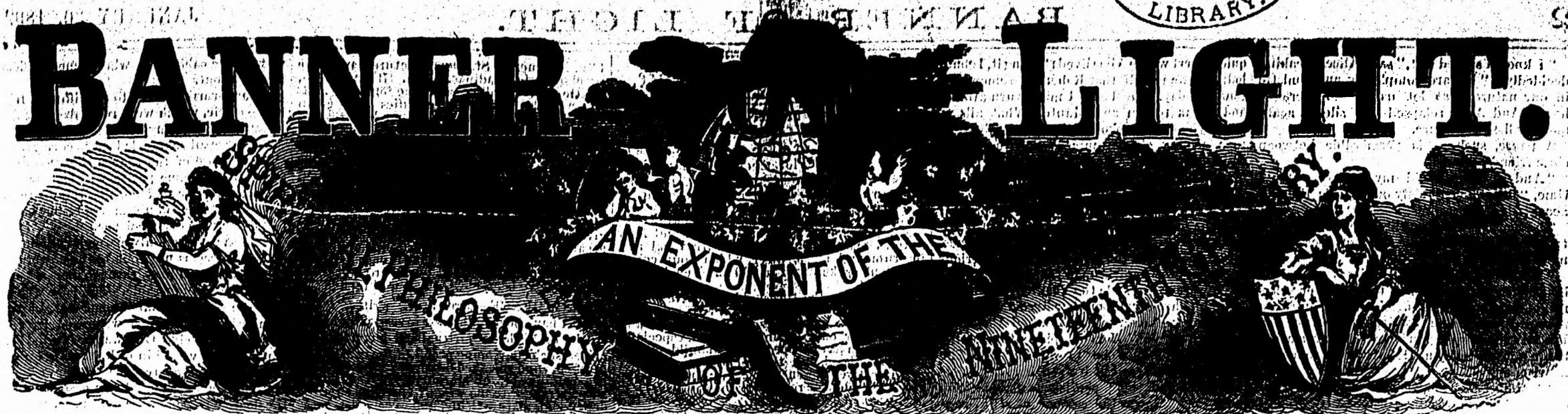


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The Spiritual Rostrum.

The Meaning of Life.

A Lecture delivered at Berkeley Hall, Boston, Mass., Sunday, Jan. 17th, 1892.
BY DR. F. L. H. WILLIS.
(Reported for the Banner of Light.)

"MAN'S life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." This is one of those wonderful sentences spoken a thousand or more years ago, pregnant with esoteric meaning. It suggests the subject of our lecture, viz.: *The Meaning of Life.*

How few persons out of the masses seem to realize that life has any very deep significance. To how few comparatively is anything more than the daily routine of eating and drinking, sleeping and waking, toiling and pleasuring.

How many of us Spiritualists have an abiding consciousness of the deep import of life? To how many of us is it a *Via Sacra*, a sacred way filled with wonder and beauty and divine significance? And yet our philosophy, based on psychological facts, has power to invest life with a deeper meaning than any other form of moral or religious philosophy extant.

Swedenborg, one of the noblest heralds of all the John the Baptists who preceded the advent of Modern Spiritualism, more than a century ago established a science of correspondences. He declared that even the minutest thing in nature has its dual principle; that no grain of sand, no mote floating in a sunbeam, no animalcule, no microscopic insect, but is a type of something higher, something far more glorious; so that in the infinite littleness of nature, as well as in its infinite magnitude, there is no meaningless form.

If we could but carry into daily life the power to discern the divine significance of even the most apparently insignificant expressions of life, what a magical transformation would take place. How the dull, the commonplace, the prosaic would glow with meaning, becoming transformed as by the touch of some mighty magician's wand. Labor would be no longer a burden. In every task, however menial, we should find some noble teaching, and the drudgery of toil would be gone forever. A blade of grass, a snow-flake fluttering down to melt on the bosom of the earth, a pattering rain-drop, would not only become ministers of good, means of blessing, but would possess for us divine significance as well.

Take, for instance, so common a thing as a ray of light. In itself it is full of wonder and beauty; but subject it and its effects to a chemical analysis, and what does it become to us? The revealer of mighty principles at work revivifying and regenerating the whole earth. We find in it a creator of life, a dispenser of beauty, a servitor, whose divine mission it is to bring order out of chaos; a magician who, with grace and harmony as his servants, transforms into beauty the unlovely.

But when light becomes to us something more than the expression of material life, light and beauty, when it becomes a type, a revealer of spiritual light, truth and love, then its divine significance is made apparent, and we can reach forward with trusting assurance to a diviner regeneration, knowing that spiritual light, life and love are perpetual gifts, and in the sunlight of spiritual glory we can no longer fear for humanity or doubt its future.

If we can but realize the significance of life, we shall find a deep, rich meaning even in its most trivial events.

Measured by our natural wants, by our physical necessities, life seems but a continued struggle, a labored effort, a way beset with difficulties; but bring to bear upon it the law of correspondence, estimate it through the corresponding or spiritual life, and at once it assumes an import that makes it full of wonder and delight.

It has been asserted by some spiritual teachers that we are daily and hourly building our eternal mansion, even here on earth. This is the theme of one of Longfellow's finest poems, "The Builders":

"All are architects of fate,
Working in these walls of time,
Some with massive deeds and great,
Some with ornaments of rhyme;
Nothing useless is or low,
Each thing in its place is best;
And what seems but idle show,
Strengthens and supports the rest."

For the structure that we raise,
Time is with materials filled.
Our to-days and yesterday
Are the blocks with which we build.

Truly shape and fashion these,
Leave no yawning gaps between,
Think not because no man sees,
Such things will remain unseen.

In the elder days of art,
Builders wrought with nicest care
Each minute and unseen part;
For the gods see everywhere.

Let us do our work as well,
Both the unseen and the seen,
Make the house where gods may dwell,
Beautiful, entire and clean.

Ease our lives are incomplete,
Standing in these walls of time,
Broken stairways where the feet
Stumble as they seek to climb.

Thus alone can we attain
To those turrets where the eye
Sees the world as one vast plain,
And one boundless reach of sky."

Whether this be a truth or only a poetic fancy, matters not. In all that is most important it is true.

Life has not its limit in to-day. Were it so, we were of all men most miserable. Each event is infinite in its consequences, each thought eternal in its influence. If to-day we seek more earnestly the true and good, the aspiration is not for to-day alone. It is a perpetual, living witness of our endeavor. What is this thought that rises forever from the human brain, even as perfume rises from the flower, forever tending toward a life beyond the material? Is it vague unreality? Is it empty nothingness? Our philosophy declares it to be a substance, an entity, an effluence of our very selves. Is it not our very life, and does it not bear semblance to all that the individual is? Then need we hesitate to affirm that it is a real creation?

Take a simple illustration from nature. The plant springs from the soil. It puts forth leaf and blossom. The fragrance from its blossom reaches the sense. We find that each plant has its distinct individual fragrance, and speaks forth the life that evolved it. Even science, stern and cold from constant dealing with hard facts, grows poetic here, and tells us that the fragrance of the flower is never lost, that a grain of musk will send forth its incense for years, and no matter how diffused through limitless space it may become, no particle of it is ever destroyed, but forever identified and forever bearing its part in changing the relations of atoms, it retains an endless life. Just so thought, which is the incense from man's being, goes forth on its endless mission. It mingles its life with other life; it becomes assimilated; it diffuses itself, but it is never lost. Through age after age it retains its existence, and changes perpetually the relations or vital force of the universe of spirit. Is there no incentive here to pure, noble thought? Does it seem a truth beyond our comprehension, one that we hardly dare adopt, that there goes forth from us perpetually this power of good or ill, according to the nature and character of our thought-effluence? And yet he who accepts the Spiritual Philosophy must accept all that goes logically with it, and this truth is demonstrated clearly by the revelations of psychometry.

We would like to present some of the beauties of the philosophy of correspondences first declared by Swedenborg, because it shows more clearly than any other the true significance of life by endowing with individual importance every act and impulse, and making the daily achievements of life so grand, so overwhelming in their results, that each individual becomes a co-worker with the divine forces for the perfection and order of the universe.

Take for illustration an atom of matter: it may be almost formless and undefinable, but it bears in itself the stamp of infinite power and the seal of eternal existence, for its relations to all matter are perfect and accord with its individuality. But the correspondence of this atom in its external relations to its hidden life or spirit, seems very vague and unreal. Yet science attempts to grasp it. Take, for instance, any metal. Separate its parts. It is not a primate. It is soluble. It is composed of other metals. They have united in order to become a higher expression of life. Certain substances are considered as primates or not resolvable. But in reality there are no primates. Their elements are all to be found if we search for them. We analyze air, water, mineral, and resolve them into their gases, and we find that their appearance in recognized individual forms is by the law of each. Thus within each sand-speck that our foot crushes lies a hidden world. Its order, its unvarying obedience to its particular or individual law renders it a constant revelation of form, color and proportion to the external eye, and of attraction, combination and arrangement to the deeper search. Yet it is not without its still higher significance. It is a crystal; perhaps, and thus expresses the law of arrangement, and the tiniest crystal, a diamond, a ruby, a sapphire, or a bit of quartz, is a type of worlds forming in the universe of matter. But it has a still higher significance. As light expresses in its symbolism truth, so a crystal represents the power of arrangement, and we can speak of crystallized thought and of gems set in the coronet of heaven with a positive assurance of that power which arranges and combines in order and perfect unity.

Science declares that the law of the generation of cells that is so distinctly recognized in each leaf that unfolds itself from the parent tree is the very law that works in the nebular matter; in those limitless fields of space

above our heads forming worlds and universes of worlds.

Now, let us endeavor to carry this law to its higher expression. Does it not lead us directly to the portals of a spirit-world, a universe full of spirit-life and reality?

But our subject becomes too abstract, perhaps. Let us return to the significance of daily life. What higher meaning has it than the petty details, the eating, the drinking, the toiling and sleeping that make up its daily rounds? Has it, no symbolism, or is it cold, hard, real? Is its aspect as we look at it merely one of stern duty? Filled as it is with seemingly trivial circumstances, we place various estimates upon it.

To some it is a great work to be done as an imposed task, a stern necessity. To others it is a mazy dance, to be whirled through in thoughtless glee. To some it is a rough current. To others a voyage over a summer sea. Some live it with no to-morrow. Others know only a to-morrow. But to earnest, thoughtful, aspirational men and women, what is it?

I once knew a woman, living in poverty, whose faith in Divine Providence was so great that she could not mend a garment without a prayer to God that her work be done to his glory. No adversity could quench this sublime trust in the infinite good, the infinite love, the infinite wisdom that to her represented Deity.

