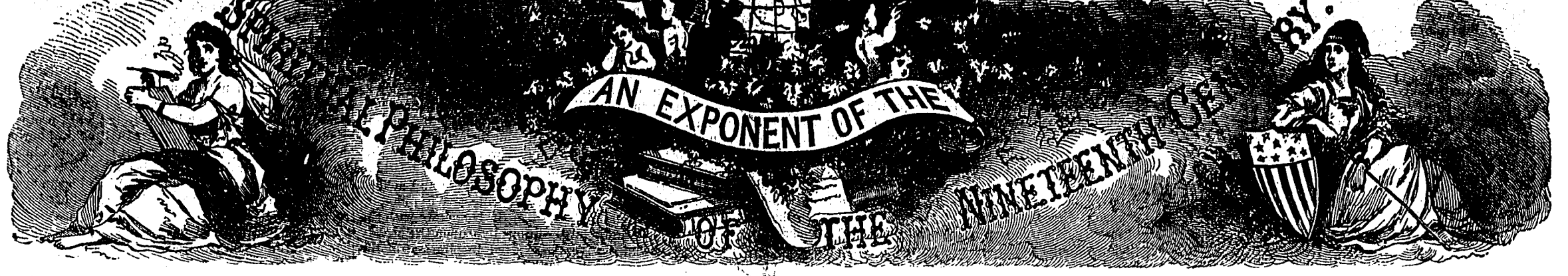


# BANNER OF LIGHT.



VOL. 68.

COLBY & RICH,  
9 Bosworth St., Boston, Mass.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1890.

(\$2.50 Per Annum,  
Postage Free.)

NO. 15.

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## CHRISTMAS.

To guide us all—as early doctrine shows—  
Through clouds of spirit darkness here below,  
In Eastern skies a Star of Hope arose,  
Some nineteen hundred years ago:  
And in this mortal gem of heavenly phase,  
Unnumbered souls around the dismal tomb  
Consoling faith have found in lovely rays  
Of light it sheds beyond the gloom.  
Unsatisfied are some by faith alone,  
When "Death" comes coldly knocking at the door,  
And need the light that in the West hath shone,  
That cometh from the Shining Shore:  
And never more need mortals fear the grave,  
For light from realms above now shineth so  
It proves the Angelhood that mortals crave,  
As Jesus knew it long ago:  
The loving Jesus who, in darker times,  
So clearly saw and plainly told about  
The Angel life in worlds of brighter climes,  
And bade us not His word to doubt:  
Who taught that deeds of kindness here below  
Will fit us best for spheres above the sod,  
That every act of love we here bestow  
Will bring us nearer to our God.  
But then, as now, when spirit visions bright  
Through him appeared to doubting mortal view,  
Unwilling to receive the higher light,  
Mankind their loving Jesus slight.  
'T is now the same: when Angels kindly speak  
And say they love, and watch, and wait, and pray,  
And strive to bless, the very ones they seek  
Will doubt, deride and turn away!  
And though their dearest ones to them return,  
To show they fondly love them more and more,  
And prove their love can never cease to burn,  
But liveth—liveth evermore:  
Even then, their angel friends they not greet,  
Though once to them so warm, so true and dear,  
But coldly view them in their winding-sheet,  
Where laid they them in doubt and fear.  
But you and I, so blessed, why should we not  
To-day with angels join, rejoice and hymn  
Our hearty thanks, that ne'er should be forgot,  
And praise give to Them and Him?

F. G. JOHNSON.

## New York's Brave Divine.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:  
The Rev. Dr. Thomas Dixon, jr., pastor of the 23d-street Baptist church, corner Madison Avenue, has been liberally reported by the daily papers on political subjects, but the following abstract from his sermon of Nov. 9th, as noted by the writer, is of equal interest and permanent importance in its application to man and the signs of the times.  
Mr. Dixon is a Southerner, young, wiry, tall, thin features, and temperament indicating strong will and nervous force, and regularly draws an immense audience. On this occasion his subject was: "Do we Believe in Ghosts?" and the text: "It is John whom I beheaded; he is risen from the dead."  
After citing other historic characters, he said, in part: Oliver Cromwell, the Iron Hand that ruled England, on one occasion while resting upon his couch, saw the form of a prodigious giantess approach his bed, which, pulling aside the curtain, said to him that he would be the greatest man in England. Cromwell gives us the weight of his life, and all his powerful testimony as a man, to that fact. Martin Luther on many occasions contended with what he called evil spirits, and in his fights with them hurled his ink-stand at them more than once. Coleridge, the scholar and poet, believed in certain supernatural signs he saw. John Bunyan testified to the same kind of facts; and whether we go into the past or consider the present, whether we investigate with the Indian occultist, the Jewish sorcerer, the Scotch seer, or the modern medium, we find the same universal stupendous fact. And in our own lives we have experiences that admit of no other reasonable explanation than the supernatural. We laugh at the superstitions of our neighbor, but we believe in things equally absurd. We laugh at him if he has a horse-shoe over his door, but we ourselves will not undertake a journey on Friday. A gentleman once saw a young woman binding with thread a lot of sticks in the shape of a cross. He asked if they were boxwood or oak. "No," she said, "they are with-elm, and if I arrange them about my person as a cross I will always have good luck." Another man declared that a certain leaf would surely cure the liver complaint, because God had made the leaf in the exact shape of the human liver. We are ready to laugh at our friend's superstitions, and at the same time show that we are made of the same stuff, out of the same piece of cloth, with the same nature, and the history of the human race has been practically the same from the beginning of time to the present—yesterday, to-day and forever.  
What says the wisdom of the ages in answer

to this question of the eternities: "If a man die, shall he live again?" Modern science has done wonderful things. I love the scientific thinker, and am grateful to every scientist who has led the race up, step by step, to knowledge and truth. I thank God for all the heroes and martyrs of the past, whether calling themselves scientists, atheists, "free thinkers," or what-not. I am grateful for all the light that man has obtained through the exertions of the scientific world. Science has solved many of the laws of Nature. We understand the lightning, now that it is no longer supernatural in its manifestation, and we do not fear a Deity with his angry thunder over our head: we have brought down the lightning and made it do our bidding. Science has settled many false ideas, and many former superstitions are now exploded.

