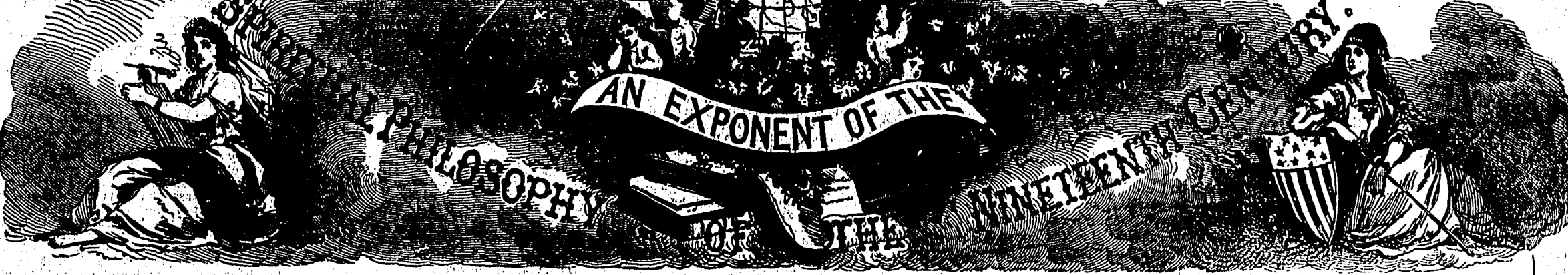


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Free Thought.

A Warning from East to West, or Every-Day Spiritualism in India.

BY CHARLES DAWBARN,
Delivered in Worcester, Mass., Nov. 29th, 1886.
(Reported for the Banner of Light.)

When the Scriptures of India were discovered and translated it seemed to many as if the past were about to give up its religious secrets, and show to the nineteenth century how man of the long ago had climbed heavenward. But apart from the fact that all religious practices have ever fallen away from the high standard of its founder, we had to learn that the old sacred writings are so worded as to have a hidden meaning—a truth for the priest and his neophyte, but a falsehood for the great multitude. There never was a period when man did not try to rule over his fellow-man, and to maintain and perpetuate his power to the best of his ability. Superior knowledge has always been a source of power, and as a natural result we find the ruling class not only striving for an increase of knowledge, but using every effort to keep those over whom it ruled in gross ignorance. If knowledge bring with it power, ignorance as surely is the mother of superstition; and superstition means a causeless fear of injury by some being who either does not exist or whose power is over-rated. The ruling class in India seems to have early discerned the potency of superstition, and to have made it the foundation of its power over what the Sacred Books call the "vulgar herd."

So we should understand, as a matter of fact, that these ancient Scriptures have for their basis just such teachings in the name of Deity as will keep the people obedient to the priests of that God. The first thought of infant manhood always is that there is necessarily an Almighty Creator of everything; and that in his wisdom he has chosen some to rule and others to serve. It is therefore natural to find these old Scriptures of the Hindu teaching that "God produced the priest from his mouth, the king from his arm, the merchant from his thigh, and the slave from his foot."

We are told that the Brahmins ruled the people through agents for many centuries. At last by combining with the people against the tyranny, the agents deposed the priests, and made themselves kings. But the kings soon found it best to make a compact with the priest, who then preached the divine right of the king, and in return was protected and supported by the crown. In this lecture I have little to say about either king or people, but shall find a subject of entrancing interest in the belief and practices of the Brahman priesthood.

We are all aware that society in India has been molded into religious "castes," from which there is no escape save by a fall into one yet lower. Thus the priest has no fear of intrusion into his ranks by any man of a lower caste; and the teachings by which his superior knowledge can be maintained are confined with ease to his own order. Our interest as American citizens is in the nature of these teachings, and their results to society as a whole, as well as to the members of the Brahman caste.

Brahmins class themselves as the sept of the "Pitris," which is Sanscrit for spirits, or ancestral shades; and we thus discover that the priests of this, the most ancient organized religion, call themselves "Spiritualists." But we must not look to the "Holy Vedas" for information as to their belief, since those were the scriptures for the common people. Fortunately we now have access to a work written for the Brahman and called the "Agrachouda Pariksha." The book is divided into four parts, which treat, 1st, of the attributes of God; 2d, concerning the world; 3d, of the human soul; 4th, the relations of souls to each other, and the modes of exorcism by which spirits may be induced to manifest and teach everlasting truth. From this book and the teachings of Max Müller, with incidents narrated by Jaccolot, Chief-Justice of the French East Indies, have been gathered the material for the first part of this lecture.

The birth of a Brahman boy is marked by various ceremonies that are not only intended to show his high caste, but also to act as a means of identification should it be necessary. The priesthood has ever recognized the importance of impressing the imagination, hence the formal ceremonies that mark the Brahman's life stage by stage. But though Brahmanism means a priesthood chosen by the true God, it does not follow that every Brahman accepts a public vocation. He may, if he choose, live an active business life and accumulate wealth or bear public honors; but his responsibility to his caste demands daily obedience to religious forms and gives him spiritual privileges unknown to those of lower rank.

At the age of nine he commences his religious life, and is placed under the care of a teacher called a "Guru"; and it is now that his novitiate commences. The special ceremony is called "Oupanyasana"; and we are told the Pourohita or temple priest specially invokes the spirits of that father's ancestors to be present at the ceremony. A very interesting portion of the ceremony is when we are told, a journey by the married women of the company to the neighboring forest, where, having found a nest of white ants, they all put pots with the earth as prepared by those insects. Having returned to the other guests, ten different kinds of seeds are planted in these pots, which are watered from a sacred tank. The Pourohita then places the pots together, and, bowing them, with a white cloth, evokes the spirits and asks them to

manifest their power. As he utters his formula the cloth is seen to be gradually raised, and when it is removed by the Pourohita ten shrubs appear, bearing flowers and fruits each after its kind. We are thus faced to face with the spiritual phenomena of Brahmanism, and by studying the details of the daily training of that boy we shall find them all directed to his development as a medium for Brahman spirits.

The lad is now called a Brahmatchery, and his Guru, or teacher, must be over sixty years of age. His first lesson to the boy is, "Know that the shades of your ancestors in an aerial form will attend you in your studies, and will reveal to you hereafter, if you are worthy, the grand secret of life." Always bear in mind that what you now learn should never be revealed to the vulgar herd. The boy is then clothed with a sacred grille, and all present say, as they separate, "The child is dead, the man is born."

At about sixteen or eighteen years of age the Brahmatchery marries, but continues with his Guru; and he is not yet taught any occult science, for until his initiation he is not deemed worthy. But he cannot become a candidate for initiation until he has paid the debt of his ancestors by becoming the father of a son; and in addition his Guru must testify to his worth.

There are three degrees of initiation, and the second and third each require twenty years of constant effort and preparation; so the Brahman is sixty years old before he reaches the third degree. If elected to the Supreme Council, he cannot become its head till he is eighty years old; up to which hour he must have lived a life of chastity from his first initiation. But after his election, and before assuming office, he must prove his manhood by becoming the father of a son, whose mother must be a virgin from the temple, selected for him by the council. The child is placed in a basket, and carried to the river. If it float to shore, it is taken back to the temple, and brought up as having passed through every degree of initiation; but if it float down the stream, the child is given to the Pariah, and brought up an outcast, or wretch below all caste.