Oberlin surveyed the road for the humble peasants of Switzerland as if kings and emperors or the Lord himself were to walk them, and give their approval, so earnestly did he ask for aid from on high in his work.

Still, struggling with poverty, and desiring above all things to complete his studies, prayed earnestly to his highest conception of divine love and beneficence, and he declared that men were sent to help him who gave to him freely, making no demands upon him, and asking no questions. There is abundant testimony to-day of gifts sent in answer to prayer that outdo all miracle. We Spiritualists comprehend the philosophy of it.

But to such men, what is life? It is the will of the Most High. It is the outworking of the divine purpose. A simple faith is sufficient for that. No sublime revelations of the Infinite are needed. Only the achievement of the truest, noblest and best that is within us, and the finding in every circumstance and event of life a deep and spiritual significance. That makes life one perpetual joy.

Some of you, perhaps, whose daily life is irksome, feel longings for something above its drudgery, its constant ministry to the necessities of life. We all know how sternly at times those necessities press upon us, seeming to shut out from our view everything besides. But take one seemingly trivial duty from the day, and what is the result? The world seems to move on undisturbed; but from the little world of individual order the beauty has departed because the harmony of relations is disturbed. Something that needed to be there is not found. Now can you not see what grandeur there is in the achievement that shall perfect even the humblest work? Put your hand to the lever. It lifts the great world of human wants. Conquer the necessity of life, and it becomes the means of perfection.

It is very hard to contend with physical weakness and pain. But it gives one a grand opportunity to test the power of spirit. See how its divine order will control disorder, if you but give it a chance. Take the simplest illustration—the laborer at work ditching. What sublimity there! Rough, hard work, hands stiffened and calloused, the body bent, down-looking. Where is God's work with him? But watch this powerful human engine at its labor. Why do the arms move? Why does the lever act? Find the great moving principle. See what spirit is doing. See how its energies are excited, its will made active. This is to the man what the hidden life-power was at work in mineral and in leafy cell.

But there is a sublimer lesson in man's energies than this. There is a moral conquest, and to him who sanctifies this toil and consecrates it to the higher purpose, it is no more mere toil, but it is the doing of the work of the highest. What if I labor at humble or even at menial tasks? If I do them nobly I am as truly a servant of the highest as if I achieved the greatest triumphs of genius.

If, then, our daily toil and labor may become thus sublime; if in its humblest duties I can find truth and beauty; if I can realize in all that I do inspiration from a higher life, then I feel courage to perform, for then I know the blessedness of achievement.

Take those lives filled with simple faith, with trusting reliance, and they reveal unto us a power that overcomes all discouragements.

The multitudinous duties and perplexities of daily life seem to call the mind from the exercise of its higher attributes; but all activity is the necessary development of the faculties. To think is the necessary act of the mind. Thought is evolved spontaneously, and it impels to action; it is the stimulant to effort. Consecrate thought, then, to its highest purpose, and every act of life becomes sacred. It is this carrying our faith into our daily lives which is to redeem the world. Not by strained efforts to promulgate it by words, but by living it.

It truly seems as if life were so stern, so real that it would be like clothing it in a semblance of fancy to attempt to take from it its severity and place about it the drapery of the beautiful; but he who does this does a nobler work than all moral teachers and preachers.

Could we separate this earth from the system of worlds, place it isolate and alone in space;

Counting time by days and months, quite a considerable period must have elapsed ere I was free to visit earth again. But there came a moment when, other tasks performed and other occupations having ceased for a little, I became conscious of a desire to return to my native city once more, and knew that it was a part of the Great Will that I should go. I use the words "native city" as a person on earth would use them. Only in heaven can the newborn soul realize that Paradise, from whence the soul first emanated, and whence it finally returns, is its native land.

It was evening again when I alighted on earth; but, this time, evening of a damp and chilly autumn day, which, dragging heavily to its close, had settled into a dark and gloomy night. Of the people who were on the streets none seemed to be out for pleasure. A general feeling of discontent and unhappiness pervaded the atmosphere, making it thick with complaints. Earth seemed anything else than a desirable resort for an inhabitant of celestial regions. And yet, knowing that I could at any moment escape the dreariness and discomforts of earthly conditions—environments, rather, which were no longer conditions to me—I derived a certain satisfaction from my surroundings; such as the enlightened traveler finds in traversing the wilds of Africa.

Naturally enough, my heart was drawn to my own people and the old homestead. I might, it is true, have easily put myself inside the house by force of will-power, unconscious of intervening space, but realizing now that I had been long since I had been there, I felt a desire to stroll up the familiar streets and approach the old home through the old avenue. But I hardly knew the place when I came in sight of it. I looked in vain for the ancient gateway, surmounted on each side by crouching stone lions, which had been at once my grandfather's pride and my own boyhood's terror. The house, too, was much too smart in its newly fledged finery. From the solid, plain, substantial mansion of my grandfather's, it had burst forth like the giddiest of butterflies, into all sorts of gables and bow-windows and modern exorcismes. It was gay with tri-colored paint, and the fine old lawn was cut up into shreds and patches of flower-beds, and held a profusion of fountains with hideous and impossible angels or cherubs in their midst. True, it was a dark night, but with my spiritually sharpened senses I could see all this as well as if the morning sun were shining.

There were so many porticoes and bits of verandas, one could not easily tell where the old door might have been; and even I, remembering perfectly the old house, hesitated some time before approaching the entrance under the *porte cochère*. Once there I amused myself with lifting the heavy knocker—the same old-fashioned one, I noticed, that I had long ago used to play with in the attic.

A man in livery came to the door, and seemed surprised to find no one there, and while he was peering out into the darkness, I slipped by him and stood once more in the ancestral hall. My brother, a boy in his teens when I had left earth, but now a handsome man of thirty, was descending the solid oak stair-case.

"Nobody there, James?" he asked.

"Nobody, sir," answered the man. "Though I could swear that knocker was never struck such a blow before."

I went up to my brother and put both hands on his shoulders. But serenely unconscious of me, he passed on into the library, where I followed him.

A strikingly handsome woman of the brunette type was reading a magazine seated in an easy-chair by the table. It was the same room where I used to wrestle with my Latin and mathematics; but there was nothing to tempt me to take up my school-books again. All the old well-worn and often rare books of my father were gone, and in their place rows upon rows of new ones in elegant bindings. They were the books of educated people, books of travel, history and fiction, books in a dozen languages and on a score of differing religions; but they were painfully new and ill at ease. They seemed to be favorites with nobody, and to exist solely for ornamental purposes. Costly paintings on the walls had superseded the old engravings I had admired in my boyhood; but they lacked that harmony of expression which is necessary to render any room effective in its best sense. In short the whole house, like the woman, who was evidently its mistress, lacked soul. It was the old home no longer.

Another knock at the door, and the man in livery let in a woman, who went immediately up the stairs.

"Who was it?" drawled the elegant woman from the depths of her silken upholstery.

"Alice Leland," answered my brother.

A slightly contemptuous expression came over the woman's face.

"I fear," hesitated my brother, as though not quite sure of his ground, "that she is having a harder time than usual this winter."

Literary Department.

"FROM THAT FAR COUNTRY."

Written Expressly for the Banner of Light,
BY HELEN M. WINSLOW.

There was no answer, as a leaf turned over in the magazine.

"Don't you think, dear," began my brother again, presently, "that we might contrive to do something more for her?"

"Why, certainly," was the answer. "If you wish to pose as guardian angel to a sentimental old maid, do so. I beg of you, don't hesitate one moment on my account."

The woman's voice was deliciously soft and well-modulated. Doubtless, before marriage, it had lacked that subtle note of sarcasm.

"If she needs money, give it to her," she continued. "Don't let's have any poverty-stricken friends coming to see mother."

"Alice is not a woman to whom one could offer money," said Gerald, patiently. "She was wealthy herself, you know, once, and is a highly refined and noble woman."

"Oh! undoubtedly," was the answer. "If she were half as worldly-wise, however, as she is transcendental in her notions, she need not suffer. How many women, do you suppose, would dream of refusing Mr. Atherton's offer?"

"But, Bruna," protested my brother, still patiently, "you do not realize. She is a great deal to us, Alice is. And she loved Robert as few women love a man."

An involuntary sigh escaped him, while a scornful smile flitted across the face of his wife.

"My dear," Gerald ventured further, "it has occurred to me that we might have her here in some capacity—as governess to the children or companion to mother—anyway so that she could have a comfortable home without injury to her pride. If you would, Bruna!"

"Thank you. But I must decline the pleasure you had so kindly mapped out for me."

His wife's tones were dulcet and suave to the utmost.

"As to the children, I want no half-invalid, disappointed old maid to attend them. And, as to your mother—well, you ought to know that she likes me none too well now. See what I have done to this gloomy old shell of a house—how it has blossomed out under the influence of my taste and my money! But, between us, I sometimes think your mother actually resents it as an unwelcome innovation!"

Gerald winced.

"It was her old home so many years, you know," he said, with an effort to control himself. "Alice could make her happier."

"Don't persist. It's tiresome," returned his wife, sweetly as ever. "Your mother, reinforced by that woman, between whom and myself there is about as much natural attraction as there is between oil and water, would look upon me with more coldness and disfavor than ever. No, sir! There is my purse. Give her money, if she needs it. I will not have her in my house."

"Bruna!"

My brother spoke sternly, and his wife, without another word, turned again to her magazine.

I left the room, full of pity for the brother who was wedded to this coarse nature for life, and found my way to my old room once more. It was now my mother's room.

There she sat in her big chair by the fire, older and feebler to outward vision than before, but, to me, the same young, fair, lovely mother who had hung over my cradle. For one of the blessed certainties of the "after-life" is the ability to see our friends as they really are. The mortal body grows old and wrinkled and withers away, but so long as the soul grows whiter, purified by sacrifice, and strengthened by its own struggles, we see them ever growing fairer and more really and eternally themselves. And so her whitened hair and aged, feeble body were but a veil through which I saw my beautiful young mother of long ago.

And Alice—ah, my Alice!

Pale and thin and drooping as she sat in the firelight, I had never loved her as at that moment. The loves of earth are poor things beside the purified, spiritualized passions which survive the change of death.

I drew closer to Alice, and tried with all my powers of concentration to make her feel my presence; but she did not raise her eyes from the fire.

"If things were only different here," said my mother, as if continuing a conversation, "and I could ask you to come and live with me always, what would I not give? But Gerald's wife—"

"I know," replied Alice, softly, without raising her eyes.