The vast claims of the so-called scientific spirit of this age, however, have not been justified and cannot be substantiated. It has been the fashion for men to have what is termed scientific doubt, but science has yet to settle the ultimate questions of the universe. We have had in the recent past, not the dogmas of the theologian, not the wild superstitions of the ancients, not the results of the laboratory and the library, but we have been asked to bow down to the unmeasured dogmas of so-called scientists. They have dogmatized about the unknown, and persisted like the past theologians, and have dared to take their little hatchets, and like the boldest iconoclast, chip the most sacred thoughts and feelings of the human heart. They call the manifestations of the soul simply mind-stuff, and what they say is stuff. In all the world to-day there is not a single scientist who can stand up and give a sensible definition of "matter." The time was when men said matter was the only reality; now they say that matter is related with spirit, and the great theorists in these years have brought forward more mysteries than they ever solved. What "gravity" is no one knows, and a thousand mysteries appear where one is explained. Gas and gravity do not make a world. According to evolution, this world was once a molten mass of fire, whirling through trackless space, and out of this mass came life, and sphere after sphere, and by-and-by the flowers and fruit and animals and man—out of a ball of fire! If that is the explanation of creation, it is more supernatural and wonderful than Genesis.

Every truth discovered opens up a thousand other mysteries more unfathomable. We understand from what man descended, but the important question is, how does he ascend? All over the world is the inquiry as to just what we do believe about this. Louis IV. went into his chapel one day to hear his great preacher, who in the course of his sermon had the audacity to say: "All men must die." But perceiving the King made a motion of impatience, he immediately added: "Yes, almost all." Scientists once said that all things perished at death; now they say that almost all things perish. To-day there is a new era, a new thought-world with its problems, and we stand before the collapse of much so-called science. We already have what is positive, but to-day we have a new science of mysteries. The pendulum of materialism swings back to sweet reasonableness of heart, back to higher and diviner things of life, and we see the outlines of a new and mysterious realm. There is much humbug, much nonsense, but it is a plain rebound in the direction of faith and knowledge, and I firmly believe that the twentieth century will usher in a higher, richer, sweeter religion than was ever known in the history of this earth since the morn of creation. Look around you to-day, and you hear the strongest protest of the human heart against materialism, and all within the last twenty-five years. You find it in literature; in weird and wonderful stories of the supernatural, of men living outside the range of matter, of ghosts and hobgoblins. You lay Howells aside, and take up instead Haggard and Stevenson, with their ghost stories.

The religious thought of to-day shows this rebound from the extremes of the past. It is said by those who know, that there are millions of Spiritualists in this country to-day—their numbers actually reach into the millions—and many of them believe that they have seen their "dead" after the burial of the body. And these men assert there are millions more not numbered among them who partake of the same belief! I bring this fact to your mind to remind you of the great truth that the world is now swinging in the opposite direction from gross materialism. The social "fad" in society and in the church to-day is the jigger, the medium, the theosophist; they are the social lions of the times; you must have them, and it shows a terrific rebound in the last quarter of a century. Not only is it so in society, but you find its influence in the different departments of progressive science. So in medicine, all sorts of cures are based upon this revolt against materialism. Then there is the mind cure, or how to cure people through the mind, by simply convincing the poor fool that he never was sick, there is no such thing as disease, and he is cured. Then again we have the faith cure, and the Christian Scientist cure, and a hundred different claims in the realm of medicine, all based upon new theories or facts, and it is utterly preposterous for a man in these days to disbelieve the phenomena. Mixed though they are with folly, there is back of this movement a great reality, and no thoughtful man can deny it. There was a time, when a physician would be almost torn to pieces if he said he was a mesmerist. Now it is scientific "hypnotism," and there are those in this city who could take four young men from this

audience, stand them up on this platform, and with a word control their minds and bodies at will. Telling them it is cold, they will put on their overcoats; or that it is awfully hot, and they will throw off their coats, fan themselves, and wipe the perspiration from their faces, utterly unconscious of what they are doing, or unable to resist. If one is told to commit a murder, he goes through the motions of drawing a knife and striking to the death. These are facts, and are printed and photographed in a recent number of *The Metropolitan Magazine*. Legislatures are asked to-day to pass laws to prohibit the exercise of the art of hypnotism, believing that man can lead his fellow-man into the commission of crime by the power of mind over mind and matter. The day is coming, however, when these subtle forces in psychology will be better understood.

In the scientific world we now have these wonders, but what would a scientist of twenty-five years ago have said if shown a photograph of such demonstrations as are given by Donati? "All a ghost story; never happened, because it overcomes the continuity of natural law."

Louisa M. Alcott, the distinguished authoress of Concord, in her recently published biography, relates an incident in the death of her sister. Herself a woman of no ordinary character, of the utmost self-possession, not excitable, with a cool head, not of vivid imagination, and her mother a woman of equal coolness—when two such witnesses relate the story, we must accept it, if we can believe any human testimony. The authoress says that when her sister was dying, her mother was sitting at the foot of the bed, and she was seated by her side, and just as the sister was expiring she saw a light, or peculiar mist, rise from the bed, and into the air, her eyes following it until it disappeared, and her mother's eyes followed it in the same direction, as she described exactly what she herself saw. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Professor of Physiology in Harvard College, in a book on Visions, recently published, says that in his practice as a physician, while standing beside the dying he has seen something separate itself from the body, rise in the air, and disappear. Such is the testimony of such a man, accustomed to look on the dying with cool nerve. If a scientist of twenty-five years ago could rise up to-day, and be confronted with that story, he would say: "Nonsense; no such thing ever happened; you are not competent to testify." We are swinging toward an understanding of a new science; we are cognizant of the fact that in common life, as we say in public parlance, in the midst of superstitions in general, there is a *residuum of truth*, facts that cannot be explained by any now known law of the scientific world. The other day in Kentucky J. J. Tilford, an employe of the Santa Fe and Texas Railroad, dreamed that a switch at Hawesville, where he was stationed, was wide open, and that the side track was filled with cars, and the express train was due, and would crash into those cars. So vivid was the impression, and although he had nothing to do with the switch he got up from his bed, rushed along the track, and to his surprise and horror he found the switch wide open, and on the side track a line of cars with sixty-five working-men, and as he heard the roar of the coming train, he changed the switch, and their lives were saved!

