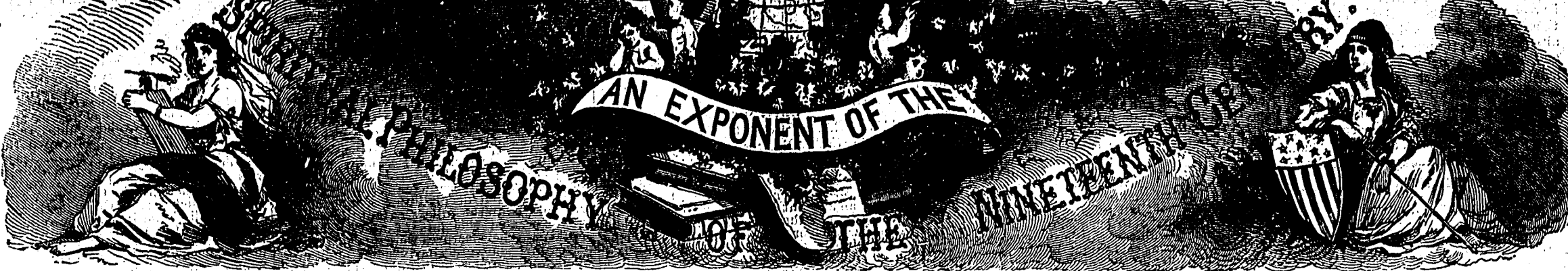


# BANNER OF LIGHT.



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## THINGS WORTH RECORDING.

(This interesting series is contributed to the BANNER OF LIGHT exclusively, by one of the earliest and ablest writers on Spiritualism and its history, and constitutes, as it proceeds, a biographical tribute—drawn from the memory and notes of the author—to men and women publicly known in the opening days of the Cause, the surpassing value of which to present (as well as future) Spiritualists cannot well be overestimated.—Ed. B. of L.)

Dr. John Gray; "The Most Elegant Practice in New York"; "A Philosophic Pioneer; Earnest Efforts to Arrive at the Truth; The Proper Use of the Spiritual Circle, etc.

Perhaps no man of modern times has gained a more enviable reputation as a skillful physician and a true gentleman than Dr. John F. Gray. His early identification with Spiritualism produced a marked influence over many social circles in New York City. It seems to be the fortunate destiny of some persons to escape harsh criticism, and to command a certain amount of deference in spite of eccentricity of thought or unpopular sentiment. Such a one was Dr. Gray. He bore himself always with dignity, and challenged no antagonism. He practiced no concealments, and was fearless and open in his declarations. As "Observer" remembers him he had a spiritual external appearance. His hair and beard were long and iron-gray, his figure slight, his manner was affable, yet a little constrained. "Observer" stood a little in awe of him, since he was said to have the "most elegant practice" in New York: By which phrase was meant that he was the beloved physician among the wealthy and aristocratic residents of the city. He was always spoken of with respect, as if it was perfectly proper for him to hold any views without censure, and as if his experiences belonged to a higher plane, as of occultism—much as people speak of Theosophists now.

It was as early as 1851 that a society was formed called the "New York Circle"—that held meetings at the members' houses, and from which arose the New York Conference, of which Dr. Gray was a prominent member, and from which sprang the Lyceum, the object of which was to hold public meetings, to secure lecturers, and in fact to consider principally the phenomena of soul or spirit manifestation. Whatever Dr. Gray is reported as saying at the Lyceum or Conference is full of suggestive thought.

He was very fond of German Literature, and was an accomplished German scholar. This gave a philosophic turn to his mind, and in Spiritualism he was not a mere wonder-seeker but a philosophical investigator. Although he left but few records of his thoughts, yet those few show that he was moved by no triviality of sentiment in his researches, but made dispassionate and earnest efforts to arrive at the truth.

He loved the phenomena well, and always welcomed Katie Fox to his home as if she might be the bringer of glad tidings. In the first years of her mediumship she gave at his house most startling proofs of a power superior to her own, and beyond the control of the Doctor himself; and it was in the belief that these phenomena were to show some new force that the scientist must use, and some intelligence that the earnest minds must consider, that he seconded Mr. Partridge's movement to call a public meeting where the discussion of this power should be deemed altogether proper.