We will now return to the Brahmatchery and watch his career. Remember he is a Brahman by birth and a member of the sacred caste, although he may never prove worthy of initiation. He is responsible for avoiding pollution which would drive him from his caste; but he knows no secret and has nothing of value to hide from the "vulgar herd." We have abundant means of studying the training to which the Brahmatchery is subjected by his Guru; and to the mere scientist it must seem tedious and objectless. But to the Spiritualist all its plans, for we see it is simply a thorough course of development. The boy comes of a race of mediums, who have been such for a thousand generations. So though some may fall of development, and thus never reach the first degree, the majority become truly sensitive.

At last comes the hour when the Brahmatchery we are watching is initiated into the first degree of priesthood. He now has a choice of career open before him. He can live as a Grihasta, or head of a family. He may become a Pourohita, or priest in service of the Pagoda, who attends to all ceremonies amongst the people; or he may become a fakir, sworn to chastity, and devoted to the production of occult phenomena, thereby strengthening the hold of the priesthood upon the nation. If he choose the life of a Grihasta, his daily religious duties are very elaborate, and all directed to keep his attention concentrated on the spirit-world. His life is regulated so as to hold every passion in check, save perhaps pride of caste. In all these exercises he is disciplining his body and preparing himself for spirit phenomena. At last he enters a room in his house, kept sacred, where, we are told, he communes with the souls of his ancestors, and is permitted to listen and hear them converse with one another. As this seems to be a privilege of every Grihasta, we may assume that the training is such as to show if this power inheres to the novice, and if not, the Brahmatchery is never allowed to take the first degree.

The initiate who chose to become a Pourohita—a priest in direct service of the Pagoda—is trained to a different development, of which we got a glimpse in that ceremony of the seeds planted in the ten pots. But there is a third class composed of men of fanatical mind, who are willing to sacrifice everything that seems to make life worth living; men who consider the body as a beast of burden, to be whipped, goaded and tortured into complete subjection. These men become fakirs, and are mediums through whom spirits can sometimes exercise powers that—in our opinion—it is far better for mortals they should not possess. These are the men who offer to the world those proofs of spirit-power which stand to the ignorant as holy miracles, and in every age have been used to demonstrate the divine origin of a priest-taught religion. These are the men who were expelled from England a few years ago, because their self-inflicted wounds, although wonderfully healed by touch, were deemed barbarous realities not to be tolerated by a civilized people. And these are the men who, as we shall presently see, are daily producing our own vaunted physical phenomena.

In the second ten years of the first degree, the candidate is no longer his own master. His whole time is devoted to prayers, fastings and mortifications which shall modify his physical organism. Even his nights are no longer his own. He eats but once a day, and then it is a handful of rice at sundown. No wonder that few Brahmins ever arrive at the second degree of initiation. The Grihasta and the Pourohita usually remain so through life. We see it is a question of development, and when the time of a candidate's sensitiveness is

reached he can climb no higher in the priesthood. Spiritualists understand this, since we know that a spirit is limited to the use of powers that inhere to his medium's organism.

At this point the Agrachouda Pariksha falls us, for the formulas and evocations of these higher degrees are never committed to writing, and are taught only in the underground crypts of the pagoda. We only know that Brahmins of the second and third degrees claim that time and space do not limit their power, and that they have command over life and death. However much of this be exaggeration, we shall find the fakirs of the first degree working such marvels that greater wonders may well be outwrought by their superiors in occult science. But we will now glance at the every day phenomena which seem to be at the command of these fakirs.

A learned Frenchman, Jaccolot, for many years Chief-Justice of the French East Indies, has made a recent study of some of these phenomena, and has written a work, with an interesting chapter or two upon his personal experience with fakirs. It is amusing to note the terror of our author lest he should be accused of over-belief, and be snubbed by his scientific brethren; but he gives us to understand there are only two possible explanations of what he has seen. One is that he was hallucinated; and the other that the phenomena are just what they purport to be. As we are interested in what the learned Judge saw, and not at all in his inferences or opinions, we will accept his testimony as to facts, and not the less that he denies all belief in Spiritualism.

The Judge is careful to draw a marked line between the fakir and our medium; for he points out that the fakir needs no confederate nor assistant—operates wherever you desire—if he needs anything asks you to furnish it, and has absolutely nothing in his possession but a small wand with seven knots, and a whistle tied to his hair, for he wears only a fragment of linen for decency's sake, and has no pockets. He will repeat an experiment as many times as you desire; and never asks any pay for his services, though he accepts presents for his pagoda. These are weighty differences, but if we find the phenomena the same they may only point to a more advanced development than is attained by our mediums.

The first experiment the Judge had with a fakir was very perplexing to that worthy scientist. The fakir sat down on the stone pavement in the Judge's court yard, placing his seven-knotted stick between his crossed legs. The Judge's servant was sent to bring seven pots of earth, seven bamboo sticks, and seven leaves from any tree whatever. They were placed six feet from the fakir, who told the servant to plant a stick in each pot, and to put on each stick a leaf with a hole in its centre. Of course the leaves dropped down, and rested on the earth in the pots. The fakir commenced his invocations, and in fifteen minutes the leaves began to move slowly up and down the sticks. The fakir had demanded no conditions, so the Judge, after standing between the pots and the fakir without effect, emptied the earth into seven goblets, and himself arranged new sticks and other leaves. But the experiment did not check the movement. Then Jaccolot took a small bag of type, and taking them at random called the letter, thus avoiding the mind-reading he suspected. At certain letters the leaves rose and fell, till he had this sentence in French: "Alban Brunier died at Bourg-en-bresse (Ain) Jan. 3d, 1856." The Judge says the blood rushed to his head with astonishment, for every word was correct.

Of course I can only select an incident here and there in these experiments, for my theme is the broad one of Spiritualism in India, and not its mere outward expression in phenomena. The Judge sees a huge bronze vase full of water, beyond the power of two strong men to move, advance and go back, and swing from side to side—every motion at his own mental request—while a shower of raps upon the vase kept time to a music box which the Judge set going. The fakir sat motionless several feet from the vase. These phenomena lasted three hours, and took place out of doors in the broad daylight. Our Judge saw that fakir rise in the air to a height measured against the wall and remain eight minutes so suspended. On another occasion the fakir took a handful of feathers of ornamental birds from a vase and threw them in the air, where they remained suspended till he left the premises. Away near by in a garden they could see a man drawing water from a well. The fakir stretched out his hands, and the rope refused to move in the pulley. The poor slave shrieked that it was bewitched, when his voice died away into a moan. The fakir dropped his hands, and the enchantment ceased. On another occasion the fakir brought a bag of sand, which he spread in a flat surface upon the floor. The Judge's penol was laid upon it, and the fakir as usual sat back several feet. Presently the penol rose up and wrote answers to the Judge's mental questions, stating facts of which the Judge was ignorant.

I will now speak briefly of apparitions the Judge witnessed, and I must then refer you to the works in your libraries if you want to study more of these Hindu phenomena.

The Judge took this same fakir one night up into the seventh story of a palace at Benares, which was placed at his disposal by an Indian prince. It was very accessible by a ladder, which the Judge raised after they ascended. The room was brilliantly lighted. In the centre was a small furnace, on which the fakir threw a handful of perfumed powder kept for that purpose in the room. Soon after the fakir sat down in a corner, the Judge saw the smoke from the furnace form into a luminous cloud, and from it hands appeared and disappeared.

Presently one left the cloud, and coming to him pressed his outstretched hand, then passing to a bouquet of flowers, broke off one and brought it to the astonished scientist. Words appeared written in Sanscrit on this cloud, and traced by this wonderful hand. The Judge copied two sentences. "I have clothed myself with a fluid body," was one; another was, "You will attain happiness when you lay aside this perishable body."