"And the worst of it is," pursued my mother, "the money is all hers. I don't remember telling you that Gerald has lost all he had by bad investments, and that most of what remained in my name has gone, too. There is scarcely enough left me to buy my clothes and give me a decent burial. Poor Gerald! But, frankly, I do not believe you would like living under the same roof with his wife, if you were to try it."

"I know I should not," said Alice, speaking decidedly. "We are completely antagonistic in our natures; so let us say no more of her." And Alice relapsed into silence again and her listless posture.

A pause, such as is permissible between close friends, ensued.

"And so, dear," said my mother, after a time, "I think you really ought, this time, to accept Mr. Atherton."

The muscles about Alice's patient mouth twitched a little, but she did not speak. My mother went on:

"That he loves you faithfully is proved by his persistent coming back to you, after years full of constant repulses. You really ought to reward him, for your own sake, if not for his. His attitude toward you is something remarkable in a man—really noble! It ought to melt a heart of stone."

"And if I were not made of stone," exclaimed Alice, moved by this appeal, "I could not resist it. But I am not!" she burst out passionately. "I am not made of stone. If only Robert were alive! If he still lived, and were in the remotest corner of this earth, I would go to him, on my hands and knees, if necessary, but I would go."

I tried to speak. I got before her, and tried to make her see that I was there, close to her, and there was no need of this vehemence of passion, because we both lived and loved somewhere, although apart as yet. But she went on unheeding:

"Oh, my dear old friend, if I could forget him for awhile! Life would be easier, it sometimes seems. But no, I will not say that. Somewhere in God's great universe he lives and does not forget me. Forget? It is not possible for a love so great as ours to be swept from existence because, simply, one of us has been removed to another sphere. Could I go on loving him as I do if there were a possibility even of his forgetting me? I tell you I am just as sure that I shall meet Robert again sometime, and that we shall be fully restored to each other, as I am that there is any after-life at all—that there is a God above us!"

"But the Bible says, you know," said my mother, wiping the tears from her cheek, and speaking in a hopeless tone, "that 'there shall be no marriage or giving in marriage there.'"

"Not marriage as we understand it," answered Alice confidently, "but between those who have loved on earth as we did, the full fruition of hope, the union of souls, made pure by years of trials and separation by realms of space and this veil of flesh. Why! the very last time I saw Robert I said goodbye to him for a few weeks only as I supposed—you know he was going to California the same day the fever came on; and, then, with the very last touch of his lips I seemed suddenly to stand in heaven, reunited to him again after years and years of absence. It was a moment of exquisite bliss and exquisite pain. A superstitious person would say the vision was a premonition of death; but it was something that has helped me wonderfully. When I have been the most discouraged the memory of that vision has returned again and again, like a bow of promise, and strengthened me unutterably. At times, too—only once in a while—he has seemed very near me. It seems now as if I could feel his presence; as if I might put forth my hand and touch him. Oh, Robert! Robert!"

She fell back in her chair exhausted. My mother with the help of her came over to her side.

"Alice, dear, you are excited," she said, smoothing the soft brown hair. "You must not talk of these things any more. It is not well for you."

Alice said nothing, and the room remained perfectly quiet for a time. I obeyed the strong impulse to speak.

"Oh, Alice!" I said; "it is all true that you have said, and much more. It hath not even entered into the heart of man to conceive the good in store for them that are faithful to the end. If I could only tell you what heaven holds for us in future!"

Then I became conscious that Alice had woken. In her enfeebled physical condition my presence was more than her emotional nature could endure without giving way. I felt that it would be a form of cruelty to compel her to submit to the strain of my presence longer, and with reluctance I left the room. I sought the attic, where I used to pass my rainy afternoons, and to my delight found there the books which had been banished from the library, where they had been the dear friends of my boyhood and early manhood.

It was so strange to sit down and read in a printed book again. In the new life we have much quicker processes of thought and study. Hence there was almost the fascination and novelty of practicing a new art, and I spent hours and hours there among my old friends, now wondering at the broad grasp of the human mind as evidenced among these learned tomes, and now amazed at its pitiful limitations.

It was noon of the next day before I sought my mother's room again. My brother had just come in.

"Did you get Alice home safely last night?" asked my mother.

"Yes," was Gerald's reply. "Poor thing! She seems pretty nearly used up. How on earth she supports herself and her mother is more than I know. Why don't she marry Atherton, and have done with all this miserable poverty? I wish she would."

"I've done my best to persuade her," answered my mother. "And I think she will yet. But she is in some ways a remarkable girl, Gerald. She still believes that Robert goes on loving her as of old. She almost frightened me last night. Why, she was sure of his being here with us—right here in this very room—only think of it!" And my poor mother shuddered.

"Poor old Robert!" said Gerald. "Don't believe it, though. You can just believe I would never come back here again if I once got to heaven." And my big brother gave himself a shake. "But seriously, I ought to go and inquire for Alice. She may be quite ill to-day. Haven't heard from her, have you? No? Well, I'll go right down. If Bruna asks where I have gone, say that I am going to the bank. I am going there before I get back," he added as an after-thought.

Knowing that I must not, for Alice's own sake, draw very near her, I yet felt an uncontrollable desire to go with Gerald, and followed him from the house. Close beside him, we went together down the streets, a visible and an invisible shape, but the hurrying people noticed neither of us. I felt drawn toward my younger brother as I had never done in our youth, and found myself wistfully wondering if he never thought of me. Perhaps it was true that my presence influenced him, for I heard him mutter as we turned the corner into the

quiet street where Alice lived: "Hang it, I could half-believe myself that Robert is somewhere round to-day. I feel as if I might turn around and speak to him any minute. What ails us all, anyhow? I reckon we're all on the road to becoming clairvoyants, or Spiritualists, or positivists, or something!" And he began resolutely to whistle an Italian song I used to sing.

It was a comfort to know that even the least spiritual natures among my friends on earth were not entirely unaffected by my presence, try as they might to shake off the mysterious influence of my spirit upon theirs.

We were soon inside the small rooms where Alice and her invalid mother lived. A rush of emotion swept over me as I noted the many familiar objects. Her old piano, to which I had often sung, stood in one corner. The books and pictures I had given her in the old days occupied their cherished places. And more than all was the essence of refinement and womanliness which emanated from the mistress of the little home, filling the room with an atmosphere most grateful to a susceptible ideality.

She came forward, looking quite pale, but calm and even bright. She was much better, she said, treating her fainting-fit of the evening before as a trivial matter, not worth speaking of. I gathered from the talk which followed, and from my ability to see below her assumed gaiety, that such turns were of frequent occurrence, and that she was really ill. A glimpse of long nights passed on her knees, of stern wrestlings with self and the Angel of Duty, passed before me; I saw far better than she could have told it, the life of self-denial and sacrifice and crucifixion of selfish ambitions which had been hers.

They talked on desultory subjects for a time. Then my brother said abruptly:

"Alice, pardon me; but accept a brother's advice, and do not struggle along this way any longer—just for a notion. Atherton's too fine a fellow to be turned off for a notion."

A spasm of pain contracted her features just an instant as they relaxed into a smile.

"Trouble yourself no more," she said gaily. "He has been here this morning again, and—tell your mother I did not say so."

Gerald seized her hand in congratulation.

"I've no doubt all my friends will rejoice," said Alice. "There's some comfort in that, if one isn't quite sure of one's self. There—I ought not to say that; but Mr. Atherton knows. He does not expect impossibilities. I could not bear that he, or any of you, should misunderstand me. He is willing to take me as I am—and there really seemed no other way open for me."

"I understand perfectly," said Gerald confidently, although I was sure he did not at all, "and I am glad you have come to take a sensible view of things."

We went away soon after, Gerald saying, under his breath, as we passed up the street: "Poor thing, she had to! It was either Atherton or the poor-house. Robert would have been a lucky fellow if he had lived."

This was the way my friends still looked at my death!

I did not linger on earth much longer. I could not remain near Alice. Her fine nature responded too thoroughly to my proximity to make it possible for me, who loved her, to impose my presence upon her, and I resolved to visit her no more so long as she dwelt on earth. It would be for such a little while, and then an eternity together. And from the very nature of her surroundings, life on the hither side of Death would be easier for her without me.

It seemed but a little while afterward when a sudden consciousness came to me in the Blessed Country of being urgently needed on the earth which I had decided to see no more for a time. I had never experienced this sensation of imperative requirement before, and I obeyed, unhesitatingly, the dominant necessity weighing upon me.

I soon found myself, without taking the least heed to my course, nearing the old city, and hurrying directly to Alice's lodgings. There were several carriages standing at the door, and people ascending the steps and entering the house; and an air of pleasant expectancy pervaded the rooms.

Up stairs was my Alice—dressed for her bridal, in white, filmy robes. My Alice, and yet not mine.

She was more spirituelle than ever, but underneath the white wanness shone the sweet face I had known and loved so long. A sharp, sudden pang shot through me as I realized that she was soon to give herself to another.

I had not blamed her. I had felt for her nothing but pity and a sort of gladness that she was to be sheltered from further rough contact with the world. But now, as she stood there waiting—just as she was once so soon to have stood waiting for me—a blinding, stifling throb of jealousy took possession of me.

"Alice, Alice," I cried, "come with me! Beloved, come with me!"

The gay chatter of bridesmaid and the badinage of happy friends went merrily on, and my earnest cry was unheeded.

Unheeded?

No. Alice heard me at last. One long, startled look, and with a stifled cry of glad release she flew across the room into my arms.

The frightened company, with alarmed whispers, gathered about her prostrate form in its wedding finery; but, together, Alice and I vanished from the room.

For her, as for me, Heaven had really begun.

We had passed the Gates of Death and entered into Eternal Life.

THE DIGNITY OF DEATH.

Here lies a common man. His horny hands, crossed meekly as a child's upon his breast, show marks of toil, and by his general dress you judge him to have been an artisan. Doubtless, could all his life be written out, the story would not thrill nor start a tear; he worked, labored, and suffered in his time, and now rests peacefully, with upturned face, whose look betrays all struggle in the past. A homely tale, yet, trust me, I have seen the greatest of the earth go stateily by, while about multitudes heaped the way, with less of awe. The gap between a king and me, a nameless gazer in the crowd, seemed not so wide as that which stretches now between us, this dead one and myself. Unfettered, dumb, and deedless, yet he is Transfigured by a touch from out the skies, until he wears, with all unconscious grace, the strange and sudden Dignity of Death.

—Richard E. Burton, in Scribner.