In looking over the reports of these meetings it is interesting to notice the different standards raised by different men and women when ethical questions came up. The radical had his language of denunciation; he had the iconoclast then as now; the conservative held to old-time expressions, and clung to familiar phrases. The clash of words came, as was inevitable, but truth came uppermost in the end. Important as these discussions seemed then, what is there left of them now? Hidden away in neglected volumes they represent very little. The voices are silent that uttered the wise sayings or the harangues, and in glancing over the reports "Observer" feels as when reading the epitaphs in a country graveyard. Yet all this effort to get at the exact truth, this delving for the hidden gold, had an unending influence. We find it in the daily press, in the Sunday pulpit, in medical journal and in current literature. It has all done its work, and therefore cannot be called in any sense lost power.

"Observer" remembers several timid women, of some literary attainments, who very evidently were "bolstered up" to a position that commanded a better view of men and things

by Dr. John F. Gray's fearless position and his faith. "Observer" also remembers the men who came with Nicodemus when the sun of observation did not shine, and measured carefully their words, and asked of the way to the light. Are there any such now?

There has been in many minds a great prejudice against the spiritual circle. It has been said to "Observer" often: "I will not let my children sit in such circles; it puts them in a negative condition which is likely to undermine their health; they become nervous and irritable by thus sitting, and show that their nervous forces are exhausted." Mediums have also complained of the depletion of strength that resulted from sitting in circles, until it has become a serious question whether as conducted in the past they were a means of development. It is therefore interesting to read the report of Dr. Gray's remarks at a conference in 1854. He certainly was well-fitted to judge of the good or ill effects of such sessions, having had all his life much experience with sensitives. He said:

"One of the remedies for existing evils is to be found in the properly constituted spiritual life. The orderly development or progress of the race has for its basis the growth of the individual. There is a psycho-dynamic effect produced by others which may be mistaken for progress, as is often seen in what are called revivals of religion. The backslider, in his fall from grace, feels himself to be in a much worse state than he was before his conversion. His misery is simply the result of contrasting his psychological with his normal condition. His imagined redemption and supposed purification are effects produced upon him from without, and in reality his fall from grace is simply the dying out of the physical exaltation which took root in his imagination during the warm sunshine and descending showers of the revival. Growth alone is permanent, and that is the natural result of the spiritual influence received through the true spiritual circle.

The spiritual circle is a state of passivity, a listening or negative state, into which impressions naturally flow, either from the spiritual world or from the spiritual side of this world (which is equally valuable), which leads to the enlargement of the affection, perception and judgment—a growth, in fact, of the whole spiritual man. But it should be borne in mind that the spiritual circle, like everything else, depends for its value upon the purpose of those who resort to it. Its use as a means of growth will be as the purpose. Human history from the remotest antiquity is full of proof to the point that the most original and progressive minds of every age have, either consciously or unconsciously, communed with the spiritual world through receding from their external or sensuous degree, or, in other words, by becoming negative.

The man who consents to sit in a spiritual circle changes his position with respect to the prevailing religious opinions; and he who admits the undoubted evidence of spirit existence and intercourse with the spirit world has by that means grown largely beyond the old plane of thought; he has abandoned authority, and has become an investigator for himself. His new position necessarily impels a reconsideration of his old notions with respect to his relation to the past, the present and the future. The science of Anthropology requires the light derived through the spiritual circle. We need the discipline of the circle to give us a true knowledge of our relations to the world around us, as well as to the world above us."

It becomes us to well consider these declarations, for in these later days, as we have said, there has grown up a feeling of distrust of the circle, and the tendency has been strong toward marvel-seeking. No doubt Dr. Gray, recognizing his own lofty aspirations and eager desire for truth, conceived that all were seekers of light who sought to hold converse with the spirit-world.

At a later meeting of the Conference Dr. Gray said:

"Circle" means converse with spirits. There is an analogous state between man and man. All human intercourse may be arranged under this law of circle. One of our chief mistakes is in supposing we are talking at all times with spirits when we may be talking with one another. There is an earth-plane law as well as a spiritual. The preacher thinks he talks with God; his people believe him, and hence their mistake. We are subject to the same error.

