

# BANNER OF LIGHT.



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## AN INVOCATION.

BY CORA WILBURN.

Come, from the lilted bowers, the joys serene,  
That hall thee angel, spirit, mother, queen!  
From the fair Eden homes thine eye hath seen—  
From paradisaic vale and mountain fane,  
From the supernal heights and love-lit plain,  
Come to the darkened earthly home again!  
Come, with the lily-wreath upon thy brow;  
The rose of youth upon thy cheek's sweet glow;  
The star-gem's lustre on thy robe of snow.  
Come with the bridal token in thy hair;  
With the bright jeweled promise thou dost wear,  
The pearl of truth within thy sacred care.  
Come! ere the midnight shadows from the deep  
Fold in the long repelled and dreamless sleep  
The yearning eyes that vainly watch and weep:  
For the swift rainbow-gleam that marks the flight  
From the soul-regions of the upper light,  
Unto the nether world of sin and night.  
Close by the turbulent, dividing sea,  
In prayerful silence, spirit-ecstasy,  
I watch and pray, beloved one, for thee!  
*Cottage Rest, 1860.*

## Two Stories Complete.

Written for the Banner of Light.

## STAR EYES; OR, THE HAUNTED MAN.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

It was a cold, chilly night in March, when I first awakened to a sense of being. I feel as if I could remember it. I almost think I remember the first breath of life that filled my body; that I can define the sensation that trickled through my brain as I uttered the word of life. Sure I am that I remember the touch of a gentle finger, the tear in a soft blue eye, and then the chill coldness of death. I cannot even blink of them now, but with that indescribable sense of reality that always accompanies consciousness. You will say it is the memory of being told all this—of being told how life began and ended; but the dread consciousness that I was not blest because I took what was dearer than myself—my own mother's life—denies that. Oh, that dread sense of living through death!

When I was a child-boy I knew all about it, heard that it was dreadful to live and have no one to say—"Oh, blessed day—that you know the light!"

I thought of the tender blue eyes, of the soft, gentle touch, and knew only that I had felt what was dearer than life—but felt it through death.

When I grew to a sense of the great world, it seemed to me like the ocean, beating, beating forever, and never resting. When I looked upon a crowd, I thought of the foam-crowned waves flowing so ceaselessly. Whither? Only to the hard shore.

I remember one night I lay listening to the measured tread of steps on the street, and I felt the first longing to live; before that, it had been only as if death was in me. I had heard all the busy talk among neighbors and friends about my sad beginning, until I, the silent child, was filled with the most active and noisy thoughts. My eyes were downcast, my lips always half open, my head a little bent forward; but in the chamber of my soul grew up the great wonder of death.

The first time I thought of life, it was not with definite thought, but as if I knew that there should be life and being and activity. I was called a moping child, and though I was tenderly put to bed and snugly tucked in each night; although my meals were carefully prepared, and I had pictures and books, power wagons, and horses and blocks, yet no one thought of resting my active brain by giving me something to think of, that I cared for, or of feeding my heart with what it was famishing for; or putting before me one really beautiful object, that I might worship it and hope.

I remember the night that I first thought of life, instead of myself, and wondered what it would be to go out into the great street without having held of some one's hand, and hearing some one say, "hullo!" or "do n't," or, "why do you not mind where you are going?"

As I turned my eyes toward the window of my room, I saw that two stars were looking down as if upon me. I gazed at them, so bright and glistening, till their soft light grew ambient, and in it I beheld two tender eyes looking at me—those eyes of memory, those eyes that I had called death—and then I cried again, and fell asleep.

Thus another birth began, the real one, and there was a great longing in my soul—always there—to go somewhere, to do something besides play with the blocks. And this restlessness was probably the cause of my being sent to school—the ushering in to that second life-consciousness of the world. Oh that glowing summer's day, where, led by the hand, I stepped on the threshold of my first hope. I did not look up for a whole week. Not once did I survey the room or those within it.

The first awakening I had was a sense of eyes bent on me and a hand touching me. I remember a thrill that went all over me, and a thought that filled me as if the stars had come down from the serene heavens—those two stars that looked in at my window, and those eyes of the first birth-night. After a week I looked up and turned around and saw the face and found the eyes and knew the finger that had touched me. They all belonged to a little girl about my age. I looked at her as I had never looked at mortal before, and from that moment I grew ambitious. I studied and learned, and knew only that I must be as good as Susy, and get my lessons as well.

What a halo is around that time—that memory of life.

But one day Susy was gone from her seat. I was punished that day because I could not recite. I ran away at recess and went to her house. She was sick, and I took my two pennies and bought her some candy, and went to the flower market and took—for I did not think it was stealing—some asters, and carried them to her door. They let me go and look at her, and as I stood by her, suddenly, in place of her eyes, I beheld the same blue eyes, like the stars. I could stay no longer. I went out and hid behind a pile of boxes. Not that I was afraid, but a vague sense of something coming—something that I would run from, was on me.

Susy never took her place again, but she sent me her book, and said I must learn it for her. That was why I studied again, and tried to forget she was not there.

And now ten years had gone. Life was no longer to be wished for—it had come. A great, mighty struggle was in my soul—an ambition, in place of hope—an aspiration in place of longing. I looked forth no longer on the stars thinking I saw them gleam like eyes, or listened to the tramp, tramp of the steps up the broad street, but I was a man among men—and came and went with the crowd. I possessed a slight frame and a thin, pale face, with black hair and grey eyes. But the wonder of my face was its silence; it seemed as if it held within itself a solemn secret, and dared not open itself lest it should be revealed. I say this of it, because every one gazed at me with earnest, searching look, and then turned away as if unsatisfied.

But I had grown to the stature of manhood, and, according to the world, I must be put to labor. I loved nothing but study, for ever since the charmed book had been in my possession, I had felt an impulse to learn. I kept the book ever beside me. It was a Third Reader, but it seemed to me a book of deepest lore, for I never looked at it that I did not feel the mystery of life deepening until I learned to think it possessed some mystic spell.

As I had no friend to help me I adopted the great resource of Americans—school-keeping—for a living. I had scarce ever been outside the limits of my own native city, when I went into the country to teach. It was a still, half-dead place, that to which I went; but there was a quiet serenity about it that pleased me. I had books enough and implements for drawing, and I looked upon the quiet meadows, the grand hills and stone forests as better far than all the bustle of active towns.

I had found a home in an unpretending farmhouse, where I had plenty of quiet and little interference. I took my stand the first day in school, among a set of rough, uncured for scholars. It was late in November, and they were clothed in coarse garments, and their faces ruddy and stupid. I went through the routine of the day, longing only for the open fields and the fresh mountain air. The toil displeased me. I hated it. As a natural sequence, my pupils disliked me; they all began to make trouble for me, until I had to fight for subjection. I grew nervous. I could not sleep from thinking of the vexations of the day, and was filled with the keenest sense of humiliation. I walked early and late, on the bleak hills and in the forest, now bare and desolate.

One night I had climbed to the highest mountain, and was looking at the stars in the east as they came up slowly and silently—yet so surely and with such glory, when I saw the same tender eyes, that, as a child, I had called death, looking at me. They seemed stars, and yet living eyes. For the first time in my life, I prayed—not to God, even then—but to death; because life seemed so harsh and death so lovely. What was the virtue of that prayer? I could not tell, but I slept in peace that night, and entered upon my duties the next day with a strong and resolute heart.

As I stepped over the threshold of the door, I felt a new life in the room, and as I numbered my pupils, a new face was there. Again in mortal faces were set those glowing stars. My voice was gentle, not harsh as heretofore; and as I said, "will you give me your name?" the eyes of all were turned upon me with surprise at my tone.

"My name is Susan Lee," said a voice that made me think of the wind in the pine trees. What! another, and yet the same? Oh, what a life was in that room, from that hour. I was the gladness, the strength, the knowledge of all, and as for myself I was now created. The third birth of my life had come! For the first time I loved the world and all in it. I knew not if Susan Lee were the Susy Lee of my memory, but I knew that in her presence life was transfigured.

But the term was over, and leave-taking must begin. I was again the world's child. With little money and less hope, I determined to be a scholar. So I buried all memories of the hills, and even of the school-room—all except the gentle voice and the star eyes—and went to college. I thought I did not need to pray there, but felt confident and self-reliant. I grew harsh and cold again, but not fearful.

One day I walked along the streets, thinking of what was to be, with not one thought of the present. Crowds went by me, but nothing attracted my mind from its search into the future. I turned the corner, and as I turned, the broad street opened its vista to the east, and there again I beheld the stars of my child-memory. Was it memory that filled me with fancy, or did indeed those eyes of ambient light look on me again? Was I to feel that this vision portrayed some coming good or ill? Was I a haunted man, or a visionary? I was ashamed of the thought—I, a scholar, a strong, self-reliant man—and yet I trembled even there. I felt a vague sense of joy and pain—of satisfaction, and yet unrest. In this mood I walked on; memory took me back, epito of myself; I felt all I had felt at the birth of death,

and the birth of life, and the birth of love—and yet I tried to be matter-of-fact—here was the street; let me go in this shop and buy a cigar, and shake off this sense of shadows and mystery. When I stepped on the threshold I trembled—yet I went in. Again I saw the little form, the soft features, the tender eyes of the child and the pupil, in the shop-girl that waited on me. A sad, weary look was on the face, but the same earnest thoughtful smile was there, and the same wonderful light in the eyes.

"Why are you here? Tell me, Susan Lee!" At these words, the eyes glowed as of old.

"Oh, do not ask me, only take me away. Yes, now—let me go with you!"

Really, this was a disagreeable position. I must get out of it. I, a young man just to take orders—I might be ruined by even the thought of taking under my charge a girl in most doubtful position; it would not do. I hastened to the door, but not so easy was it for me to pass out. In front of me were again those imploring eyes of the heavens. I stopped, and spite of myself, I said,

"Come, then! I am strong and will protect you."

This act—this rescue from a fate worse than death—shall I say it, was the ruin of every worldly hope—Calumny, slander, every evil imputation rested on me. Men that professed to love the world, hated this act of love and called it vile. And I—yes, shame on me, I regretted it. I could not bear the loss of position. My pride was humbled, and who was helped thereby? Only a poor girl that fortune had already cursed. She had come to the city for respectable labor, and this was the result. What fatality was this that led me over to her?—that made her first my saviour, and then my hers? When I thought she was dead, she had found a house among the hills, and when I thought her blest, she was found cured.

Ambitious schemes pressed on me. I put aside the humiliation, and determined to be brave; but friends forsook me—poverty came, and sickness. Again I prayed, but it was again to death, not to God. I would not live. I would force myself from life. Who knows of death in life? Who knows the fearfulness of perfect despair? Let that one pity, for no one else will. I must either commence battle again with fate, or yield. I preferred the latter, and lay whole days in perfect silence waiting the end. I could not die, but lived.

Just as Spring dawned I grew better, and started for the country. I traveled slowly, and without object or destination. Without intention, I found my way to the old country home. There I had sent Susan Lee to the old school district. I wanted to see the hills once again—the grand rock-crowned hills, and the soft, sleeping valleys, but not the face of Susan Lee; I did not hope for that, or even ask for it.

The Spring work was being done by the farmers, and the country was fresh with its newly turned furrows, and its soft shade of green. I had only one thought in my mind as I looked on the dark soil—how cool it would feel if pressed upon my forehead and I, three feet deep beneath the turf. Well! I grew better every day—stronger and more active spite of that thought; and when I was well enough to talk, I sought out Susan Lee. She was very quiet and very beautiful. She said little about her gratitude and happiness in her home, but it was all written in her eyes. I read it there.

"Susan," said I, "we have always been good friends, and something loves us that brings us together."

"Something?" said Susan. "God loves us and guards us, and God made you my protector and saviour."

"I don't know," said I, "about that; he was a bitter enemy, if he did."

Oh, how the light faded from her eyes. I had told her all that I had felt, without intending it, and had put the burden on her, of all my suffering for her sake. I hated myself, and then I hated her. I knew that I had put a stone in her heart and a bitterness in her cup; but I was too proud to declare the words false—and they were not, for even then I hated the day when my care for her blasted every hope of my life, and I bitterly said, "Why should she not know it?" And so we parted.

I recovered my health, and returned to work. I became a student of medicine. I was prospered, grew rich, and forgot the past as best I could. Susan, I was told, was to marry a respectable farmer, and would live in comfort. When I heard of it, I said I did not care, and I did not much; but that night, the moment I closed my eyes, I saw hers beaming on me; and when I opened mine, I saw the star eyes of my childhood's vision.

I did not believe in God. I hated the world; but the world professed to love me, for I was rich and prosperous. Ah, I had received a bitter lesson of the world's charity, and I did not care again to do good for good's sake, but only to subserve pride and popularity. I was a most noble man—the world said. I knew it would say it, if I humored the world and did my aims to be seen of men. I was munificent in charities, all believed; I intended they should. But a cold mist was over everything in life. I knew no joy or hope. Why should I stay toiling longer in a loveless city? I would go away among the hills, and believe they, at least, loved me. So I bought an old mansion, not far from the old schoolhouse, and fitted it up with all that pleased my eye. I had a park already planted, a fountain already flowing, and my eye could look out each day upon a landscape that rivalled the glorious reality of Church's art. The grand hills encircled a valley to the north; the meadows stretched away in the distance southward, till they seemed seeking some outlet between the far-off range of mountains.

I spent days in hunting, fishing, and walking; I read by night, until sleep overpowered me. Thus I lost my restlessness, and began to think life had some good. I do not think I ever remembered the

past, except as a dim, unsatisfactory dream. My old housekeeper did not allow me to want for any comfort, and I was never fretted with care.

I found that the old house I occupied had a doubtful reputation in the neighborhood; it was said to have been forsaken, because of the strange, unaccountable noises heard in it. But I had no faith in pneumatology. I did not even believe in any future, so I heard nothing because I fancied nothing, I believed.

It was my birth night—a cold March night—the house was silent, except when an occasional gust shook the shutters and moaned in the tall chimneys. I rose, and looked from the window. The moon was just setting in the West, and the stars were putting on their gleaming light in the East. Why did memory go back to the past, until I recalled the days of my births, and thought of the tender eyes that had blessed those days? An inexplicable longing came over me to know another day of life—to feel once more the blessing of existence through another. As I turned from the window I felt a hand touch me, just as I had felt in the schoolroom long ago, and yet there was no one near. I went to the shelf, and took down the old worn Reader. I turned over its leaves. Was it their rustle? It must have been, and yet distinctly I heard the soft wind-voice calling Susy, Susy. Spite of myself I trembled. I put the book up hastily, and sat before the open fire, looking at the embers. What fancy was at work in my brain? Those glowing embers suddenly shone forth with a human look. Tender love seemed in them; I even thought I saw them move as if coming to me. I was surely growing ill. I must certainly take an alternative on the morrow. I took down my old copy of Darwin to see what he thought of the connection between seasons and nervous diseases. But as I turned the leaves, again their rustling echoed through the room as Susy, Susy.

What is so harsh to the mind as a tender memory, when memory brings no hope? I had forgotten Susan Lee, or forgotten her in the present; for there is a memory that seems to dwell in the past, and a memory that comes into the present; and yet here the haunted chambers of my brain were echoing again and again with a living presence. Away with them, said I, and I stamped with my foot on the floor, and the echo of that sound seemed like the quivering sigh of the past. I then recalled all that I had tried to forget, and one desire seemed to come from all the memory—to see Susan Lee once more—and yet was she not wedded, and had I a right even to desire to see her; and if I did wish to look upon her face again, where was she? No one had mentioned her. I knew not if she were not beyond the prairies, or in her grave. There was to be a country festival the next day, and I resolved to go, and that resolution sent sleep to my eyes, and I saw and heard no more but the flickering firelight, and the wind in the buttonwood trees.

I went to the festival. All seemed happy, and very gay. Everybody was especially glad to see me; but I believed it was because I would pay all they asked me, and never dispute the price. Such was my estimate of the world's sincerity.

After the night was far spent, the company dispersed. A wild storm had arisen, and my horse had become restive. As I mounted him, he plunged and reared, and then took the track homeward with a wild rush. But just in the middle pathway, when he had gone a mile or so, he stood perfectly still; the spur did not urge him, and gentle words did not move him; his ears were bent back, and I was at his mercy, for he would not stir. I dismounted, and he became docile, and followed me; but to walk three miles in the wind and sleet, seemed a fearful effort. I hailed the light of a farm-house not far off, and went toward it. As I knocked on the door, again I heard the soft pine-toned voice, and thought I dreamed. A rough man opened to me, and I told my trouble; my horse was stalled, and I entered the little brown cottage.

Nothing was there to make me fear, but I trembled from head to foot. I could hardly speak. The hospitable farmer piled up his logs, and I soon grew calm. He left me, and went to the next room, and again I heard a sound, soft and low, like the wind-swept pine. My heart was touched as if by all the memories of the past.

"Oh God," said I, "take care of me, for I believe I am ill or mad."

"She says bring you in," said the farmer, "for you are a physician."

"Your wife?" said I.

"No; a friend, a saint is dying, I believe."

Just then the winds broke forth, and shook every rafter of the house, and wailed round the corner.

"Oh, death, I cannot feel you again," was my inward exclamation; but I was ashamed to seem timid, so I followed, and entered a small room, and stood by the bedside. I looked at the pale face and the closed eyes—closed as if in prayer. When they opened, "My God, may I never forget thee. Oh, glory and blessing," said I to myself. This is what I saw last night; just these eyes, and they called me with their look of eager longing.

I hardly know how I said it; but I breathed her to hear:

"Susy, live—do not die—live—you must live—you shall live!"

I saw a faint glow spread over her face. I took both her hands in mine. I laid my forehead against hers. I breathed on her lips, and she grew stronger. I sat all night, all the next day, and for a week, and she lived, and sat up and walked about. Then I said to her:

"I killed your joy, but I crushed also my own, for I was too selfish to know pleasure. Say you no longer remember those cruel words. I have hated the world ever since I hated myself and you, and the world have hated me."

I looked for her answer rather than listened. A sudden light seemed spreading over her face.

"I remember only the Cross that gave the Crown," she said.

Was it a vision that haunted me still? Directly over her head gleamed again those love-lit eyes of the heavens. My mother's eyes I then knew them to be. Was her life then given to another, that I might feel she lived and loved me? I had heard of a new philosophy—spirit impressibility. Was I to trust it? I will not add more of what passed.

In six weeks my home was haunted by a real spirit presence. Love was treading it instead of fancy; love lighted it instead of glowing embers; and yet, was it fancy, that light and those voices? Tell me, if you can, ye wise and learned. I call it God's revelation, even now, living and real. I call it the mediumship of heaven. I call it the voice of angels, wooing my steps from the wild, cheerless paths of selfishness and doubt to the flowery paths of love and faith.

Summers came and went—two, three of them—and we heard another voice within our home, not soft like the wind in the pines, but ringing and glad, like the bird's note; and eyes gleamed forth, not like stars, but like the sunlight on the dew-dew violet, and from that voice and those gleams went out continually a God be praised, until every heart turning heavenward, said, God in everything.