For Over Fifty Years

Mrs. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP has been used for children teething. It soothes the child, softens the gums, allays all pain, cures wind colic, and is the best remedy for Diarrhoea. Twenty-five cents a bottle.

Banner Correspondence.

Maine.

KNOX CENTRE.—Mrs. M. J. Wentworth writes: "New Year's Eve the Spiritualists of Belfast held a parlor meeting at Mrs. Benson's. The absence of Mrs. A. E. Clark, Mrs. Durban and Miss Hicks, all on account of illness, was much regretted, but the sent loving messages that were very acceptable."

Mrs. Lancaster, Mrs. Cunningham and Mrs. Staples opened the meeting with vocal and instrumental music, after which your correspondent spoke on 'The Old and New,' and in part said:

Standing on the threshold of the New Year our thoughts turn to the old with regret for our mistakes and faults, and gratitude and gladness for our blessings received, especially those which have helped us to uphold our immortal selves, and that of others. Looking retrospectively upon the past, we realize that the truth of spirit-return is among its choicest treasures. As in thought we review the growth and progress of this truth, how like a mountain stream it has broadened and deepened through the ages, until it has attained its present grandeur, we joyously exclaim: The things which now are have been, and the things which have been are yet to be. We hold with what unparallelled force it has spread into all channels of social, political and religious life, we reason inductively that the future will be radiant with its glory and might with a power so grandly incomprehensible to us of the present, that if some prophet gave it utterance, his truths would be considered more chimerical and improbable than those of the prophets who foretold things which are manifested in our day.

Thought, standing as it is in the domain of the unknown, and clinging to our grateful hearts the revelations of the past, how the consciousness of the soul's possibilities and the probabilities of their unfoldment energize and spiritualize; human life takes on a grander significance, and we exclaim, Wonderful, eternal and divine, art thou, oh life, that has no ending in the ages yet to come! On this eve of the glad New Year, with higher resolve and holier aspirations we reach out to the world of souls for higher inspirations that shall enable us to glean from future experience more of wisdom, truth and love.

Appropriate selections were rendered by Mrs. L. and others. Mrs. Curtis spoke under control of her guide very acceptably to all. Mrs. Staples, under control of 'Sunbeam,' gave manifestations of a glad child's soul-life that were like spring flowers from a sunnier clime. Dr. Colson of Belfast made interesting remarks on the 'Present of the Present,' saying that the spiritual manifestations of the past confirmed those of the present, and Mr. J. Stuart spoke of the high moral teachings of his favorite book, 'Oahspe.' Mr. Stuart has finished a commodious room in his house, and supplied it with chairs and a musical instrument, and proffered it free of charge to the Spiritualists, who appreciate his kindness and have already at times availed themselves of its use.

When in Belfast I called on a lady who is a graduate of the Monroe School of Oratory. She is not a Spiritualist, but an earnest investigator. I told her that her readings and teachings as an elocutionist were not all of her work, but preparatory for work waiting her in the future, a helpful work her spirit-friends want her to do. Truth needs cultured workers now as in olden times; first the fishermen, and others unbiased and trusty, then the cultured and grand apostle, Paul, to witness to the truth. It is said history repeats itself. The materialist and agnostic, under the leadership of Ingersoll and others, are demolishing the strongholds of error and superstition. Heber Newton, M. J. Savage and others, our Watsons, Sidney Deans and Baxters, are they not culling from the old and gleaming from the new material with which to build up a bulwark of facts around the citadel of truth from which immortality may be permanently revealed?"

Missouri.

OREGON.—"Holt" writes: "No one was ever more incredulous than myself concerning religious creeds, spiritual facts and a future state. When the Rochester knockings began I laughed at the utter folly of those who could for a moment seriously regard them. 'Another nine days' wonder, soon to be forgotten,' was my comment. For years I paid no regard to newspaper statements about them. Fourteen years passed since the first rap through the Fox children, March, 1848, and we were in the autumn of 1862 when by chance I overheard some one reading an item from a newspaper."

"What paper is that?" I asked.

"THE BANNER OF LIGHT, a spiritual paper," was the reply.

"A spiritual newspaper!" I exclaimed; "and is it possible that there are enough people who believe in Spiritualism to sustain one newspaper?"

"One paper, dear sir! there are several papers, with two or three magazines, devoted to that cause."

This was adding amazement to simple wonder—such was my ignorance. Examining the newspaper the person was reading, I found that it was one which required a very large patronage. Its advertisements indicated the existence of many thousands of readers and others who were practical believers in Spiritualism. I was business man enough to know that.

My wonder was lost in pity. I felt toward them what most of us feel toward those we call 'heathen,' and with just as good reason. I was yet to learn that a man's wisdom and experience enlarge his capacity of believing; that doubt and denial have ever been the readiest tools of ignorance, as persecution is its first resort. It occurred to me, however, that this 'humbly' was disappointing the predictions made in 1848 that it would be short-lived. Here it was, contrary to all precedent, living and thriving fourteen years on my hands.

Having plenty of time on my hands, I determined to gratify my curiosity as to 'why this thing still existed and flourished.' Accordingly I went to work. First I procured all the books by authors of good repute on the subject, and among these Howitt's 'History of the Supernatural,' Owen's 'Footfalls,' Judge Edmonds's works, and others. I was astounded at the weight of the testimony by direct witnesses. Meanwhile I watched the current news, and whenever I heard or read a spiritual story in which the address of the witnesses was given, I sought them out and cross-examined them. Again to my surprise, out of about one hundred instances I found but one that was not founded on absolute facts. Taking advice of persons of sound judgment and experience in the matter, I confined my personal investigations to opportunities occurring under my own roof with mediums above suspicion of deceit, and learned that there is beyond all doubt a something that cooperates with and often acts independent of mediums, and claims to be a living intelligence with a self-consciousness prolonged from this mortal life.

The inquiries I made brought me some remarkable communications. My memory being very tenacious of facts, in a few years I had acquired a knowledge of a vast number, any one of which is enough to establish the claim that human intelligence and self-consciousness survive the dissolution of the earthly body."

Rhode Island.

PAWTUCKET.—Mrs. Charles W. Clough writes: "Spiritualism is progressing quite favorably in Pawtucket. Dec. 7th, 1890, a few friends met at our home and formed 'The Pawtucket Spiritual Association.' We continued to meet at the same place during December, but as we could not accommodate the increasing number who wished to attend, we hired a room having a seating capacity of about sixty. Two months later we were obliged to hire a larger hall; still the number increased until we had to move again, and now occupy Barker's Hall, with a seating capacity of over two hundred. Since the opening of this season, Oct. 1st, we have had many good speakers and test-mediums. Sunday, Jan.

10th, Marguerite St. Omer lectured and gave readings, and on Jan. 17th and 24th, little Holt-Harding, and the 31st Mrs. St. Omer again. Both these ladies have given great satisfaction here by their lectures and tests. The mediums have been very kind in giving us benefit circles and seances. Mrs. Ross, materializing medium, gave us a benefit seance Dec. 17th, which was very satisfactory as to manifestations and financially. Saturday evening, Jan. 10th, Nettie Holt-Harding gave us a benefit test-circle, which also was satisfactory. Mrs. Harding and Mrs. St. Omer have given remarkable tests. The people are taking great interest. They are forming family circles, and a number of good mediums are being developed. The work has been hard, but I feel that we have been blessed and well repaid."

PROVIDENCE.—Mrs. J. R. writes: "For years I have been an honest investigator of the truths of Modern Spiritualism, but never received such convincing proofs of the continuity of life beyond so called death as I have through the mediumship of Marguerite St. Omer, who was a stranger to me when I visited her for independent slate-writing, and received a message and picture of my deceased mother; since which I have attended some of her seances for tests by spirit telegraphy, and received beautiful communications from friends and relations who died in France and Germany. One message I received from a dear friend of mine who was drowned was remarkable, as it enumerated circumstances in my life that only he and myself were conversant with. She is the only medium I ever saw in my years of investigation through whom I received telegraphic messages and could talk with the friends of my youth as though they were present in the flesh. Long may she live to be an instrument to bring messages to earnest searchers for spiritual truth and proofs of an immortality."

PROVIDENCE.—"Argus" informs us that some of the mediums in that city are making great efforts, by the devotion of time and energy, for spreading the grand truths of Spiritualism. At a circle held there recently several prominent mediums were present, among them being Mrs. Cora Hazard, a gifted prophetic instrument; Mrs. Williams, who, while under control, is a most excellent linguist, and Mrs. Minnie A. Lathrop, who is known, he writes, in that vicinity as the singing medium. At the close of the circle it was decided to form a society to be called "The Magnetic Band," the object of which organization will be the making of missionary visits by its members among the people in the suburban towns and villages, giving magnetic treatments and holding circles wherever called, "without money and without price."

Colorado.

DENVER.—S. M. Bartholmes writes: "A most worthy medium has been in our city a few weeks, Jules Wallace from Australia. He is creating great interest here among many who have only begun to see the truth of spirit return. He holds developing circles, and at almost every circle some one becomes influenced by their spirit friends. It is hoped he may remain here some time, as such earnest and faithful workers are needed in every city. He is a complete visitor to the East before he returns to his native home. Few, if any, of his power have been in our city before."

Connecticut.

NORWICH.—W. W. Clapp writes: "We have here in Norwich quite a flourishing society of Spiritualists, which holds two meetings every Sunday, with such speakers for this season as Dr. F. L. H. Willis, Mrs. R. S. Lillie, A. E. Tisdale and Willard J. Hull—each of them for one month; then for two or three Sundays each Mrs. Clara H. Banks, Mrs. Helen Stuart-Richings, Mrs. Clark Kimball, Mrs. Loring, et al."

Spiritual Phenomena.

Seance with Mrs. Sawyer.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

At a recent circle held at 243 West Nineteenth street, New York City, by Mrs. Carrie M. Sawyer, the excellent materializing medium, manifestations so remarkable occurred that I think an account of them will interest your readers.

The seance in question took place in a private house, only a few being present.

The lady who manages Mrs. Sawyer's circles objected to the medium sitting, as she had been quite ill all that day, but Mrs. Sawyer said she would try, and see if we would get anything. While she was standing outside the cabinet, which is only a small clothes-closet, "Elan," the well-known control, spoke from inside the cabinet and said: "I see that a gentleman present has come prepared to apply a very simple and yet strict test to our medium. I have no objections, sir, to your test."