Another mistake is in the abuse of the mesmeristic relation between us in the body: remaining in the circle too long, etc. No circle should be kept in session longer than an hour and a half. No energetic courtship, no poetic fervor should be continued longer to be healthful. The recession from the natural and the approach to the spiritual call into action laws of too delicate a nature to be overtasked. I cannot believe that a circle can be injured by the evil disposed. The potency of the will depends on the law of orderliness. The lower cannot control the higher; but the reverse is the case. Hence it is that God controls the universe, and thus one orderly mind will control the circle, if all its other members are devils.

I think that in the spiritual circle we should wait patiently until a sure physical manifestation stamps its seal upon the completion of the spiritual connection. Spirits have to leave their own plane and enter our sphere before they can communicate. The value of spirit-communication to me is that it has taught me to meditate. It has taught me how to enter into rapport with the spirit-world. It has taught me how to avoid temptation, especially the temptation of death. It teaches how to act. If a person wishes my charity I know when and how much to bestow. It enables the interior Dr. Gray to advise or direct the external Dr. Gray how to act."

Dr. Gray cited an incident in early life, where he was peremptorily ordered from an invisible source to go out of a building in which he was alone at work, there being no person but himself either in or near the place at the time. The order, on his mental refusal to comply, was repeated until he felt himself, as it were, compelled to obey, which he did just in time to escape imminent death from the fall of the building, consequent upon the superabundant weight of snow. As he stepped from the threshold, his clothes were brushed by the falling ruins. Such a case might occur by the law of transfer, but no one was near to make it. The skeptic will say, "It was a coincidence," but he thinks not:

"Now we know that the spirit manifestations exhibit wisdom, or an adaptation of means to ends, on

the human plane; hence the intelligent use of the raps proves the existence of an intelligent spirit. Nothing below the human is adequate to the solution of the fact, and no intelligence above the human is necessary to its explanation; therefore, its ascription to the human plane manifesting from above the earth-life is a rational necessity. Indeed, we need not go beyond the raps to confound the philosophy and science of the whole world. The philosopher has no consistent ground from which to attack Spiritualism until he has first solved that problem. It will be time enough for him to enrich the literary reviews and religious periodicals of the day with Jeremiahs on the evil tendency of Spiritualism, when he has demonstrated the mundane origin of this single phenomenon among the myriads of others of daily occurrence in spiritual manifestation."

These utterances of Dr. Gray sound like a living voice speaking to us of the power and wonder of even the simplest phenomena. We almost forget, in the wonders that occur every day that are reported under signatures that command respect, the simple beginnings of this occult power. How those raps, gentle but firm, thrilled the heart! It was as if a voice spoke the longed-for words: "I am here; there is no death!" and with that voice the clouds of doubt rolled away, and the clear sky of hope and faith shone above. Delightful raps! soul-answering raps! Let us not forget to thank the invisible powers for that "bridge of light" so delicate that few could recognize it, but on which the angels descended with their "glad tidings of great joy."

If "Observer" remembers correctly, Dr. Gray was a member of the "Miracle Circle," as it was called (though perhaps not by its members), that held regular meetings and received manifestations as wonderful as those that occur now. Very beautiful materializations were reported. But few outsiders knew what transpired, and there are no public reports of the meetings.

A life so useful as that of Dr. Gray should have some more fitting tribute than "Observer" can give; but the thinking mind can recognize in the few extracts that we have given of his reported remarks, the bent of his mind. Without doubt he is still an earnest worker in the sphere of Philosophy and Mental Science. In lingering over the columns selected for extracts, fresher and clearer ideas seemed to force themselves between the lines, and above the written words appeared the "sign" that signifies a presence:

"Indeed, life had just begun when mortal life ended. The soul not only lives on, but the soul's means of expression, the affections, the intellect, the aspiration, the will, even the ambition. Instead of worldly ambition, however, there is the never-ceasing desire to attain unto the sublime knowledge and greatest freedom. The benediction of the disciples of Jesus descends on the laborers of 1890. The interval of forty years is but as a moment of time, yet eternity is in it. A never-ending succession of revelations shall make the future glad. For within every mortal form is the immortal spirit that must reveal itself sooner or later, and when once the environment of ignorance is thrown off each human soul must know itself immortal, and thus sure to be united with spiritual forces, and subject to spiritual laws."

