible and eternal, its union with other atoms is a partnership whose firm members change from time to time, just as it is with the partnerships in our business life of to-day. At the same time we must notice we never, come into personal relation with even one member of the firm, but every question is answered, and every movement determined by the whole community acting as one individual.

Ask the naturalist to show you a little brown hydra, and you will make the acquaintance of a very small animal with a very sharp limit of force and intelligence. The scientist will prove to you that, like every other form, it is composed of innumerable atoms beyond even imagination to count. So that little being is itself a nation, which we call a "hydra." We do not think of

its separate atoms any more than we think of every man woman and child in England when we speak of the English nation. Yet when we use the term England we are obliged to include the individualities of which that nation is composed. And it is only because we have not grasped the thought that the atom, whether of force or matter, or of intelligence, is the true individual, that we think of the hydra as a unit instead of as a nation.

Taking this truth as our foundation thought we are ready to apply it to higher manifestations of life. We find that we hydra under favoring circumstances building a nation of hydras, which therefore includes more of intelligence, more of force and more of matter than was possible to the single hydra. Of course the proportions of each are so far changed in this process of evolution, that only the scientist who follows it step by step can realize that the hydra polyp is really a nation of hydras. But when we discover that the hydra-polyp is evolving organs and powers impossible to the hydra, we must not forget that it is only a nation whose every citizen is a wee hydra. Nor must we forget that the hydra is itself a nation of molecules, and that each molecule is but the blending of individual atoms.

I don't want to carry this thought to an extreme by suggesting that the hydra-polyp might perchance cultivate its offspring until a higher and a higher form becomes nationalized. The discoveries of progress by evolution would not justify any such assertion. That thought I want to express is, that what we call individuality is always a blending of other individualities—a gathering of ultimates, under the laws of evolution and survival of the fittest. It is these individual forms which our nineteenth century scientists spend their lives in endeavoring to classify and comprehend.

You perceive that this thought revolutionizes our old conception of man. We may presently discover that this revolution is even more of an upturning than seems possible to-day. Nevertheless, the only question we should each ask, "Is it a truth?"

I know that we have had assertions from time immemorial that man is in some sense distinct from the rest of creation, and that he has a soul all his own. On the strength of this assertion we find heaven and earth in communion to save or damn this human soul. So important has this conception of a soul seemed to man, that upon it every religion has been founded. The poetic imagination of seer, prophet, and Messiah has conceived of Deity as living and moving and having a being all in special relation to the welfare or ill-fare of the human soul.

But if humanity be only a conglomerate of individualities, Deity could no more damn the soul of a man than the soul of Great Britain or the soul of the United States. So I am not dealing with an idle thought, but with a fact of nature. But I want to carry the thought a step further; out into the wider manhood of humanity as distinct from the six-foot limitation which is the special study of the scientist, and the ponderous problem of the philosopher.

If we have mastered the thought that every thing our senses can grasp is composed of three elements, matter, force and intelligence, each existing as ultimates, we are ready to build upon that foundation a practical philosophy of man, which shall make him smaller and larger than prophets, poets and philosophers ever dreamed.

Intelligence must express itself according to the conditions of the matter at its disposal, and the special condition is always a result of more or less force expressed in varying rate of movement or vibration of the atom. When we speak of a savage as incapable of progress, we mean that his brain is composed of matter whose rate of vibration cannot be increased without destruction of its form. Matter will always respond to an increased force, though a heat that will only warm one form, will melt and thus destroy another.

We must not forget that ultimates of force and ultimates of intelligence are coming and going as freely and incessantly as the ultimates we call atoms of matter. This is but re-stating what I have already affirmed, that man expresses only a civic individuality; that every man is a vast city voicing the opinion of a majority of its citizens. But the tailor never measures the circumference of this wonderful being. He can deal with just so much of its matter as vibrates in harmony with his mortal sense and no more. And his mortal sense is intelligence expressed through certain limited organs.

The point I want to make is this: each organ is necessarily offering a limited expression to a limited comprehension. Increase my comprehension, and I shall find that your intelligence has a wider limit than I dreamed. But in any case our earthly or mortal sense has a boundary it cannot pass; because there is a certain limit at which increased vibration would melt its organ into destruction of form.

Harmony of comprehension is based upon harmony of vibration, therefore so much of my thought as demands vibration outside the mortal limit of my brain, can only express intelligence to so much of your brain as also vibrates outside the limit of a technical physiology. The mysteries of manhood's intelligence are only mysteries to that portion of the organ which is vibrating to an earthly tone. There is a fixed limit to the vibrations that our optic nerve can transmit and record. A movement more rapid must express itself to nerve-matter so played upon by a greater force that both vision stands to the mortal as clairvoyance. Precisely this same law applies to all expression of intelligence through every organ by

which man mortal senses the lower rates of vibration. It is as if we lived in a mighty glacier with ice limiting every expression of our manhood. In a certain direction that glacier has felt the sun's warm ray, whose force has melted the ice into a rippling brook. There is only a difference of vibration between ice and water, yet the life possible on ice must lose much of its expression if placed in water, and would become impossible if more force be added, until the water becomes steam.