When I go back in memory, and recall those monitors of good, I no longer call them visions or fancies, but I know they were as the light of God being revealed to me to light me to his great glory—a blessed life. "Groping blinded in the darkness, I beheld God's hand in that darkness," yet knew not that it was His, and that it led me. Oh, faint hearts and ye who doubt, heed the glimmers of light; heed even the voices of fancy, for they are voices from the eternal and true.

Written for the Banner of Light.

OUR

## OLD SEXTON'S LITTLE DAUGHTERS.

One of Aunt Esther's Remembrances.

As you love to hear me tell of the "queer old times" of my childhood, especially of the people in the ancient parish of Wenbury, I think, my dear niece, you would be interested to know more about the Old Sexton. It seems but a very few short years since I saw him leaning over the churchyard wall, under the shade of the great willow, gazing with a strange, satisfied look upon those grassy mounds—graves they were—of more than one generation, which his spade had opened, and into which his hands had lowered forms and faces familiar from childhood to his eyes; and well do I remember, as I thus passed him once on a bright summer's day, how I quickened my step, as I thought with what a calm, reconciled air he might shovel the clouds over my coffin, and grimly smile, perchance, to see our "family lot" thus filling up, even if it were with its youngest members; and my step was hastened still faster, as turning my eye, I caught a glimpse of that old "sorrel horse" who, drawing behind him that rusty funeral carriage, had so often slowly moved up and down our village street. Not a house he had not tarried before—not a family, some of whose dear ones had not taken their last ride under those sombre curtains; but now, there he was, near his old master, within those precincts so peculiarly theirs, nibbling with his nearly toothless gums, the scanty herbage off those nameless graves in the lower yard—not that he restricts himself alone to those; he felt entitled to the harvest of all. And though complaint was often made at such liberties, he still remained over them at will, and—shall I tell you what the dwellers near that place of graves now say?—that on dim, starry nights the "old sexton's horse" is still seen slowly limping over those old mounds! The herbage in that new country to which he was supposed to have gone, (by believers in animal immortality) not probably being so delicious as grass grown over that acre of human dust, and no repose so soft to him as those rounded hillocks. But do not be frightened—my story is not all of "spooks" and churchyards. Pass on with me where I stopped with the scare all left my face, as I saw two rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed children—our old sexton's little daughters! Yes, they were calling that old man of near four score, "Father!" His feeble limbs moved quickly at the sound as he roused from his reverie, and turned to look fondly, yet with a sort of strange surprise, at these fresh buds which had unfolded from his so withered being. These pretty children! methinks I see them now—quick, delicate Ruth, with her large, soft, hazel eyes, and timid movements, as if questioning how it ever came to pass that she was in this wonderful world; and looking so pitifully on her father's white, hair and bent form—while Nettie dashes forward with a fearless step, her merry, bright eyes meeting yours with the expression—"If my coming here is anything unusual I do not know it; they are more dreadful to me than strange, my quaint old parents, and I shall get all the happiness I can out of everything and everybody." Nettie's little mind of four summers' development had never reasoned this all out, of course; it was a born wisdom with her, fitting her for the life to which she had come; while Ruth's sensitive nature, upon which all disharmony jarred, proved as clearly as did her sweet, spiritual face, that she was only staying here for awhile, and was expecting the "angels would call her." They, too, had been in the graveyard; and Nettie's tin cup full of blackberries, and Ruth's little hands filled with golden rod and yarrow, showed that they, too, find sweets and beauty in that dreary place. But before we say anything more of them we will try to tell you how these fresh blossoms happened to bud from that old bough.

Our old sexton married early in life, and his young



manhood was blessed with the love of wife and children; but she, with two little ones, were gathered into the churchyard long before he became its presiding officer. One son alone was left him, who, when he grew up, went to sea, and "settled in foreign parts," as his father said, from whom he still received tidings and gifts. A widowed sister then took her abode with him, till after many years she was removed by death; then feeling, indeed, alone, with growing infirmities, he looked around for a suitable housekeeper, and a quaint old spinster, who had passed her fortieth year three or four summers previous, attracted his notice, so he invited her to take care of his house; and finding that, with all her queer ways and sharp sayings, she was a tidy, efficient manager, he proposed to give her the title by which she could claim permanent authority over his domestic matters; and the old maiden (whose home had previously been with a sister, so like herself that they never could agree), concluded to accept the offer, for, as she told a neighbor, she "could get along better with the old man than with Polly; yet she was afraid that, as he came from a long-lived race, she might not have a very easy time with him in the end." She certainly did not marry the sexton for his wealth or beauty. She knew the old place was mortgaged; and his round shoulders and shuffling gait could never have won for him favor by grace of movement in his best days, to say nothing of his over-disordered looks, and homely, though intelligent gray eyes, and a nose, the like of which is not often seen; yet the science of Lavater tells me it was a good nose—a nose patriotic! and as he actually fought at Bunker's Hill, his patriotism did not wholly lie in that organ, immense as it was.

I was out of town when the wedding took place, or else (as it was not a strictly private affair) I should have peeped in to witness the ceremony with the other girls, who gave me an amusing account thereof; but I was present about a year afterward at the christening of the twin-babies! It was a strange scene. The sadness awakened by the sight of that old man, presenting with trembling hands those little ones at the baptismal font, was relieved by looking at the mother's rather jolly face, which, somewhat pretty still in feature and complexion, expressed, with a mingled look of shrewdness, honesty and drollery, that she thought this coupling of babyhood and old age was somewhat ridiculous; yet that she felt an inward strength to take care of them all—folks might laugh, and she would, too; but she would show them "she was equal to her destiny." And truly the babies thrived and grew, without being lulled by the softest of motherly notes, or tossed from strong fatherly arms. The caresses bestowed on them were peculiar. We school-girls loved to call and see them, and hear the mother's queer talk to them; and complaints of "the world of trouble them young uns gin her, and that father was as much a baby as them, (and what under the canopy she married the old fellow for, she didn't know) and the cow and the horse were always straying where they had n't no business." Yet one could easily see that, in spite of all this fretting, there was an undertone of love and tolerable satisfaction, and a certain motherly expression would look out of those dull round eyes, though she ignored the sentiment in speech, and seemed ashamed of any inadvertent demonstration of tenderness toward her progeny.

When the children were about seven years old, I essayed my first duties as teacher in the Sunday-school, and to my delight Ruth and Nettie were assigned to my instruction; as we had long been friends, they were not so shy toward me as they were to the minister and other teachers. From their father they had received some Biblical knowledge; and it was an interesting study to watch the effects produced on those two little minds by the same study or lesson. Thus, while Ruth's brown eyes would fill with tears at the desertion of Joseph by his brethren, Nettie said, "I shouldn't have thought they would have felt so bad about that little coat. Marm patched my red gown with brown and yellow, and it looked awful. I shouldn't want a coat of many colors." And when Ruth expressed her grief over the infant Jesus in the manger, Nettie looked up with surprise, saying, "Why, Ruth, you like the cows and oxen—and then, don't you know, he had all those pretty things the Eastern men brought him? and I'd rather play in the barn than anywhere."

"Yes—but he was a tiny baby, Nettie."

"What of that, Ruth? Then he did n't know where he was; and besides, his mother held him in her arms."

So she was sure it was waste of sympathy to cry about him.

Ruth's questioning soul looked forward to the other life; and often and earnest were the inquiries she made about the little children and good people who had gone to Heaven. What kind of a world was it? What did they do beside singing? She wished the Bible had told more about it. She felt troubled when she saw her father cover them up in the ground, and she asked him would they live again? He guessed they would; she did n't think he knew. Nettie did not like to have her get on such a train of thought, and would quickly try to divert her attention to things tangible.

Dear, brave, noisy, ever glad Nettie! who did not love to see thee, and hear thy merry words? Ruth's thin, spiritual face was all gazed upon with loving reverence—feeling nearer the angels when talking with her. Yet, as the "Professor of the Breakfast Table" says, in his own inimitable way, "I do verily believe, that He who took little children in his arms and blessed them, loved the most healthy and playful of them, just as well as those who were richer in judicious virtues;" and further on, adds, "In the sensibility and anxiety which accompany premature decay, I see one of the most beautiful instances of the principle of compensation which marks the Divine Providence."

For nearly four years I thus enjoyed meeting with these children, and hearing their Sabbath lessons and their young thoughts thereon; then left town and did not return till more than a year had elapsed. My first inquiries about the old parish were of the sexton's little daughters, and most sorry was I to learn that dear Ruth had been very sick, and her recovery was still doubtful. She had taken cold in the early spring, going to and from school. Nettie could bear all weathers—wet her feet in rain and snow without being the worse for it; but Ruth's delicate nature could not endure such exposure. Yet her mother, having faith in the toughening principle, thought she might become "hardened to it," and the child was so ambitious she could n't bear to be a day absent—so a severe cold ended in fever, which had left her very weak, with a bad cough.

The old father had, with his wife's assistance in keeping tidy the old meeting-house, and with the help of a young man at the funerals and interments, managed to keep his post as sexton, until the autumn

previous, when he had a stroke of paralysis, from which he partially recovered, yet he was very lame and almost helpless; so that now poor Mrs. L— had the "hard time" of which she had so long complained. His eyesight was still pretty good, so that with the help of his glasses he could often amuse himself by reading—for I forgot to tell you that he had been quite a reader, as well as original thinker, upon some points of science and theology; but his neighbors, "well-to-do farmers" as they were, had little respect for his "book larnin'"; yet the minister enjoyed talking with him, even if he did not find him quite so orthodox as he could have wished—for he belonged to that "old Arminian school," which was the former faith of the parish.

I called to see little Ruth as soon as possible, and I should like here to give you a picture of their old house, with its brown wooden front, its block-work decoration under its projecting eaves, (for it was a house of some pretensions when it was built, in the early days of the colony); its brick ends, within which long, narrow glass windows were deeply encoined, with arched tops; its capacious central chimney, alike ambitious in architecture. Within, a roomy entrance, where a carved balustrade ornamented its winding stairs; on each side, its northern and southern front rooms, each with its corner hearthstone, and its parlor fireplace adorned with Scripture illustrated tiles; while behind, its long kitchen stretched from the pewter-plattered dresser on one side, to the deep-shelved buttery on the other.

The sexton's family occupied only a part of the house; the last descendant of the original owners occupied the other. She was a half-crazed spinster, who was dreadfully troubled by "the witches"; was up several times in the course of the night to have a tussle with them, much to the annoyance of the other occupants of the house. There was an orchard on one side, from whose old and crooked trees but a small harvest was gathered. Back was a little tillage and pasture land; while in the corner of a large front yard stood a noble elm, whose protecting arms had waved over the old roof more than a century.

Around the door and under the low windows were lilac bushes, yellow lilies and French pinks; and in a little bed front of them, Ruth and Nettie had their sweet peas and four-o'clocks.

As I entered the open door, and turned to enter the southern room, I was arrested by the picture there presented. In the corner, on a low bed, sat the sick child, supported by pillows, her hands crossed over a book, her face, oh so thin and pale! her large eyes, now brighter than ever, gazing out of the window opposite at the crimson and purple sunset. Her father sat in an arm-chair by her side, his white hair flowing down his shoulders, his eyes fixed fondly on his little daughter's face. As I thus stood, dreading to disturb the holy quiet, Nettie, coming from the kitchen, saw me, and running eagerly forward, grasped my hand and drew me into the room, exclaiming:

"Oh, Ruth—Ruth! here's our teacher!"

I involuntarily shrank back from such a high appellation, and with a softened step went toward the bed, and taking those small, thin hands in mine, said:

"No—no, dear Ruth, not teacher now; I have come to learn what those great brown eyes have seen, and what the angels have whispered to you here, for I am sure they have been with you."

"Oh, yes—I have dreamt—oh, such beautiful dreams!" said the feeble voice of the child; "I do believe the angels have been with me, but you must tell me what they were."

Then as I turned to speak to the old man, his face lighted up, and he said, softly:

"Yes, Ruth is teacher now; she has been teaching her old father how to die—and she thinks she shall go with me through the dark valley into the light."

"Oh, hush—hush!" spoke the quick, loud voice of the mother, as she entered the room. "Why Miss M— (shaking me heartily by the hand,) 'why, you do n't know how our Ruth talks! Her father thinks it's good and right—but I do n't see what the child wants to die for. I've done everything for her; she's taken lots of doctors' stuff; and now I've got a cough mixture that Captain Harnden's darter Hannah took when she was worn to skin and bones, and nobody thought she'd live—and it cured her, so she's as well as anybody—and it would cure our Ruth, too, if she was n't determined to die."

Little Ruth's sensitive spirit gave a slight tremor to her weakened frame, as these querulous, yet not unloving tones met her ear, and she quickly said:

"Oh, mother, you know I've taken everything you wanted me to, and if our Heavenly Father saw it was best, it would help me as it did Hannah." Then turning to Nettie, whose happy eyes were filled with tears—"Oh, Nettie, you know I'd love to stay with you; but I am so sure I shall go, that I do wish you would let me talk about it—do, please, mother?"

The old mother raised her apron to her eyes, saying, with a sob:

"What a strange child you always was, Ruth—but a good'un; so I know you'll go sooner for it—yet I'm sure good folks is wanted more here."

Then Ruth leaned back with such a calm and happy expression on her face, and told us of the pleasant things she had seen, of the loving faces looking at her through bright clouds, of such beautiful children—

"And—I do n't know," said she, softly, "that they were all dreams, for I had my eyes open, looking out of the window, and I saw that rose-bush there—you gave it to me, you know, Miss M—, and there have been ten roses on it this summer. Well, I saw them come in right over the rose-bush, and they smiled on me and held up a wreath of such beautiful flowers, and said 'they do n't fade there,' pointing up. And then they sang—oh, so sweetly—I held my breath to hear; and the words were 'go pretty—but I've forgotten them, only that there was 'no sickness there,' and 'the old grow young again,' and 'the good Jesus loves us all.' Then another day they came again, and it seemed to me I was rising to go with them; when I looked to father and said, 'I want him to go, too;' then they smiled and said, 'Yes, pretty soon; when we come again, we will take you both.' And oh, it was so real, dear Miss M—, I can't help believing it will come true—do n't you?"

What could I say to the sweet child, but tell her that doubtless the angels had been sent to comfort her; yet that perhaps she was now to be strengthened to help take care of her father here awhile longer. Here the old man shook his head, but said nothing.

Her mother's faith in "Captain Harnden's darter Hannah's cough mixer" seemed to produce a good effect. Ruth took it perseveringly, and grew stronger, her cough was less frequent, yet still hard and severe. She was able to walk about her room, and one pleasant afternoon I found her seated on the door-step; she had been walking in the yard. The fresh air

made her feel brighter. She said the doctor was coming to take her to ride the next morning.

We could see the school-house on the green, and the bright gleaming of the little pond near it, and could hear the merry voices of the children at their recess play. I asked her if she did not wish to join them; she answered:

"Sometimes I think I'd like to; yet I think more about those dream children, and would so like to hear that singing again. I did hear them as though a good ways off, last night."

The next morning was fair and beautiful, a day in late September, and an early frost had touched the trees, and they were changing their green robes for crimson and yellow. I was thinking how much Ruth would enjoy her ride, when I was summoned to the door by a messenger from her mother, who informed me that Ruth was taken suddenly worse, and would I come to her?

I went immediately. Excitement and over-exertion had ruptured a blood-vessel which had flowed profusely, and she now lay exhausted—dying. Yes—there was no mistaking the look of those glazed eyes. I looked for the father. On the opposite bed he lay, prostrate and still; the shock occasioned by seeing the fresh blood pouring from his dear child's lips, was too much for him. He was seized with faintness, and now lay in a palsied stupor. I passed on to Ruth's little bed, and called her name softly. Her eyes turned toward me, but she saw only a few spiritual visions now; yet she smiled, saying:

"I am glad you are here." Then after a few minutes she whispered, with such a happy expression—"Oh, they have come again! Father and I are going together! Dear Nettie, don't cry; we will come to see you. Mother, Miss M—, Nettie—good—good—by—"

A slight tremor passed over her, and all was still. A movement from the opposite bed told of a change there; the old man's eyes opened with a look of strange brightness, as if he also saw the messenger; then gently closing his eyes, with a faint but joyous cry, which sounded like Ruth's, all was over.

We stood transfixed and silent amidst the sobs of Nettie and her mother, until the voice of the minister (who had just entered,) broke forth in those conjuring words—"I am the resurrection and the life; whose believeth in me shall never die." Then kneeling, he gave thanks for this holy departure of angel-loving youth and weary age with his faith strong in Jesus.

Time passed on, bringing its changes to us all. I was absent from my native town many years; yet I kept up my acquaintance with Nettie by occasional correspondence. She would write in such hopeful, child-like simplicity, of her plans, while she would always remember something pleasant of Ruth's sayings and doings. She deeply mourned her sister, and seemed to become more like her. A growing sensibility and refinement became visible in all her expressions; and Ruth's gift of angel seeing became hers also. She, too, had her dreams, when those large brown eyes would look lovingly on her; and she felt that Ruth was cheering her on to a life of patient work and endurance. Her love of study increased; and she prepared herself for a teacher, thus supporting herself and mother. She successfully taught in then our district school; then in one more advanced in a neighboring town. Here she became acquainted with a young man who, by industry and perseverance, had acquired a collegiate education, and was going out as teacher unto the far West. He saw and loved "our Nettie"; and she, finding he possessed an honest, pure spirit—a reverent, practical piety, soon gave him her loving heart's pure affection, and promised that as soon as he should make himself a home in which she could comfortably shelter her mother's old age, she would go to him. So they parted, full of hope and courage; she remaining teacher at F—, two years longer, returning to her home every Saturday night. Her mother was still bright and vigorous; but if you are expecting to hear she, too, became refined exteriorly by Ruth's holy departure and the loving goodness and lady-like manners of Nettie, (of whom she was very proud) you will be mistaken; yet she had improved much, though still retaining her quaint brusqueness of speech and manner.

Nine years since I unexpectedly had the pleasure of a tour through our Western States, and gladly went out of the direct line of travel to reach the flourishing town of R— in Illinois, to visit the Principal and his wife, of the well-conducted and popular seminary there. The carriage stopped at a pretty white house, around whose piazza the prairie rose and trumpet flower twined luxuriantly, and across which a lady and gentleman were slowly walking. As I put my head out of the window as we drew up to the gate, the lady jumped quickly from her side, hastened down the nicely gravelled walk, and with a face all bright with smiles, and a welcome such as only "Nettie" could give, embraced me, and joyfully introduced the tall New England-faced man who had followed her, as her husband. Then clingly putting her arm in mine, she hurried me into the house, where, seated in a rocking-chair at a pleasant back window of a very cosy room, sat a round-faced, happy-looking old lady, in such a snowy, becoming cap, neat brown dress, and black silk apron, that I hardly recognized who it was till she rose up, clasped my hand with such a strong, hearty shake, exclaiming in the old familiar tones—

"Well, well! who'd a thought of seeing you out here? When we come to this world's end, I never expected to see anybody again—leastwise you! But look—look here!" and from behind her chair peeped the curly head of a two years' old child, whose large brown eyes were fixed upon me with such a questioning expression, I almost started, when, quick as thought, there passed over them a droll, merry look, as she toddled forward and pursed up her lips for a kiss. Then the grandmother clasped her hands, saying, "Now, did you ever? She knows all about it, and is as glad to see you as we are." Then taking off her glasses to wipe her eyes, she said more softly, "There's Ruth and Nettie both together! She knows so much, and is so good, I sometimes think they sent her, and she will be called away soon."