Scientists begin to recognize they must be scientific in fact, and not merely shams. They are hunting the improbable with the wrong instruments. They are coming to realize the truth that there are realities in this world beside those that appear to the ordinary five senses. My mother is dead, they say. Yes; I ask science for an explanation, and it says: Your mother died of heart-failure; that is all; her health merely broke down, and that is the end. As I stand over her grave, and remember her life, her tenderness, her love, her devotion, her sacrifice, I say to that scientist: You have lied. That is not all there is to this life, and I know it. The world has arisen to-day in its might and ascertained the tremendous truth, and science has begun to investigate a new series of phenomena that will bring us nearer in the future to those things that can be comprehended even here of that which lies beyond! During the reign of terror in France a young man was sentenced to die. His father refused to leave him, and determined to stay by his side in prison. The day for execution came; the boy had fallen asleep, broken-hearted, the father beside him. While the son slept the prisoners were called from their cells to the guillotine. The guard came to the gate and called the name of the boy; no answer. Suddenly the father conceived the idea that he would respond instead. He did not dare to embrace his boy for fear of waking him, but leaving word, that he might not do himself any harm when he learned the truth, the father went up to the scaffold, laid his head down on the block, exclaiming, "Oh, Lord, bless and save and guide my boy!" and the glittering knife of the guillotine came down, and he was no more. "Gray matter" did it all!

Narrating some instances of mysterious coincidences, and impressing upon skeptics and believers the truth of personal responsibility for the present and future results of individual life, the earnest and eloquent gentleman concluded his courageous and inspiring discourse.

J. F. SNIPES.

A MARRIAGE RETURN, *par excellence*, is recorded in the following: A colored justice of the peace in Mississippi, being called upon to furnish reports of his official acts, and being just then short of material, naively made out the following, and sent it to "headquarters":  
"Plaintiff, Bill Jones; defendant, Silvia Johnson; officer, justice of the peace; judgment, married; costs paid by plaintiff; satisfaction by both parties."

## Literary Department.

## CRIME AND RETRIBUTION.

A STORY OF BOTH HEMISPHERES.

Written for the Banner of Light,

BY CORA WILBURN.

### CHAPTER XV.

#### The Father's Confession.

"Do not weep, do not look so despairingly to heaven, my beloved child! Oh! now I feel all that she—that you have been to me. Felicia, child of my love, I am the vilest, lowest sinner on this earth! You will spurn me, my daughter; you will turn from my dying bed with horror and aversion; you will spurn and curse the stricken wretch before you! My pure, good child, you will turn from me with loathing, for I am burdened with a weight of crime!" And he writhed in the bodily torture that was the accompaniment of his mental pangs.

"Do not talk so, dear father—ever my father, whatever you be. God, who is all righteous, does forgive. Dare I, his frail, human creature, harshly judge or condemn? Oh! father, no matter how deeply stained—you are now repentant; you will henceforth live to bless the Lord! Only tell me that you feel the hope of life; that you will not die and leave me desolate!"

She looked imploringly into his face, and wiped the clammy perspiration from his brow. Overhead the lamp shed its flickering gleams, and the little vessel rolled and pitched as she plowed the waves. The anxious daughter had not left his side one moment, though her garments were wet, and her own golden hair strayed in disheveled masses from beneath the disguised braids.

"I feel that I shall not live long, my beautiful!" he fondly replied; "but do not yet give way to grief. I have much, much to confess. Go and put on dry robes, my child. Nay, I beseech you, leave me, and do as I desire; put on some of your own clothes; arrange your own bright hair. I would see my Felicia as she is. It is my earnest wish."

She arose with a deep sigh, kissed his hand, and withdrew. The captain gave her the keys of the trunk that had been sent on board, and she took from one a dark, close-fitting dress, and arrayed herself as usual; she combed and smoothed her glossy hair, and arranged it in the floating ringlets her father loved so well. Meanwhile he held a whispered conference with the good-natured little Yankee captain.

Felicia returned to her post, and with a feeble smile he greeted her. His strength was fast declining; he had received three poniard thrusts from the hand of his treacherous servant, and no human skill could avail to save him. Although suffering excruciating pain, he controlled himself by that iron will-power that had characterized him through life. He suppressed the groans that arose to his lips; only when the resistless torrent of remorse swept over him, did it force from him the expressions of physical suffering also. Often compelled to pause from excess of pain, from sheer exhaustion, he continued:

"Felicia, gather together all the noble courage with which I know you are endowed; take your religious principles, the memory of your—of Rose; think of God's mercy—that mercy that long I have disbelieved in, that I have never acknowledged, never called upon until too late—and when you have done this—and you must do it quickly, love—prepare to hear the frightful statement that brands me—your father—with present and eternal infamy!"

The daughter gazed fervently upward, and implored the strength of the Eternal's arm.

"I am ready to hear all you have to say, my father."

"You will not curse me?—not despise me while the life yet lingers? Felicia, you are the only being I have ever truly loved! Wayward, stern as I have been, even to thee, that one pure, unperturbed affection ever rested in my soul, the one, the only redeeming point. Felicia, in the name of the great God who has visited me with punishment, I ask your forgiveness! I would kneel to you, could I compel this wretched body to that posture of humility! Pardon, pardon my child for the sins I have committed against you!"

"Father, you have not wronged me. You have been generous, kind and indulgent! You were never harsh to me, except—and then you were not yourself," she said, with a burst of emotion.