But man seems to have powers that compass the infinite whole. He may, as it were, live in the glaciers' eternal cold, where only intelligence that is in harmony with that rate of movement can greet him mind to mind. But his intelligence can also use matter which though evolved from the glacier, can express a higher life and a grander thought. Yet that higher life can only be expressed to intelligence on the same plane. This is practically an impossible conception to the mortal who allows his thought to be bounded by the glacier of earth-life. But when intelligence has once burst the barrier, it perceives that neither ice, water, steam, gas nor ether can refuse it expression, although in each sphere humanity will find the law of harmony limiting its intercourse to its fellows on the same plane.

When we have grasped this truth, our next object should be to determine man's power in each stage of his existence to prepare himself for a higher expression of intelligence. Of course it would not be intelligence for man mortal to take any action that would prove destructive to the form of to-day. In other words, man mortal must find his pathway outward through a development of his present manhood, by learning how to use all the powers that inhere to his earth-life. The savage is to-day distinguished from the man of profound intellect by the slower movement of the atoms of matter in his brain. But the child of civilization may live and die ignorant of the privileges of his inheritance. No matter how material may be the declared limitation of the proud scientist, he is by inheritance in possession of a higher and grander manhood than he claims. But he will never discover this in earth-life unless he can remove the cataract of prejudice that now blinds his vision.

On the other hand, there are many claiming a higher life because, from a supersensitiveness, they can work amidst vibrations impossible to the scientist of to-day. Such persons would do well to remember there may be a volcanic eruption of force to a very small proportion of intelligence, amidst vibrations that stand to mortals as spirit-life. A man may explore an unknown country, and yet exhibit less intelligence than his brothers and sisters who never left the old home. And we know too well that many a clairvoyant, clairaudient and psychometric sensitive evinces far less intelligence and true knowledge than students who live and think within the range of mortal life.

If we have grasped the thought that man is a nationality of intelligences dwelling amidst surroundings which compass from ocean level to mountain summit, we can prove by observation that this man-nation can utilize every climate by leaving its citizens free to adapt themselves to any locality they choose.

The intelligences in man can, without destroying his mortal form, exhibit powers of acclimatization of which we do not yet dream. Man has, as it were, lived on the seashore through all the centuries; or in swampy levels, whose conditions have forced contention, competition, bigotry, superstition and bloodshed, because the whole atmosphere is full of a malarial selfishness. So we are now face to face with the practical question, "How far can we in earth-life cultivate man's higher faculties?" That is to say, "How far can we develop the spirit-powers in man mortal?" When we use intelligence through matter at a very increased rate of vibration, we call it "spirit"; by which we mean that intelligence is at work outside the scope of our five senses. It is very important that we mark the philosophical truth that there is no necessary relation between an increased rate of vibration and a higher manhood. So sitting for development, even if successfully practiced by the twelve hundred millions of mortals, could never raise the human race one inch toward a higher manhood. Mediums can sense rates of vibration the rest of us do not feel; but we all know they do not thereby become better men and women than the average of humanity.

We listen to those whose lecture and talk is from the standpoint of increased vibration of the atoms of matter in their mortal brain; we spend three parts of our admiration in comparing the lecture with what that medium would have said if the mortal brain had continued at level of wash tub and spade. We call the whole world to witness the marvel of spirit-power and the demonstrated fact of spirit-return.

But the world is demanding a higher standard. It sees no special merit in the thought of an inspired brain unless that thought stands superior to the intellectual effort of a normal thinker. Here stands a medium of the average lack of education and culture. Pour the force you call development upon that mortal brain, and out may roll doggerel by the yard and poetic thought by the inch. Yonder reporter catches the words, but his editor tears his hair as he attempts to scan the lines. Is that what you call the education of a higher faculty? If it be the babyhood of a higher life, it should be kept, like other baby efforts, for the nursery and not for the platform.

You know full well that we have a clairvoyance that sees all but the very most important point and there usually fails; a clairaudience that hears only a spirit silence of truth; a

psychometry that gathers facts from the eternal shore, and then mutilates them by imperfect utterance. All these things and results are right if you count them as infant-school exercises; but we have been demanding that they be compared with the college thesis. The baby spirit knows much less than the trained mortal, and his only advantage is in his future possibilities. Yet we proudly present that baby to the public, not as a baby but as a man.

If we have now learned the lesson that development of spirit power may possibly only exhibit spirit ignorance, we are ready for another step. Knowledge always demands a sure foundation. Each step must rest upon the one below.

If some learned professor were to discourse to us to-day upon the higher mathematics, he would find most of us unprepared to profit by his teachings. But there are many amongst us who, watching him at the blackboard, would be fascinated by the beauty of the forms he drew, the ease with which he solved difficult problems, and his gentlemanly demeanor. Yet they would miss the truth he came to teach because they were not ready for it.

The first step toward cultivating a higher manhood is to prepare yourself to receive a new truth. The presentation of an old truth in a new spring has seems to satisfy all the church-goers of the world. And Spiritualists are crystallizing around the one great truth of spirit-return until they are quite contented, or specially interested if they find it wearing some new phase of phenomena.