## Self-Control.

Rev. Reuben Thomas, D. D., treated this important subject in a very forcible and practical way at the Young Men's Christian Union in this city on the evening of Jan. 2nd. The wisest of men, said the speaker, have been of opinion that in self-control is the true secret of happiness. Plato in ancient times, Kant in modern times, are respectable names on that side of opinion. Freedom would be a more popular but much less necessary theme. Freedom seems to be the letting one's self out of prison; self-control the fastening one's self in, but this is only a delusion. Without law there can be no freedom, without self-control no independence. Self-control, according to Plato, implies a higher and a lower principle in human nature. When the upper ranges of our nature govern them the man is said to be master of himself. The self-controlled man is necessarily manly and aristocratic. He follows reason, and is under the guidance of mind. Hence education tends to lead toward self-control. Only by assiduously cultivating the upper parts of our nature can the lower be brought into subservience.

In these days when material success dazzles, whoever stands for the mental and moral is of necessity a benefactor and a source of refinement to the community in which he lives. The materialist must ever be a man whose dissatisfaction grows with his increase. The man of mental and moral life has more happiness than he. Self-control means physical health and moral self-respect. He who is set on finding happiness must tread this road. This is not, as so many suggest, a preacher's theme or one belonging to the Professor of Moral Philosophy only—every man in every department of life has to exercise self-control if he is to gain business or fame or friends. The real fight of life is the fight of the higher and nobler with the meaner and lower self. The vulgarity of self-assertion, the refinement of self-repression, are evident. The one is natural, the other comes only by culture. In temper, in speech and in daily conduct nothing is so useful as restraint, especially with ardent and impulsive natures. Self-indulgence costs too much for any wise man to pay the price. Everything we do depends for its quality on what we are. If once we learn to get the whip-hand of ourselves then we have been to a good school, and have gotten the best kind of education.

The severely practical Cape Ann Advertiser (Gloucester, Mass.) has this pointer for its many nautical readers—and "stay ashore" ones, too: "We have booms in business, and booms in stocks; but as long as the foreboom and mainboom hang together, fish is the safest thing for our people to depend upon."

## Free Thought.

### THE SALOON AND ITS OUTCOME.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

It seems to me that we Spiritualists, who claim to have discovered a higher and better philosophy of life, have something more to do than to gather in our little circles and séances and congratulate each other upon the solution of the great problem which has bothered so many generations of men.

We have demonstrated that human life is continuous, that man lives beyond the grave, and that he can come back here and prove it. So far, well and good. It is a great stride beyond the theology of John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards, and has lifted the race out of the mire of a gross superstition—and that is also well.

Now, having saved the souls of men, have we not a duty to perform in trying to save their bodies? How few people realize that there exists in the heart of this apparently Christian civilization a vice so hideous, a crime so black that all other vices and crimes fade into nothingness before its appalling blackness? I mean whiskey-drinking and whiskey-selling. It does not need argument to prove the evil character of this business; the simple assertion that it is wholly bad, and that it is dragging more men and women down to degradation and death than all other causes combined, no living man will deny. I want to give a few facts about the community in which I live, as an illustration of what the business is over this whole country:

New York, Brooklyn and Jersey City contain in round numbers a population of three millions. New York City licenses nine thousand saloons, Brooklyn four thousand and Jersey City one thousand; in all, fourteen thousand dens of vice and crime located in the business and residence centres of this great population. Setting aside for the moment the criminal results which inevitably and constantly flow from them, let me present the side of the question which exhibits the enormous amounts of money expended for drink, and which, if changed to legitimate channels, would so greatly alleviate human suffering.