The gentleman seemed surprised at what the control said, and admitted that he had intended to ask to have his test applied. It was certainly a very simple one, and one I had never witnessed before. The test was this: He placed Mrs. Sawyer's hands on a piece of drawing paper, and with a pencil drew a mark around each finger; as there was no table in the cabinet a large music book was procured, upon which the paper was placed; another sheet of paper was deposited on the floor, upon which the medium's feet were placed, and that was marked likewise. After having finished his marking the gentleman said that in case the medium moved one-eighth of an inch it would be easily detected, as it would be impossible for her in the dark to place either hands or feet in the same pencil markings.

Mrs. Sawyer submitted to this test, as well as she does to all others, without a word of complaint. No sooner had the gentleman left the cabinet than a very tall female form followed him out into the room and led him back to the cabinet; he said he saw the medium in her chair as he had left her. Two forms, male and female, appeared at the same time, and calling for their sister Lucy, were recognized by a lady answering that name as her mother and sister. My father and little daughter came out together, and calling for me gave me some private information which I know no mortal ever could have known. To me it was the best test I have ever received of the intercommunion of the two worlds.

While my relatives were conversing with me, "Maudie," the little familiar control of the medium, appeared at my daughter's side and saluted the circle. She said: "It seems so funny to see the medium sit so straight, with her hands on the paper."

Two and three forms appeared repeatedly together during the evening; but the most remarkable manifestation was yet to occur. Toward the close of the seance "Elan," the control, came out into the room, and while addressing the circle we noticed something growing out of his side, which soon developed into a beautiful female form floating horizontally into the room; it detached itself entirely from "Elan's" side, and, hovering over our heads, greeted us with a few words. It was distinctly visible, being robed in a glittering mass of white. While watching this wonderful materialization, which I know was one, the form gradually disappeared in the same manner as it had come, "Elan" standing in full

view at the cabinet the whole time the floating form was out.

Other forms appeared to the different friends in the circle, which were recognized.

Maudie gave many tests from the cabinet, which were all acknowledged as correct.

At the close of the seance the medium was found in the same position as she had been placed, which proved conclusively to the gentleman that she had not moved either hands or feet during the entire seance.

Mrs. Sawyer is truly a wonderful medium, and there seems no limit to the power of the spirits who manifest through her when the conditions are favorable. The lady who manages the seances related some extraordinary manifestations she has witnessed with Mrs. Sawyer privately. One was a few days ago, when Mrs. S. was ill in bed. A male form materialized in the presence of her attending physician, and diagnosed her case accurately; the doctor recognized the form as that of an old classmate long deceased.

Mrs. Sawyer will hold seances at the above number on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday evenings and Thursday afternoons.

New York City, 1892. ADELAIDE ADAMS.

Development of Mediumship.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

There is always food for reflection furnished at the afternoon meeting of the First Society of Spiritualists at the New Music Hall, New York City, every Sunday. Mrs. M. E. Williams presides over this meeting, and is the chief caterer of spiritual nourishment. She is an accomplished parliamentarian, so to speak, and very strict in the enforcement of rules, a fact which the novitiate and aspiring orator will testify to.

Sunday, January 17th, her diplomacy in this matter was well tested, and the result gave proof of her large experience and diversified knowledge. There was a very interesting discussion started on "Medial Development," and, as may be supposed, there was a clashing of opinions. Each speaker would almost convince you that his idea on the subject was the only rational one to arrive at, till you heard the next; but by the time they all got through, and Mrs. Williams had pronounced her conclusions, you would imagine they were all of the one opinion. And so they were; but it required a master mind to mold them into harmony. And so Mrs. Williams has grown into popularity, and those Sunday afternoon meetings are largely attended.

One of the speakers who inveighed against the "developers" was a Frenchman, with somewhat imperfect pronunciation, but very sound logic, as it appeared to me. He contended that we must cultivate harmony in ourselves, in order to be efficient instruments for the spirit-world, rather than depend upon what is to be gained by developing circles.

There was a patriarchal-looking gentleman who argued that mesmerism is the most prolific source of development of mediumship.

Mr. Walter Howell had something to say on the subject. Mediumship *per se* is not moral or immoral. He held that manifestations of spirit-power may be had through the organism of a person whose character may not be "highly developed." "First of all," he said, "see you are good men and women if you want to become good mediums. It is vastly more important that a man shall be a good man rather than anything else; but if he is a good man first, I do not mind how much of a medium he becomes after." This philosophical sentiment brought forth resounding plaudits.

Mrs. M. E. Williams now made an address, preparatory to the presentation of the phenomena, in her peculiarly fascinating and convincing way. Her exposition of the laws governing the phenomena was delivered in a slow, gentle voice, and was so luminous and direct that the casual visitor could clearly understand.

Mrs. Mott-Knight gave an exhibition of the phenomena of slate-writing. A committee of four—ladies and gentlemen—taken haphazard from the audience, sat at the table with her. Everything passed satisfactorily.

Mrs. Margaret Fox-Kane exhibited that phase of the phenomena for which she is so remarkable.

All through the afternoon there was a rapid succession of spirit-rapping, which the uninitiated, like myself, attributed to some unruly member of the audience; but this "disturbance" was sufficiently explained by a remark of Mrs. Williams in the course of her address, when she referred to the spirits' cooperation in her views.

"Maggie Fox," as the Spiritualists here affectionately call her, does not look prosperous, and she was certainly the most unconcerned of all in that hall. She didn't appear to want "conditions"; and as she came to the platform it seemed as if the spirits vied with the mortals in their demonstrations of applause. During the slate-writing test there was a call for "square and above-board dealing," but in the case of Maggie Fox it was not only above-board but under the boards, about and around, and in the very air. I sat with some friends at a distance of one hundred feet from the platform, and at one time the rapping was so distinctly under our chairs that some women were in a state of momentary consternation, as though an imprudent mouse were nosing around.

At the suggestion of Mrs. Williams, Maggie Fox moved through the audience, giving spirit communications to those to whom she was attracted, and during this time the rapping was more intensified.

This meeting was the most satisfactory of any such I have ever attended, and under the benign influence of the spirits, and the wise direction of Mrs. Williams, I hope to see many more such.

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, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and 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 wish it, this recipe in German, French or 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.

Because I differ with my parents, because I am convinced that my father was wrong in some of his religious opinions, Mr. Talmage insists that I disgrace my name. How did the Christian religion commence? Did not the first disciples advocate theories that their parents denied? Were they not false—in his sense of the word—to their fathers and mothers? How could there have been any progress in this world if children had not gone beyond their parents? Do you consider that the inventor of a steel plow cast a slur upon his father, who scratched the ground with a wooden one?—Ingersoll.

Constitutional or scrofulous catarrh, sore eyes, etc., surely cured by Ayer's Sarsaparilla.

I have been enjoying of late a glorious mediumistic opportunity: Mrs. Wm. B. Butler (Maggie Folsom Butler), of your city, has been visiting Mrs. Huyler here for some days, and these two psychics—each endowed with rare and lofty gifts—have, by their united power, called around them hosts from the spheres above to cheer and enlighten us. If I should enter into detail, I should not know where to begin or where to stop. As each one paused the other took up "the wondrous tale," and continued it with test upon test of the most delightful character.

To be, sure, we have passed beyond the region of tests and phenomena; and yet, it is not to be denied that it is always gratifying to have them come.

As next summer these two mediums are to occupy their cottages at "Craigledge-on-Maranacook," in Maine—that spot of singular beauty and romance, a strange promontory that juts into the blue and crystal lake—and near the lovely cottage of your partner, Mr. Rich, it is presumed that you, Mr. Editor, the veteran spreader of spiritualistic intelligence, will go, there, too; and then, mayhap, you will have the repetition of the angelic scenes which we have been witness of for the last few days. Glad will all the cottagers be that elysium be to welcome you to their country homes.

"You're in the 'taint, yes, more than 'that,' in 'th knowledge" of the earth of the earth LUTHER R. MARSH.

110 Benton Avenue, Middlesex Co., Orange Co., N. Y., Jan. 11th, 1892.

Message Department.

ON TUESDAYS AND FRIDAYS

Of each week Spiritual Meetings will be held at the Hall of the Banner of Light Establishment, free to the public, commencing at 8 o'clock P. M. J. A. Shetler, Chairman.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS, AND THE GIVING OF SPIRIT MESSAGES, will occur on the same day, and the results will be published in this Department of THE BANNER.

At these Spiritual Meetings of Mrs. M. T. Longley, occupy the platform for the purpose of answering questions proper to the spiritual life, and of bearing upon human life in its departments of thought or labor. Questions forwarded to this office by mail, or by letter, will be presented to the presiding spirit for consideration.

Mrs. Longley, under the influence of her guides, also gives examinations of individuals, and sends messages to their relatives and friends in the earth-life an opportunity to do so.

It should be distinctly understood that the Messages published in this Department indicate that spirits carry with them to the life beyond the characteristics of their earthly lives—whether of good or evil; that those who pass from the mundane to the spiritual life, in this condition, eventually progress to a higher state of existence. We ask the reader to receive no doctrine put forth by spirits in these columns that does not comport with the reason. All express as much of truth as they perceive—no more.

It is our earnest desire that those who recognize the messages of their spirit-friends will verify them by informing us of the fact.

Natural flowers are gratefully appreciated by our angel visitants, therefore we solicit donations of such from the friends in earth-life who may feel that it is a pleasure to place upon the altar of their spirit-friends.

Letters of inquiry in regard to this Department must be addressed to

Questions Answered and Spirit Messages
GIVEN THROUGH THE TRANCE MEDIUMSHIP OF
Mrs. M. T. Longley.

Report of Public Séance held Nov. 17th, 1891.

Spirit Invocation.

Oh! Holy Spirit, thou Supreme One, who art all love, all wisdom and intelligence, we feel that all things in being are thine, and that we thy children may turn to thee for aid. We shall receive from thee inspiration, and from the ministrations of thy pure and beautiful attendants something that shall quicken our spiritual understanding and give us light. We reach out toward thee in thought and aspiration at this hour longing to know more of thy life, and to comprehend thy laws more deeply, that we may expand in knowledge and grow in wisdom so as to become fitted to judge upon the things of existence. We are like children groping in the dark, knowing but little of the things which pertain to life, and understanding only faintly the grandeur of the universe. This has been hidden from us because of human ignorance. This we would fain see, and the soul of mankind stands in need of thy light to reach into those wonderful laws of the vast universe.

May we receive from angel friends who come to us tidings of the eternal world and its laws? May we be made to discern our own plane of life and realize something more of its stupendous works? We behold Nature's glorious handiwork on every side, but we are unable to comprehend its immutable law, that the very soil beneath our feet may reveal to the searching soul wonderful things full of instruction; and that the stars above our heads may unfold a grand and beautiful story that shall form the basis of our knowledge, the hand that made them. So would we learn of these things and find our inner natures expanding more and more, becoming more and more intelligent, and more fitted to comprehend the things that belong to eternity.