There is no growth of spirit faculty possible under such conditions of mental stagnation. Growth depends upon accretion; atom added to atom, whether it be of knowledge or of matter. So I assert and reassert that sitting for development may make you a medium, but your becoming a spirit instrument does not necessarily imply that you can teach as profound a truth as that elaborated by the student minds of our men of learning who claim no inspiration. But this should not be so; for the law of vibrations should teach us that higher and higher truths are within the reach of manhood prepared to receive them.

We are full of admiration for the advance made by scientific investigators of to-day, and all unconsciously they point us to the pathway we are seeking. Just as every mortal sense comes into play by the natural process of daily use, so will our higher senses be unconsciously evolved by an advancing manhood, and in no other way. No instructor from the world of spirit could teach your child to read and write as well as it could be done by his mother, or in the schoolhouse on the village green. Our level must be near to that of our teacher if we are to profit by his thought.

Theoretically the astronomer should be the first to benefit by the higher astronomy. The mathematician should most readily grasp a new truth in higher mathematics, and the trained philosophical mind should be best prepared to receive an advanced thought. I say theoretically, because a terrible obstacle intervenes, and that is the present scientific ignorance and prejudice which would deny the possibility of any development of man's higher faculties through the law of vibrations.

A new truth is brought by one who knows to one who does not know it. And if ignorance and prejudice refuse to listen, the new truth remains silent. Nevertheless the profitable cultivation of man's spirit faculties in earth-life depends upon and demands the utmost development of his normal powers.

I do not mean that a far-sighted man is nearer to clairvoyance than one who is short-sighted. Nor do I mean that a keen ear means a coming clairaudience. That would be nonsense. But I do assert that the use of your mental faculties through your mortal brain to their fullest extent prepares that brain to receive higher truth by increasing its rate of vibration.

Now what does this mean to the Spiritualist? He cannot reach the professor and philosopher of to-day who stand enmeshed in public esteem and admiration. So his work must be to raise to the philosopher and professor of the future. So that the child grows up in the light and knowledge of spirit-return, and by so much bigotry and prejudice will become impossible to him. Then see that he realizes the existence of spirit faculties as his birthright; but at the same time teach him that those spirit faculties will be of little value to himself or the world until he has cultivated his mental faculties to their utmost extent.

Let science make him a lover of fact; through philosophy mold him into a worshiper of truth; and you are thereby developing the soul-power of that young Spiritualist most gloriously, for you render it certain that every development he may achieve of a higher or spirit-faculty will become a blessing both to himself and the world. So there is no miracle about it. It is only progress continued far beyond its present limit. You lay one brick at a time, with the work of a corner or an arch misshaped by prejudice, and the result shall be a spiritual temple fit for the indwelling of an immortal soul.

Make haste slowly, my brother and my sister. By so much as you fill the world with test-hunting Spiritualists, by so much as you proudly exhibit imperfect phenomena to a skeptical world, by just so much you stop the progress of the good work. We have been talking of scientific prejudice. But the prejudice and ignorance existing to-day amongst Spiritualists is a fearful reality that betokens how little we have yet learned to develop and cultivate our higher manhood.

Nature is holding supernal privileges in her right hand as a gift to her spiritualistic child who shall develop his higher faculties by his own independent labor. The Spiritualist of to-day has somehow got the idea that development means sitting still with some one, else to do the work. That man who develops mediumship, but it will never develop spirit manhood, either in this life or any other.

And there will be no real blessing born of Modern Spiritualism for mortals until every believer shall realize that all true progress must be based on his own effort, and that the cultivation of his spirit faculties must follow the development of his mortal manhood.

ALL SORTS OF PARAGRAPHS.

NOON !

Roll summer, and at noon ; from a waste bed
Convulvulus, musk-mallow, poppies, spread
The triumph of the sunshine overlead.

Blue on the shimmering ash trees lies the heat ;
It twinkles on the hedgerows. The young peasant
Sleeps, warm in golden verdure, at his feet.

The pale, sweet grasses of the hayfield blink ;
The heath-moors, as the bees of honey drink,
Suck the deep bosom of the day. To thirl

Of all that beauty, by the light defined,
None share my vision ! Sharp on my mind
Presses the sorrow ; fern and flower are Wind.

Michael Field.

A farmer prepares soft wood fence posts as follows: Take boiled linseed oil and stir in pulverized charcoal to the consistency of paint. Put a coat of this over the timber to preserve it from rotting.

Every now and then a man's mind is stretched
new idea or sensation, and never shrinks back to
former dimensions. — O. W. Holmes.

12mo, cloth, pp. 72. Price 50 cents; postage free.

The Parker Tomb Fund.

A Fund is now being raised by the friends and admirers of Theodore Parker, to improve the condition of his tomb in the Old Protestant Cemetery, Florence, Italy. It is proposed, among other things, to place upon the monument a bust or medallion of the great reformer. The nature and extent of the improvements that will be made will depend upon the amount of money that is collected. The list of subscribers to date are as follows:

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