"Do not weep for me; I am not worthy; be grateful to the Lord for taking me from your life-path. The path of evil is so flowery, so inviting; it seems so smooth and lovely; daughter of my soul, it leads to untold depths of darkness! Once trodden, it may not be retraced. I might live to bring more shame upon you; to drive every vestige of affection from your heart by drunkenness and sin. I am taken ere I can do more harm."

"Dear father, there is joy in heaven over every sinner that repenteth."

"Oh! that I were not too late! Oh! that I could expiate every crime, and banish the haunting spectres that pursue me! Felicia, I have wronged you from your birth!"

"Tell me all; tell me all that burdens your conscience. I will apply to it the sacred promises of God."

"Rose was not your mother, my child!" The young girl's eyes dilated with a wondering stare—her very lips blanched; she pressed her hands together, but only a feeble moan gave evidence that she had heard and understood.

"But you are my daughter, my own beloved one!" he said, quickly.

"Am I the child of shame?" she asked, tremblingly.

"You are my daughter by my own lawful wife, Teresa de Alcayda," he replied.

"And she—my mother?—where—oh! mother Rose!" she cried, with a convulsive flood of tears.

"Your mother, your own mother? Listen, my child—there lies my greatest sin. She was my wedded wife; and I, foul wretch, deserted her for no cause save love of novelty and change! I married Rose Palmer; but the ceremony was null and void, for your mother was living, and could have claimed her rights."

"Is she living still? oh! father!"

"How could I have been so incarnate a fiend, your looks would ask? A false ambition, an unholy, insatiate desire for gain possessed me. I stole from your mother the money sent from her native place. I left her in misery and in privation. I stole you from her arms! Felicia, curse me! Trample out the wretched remnant of my life. I am unworthy of your pity! I am too far beneath the mercy of just Providence! See, child! this right hand struck my mother! This dark heart planned the hellish scheme that sent Teresa forth a beggared maniac on the world! I deceived poor Rose—I tore her from the safe shelter of her virtuous home, from the love of her father! I poisoned and embittered her life, and made her the slave of my caprices. I intercepted her letters, and she never heard a word from home. It was not consumption, but I, that killed her! And morning, noon and night, have I been haunted by the spectral face, the outstretched arms, the wild, accusing voice of her who bids me return her child!"

"God forgive you—be merciful unto you!" gasped Felicia. "But is she living, father?"

"I know not—but the Lord watched over her! She came to my mother's house—she was received, adopted as a daughter by that mother. I heard from my secret emissaries. I fled with Rose, who never knew the deceit that made a wife of her only in name! She deemed your mother had been my mistress; yet she loved you, and adopted you as her own!"

"Blessed mother! Dear saint in Heaven! Never shall I cease to call her by that sacred name!"

"Felicia, I have not heard directly from my mother for many years. Since I fled from home she has not known of my whereabouts, and I could obtain no information since the time I heard of Teresa's establishment with her. She had wealth; her family were influential; yet I blighted her life for a mere caprice. I could not brook her noble, self-dependent, fiery spirit. Through her affection for you I made a willing instrument of Rose."

He paused awhile to recover breath. With a piteous look of entreaty he gazed into his daughter's face.

"Have I told you enough already to inspire you with lasting abhorrence? Will you now turn from me, and flying from my sight, leave me to the accusing phantoms of my sins? Felicia! am I condemned by thee?"

There was such a tearful agony in his voice, that she seized his hand and covered it with kisses.

"May the Almighty God forgive, fully as my own heart," she replied.

"Bless you—bless you forever, angel! interceding, loving angel!" he cried, and large tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Oh! father! tell me of my mother; where is she? Can I not find her, if she is still on earth?"

"You can, and you must! My mother lives in—. Take this portfolio by my side, open it, take out the small box of sandal-wood! It contains my most precious documents. Give it to me. Here, child, is my mother's address. She took it in her trembling hands, and read: "Mrs. Mercy Almay, Linden Cottage, three miles from C—shire, England."

"You ponder over the name!" said her father. "That is my real one. The name of Delano, like many others I have borne, was assumed. But, dear, my strength is waning fast; hearken to my last instructions, as well as to my dying confession! The good captain will see you safely on board a vessel for England. He will also procure for you a faithful attendant of your own sex. Go to the metropolis, and wait upon the firm of Wells & Grattan—they were correspondents of mine. Some one of the firm will be in existence. Without discovering the purport of your journey, ask them to send you to—shire, if you can previously gain any tidings concerning my mother or your own. And if they are both gone, you will inherit all. My poor mother was, in conscience of God."

[Continued on third page.]



## THE ANGEL OF PATIENCE.

Bolds the tolling way,  
Lowly and sad, by fruits and flowers unblest,  
Which my worn feet tread sadly, day by day,  
Languing in vain for rest,

An angel softly walks,  
With pale, sweet face, and eyes cast meekly down,  
The while from withered leaves and flowerless stalks,  
She weaves my fitting crown.

A sweet and patient grace,  
A look of firm endurance, true and tried,  
Of suffering meekly borne, rests on her face,  
So pure, so glorified.

And when my fainting heart  
Desponds and murmurs at its adverse fate,  
Then quietly the angel's bright lips part,  
Murmuring softly, "Wait!"

"Patience!" she sweetly saith;  
"The Father's mercies never come too late;  
Gird thee with patient strength and trusting faith,  
And firm endurance, wait!"

Angel, behold! I wait,  
Wearing the thorny crown through all life's hours;  
Wait till thy hand shall open the eternal gate,  
And change these thorns to flowers.

Wilt thou not open the gate?  
Thy morning calls on me with cheering tone,  
And every hill and tree  
Lends but one voice of thine alone.

Come! for I need thy love,  
More than the flower the dew, or grass the rain;  
Come, like thy holy dove,  
And let me in thy sight rejoice to live again.

—Mrs. L. C. Taylor.

## The Spiritual Rostrum.

## Mediumship the Foundation of Our Philosophy.

An Inspirational Discourse by the Guides of

MRS. R. S. LILLIE,

Given before the Boston Spiritual Temple Society, at Herkeley Hall, Boston, Mass., Sunday Morning,  
Nov. 30th, 1890.