At last another cloud more opaque and of brighter color formed, and presently assumed the human form of an aged Brahmanical priest. Kneeling by that little furnace the spectre first fed the fire with the perfumed powder, and then coming to the Judge held out its withered hands, which he found warm and life-like. "Are you really a former inhabitant of the earth?" asked Jaccolot. The Sanscrit word meaning "yes" appeared in letters of fire on the old man's bosom. "Will you leave me something in token of your visit?" asked the Judge. The figure broke three strands from the triple cord around his waist, gave them to Jaccolot, and then faded away.

Such are the every-day experiences of phenomena in India; and let us remember such they have been for thousands of years. Let us now take a glimpse at the conditions of human life in that country, that we may presently examine intelligently the teachings and influence of Spiritualism upon the millions of its population.

We find a fixed system of caste from which a man may easily fall, but can never rise above his birth-rank. The priest towers haughtily above all. Kings have for ages rendered homage and support to the Brahman priesthood. But the king has ground the peasant down into a degradation that seems to have crushed out manhood; for history is silent as to any blow he has ever dared to strike for his own rights and against such slavery. The fighters have always been of a caste with whom even a king might associate, and no contest has had interest for the poor peasant, as it could at most only change his landlord. The king and his nobles have claimed the land, and all the slavery they have desired has been the privilege of charging rent for the use of their broad acres. Wherever you find heat and moisture the soil is productive, so of course wealth accumulates; but wealth is what is left after life is supported, and the landlords have taken all that in the name of rent. So there is plenty of riches there, but a few thousands have all and dazzle the world with huge fortunes, whilst a single bad season leaves a million or two to die of hunger. And even when Nature is most bountiful they never have enough left for the decencies of life.

So Hindostan is to-day the land of the most hopeless poverty the sun shines upon. Poverty means ignorance, and ignorance means superstition; so when the soil, ill-polluted for a thousand generations, breeds cholera and deadly fever, the people believe the priests, who declare it is the will of heaven.

Remember that the priest is sworn that not one of the truths he teaches to his son shall be whispered to the "vulgar herd," as his scriptures call the people. Remember this, and you will expect and find as a matter of course belief in magic and the evil eye. If the peasant have a child or a wife sick, or his crop be eaten by insects, he lays it to the malice of some wicked spirit set to work by a foe, and immediately gives his last mite to some priest to drive the evil one away. He knows nothing of the laws of health, and though he belongs to the most abstemious race in the world he has never even been taught the necessity of pure water. In all probability you will find the village pool reeking with filth, and used both for bathing and drinking by every inhabitant. You will find that peasant scratching the soil just as his ancestors have done it for thousands of years. He must labor without ceasing or he starves; and totally without education he lives his life of wretchedness and woe, whilst even his death is cursed by horrid fears of the future. For he listens to the fakir, and when he sees such marvels as we have just seen nothing they are miracles to him, proving that God is talking to him through these holy men and commanding him to obey.

How do you like this picture of the lives these millions lead in a land where Spiritualism has ruled for thousands of years? Don't you think we ought to find important lessons somewhere amongst this mass of horrible facts? Let us try a few figures.

India has for ages been densely inhabited. To-day it supports two hundred and fifty millions; but we will assume an average of one hundred millions of these poor degraded wretches. Then remember there are at least three generations to a century; so we have three hundred millions of these wretches becoming spirits every hundred years, which means three thousand millions in a thousand years. Some writers claim a history of twenty thousand years for India, but if we call it only five thousand years we have fifteen thousand millions of spirits of low caste, or enough to people twelve worlds filled as ours is to-day.

These spirits have gone to the next life with horrible experiences of unjust and unnecessary earth suffering. Our mediums teach that progressed spirits are always eagerly working for mortals. You and I demand what have these fifteen thousand millions of spirits done for their native land? If nothing, why have they done nothing? The answer must be, either that they have not progressed in all these years, or else that some law of Nature has proved an obstacle they could not overcome. Yet India has been ruled by Brahman spirits through all these ages. There must be a truth somewhere that will solve this dreadful mystery. Do

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Before the oncoming light of Truth, Creeds tremble, Ignorance dies, Error decays, and Humanity rises to its proper sphere of knowledge.—Spirit John Pierpont.

The Soul's Immortality.

All men hope that life is to continue, and universally under more favoring conditions and with improving environments. The more we know and higher we rise, the stronger is our desire for a continuance of the life which brings such deep satisfactions. The immortality of the soul is not to be compared with any conception we could form of the immortality of mere physical existence. Chancellor Sims some time since preached a thoughtful discourse on the immortality of the soul in the Fourth Presbyterian Church of Syracuse, N. Y., in which he illustrated his theme by saying that the man who plants an orchard knows that when a tree has once blossomed and borne fruit, it will repeat itself, finally die, and thus end its existence; but suppose he had one tree which bore, now a crop of toys, now of musical instruments, now of beautiful art products, now of philosophy, and then died; he would wonder what its future would be, and fear that there was nothing which it might not have borne, had it lived on. So, said he, a human life has its childhood, when it bears its crop of toys; its youth, full of dreams and plans; then the rich fruition of manhood. We wonder what it would not accomplish if death did not cut short its existence.

Undertaking to establish immortal life by proofs from nature alone, he mentioned several whippers of hope that came to us. One comes from sleep, death's mighty counterfeit rehearsal. What, he inquired, would we think was happening to a person falling asleep? But we have seen the waking. We know that sleep has an end, and that refreshment and renewal come with awakening. Night, again, brings with it darkness and gloom, but it is followed by morning, when every leaf and blossom glitters with the dew. Winter gives way to spring. All these, said the Chancellor, are hints, not arguments, from nature. What, he asked, would be thought of a father who gave such hints to his children only to disappoint them? And what, he continued, do the laws of science teach us on this subject? Take a piece of iron, or a grain of sand, and personally try by all your possible force to crush and destroy it. It defies all your efforts. And shall a lifeless, unreasoning grain of sand, he asked, laugh at a human soul and live on while the soul dies? What is true of matter is true also of force or energy. The energy of the sun's rays, which operated in producing the luxuriant vegetation of the carboniferous age, now reappears through the agency of coal in the gas which we use. The mass of the mountains could not annihilate that light or that warmth.

And if the smaller and less important works of creation do not perish, argues the Chancellor, shall God's greatest work, the human soul, die? God never created a desire in any of his creatures without providing the means to satisfy it. The autumn comes, and the birds prepare for flight to the South. God would not tantalize a bird by giving it a desire for a warmer climate, and then disappoint it by sending it to a land of ice and snow. "Ye are of more value than many sparrows," said Jesus. Man is the only being that buries its dead. The City of the Dead, separated as it is from the bustle and traffic of the world, evidences a belief in a life after this. The longing of the soul for rest, and continued life, is God-implanted; and will he not satisfy that longing? We find in ourselves something that does not perish as the body does. We cannot positively describe the composition or substance of the soul, any more than we can that of electricity, and yet no one will venture to deny the existence of a certain force which is called electricity. If death leaves memory, love, reason and hope unharmed, it cannot be a very serious thing to die. What would we think of an artist who destroyed his finest work of art, and carefully preserved the unfinished and hasty sketches? Would God destroy his masterpiece, and leave his minor creations, like the sand and material force, to continue forever?