We desire to come into communication with intelligences from the spirit world, and to receive from them aid and inspiration to mortal life some word and some influence that will be freighted with good results. May they send forth an atmosphere that will surround us, and give us the power to reach, and may it bring to such souls peace and the consciousness of immortality.

We ask thy blessing, O Lord, and we seek the ministrations of pure spirits now and forever.

Questions and Answers.

CONTROLLING SPIRIT.—You may present your queries, Mr. Chairman.

Ques.—[By L. N. Smith.] A lady who is soiling funds for a charitable institution which she says she has started, was asked how she obtained the money that she expended for it, and she replied: "By nursing, taking in washing, and speculating." With all due respect for the lady's good intentions, I ask would not the most charitable work for all the people be to reform the government, that makes speculation possible? 2. Does not speculation for money or property make the poor poorer, or hinder them from improving their circumstances? Is it charitable or honorable for any person to take from the poor, or in any way directly or indirectly to oppress the poor, in order to give to the poor? If the poor had justice, would they need "charity"?

Ans.—If exact justice was dispensed throughout the dominions of the earth by governments and by individuals, there would, undoubtedly, be no poor human beings in the world; but the reign of justice has not yet come to this planet. You have lived in the past, in the present, and in the future, through the ages of the world's history—through the dark ages, through the iron age—but you have not yet come to the golden age of love.

When we consider that mankind has been placed upon this planet, originally shackled by the bonds of ignorance, obliged to cope with varying conditions, mostly adverse ones, and to struggle to maintain an existence upon the footstool, we may not be surprised that selfishness has been the quality most prevalent in the human family. Selfishness, we say? Yes; for man has struggled with his fellow-men, striving not only to maintain his own place, but to crowd himself forward into some better place, many times regardless of those whom he pushed to the wall while making his way; and so selfishness, engendered by greed and other qualities of the animal man, has predominated largely, and the iron age of rule has extended its sway over the people.

Man is progressing, standing on a feeble individual, preyed upon by all sorts of adverse circumstances, yet has made his way onward until he has reached a plane where he deems himself conqueror in many respects. So he is, for he has studied and mastered much, has gained knowledge and power, and has achieved many results for the good of the race. Yet the spirit of greed is still abroad, and this is undoubtedly the spirit of speculation. We do not believe in speculation, in the sense that word is understood in the business world; we do not believe in trading upon other people, or in preying upon the poor and their interests; and when love and justice rule, there will be no such spirit rampant throughout the world.

Legitimate trade in the circles of business we certainly do endorse. We do not intend to be rabid upon any question or subject that may come up for consideration. We wish to occupy a broad platform, and to extend our aid to human beings charity and kindness of thought. We do not believe that man really, in himself, as an immortal spirit, desires to prey upon his fellow-creatures, or to commit such deeds as will bring him to the front at the expense of those whose sacred possessions or lives he tramples upon; but we do know that the conflicting conditions of life, the inherited traits of character, the perverted qualities of human nature, and all the circumstances which have hedged mankind in, have operated in many instances in producing individuals, even of the present day, in this enlightened century, who are all too selfish, too grasping, too regardless of the rights of others, and who rush heedlessly on, looking to their own interests at the expense of their fellow beings.

Your correspondent opens his remarks with an allusion to some individual who is, presumably, engaged in good work, wishing to do that which will be of benefit to mankind. We have no word of censure to utter of any one who is engaged, earnestly and sincerely, in an unselfish work for the blessing of his fellow-beings. If the lady alluded to has sacrificed her own tastes and inclinations sufficiently to go to the wash-tub, as is stated, and to there labor hard, as she must have done in such an avocation, in order to gain a few dollars to be put aside for the benefit of the needy, we who stand aloof, and have operated in many instances in producing individuals, even of the present day, in this enlightened century, who are all too selfish, too grasping, too regardless of the rights of others, and who rush heedlessly on, looking to their own interests at the expense of their fellow beings.

If we would, one and all, attempt to do a service for mankind in some good way, whether it be by putting our hands to the wash-tub, to the saw-horse, or in some other manner employing our energies, and expending the returns therefrom for the benefit of our kind, we should find but little time to criticize the doings of others. We believe in good works, and we believe in the exercise of a broad spirit of practical charity and of kindly feeling.

We do believe, with your correspondent, that when the time comes that true justice shall rule and every man shall wish to see his fellow-beings accorded that which belongs to

them by right of birth and by right of living in this broad world, when the reign of love shall dawn, and every individual has the desire to see his brother and sister placed in a condition above want and sorrow and pain, there will be no need of the exercise of that quality which you call charity; that is, bestowing alms upon the needy and giving bread to the hungry—because there will be no needy and no hungry anywhere in the world.

Q.—[By A. H. Nicholas, Summerland, Cal.] "There is no barrier to man's progress save his distrust of himself." Is this statement true?

A.—In one sense this may be a truism; in another, not. Circumstances have much to do with the condition of every human being. Inherited traits of character and qualities of mind also have much to do with the successful or unsuccessful career of every man and woman. There is no doubt but that self-distrust has much to do with the failure in life of those who are diffident, who have but little confidence in their own powers, and who, therefore, do not go out into the world determined to conquer all difficulties and to overcome all obstacles in their path to success.

Confidence in his own powers and inherent qualities has a great deal to do with the successful achievement of human endeavor in every department of thought, expression and labor; but, as we have said, circumstances, or the environments of individuals, have much to do with the results of one's life. Therefore it may not be possible for one person who is peculiarly organized, and who is circumscribed by depressing conditions, to exert that quality which we call self-confidence, or to develop and exercise a trust in his own powers; while another, born with the quality of positive energy stamped upon his own individuality by the character bequeathed to him by his ancestry, may go forth into the arena of manual or mental labor well equipped as a warrior to do battle and to win the victory.

So, while we may concede, on the one hand, that distrust of himself is a great foe to man's success, yet we cannot wholly concede that this is the only enemy which prevents a man from carving out that career which he may desire. We have seen cases of individuals who have had fairly reasonable self-confidence, who have trusted in their own powers, and who have known positively that they possessed those qualities which, if put into action, would bring them before the world and produce fine results in some department of human life; and we have seen these individuals, confident of their own powers, yet so hedged about by circumstances in the outward life, which in a large measure governed their existence, that they were unable to break away from these conditions. It was not possible for them to step out into the broader road leading to successful achievement, and they have spent their lives on earth in a narrow circle, feeling the powers within, conscious of their spiritual and mental possessions, yet unable, because of the world and the conditions which it afforded to them, to give a natural and an active expression to these forces of which we speak.

Therefore, while we know that self-distrust prevents the use of a useful career, or of a brilliant career we will say, for some, this is not the cause of the non-success of all those who have joined the great army of individuals who have not made the most of what is within them, because we all know that there are many laws impinging upon human life, and that every one of these operates according to the circumstances and the conditions of this human life, and human beings are affected by them accordingly. Yet we do not claim that man is altogether a creature of fate. We believe that he can, to a certain extent, through the force of his spiritual nature when he comes to understand that immortal life within him, rise above the material limitations and make something of himself, which could not be done were he a creature of fate alone.

Martha Washington Ames.

I hesitate a little in coming here, for this is a strange place to me. I am not familiar with this section of the country, and so long a time has passed since I left the body that I do not know as I shall be welcomed by my friends who still linger upon the earth.

I have friends, or at least I think I can say there are those who are friendly to me, for I know they have thought of me many times since I left the body long ago; and if they can be persuaded that I still continue to think of them and feel a kindly regard for them, they will show a friendship for me now. My friends are in Wheeling, W. Va., and I would like them to know that I am still in the so-called dead, but it is not a dead world, nor are its people lifeless. It is a land of life and of active force, and those who dwell there are full of activity and strength.

I have friends with me in the spirit-world. Some of them passed on before I did, and others have come to the great and beautiful life since I went, and they are all as happy there as they were on earth, and even more so, for they understand life and its purpose more fully than they did here. We all had our interests here of a material nature. Some of them now seem to have been frivolous and of small account as we view them from the spiritual standpoint; but I presume we all have our experiences to teach us. We of the spirit-world had ours on earth, as my friends who are here are gaining theirs, and it may be for the best. We bring our love back to our friends, and ask them to learn, if they can, something of the Spiritual Philosophy; and to try among themselves to get into communication with their friends in the other life. We will do our part, and it would be a great pleasure to us to be able to bring into the homes of those we have known on earth some evidence of immortal life and a knowledge of our love for those who are here.

I am Martha Washington Ames.

Barney Gallagher.

[To the Chairman:] How d'ye do? [First-rate. How are you?] I'm pretty good now. I did not feel so well before I went out, but I've been gone over quite a while now, and I'm all right. I feel pretty well, will you, please, that I'm feeling pretty good.

I was an old man, and for some time before I went out I did not do much; but I was a hard worker in my time, and I tried to live prudent like, and so I felt I had a right to keep quiet in the latter end. Yes, sir, at the very last I did not feel good at all. I had trouble with my foot, and I went to the hospital, and—well, I won't say any more, only it did not do me a bit of good. In one way it did not, and then when I look it from the spirit-side and see all that I have found out since I went over, I think I did do me a great deal of good, because the trouble sent me out of the body, and I gave up the things of this world—that is, you know what I mean, that belong to the physical life. I did not give up everything, because I left a good wife here and a family. I kept right on seeing how the boys were getting along and how everything was doing, and I didn't lose sight of them over there.

[To the Chairman:] Well, sir, I want to say that I've got back feeling in good shape. I'm all whole, I've got two feet as good as any you know about, and I have a bit of fault to find. I lived in Palmer. Do you know where that is? [Yes.] Well, it's in this State. I lived there a long, long time, and in one place a long bit, and I'm sure I'll not be forgotten. Then, you know, my people are there, and I come to bring them a good feeling, and to tell them how well I am.

[To the Chairman:] I've met many on the spirit-side that are in first-rate condition. They're feeling good to be out of the body, and there's no trouble about it, either. I didn't get into a dark place. Sure, it was pretty light when I got out, and I felt that a good thing had come to me.

I was a Catholic, and I have not got anything to say against the Catholic religion. I think it is pretty good sort of a religion to hold on to. Of course, there are things different now on the spirit-side. I and we don't need the masses, we don't need the praying, and, sure, we get along just as well, or we could, without all those things that are said for the repose of our souls; but, then, I don't care, because, don't you see, it sends out to them that are gone a kindly feeling like, a good, strong sympathy, and it warms them up, and makes them feel good.