Fifteen dollars per day have been estimated as a fair average business for each saloon; they could not live on less; this sum, multiplied by the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year, makes fifty-five hundred dollars; and this again, multiplied by the fourteen thousand, makes a grand total of seventy-six million six hundred and fifty thousand dollars in this city alone, annually taken from the wages of labor and devoted to a cultivation of the darkest side of human nature: the sad results being everywhere to be seen in debased individualisms, miserable or broken brains, and a tainted body politic.

Ours is a Christian civilization, or is supposed to be; Christian ministers and Christian people in the church and in politics tolerate, legalize and license this business, and tell us that this is the only way to deal with it. What a weak and miserable sham! As if the intelligent moral people of this country did not, if they chose to exercise it, have the power to use the knife, and cut this cancer out by the roots! New York City derives a revenue of a million dollars annually from licensing whiskey shops, and then proudly spends ten millions in taking care of the consequences of the crime; and that she calls political economy.

Seventy-six million six hundred and fifty thousand dollars is an enormous sum of money. It means twenty-five dollars a year for each man, woman and child located within a radius of fifteen miles of the New York City Hall. What would this money do if the expenditure was diverted from this channel and devoted to the legitimate purposes of life? The question answers itself. No one need be told that if this seventy-six millions of dollars was applied to the purchase of additional clothing, food and the ordinary necessities of life, there would be no such thing as poverty stalking in our streets, or skulking in filthy tenement houses. There would be no idle hands, or ragged, hungry men and starving women. The jails would be empty, almshouses might be burned, a thousand policemen could be discharged, criminal courts abolished, and many other social problems solved.

And why don't we do it? Simply because we have gotten into a rut. Whiskey has always been sold on our public streets. Saloons and bar-rooms have always existed, and the people have not had the moral courage to rise up and out down this tree of evil fruit. The saloon has a "pull" with the politicians, and the politicians have a "pull" with the saloon. Should any one dare to even speak ill of the saloon the cry comes up: "Oh! don't do it! you will hurt the party!" What sort of morality is this? What kind of a party is it that can be hurt by abolishing the worst crime which has ever fastened itself on the human race? If any party exists it ought to be hurt—indeed it should be killed outright.

Do you know that in this great country of ours we have more than two hundred thousand saloons, the worst dens of iniquity that a civilized nation ever tolerated, and that we have a standing army of men engaged in this business numbering over four hundred thousand, and that it costs us annually nine hundred million dollars to support this army? And what does this army do? protect the country from hostile invasion, build up cities and towns, erect houses for the poor, embellish the land with seats of learning, build canals, steamboats and railroads? Oh! no! such wise and beneficent purposes are remote from the

objects of this grand body of soldiers. Then for what purpose is it maintained? Their business is to make, manufacture and deal out to the poor and weak of their fellowmen an irritant poison called alcohol, the most dangerous and destructive element which the human being can take into the system. Their special right is to manufacture drunkards, paupers, lunatics and criminals for honest, sober men to take care of and support; to control the politics of the country—get the offices and spend the revenues. What reason can possibly exist why the non-drinking, temperate members of a community should work for, support and maintain this army of depredators, is beyond all human comprehension. No living man can answer the question.

The saloon and all of its accessories are absolutely evil; there is not one particle of good in a million of them, and yet we dare not lay a hand upon this sacred, time-honored institution. What a shame upon our boasted civilization—the political power of a great empire truckling to a whiskey shop; the model republic of the world bound hand and foot to a gang of moral brackens.

Now I ask the question of you, Spiritualists: Is it not time, and is it not your duty, to take a hand in this business? If the Christians of the world are afraid of it, and make no move to destroy the power of this devil of drink, it is your bounden duty to do it. Some day we shall have to answer, not at the bar of God, but at the bar of our own consciences, for permitting this moral monster to exist.

GEO. A. SHUFELDT.

27 Broadway, New York.

## WHAT IS SPIRITUALISM?

BY HUDSON TUTTLE.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

In most of the statements of principles in which Spiritualists agree, it has been thought essential to define God, and iterate a belief in him. All received religions rest on the foundation of a personal God, and the relations of man to him, consequently to them it is vital to define his nature, and exact an unqualified belief in him.