"Oh, no—no, dear mother!" said the pleasant, trusting voice of Nettie. "Aunt Ruth and grandfather know, to be sure, what a treasure she is; they, too, enjoy our happiness, and pray for its continuance."

And as I took our old sexton's little granddaughter on my knees, I felt with its mother that they did indeed "know all about it," and would be ever-watchful guardians over that young life. E. M.

Gen. Scott is the largest man in the American service. He is six feet six inches tall, and weighs two hundred and sixty pounds. He is seventy-four years old, yet his health is good, and his whole system is apparently vigorous—much of which is owing, doubtless, to his very temperate habits.

## THE MYSTERIOUS BULLET.

BY ENASMO.

In the fall of 1852, I left Newport with the intention of visiting a gentleman and lady, friends, in Cincinnati, the acquaintances of whom I had formed during their sojourn by the sea shore on the lovely Island of Rhodes. On their departure from that beautiful spot, I promised to visit them, and for the fulfillment of this promise I had set out. Going by the way of Philadelphia, I concluded to remain a few days in the City of Brotherly Love; and spend them with a young married friend. On arriving at his residence, I was surprised and pained to learn that a brother of my friend had, but a short time previous, buried his wife, a lovely and interesting woman, which had plunged the whole family into mourning, and the grief of the once happy husband was intense.

My nature being of a sympathetic character, I clung more closely to the lonely widower than to my old friend, and tried to console him in his great loss. He seemed to fully appreciate the consolation I offered, and considering it my duty to afford the heart-broken man all the comfort within my power, I sought his society. His brother seemed somewhat displeased at this, and I wondered why it was.

On the evening of the day following my arrival, my friend asked me to accompany him down town, and call upon some of his friends; but I declined, saying:

"As long as I can be of any service to your distressed brother, I shall remain with him."

He left the house, feeling quite provoked with me. That evening I learned why it was that he disliked to have me so constantly with his brother. Soon after the departure of my friend, I was startled to hear the young widower say that he had become a Spiritualist since the death of his wife. I had never before given the subject a thought, and was wholly unprepared for such a revelation. Of course I was a great skeptic. After a long and very exciting argument, he persuaded me to listen to some communications purporting to come from his wife. He said he was fully satisfied that they could come from no other source. As he finished reading the last message, I was forced to exclaim—

"By George, William! they are beautiful, and it must be a pure source from which they emanate. No wonder they give you great joy, if you really believe they come from that lovely being you have parted with; but as for my ever believing our friends come back and communicate to us through mortal beings—Judge Edmonds, and all other great minds to the contrary—I never shall, and it is of little or no use for you to try to interest me in such an unearthly subject."

He still persisted in talking to me, and tried to make me reason with him on the subject; but skeptical know no such thing as reason, neither did I on this occasion. Not wishing to have it said that I was a coward, and afraid to see a medium, I accepted an invitation to go with him, and appear before one of those dreadful creatures, which my mind had been picturing. It was but a short distance from our abode, and I was soon ushered into the presence of—not a she devil—but a perfect lady, the wife of a physician of Philadelphia. After passing the compliments of the evening, etc., with the Doctor's family, we drew around a table. All were perfectly quiet, and the stillness of death reigned in our midst.

Mrs. C. soon felt the spiritual influence stealing over her, and in a moment she became entranced, and, turning to me, she said, in a voice not like her own:

"Your sister Fidelia desires you to remain in Philadelphia, and give up all idea of visiting Cincinnati."

My mind was fully made up to go, and I could not have received a communication of a more unpleasant nature. Although I was forced to acknowledge I had a sister Fidelia, then dead, I thought "humbug," and moved back from the table with apparent disgust; but the spirit held possession of the medium, came toward me, and said things to me, known to no one in the room, save myself. I must confess I was not a little startled. The whole object of the spirit seemed to be to convince me of her identity, and then persuade me not to visit my friends in Ohio, which appeared very singular to me.

On my way home I remarked to my companion, that nothing should deprive me of my anticipated pleasure, and that I should start for Cincinnati in time to reach there Saturday evening. He advised me to abide by the spirit instruction I had received. My only answer was a "ha, ha, ha!"

"You may laugh," said he; "but will you visit with me on the morrow, a physician in Fifth Street, who is considered one of the best mediums living?"

I had seen just enough to awaken an interest in me, and could see no harm that would be likely to result from a visit to the doctor. I consented.

The next morning I met my old friend at the breakfast-table. He had heard of my visit with his brother, and was inclined to treat me with indifference; and out me whenever an opportunity offered. Meanwhile his brother became more and more warmly attached to me.

At ten o'clock—for this was the hour that the doctor held his morning circle—we proceeded to the haunted house in Fifth Street; and before I left it, test upon test was given me, to assure me that my spirit friends were with me. I was told by others present, that I had received evidence enough to convince any reasonable man, but I could not, or as I now think, would not see it.

The messages I received through the doctor, were all of the same nature as the first one which came through Mrs. C.—begging me to give up the idea of going to Ohio. I asked them to give me some reason for wishing me to remain in Philadelphia, and they would reply, "You shall know in time." I was out of patience with such answers, and declared I would start that very night, (Thursday,)—but, to tell the truth, I had become deeply interested. The spirits knew this, although I supposed it remained a secret with myself.

On Thursday evening I was persuaded to remain in the room with the doctor all night. I was assured that I would see strange things. I did, and they were of such a startling nature that the world would not believe, and I doubt whether many Spiritualists would not consider that I very much exaggerated things, should I relate what I saw, heard and felt on that night—which will never be forgotten by me. Suffice it to say, by the experience of that night, my iron will was forced to succumb, and I did not start for Ohio at all.

Friday and Saturday, I continued my investigations until eleven o'clock in the evening, when the doctor and myself accompanied the young widower to the ferry-boat, and he took his departure for New York by the night train. On our way to the dock

we heard raps constantly beneath our feet, and the same when we returned, the spirits responding upon the bricks, to questions put to them by the doctor and myself, until within a short distance of the house, when they ceased, and we were both startled by the report of a pistol. We saw the flash above our heads, and in an instant more something dropped with great force into my paragon, which I was carrying carelessly by the handle on my forefinger.

"What have we here?" said I; as I turned the paragon upside down, and a small ball rolled out upon the sidewalk. "My heavens! it's a bullet—and some one has fired at us!" I exclaimed, very much excited.

At that moment the raps came loud upon the bricks beneath the doctor's feet. I asked if we were to consider what had just transpired a manifestation? My answer was in the affirmative, and in a moment a spirit purporting to be that of my brother-in-law, took possession of the doctor, and said he would explain all as soon as we reached the house. I picked up the bullet, and we crossed the street and soon found ourselves in the doctor's office. My spirit-friend, seeing my anxiety, spoke as follows through the medium—as near as I can remember:

"My dear Brother—Your spirit-friends are rejoicing over the preservation of your life. They have been the means of saving you from an untimely death, through this medium, who has permitted himself to be controlled by us for this purpose. Had you started for Cincinnati as you intended to do, you would have arrived at the hour we have manifested ourselves to you in this singular way, and you would have received the ball which was intended for another. As it is, the man you would have been taken for, was shot. Look in the papers published on Monday, and you will see an account of the accident. Adieu."

I considered the above a very strange communication, which did not fully satisfy me for having been detained; and I thought the idea of looking into the papers for an accident which my spirit-friend told me had occurred, as the communication states, too absurd; still, when Monday morning came, I went to the reading-room, and there, to my great amazement, found what the spirit had told me was true. That night, at half-past eleven, a man had been shot, as the spirit stated. But to return to the mysterious bullet.

On that eventful night I placed the bullet in a drawer of my bureau, and retired to rest. The next morning I looked for the bullet; but it had disappeared, and where it had gone was a mystery to both the Doctor and myself. We had given up all hopes of ever seeing it again; but on the following Saturday evening, at precisely half-past eleven, the bullet shot into my room as if fired from a pistol. Where it came from I know not. The door and the windows were both closed. I called the Doctor. There was no more sleep for us that night. To every portion of that house that bullet went, and we followed it until we were tired, and then lay down to rest; but all night long that bullet rapped upon the walls of that haunted house. For a long time afterwards it would come to us whenever we asked for it. I was requested to mark it so that I might know it. I did so, and that mark remained upon it until it had grown as small as a buck-shot, and then it disappeared altogether.

One of the favorite tricks the spirits used to play with it was to drop it into a tumbler of water, and then make the bullet so hot that no person could take it out of the water. I have seen a great many unbelievers try to pick it up, or take it out of the water, but they never could until the controlling spirit would permit them to.

During the following summer I visited, with the Doctor, friends of his in Connecticut, and also my friends in Massachusetts. Through both of these States that spirit-bullet followed us, and would appear at all places, and at all times, whenever we desired it to, and sometimes when we little cared to have it.

We found it a faithful companion; and at last, as we approached the end of our journey, it bade farewell to us forever. Little by little it wasted away. Like old age, it vanished from earth, having fulfilled an important mission.

My spiritual investigations were full of interest from the commencement, and I have often regretted that I did not keep a record of them, and when time permitted present my experience to the public. Seeing no better way to spend a Sabbath in this ungodly place, I concluded to write a true history of the Mysterious Bullet, and send to you for publication, begging your acceptance of the same.

Written for the Banner of Light.

ALONE!

BY HELEN MAR.

Alone! What a dirge, what a knell rings in that word, alone. We gaze upon the silver lake, spread out in loveliness before us, and seem to see that dread word engraved on the crested cap of every dancing wave. We look again; the foaming surf has vanished, and the waves have mingled into one. All is harmony.

We look out upon the snow-capped mountains, where the sunlight dances and plays, weaving rain-bow garlands for every shaggy rock-bound cliff, and seem to see alone, written there. But are the mountains alone? Oh, no; there they stand, side by side, cemented by the eternal laws of gravitation in one indissoluble bond of brotherhood, and that cold word alone is but the reflection of a desolate heart upon their icy slopes.

The rain-drops are falling, patter, patter, against the window-pane, and the old Storm King is marching through our streets, with stately steps, and slow beating on the muffled drum of time the death-march of the departing year. We listen, and he seems to say—

"Alone, alone, we're marching on, through a world of bustle and care; No sympathy near, our woe to cheer. None cares our sorrow or joy to bear—None, flies off, the old dying year—None, comes on the new in the rear. And the only word you'll ever read there is alone—alone!"

He has passed by, but the dirge still rings in our ears—alone! And is it so? Is there but one word in the great vocabulary of humanity, and that word Alone!

Listen! Methinks I hear gentle whispers—angel voices. Yes, we seem to feel their sweet, soothing influences. A frail, trembling network of attraction is drawing us away, and we discern the misty, shadowy outline of something real!

In the midst of this pleasing reverie, alone strikes again upon our ear in death-tones, and all is hushed. The heavenly visitants are fled, the silken threads which seemed to be drawing us toward a better, higher life, are sundered, and the spell is broken! The realities of stern, cold, selfish life burst upon us, and we feel that we are alone!

Oh, thou Eternal Spirit of Truth, must it ever be thus? Is man doomed to plod on through this



trackless, wilderness world, unable to read in all that book of Nature and Revelation naught, save that one word, Alone? Are there no soul-sympathies for us? Shall our ears never hear the celestial music of the spheres? and must that requiem of hopes departed haunt us to the grave? Shall we forever hermetically seal up the deepest, purest fountains of our heart's highest aspirations, and bid a heartless world gaze and trample on and misjudge? It must be so. Many a flower which might have bloomed in beauty, and shed a fragrance on all around, has been transplanted to an uncongenial soil, tilled by a rash hand, supported on a thorny trellis, and watered by bitter tears!

#### THE LITTLE ROBINS.

BY MRS. A. C. SPAULDING.

In the robin's nest in the old elm tree,  
Are some little birdlings—I counted three;  
I listened just now, being tired of play,  
And what think you, ma, I heard them say?  
Why they said, or at least I seemed to hear,  
That for ever so long their parents dear  
Had quite controlled them, but now they'd try,  
Being all alone, if they could not fly.  
So one little robin hops up on a twig;  
His wings they were small, but his body was big,  
He sprang in the air with a wee little jump,  
But down on the ground, lo! poor robin fell plump.  
Now birds, or children, great or small,  
'Twill save you, dears, from many a fall,  
To listen and learn of those more wise,  
Before you attempt too high to rise.

#### SPIRITUAL PHENOMENA. EXPERIENCE AND OBSERVATION.

BY A. H. DAVIS.

##### CHAPTER II.

THE CIRCLE OF 1863—THE MEDIUMS, HOW INFLUENCED—MY RECORDS, HOW TAKEN—MEMBERS OF THE CIRCLE—JONIOUS FABULUS—HIS HISTORY—HIS TEACHINGS—WHY CANNOT ALL BECOME MEDIUMS?

The circle held at the residence of Mr. Healey, Sunday evening, Oct. 1, 1863, at which I received the communication from my father, alluded to in Chapter I, was the commencement of a series of private circles, which we continued the remainder of the fall of 1863, and during the winter and spring months of 1864.

The medium through which the principal part of the communications came, was Mr. J. P. Healey, then, and for ought we know, now, a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in good standing; and with much that was taught us through his own hand, he had, or professed to have, no sympathy. He was an impressed medium, and his hand was also controlled to point to the letters of a printed alphabet which lay before him, in a rapid manner, a letter at a time. A second person looked over and pronounced the letter as soon as pointed to, and when the word was spelled out, I took it down; and the words came about as fast as I could write in long-hand; and, in fact, I found it exceedingly convenient before the winter was out, to resort to photography, of which I had a partial, and which I now took up again and gained a practical knowledge. Mrs. Healey, the wife of the medium, was a trance and writing medium; and occasionally we received communications through her hand.

A few facts in connection with these sittings are worthy of notice; and first, much of what we received was counter to the professed belief of the medium. Secondly, the style was bold and glowing, and many parts eloquent, and every member of the circle was satisfied that the teachings were in advance of the medium, or of any mind present. Thirdly, there was a connected link through the whole series—and in several instances the communication was stopped in the middle of a sentence, and the medium would engage in conversation, with the circle, foreign to the subject, ten or fifteen minutes, and then commence again; and when my notes were written out, I could not tell where the break was made—being good evidence, to my mind, that the communications were not received from the medium's mind.

Those who attended the meetings of this circle, punctually, were Franklin Hanohett, Anna E. Hanohett, Joseph P. Healey, Mary P. Healey, Man-son Morse, Martha Burnham, John Jennings, A. H. Davis, all of Natick, and Henry Wood, of West Needham. Nathan Rice, George Wood, and H. L. Bowker were also occasionally present.

It will not be expected that I shall give a full report of what was received during these sittings; and I will give only occasional extracts from such parts as I deem of interest to the general reader.

At a meeting of this circle, held October 22d, soon after we were seated around the table, it began to tip in a marked, heavy and measured manner, different from what we had ever known it to tip before. It was asked by one of the circle—

"Will the spirit tipping the table give us its signal?" and in response the table tipped twenty-one times. Again it was asked:

"Will the spirit tipping the table give us the name by the alphabet?"

Answered "Yes," and the name, "Jonious Fabulus" was spelled out. Again it was asked:

"Where can we find that name?"

It was answered—"You do not have the name in any of the books with which you are familiar. It was from my name that the poetical sprang, of calling whatever seemed marvelous or strange, and not to be credited, a fable. In my time of existence on the earth, there was but a very imperfect knowledge of any existence after the spirit left the body, and when I labored to convince the world that there was such a place as the spirit-world, I was ridiculed and called a deceiver. From that fact, it became a general practice to call whatever was not fully understood, one of Fabulus's stories, which in time degenerated to fable. What I came for was, to call your attention to the fact, that there are in the spirit-world those who, though they have lived long before the time of which you have any history, still have a deep interest in the whole human family, and are at all times ready to render such assistance as is in our power to give, when a proper opportunity is presented."

Whether such being as Jonious Fabulus ever existed, or whether the name is a myth, we did not stop to question; but as we found the teachings good, we received them. And I would here remark, it has never been a matter of interest with me to identify spirits; but when the spirits see fit to give evidence of their identity, I am always happy to receive it.

This, as I have intimated before, was the commencement of a series of teachings, through the fall and winter months—the circle meeting twice, and sometimes three times a week. I will not tax the patience of the reader by giving a detailed report of

all we received, but simply review my reports, and give the leading subjects, and occasionally an extract from the teachings. The subjects came systematically and in order. An experienced writer would not have arranged them more systematically. And, what is still more remarkable, on one or two occasions it was announced several weeks before-hand that at a certain point in the teachings he would be aided by Herschel and Martin Luther; and when the time came, although every member of the circle had forgotten the promise, it was fulfilled; and I would not forget to mention, either, that every week day the medium was employed at his trade.

I will now give here another extract from a communication received from Jonious, at a circle held Saturday evening, Oct. 29, 1863: "The race to which I belonged, known in history as Greeks, were among the first to adopt social habits, or, as you may say, the habit of living in communities. With us began the practice of building temples of worship, and houses to live in. To us belongs the honor of taking the lead in what is known among you as architecture. Although at first it was in but a rude state, yet step by step it advanced, according to the laws of progression, improvement following improvement, until there were erected those massive piles which have been the wonder and admiration of ages past, and are still the study of the present generation, affording matter for the research of scientific minds of all nations whom curiosity led to open the bowels of the earth, to search for cities long buried beneath the wasting elements of time. Be assured that there are still many places that have been the abode of men, which have long been lost to the knowledge of the inhabitants of the globe. Nineveh is not the only city that has been swallowed up in the many convulsions which have taken place since man appeared on the earth; and the account of that was not recorded for many centuries after the occurrence."

Question—"Will you tell us how many thousand years it has been since those pyramids of which we have an account were erected?"

Answer—"They were not all erected in one century."

Question—"Can you tell us how long any of them have stood?"

Ans.—"If I should give the time in your mode of reckoning it would not be credited, and might lead some to doubt the truth of the whole subject; but as light increases, the mind of man will become more and more prepared to take in the great and mighty things which are yet to be revealed. This much I will say, your history does not give anything like a correct idea of the time."