Reported for the Banner of Light by Miss Ida L. Spalding.

## INVOCATION.

As ever before, oh! spiritual beings, we ask your aid. We ask that our minds may be reached by the truth which ye are ready to give. Enable us, oh! angels of light, to lay aside all cares that perplex and annoy, and to enter the spiritual state of receptivity, desirous of the light and the truth, and willing to lay aside all idols of prejudice, if such are ours. We may be led by your power into a realm of thought from which we may be able to gather something that shall strengthen and encourage us amid the duties and cares of our earthly life. That we may walk directly in the light, we ask you to lift the clouds of superstition from our minds; that we may be benefited by this light, we ask your assistance, and in the application of your teachings to our every-day life, may we grow in spirit and in truth. If, through your aid, we are thus enabled to reach the loftier heights of the spirit-world, toward which our aspirations lead us, then unto thee, the source of this blessing, will we return our glad thanksgiving.

## DISCOURSE.

In mediumship we have that which causes all the difference existing between Spiritualism and systems of faith. Through mediumship you have received what we term the philosophy of Modern Spiritualism. I say "through mediumship," understanding that Modern Spiritualism, according to your view, dates back only to 1848, when the Rochester rappings, and other demonstrations of a power outside of matter, awakened the interest of multitudes. Prior to this, however, there was an awakening upon the mental plane. That Spiritualism, as a movement, dates to the manifestations taking place at Hydesville and Rochester, is but an illustration of the fact that the human mind can be aroused or awakened to a greater degree when material objects arrest its attention than it can be by simply mental experiments or phenomena.

Preceding these demonstrations there had been a mental awakening and a mental movement. I speak of mesmerism as it was then denominated, but which is now termed hypnotism, for this is only a new name for an old fact discovered long ago. These experiments were first made upon what was supposed to be the mortal plane—one mortal, possessing a superior, subtle force, controlling the mind and actions of another, who must always be passive to the influence of the operator. Investigators in this branch of science found that they had entered a field of wide interest, one which, according to even the earlier experiments, led them to see that the subject operated upon, while in this superior state, as they denominated it, was possessed of powers exceeding those possessed by him in his normal condition—that he was possessed of ability to traverse long distances, to enter dwellings, and to penetrate matter wherever it lay in his path.

Through these experiments other discoveries were also made, and one of the most important of these was the fact that the subject oftentimes passed beyond the control of the operator, and manifested a degree of intelligence which could not be accounted for, either by the operator or by any of those present. Questioning these subjects, it was found that they had entered a vast realm; that the mind of man was, in a measure, unfettered in this condition; that doors were unlocked which had never yielded to the touch of man before. But when passing beyond the degree of intelligence belonging either to the individual operated upon or the operator, there arose in the minds of those who thought deepest upon the problem, inquiry as to what this could be, and what its source of power. In making these inquiries, they, in many instances, received the reply: "I am a spirit. I once dwelt in a form such as you now possess; I once was an inhabitant of earth; I passed through the change called death, but I still live. There is a world of realities, which belongs to the soul, or spirit of man, as this material plane belongs to you. We who dwell in that world are still interested in the affairs of mankind. We desire to uplift you and to aid you in rising out of your present conditions, and we have returned to earth for this purpose." "If this is true, why have you not manifested before? Why has this fact not been known to ages past?" was asked. The answer came: "Through these experiments you have made it possible for us to intelligently communicate with you. While you have made the subject subordinate to your will and, in a measure, to your intelligence, you have also made it possible for us to intelligently use the same channel."

This, friends, was one of the early experiences in what we term mediumship. It was through such experiments that the wonderful boy, or young man, Andrew Jackson Davis, uneducated, as far as the schools of earth were concerned, was enabled to give to you what is considered, and may well be conceded to be, one of the greatest works of any age. In this condition of mind this work was wrought out several years prior to the time you date the advent of Modern Spiritualism; and the claim was also made that this was the spiritual state, and that in this state it was possible for spirits in the body to come into relationship with those out of the body, namely, exorcated spirits.

This, then, was the introduction of the movement which has spread until every nation of the earth has heard its message, until the intelligent minds of all climes have come into a realization of the fact that there is an open door of communication between this world and the unseen, made available in these later days by the experiments of mankind.

So we say that the mental movement antedates the physical one, unless we can understand that both the mental and physical phenomena of Spiritualism are so united that it is almost impossible to draw any line of distinction between them. When I claim, as an intelligence, to be a spirit or an outside mind addressing you through the vocal powers of one who is visible to you while I am invisible, can you not see that it requires both physical and mental phenomena to produce this result? that I must overcome the physical conditions of the organism, and, in a measure, oblige it to become subservient to my mind and will? If so, then we say that both kinds of manifestations are in

reality united; that the physical and mental phenomena go hand in hand; that there are degrees of both; that the highest or most marked degree of mental phenomena has with it, as a part and portion thereof, as it has had from the first, physical phenomena; and that these instruments who stand before you to-day, representing the mental phase alone, have, almost without exception, and I believe quite so, passed through one phase, at least, of physical manifestations and development, and out of and from and with this has grown the mental expression of the power which is with them at the present time.

What we term mediumship to-day has been known by various names in the ages of the past. Those whom you denominated mediums to-day were known as prophets, seers and messiahs in Biblical times, while numerous other appellations were given them later on, according to the character of the manifestations produced through their agency. Misunderstood by the world, they have ever been looked upon as peculiar and eccentric. Some have been called geniuses, gifted especially by nature, while others have been termed witches, from the days when the woman of Endor astonished King Saul, up to the days when Salem and Boston hung the undeveloped and misunderstood instruments who reflected but in part the same power. Prophets, seers, disciples, messiahs, witches and latter-day mediums are but terms applied to persons possessing different degrees of the same power; and when we find ourselves witnessing or passing through experiences that we do not understand, and give to them some of these modern names, we really do so because we are ignorant of the true condition underlying the result. In regard to the subject of witches, I take the ground that, while ignorance controlled in those days to a great degree, there was a power manifest through individuals which the people did not understand, and mingling with the errors of men, it became many times hideous and tormenting, when it might have been made means of light and blessing had it been understood. Therefore we believe that mediums have lived in the past, even as they live to-day; that in almost all ages men and women have been affected, in a measure, by this same power and influence; and that, wherever you find a record thereof, you will find something similar to what we to-day denominate mediumship.