I'd like to get to me family. I'd like to tell me boys all about this other life, and what's going on over here, and give them a bit of knowledge concerning the great spiritual world before they get out of this life. Perhaps I'll have the chance to do it some day when the right time comes. If they hear me rapping around, they needn't be frightened; I won't hurt any of them. They might ask, you know, if it's me, and I'll do the best I can to make myself understood.

Give me greeting to all me old friends, and tell them I'm glad to speak to them from the other world. I'm Barney Gallagher.

Joseph W. Van Gilder.

It seems just the right time for me to slip in here and send a word to my friends in Cincinnati, O. I lived there, and my home was at the corner of Henry street.

My friends to know that I have come, and that I have been looking around to give them a word from the spirit-world. Not long ago there was a medium on the public platform in the "Queen City," who was giving some words from spirits who were present trying to reach their friends. I was there, and I wanted to say a word. [To the Chairman:] Well, the experience gave me an influence, sir, that helped me to look out for other channels, and I think it has helped me to come here. I am ready to say now that I am not sorry for the change. I was at first a little. I could see things on this side to be attended to. I knew of affairs that ought to draw me here, and I was not just satisfied when I found myself dead; but I have got over that, and have been looking up the things that belong to my new life, and am about satisfied now that it is all right.

I was not an old man when I went out of the body. I was about the last of the month. I have been forty-four, and I feel that I did not know so much of this world after all as I ought to have known. I did not feel that I had done the best I could, and there were many things to think about when I collected my senses on the other side. You see, forty-four years is a very short period of time in a man's life when he has eternity open before him; but I had my experience, as far as it went, and I know it will do me good even on this spirit-side.

[To the Chairman:] Now, if you will tell my friends that I have come here, that I am feeling very well, and am all ready to meet them if I can have the chance, I shall be much obliged to you.

I am Joseph W. Van Gilder.

S. R. Leland.

I look upon this place, Mr. Chairman, as a sort of outpost where one may look out toward the town or the country to which he as a mortal belonged; and so I come here to lean out to my friends in Farmington, Me., and to give them my report from the spirit-side of life.

Here, I was interested in agriculture. In fruit-raising, in stock-raising, and I am not entirely out of that line of labor and interest now.

You can call me S. R. Leland, and tell the friends that the old man has come back ready to grasp them by the hand and to give them a favorable report of the new country. Its climate is mild and adapted to luxuriant growth, not only of nature's products, but also of man's mentality, and I am satisfied that this is a world offering great advantages to the progressive mind. I do not exactly see that a man has to trouble himself greatly on this spirit-side concerning the means of gaining a livelihood. I do not think you can knock him out of existence if you try. I am sure you cannot starve him out. If a man doesn't have something to eat every few hours, he gets into a deplorable condition on this side; if he does not find the means of sustaining life through feeding his body, he is very soon sent out of that physical covering; but I don't exactly see that state of things on the spirit-side. One doesn't have to put all his thought into the one act of getting a living, and so perhaps suppressing all the mental qualities, or most of them, because he must keep at one grind day by day; but I find that, as the mental expands, reaches out, and expresses itself in intelligent ways, there comes more and more of spiritual possession to the man, and his external circumstances are all the brighter because of this unimpedment.

So you see there are better advantages for humanity just beyond; and while I know there are thousands on the spirit-side who are unhappy and restless, and some who seem to be poverty-stricken, I find that it is all owing to themselves; that they have made these conditions of want and necessity, and that, just as soon as they wake up to the true state of the case, they can go to work and make something better for themselves. Knowing this I am ready to believe that the other life is an advancement for all who enter it, even the most depraved, because they all get a new start over there, or have the privilege of making a new start that will do them good, and lead them to a higher condition.

Well, I did not think of preaching like this when I came in; but I was gazing at various intelligences that I saw around me here, and realizing myself by judging of their real condition. They turned my attention to things in the spirit-life, and I thought I would tell my earthly friends concerning them.

Now, I presume that most of those who know of me as having lived in the good old State of Maine, and as having identified myself with its agricultural interests in that quarter where I made my home, will think it very strange that you are receiving anything here in my name, and that I should concern myself enough about the life of this life to try to come back from the other life and say a word. Perhaps they will not receive me. They may believe that this is all false, especially as I say nothing concerning my former ideas; but I have been passing through a school of training, religious as well as intellectual, in the little while that has gone by since I entered the spiritual state, and yet I do not feel myself quite prepared to make much of a statement concerning these things which I have learned. I turn my attention to things in the spirit-life, and I thought I would tell my earthly friends concerning them.

Now, I presume that most of those who know of me as having lived in the good old State of Maine, and as having identified myself with its agricultural interests in that quarter where I made my home, will think it very strange that you are receiving anything here in my name, and that I should concern myself enough about the life of this life to try to come back from the other life and say a word. Perhaps they will not receive me. They may believe that this is all false, especially as I say nothing concerning my former ideas; but I have been passing through a school of training, religious as well as intellectual, in the little while that has gone by since I entered the spiritual state, and yet I do not feel myself quite prepared to make much of a statement concerning these things which I have learned. I turn my attention to things in the spirit-life, and I thought I would tell my earthly friends concerning them.

Lizzie Bradley.

[To the Chairman:] Will you please say that I am Lizzie Bradley, who sends her love to her friends in Sohieroad, N. Y.?

I am a stranger here, but I know of no other way to send my love home to those who perhaps will be wondering what I have become. I am glad to know that I can return and speak as I used to do. Tell them I am not weak and feeble in that other life, though here I do take on some of those feelings that I had before I passed away. In coming into the earthly atmosphere I lose considerable, but in the spirit-world I am strong. I do not have any of the old sensations of uneasiness and pain that afflicted me so much while I was here.

Sometimes it seems to me as if I could not wait to have my dear ones on earth know how I live and what a beautiful home I have. All the dear ones are with me—Jennie and mother and others—and they are full of peace and happiness, and make my life harmonious and sweet. If the rest who remember us here could only know these things, I think it would do them good; so I come with the hope that they will learn and try to understand, and perhaps sometime they will have the privilege of communicating with the spirit-world in their own homes, and of satisfying themselves beyond a doubt that there is no death.

Henry Hale.

A year ago at this time I was in the mortal body, possessed of large means, and also of a certain influence in worldly affairs, which are not mine to-day. I do not know, in looking back over the last eleven months, as I would, if the choice were given me, come back at this time and take up the mortal life with the spent body and the cares and responsibilities which surrounded me, even to have the wealth and the influence of which I speak. I rather think

I should reject them if they were offered me; for, as a spirit, I feel free and able to go from place to place, gaining new experiences, and being initiated into new forms of life and new offices of observation with which I have before been totally unacquainted.

I know what it is to labor, and to labor hard, in building up a personal career and a fortune. One cannot do that without knowing something of life and its various phases, fortunes and circumstances. I had many adverse conditions to struggle with in my earlier life, but I presume I possessed a good stock of that positive energy which your Spirit-Chairman spoke of in the consideration of his questions, and which never deserted me; so that I made my way and became what I was.

I do not come back as a business man from the spirit-world. I do not come back as one who had large means, making boasts of personal possessions. I only speak of these incidentally as being a part of my experience. I come back as a mere child, ignorant of many things that he has yet to learn. In such an extended life as mine one does, of course, make mistakes, and in looking back he can see where the mistakes were done different and made others more happy. I can see where I might have saved a portion of that which was mine in relieving many who suffered. I can see where I might have built up greater spiritual possessions for myself. Such matters did not appeal to me so much here as they do now, and so I left more than I ought to have done, because I feel that I ought to have distributed my means more largely than I did while I could have seen from the earthly plane the blessing that would thus come into lives that had been shadowed by want and pain.

I am glad these questions of making the condition of suffering human beings better are being abroad. I think it is a great work. I can see from the spirit-side great numbers of intelligences so bright in themselves that they appear luminous, going out over the world and doing good unto others. I know by the reflection it casts on them that it is a blessed work, and brings its own reward.

Well, like the friend who preceded me, I wonder why I am taking in this strain. It is not what I intended to say when I came, but perhaps it is just as well for me to speak in this manner as to branch out into subjects connected with my past life and its material welfare.

[To the Chairman:] I bring my greeting to friends. I come, sir, all the way, speaking after the manner of earth, from St. Paul, Minn. I have an interest in that place. I feel as if I was identified with it, as if it had sort of grown up with me, because I went there long ago. A son of New England, I followed the western line of travel and made my career in that part of the country.

I am Henry Hale; and if it should be my good luck to have any of my old acquaintances or friends feel pleased that I have come here to your office, and to have them send out a greeting to me with an invitation to come nearer and communicate with them, I will do my best from my standpoint to reach them with something intelligent.

INDIVIDUAL SPIRIT MESSAGES TO BE PUBLISHED NEXT WEEK.

Nov. 20.—W. J. Vanecko; Hiram Barker; Willie Allen; Fanny Scott; Catherine H. Pierson; Elizabeth Williams. Nov. 24.—Warren Chase; Capt. Oliver Pillsbury; Florence Marsh; Peter Day; Elizabeth Reale; Fanny E. Hodges.

Messages here noticed as having been given will appear in due course according to routine date.

Jan. 15.—Warren H. Cudworth; Mammie Gallagher; John Buchanan; Charles Smith; Louisa Powers; Harold Jenkins; Mary A. Holbrook.

Jan. 19.—George B. Lincoln; John H. Roundtree; Andrew Palmer; Julia Shattuck; Mary J. Anderson; John H. Dennot; also for Elizabeth Rice and Henry Thompson.

DEFEATED.

BY HUDSON TUTTLE.

Hugh O. Pentecost became suddenly famous.

He posed for the champion of the poor and oppressed. Many looked upon him as the Moses to lead them out of the bondage of unrequited labor. He had genius, brilliant, meteoric genius, eloquence of pen and tongue, and readiness of wit for all occasions and all adversities, yet there was a weakness of thought, a flippancy of style that betrayed his true character. He had a mortal failing, one that must have sooner or later revealed itself—he had no backbone. Like a great many others who have placed themselves conspicuously before the world as reformers, his backbone, instead of being a solid, inflexible column, was like the tail of a kite, the bits of paper tied on representing the vertebrae.

To men of his class the world is all wrong, and little or nothing was known before they were born and began to think. They scarcely began to think before they were able to counsel God, and desire new and better schemes of evolution. Their counsels are not received. There have been scientists, philosophers and statesmen before their day. The old world is not quite ready to be turned over by them like a hot griddle-cake, and, were it ready, they have not the ability to turn it. The griddle may be excessively hot, and the world-cake burning, but a greater than they must come before the change.