WHY CANNOT ALL BECOME MEDIUMS? At another sitting, held November 5, the following was received in relation to mediums: "I perceive that there are minds among you disposed to inquire, why cannot all persons be used alike as mediums? and why is it that all that does come through such as are mediums is not reliable? I will say, in answer, that when you will tell me why every man you know is not a Franklin, a Fulton, or a Morse, then you will discover the reason of what you ask. You must not expect every medium to be an Andrew Jackson Davis any more than you can expect every man to be a Daniel Webster; but be prepared to receive the truth as it may be made manifest, whether it comes in a broken and disconnected manner, or in words which shine like pictures of gold. Some are disposed to doubt, because every communication is not substantiated by physical demonstration beyond the possibility of deception. Now apply this rule to the every-day occurrences of life, and see how it will hold. You are willing to take it as a fact established beyond doubt that steam may be used as a motive power, and go to work accordingly, making use of the knowledge others have gained, and applying it to practical use. So do with this subject, which has been as plainly and positively demonstrated as has the other, and which is of as much greater importance as the spiritual world is above the earthly. If all cannot be used in the more elevated spheres of development, let them be willing to be useful where they can; for, rest assured, the Divine Mind has a work for each of the inhabitants of earth in nature's great workshop, and the one the most willing shall make the most progress. But it is impossible for any to make progress without labor."

Question—"Did you have any part in sending Martin Luther to us?"

Ans.—"Yes."

"Is it your intention to give us a course of instruction in relation to the spirit-world, assisted by Martin Luther?"

"Yes."

"Shall we devote more than one evening in a week to you both?"

"Yes."

"Shall we devote one evening in a week to each?"

"Yes."

"Let not your minds wander from the great and important work which you have commenced, and you may rest assured you will yet see the highest desire of your hearts gratified in receiving communications both instructive and useful."

#### THE QUESTION OF MEDIUMSHIP.

I saw in your issue of November 10th, an article headed "A new question for discussion," in which Mr. G. H. Davis asks the following questions, viz:—"When a medium is in a trance state what proof have we that the ideas or thoughts which he or she may utter, come from spirits; and if the intelligence which comes forth may not proceed from a highly magnified condition of the faculties, which enables the subject to grasp superior wisdom through the same mysterious process that man naturally receives his thoughts?"

Now, to my mind, this proof is very apparent, and if I can make it so to others perhaps both parties will be gratified.

First, then, I will say, (as those conversant with the subject well know) that the trance state, so called, is very different in the different individuals subject to it. And also that the degree or depth of trance varies greatly in the same person. Some persons while in this state are entirely unconscious of outward things, and do not remember anything which takes place during their sleep, or trance. Others never lose their consciousness, but take cognizance of all which may be said or done by those around them, yet without the power to speak or act of their own volition, because their physical organs are in the control of another mind, or power, and not their own.

Again, some mediums are at times totally unconscious, and at other times semi-conscious, according to the degree or power of the obsessing spirit, or controlling power, over such mediums.

Now let us take the case of a conscientious truthful, honest, good-loving medium, (and I feel thankful there are many such) one whose self-consciousness is never entirely lost, but whose own mind takes

note of all that is said or done through him on her (as the case may be) yet without the power of resisting it; who often doubts the truthfulness of the assertions being made through their (the medium's) organs, has doubts about its being the spirit who gives its name or is recognized by persons present, by the many peculiarities pertaining to such spirit's character or individuality, but of which the medium is entirely ignorant; in short, one who is all the time aware that the physical body and organs are manifesting all the emotions of a separate, distinct and different individual, whether it be manifesting joy or sorrow, laughing or weeping; whether embracing long loved friends, or blessing with all the out-gushing affection of a mother's love, the dear children who may be present, but from whom that mother has long been separated, because before unrecognized by them—and many such scenes I have witnessed, many tears of joy I have seen shed, and heard many a prayer of thankfulness, on such occasions, both from mortals and spirits.

I say, then, that a truthful medium, who is conscious of all this at the time, will not, when relieved from the trance or influence, claim to have produced it themselves, but will invariably tell you that they knew but could not prevent what was being done, and that the thoughts, the speech and the acts were as new and strange to them as they were to others present. And even suppose mediums should claim to have done it of their own volition, (but I never know of such a case,) those who know them well would know of their inability to personate, unaided, the perfect individuality of those whom they had never seen nor heard of.

My wife was a medium through whom the spirits often spoke—as you may see by reference to "Spiritualism," by Judge Edmonds. She was never entirely unconscious, was at times quite skeptical, especially as regards the wisdom or power of spirits; and, although she could often see spirits, and hear them talk, she disliked, as a general thing, to yield to their influence, but would do so if she thought any good would result from so doing. Spirits would often come to her and beg to be permitted to speak through her to their friends on earth; and when such friends were present, their (the spirits') importunities would be almost irresistible.

When she did give herself up to their influence, she seemed, as she said, to stand aside as it were, and listen to the words her lips were uttering; at the same time commenting in her own mind on what the spirit said, the same as any other listener would do.

If it purported to be some person of note, who was speaking, Webster for instance, she would think so herself thus, "I don't believe this is Webster who is speaking, for it seems to me I could speak as well as he is doing;" or again, "I don't believe this spirit knows as much as he pretends to; if it is a spirit, he don't seem to know any more than other folks. I won't let them use me to speak through again if they can't talk better than they are now doing." &c., &c. Now at such times she was conscious of no superior illumination of mind, was perfectly alive to external things and did she hear her child cry, or anything else of a startling character, she would struggle to get control of her organs again, and in some instances succeeded in doing so.

The ideas given through her, would be new, strange and different from her own. No person had a higher veneration for truth, and it often caused her considerable anxiety and distress, for fear that something which was given through her might not be true; and she often remarked that if a spirit said anything through her which was not true, she would yield to the influence no more.

Now these are stubborn facts, and they prove, in such cases at least, that the mediums do not get the ideas, or thoughts, through a "highly magnified condition of their faculties," nor through the same mysterious process by which man naturally receives his thoughts.

I am aware that some persons, somnambulists for instance, do many things while in that state, which they are not capable of doing while in a normal condition; they may write sermons, or paint pictures in a dark room, or with eyes closed. At such times, I do believe that some of their faculties are in a superior or illuminated condition, while other of their faculties lie dormant and inactive. While their faculties are in this illuminated state they may, and perhaps do, possess a power of obtaining ideas or of knowing things, which at other times they do not have; but I never knew such persons to pretend to be anything more than they really were—certainly they do not pretend to be the spirit of another person; if so, I have yet to hear of the first instance. They are not conscious of being asleep and awake at the same time, or that they are in any abnormal condition, consequently they are not capable of reasoning upon the peculiar state they are in.

The minds of mediums do often affect or color the communications given through them, and it may be, that those in deep trance sometimes speak through their own organs from the volition of their own spirit; but if we are to suppose that they are then in a superior condition, they must be aware that they are speaking and acting out falsehoods, if they were really doing so. Conscientious mediums would not be likely to do such things many times, nor permit themselves to be placed in a condition to give forth such things.

Clairvoyants claim to see, hear, &c., for themselves. They may see spirits, may hear them speak, but they do not claim to be spirits other than themselves. May we not believe in the one case as well as in the other?

To sum up then. Some mediums are conscious of speaking through their own organs. They are conscious of seeing and of being spoken to by spirits, and they are also conscious that spirits control and speak through their external organs of speech, in spite of their desire and efforts to the contrary. And unless we rule out all faith in the honesty and truthfulness of the multitudes of good, moral and truth-loving mediums throughout our country, together with the evidence of our own senses, sharpened as they are by doubt and skepticism, we must believe that departed spirits do speak with us, as they claim to do.

Yours respectfully,

New York. G. SWEST.

#### ON EPITHETS.

I never in my life called man or woman a drunkard, thief, or prostitute, or pauper. I know that these are the legal names applied to such, and it may be only a morbid feeling that has made them so offensive to me as never to use them. And, moreover, I never felt toward such any feeling but compassion; whereas, with a more healthy mind, I might view them with horror and disgust. I doubt if I can now correct this feeling, if it is wrong; and that when I read or listen to "reform" discourses, where these (legal) epithets are applied with so much gusto, they will give me anything but pleasure; and that I may continue to doubt at times if the denouncer is any nearer heaven than the denounced.

PAUL PAT.

#### A RETROSPECT.

This beautiful sunny day, as it spreads its shine over this great city and lovely bay, reminds me that forty-eight annual revolutions of our earth have transpired and completed to day since I entered upon my pilgrimage in the outer and visible life. How changed is life in this brief period, with its two ends, so near in the endless hoop of eternity! Then I knew nothing of this or any other life—had barely a capacity to feel a little of my surroundings, but not even capacity to know I had no friend in this world but a mother, and that to her, even, I must have been an unwelcome visitor in the cold storms of New England, and the colder blasts of poverty and contempt that surrounded her.

Those who wish to know the story of my trials and sufferings in early life, and the wretchedness of a mother whom the angels took home so soon after my appearance (four years) can read it in the "Life-Line of the Lone One," as I cannot recount it here, but only introduce it to exhibit the contrast between the poor, friendless outcast boy, homeless, despoiled, forsaken, and sold into sixteen long years of servitude, and the present condition of the same child, (for still I am but a child,) with thousands of friends scattered over our country, and hundreds of the best and happiest homes in the nation open to welcome me, and the warmest of hearts bidding me welcome to a home; with a pleasant little cottage, and happy family, who call me husband and father, dear father, etc.; with all the endearing terms that can bind a loving daughter (only one), or a noble and dutiful son (two), to any parent, and a kind, amiable and noble wife, who always welcomes me to the little home circle, and would not consent to my going, only that she feels the importance and uses of my mission; and then a little higher, and more important and permanent still, the spheres and life above, of which I have an equal certainty, where dwell my mother—more dear to me than ever—my two little boys, who have preceded us, and are watching over us and anxiously awaiting the time of our arrival to that happier home; and many near and dear friends, whom I have known and loved while here, already there, and often sending me messages of congratulation, sympathy and continued affection; and, added to all, messages of encouragement, friendship and love from scores of noble and worthy persons whom I never knew on earth, but whose very names I had respected and revered, and whose written words had been to me "footprints on the sands of time," which I have tried to follow; and last, and most precious of all, the full assurance I have that in that world the deepest and strongest elements of my soul shall find a legitimate sphere of growth and expansion, and that the love of every soul shall not be doomed to wander unsatisfied with the cold formalities, idle dreams, or vulgar sensualities of this mundane stratum of being. And all this great change, in less than half a century, has occurred in me.

I know I have not lived in vain. Whether useful or useless to others, I have been useful to myself, and life has paid at last, although for years it seemed to me a failure, and I feared the whole race was bankrupt and the creation a failure, as it surely would be if either sectarian Christianity or that infidelity which denies a spirit-life were true; but, thank God, I know they are not; and thousands with me know that this human bark is not to be wrecked by either Scylla or Charybdis—is not to be burned up on African sands, nor bound in eternal ice by Arctic frosts. There is a temperate region of eternal bloom open to the souls of this world, and those who long for and can appreciate and enjoy it, will find it when they sail through the gate of death. My mother did, my children have, as well as many friends whom I have known here, and all testify to the beauty and loveliness of that bright world, now being, through Spiritualism, so closely linked to this and to us.

The frosts that have whitened my locks have ripened my soul, and although I do not feel the creeping years in my body, and my mind seems still strengthening, expanding and unfolding through the body, yet I feel and know by my time-table and the annual stations I have stopped at, that the journey is nearly at an end on the foot-path, and voices are already calling me to "come up higher," and I feel sure my spirit will, in a few more short years at farthest, let go its hold on earthly matter, and freed from this body that now anchors it to earth, ascend to the home where I trust its reception and welcome will be different even by the same mother that received me here, as well as by others.

I have much work laid out before me to do here, but may not complete any of it. Books in manuscript, and lectures in embryo; both may be left for others, or finished by me through mediums, for I expect to correspond and communicate with this sphere after I enter the next; for I know others do, and I know my sympathies at least cannot be withdrawn while I am what I am, or while my nature remains as now.

I reached this city last evening, and met a most hearty and cordial welcome from my friends; and when I have felt the political and religious atmosphere, and taken observations in that direction, I will make a note of them; but, at present, the appearances are that the great storm is not to be as severe as I anticipated at one time. The moderate men have the helm here, and the rowdies are out of power, and hence have little influence.

Baltimore, Md., Jan. 6, 1861. WARREN CHASE.

#### IS THERE NO EVIL?

I have been an investigator of modern Spiritualism since its advent at Rochester in 1849; have read most of its earlier publications—including Davis's works; been a subscriber to some Spiritual paper most of the time, commencing with The Spirit World; am now a subscriber to the BANNER OF LIGHT. I have tried to keep up with the progress of the times; have seen many new and truthful ideas established, and many erroneous ones exploded.

All great errors have generally been exploded at once by some of the many able writers in the spiritual press. I have never until now been obliged to emerge from my obscurity to rescue truth, or explode error. I would gladly leave the task to able hands; but having waited long, and looked in vain for a refutation of the heresy which confounds evil with good, and teaches that man can do no evil, I am constrained to undertake the annihilation of this moral Goliath with the powers with which heaven has endowed me. Unless this can be done, the foundations of our civilization are in danger from this monstrous doctrine.

If we destroy the contrast between good and evil, how long will our civilization endure? Teach that we can do no wrong, and what law will be respected? All our laws, and the order which exists in society, are based upon the recognition of the antagonism of evil to good. It is this antagonism which renders law necessary; and although Dr. Child may succeed in convincing weak-minded people, and people of

easy virtue, that there is no such antagonism, yet such antagonism is none the less a fact. Allow me to refer the Doctor to the saying of him "who spoke as spake no other": "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." Why? Because he, in so doing, stifles the voice of the God within—closes his ears to the voice of his God. The man does not live, whose inner conscience, at first hearing this "all-right" doctrine, did not tell him it was false.

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,  
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;  
As, to be loved, needs but to be seen,  
But soon too oft, familiar with her face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

And although he may have schooled himself to embrace it, he cannot thus easily escape the consequences of the error. But the Doctor having first smothered the voice of his God, endeavors, by the use of the prevalent false ideas of God, and some very ingenious sophistries, to induce others to smother the voices of their Gods also. His whole argument is based upon the following assumption, which is not only unproven, but unsupportable of proof, viz, the original existence of an organized creative power, all of whose works are necessarily good; whose mistakes are by design, and whose errors are infinite perfection.

If this assumption is admitted, of course his conclusions are inevitable. But it is said the negative of this cannot be proven; therefore the affirmative stands good as the most reasonable way of accounting for the phenomena of being. But is this so? Is it more reasonable to suppose that an organized being, perfect in attributes, and containing the germ of the universe, originally and eternally existed, than that matter existed in chaos before progress had developed organization?

I admit there is something beyond our comprehension in the eternity of matter; but it is still more beyond our comprehension how an organized God came into existence before any progress had taken place to develop one. The old argument which I can only regard as a compound absurdity, is this: "The universe exists. It must have had a beginning; and if it had a beginning, it had a beginner; and the beginner must have had power to create, or to make something out of nothing." It can be illustrated in no better way than by repeating the argument until we perceive its absurdity. Thus: That Being must have had a beginning; and, if he had a beginning, he must have had a beginner; and that beginner must have had power to create him, and that Being must have had a beginning, and if he had a beginning, then he must have had a beginner, and that beginner must have had power to create him, and so on, *ad infinitum*. You will finally leave off just as wise as you began, unless you lose your senses in the operation.

Why is it not as well to admit the eternity of matter, and that matter contained the germ of God, as to admit the eternity of God, and that God contained the germ of the universe?

In either case we are forced to admit the eternity of matter. Is it not more reasonable to suppose that the first condition of matter was chaos? God is an organized being, and organization can only come by progress. Chaos must therefore necessarily have been the condition before there was any progress. Now upon the supposition that chaos of matter was first, and that progress developed organized life, and further progress developed intelligence; and that higher and still higher developments of intelligence developed the several circles of wisdom and power; and that the great sum total of intelligent being in all the multifarious degrees of perfection in wisdom, power and purity, is what we call God—therefore chaos is the beginning, and God the ultimate of being.

The fixed and eternal laws of nature, bringing order out of chaos, is Deity. Organized life is God. The object of the universe is the development of this God-principle. Therefore all action which tends to the development of the God in us, is good, and all which tends to retard it, is evil.

See, Mass., 1861. ALANSON FREEMAN.

Speculations upon the origin of God always lead to the same point, whether we consider that God was always existent and the first great cause of all things, or that God is a power developed by matter under nature's laws. Our friend starts with "chaos," another starts with "God." We do not see so much difference in the beginning; for chaos, which could contain the germ of the world, is no less a wonder—no less incomprehensible to us than a personal God. Either power contained the law within itself which has evolved present Nature, and whence originated that power is the question to be asked in either case, *ad infinitum*. All our ideas of God are vague and unsatisfactory, requiring a better knowledge of self and outside Nature than mortal possesses to enable him to comprehend. We believe that evil contains within itself a germ that shall in time develop in the subject, by suffering, a more perfect state, which we call good.—Ed.

THE BOOK OF JOB.—The Book of Job is generally regarded as the most perfect specimen of the poetry of the Hebrews. It is alike picturesque in the delineation of Hebrew phenomena, and artistically skillful in the didactic arrangement of the whole work. In all the modern languages into which the Book of Job has been translated, its images, drawn from the natural scenery of the East, leave a deep impression on the mind. "The Lord walketh on the heights of the waters, on the ridges of the waves towering high beneath the force of the wind." "The morning red has colored the margins of the clouds, as the hand of man moulds the yielding clay." The habits of animals are described, as, for instance, those of the wild ass, the horse, the buffalo, the rhinoceros and the crocodile, the eagle and the ostrich. We see "the pure ether spread, during the scorching heat of the south wind, as a melted mirror over the parched desert."

The poetic literature of the Hebrews is not deficient in variety of form; for while the Hebrew poetry breathes a tone of warlike enthusiasm, from Joshua to Samuel, the little Book of the gleaner Ruth presents us with a charming and exquisite picture of nature. Goethe, at the period of his enthusiasm for the East, spoke of it "as the loveliest specimen of epic and idyl poetry which we possess."—Humboldt's Cosmos, Vol. II., p. 60.

After he had got fairly a-going in his printer life in Philadelphia, Franklin's financial prudence never left him. While he yet owed \$100 toward his newspaper property—(the story is his own)—a match-making woman tried to negotiate a marriage between the printer and a young lady of which he was somewhat enamored. "Tell the parents," said the type, "to give her \$100—enough to pay my debt—and I'll marry the girl." "Let me mortgage their house, and borrow the money," said Franklin. "Wont do it," replied the parents. "Then I am too poor to marry," said the printer—and so ended the affair.



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## SHOULDERING A MUSKET.

There is another and a better courage than the physical. Not that the lower must not always lie below the higher; but it is not worth while to confound them by running one into the other. We often speak of a moral courage as entirely distinct from a physical; whereas, if it is looked into as it deserves, there can be nothing like a physical without some sort of a moral courage to inspire and inform it. The greater must ever include the lesser, and so must the higher gradually grow out of the lower conditions.