What is mediumship? It is simply an intermediate state between the two conditions of life, embodied and disembodied, or mortal and immortal, and those who can act as intermediates, or mediums, are those constituted by nature to be sensitive to the influence of these outside intelligences. What constitutes this sensitiveness? I can scarcely define it to you, but I will say this: In every organic being there are subtle fluids and properties, which you are only beginning to understand. The mesmerist of to-day calls these "magnetism." These fluids, together with electricity, which is a part of and permeates all physical matter, have their avenues of activity as much as the blood has its veins, and constitute the substance medical scientists term the nerve fluid. It operates with great potency immediately upon the external body, and is directed, either consciously or unconsciously, by the human will. I say "consciously or unconsciously," for most of our activities are in reality obedient to what we term the unconscious action of the will. The individual wills to operate in a given direction, and this gives an impetus to the same force which is working under the unconscious action of the will. This is, therefore, the same force intensified by intelligent mental action.

Now this being true of the individual existing in the body, the fact forms a starting point to a knowledge of how spirits operate upon subjects on earth who are sensitive to their influence. In this light we can readily see that it is by the subtle touch and insinuating power of will, which quickens this unconscious operation, and gives it a stronger impulse. A continuation of this direction of the force by an outside intelligence, establishes a habit between the two—the mind outside and the mind holding the citadel of the body. To those who may not perhaps understand my last statement, I will say that habits are formed in every portion of our bodies by our own will, or that of some individual who may seek to exercise his mesmeric influence over us. I will illustrate: An experimenter upon the mental basis, such as Prof. Carpenter, goes before an audience in a public hall. Selecting those sensitive to his influence, he calls them upon the platform, and demonstrates his power of mind and will over them. By a pass opposite to that by which he has mesmerized them, he throws off his influence, breaks the connecting link between his mind and the minds of his subjects, and ceases to use his will; but there has gone forth a subtle force, which is the magnetic-spiritual, magnetic-electric, or what might be termed the spiritual ether. This will do his bidding later on, if he sees fit to make use of it, and distance for quite a length of time will make no difference. If he is unprincipled and desires to do so, he may hold the subject obedient to his will by fixing a little habit, or by keeping up the experiment; and every time he renews the experiment, the subject becomes more subordinate to his will. If the subject desires to have the influence entirely broken, the operator must cease to exercise his will over the former, and in time the subtle substance which he left with the subject will be dissipated, and he can no longer control him. The principle is just the same in mediumship, the only difference being in the fact that the operating intelligence is an exorcated spirit instead of a mortal.

Mediumship, we say, begins in the physical. There is, in the first place, almost an entire reconstruction of the outer or physical body. Many of you who are mediums have passed through strange experiences. People have misunderstood you utterly, and much of the time you have not understood yourselves or your own condition. You were operated upon by spirits who were fixing a habit or condition between you and them which would cause you to respond at any time to their will. The length of time required for such experiments is usually denominated the period of development. All pass through a process of growth by these experiences, which are the result of an agreement made between two parties, an outside band of intelligences, and the spirit occupying the mortal body. Any of you who are sensitive and mediums, if you have been such for any length of time, have become a willing party to a compact between your spirit and the intelligences approaching you. You have either willingly acquiesced, which is permission itself, or you have entered into an intelligent agreement. There are many who, seeing a well developed medium doing his work, whatever it may be, exclaim, "Oh! I would give anything if I possessed that power." If there are any in this room who have thus voiced their desire, I want to say to you that if ever you do possess it you will give anything, and you will give everything, because mediumship in reality involves a yielding up, a sacrifice of self. I mean by this that there is the necessity of being misunderstood, because of the ignorance of those surrounding you; and they who seek spiritual gifts invite this misunderstanding of men, invite their criticisms, invite their persecutions, for all this comes with your mediumship as a part and portion thereof.

I have said that in mediumship there is a compact made between outside intelligences and your own spirit. You invite it, or at least acquiesce and enter into this relationship. What is desired? Some of you immediately fix upon a phase of mediumship which you are anxious to possess. You say, "I would like to be an orator. Of all things I desire to be able to interest an assembly." Another may say "I would like to be a test medium. Above all things I desire to be able to give that which will be convincing to skeptical minds of the presence of spirits." Is there any choice in the matter? No; you cannot make a choice unless you first understand yourselves, for nature has endowed you with mediumship from birth, or you never possess it. Your natural endowment is discerned by spirits more readily than by yourselves, because they see spiritually, and discern your spiritual condition. They can tell what element is dominant in your make-up, and therefore they can understand what can best be made use of. When they can acquaint you with the result of their investigations through your own impressions—intuitions we might say—or through the influence which they at length obtain over you, you possess what I consider to be the best source of

information. You may be reliably informed by spirits through another medium, and you often are; but those immediately interested in you, and who are with you, know best your temperament, your every-day life, your qualifications and fitness for mediumship.