The argument is a plain one, and fits close. So far as it goes it is well; would that it were even more immediately and impressively convincing. But it fails to be satisfying, however comforting and encouraging it may be. What humanity craves is absolute proof of the existence of exalted beings. "And, as Chancellor Sims rightly argues, the creation of the desire implies of necessity a provision for its satisfaction."

tion. What mankind has so steadily desired to know it now possesses the full proof of. Modern Spiritualism has brought to it a revelation that contains no doubts and leaves no room for dispute. It is made clear that there is a continuous life after the spirit of man leaves this physical body. Through nature and her laws Spiritualism gives positive knowledge rather than mere hints. Faith is no wise impaired thereby, but strengthened all the more. It now has a firm basis to rest upon. It builds higher and broader than it ever did before. And religion grows religious in place of remaining a mere commodity to be distributed from an ecclesiastical dispensary.

Taxing Church Property.

In an admirable article on the "Misgovernment of Great Cities," in the *Popular Science Monthly* for January, the writer touches on the exemption of certain property from the payment of its share of the public burdens, and refers particularly to the elaborate and costly church edifices which are so prominent a feature of every large city. The writer does not presume to offer any opposition to the exemption of buildings used for public worship so far as it applies to modest structures of reasonable value, because he thinks it is in accordance with the traditions of our people, and in harmony with the principles on which our State and national governments are founded. But he thinks it is clear that "the magnificent structures which abound in all our large cities cannot claim a place in this category." He regards it, and rightly, as scarcely a proper use of language to denominate them houses of public worship. Though, as he says, they are nominally open to the public, still their appointments, their furnishings, the style of their services, their practically reserved seats, the restriction as to the time of admission of any except pew-holders, and the accommodations provided for the public, all warrant the statement that they are really the private religious club-houses of wealthy parishioners, whose right to erect and maintain and enjoy them is unquestionable, but whose right to do all this at the public expense is by no means so apparent.

It is urged further, that these institutions share in all the benefits of the city government, are guarded by its police, protected by its fire department, approached by streets lighted, cleaned and paved at its expense, and in case of their unlawful destruction, the municipality would be called upon to respond in damages for their full value—all this for the accommodation of a small fraction of the people! The writer is of opinion that the value of these structures, or at least so much of it as exceeds a certain reasonable limit, should be taxable. He implicitly allows that no principle is more firmly imbedded in our political system than that the support of religious worship and institutions shall be entirely voluntary; but he declares that the exemption of this class of property from taxation violates the principle, since it is a forced contribution on the entire community to the extent of the exemption, and he holds it to be the less defensible because the exemption favors that portion of the community that could meet its obligations most easily.

The writer's view of the matter is that if a direct tax were proposed for the maintenance of the churches, it could not find support in any quarter. No community in the land would consent that either the State or the municipality should levy any direct tax to be appropriated for the support of religious services or institutions. And he confesses himself utterly unable to understand why it is the less objectionable because it takes the form of special exemption from a common liability. The case is well put above. There is no escaping the short but stringent logic contained in the statement. The more the people give it their attention and serious thought, the more do they become persuaded that the existing practice is wrong, because it is the toleration of an acknowledged and a growing violation of their constitutional rights. In this country, at least, the burdens are either to be equally borne or else those who want to be at the top must lift the weight of the responsibilities. Until the day comes when an upper class is universally recognized, the common principle of justice is to be insisted on without any exemption.

Woman in the State.

The Christmas discourse of Rev. Heber Newton of New York was upon "Woman in her Relation to the State," and it was pronounced a bold and unconventional pulpit utterance even by a man not wholly unused to making such to his Sunday hearers. He thought it strange that a thousand years after the Hebrew psalmist celebrated, in a song that still stirs the blood and the heart even of a stranger race in a land then undreamed of, the achievements of Deborah in leading her people out of bondage and inculcating wise laws, woman's fitness for public life is yet questioned. He regarded the State as more than an organization of human society for the protection of life and property. It is not the government alone. It includes all the functions that do not belong to the other two great social institutions, the family and the church. Into this wider sphere of life women are already entering, and are destined in the near future to occupy a larger place.

The functions of citizenship, he said, include much more than politics as commonly understood. In fact, the franchise is not absolutely essential to active citizenship. A man has but one vote legally, but the active expression and dissemination of his opinion may influence hundreds of votes. It is the power of opinion that controls and directs the power of the ballot. Still, he did not hesitate to express his emphatic conviction, not merely that woman is entitled to franchise, but that the logical justice of American citizenship, as of Christian justice and morality, is certain to put the ballot in the hands of woman. It will not be done suddenly, but by the natural, gradual, and slow development of public opinion. Two women on a school board no more indicate a revolution in this respect than two swallows betoken summer's advent.

These advanced and liberal views on the right of woman to the exercise of the elective franchise equally with man, do credit and honor to the one who, standing in the place he does, so fearlessly utters them. They are especially timely, too, coming from such a quarter. There are many others who already feel the dawning influence of these views, but do not feel quite ready to give them utterance, but to whom the present courageous expression of them will come as a stimulating and strengthening help. And thus the good work of emancipation goes forward, the seed being all the time sown in good ground where it is sure to bear fruit many fold. Public opinion is the strong cleid to be persistently assailed on this vital subject which belongs to the higher civilization.

A Distinguished Party at Materializing Seances.

A personal friend of ours who we consider entirely reliable has furnished us with facts in the materialization line which to some may be considered of an extraordinary nature, but to experienced Spiritualists are known to be of frequent occurrence. It seems from the information given us that two seances were held, at which several prominent individuals were present, the details of which are given below:

An intelligent and interesting group of six ladies and ten gentlemen met at Mrs. H. V. Ross's seance room in this city on the afternoon of Dec. 27th. Among them were Prof. Alfred R. Wallace of England, Prof. William James of Harvard College, Dr. James R. Nichols of Haverhill, Rev. M. J. Savage of Boston, and E. A. Brackett of Winchester. Both before and after the seance, the cabinet—which was formed by curtains being suspended across a corner of the room, backed by solid walls—was carefully examined, and the room above and cellar below were thoroughly inspected without finding anything that could in the slightest degree reflect upon the honesty of the medium. The folding doors near the cabinet, which are always closed during seances, were, at the request of Prof. James, thrown open, and Prof. Wallace allowed to take his seat in the rear room near the doors, thus bringing the cabinet under careful inspection during the whole of the seance—a precaution, however, which would seem to be entirely useless to any one who had carefully studied the construction of the house. Prof. Wallace remained there through the seance, except when called by the forms.

Early in the seance a very interesting female form came from the cabinet and went to him, where he sat, claiming (as understood) to be a materialized spirit, who came to him some years ago in London. The bearing of Prof. Wallace was admirable throughout the seance, showing that he fully understood the conditions necessary to insure satisfactory results.

As a rule those that appeared were well materialized; but it was evident from the beginning that the positive and skeptical character of a majority of the audience would interfere somewhat with the success of the manifestations, which proved to be the case, as the spirits did not show the strength and intelligence usually observed at Mrs. Ross's seances. A female form came across the room to Mr. E. A. Brackett, who rose and greeted her, and returned to the cabinet with her, where another beautiful form welcomed him. After conversing with them a short time he called Prof. Wallace, who shook hands with them, greeted them with kindly words, and asked them to step out so that the audience could see them. They consented to do so, and Prof. Wallace walking at their left side, and Mr. Brackett their right, led them to the middle of the room, in full view of all.

While the manifestations as a whole were not up to the average of Mrs. Ross's seances, says our informant, all (especially those who were not familiar with the phenomena, and this was the case with most of the audience) went away greatly interested.

A more successful seance was held at the same place on Tuesday afternoon, Dec. 28th, with only eight persons present—the above-named five gentlemen and three ladies. The same form that came to Prof. Wallace on Monday came again, giving her name, and relating incidents which led to a more complete recognition.