We frequently overhear men saying, in these times of excitement and confusion, that they are all ready to shoulder their musket for the union of these States, or for the perpetuity of their political principles. Well, if they really are ready, perhaps they have much to furnish them with gratifying reflection; but it certainly cannot be a reflection that proceeds from the most satisfactory sources. As if, now, the truest courage lay in bringing a loaded musket to the shoulder! As if, unless a man could be brought up at once to the pitch of passion, or frenzy, he may be taunted with possessing no courage at all! But this is but the popular misapprehension; when matters are better balanced and harmonized, the public verdict will come nearer the truth.

What if you are ready to shoulder your musket, sir, in imaginary vindication of the principles you profess, or of the integrity of the government under which you live. That proves your courage, does it? Very well. Now then, are you just as ready to leave off your impulsive threats, if thus your cherished principles could be made more secure? Are you just as ready to "present arms" as you are to point the muzzle, in order to place your government, now in peril, upon a higher and more permanent foundation? In brief, is your courage nothing more than the gunpowder courage, the same that lies nearest the surface, and has always been prompt to answer the summons of passion? Is it of that old sort that clenches the fist, distorts the muscles of the face, gives one the horrid mien of a madman, and will do nothing unless on the spur of excitement, and under the heat of passion?

It is much easier to act than to think. Calm reflection, especially in the midst of exciting and even provoking circumstances, is one of the tests of human character. To control one's self costs a great deal more than to conquer others. It is an easy matter to get excited, whether with or without due cause; but it is no proof of radical courage, which must always include high-mindedness and forbearance, and imply the existence and harmonious working of several leading qualities. One who is but superficially developed cannot easily know what it costs a full-grown man to refrain from doing that which the former would rashly plunge into. What seems to many the merest negativeness of character is frequently but the profoundest positiveness. We may not judge another by what he does until we have been at the pains to look around and see what he has refrained from doing. It is vastly easier to shun temptation of any sort than it is to resist and overcome it.

While we are animal as well as spiritual, and while each half of our common nature is alternately attracted to and repelled from the other, it is not so easy, either, to abandon the claims which the purely physical makes on our constant consideration. We agree that that is a very essential portion of our present make-up. We allow that what is called purely physical courage is by no means to be sneered at, much less left out of the account. It is the substratum on which the better sort of courage rests; it is the pedestal whereon stands the entire spiritual structure.

But animal courage, which at best can only be styled an instrument in the hands of its superior, ought never to get the upper hands of its real lord and master. It should ever be kept subordinate. Its place is the lower, and not the higher one. It is useful when it performs service, but mischievous when it usurps authority. We could not get along without it, nor yet ought it to become supreme. We ought to be willing and ready to shoulder a musket, but we ought to be still more willing to forbear and forgive, to propose peace and extend the right hand of fraternal feeling. The readiest impulses must not be taken for the strongest and profoundest ones. What lies nearest the surface is not therefore of the most value. The passion that soonest flames up, soonest spends itself and is over; the still forces that lie beneath, kindle slowly and burn a long while.

When, as now, there reigns a feeling of panic, and one side is very sure it is right and that the other is wrong, the truest courage for the party thinking itself right is, to exercise toward the other only the kindest disposition and the largest charity. It is the most courageous, too, because it costs most to practice it; were it an easy affair, there would be little or no merit in it. How very hard, how next to impossible it is, for a man who feels that he is right and knows that he has been wronged, to yield his convictions temporarily for the sake of permanent peace—or, rather, to hold his opinions in abeyance, until time and favoring circumstances have been allowed to step in and do the work which can be done only by them! Who is there that does not rather desire the full gratification of his pride, becoming even stiff in his demands, than to have only what is best accomplished, and accomplished without his aid? It is far easier, in these matters, to put a musket to the shoulder than patience to the resolution; to fire a loaded gun at an opponent, than to exercise charity toward him till he sees the better way.

We frequently hear, in these times, one and another condemning our Chief Executive for his vacillation and inefficiency, because he is not already engaged in firing guns upon, and thrusting bayonets into his fellow-citizens of the discontented States; but whether he is right or wrong in his position and conduct, it cannot reasonably be denied that this same inefficiency, which is charged upon him, is the only present protection of our quasi fraternal relations, and this apparent inactivity is fuller of promise to all of us than could possibly be the promptest activity that ever made the power of a government felt. How can any one of us see and know what the President must see and know? He was set in his present place by us expressly for the purpose of keeping watch over events and occurrences that transpire in every part of our wide country; and it is but right and fair that he should be allowed to use the discriminating authority with which he has been invested.

Let us not forget, any one of us, that this is not a government of force, of conquest, and of subjugation; that however much we may desire to enforce its authority everywhere upon the individual, yet there may exist circumstances where even the use of that central authority is not for a moment to be weighed in the same scale with the everlasting blessings of Peace; that it is better to yield a large claim of authority, than to sacrifice, by vigorously asserting it, every one of the results for which such claim is set up; and that we have yet to try the practical experiment of forbearance and charity and love in our political affairs, even as we have all along advocated it in affairs social and ecclesiastical, in order to prove the still profounder resources that lie undeveloped in human nature and the human heart.

## A Complete Character.

It is wrong for us to place the same sort of estimate upon our moral elements that we do upon our material goods and possessions. They are not to be judged by the same rule, nor brought to the same standard. It is, therefore, an unfortunate mistake to measure human character by the same process that is employed upon the estimates of property. Nay, more; it is impossible to judge of a man by the points of character that he merely shows. What is hidden from view is as valuable as what is plain; and not unfrequently has more to do with character than that which is observable. A perfectly developed character is the very thing we all aspire after; and that is the desideratum in life—not the mere forcing of one particular quality forward to a morbid and unhealthy development, while the rest are neglected. A French writer says:

"Accustomed," says he, "to estimate objects according to their rarity, according to what they may offer that is extraordinary, according to the trouble they have cost rather than according to their real merit, we sometimes pronounce a similar judgment on characters. Yet a complete character, though accompanied by inferior qualities, is nearer perfection than an incomplete character united to the most brilliant faculties. This proposition may shock our prejudices; it is nevertheless, justified in the eyes of true philosophy. It ought to be well understood, no doubt, that by inferiority of talents we mean only such as belongs to their natural limits, not that resulting from our own negligence in cultivating them. As to the rest, are we not sometimes led into confusion, and give the name of inferiority to what is only modesty? The beauty of the moral edifice does not consist merely in the grandeur of the dimensions, but likewise, and especially, in the excellence of the proportions. In a complete character everything contributes at the same time to the same object; all the qualities aid and sustain each other; none of them thwarts the aspiring and destination of nature; the parallel whereof is a mechanism, all the wheels, all the parts of which are perfectly adjusted; the friction is imperceptible; no movement is lost.

Such characters attain happiness more easily; perhaps they are the only characters for whom happiness becomes in effect a reality. They taste it without celebrating, and even without defining it; just as we breathe an air, free, sweet, and pure. For them, security is reserved; for them, everything is in its place; every action responds to its object. Is happiness anything else than the secret feeling of that general and constant correlation which maintains everything in harmony within us? I say within us, for if everything is in harmony within, we cannot fail to be at peace with that which is without us, since nothing external affects us in an immediate manner, and since the things that are without not on us only in proportion to the influence which we accord them. Complete characters are those which in the commerce of society offer the surest, the most facile and delightful relations; to encounter them never leads to any painful collision; we never find them contradictory or false to their ordinary conduct. Their solidity determines confidence—their frankness excites abandonment and openness; we feel at ease with them; we are all less offended by their superiority. No doubt we admire them less; but also we never think of shooting at them the arrows of envy, and they seem to disarm malignity by that peaceful influence which attaches itself to their presence. If the ways of perfection appear to us so arduous, it is because we seek them far from the direction which was traced by Providence. If we knew how to be consequent with ourselves, many things which appear difficult would become easy—many which are bitter would become sweet. Complete characters are to the moral life what comprehensive minds are to science."

## Mexico.

While our own Union is threatened with disintegration at the hands of unhappy and disaffected political leaders, whose representations have influenced thousands who might otherwise never have felt themselves aggrieved, it is encouraging to see that our Mexican neighbors are fairly on the road to the betterment of their internal affairs. Miramon, the aspiring Dictator, has at last met with a total overthrow a few miles outside the gates of the capital, and the Liberal forces are already entrenched in the ancient stronghold of the Montezumas. It is a fortunate thing that we, of the United States, have no backward steps to take in reference to the new government in Mexico, the present ruling party having been acknowledged by us, some time since, as the real power in the country. Hence we have no steps to retrace in that matter, and our timely advances will also be likely to return us a good political dividend in the future.

Should this change in Mexican affairs prove to be of a permanent and abiding character, there is hope that still another power will make itself felt among the nations of the world. The people of poor, priest-ridden Mexico have suffered from division and distraction, from the ambition of their rulers and the exactions of their spiritual guides, until there would appear to be but little vitality left as capital for the future; but there are abundant instances in nations, as of individuals, where bleeding and reducing prove the surest preparatory steps to subsequent vigor and health. It may be so with our darker-skinned neighbors. Certainly, they have passed through discipline enough during the last thirty years, to have made them at length familiar by experience with the elementary principles of a sound and stable popular government, which is what we hope they may now secure.

## "Optimism."

From the volume thus entitled, we are glad to make two or three extracts for the benefit of our readers at large. We spoke of this promising little volume, a week or two ago, and then hinted that we should, probably return to it for a few quotations.

Says the author, speaking of the everywhere prevalent doctrine of Compensation in the affairs of life—"Everything is blessed, but everything is unfortunate as well. If we run to brain, we will diminish in muscle; if we run to invention, we will diminish in execution. He that can invent has not the faculty to sell an invention; the ready, versatile tactician seldom can invent. If we conquer evils with science, we lose the victory in the carelessness of pride. Possession increases the appetite for possession, or else satiates to a want of the wants which that possession can gratify. He that is hungry, with nothing to eat, can see plenty of men who would do as much for his appetite as he would do for their provision. He that is injured by overworking, shall see plenty dying of idleness; and he that is dying of starvation, may see plenty dying of gluttony. It is all one to be smothered, whether with kisses or with ditch water. He that has no special misfortune to trouble him may see the man of troubles grow strong of soul, while the listless shall stagnate with idleness. He shall find the man of labor full of health and spirit. He shall find that if the hard toil blisters the tender hand, the hand will grow fit for its mission and will wax instead of waning. And he that has hands fit for the sledge cannot make watches nor drill needles. He that is a poet, sensitive and impressionable, cannot be competent to the sudden stratagem and dangerous reckonings of the field of battle. He that is impressionable must be impressed—he must both suffer and enjoy with more intensity than he that is full of the sturdy confidence of vigorous life."

And, upon Experience, he says:—"To us, this carnal carelessness, or stupidity if you please, is a redeeming feature in man's life, here or hereafter. Wherever we exist, through a thousand progressive changes, we see this mantle of divine charity protecting us from the chill winds that would otherwise blow in on us from the vasty deep, where God walks, now as ever, alone. We believe in a 'spiritual body,' growing within this body of flesh, as a child grows in its mother, to be delivered into a finer sphere. And this new body shall lie down in the world to which it enters, and from it shall go forth another—and from this another—far into the depths of the eternal divinity. The soul shudders at any other existence than that of body—shudders at any direct partnership in God's majesty, and fondly clings to those carnal and spiritual bodies which hold us asunder, alike from the universe and him."

On the theme of "Each for All," he philosophizes—"If for any wise purpose of variety, or harmony, life rises from the infinite to the infinitesimal, there must be somewhere such a thing as man; and if for the same reason the human race varies from Shakspeare and Bacon to an idiot, there must be somewhere such a man as you are. All cannot be the head, but some must be the hands, and legs, and lower parts. None can be made for itself alone, but each for all—for the edification and amusement of the entire race. One must furnish beauty, and lose something thereby; another must furnish deformity, and have some compensation therefor. One must furnish black eyes, another blue. One must be an example of suffering, and another must die of joy. Each man's actions must refer to the actions of all other men."

## LORD BYRON ON IMMORTALITY.

We make a few extracts from Lord Byron's "Detached Thoughts." They present forcibly some of the natural evidences of our future existence, and also foreshadow, with almost a prophetic spirit, the truths which Spiritualism is impressing on the public mind:—

"Of the immortality of the soul, it appears to me that there can be little doubt, if we attend for a moment to the action of mind; it is in perpetual activity. I used to doubt of it, but reflection has taught me better. It acts also so very independent of body—in dreams, for instance—incoherently and madly, I grant you, but still it is mind, and much more mind than when we are awake. Now that this should not act separately, as well as jointly, who can pronounce? The stoics, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, call the present state 'a soul which drags a carcass'—a heavy chain, to be sure; but all chains being material, may be shaken off. How far our future life will be individual, or rather, how far it will at all resemble our present existence, is another question; but that the mind is eternal seems as probable as that the body is not so. Of course, I here venture upon the question without recurring to revelation, which, however, is at least as rational a solution as any other. A material resurrection seems strange, and even absurd, except for purposes of punishment; and all punishment which is to revenge, rather than correct, must be morally wrong; and, when the world is at an end, what moral or warning purpose can eternal tortures answer? Human passions have probably disguised the divine doctrines here, but the whole thing is insupportable.

It is useless to tell me not to reason, but to believe. You might as well tell a man not to wake, but to sleep. And then to bully with tortments, and all that! I cannot help thinking that the menace of hell makes as many devils as the severe penal codes of inhuman humanity makes villians.

Matter is eternal—always changing, but reproduced, and, as far as we can comprehend eternity, eternal—and why not mind? Why should not the mind act with and upon the universe, as portions of it, and with and upon the congregated dust called mankind? See how one man acts upon himself and others, or upon multitudes! The same agency, in a higher and purer degree, may act upon the stars, etc., ad infinitum.

Believe the resurrection of the body, if you will, but not without a soul. The deuce is in it, if, after having had a soul (as surely the mind, or whatever you call it, is), in this world, we must part with it in the next, even for an immortal materiality! I own my partiality for spirit.

## Spirit-Drawings through Mrs. French.

A recent number of the BANNER contained an elaborate account of the mediumship of Mrs. E. J. French, of New York, which is attracting great attention in that city.

Drawings which would require as many hours of an artist to execute, are finished in four seconds by Mrs. French. She allows visitors to bring their own paper, only stipulating that it shall be drawing paper of a certain texture. Visitors may choose their own paper, so as to be sure it is the same paper drawn upon as she handed to the medium; but the usual method is to cut a slip of irregular shape from the sheet, and retain it until the drawing is perfected, and then compare the parts. Visitors sit in a lighted room, a few feet from the table upon which the paper is placed, but are requested not to concentrate the power of the eyes upon the paper.

Dr. Gardner has brought with him from New York, two drawings, which he will exhibit to his

friends in this city. One is a collection of flowers, bird, etc., etc. One corner of the paper, in a semi-circular form, is cut from it, the words "Truth is Power" being written so that the top of each letter is on one of the pieces, and the bottom of the letters on the other. This was done in four seconds. The other is a water scene.

Dr. Gardner has made arrangements for Mrs. French to visit Boston on or about Tuesday, the 29th instant, and she will spend two or three evenings in this city, giving friends an opportunity to witness these wonders. Due notice will be given as to the place where her sances will be held.

Reported for the Banner of Light.

MISS A. W. SPRAGUE AT ALLSTON HALL,  
Sunday, Jan. 13, 1861.

## AFTERNOON DISCOURSE.

The lecturers announced her theme of discourse as "The Spirit of Protestantism." Its spirit, she said, is of larger construction than the organization called the Protestant Church. It is a principle that has always obtained in the human soul. Ever since man had his reason, has he received that his mind has protested against. So the spirit of protestantism and inquiry must go together—for the mind ever questions the great things needed for its nature. There was a time when it was dangerous to protest, and it is, to a degree, yet, for man to refuse to worship the deities he is told to bow down to. For this reason the world has always had its martyrs, and man's intellectuality has grown stronger from the training it has thus obtained.

When the mind is dormant, it can worship a god of wood or stone, for the mind is as senseless as the god. When creeds and dogmas are too small for the soul, it surely protests against them, and thus it will itself grow larger. So long as the mind is latent, these things will do, and bishops and priests will thrive while the souls of the people sleep; but lead the mind to understand its own dignity, and priests and bishops can no more hold it than the waves of the sea would obey the behests of the olden king.

Men possess a power which their minds cannot fathom, and which their spirits cannot quench, which instinctively leads them to seek the fountain of true knowledge and spiritual unfoldment. Not only has man's mind gone beyond the grasp of priestcraft, but God himself, whom they thought to secure in the Ark of the Covenant, has outwitted them, and when they look to find him, he is gone. Men are made to think in spite of themselves, and when they find no satisfying answer through the priesthood they seek Jehovah's truths at their fountain, till it almost seems that men can so outgrow themselves as to measure heaven and grasp at the very throne of God—till they are taught there is no way of fathoming the Almighty's mind, when even their own is beyond their comprehension.

No soul can afford to wear the mark the world has given it, for in the grand total—the summing up of all events—the Father of Humanity will see just how all his children. Men may cease to know a Jesus of Nazareth ever lived, but it will be when the truth of his life and words will become so incorporated into human thought and actions that his life's mission will be achieved. Some men fear criticism will strip from the Son of God the insignia of his rank. But if forms and ceremonies are destroyed, the truth of God can never be. All there is of goodness and truth can never be destroyed, till it is absorbed in yet higher truths and nobler goodness. There should be that trust or goodness which is willing to stand the searchings of the inquiring mind. The proud, self-righteous, worldly-wise man may investigate in vain; but there is a class of honest and earnest thinkers who are fit ones to trust any truth to, for they are the true children of God. Those who cling to the faith of their fathers, in honesty and sincerity, are doing their work, and we should let them alone. But when we find those who claim to believe because their fathers did, without knowing within themselves any reason for their belief, or find men who are either without strength or purpose of mind, or are cringing slaves of selfish interests.

Your churches almost worship such men as Luther and Calvin, as eloquent defenders of the faith. What faith? Only that they made, to have men believe if they could be induced to do so. We praise them for the truths they did evolve, and for the quota of human progress they were the instruments of; but not for their attempts to hold the mind in check to the dogmas they taught, under the belief that they had reached the ultimate of religious progression. And, more, we do not like to be called infidels by their followers for doing just what their leaders did—protesting against that unsuited to our condition and sphere of growth.

The spirit of Protestantism has always been known, and those have protested most have most been worshipped by following generations. But in the workings of time the Protestant has always been protested against, and the Protestant Churches ground themselves as firmly now in their tracks and in support of pet dogmas as the church against which they first protested.

God's words are given just in proportion to the mind's receptivity; and what man would receive, he must first be ready for. When God was revealed to the Jews, they thought they knew all about him, and crucified Jesus, who came bringing them fresher tidings from the throne of God; and in turn, those to day who heal the sick and cure diseases, as Christ commanded his true believers to do, are rejected and denounced by those claiming to be his faithful followers.