I have said that almost every one possesses the gift of mediumship in a measure, but that it is not possible for you to decide absolutely for what phase you will be developed, for while you may make a choice, it must be in accord with nature and her laws. There is also one other point to be considered in this connection, and that is this: When making your choice, you must settle the question as to how much you are willing to lay upon the altar of sacrifice, namely, how much time you are willing to devote to it, and how much you can do and not interfere with your duties in other directions. Again I would say, those who desire spiritual things (I am speaking now especially of mental phases) and desire them in the highest and noblest sense, must first be willing to make sacrifices. We cannot indulge all the appetites and desires of the body if we wish the spirit to be dominant. We cannot live upon the grossly material plane and receive the exalted inspirations of the highest sphere of spirit-life. While I maintain this, I also maintain that mediumship does not depend, in either its mental or physical phases, upon moral character. I desire to be clearly understood upon this point. Mediumship does not depend upon the moral character of the individual operated upon because it is, as I have said, a gift of nature, and it is possible to have in the same organism an accompaniment of immoral tendencies. I believe that wherever mediumship is unfolded to any great degree by wise spirits, it is done for one of two purposes. Sometimes it is simply for the benefit of the individual himself, sometimes for the benefit of others. Do not always expect, when you begin to develop mediumship, that you are going to be used publicly for some demonstration of spirit power. There are those to whom spirits come for the uplifting and educating of the individual. They need the benefit to be derived from silent teachers, who are willing to take up this individual work, and then do what little good they can outside of this. Many of you have been chosen for a broader field of labor. There must necessarily be taken into consideration the conditions and requirements in this case. You must be of that temperament, disposition and mental quality which, when mingling with individuals and with society, will carry with them an influence as well as outside spirit intelligence.

Spirits need, then, the cooperation of those upon the mortal plane to do a successful work for mankind. The work is cooperative, a conjoined effort of spirits and mortals. You who have passed through mediumship also know that when you have prayerfully desired the best that your organism could respond to, and you have felt that your prayer has been answered, there have come to you proofs that wise intelligences have surrounded you. Under such circumstances, having become convinced that you have called to yourselves a higher degree of intelligence from the other side than you possess, you may safely place yourselves in their hands; for, although there is cooperation here, there is at the same time a willing submission to higher teachers. If you are not sure that they are higher than you, wait until you are. Call again. Send forth once more from your own souls these lofty aspirations and desires. Seek the highest that can respond to you. Take no one else as a criterion, saying, "I must have a gift such as he possesses," but rather say, "Give me the best my cup, or my vessel, or my brain can receive."

In a true sense there is in mediumship no high and no low. The rap, the slightest demonstration proving the presence of a spirit, is in quality as high as the greatest demonstration which proves a like point; but there is a high and a low within ourselves, and this will settle the question largely as to the quality of what may be expected through us. We are vessels, you are vessels; and if we take a dirty, greasy, rusty vessel to a spring of pure water, we shall find the water affected by the condition of the cup. I say to you who desire the sweetest waters that flow from the fountain of inspiration, first go to work and cleanse the vessel, if you would bring these waters of the living good as a gospel of truth to mankind; and until mediums understand this and act accordingly, mediumship will not be placed on the plane where all true souls must desire to see it. "What can I do?" asks one. Be clean in body, language, thought and deed. This is the first step, and such a life will finally clarify and prepare the body for the reception of the highest inspiration.

Nearly all our early mediums were directed in the beginning even as to what to eat and drink. Many times the food was thrown violently from them by the unseen force or intelligence. Many times the cup at their lips was dashed to the ground because they had not learned the lessons which had been given to them over and over again. You mediums of to-day have had forty-two years of philosophizing. You have been taught these lessons again and again. Nearly every platform discourse says to you: "Live rightly; be clean in your habits; be pure in your tastes; eat and drink wisely unto the soul and not unto the body, realizing that this is but the temple, tabernacle or tenement of the living god, the living God, and the Divine Presence within."

Despite these teachings, the belief prevails to a very great extent that there was a good deal of crankiness in the early apostles of Modern Spiritualism, especially regarding the prominence they gave various hygienic ideas, and they who advance these thoughts even to-day are called "cranks." A person may be, according to your modern phraseology, an enthusiast or a crank in this direction, and while we believe there are a number who are unreasonable in their advocacy of this subject, we certainly are of opinion that there is altogether too much listlessness in regard to making the outward life comport with spiritual conditions. I would not advise any one to start out with the determination to make a decided change in every direction, for that would submit the individual to great inconvenience, and the result might be detrimental instead of beneficial; but I would say to every individual: Study yourself, eat what you know agrees with your body, and abstain from partaking of that which you know by experience will distress you and disarrange your whole system. If such things impede your own thought, they certainly will impede the thought which your spirit-guides may seek to give you. If you are in a condition which makes it impossible for you to think your loftiest and divinest, then you are in a condition in which the spirit-world cannot approach and communicate with you, that is, to any degree of excellence. Therefore, we need to take into consideration the subject of living, from morning till evening, and bringing into harmony the two states of being.

Mediumship is to be found in every degree of development. There are those who seem to understand little of themselves or the intelligences around them. There are those who seem to be almost, if not entirely, obsessed by themselves. Spiritualists are acquainted with this class of mediums, and outside observers have witnessed so much of their vagaries that many have become opposed to Spiritualism because of such manifestations. Many times what goes by the name of mediumship is a partial state of development and a disordered state of the system, which makes it impossible for the spirits to go any further, or to express themselves any more clearly.

I have one word to say in reference to obsession, which belongs to the mental phases of mediumship. There is, at the present time, almost a craze among a certain class of Spiritualists relating to this thought. Everything that is discordant, inharmonious, and unpleasant, is laid at the door of obsessing spirits. In my opinion this idea is next-door neighbor to that of the Orthodox devil, upon whom everything is heaped. According to my observation, while there are undoubtedly instances where unclean, impure, or undeveloped spirits affect mortals, as there have been ever since Jesus of Nazareth walked the earth among men, rebuking such spirits wherever he met them, and causing them to flee from their subjects, yet they are met with infrequently. In most cases where the disturbing condition is attributed to obsessing spirits, it is caused by the individual becoming possessed of the idea that he is what he is not, and his ignorance in regard to what he is; these, with an undeveloped and inharmonious condition

of his physical being, causing very mixed results. The highest spirit in the spirit-world, touching that brain, could give no other demonstration than that imperfect one, which would be called obsession, which, in fact, it is not, but only an imperfect manifestation, whether produced by the spirit residing in the mortal tenement, or some one outside attempting to transmit a thought through the physical organism. Many times this condition is owing to a disordered state of the individual physically, under which circumstances the magnetic battery or force touches the subject simply as a force rather than as an intelligent power.