An elderly man, with white hair and beard, and finely materialized form, was at once recognized by Prof. W. as a relative of his whose demise took place in Australia. Several others came to him who were identified.

A female who passed away during confinement came to Mr. and Mrs. Brackett, bearing an infant in her arms. All were allowed to see and touch it, and Mr. Brackett's little daughter was permitted to take the baby in her arms.

Mr. Brackett's niece, Bertha, came; she was quite strong, and passed around the room, vivaciously greeting all in her characteristically pleasant way. Mr. B. said, "You are not quite as tall as you are at some other seances." She replied, "I come here just as I am in spirit-life; in my feelings and actions I am, and always expect to be, a child." The appearance of Bertha attracted much attention. She is a most singular embodiment of youthful beauty and child-like affection.

A strong Indian, six feet tall, held possession of the seance for a long time, and finally Mr. Ross asked him if he had not better retire and allow other spirits to present themselves. He at once disappeared within the cabinet, but instantly returned, leading Bertha to Mr. Brackett with an expression upon his face plainly showing that, having complied with the request, he felt that he merited the privilege of staying out a little longer. Taking Mr. B.'s little daughter on his arm, he danced around the room with her, evidently intending to improve his opportunity and to attract his share of attention. While this was taking place, Mr. Brackett was standing by the cabinet talking with Bertha, when Mr. Savage came up and desired to again shake hands with her. She evidently was attracted toward him, and the child-like tenderness with which she greeted him will doubtless long hold a place in his memory—at least we hope so.

At one time, while a slender girlish form stood in front of the cabinet, the curtains being held aside by invisible hands, a strong light was thrown upon it, showing a beautiful face with dark, expressive eyes, and every feature perfect as if chiseled in marble. During the seance a number of children came. One called the little girl, and they played with a doll and chatted together for some time.

Dr. Nichols was repeatedly called to the cabinet. He recognized several forms, one of whom dematerialized in full view. All present, in fact, received more or less attention from the spirit visitants, and it was evident from what they said and the interest they took in the manifestations, that both Prof. James and Mr. Savage felt they had made considerable progress in their investigation of this important subject.

Prof. Wallace said he was not only pleased, but astonished; that nowhere in Europe had he seen anything to compare with what he had witnessed, and that Boston appeared to be the home and centre of these manifestations.

Our contemporary, *The Aroostook Herald*, of Presque Isle, Me., is a live sheet, and deserves a large circulation. Bro. Joseph B. Hall has been in the editorial harness many years, and has always wielded the pen with marked ability, which accounts for the brightness of the *Herald*.

Read the announcement made by J. Wm. Fletcher on our fifth page.

The Maine Medical Law.

We are glad to note that *The Eastern Star*, published in Glenburn, Me., takes up the slogan of Medical Freedom which our correspondents from that State have already raised in the *Banner's* columns. Truly—as set forth in the *Star*—"it is the way of all dying institutions that for their perpetuation the strong arm of physical law" is sought to be applied by their votaries to the putting down of the disciples of the new. Old Allopathy is having a death-chill all over the country, hence the activity of the M. D.s, and their efforts to revive their sinking deity with a strong hypodermic injection of re-vivifying "legal protection." The *Banner* has been for a long time urging the friends of liberty of conscience and right of choice in medical matters, in all parts of the Union, to meet with earnest opposition the machinations of these diploma-holders: *The Star's* paragraph in the same direction will prove good reading in other States beside that wherein it is printed:

"Send in those 'remonstrance petitions' at once well filled. The 'Regulars' are circulating a petition in favor of passing the bill. Take your team and go to work. Heavens! have we got to submit to such an accursed medical monopoly? *The plot thickens.* In near the words of Spartacus to the Gladiators: 'Will ye stand here like fat oxen waiting for the butcher's knife?'"

The Andover Trial.

As briefly mentioned in last week's issue, the hearing of the charges against the Andover professors began in Boston on Tuesday, Dec. 28th. The counsel for complainants were Judge Hoar, Judge French and A. W. Wellman; for the professors there were Charles T. Russell, formerly on the Board of Visitors; Prof. Baldwin of Yale, ex-Gov. Gaston and Prof. T. W. Dwight of New York. The Board of Visitors decided to take up Prof. Smyth's case first, and Judge French put in as further evidence an *Andover Review* editorial and Prof. Smyth's address at the meeting of the American Board at Des Moines. It was agreed by complainants to accept the suggestion of the professors and put in the whole book, "Progressive Orthodoxy," so as to get its entire scope. The battle royal was then commenced by Prof. Dwight in defense of Prof. Smyth, and the bigots who have attacked that gentleman and his conferees must have winced under his eloquent and trenchant arraignment, and that of ex-Gov. Gaston and others later on. The trial ended on Monday, Jan. 3d—the other Professors appearing also as respondents. At time of our going to press the result has not been made public, and it is understood that a considerable period must elapse before a decision is reached, as all the matter will be put in print.

The Mission of Mediumship.

Spiritualists are rapidly attaining to a full realization of the true mission of mediumship, and of the duty they owe to those who are employed as instruments of the spirit-world to make known to mortals the vast arcana of the life beyond. "We want," says the *Golden Gate*, to see "mediumship lifted out of the rut, and this can be brought about, not by denouncing mediums for their faults and weaknesses, but by kindly helping them to a truer understanding of the sacred nature of their gifts. They should be encouraged in all honesty and purity of purpose, and made to feel that any communion with the spirit-world for other ends than those of demonstrating the fact of spirit existence and return, or for the spiritual unfoldment, either of spirit or mortal, is to trail their robes in the dust, and lower themselves in the estimation of all good men and angels."

The New York Medical Petition.

We have been requested to ask those persons in New York State who have kindly interested themselves in circulating the petition—the heading of which appeared in our columns some weeks since—for the repeal of the Medical Law of 1880, to use all practicable speed in obtaining signatures; as fast as filled up each petition should be sent at once by the party having it in charge to his or her Senator personally, or they may be sent to some other of the members by mail (registered), with the request that they be placed before the Legislature at the proper time.

Boston Readers.

Who see the *Banner* on Thursdays, should not forget the entertainment prepared by Mrs. W. S. Butler and other friends for the Benefit of Children's Lyceum No. 1, which is to occur on the evening of Thursday, Jan. 6th, at Parker Memorial Hall. Miss Lucretia Webster, Wyzeman Marshall, W. J. Colville and others are engaged for the occasion. There should be a large attendance.

THE SPIRIT MESSAGE DEPARTMENT.—Communications from John D. Williams, of Boston; Charles Allen, of Bridgewater; Abbie Parker, of Parkersburg, Va.; William Lawrence, of Chicago, Ill.; Sarah Blake, of Cambridge; Annie Russell (a friend in Eau Claire, Wis.); James Watson (to those who knew him in Des Moines, Ia.); John Pearson, of New London, Ct.; and Charlotte Neal, of Halifax, N. S., will be found in the Department on our sixth page the present week—also important answers to vital questions concerning mediumship and its exercises, etherealization and its position regarding materialization, etc.

The interesting and eloquent addresses delivered by the guides of Mrs. Cora L. V. Richmond, and published in neat, pamphlet form each week, have reached No. 43, the subject of which is "The Old and the New Dispensations Contrasted and Compared, by the Spirit of Thomas Starr King." This, bearing date of January 1st, was delivered Dec. 26th, and brings the series to its 34th page. They are issued by the Spiritual Publishing Co., Chicago, at \$2.50 per annum.