The views of Spiritualists take of the universe are those of the most advanced knowledge, and opposed to the misconception of nature on which the prevailing ideas of God are based. These ideas had their birth in ignorance, and have been sustained by ignorance and superstition.

As we cannot explain how a single blade of grass grows, how can we understand the attributes of a God who not only makes a blade of grass to grow, but sustains the infinite worlds of space?

Back of all laws is force, which through them touches the world of matter, and is manifested to our minds. What is back of that we do not know, and with our present limited powers of mind cannot know. We are certain it is not a being with personal limitations who created the world out of nothing six thousand years ago. In short, that which should engage the least attention, which is most fruitless, is the discussion of the attributes of God.

Happily it is not of any consequence to us whether we do or do not know of God. It is neither affects him nor ourselves. We are creations of law, governed by law, and we cannot escape its control. It is by knowledge, not prayer, we are enabled to adjust our lives in harmony with the forces around us. We are not lost from God, and hence have no sacrifice to make, no especial service to perform to regain his favor.

Hence a belief or disbelief in God, a belief in the god of Buddha or Mohammed, is no bar to the belief in Spiritualism. As a subject, no one has ever satisfactorily explained, and no one ever can fathom; all are allowed freedom to make the attempt, or rest satisfied with the futility of the attempt of others.

SPIRITUALISM IS THE SCIENCE OF LIFE HERE AND HEREFTER. It is the knowledge of everything pertaining to the spiritual nature of man; and as spirit is the moving force of the universe, in its widest scope, it grasps the domain of Nature. It embraces all that is known and all that ever can be known. It is a cosmopolitan eclecticism; receiving all good, rejecting all error.

THE SPIRITUALIST is one who is truly spiritual, and embodies the highest ideal of excellence in his life.

MAN IS A DUALITY—a physical body and a spirit, evolved by and out of the physical body. IMMORTALITY.—This spiritual being is immortal.

DEATH is the separation of this spiritual being from the physical body, and does not affect the spirit morally or intellectually.

RELATIONS OF THE SPIRIT TO THE SPIRIT-WORLD.—The spirit holds the same relations to the spirit-world that man holds to physical matter.

SALVATION.—JUDGMENT.—There is no arbitrary decree, final judgment or atonement for wrong, except through the reformation of the guilty, affected by suffering and growth. The spirit after death, as before, works out its own salvation.

DESTINY OF SPIRIT.—The knowledge, attainment and experience of the earth-life form the basis of the spirit-life: Progressive evolution of the intellectual and moral natures is the endless destiny of individual spirits. In the spirit-world, as on earth, each will receive according to his capacity.

HELL AND HEAVEN may be taken as types of conditions, but are myths descending from an age of ignorance.

SPIRIT COMMUNION.—It is possible for departed spirits to communicate with their















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## WASHINGTON NOTES

BY U. A. B.

Jan. 28th

### Meetings in New York.

### Reception to Mrs. E. A. Wells.

Mrs. H. J. Newton said she was glad to have an opportunity to speak of the intrinsic value of the medical partnership of Mrs. Wells. She had known Mrs. Wells for many years, and had nothing to say of her but that which was good. She said that Mrs. Wells stands on a rock more firm than that known to history in connection with the medical profession.

*New York, Feb. 2d, 1890.*

**Consumption Cured.**

An old physician, retired from practice, had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure of Consumption, including Phthisis, Asthma, Catarrh, and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints. Having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, and desiring to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge to all who apply, a copy of the treatise, in plain English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail, by addressing, with stamp, naming this paper, W. A. NOYES, 820 Powers' Block, Rochester, N. Y.

### Lake Pleasant.

**A Card.**  
I am an invalid, besides am contending against particularly difficult circumstances. Turn whichever way I may, impassable walls seem to shut me in from any prospect of attaining my great desire. Will any sister gifted with the power to inspire, tell me I there but have, and how to win to the accomplishment of it? This I have to ask in charity. Address  
*Springfield, Mass.* *Mrs. LUCIA ELLIS.*

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

If it's solation, bathe with Johnson's Anodyne Liniment, pressing the muscles and nerves hard



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