You need not be ready to believe everything you are asked to, but you should be bold enough to take everything that comes to you into the laboratory of your own reason for the most rigid analysis, and you will surely then unminge the gold from the dross. Jew, Mahometan, Catholic and Protestant, each apply the stigma of infidel to the other—and who shall blame them? For from their standpoint each conceives it has received the key to ultimate knowledge. But we are free to say all are infidels so soon as they close the door of their own consciousness, and reject any new truth. It will not do for those who were beggars a few years ago, now, because surrounded with plenty, to speak hard of the beggar, for the beggar to day may have given them of his opulence when they were poor. So with the churches. It is unseemly for those who were classed as infidels a few years ago to bestow that epithet upon others now; for all the reason that they are asked to, but you should be bold enough to take everything that comes to you into the laboratory of your own reason for the most rigid analysis, and you will surely then unminge the gold from the dross. Jew, Mahometan, Catholic and Protestant, each apply the stigma of infidel to the other—and who shall blame them? For from their standpoint each conceives it has received the key to ultimate knowledge. But we are free to say all are infidels so soon as they close the door of their own consciousness, and reject any new truth. It will not do for those who were beggars a few years ago, now, because surrounded with plenty, to speak hard of the beggar, for the beggar to day may have given them of his opulence when they were poor. So with the churches. 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## The Messenger.

Each message in this department of the BANNER was claimed by the spirit who gave it. It is not published in the name of the Editor, but in the name of the spirit who gave it. It is not published in the name of the Editor, but in the name of the spirit who gave it.

We hope to show that spirits carry the characteristics of their earthly life to that beyond, and away with the erroneous idea that they are more than virtuous beings.

We believe the public should know of the spirit world as it is—should learn that there is evil as well as good in it, and not expect that purity alone shall flow from spirits to mortals.

We ask the reader to receive no doctrine put forth by spirits, in these columns, that does not comport with his reason. Each expresses so much of truth as he perceives—no more. Each can speak of his own condition with truth, while he gives opinions merely, relative to things not experienced.

**Visitors Admitted.**—Our sittings are free to any one who may desire to attend. They are held at our office, No. 513 Brattle street, Boston, every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday afternoon, commencing at half-past two o'clock; after which time there will be no admittance. They are closed usually at half-past four, and visitors are expected to remain until dismissed.

**Answers of Letters.**—As one medium would in no way suffice to answer the letters we should have sent to us, did we undertake this branch of the spiritual phenomena, we cannot attempt to pay attention to letters addressed to spirits. They may be sent as a means to draw the spirit to our circles, however.

## MESSAGES TO BE PUBLISHED.

The communications given by the following spirits, will be published in regular course. Will those who read one from a spirit they recognize, write us whether true or false?

**Wednesday, Jan. 9.**—Come and let us reason together. Let the Lord; Francis T. Whitler, Troy; Laura Wood, Brooklyn; Pat Riley, Lawrence.

**Thursday, Jan. 10.**—The Cause and Effect of Sin; John Coffin, New Bedford; John M. Mordock, Phillips, Me.; Betsey Hewins, Sharon, Mass.; Richard Crowsfield.

**Friday, Jan. 11.**—Invocation; What is Thought, and does it travel? Wm. Shipley, Boston; Rebecca Collins; T. Belcher Key.

**Saturday, Jan. 12.**—How are we to understand Biblical History which refers to the Creation of the World and the Origin of Man? Charles French, Fall River; Chas. Herbert, Boston; Mother Underhill, Boston.

**Sunday, Jan. 13.**—Is it not possible to educate certain animals up to the standard of man?—and is not all life immortal? John Derby; Harriet Abby Phillips; Edward Hooper.

## Invocation.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, in whom nations and individuals ever move and have their being, we find ourselves called upon to thank thee for the blessings of the present hour. We thank thee, Father, that thou hast again permitted us to walk through this temple of the flesh to speak to mortals. And oh, our Father and Mother, though our words may be few, may they fall upon good ground, bearing fruit to thy glory. While we look around us, oh Saviour of humanity, we can but wonder that the nations of the earth have no better confidence in thee. We can but wonder that they do seem to wander from thee. We can but wonder that they have not that implicit confidence the child should have in the parent. We can but wonder that they do not see thee in the shadow as well as in the sunbeam. But when we stand apart from mortality we see that the veil is thick between thee and them—that darkness heavy and black still mantles thy subjects, thy children. And yet, oh Divine Sovereign of souls, while we look in pity and wonder upon the inhabitants of earth, we will at the same time lift our souls to thee, thanking thee for all we behold—for the shadow as well as the sunbeam—for the souls who do see thee, and those who see thee not, and cannot rest with confidence upon thy bosom. Shall we ask thee to bless the nations everywhere? Shall we ask thee to pour out special blessings upon those before thee? Oh no, our Father, for each atom thou hast called into life thou wilt perfect. Therefore we ask no blessing of thee, but rest in thy mercy, knowing that thou art our friend, our Father and our Mother.

**The Political Condition of the American Nation to-day.**

Lo! the land rejoiceth! let the people rejoice. Yea, notwithstanding the tumult is everywhere, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, and therefore the people shall rejoice.

The past hath brought you to the present. It hath laid at your feet all that is real that is of it. It hath shown you the glory of the present hour, and the present hath unfolded to you much of the future. It points you not only to duty in the outer world, but to duty in the inner world.

The present gives you a brighter light than the past was prone to give; and why? Because our God is a God of progress—because he hath marked progress upon all his creations. He hath called all things into life, and he will call all things to himself.

We have been requested to speak upon the political condition of the American nation to-day.

What shall we say in behalf of the children of this enlightened age, who seem to stand, as it were, upon platforms they have done nothing of themselves to erect? Shall we say they are governed too much by the past? If we speak according to the dictates of materiality, we shall say this; if we speak according to the dictates of our experience, we shall not charge upon them these things. We shall say, in the language of our text, "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." His hand holds the reins as much to day as in the past—as in this condition as in that of the past.

The present condition of the American nation is but another foothold upon the boundary of another life—another development—another individualized mind seeking to build for itself a higher standard of right. Although the time has not yet come when each individual can stand alone, yet it is fast tending to it. One mind says, "I will not walk by your law; I am a God of myself; and as I am thus, I will walk by no opinion save that begotten in my own soul."

Peace begetheth no glory, no honor. She doth not take many steps in progress; but war, that which ever has brought glory, honor, and undying fame, ever will bring it. And if the waters be never troubled by the angels calling you onward, how shall you be healed from the errors of the past? How shall you be merged into the glories of the future? Then fear not for the fate of the American nation. Fear not for the hand of God is in this work.

The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The same spirit that is at work dividing your States, is at work elsewhere also—dividing the parent against the child, husband against the wife, brother against the sister. Yea, it is severing the most holy ties existing among you. Is it because the Devil reigneth? No. But because the Lord God is calling each soul upward, saying, "Know thyself, oh man, and live by thine own knowledge."

Again we say, the same spirit manifesting itself in the North and the South, is manifesting itself in your midst. It is separating the chaff from the grain; it is giving you a better knowledge of yourselves as individuals; it is bidding you bow the knee to no class of individuals; to worship at no shrine save that in each soul. That which each individual thinks right, is telling you to fall down and worship.

We rejoice with joy unspeakable at the difficulties about you. We rejoice, for now we know you are not all dead in the tombs of the past.

What though your forefathers did give you a system to go by? What though they did mark it as sacred? The God of to-day does not bid you go down to the tombs of other days to get your guides to lead you on to brighter things they never dreamed of.

While gazing upon the condition of your land, ask God what he will have you to do as an individual. Ask not the multitude. God is not there to answer your call. He talks to each individual, telling them their duty in tones they cannot but understand.

When some dire calamity visits you, what do you do? You pray to the Lord God to take away that he hath visited upon you with judgment. You pray; but will your prayers be effectual? Will the hand of God be stayed, because you ask him to stay it? God cannot turn aside from his immutable law to please you as individuals, nor the vast multitude of mortals and spirits. He is as much a subject to the law as you are.

Then seek to understand this God, and instead of asking him to turn aside to cast the shadow upon others, you will see that he gives you the midnight shade to grow by. If you understand that he doth right, you will not fear him; you will know that he doth right always.

What is this God? It is the higher principle of human life. It is that which always tells you when you are wrong and when you are right. It is that which not only points the way, but leads the way, and makes you follow in his path.

If you would see this God, slavery would cease, and man would see that every man hath a sovereignty of his own, and he would not dare to trample upon his brother. But when you are looking for externalities, you will constantly be in error—constantly trusting an Unknown God.

Once again we say, if your God bids you do this or that, go do it. But be sure when you ask counsel of this God, to close your eyes to the external world; be sure you commune only with God, and in secret God will hear you, and the blessings you ask for in the internal will not cease to shower upon you in the external. Your nature shall bloom in glory, and be not only such as the nations of the earth will look upon and admire, but such as shall please you to look upon.

Oh, then, feel that the Lord God Omnipotent still reigneth. Though midnight darkness settles upon you, God is there, bidding you through the cloud to come up higher and worship at the altar of Individual Sovereignty. Then shall you be created in the image of your Maker, fashioned like unto himself.

## George Carter.

I don't believe God always reigns; I think he must get asleep sometimes, and let the devil take charge.

I should think I was bored up in a rat-trap. Look here, mister! Is this the kind of accommodation you always give? I suppose I shall have to be satisfied, 'then.

Now you see I've been out of my shell most four years, and I'm inclined to think if the devil had not reigned all that time, I should not have been back here. I suppose I must have done right always; for if God reigns, he won't let anybody do anything but right.

The worst fallings I had I must own up to, oh? Well, somehow or other I would get drunk. When I tried the hardest to keep sober, I was sure to get the most drunk. That's so, sure as you live. I tell you what it is, I've come to the conclusion that there is somebody round trying to overthrow God. He thinks he reigns all the time; but I guess he don't. Just like the Catholics and other people, who think they are right. As long as they think so, it is just as well, I suppose.

My name was George Carter. I tell you what it is, it is hard work getting back here. You want me to tell about myself straight along, do you? Well, I suppose if I had lived about one month longer, I should have been thirty years old. I've seen some of the rough sides of life, I tell you. I've seen plenty of it since I've been here, too. They say I died drunk—I don't know about that. If I did, and God reigns, he overruled it—so it's all right, is it not?

Ans.—Yes, I do wish I was back in the form again, particularly in my mind body.

Do you know a man by the name of Robbins, at the House of Correction, and Adams, at the East Cambridge jail? They are kind of rat-keepers; I used to call them so. I've seen them both, and expect to again before I die the second time. I suppose the second death is falling from grace. I conclude I can't die the second time, for I never had any grace.

What I'm driving at is, I've got somebody here that I should like to take a look after. Here a short time ago—all of a year ago—this person was under the care of the East Cambridge jailer. A brother of mine is getting hard whipped round here. He used to help me a good deal, and it's no more than fair that I should help him. I don't suppose he will get this letter, for it's a hard case. I want to ask one of the chaps that knows him, to see he gets this. But they're not so apt to help people that's clear down. The name of this brother of mine is Philip B. Carter.

Phil, we used to call him. He is hard up, and has been ever since I died, and before, too. The amount of it is, I want to know how I can talk with him. By sending to the jail, I'll be more likely to find him—for I don't know where he is now.

I've got respectable folks about here. I was born in the good old State of New Hampshire. As high as I remember I was born in Deerfield. I had no trade to work at, for farming is n't good round Boston. I could mix a glass of liquor as well as the next one, and drink it, too. I tended bar for a man by name of Brown, pretty near Court Square—then for a man by name of Chamberlain, down by Blackstone street. Do you know a man by name of Matthews, down in Fleet street?

My brother does most anything. Like me, he did not have any trade; nor much money.

You may say I have taken a good deal of pains to come here, and have tried a long while to come; and if he thinks it well to have a talk with me, it's all right—if not, it's all right. I will say no more. I can put him on his feet, I reckon. I advise him to drink no more rum, unless he can make a better living at that than anything else; but I don't think I can.

Ans.—I don't know but I might have a desire to drink if I stayed here long enough, and saw rum around. I swore enough when I was here that I would not drink, and broke over it that I am most afraid of myself now if I had a body like mine was.

I came nigh belonging to a church once. Do you know a Methodist minister by name of Cox, who used to preach in Hanover street? Well, about seven years ago I had a straight spell, and they had a revival down there, and I was a candidate for the sprinkling business; but, somehow or other, the very day I was to have been sprinkled outside I got pretty wet inside. I was sorry for that a week after; but they gave me such a cold shoulder that I got over it.

I seem to be in a place where it's close quarters. I'm getting over it; but the fact is, we don't know what is outside of us, and don't like to move much, for fear we shall tumble into the hot place. I had that before me all the time I was looking into the Methodist church. That had more to do with it than fear of God did. One of them told me he was sorry I had fallen from grace after I got drunk, and said something about plowing—putting your hand to the plow, and falling back. That's the way they talked to me. That's all the time I had anything to do with religion. When they asked me if I wasn't sorry I had got drunk so soon, I said I didn't know as I was. I suppose if I had said I was, they would have hauled me in again; but I didn't know as it would do to tell a lie there.

Can't do any other way but keep sober in my kind of life. There is only one way to walk here, and that's a mighty narrow way to me. Good-by.

## Samuel Upham.

Perhaps I have made a mistake in coming so soon, but I don't know as I shall do any harm. I have n't got strength to stay long, but I promised to come here as soon as I had power to speak or write. I want to thank the friends who were so kind to me when I was sick. I find things about as I thought I should. If any poor soul was glad to get far from earth, I was.

I shall not stay long, for I know my influence does harm—no good. Do you remember me as I saw you last? I want to thank Mr. and Mrs. Pope for what they did for me. If there is anything I can do for them, I shall be glad to do it. I am weak, but thank God I'm happy. I have visited my wife since I died, and I hope to have a chance to go again soon.

My father and all my folks are not forgotten, and I shall always do for them the best I can.

The first thing I did when here was to pray as I never prayed before, and thank God that I had got out of my body. My brother helps me here to-day.

## Anne Maria Hussey.

My name was Anne Maria Hussey. I was born in Hallowell, Maine, in 1847, on March the 6th. I died in 1857 of dropsy of the brain, I suppose, together with general debility. My mother died three

years before of consumption. I was with her a great deal, and was never well after she died. I have a father; he was in California when my mother died, and when I died; but I have since heard that when he learned of our death, he made up his mind not to come back. My mother, too, wishes to speak with him.

I have come here to-day with the hope of giving something that may reach him. I do not suppose he understands anything about these things. If he can find some medium that mother, or myself, or my brother, who died sometime since, can control, we will all try to come to him. If he cannot find any one there, perhaps he may come to the States again; and, if he does, won't he find some one here?

My mother and myself and my brother are very happy, except when we think of his loneliness, and then we want to do something to make him happy. His name is Charles, and that is my brother's name also. He was a brick mason.

For awhile after my father went away, we heard he had very bad luck, and was not happy; but after that he seemed to be more happy; but his letters always expressed a wish to be at home once more, and we knew he must have hours of sadness now we are dead.

We all send him much love, and hope for his happiness, and will try to speak with him. And if he will try as hard as we will, we think we can soon do it.

## To Joseph Loomis.

I am deputized to come here by the friends of one Joseph Loomis. He used to be in the employ of the Boston and Lowell Railroad—a machinist by trade. The friends who have requested me to come, are not able to come themselves, and they wish to have a private interview with him. I do not know what for, nor do I care.

My name is Balcom. I was in the same employ eleven years ago, and was killed by coming in contact with a bridge—carelessness, of course.

I was not told who to say wished to commune with him. Good day, sir.

## Louisa Gann.

I do not come here this afternoon from choice, but because I seem to be impelled so to do. Two months ago I announced myself at a private circle. Three of my friends were present at that circle, where I did the best I could to make myself known; and unless skepticism had settled upon their souls like a dense cloud, they would not have requested me to come here and answer, myself, publicly, as they have done.

I have no desire to commune with the world in general. If I could benefit the world I would throw myself upon it, and try to raise those who stand in the lower walks of life, as I do not hesitate to say I once did.

I there gave a very correct sketch of my earthly career; but I positively refuse to give it here, because I do not deem it best, not because I am ashamed to. I think we each have the right to choose the path we walk in.

I say I would not have come here to-day except I was obliged to by force of conditions. I do wish to commune with all my friends, but I do not desire to remove mountains in order to do so.

My name was Louisa Gann; I was an actress, and lived in Boston.

## Correspondence.

## Prophetic Spirits, Correspondential, &amp;c.

How beautifully diversified are the angel gifts, dropping like sweet incense here and there! They come to the poor frail body, writhing under torture from disease, in form of healing power—to the skeptic who doubts a continued life, or to one whose theologic teachings and belief are far from truth, and to the infirm in thought and not, and whose better nature is smothered in senselessness and vice, they come, mayhap, in the tip of a table, in a tiny sound; or perchance some more startling demonstration arrests the attention; and although the squeamish and the unthinking cry out shame upon a belief in such undignified spirits, still they falter not, but lead all these misguided and inquiring ones on and upward step by step, until their souls become enlightened, purified and redeemed. To the bereft and yearning soul they come in sweet intercommunion with the loved, but no longer lost.

Among these countless gifts, none are perhaps more coveted, or less understood, than those administered by prophetic spirits. A remarkable instance of prophecy recently met with its fulfillment within this vicinity. Several persons of my acquaintance were witness to its truth, from one of whom I received the statement.

A Mrs. Bailey, a lady of much intelligence and worth, became, a few years since, developed as a writing medium, to which she devoted much time, and, as I understand, produced sufficient material for a book of considerable size. On the 4th of Oct., 1859, as she sat alone in her room, busied with her needle, she unexpectedly received a visit from an angel messenger, who informed her that one year more was only allotted to her earth-life, and within that time she could make every arrangement necessary for leaving. She talked with her family upon the subject, but finally came to the conclusion that it might be her fancy or imagination, and thus the matter for awhile remained. Some few days thereafter, as she again sat alone in her room, she saw suspended from the ceiling a bunch of flowers; and at the same time appeared her spirit visitant, saying she did not heed his former message, and he would now renew it. He assured her that her earth-mission would close when those blossoms again appeared in their annual round, and that a short time previous to her dissolution a sore would gather upon her back, and breaking inwardly, cause her death; that an incision or any remedy would be of no avail. Mrs. B. now felt satisfied of the reality of the message; she made a memorandum of the time, and calculations accordingly. Earth presented her with many attractions—wealth, friends, and a happy home, with a husband and six children; but she struggled with energy and overcame them all. During the year each day brought a renewal of preparation for the journey to the hereafter, so that her family became gradually accustomed to anticipate her departure. During the past summer she visited, and took leave of some friends in the northern part of the State—purchased, and made with her own hands her burial robes, which were not funeral in their aspect, but tasteful and life-like. As the time approached, she made every necessary arrangement for leaving the family in comfort and order. Two weeks previous to her death a slight swelling commenced, as indicated, but for a time was not painful, and caused no uneasiness. A week after its appearance she rode into a neighboring town, remarking, it was her last ride. Just before her final change, a sister-in-law came in, bringing in her hand a bunch of flowers she had gathered for her by the way-side. They were of a purplish, blue color, and called by many the "Bloom of Autumn." She recognized them as the same presented, and called by that name by her spirit-friend one year previous. (At her request they were set in a vase of water, and placed in her hand and about her person at her burial.) Soon after this she passed away so calmly, that her family were scarcely aware of the event. She herself arranged all the funeral ceremonies; and as no spiritual medium could be obtained, a Universalist clergyman officiated, who read, from the desk of a

Baptist church, her own sermon and address to her family and friends. The lady giving me the description says, "I never before witnessed such a burial scene—so calm and peaceful, not a tear dropped by the family until the farewell to them, and even then more emotion was shown by the audience and members of the church where we were assembled. I could but exclaim, 'If this be the last of earth to the derided Spiritualist, let my last end be like hers.'"