A New York correspondent speaks in terms of high commendation of Mrs. Rloh, a medium for the practical affairs of this life, located at 220 West Fourteenth street. According to our informant, Mrs. Rloh's mediumship in her speciality is very convincing and satisfactory.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.—Robert A. Thompson, as Corresponding Secretary of the First Association of Spiritualists, would like to open correspondence with speakers for the camp-meeting to be held by that organization in 1887. Address him 8600 Marshall street, that city.

We note in *Hall's Journal of Health* for December an article by Prof. Henry Kiddle on "The Order of Disease," which has the right ring. Glad to see he has committed a campaign in the medical journals.

A Lyceum in London.

Mr. Alfred Kiteon, whose indefatigable labors in behalf of Children's Progressive Lyceums in England have been often referred to in these columns, proposes to the Spiritualists of London the establishment of one in that city. Alluding to this important auxiliary to the cause, he remarks that the Lyceum is to Spiritualism what the Sunday-school is to Christianity; but, unlike it, instead of being founded on belief, and the vile, debasing supposition of total depravity, it is founded on the immortal nature and innate purity of the child, as demonstrated by Spiritualism and sustained by reason.

It is singular that so marked a degree of apathy should exist among Spiritualists in regard to the proper instruction of their children in truths they profess to prize so highly, especially when the matter and method of the lessons are so generally correct and attractive.

The *Boston Herald*, which throughout the late Andover trial has stood up for the persecuted Professors in the most creditable fashion, shoots a Partisan arrow in its last Sunday edition at the action taken by the managers of the A. B. F. M., in announcing the name of Dr. Egbert C. Smyth in the annual report as having "resigned" from the Prudential Committee, when the fact is patent that the Conservatives in the American Board prevented his reelection. The lame effort of certain parties to explain away the action referred to, the *Herald* says, will not do at all.

Ordinary mortals (it remarks) are placed under oath to keep correct records of the matters committed to them for preservation, and as witnesses to tell the whole truth as well as nothing but the truth. It will soon be necessary to put the reverend doctors of the American Board and the editors of the religious press under the same oath if they are to retain their influence with the lay public.

A PLEASANT OCCASION.—By invitation we attended an ovation in honor of Mrs. J. B. Hatch, Sr., 54 Green street, Charlestown District, who has been for a long time a devoted worker in the Children's Lyceum cause in this city. This meeting of friends was held on the evening of Jan. 1st, on the occasion of the anniversary of her sixtieth birthday. Four generations of the family were present, besides invited guests. The presents were numerous and valuable. A regular Thanksgiving dinner was provided. The festivities closed with music, anecdote and song. But the most prominent party on this festive occasion was the mother of Mr. Hatch—Mrs. Rebecca S. Hatch—who attained the good old age of one hundred years Dec. 17th! This venerable lady was born in the town of Eastham, Mass., and, despite her advanced years, retains possession of her faculties to a remarkable degree.

We are in receipt of a fine example of the artistic powers of Albert Morton, Esq., of San Francisco, Cal., in the form of a truly admirable likeness of the late Charles H. Foster, which can be seen at this office.

A Lively Time in Kansas.

Judging from the reports coming to us in the local papers of Newton, Kan., a lively time is in progress there, inaugurated by the lectures of Mr. J. Clegg Wright, whose efforts to demolish ancient myths inherited by and holding a place in the minds of many people, have aroused the antagonism of the churches to such an extent that they have enlisted a champion of their well nigh "lost cause," in the person of Prof. Clark Braden. Mr. Wright is delivering a series of lectures on "The Evolution of Religion," and Prof. Braden one on "In favor of Christianity as against Infidelity." One of the papers defines the situation as follows:

"The Kansas has always believed that the ministers hereabouts have made a mistake in not defending their cause, their churches and their members, if they are entitled to a defense, and not sit idly by and see and hear them punctured as they have been of late and in times past. . . . Most men are skeptical by nature and want to know the why and wherefore of things, and if there is any good and any truth in it, they desire to know it. Evidence of this fact are to be seen in nearly every church of this city on a Sabbath day, from the lack of men who for these or similar reasons fail to attend churches. We are glad Clegg Wright is here, and also that Prof. Braden has followed after him, and hope the matter will be settled down and both sides have a fair and impartial hearing."

Buchanan's Journal of Man.

The publication of this unique and original journal, which begins in February, will interest thousands not only America but in foreign lands, who have long been looking forward with impatient interest for a fuller presentation of the experiments and discoveries of Dr. Buchanan, whose foundation, revolutionary medical doctrines, educational systems and scientific methods, and combine physiological and spiritual science in a demonstrable system. All who wish to obtain clear views of science and keep pace with the most advanced intellectual progress and social reform should be among its readers.

HALL'S JOURNAL OF HEALTH.—The January number is the first of the thirty-fourth volume, and is all the most progressive minds can desire, both in the tone of its contents and the appearance of its typography. In its greeting for the New Year it remarks that when, twelve months ago, under its new management it was proposed to adopt the liberal policy, the question arose whether it would be acceptable to a majority of its readers, for it was scarcely to be expected that so radical a change from its previous conservatism would meet with unanimous concurrence; but the result has been that not only have its old patrons stood by it, but many new ones have come forward than on any previous year of late. We congratulate the *Journal* on its success; another proof that truth only needs to be known to be approved and appreciated. Among the articles in this number is one by Charles Dawbarn, and an able defense of Henry Slade against a spirited attack upon his mediumship, in the *Journal de Hygiene* (Paris), a translation of which is given. Published at 205 Broadway, New York.

Col. W. D. Crockett informs us that for several weeks past parlor meetings have been held at the residence in Boston of L. L. Whitlock—(publisher of *Facts Magazine*)—Mrs. Whitlock being the medium. The sessions have occurred on Sunday mornings, have been attended by friends of the family, and others, and have been addressed by this lady while deeply entranced. She gives, in Col. C.'s opinion, strong promise of ultimate development for a good work on the Spiritualist platform.

Mrs. MAUD E. LOND was at Los Angeles, Cal., on the 10th ult., on which date she addressed the public in Odd Fellows' Hall. Her remarkably fine mediumship has attracted much attention there; and indeed, it has in all places she has visited on her Western tour. The *Tribune* of Los Angeles, gives the following account of an interview with her, which she narrated some interesting portions of her media experience.

Mr. John Slater Jr. was pleased to learn, meeting with great success in San Francisco. His Sunday evening audiences are ready to number nearly a thousand, and many are wonder-struck and delighted at the remarkable proofs given by him of spirit presence and identity.

BERNARD M. HARRIS, who for forty years has been one of the pillars of the Spiritualist cause, has just issued a new book, "The Spiritualist's Handbook," which is a most valuable work, and one of the best of the kind.

Message Department.

Table Free-Circle Meetings. A Bowditch Street (formerly) Church, every Tuesday and Friday afternoon. The hall is used only for these meetings. The hall is open to all who desire to attend. The meetings are held at 2 o'clock, and the doors will be closed, allowing no access until the conclusion of the service, except in case of absolute necessity. The public are cordially invited.

The Message Department under the above heading is a place where the friends of the cause can find a place to place their contributions. The Message Department is a place where the friends of the cause can find a place to place their contributions. The Message Department is a place where the friends of the cause can find a place to place their contributions.

SPIRIT MESSAGES,

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

Report of Public Séance held Nov. 23d, 1886.

Invocation.