These world-overturners are disappointed. They do not see that the present in all its beliefs, usages, laws, customs and ideas is an evolution from the past, and hence reform, to be successful, must be in the line of that evolution, and not in conflict. Then they strike at the existing order, and plan arcades that ought to be, and, after butting their heads against the wall of existing things, are disappointed that they have not even made a dent, though their heads feel nearly broken. In his hour of disappointment and depression of utter failure, Hugh O. Pentecost moans. Hear him:

"I do not think it wise to suffer martyrdom unless one finds his happiness that way, as some persons do. It would not contribute to my happiness to be a martyr. During the last few years I have learned something of the character of the class of persons, as a class, in whose behalf martyrdom is sometimes suffered, and I think they are not worth suffering for. A people who will put suffering on one who tries, and because he tries, to make the world a happier place to live in, are not worth suffering for."

So away with dreams of reform, and the knight errant of the Twentieth Century; the evangel of the New Gospel will become a lawyer! He who has denied the right of law, and ennobled anarchy, will now devote his little life in vindicting the claims of his clients under the law!

Pentecost is disappointed, but far greater is the disappointment and chagrin of those who believed in him. He does not wish to be a martyr! As long as the path is rose-covered and pays well, let us hurrah for reform; but when it grows rough and our feet are out with flinty stones, and there are suffering and loss to be borne, slanderous reports and the sneers of men, let us turn to the beaten road and move with the masses.

Had all thought thus, there would have been neither reform nor reformer in the world. He who sets out to give his strength in aiding his fellows to reach higher grounds must do so without a thought of self, with perfect self-abnegation and sacrifice. It is because the masses are "not worth suffering for" that they need the assistance and must be suffered for. The reformer goes forth, and the scourge of slander's tongue, the sneers of the world, loss of friends, of social honors, of power, dis-

tion, place, are his reward. It has been the rack, dungeon, flames and the cross!

If a man were drowning should we say, "If we went to his rescue he would clutch us fast and drag us down in his ingratitude, or that if he did we must be strong and wise and carry him to the shore?"

If we attempt to teach the ignorant and they hear not, our duty is done. What is the scorn of enemies, or the ingratitude of those we serve, to the high sense of duty done?

The poor, oppressed, suffering people "not worth suffering martyrdom for!" What say that host of heroic martyrs who have smiled at tortures and death at the hands of those they sought in their unselfishness to reform? The poet of future generations enfranchised sings their praise; the historian records their glorious deeds; and their everlasting monuments grow tall with the centuries, overshadowing a race redeemed.

Verifications of Spirit Messages.

JOHN HUBBARD STEVENSON.

It affords me sincerest pleasure to acknowledge recognition of a communication in THE BANNER of Dec. 20th from JOHN HUBBARD STEVENSON, an old and very dear friend of the days of my early childhood.

I was not aware of his having passed into spirit-life, but am certain it will be a gratification to him to realize that he is still kindly remembered by one for whom he always entertained the best and noblest sentiments. Hope he will incline to come again, if he has not forgotten. KATE BOYD MEURLING. Cumberland street, Brooklyn, Dec. 31st, 1891.

MELINDA DOUBLEDAY.

In the BANNER OF LIGHT of Dec. 10th appears a message from spirit MELINDA DOUBLEDAY of Dana, Mass. I feel it to be my duty to verify it. I recognize the correctness of the communication; I was acquainted with her and her family. The message is like her in every way. I have lived in the same town with her over forty-two years. She was my late husband's uncle's wife, and was almost wholly unacquainted with the Spiritual Philosophy.

MRS. ANNE E. DOUBLEDAY. North Dana, Mass., Jan. 20th, 1892.

Passed to Spirit-Life.

On the 9th inst., my father, Timothy Hunting Morse, of this city.

He was a strong Spiritualist, and for over thirty years a reader of THE BANNER. He will be missed by many Spiritualists, some of whom are doubt yet living in Bangor, Me., where he once resided up to the year 1857.

He was born in Natick, Mass., and was for a number of years a builder, and later on a cooper in the Penitentiary, and then a trader in Bangor. He was for some twenty years Superintendent of the gas works here.

At the age of twenty he was married to Lucy Maria Gilbert of Brooklyn, Conn., with whom he lived fifty-five years, when she passed away. They had five children, of whom four are now living. He was a member of the Politically, he was elected to many offices in the gift of the people. He was a Free Mason for sixty-seven years, holding many offices, and was high officer, and was a member of the Grand Lodge of the State of Maine. Some thirty-eight years ago he commenced the investigation of Spiritualism, and was acquainted with Rev. John Pierpont, Hon. Joshua R. Jewett, and others of the same member of Congress, and many others of the stronger Spiritualists of those times. He found in Spiritualism the sure evidence of immortality, and the true foundation of all religion as taught and practiced by Christ.

A useful and honorable career in the mortal is now terminated, and a freed spirit has joyously entered the Higher Life. Wm. G. Morse.

Plainfield, N. J., Jan. 16th, 1892.

From East Granville, Vt., Daniel Tarbell, in his 81st year. His transition took place on the 11th of this month. Mr. T. has been and is a remarkable man. He came up from obscurity and carved a name among men single-handed. He was a stranger to four languages, and a native of the State of Vermont.

When the locomotive entered Vermont he began to build villages and establish stores and hotels, and his course seemed Napoleonic. One time was near at hand, however, when Spiritualism claimed him, and he

Written for the Banner of Light. TWO COMFORTERS.

BY L. L. DRYANT.

A mother bowed in agony
O'er a little cradle bed,
Where her first-born darling, precious boy,
So still and white, lay dead.

She said that God was too unjust
To take her child away;
To such a cruel Being she
Could never kneel to pray.

Such words dismayed her pastor, who
Endeavored to explain
That God was just: He had a right
To take his own again.

The little one, so still and cold,
Was but a treasure lent;
That 'twas a sin to question thus
This dispensation sent.

Then in a gentler strain, he said,
"Our Savior knows thy grief,
For he was tempted in all points,
So he can give relief."

The mother raised her downcast head,
With eyes so dark and wild,
"Don't tell me that," she quick replied,
"He never lost a child!"

"He may have suffered many ways,
With strength and power divine
To bear it, but he never felt
A mother's woe like mine!"

The preacher left her to her grief,
Shocked at such words profane.
All he could say gave no relief;
He deemed her quite insane.

A lady came, with gentle mien
Approached the sorrowing one.
Said she, "I'm on a mission sent,
I've seen your little son!"

"Alone, to me, to-day appeared
A precious child, who said,
Go quick and tell my mamma dear
That Willie is not dead."

"Tell her to please not grieve so hard,
For I'm not far away,
But I'm her little spirit boy,
I'll love her every day!"

The mother, thus surprised, exclaimed,
"You are a stranger here.
How did you know my darling's name?"
She said, "Pray do not fear."

"For of a truth he came to me,
Your sweet-faced little son,
He told me Willie was his name,
And he your only one."

The storm was calmed; the mother smiled;
"Thank God!" she eager cried—
"I will be happy, now I know
My darling has not died."

Farmington, Me.

*The above verses are founded upon real occurrences
that came under the writer's own observation. L. L. B.

THE TREATMENT OF CRIMINALS.

BY WILLIAM FOSTER, JR.

NO. II.

Preliminary to the discussion of this subject
in a previous article, I quoted a statement by
ex-Governor Seymour of New York, touching
the responsibility of society itself in the mat-
ter of crime and the development of a criminal
class. It will be recollected that he declared
it to be almost an impossibility to frame an
indictment in any community against any
man, for any crime whatever, which was not
at the same time an indictment against the
community itself. On this point permit me to
make another quotation, from Ernest Renan,
found in his work, "The Future of Science":

"The State owes the people religion; that is to
say, intellectual and moral culture; it owes them
school even more than the temple. The individual
is only completely responsible for his acts if he
has received his share of the education which makes
the man. By what right do you punish this wretch
who has been shut off since his youth from moral ideas,
having barely the power of discerning between good
and evil, impelled by coarse appetites which are his
sole law, and perhaps also by pressing needs? You
punish him for being a brute, but is it his fault if
no one took him at his birth to cause him to be born
to the moral life? Is it his fault if the only escape
he has received has been that of vice? And to remedy
these crimes which you have been unable to prevent,
you have only the galleys and the scaffold. The true
culprit in all this is the society which has not elevated
and ennobled this poor wretch. . . . But crime is only
crime when it is committed with full consciousness.
Do you suppose that this poor wretch would not, like
you, have been honest and good if he had, like you,
been cultivated by a long course of education, and
ameliorated by the salutary influence of the family?"

Like ex-Governor Seymour's, this is a most
terrible arraignment of society, as well as a
sad commentary on our civilization. But it is
true, though terrible and sad. What, then,
shall we do? Shall we visit our own sins upon
the offenders, assume to punish and wreak ven-
geance upon them, ignoring our own short-
comings, neglect and recklessness? This we
have been and are doing, vainly seeking to
stop the stream of crime with a dam of mud,
instead of drying up the springs and streams
which are its feeders. We need to go to the
fountain-head; remove the causes of crime,
instead of permitting them to be ever operative.
In some portions of the city of Providence, on
the streets any day, especially after nightfall,
I can show you scores of boys and girls who
are in the drift to the bad; they are vegetat-
ing as thieves or prostitutes or paupers. So
of all cities; but society lets them drift and
then punishes them.

Sit down and sum up the expenses of the in-
stitutions erected to receive these children as
criminals when they reach adolescence or mat-
urity, and the aggregate is appalling. Yet
society complacently follows the old paths,
manufacturing criminals then punishing them.

Every child born has an inherent right to be
posited so as to advantage itself of all its lat-
ent faculties and their possibilities. If the
parent does not or will not afford his offspring
an opportunity to grow and expand in moral
and intellectual culture, then he forfeits his
rights as a parent, and it is the duty of the
State to step in and assume guardianship.

Let this be done, and in a few years the aspect
of affairs will be changed; the stream of crime
will be much lessened. In volume, thus adding
noble manhood to the community, besides sav-
ing vast sums to be expended in numerous
ways for the public good.

Hence it will be seen that I advocate a pre-
ventive policy in dealing with crime, but por-
tunity as well. Society can never hope to cure
crime or pauperism so long as it permits their
causes to exist and have full play. "Preven-
tion is the only true repression, and until
society adopts this policy the evils we would
remove will be intensified."

Providence, R. I.

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with a grizzly beard since the introduction of Buck-
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