Now that I am upon the subject, I will mention one more instance, somewhat similar, coming under my own personal observation. Not quite two years since, a lady residing near me fell a victim to consumption, and passed away from earth. She had for a long time been conscious of spirit impressions; but as the physical became more and more prostrated, the spiritual acquired now strength, until she came to hear and recognize spirit-voices. After her physician and friends were satisfied that her lungs were almost gone, and that no mortal remedy would enable her to again rise from her couch, she received through her spirit friends strength and assistance to do so, clothe herself suitably, and walk about her garden. This she did repeatedly under their guidance, being told at the same time that a renewal of life would be given her to visit her friends in the Eastern States. She accordingly journeyed thither with her husband, and after spending some months, time, returned and set her house in order, then awaited calmly her transition.

This far-off Western town has been until recently slumbering on, unaided by any speaker or social gathering for spiritual improvement. But our thoughts are ever active, and many a bright thread is manufactured which will by-and-by mingle in and enliven the good time coming. N. Frank White, so favorably known to many of our eastern friends, has been among us, delighting our souls, and infusing new life into our inanimate society. He formerly resided for a short time in this town, winning the hearts of all those who became acquainted with him, by his unobtrusive worth and highly intellectual order of inspiration. His last lecture on Sunday evening amplified somewhat on the "all-right" doctrine, and was, surpassingly beautiful in every respect. He is now traveling northward; will be in Milwaukee during January, and visit us again in February.

A. C. S.  
Beloit, Wis., Dec. 20, 1860.

**H. F. Fairfield at Fort Ann, N. Y.—A Test.**

For a number of years I have been earnestly investigating the subject of modern Spiritualism. When it was first announced that the spirits of our departed friends could and did return from the heavenly spheres to communicate their experiences and teach the inhabitants of earth the ways of truth and happiness; I thought it was uncalled for, inasmuch as we had a plenty of teachers already.

It also seemed that when we were ones freed from earth with its attendant evils and sorrows, that we would not, and that we could not if we would, return to earth. Therefore the whole subject looked like a humbug and delusion, and the first circle I sat in to hear and see, I must confess, looked like foolishness to me.

There were men, women and children of professed intelligence, sitting around a table waiting, and some expecting, who had more faith than myself, that the spirits would come and rap, write or speak to us. Oh, how absurd, thought I; and why should n't I, for I belonged to the Baptist church, and they did not have spirit-rapping in their creed, nor even the word Spiritualism; for they had heard, ere I was enrolled as a member, what Spiritualism purported to do. They began to leave out what was once taught, that our spirit friends came to assist us in our second birth. But circumstances being favorable, we did get some raps. Not content with this, and contrary to the wishes of the church, I invited Mr. H. F. Fairfield, the well-known and truly worthy trance speaking medium, to come and lecture one Sabbath. Mr. F. came, and two such lectures as he gave upon the subject of Ancient and Modern Spiritualism, (which, by the way, was well adapted to the time and place,) the people of Fort Ann never listened to before, and they were well represented, for Mr. F. was the first lecturer we ever heard.

His arguments and illustrations could not be refuted by any one. He spoke powerfully yet eloquently, and many said he was a most profound scholar, while others said he had learned his lectures, and was deceiving them. This being the common idea after he had left us, many were anxious to hear him again, thinking he would soon run dry and come short of lectures. Consequently I wrote to him to come again, telling him the state of feeling in our town.

He did so, but was suffering from a severe cold and hoarseness. He came the 19th of December, and lectured on Sunday to a full hall of earnest and intelligent listeners; and, if possible, his lectures were far superior in eloquence and logic than when he was first with us. His audience were perfectly charmed with his oratorical powers and profound philosophy.

At the close of each lecture the spirits subjected themselves to the criticisms of the audience. While here, he spoke nearly every evening in the week in private families, and many of us have begun to realize that the departed are not dead.

Last Sunday, Dec. 31st, he again called out two large audiences, who listened to the sublime truths of life and progression here and hereafter, as portrayed by the spirits Hosea Ballou and Lorenzo Dow.

Finally, Messrs. Editors, let me relate a test, which we received through him (Mr. F.) at my house. The first Sunday after he came, after preparing myself for church, I went to the barn to see about the chores, as I was going to leave. While there I lost from my bosom a gold button, but did not miss it until I returned to the house, when I went immediately back and looked everywhere that I could think of that I had been while there, but could not find it, there being snow on the ground and the yard full of cattle and sheep, I discontinued my search, and it soon passed from my mind.

Six days after, the medium, Mr. Fairfield, was entranced by an Indian calling himself Wild Medicine, and after going through various Indian manoeuvres to convince us all of his Indian highness, he came and took my wife's bosom-pin, and looked after finger rings, saying, "Indian love-shiners," when it came to my mind to ask him to find my bosom-button. I accordingly did so. He replied he did not know whether Indian could find it or not, but said he would try. He then took down a coat which was hanging in the room, put it over his head, and tied the sleeves around his neck, completely blindfolding himself. He then took hold of my hand, led me to the room where I changed my clothes, went up to the mirror and touched it, then touched my bosom, when he started out and for the barn, saying, as we started, "If you humbug Indian, Indian humbug you."

We went to the barn, where I had been the week before, and around the yard, looking and hunting all the time. Finally we stopped, when the medium bent down, and commenced digging about and breaking up the pieces of frozen snow and manure; and strange as it may appear, the button was found by him about three inches below the surface, and brought to the house and washed from the manure, to our great astonishment. There were many witnesses to the above, whose names can be given if any desire it.

He has also given us many other tests, even in public—such as reading a whole chapter from the Bible while entranced, and the book closed—all of which have put us well on the road to progression.

To-day, which is New Year's, we are obliged to part with him, and may the good spirits of heaven and earth be his friends and companions, is the wish of his friend and brother,

CHARLES W. BURGESS'S TEST VERIFIED.—Somnambulism.

Through old Connecticut's lovely farms, and over her winding rivers I found myself wandering upon a pleasant day last week, and by steam car and horse power reached the "Roso Cottage" of Mrs. Davis, of Putnam. After stopping a time with her, the spirit moved me to go onward, and verily I proceeded until I came to another cottage, nestled in among the hills of West Killingly, at the foot of Mount Mashituck, which is the residence of Mr. William Burgess, and the home of Mary Maria Macomber, well known in our spiritual annals, and with whom I passed a day most pleasantly and profitably.

Perhaps you, and your readers also, will recollect a communication in No. 12 of the present volume of the BANNER, given through Mrs. Conant, from Charles S. Burgess, of West Killingly, Conn. This has never been responded to; and he being a son of the Mr. B. of whom I speak, I am requested to address you in regard to it. The communication was recognized by all his friends, and the neighbors, as being entirely characteristic of him; and all the data and circumstances are correct, with exception of the middle initial of his name, which should have been W., and was, as the spirit says, given correctly; but being written hastily, was probably afterward mistaken for an S. This mistake he told his parents of before the article appeared in the BANNER, and had also, six months previous, informed them that he had given them a test through Mrs. Conant; subsequently saying, however, that the BANNER people had mislaid it, or would not publish it, which agrees with what he gave in this, his second article. Much of the phraseology is distinctly recognized by all as being his own.

About three years ago, before Mrs. Macomber became a medium, she was also addressed through your columns by her grandmother, Sarah Macomber, who told her that she was a medium, and ought to sit once in so often, for her development. At this time Mrs. M. was an Adventist, and not believing in spirit existence, independent of the outer form, paid no attention to it, though it was pointed out to her acquaintance to her. It is unnecessary to add that it has all proved true.

Mrs. Macomber has always, from her youth, been a somnambulist; and after an exciting day, generally repeats the events thereof during the night. She sometimes, in this state, gives beautiful and lengthy improvisations of poetry, or launches off into some question which has been agitated during the day; but generally she wishes to plunge out of doors up "on the hill," as she always says the spirits are waiting for her there, and calling to her. She sometimes rises, and dressing herself with great rapidity and quietness, is out of the house before any one knows it. She, though in frail health, never seems to take cold in these nightly excursions, but will go generally to a rock house, or cave, in the side of a hill near by, have her weird talk and pantomime over, and return to the house. Sometimes she writes in her room; and then again retires. This state, though to a degree natural to her organization, has of late become rather a trouble to her; and being in a low state of health, she fears it will have a deleterious effect upon her. These affairs being of a nature that many would not like to speak of, I should not do so, except with her permission, and in the hope that some kind friend may suggest to her a remedy for this sleep-walking.

I heard her speak Sabbath day, in the Spiritualist Hall in Putnam. She was most rapidly developed in the commencement of her mediumship, and in the time which has elapsed since, has continued on with unabated ardor, until she stands in the very front ranks of our speakers, as a sound, argumentative, philosophical mind, which will leave its stamp on whatever community it enters, and for the entire success of which, I have only this fear, that the spirit may become soon too ripe for the frail body that enfolds it, and we may see transferred to brighter spheres her whom we so much need here. But I hope for the best, and that she will not overtax herself with labor until recuperated in physique. She is with the kindest of friends, but her duties, publicly, have been too arduous.

Mr. Loveland is speaking (and Susie Johnson is to follow,) at Danielsonville, where the friends have established regular meetings. This is a bold and independent step in them, considering the multitude of scoffers with which they have to contend, and we hope they will be well sustained by a long continuance of the interest now felt in our twelve year old philosophy. Of course, I do not allude to the age of the principles underlying the philosophy, but only to externals.

We had a pleasant month here in December, for we had with us one of the gems of the speakers' constellation, Miss A. W. Sprague. She is a favorite everywhere, so that any words from me would be superfluous. With the dawn of the new epoch, '61, we had the good fortune to welcome Brother Miller and his estimable lady. Brother Miller is well known as an energetic and logical, as well as agreeable speaker, and an audience cannot do otherwise than improve under his teachings.

At Christmas, Miss Mary H. Wilbur, a well known writer in the spiritual ranks, issued a neat volume of 250 pages, called "Violet." This is a finely written story for the youth, and will be quite an addition to the youth's library slowly forming in our midst. It is interspersed with many poetical gems, and will repay a perusal.

LURA H. BARNES.  
Providence, January, 1861.

The paper having the largest circulation—the paper of tobacco.

Paper for the "roughs"—sand paper.

Paper containing many fine points—the paper of needles.







## MATTERS IN NEW YORK.

Reported for the Banner of Light.  
SPIRITUAL CONFERENCE.

Clinton Hall, Tuesday Evening, Jan. 15, 1861.

Subject—Spiritual Doctrine concerning Human Rights.

Dr. HALLOCK in the chair.

MR. PATRICK.—If there were but two beings in the universe, they would have mutual relations; if there were more, the relations would be the same. Where there is a great number, a necessity is felt, in proportion, of some definite law and order; but where the human is sufficiently developed, he may seek to contravene it, and hence we are obliged to establish certain laws among ourselves for the development and welfare of our own beings, and our mutual benefits; and these laws spring from our moral natures. This nature recognizes certain uses, and, to promote them, we feel it necessary to promote the uses of the neighbor. This is necessary, inasmuch as no man can preserve his own rights who does not observe the rights of his neighbor. Hence the social compact—the spiritual claim of human right, by which we must recognize means and uses adapted both to ourselves and to every other individual. Out of this come the laws regulating the intercourse between the sexes—meaning not the laws as they are, but as they should be. Man, moreover, is capable of cultivating the earth, and thus providing for his livelihood. It is his constitutional right to use the water and the air for the display of his genius and strength; he must have this right, because his spiritual and moral natures demand it. We must meet this demand, and give every man his right; yet this right and the law of nature is violated every day. I violate the laws of nature and the rights of man, and thereby think I am asserting my manhood. It is an idea generally prevalent that a man must not against the interests of others in order to serve his own. Every man knows what is moral, and what is immoral, yet he often finds the latter to serve his interests better than the former. Human laws may be said to express the fact that there are in every society some persons, full grown in physical stature, who do not think that they owe anything to that society. It is necessary, by force of law, to bring the action of such persons up to the standard demanded by the whole community. Can a single State secede from the social order established by the people of the United States "for themselves and their posterity"? If so, then any single city, town or village may withdraw from the control of the State; nay, farther, any individual in such community may at pleasure sever his relations in law with any other; husband may desert his wife, parent his child, as a matter of course. This is the plea of every outlaw. "I don't wish to abide by your laws." He would break down the social order in order to prey upon the rights of his neighbor—this social order being a burden on him, because he wishes what it does not admit of. Once allow that a State may secede, then I say that I may secede for purposes of robbery or outrage. These consequences must follow.

Mrs. COLLINS.—Human rights are human wants. The harmony of nature, in all her departments and manifestations, depends upon preserving an exact balance between demand and supply. On this depend all attractions and repulsions. All rights are the supply of our necessities. Necessities are rights, and are the only guarantees we can require for the fulfillment of the latter. There are necessities of the body and necessities of the soul. We know in what way the former are violated. Labor is the king of the earth. The relations between capital and labor must be changed. The sovereignty of the individual soul must be acknowledged. All men must have their natural, indispensable needs supplied. The intercourse of the sexes should be regulated only by the laws of God, regardless alike of fears for the future and regrets for the past. Love is the life of the soul. God himself is love. While all other beings everywhere are rejoicing in love, shall man alone be denied and starved in what is as much the necessary, daily food to his soul, as bread is to his stomach, or air to his lungs? Great souls require larger supplies of affection than small ones. An important point is the proper balance between the growth and support of the *cerebrum*, or seat of the affections, and the *cerebrum*, the seat of the intellect. The intellect has a right to know and understand everything up to the full measure of its capacity. The third and last class of our desires and wants is that to which belong our restless aspirations for higher states of purity and love. The dimension of these faculties of *spirituality* is the crown of the head. In this present state of being and of our spiritual progression we are demanding a larger supply for these exalted faculties, and we shall have it. For, in the sublime formula of Charles Fourier, destinies are proportional to attractions; i. e., all rights depend upon necessities.

MR. ADAMS first spoke of the importance and necessity of an investigation and such a law. We can at least catch some glimpse of it, which may be thus expressed: Every individual has an eternal germ of mental, moral and spiritual life, always in process of developing, never fully developed, and having a right to all things necessary for such eternal unfolding. That such germs actually exist in all forms of life, may be shown in the case of vegetables. On examining seeds through a microscope, I have myself traced the exact form of the whole tree in each one of them, and this is true of all vegetables. No vegetable can grow otherwise than it does, as springing from an exactly corresponding invisible germ. Since this is the case, no existence can reproach another with any fault or defect in its inevitable development from an unalterable type. Rights can belong only to the type, and the one right is the right of development—that is, to development in all respects, and this involves the right to all elements of plastic growth, all the gaseous elements of nutrition, the light of the sun, etc. All functions also have a right to be fulfilled. As no two forms have the same type, so no two have the same rights. [Here the speaker treated of the law of correlation, as illustrated in the case of the tree.] All the elements have the right to be used in their various transmissions to serve the purposes of vegetable growth. All these rights are to be so used in each case as to serve for the development of other rights. Hence follows, as a consequence of wantonly cutting down a tree, that the whole vegetable world cries out against you. Each type should exercise its own right, else the rights and needs of some other type will be violated. Our great error is a blind reverence for authority. Only Nature herself can teach us the true law of rights, uses, and correlatives. [The speaker went on to apply the foregoing principles to the subject of human rights in their various departments.] Every human being has a right to live long enough for the full unfolding of its type. Hence premature death is a violation of right, both in the particular case and in that of every other existence contingent or dependent upon it. But there is a good time coming—a new heaven and a new earth. Then there will be no premature deaths. Then there will be no need for spirits to come back to human organisms in the attempt to take out their curtailed and imperfect earth lives. Then death will be a mere falling asleep—as now sometimes in the case of a very old person—for the fruit being ripe it falls easily and spontaneously; whereas, while green, it cannot be detached without struggle and mutilation. Then shall we learn and practice the sublime art of dying. [The speaker next traced the development of moral, affectional and spiritual nature.] No right is more sacred than that of the affections, and none is so often violated. Sooner or later, in this world or the next, this right, in every case, will be admitted and enjoyed. And so with the rights of our spiritual nature—the right to freedom from persecution—from the tyranny of creeds—the right to cast off all false forms of doctrine, and come up each to the great temple of the universe to worship as seems good to himself.

DR. GRAY read extracts from a letter, giving an interior view of a circle in Philadelphia, and detailing depredations, furniture, ceremonies and declarations of doctrines, resembling those of the Roman Catholic Church, the medium being Mr. Gordon.

He then passed to the subject of the Conference. Each want or desire is not a right in a higher sense. Each want or desire is to be found in the spirit. Each wish is not an exponent of the right. To find what are the rights of the man, we have to ask what are the wants of the spirit. My body wants food, and you may say I must take food in accordance with the preferences of my palate; but one of you may be so want as an immortal spirit, and that may interfere with the lower want of my palate. This is not fanciful or far-fetched. Our friends talk of freedom of free episcopate in the pleasures of the taste; but the major proposition, on which my argument is based, is not to be found in the demands of the mere body, but in the deathless needs of the spirit. I am entitled to love; but that right must be limited by the rights of my spirit, according to order and duty and the internal functions of my individuality; not the law of lust, but the which is to accompany me through eternity. The contest between the epicurean and the stoic scholars of philosophy turned on this point. Epicureans declared pleasure the highest good; the stoics uphold virtue, and their respective followers have sought, in one way or the other, for happiness. The Spiritualist agrees not precisely with either. He sees his highest good in pleasure neither of body nor of mind, but in the application of his spiritual individuality—not to the ends of his own happiness, but to uses. And this is distinctly taught by Jesus when he declares that "he who seeks his life shall lose it," and in similar passages. He who applies his individuality to uses has found the core of his rights. He has found the exponent of his needs of happiness in proportion as he has found those of uses. The performance of use, therefore, transcends the performance of pleasure. By this law, Jesus on the cross rose to the perfect and highest type of manhood, when he said, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." What my body needs, my body has a right to; and the same is true of my soul; a duty is imposed on nature to furnish it, since every right imposes a duty; but then the major need is in the spirit. More than this; a series of correspondences is clearly deducible between the needs of the spirit and the lowest needs of the body, according to which we find that sexual love is based upon, and directly connected with the prolific power of the soul. What ever wastes and degrades the one, inflicts corresponding loss on the other; and precisely so with the appetites for food and drink, as related to the corresponding wants of the spirit. The appetite of the stomach is the continent of the desire for what is good and true in the spirit; and whoever pampers the one degrades the other. In general, the needs of the body are determined, limited, by the needs of the deathless spirit. Let us study the correspondences between the needs of the spirit, and the wants and lusts of the body, and we will find them bound with hooks of triple steel.