Ohi our Heavenly Father, we return praises unto thee for this hour and this occasion. We thank thee that the gates of immortal life are wide open; that the loved ones, bearing messages of good cheer and tidings of great joy to weary mortals, may return from their heavenly homes to bless and comfort human hearts. Our Father, we ask for the blessing always to descend upon humanity; may its deep abiding peace be felt in every soul, may its sweet harmonies rest upon every life, drawing it upward from the lowliest conditions of sorrow and pain, unto the heights of beauty and transcendent joy. We bless thee for thy bounteous gifts to the human family, and for what nature brings forth for the well-being of the physical, as well as that which the spiritual doth give for the benefit and beauty of the interior life.

Questions and Answers.

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

Ques.—Does the exercise of mediumship increase the mental qualities of the medium?
Ans.—Yes. The exercise of mediumship power is inherent in man increases the depth and intensity of that power. Mediumship is no exception, that being a quality inherent in the organism. One who finds himself possessing mediumistic gifts, and patiently attends to their cultivation, by affording the best possible conditions he can for their development, will find that as he seeks to express those powers they deepen in intensity as he gives forth what is brought to him by visitants from the spirit-world, and will be made capable of transmitting communications or inspirations from high intelligences for the benefit of others. Practice in this department of life in any other makes one almost perfect; yet we do not advise any medium to give public expression of this gift until he knows that he is under the guidance of wise, brave, true spirits, who desire to bless mankind. We find that much has been done to Spiritualism and to mediums by those appearing before the public who are only partially developed in mediumistic gifts. This is wrong. Mediumship should only be exercised in the private sanctity of the home circle until the medium and the spirit assistants are fully persuaded that he is sufficiently developed for their public work.

Q.—Does the influence of an ignorant spirit improve the mental faculties of the medium it employs?

A.—By all means. We have had large experience on this subject. We have seen many mediums brought under the control or influence of wise, good, intelligent spirits. Many of those mediums were uneducated, undeveloped in character and mental ability, but being surrounded by the influence of high spirits, these mediums, having imbibed the inspirations and the instructions of their attendants, have unconsciously to themselves, developed in character, grown strong in mind, body, and spirit, wiser, better and purer men and women than they could have possibly been, with their external surroundings, without the aid of those beneficent spirits. We know from what has been said that it is impossible for a wise, good spirit to take a medium under his charge, exercise an influence upon her, bring a spirit into a sphere to her home, and frequently envelope her with an influence, without uplifting the medium, physically, mentally and spiritually; she is bound to become educated, and understand more of life, to grow in spirit and in intellect, because of the harmonious spiritual associations which are brought to her by those wise and intelligent ones of the higher life.

John D. Williams.

I shall crave your pardon, Mr. Chairman, if I intrude. [You are welcome.] Thank you. Many years have slipped away since I traversed the familiar streets of Boston. I considered myself one of its citizens—one who helped maintain the interests of this good old city. Possibly I have passed out of the active memory of many who knew me, but there must be those in Boston who still remember me, and perhaps would like to hear a word from one who has passed on beyond the confines of mortality.

I do not come back now in the condition I should immediately after passing from the body, as I now see that I was then crude and undeveloped in spirit, though I possessed a certain amount of education, and what is called the amenities of society, and wielded a degree of influence among those with whom I associated, but the inner life was not properly developed. I had much to learn, very much to cast aside. I confess it was not easy for me to throw off those trammels which burdened my spirit; it was not easy for me to learn the new lessons which I was obliged to study. But at this late day I think I can say the burdens have been mastered, and I have risen above them.

That is why I was anxious to give utterance to a few words, so that those who have known me may understand that I am the same man, and yet not the same that I was when on earth. I have found that I did not then hold that conception for my fellow-men I should have done. I professed Christianity, I professed religion, and yet it did not take vital hold of my life. As I now understand what religion is, were I privileged to again take up a mortal existence, with the experience and information that I now possess, I should choose different lines of business pursuits. I should walk a different pathway in life from what I did in the past.

I think it is true that a man must of necessity pass through one lifetime of experience in order to learn how to live, how to ascertain what is for his best interests. It has been so with me, and I understand that after we pass from this earth we do not come back dissatisfied, my lessons have been learned thoroughly, and they have done me good. I now have the privilege in the spirit world of coming in contact with men and women of high endowments, who are engaged in noble efforts. I draw from them an inspiration which is indeed of great service to me.

I have been invited here many times, but I always felt that the hour had not come. I speak to-day because I feel impelled to, for I was invited to do so by your Spirit Chairman, and from him and other good souls present I gain an influence which seems to cast a rippling glow upon my spirit.

To all who have known me to all who care for my memory—I bring loving greeting. I would like to speak to them privately, for I have many things to say that I think would teach them concerning their own lives here and the spiritual lives we lead after we pass from this earth. I send them a call; perhaps I shall be received, perhaps not. If not, I shall go onward, knowing that I have other lessons to learn, and that there is much for me to do because of the past, and that I must press forward unceasingly, seeking to unfold more and more of my spiritual nature. My name is John D. Williams.

Charles Allen.

I was an old man, Mr. Chairman, when I departed this life, but I now feel like one who has dropped off an old garment, and adopted something new and fresh. I have been some time in the spirit-world, quite long enough to be able to observe, and to tell you what I have seen and done. I have passed on very much, and year that I have passed on to that spiritual kingdom. It was a very great surprise to me to find the spirit-world so much like the earth, and to see my old neighbors and others gathered around, as they would be in the body, and give me freedom, and make everything as comfortable for my welfare as they know how; that was astonishing to me, for my ideas of the other world were very different from that. I studied the Bible, I believed in God the Father, and trusted that God would be good to me in the spirit-world, so that I might find his holy kingdom and be at peace.

At first I could not understand the change; it seemed to me there must be something like what I had conceived beyond this new condition, and I must search for it, but I finally became convinced that it was all planned naturally, and that I was to pass on from one stage of life to another, as he would go from one school or from one college to another, and study his lessons and perform his duties.

I have never had the opportunity of talking with my earthly friends on this subject, but have never been able to tell them that I had, and could come back; that I had dropped his worn-out mantle, and stepped into a new field, to go over the ground and see what he could make of it. That has been my object; it was one that somehow had an attraction for me here, materially speaking, and I am interested in going forward and trying to find out how to cultivate and improve the place where I live on the other side.

I believe I can say I have friends here. I am sure I consider them so. I am friendly to them and to their interests. I would be very glad to give them a gleam of light, or a helping hand to aid them over the ways of life in some direction they may only let me know. I am called Charles Allen. I lived in Bridge-water, Mass. I have friends in the Bridge-waters, and it seems to me some of them will be glad to know I have stepped back, even if it is at this late day.

Abbie Parker.

I have ventured to come a long way to send greetings to friends. I do not know what they will ever learn of my return, but I think they will. They do not understand this philosophy; it is all strange to them, as it was to me. I knew nothing of the spirit-world and its conditions. I would have gone home to it without fear and with hope if I had known about it; but, as it was, I shrank from the thought of death. I did not like to die.

I bring my love. I would have my friends realize, if possible, that the dear ones whom they have mourned so deeply are all around them, bringing good cheer and the glad tidings that there is no gloom, no sadness beyond the tomb, though they enter the spirit-world, even though they mourn for them, it does not fail them, and that with heavy weight that the sadness and despair coming from the thought of an unfulfilled life does.