Perhaps I shall not be understood on this point, but according to my observation this is where the danger lies in forming promiscuous or large circles, and I protest against them in every instance. I know that many of our mediums have been developed in circles, but it has been in a well-organized home-circle, where with a few friends and good conditions, superior results followed. What I mean by the forming of promiscuous circles is this: Supposing twenty-five of you are left in the hall at the close of these services, intending to remain until the next session, and you organize the whole number into a circle, indiscriminately, without understanding that here is age, decrepitude, incipient disease, infirmity of one kind or another that will go round that circle by a natural law, for whose operation you have provided conditions. Every member of the circle is compelled to take up more or less of these elements. Some of you may go out and say, "I feel ever so much better." If you do, be very sure that some one else feels ever so much worse; for there is in reality but a giving forth and uniting of detrimental conditions, which fix themselves permanently upon some sensitive one, and in after days he may say, "I have been distressingly annoyed by an obsessing spirit ever since that circle." I say it is simply an obsessing condition, awakened, quickened, taken on in that unwisely-formed circle. These are things that should receive the attention and call forth the wisdom of the best minds of our age.

Some one might say that in the early days people stumbled into Spiritualism; they experimented in various ways; they formed circles here and there; but I will tell you what they did, as a rule, and what governed them so well. They were so afraid of being found out by some one else that it was generally but a small experimenting circle of a few friends, and many times was held right in the household. They did not want any one to know it, and that very trait, evil or undesirable we might term it, was the very thing that saved them, to a greater extent than they were aware, from having everybody's condition mingled in their dish magnetic, that needs the steady hand and the wise counsel of direction by a sure wisdom.

In closing I want to say to our mental mediums: You have the phase to be desired among all the phases of mediumship, because it is that which comes to your own souls, opens an avenue of continued knowledge to you, becomes a perpetual school of discipline, and may be made, if you wish, the means of larger spiritual growth than anything else can be. We hear a great deal about self-discipline and self-culture. That is all well enough, friends, in its way; but can you prepare a better condition for cultivating your spirit than by going into good society? If you were going to begin upon the mortal plane, would you not select the most intelligent, refined and cultivated for your companions, knowing that that association would of itself improve you? Certainly you would. Then, if you have the gift called mediumship, and you enter into partnership or relationship with high intelligences in the spiritual world, holding almost constant communion with them, will you not be improved by that companionship?

Perhaps you fear that such close communion and relationship will take away your individuality. Not a bit of it. There has been a vast amount of nonsense in regard to losing one's individuality. You might as well talk of losing your personality by reading a good book or in perusing a whole library of excellent works. Another objection which you may raise is that mediumship is injurious to the physical system, and some are, undoubtedly, afraid of it on this account. I say that mediumship, entered upon wisely and used wisely, is beneficial to the individual in every instance. When it is injurious, it is because it is used too much and used foolishly and unwisely. You may pervert any good gift of nature. You may drink pure water enough to give you the cholera, and yet you cannot live without it. You may, likewise, be injured by an improper use of your mediumship, but its proper use is not injurious in the least.

Now, again, what is mediumship? It is the making use of the vital nerve fluid for a given purpose. Every one manufactures, to a greater or less extent, a surplus of this vital force. They who manufacture most are the strongest in mediumship, because they have plenty to spare. Nature has endowed them with the ability to gather certain elements from almost every body and every thing they come in contact with, and receiving these in the reservoir of their bodies and there chemically assimilating them, they are enabled to dispense this power to others. All manufacture more or less, but if you use that vital energy in a day's hard toil, and go home weary at night, you are not in a condition to exercise your mediatic gift, for you have used all this power that you can safely spare in your day's labor.

I come now to a point upon which I desire especially to touch. Mediums are often blamed and called shiftless because they let go of external duties. The influences around them compel them to do so, and then the keen, critical observer says: "Well, mediumship has a strange influence upon people. When they discover that they possess this power, they at once begin to think that they cannot do this and they cannot do that." What are the spirits doing? Directing the same energy in another channel. If you direct the waters of the Mississippi into a new channel, you leave the old bed dry because you have turned the course of the stream. So, if you would use these fluids in mental efforts, you must not use them up in physical ones. You can do but one thing at a time and do it well." Some one says: "Such a person is literary; he is a walking encyclopedia of knowledge; but see the peculiarity of his taste, see how oddly he dresses," and everybody laughs. "What quaintness!" exclaims another. "How well such a one dresses, but I wish you could see her house," says a third. It is very true that some people write books on cooking and housekeeping, giving recipes that far excel any that your grandmother possessed, who do not keep house themselves. Why? They have no time. Their strength is employed in giving expression to thought. They work with the brain, and when their labors are completed in that line they have no time or energy left to work in any other direction. Thus you find many times that these things which appear so inexplicable are but the working of nature's laws, which operate in every instance for the highest good of the individual.

There are some individuals who say: "I have my mediumship, but I have never neglected my business." Very well, you are fortunate. If you have an account on both sides of life and keep them balanced, you are doing a good work, and you ought to be thankful for your double endowment, for the abundance of this spiritual force which has enabled you to fill these two vessels. But the majority of mankind are unable to do so, therefore we are obliged to call earnestly upon you as Spiritualists to watch your mediums. If you have a good medium in your home circle, take care of that medium. Do the best you can to help him or her to carry this double load, lift life's cares and burdens, and in so doing you will open the gates beautiful that let in the light-immortal.

"Brother, is life's morning clouded,  
Has the sunlight ceased to shine?  
Is the earth in darkness shrouded,  
Wouldst thou at thy lot recline?  
Cheer up, brother; let thy vision  
Look above! See! light is near!  
Soon will come the next transition,  
Trust in God and persevere."

We should as soon go without matches in the house as Johnson's Anodyne Liniment for cramp.







in this way, where it is sure to do ever so much good will be able to do at least as well by this gentleman and his work as they have ever done before.







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