DR. YOUNG.—Human rights are human needs and things, and can only grow out of the necessities of the individual as a part or integer of the social state; but society, as now organized, denies all rights by generalizing them. Hence common law and statutory law are of little practical valuation, because they provide for no conditions, and punish with equal severity all infractions of them, whether done in ignorance or aforethought. I have a right to life, to liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and yet if the capitalist does not need my services, I have no remedy but to starve or go to the poor-house and do work that others outside of it are nearly or quite starving for the want of, and leave my family unprotected. Thus everything that constitutes human rights is made dependent upon the course of commerce and trade; and these never respect human rights, and are ever fluctuating between two extremes of supply and demand; and not only this but the seasons interfere, and for one-third of the year one-third of the customary employments of life are out of, and that portion of society whose only chance for occupation is to be employed by capital, must suffer in common with those who at best can only have chance occupations and opportunities for labor. This condition of things everywhere exists in greater or less severity, and for at least one-half of humanity, and all because human rights are nowhere respected. Crime in all shapes therefore becomes a normal necessity, and should be condemned—and beggary and want equally so, also. What, then, are human rights? To be real, they must have a basis in the things that constitute the state, in the things that go to make up a good and intelligent citizenship, or at least constantly tend that way. The spirit has its house in the body, and the body, as a congener of this, needs a home in the state, or a chance for development, without hindrance, equivalent to that which surrounds the child on the domestic hearth of the well-to-do citizen, because not only the welfare of each spirit, but of the commonwealth, is best thus secured. But how is this to be obtained? For it is manifest that neither individuals nor society can upon each separate emergency in the million of emergencies that are constantly occurring, stop or turn from their courses, to provide for it or them, or protect human rights. This can only be obtained by starting from aboriginal grounds, by recognizing no distinctions in occupations, and no castes in society, and by breaking down those privileges that now exist in laws and customs, which enable power to accumulate in the hands of the few because they are recognized as having rights that, as yet, like Moses' rod, swallow all other rights; or else by establishing by law and custom that one man's hour, employed in the service of another, is of equal value to any other man's hour, or something kindred thereto—due allowance being made for time and money spent in the acquisition of any given occupation, over and above what the common acceptations of life cost to prepare one for them.

Provisions should be made likewise, whereby every man having a family to sustain, should either be allowed and paid the pro rata value he bestows by his existence as an integer of the State upon its land, or be allowed a homestead site, or farm lot, in lieu thereof; and this right can only be attained by restrictions against monopoly of the soil, or by so taxing land, after exempting the homestead from tax, that encouragement shall not exist to stimulate its acquisition. All other rights may be left to the common love of intelligence and the sympathies of the race mainly. Regulate the homestead right and the equal compensation right, and other evils will work out their own remedy. But while I, or any considerable portion of mankind may establish my own freedom of action and rules of acquisition, there is no remedy against the enslavement and robbery of mankind.

DR. HALLOCK.—I think man has a right to grow, and I think we do wrong when we expect ripe fruit where nature declares we shall find green. The germ of no form of life gives anything voluntarily; it demands first the riches of the sun, and of all which is suited to its support which the sun has eliminated. It yields nothing as a form of its own volition until it arrives at maturity. This is the law of the vegetable kingdom among men, and throughout the universe up to God, who is the All-Giver. The perfect being is that which gives all things. This generosity is the expression of maturity of manhood. This is a young world, not a ripe one; and, as in the nursery the child wants all things because it needs all things, so it is in that collective man called society. It is wrong as yet to call it man. It is a child, and as a child wants toys, so it wants brown-stone houses, bank-stocks, place and power. The wants of the child are natural and right, in either case; but let the so-called man grow up, manured with divine truths and principles, and you will wear him from them as we wear the child. Let us have patience. Don't take the toys away from him too soon—there is use for them yet. We must not expect ripe fruit where nature has only given the green. When the growth of the world is perfect, then we shall find the generosity among mankind it would now be premature to look for. If we would have the perfect fruit, let the great human tree first show its buds and blossoms, knowing to what they tend.

EDGAR A. POE.  
The late poetical improvisation through the mediumship of Lizzy Doten, which was published in the BANNER OF NOV. 10—and which was delivered by her at the close of a lecture at Allston Hall the Sunday previous, by an influence controlling purporting to be that of the gifted poet whose name heads this paragraph, and whose short and sad life was such a melancholy blending of divine powers and human frailty—has been republished all over our country, and excited all sorts of comments from the various newspapers which have given it space. Many orders for the paper containing it have been received by us, which we are unable to fill, and we are induced to republish it, to supply the demand:

From the throne of life eternal,  
From the home of love eternal,  
Where the angel feet make music over all the starry floor,  
Mortals, I have come to meet you,  
Come with words of peace to greet you,  
And to tell you of the glory that is mine forevermore!  
Once before I found a mortal,  
Waiting at the heavenly portal—  
Waiting but to catch some echo from that ever-opening door;  
Then I seized his quickened being,  
And through all his toward seeing,  
Caused my burning inspiration in a fiery flood to pour!

Now I come more meekly human,  
And the weak lips of a woman  
Touch with fire from off the altar, not with burnings  
As of yore,  
But in holy love descending,  
With her chastened being blending,  
I would fill your souls with music from the bright celestial shore.

As one heart yearns for another,  
As a child turns to its mother,  
From the golden gates of glory turn I to the earth once more—  
Where I drained the cup of sadness,  
Where my soul was stung to madness,  
And life's bitter, burning billows swept my burdened being o'er.

Here the harpies and the ravens,  
Human vampires—sordid cravens,  
Preyed upon my soul and substance till I writhed in anguish sore;  
Life and I then seemed mated,  
For I felt accursed and fated,  
Like a restless, wretched spirit, wandering on the Stygian shore.

Tortured by a nameless yearning,  
Like a frost-fire, freezing, burning,  
Did the purple, pulsing life-tide through its fevered channels pour,  
Till the golden bowl—Life's token—  
Into shining shards was broken,  
And my chained and chafing spirit leapt from out its prison door.

But while living, striving, dying,  
Never did my soul cease crying:  
"Ye who guide the fates and furies, give! oh, give me, I implore,  
From the mad hosts of nations—  
From the countless constellations,  
One pure spirit that can love me—one that I, too, can adore!"

Through this fervent aspiration  
Found my fainting soul salvation,  
For, from out its blackened fire-crypts did my quickened spirit soar;  
And my beautiful ideal—  
Not too saintly to be real—  
Burst more brightly on my vision than the fancy formed Lenore.

Mid the surging seas she found me,  
With the billows breaking round me,  
And my saddened, sinking spirit, in her arms of love upbore;  
Like a lone one, weak and weary,  
Wandering in the midnight dreary,  
On her sinless, saintly bosom brought me to the heavenly shore.

Like the breath or blossoms blending,  
Like the prayers of saints ascending,  
Like the rainbow's seven-hued glory, blend our souls for evermore.  
Earthly love and lust enslaved me,  
But divinely love hath saved me,  
And I know now, first and only, how to love and to adore.

Oh, my mortal friends and brothers,  
We are each and all another's,  
And the secret that gives most freely from its treasure, hath the more.  
Would you lose your life, you find it;  
And in giving love, you bind it;  
Like an angel of safety, to your heart for evermore!

A correspondent also suggests that we republish the poem alluded to in the second verse, which was given through the mediumship of T. L. Harris, in November, 1854:

—Then there came my Fairy's Maiden  
From her dim and mystic den,  
And a light from her full bosom shone her Angel-form before,  
And she whispered as the roses  
When the blushing bud unfolds,  
And like dew from off a blossom fell her speech for evermore.

"I have waited, I have waited,  
As the Evening Star belated,  
When it lingers pale and lonely by the purple sunset door.  
I have found thee, I have found thee,  
And with heart-appeals fast have bound thee,"  
So from out her glowing halo sang the Angel Maid Lenore.

To my rapt, enamored seeming,  
Framed amid the golden gleaming,  
Like a star in its own brightness high above the ocean's floor,  
Shone the lovely apparition,  
And from Earth's accursed perdition  
I was lifted by the Angel, and my death-in-life was o'er.

O the sorrow, the despairing,  
The weird terror phrased with daring,  
The wild wind-storms of remorse that my earth-bound spirit bore!  
Like the tempest-lashed Atlantic  
With my anguish I was frantic,  
And the serpent man name Hunger gnawed into my bosom's core.

While on earth the Poet hungered  
For heart-bread, the gay world wondered,  
And poor beggars spurned the rich man, heaping curses evermore.  
Till I prostrate fell despairing,  
In my anguish breast unsharing  
All Earth's undivided sorrow, crushed as never man before.

I was mad with desolation,  
Like a sun from out creation  
Stricken rudely and its brightness turned to blood upon its shore.  
I for years was broken hearted;  
Long before my youth departed  
But a heart by Fate down-trodden into palpitating gore.

And I fled Life's outer portal,  
Deeming anguish was immortal,  
Crying, "Launch thy heavy thunders, tell me never to adore.  
Hate for hate and curse for curses,  
Through abyssal universes,  
Plunge me down as lost Archangels fell despairingly of yore."

So the whirlwind bore my Spirit,  
But to lands that Saints inherit,  
And it seemed my heart forever like a ruby cup runs o'er.  
I am blessed beyond all blessing,  
And an Angel's pure caressing,  
Flows around my soul forever like a stream around its shore.

We also copy the "Raven," Poe's masterpiece, that our readers may compare it with the poems above, and detect, if they can, anything in the former inconsistent with, or unworthy of, the genius that shaped the following, etc.

"The fever called 'Living'—  
Was conquered at last!"

THE RAVEN.

"'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—  
Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember, it was in the bleak December,  
And separately dying embers wrought its ghost upon the floor,  
Eagerly I wish'd the morrow; vainly had I tried to borrow  
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—  
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—  
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain  
Thrill'd me—fill'd me with fantastic terrors never felt before;  
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating  
"Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—  
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—  
This it is, and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,  
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;  
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,  
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,  
That I scarce was sure I heard you,"—here I opened wide the door:  
Darkness there, and nothing more!

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,  
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;  
But the silence was unbroken, and the darkness gave no token,  
And the only word there spoken, was the whisper'd word, "Lenore!"  
This I whisper'd, and an echo murmur'd back the word, "Lenore!"  
Merely this, and nothing more.

Then into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,  
Soon I heard again a tapping somewhat louder than before.  
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my chamber door—  
Lure me not into temptation, I entreat!"  
Let me see, then, what thence is, and this mystery explore—  
Let my heart be still a moment, and this mystery explore—"Tis the wind, and nothing more!"

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,  
In there stepped a stately raven of the saintly days of yore;  
Not the least obeisance made he; not an instant stopp'd or stay'd he;  
But, with mien of lord or lady, perch'd above my chamber door—  
Perch'd upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—  
Perch'd, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,  
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,  
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven.  
Ghastly grim and ancient raven, wandering from the Nightly shore—  
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"  
Quoth the raven "Nevermore."

Much I marvel'd this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,  
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;  
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human Ever yet was blest with seeing bird above his chamber door—  
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,  
With such a name as "Nevermore."

But the raven sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only  
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.  
Nothing further then he utter'd, not a feather then he flutter'd—  
Till I scarcely more than mutter'd, "other friends have flown before—  
On the morrow I will leave me, as my hopes have flown before."  
Then the bird said "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,  
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only store of sound—  
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster  
Follow'd fast and follow'd faster, till his songs one burden bore—  
Till the dirges of his Hope the melancholy burden bore  
Of 'Nevermore,'—of 'Nevermore.'"

But the raven still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling,  
Straight I wheel'd a cushion'd seat in front of bird and bust and door;  
Then upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to thinking  
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—  
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt and ominous bird of yore  
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

Thus I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing  
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burn'd into my bosom's core;  
This and more I sat divining with my head at ease reclining  
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gladdened o'er;  
But whose velvet vesturing lining with the lamplight gleamed o'er—  
She shall press, ah, never more!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfume'd from an unseen censer,  
Swung by angels whose faint foot-falls tinkled on the pattern'd floor—  
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lend thee by these angels he hath sent thee  
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!  
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost Lenore!"  
Quoth the raven "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil—prophet still, if bird or devil!  
Whether tempest sent, or whether tempest toss'd thee here ashore,  
Desolate yet undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—  
On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—  
Is there—'tis there halm in Gilead? Tell me—tell me, I implore!"  
Quoth the raven "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil—prophet still, if bird or devil!  
By that heaven that bends above us—by that God who doth adore—  
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,  
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—  
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."  
Quoth the raven "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I cried, "thy beck I heed, thy message I attend, thy word I heed—  
Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!  
Leave no black plume as a token that thy soul hath spoken!  
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!  
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from out my door!"  
Quoth the raven "Nevermore."

And the raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting  
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;  
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon that is dreaming,  
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;  
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor  
Shall be lifted—nevermore!

Reported for the Banner of Light  
BOSTON SPIRITUAL CONFERENCE,  
WEDNESDAY EVENING, JANUARY 10, 1861.

Question.—"What is Prayer, and what its uses?"

DR. BUNSEY, chairman.

JACOB ENSON.—Prayer is the spiritual demand made by aspiring, receptive souls, as they trustingly confide in the fountain of all good, and the means of its manifestation. It is the recognition of a religious life, an unfolding bond of union between the human soul and God. It unfolds motives for action derived from an acknowledgment of divine power, rather than any particular line of conduct itself. Its object is to draw man nearer to God, which is accomplished in proportion to the truthfulness of our conceptions of God and of ourselves, and the reality we give them by our living faith. Correct speculation, (I mean unprejudiced inquiry in a religious spirit,) tends to shorten in two ways the bond between the soul and God—bringing God nearer the man, while it raises man nearer his Creator. This shortening at both ends (so to speak,) is always simultaneous. To deny the efficacy of prayer in toto—to hold that the unchangeable God cannot be moved by the breath of feeble man, leads at once and directly to the doctrine of fatalism, which, believed in, renders the soul incapable of effort or advancement. To allow a reflex benefit to the soul from communion with God, but advances a step higher, though it opens a way for improvement. But to hold God a sympathizing Father, ever ready to hear the cry of his children—a wise and beneficent Creator, who has made the bestowment of his favors dependent upon our efforts, leads to a filial trust, a warm, gushing love, and a life of devotion to his service. This idea, gloriously adapted to the wants of the human soul, is the only one by which may be produced the effects each man knows he needs. Nor is such an idea unreasonable, nor is such a course a sickness of mind on the part of God. His laws are over the same, his providences are ever varying. I am aware our philosophers claim God is immutable, and cannot be moved. In the main I admit this; but perhaps there are some relations between him and us where he may be moved to bless us by the true and proper expression of the desires of the soul.

MR. GROSVENOR.—I was thinking this moment of a case of prayer. When David had been driven from his throne, and his son had gone out of the union in disgrace, he uttered the simple prayer, "God defeat the counsel of Ahithophel." Ahithophel was a traitor, and David knew him to be a subtle enemy, and he knew if he was allowed to carry out his scheme, he himself would have been destroyed. Ahithophel's counsel was rejected, and he put his house in order and went out and hanged himself. Many cases of prayer have been made in this peculiarly brief manner. A long prayer was made at the dedication of the temple of Jerusalem, and one part of the prayer was, that when its children should be driven from the city, and they should turn back to the city to pray, and God would answer their prayers. This was done often afterward, and it almost seemed as the fulfillment of prophecy. There is no happiness to me so pure as that of prayer. I have sometimes thought that men often reverse the use of prayer, and make it a blasphemy instead. It is a drawing nigh unto God, that he may answer.

MR. BURKE.—I suppose there is no one here, old or young, but has some time felt the need of prayer. Their lives must have been cast in pleasant places, if they have not. Young America, in his wildest pranks, always feels there are some things he has done he wishes undone; and there is no way of softening remorse like prayer. It is vain for a man to try to cheat himself. The idea attached to prayer by philosophers is, that it works no effects upon God. How do they know it? Are they acquainted with God's secrets? I think none here are so foolishly hardy as to claim this. Now, if we cannot cheat ourselves, we surely cannot cheat God. There is a need and appropriate place for prayer; but there is a time when prayer becomes not only vain, but blasphemous. When man goes to God in utter contrition of heart, it does seem to me that God will answer such a prayer as his. If prayer is not answered, it does seem to me the human heart must be made in vain. We do not expect to add anything to God's knowledge, for he is omniscient; but he has commanded prayer. I do not suppose God will answer prayer unless our work goes with our words.

MR. BISHOP.—A case once happened under my own observation, between here and Florida. A vessel loaded with lumber was capsized, and the captain's wife swept overboard. There were seven men on board, and all expected to die, but assembled in prayer, all but one of them—an infidel. While the others were on their knees, he got an axe, and cut away the masts, and so the vessel was saved. Which saved the vessel, the prayer of the crew, or the man with the axe?

MR. GROSVENOR.—Perhaps some bright angel came down and sprang that man's nerves, and forced him to move, in answer to the prayer of the other six men. I like the old maxim, that "man's extremity is God's opportunity." Men have been known to pray—men unused to prayer—in times of emergency, when they knew not why they prayed.

MR. BURKE.—If Christ's prayer on the cross was answered—to wit—Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?—why are the Jews to-day objects of everybody's hatred and contempt?

MR. GROSVENOR.—This question has exercised me before. But it seems to me to be referred to those who were simply the executioners, upon whom the prayer rested—the Roman soldiers.

JACOB ENSON.—It seems to me the Jews could not receive the blessing of God till they were sufficiently receptive. If I am penitent for an injury done a brother, and he is not ready to forgive me, I do not care a snap, for I get forgiveness then at headquarters, and go right beyond him, on account of my condition. It seems to me the prayer prompted by the dread of the chastising rod, is the lowest kind of prayer. Prayer is simply the opening of our mouths to receive the bread of life. As an inventor, I sometimes feel a need that does not hardly come up to a want. Every man needs prayer, if he does not always know he wants it.

MR. THURM.—I have heard some pretty sensible talk to-night. I have failed to find an instance of the direct answer of prayer; but I believe God, away back in the beginning, shaped certain laws, by which, when we are receptive to them, we shall be blessed. One of the first missionary ships that sailed around Cape Horn was wrecked and all but one man lost, though thirty souls, the salt of the Christian church, engaged in trustful, earnest prayer. This occurrence led me to inquire into the subject, and to the conclusion that prayer does not always bring an answer. But prayer, we surely know, is a regulator-belt, connecting man with God. Prayer clears the brain, and the divine principle is better prepared to act.