I wish my friends to know I come to them—that I have tried to manifest my presence, and that I shall continue to do so. I want them to learn this blessed truth. John sends greetings with me from the spirit-world. He, too, is contented and finds many things to do, and seems to fit into his place more thoroughly than he did when here. He has gotten over his restless, dissatisfied condition, because now he feels that all things are for the best, and would not return to earth if he could. He sends his love, and wishes his friends to know he is happy when they are prosperous and at peace; he will help them, and I will try to, and all their loved ones will do so, whenever possible, because we find no joy so great as the happiness of helping from the spirit-world, and trying to help our friends, that they may be blessed through our efforts. My friends reside in Parkersburg, Va. I am Abbie Parker.

William Lawrence.

I went out from Chicago, Mr. Chairman. I am glad to come back in Boston, because I had a very high regard for Boston, and I had promised myself the pleasure of taking a trip East and visiting this city. Circumstances were such that I could not do so, yet it seems to me the thought must have been deeply impressed on my mind, for after I stepped out of the body I still felt an impelling force toward Boston, as though here I should find something or someone that would be congenial to me.

I have friends in Chicago, but have not the power of reaching them—friends who were associated with me in business life and friends of the social circle. I know that they hold an attachment for me, as I do for them, and my most painful thought after passing from the body was, that I was so powerless to make my friends know I still lived and could come around them.

Well, sir, I have tried and tried, but without success. I know there are mediums in that city, and that spirits do manage to communicate with their friends at times, but I have never been able to do so. I have tried, but I come here, bringing my greetings to my friends, and to tell them I am strong and very well situated and have no desire to take up the old life, though I was a man full of energy, always trying to work out some new plan, some new idea. My friends did not always think the idea practical, perhaps not, but I knew I could see the end before I commenced to outline it to my friends, and I generally succeeded in working out whatever I undertook to do. I had several projects in my mind, but fortunately sometime to work into form, but fortunately or unfortunately, I hardly know which, I was not allowed to do so.

It seems to me, now, that I might have lived longer on earth. I possessed a body that was comparatively sound. I did not know much about sickness, and I had not reached old age, yet somehow I was out off and taken to the other life. I feel that I regret that I am certainly as full of power now as in the past, in some directions more so; yet I am cramped. I feel that I want to spread out more. There are things that I cannot yet accomplish; but I am beginning to believe that the man of will, one who has an aim in view, who keeps steadily to the point, will accomplish that aim, and I know I am at some time, and as he goes on in experience, year after year, he enlarges, and he finds a power to do what he feels for the best.

I am not sure that I succeeded in making myself understood. I sometimes thought my friends did not understand me when I talked with them, and I am sure that I know I had their sympathy, that they watched me with interest and were always glad to give me a word of encouragement.

I come to them, to-day, to give them encouragement, to let them know that their view of life is not shut off when death comes to the body, and to tell them that there is something beyond, more satisfying even than what they can possibly find here, and to cheer them on in their work and duty, asking them not to dread the inevitable when it comes, but to meet it as a friend, sure that it will conduct them to a more roomy habitation, to a place where they may understand and themselves. I am simply William Lawrence.

Sarah Blake.

I would like to come to my friends in Cambridge. I sometimes think it would please them to know I can return, and that I still hold them in my love, for they are very dear to me. I have many times felt how sweet it would be to just step out before them in the banner and say a few words. I was there; I could speak, but not with the voice they would understand, and so they did not know that a friend from the higher life was present.

I am glad to come here, and send them my love, to let them know how are the angels who love them, and how our friends unite together; that they are happy; that they have outgrown the misunderstandings of earth, they see things more clearly, and are in sympathy with each other.

I felt weak for some time before I passed from earth, and I thought I never would see you strong again here; and at other times the con-

viction pressed upon me that I was slowly wearing away, and that death would come to claim my life. I can hardly tell you how I felt, yet, yet, I did not fear it; it all things were so uncertain, it seemed to me that it was impossible to learn anything of what was passing beyond the veil, and I turned from such thoughts all I could. I made my friends think that I expected to get well, and I wanted them to encourage the thought. I clung to it, and so they were, perhaps, more surprised when at last I did fade away.

I want to tell them now I smile at the thought of what I said and did. It seems so childish. The spirit-world only brought me peace and rest such as I had never known. My mother and father and all the dear ones were there, and I was taken care of by the hand and made me feel at home; and so all things have been pleasant, because I have tried to understand and to live in accordance with the life around me.

James sends his love, and so do all the friends. We would have our dear ones know that we are all well, and that we are ready to give them welcome. I am Sarah Blake.

Annie Russell.

I bring with me to-day a cross of white blossoms and a crown of purple passion-flowers, as an emblem, and a gift to a dear friend, who will understand them. They have been described to her before as typical of certain conditions, and she has asked me to come here and send some message to her abiding heart as a token of my affection and of the interest of her spirit-friends in her welfare. I have tried to come a number of times with these tokens, but was unable to speak.

To-day I am more than happy to accomplish my wish. My dear friend, do not be so sad; the clouds have hovered over you for some time, yet you can see even now that they are breaking a little, and that there is light above. I tell you they will pass away one by one, and those things which seem so heavy, yet you now will find them all lighter, and you will be able to move along more swiftly in your chosen path.

I bring to her, and to all my friends, my love and greeting. I have many times sought to lighten their burdens and make their burdens easier to bear. We are not permitted to do much in this line, because we are taught that we must first lighten our own burdens, and learn to do it patiently; must ripen its soul-powers through experience, and when the discipline is hard and severe it will only make the spirit more beautiful and strong in consequence; so while we bring our consolations and our encouragements, we could not, we would, we must leave the main work to the spirit-world, and only seek to bestow an influence that will help our friends, and give them endurance and patience to look forward to the coming time when all sorrow will cease, and peace will comfort their hearts.

My friend lives at Eau Claire, Wis., and I am sure she will understand and understand it, for she has asked and looked for something from me. I would have come before had I had the power, but I feel that it is better to come now, even though it does seem a late hour.

Please, Mr. Chairman, call me Annie Russell.

Report of Public Séance held Nov. 26th, 1886.

Questions and Answers.

Ques.—Is the phenomenon known as etherization an independent one, or is it an approach to but not a perfect accomplishment of materialization?

Ans.—We consider etherization to be a phase of spiritual phenomena distinctly by itself. The etherization of a spiritual form is essentially more spiritual in its character than is the materialization of a form which is operated upon by a spirit. In etherization the spirit gathers to itself only the spiritual elements possessed by the sitters, which, combined with its own, will enable it to present a representation of its own true spiritual form. In materialization the spirit gathers to itself elements and particles of matter from the physical bodies of the medium and others present, of which it builds up a form independent of its own spiritual body. It may be that the spirit will be able to come so close to that form as to seem to possess it, or it may be that the spirit may remain apart from that form and operate upon it—as a psychologist operates upon his subject.

As etherization, may be that these particles of matter are built up to represent the form of some spirit who may not be present, and may be operated upon as an automaton by cabinet spirits who are present and desirous of showing their power to the sitters who are present from interest or curiosity. Etherization we believe to be the grandest phase of spiritual phenomena, and it is the form of spiritual phenomena that we believe it is to be the phase of spiritual phenomena in the future, and that it will convince mankind generally of the immortality of the soul, the power of the spirit and the quality and nature of the spirit or etherization, and it is the form of spiritual phenomena that we believe it is to be the phase of spiritual phenomena in the future, and that it will convince mankind generally of the immortality of the soul, the power of the spirit and the quality and nature of the spirit or etherization, and it is the form of spiritual phenomena that we believe it is to be the phase of spiritual phenomena in the future, and that it will convince mankind generally of the immortality of the soul, the power of the spirit and the quality and nature of the spirit or etherization, and it is the form of spiritual phenomena that we believe it is to be the phase of spiritual 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