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Literary Department

Immortality.

Couldst thou but lift the veil that hangs between
This world and that beyond—the world unseen,
But raise the mists from Jordan's turbid wave;
And view the land whose port is the grave;
Couldst thou but feel that this short flitting
span,
This transient breath, is not the life of man;
That death is but the arm of the great
Earth; but the starting-point—death not the
goal,
But just the gate whereat is thrown aside
The worn-out robe, which, beating 'gainst the
side,
Impedes the soul, reverts its upward flight,
And hides the clearer path way from the sight;
That faith would stop the frightful mark away
That hides Death's smiling face. 'Tis but the
clay
That trembles at the shadow of his wing.
The soul sees clear beyond a joyous thine,
Which greets the welcome messenger as he
Who opens its prison doors to set it free.
Think not, dear friend, that life, but just begun,
Should not a landing on a farther shore!
All the great work which the aspiring soul
Has longed to do—desire beyond control!
Think not that loving, dear ones gone before,
Should not a landing on a farther shore!
They are not dead, they hover round thee now,
Linging with sweet caresses to thy brow;
Till thee they touch, though bid from mortal eyes,
They're with thee still, and eager to destroy
Some token that their labor is not vain.
That love like theirs returns to them again;
Eager to lead thy erring feet beside
The waters still; thy wand'ring thoughts to
guide
To themes above the things of time and sense
To that celestial land of brightness, whence
All light and wisdom come—the resting place
Of earth-born pilgrims. Oh, couldst thou but
trace
The shining path that lies beyond the grave,
Thy soul would leap, thy spirit up, and save
Thy soul from coming to a distant shore!
That hazy, gloomy pal, o'er all that's dear;
Then couldst thou greet the message which shall
come
To call thee hence, as summons from thy home;
Then with thy abbing breath triumphant say,
As the spirit sighs itself away,
Oh Death, thy sting is robbed of all its pain!
Oh, Grave, thy victory to us is gain!

The Bostrum.

A LECTURE.

Delivered at Concert Hall, Philadelphia,
By J. G. FISS.

On Mediumship and the best means of Cultivating it.

Reported by Henry T. Child, M. D.

The subject for the lecture this evening, my friends, is one of your own choice:—
"Mediumship and the best means of cultivating it." You must not expect a full investigation of this vast subject in one lecture of an hour. The subject is too broad and deep, too high and extensive, even in its manifestations, for any individual to enter fully into the investigation and discussion of, in a single lecture. Mediumship has been a matter the world has sought in all ages to comprehend. As far back as the days prior to that morning when the watchers upon the plains of Bethlehem, beheld that star with its radiant glory appearing above the horizon,—ages prior to this, man had been endeavoring to discover the manner of procuring responses from the dead,—the manner of evoking spirits to come again to the dark portions of earth, and seeking to know the best means by which they could obtain intelligent answers to their prayers. Man was conscious of some mysterious power or faculty within himself by which, in certain conditions, he could converse with those outside the material form, and the best means by which this could be done was a subject of serious investigation and deep thought.

You have heard of the sons of the prophets, of the schools of the prophets. These were schools wherein were taught the occult ways and means of procuring responses from spirits. You have read of these in the sacred writings of all nations, and through all time. According to the statements of these writings, it would seem that they were investigating the best means of opening the gateways to heaven, and of holding converse with Him who sits enthroned there,—hence the responses were preface with "Thou-said the Lord." And the Lord spoke unto the people. Yet when you bring the matter down to your own experience in these days, and take into account the responses that were received, there was nothing to mark them as of any other character than communications from spirits disembodied, and all the terrific grandeur disappears. Through down to us they are within the range of human power, they are found to be the same among all people and in all ages.

The various phases of mediumship are but imperfectly understood to-day, but they are better understood than they were among the ancients, yet even at the present day they abound in mysteries which we do not comprehend. They have a sort of ghastly appearance to many persons. There are certain powers that pertain to man by which he controls the organs of the body, that by the will power the hand is put out in different directions. So you find that individuals in themselves have certain powers; again there are other powers that individuals are possessed of, that extend beyond the control of their own organisms, that extend to the control of the organisms of their fellows.

In this investigation we must proceed step by step, we must commence with fundamental principles that are laid in the mundane sphere, and

pass to the consideration of some laws that pertain to spirits.

We repeat that there is a power in man that extends beyond the control of his own organism; this power enables him, under favorable conditions, to control the organisms of others, and to deprive them of their own consciousness, and by the exercise of his will power to evolve his own thoughts through the brain of another organism. The scientific world has ceased to question this. It is now admitted as a matter of fact, although science has not demonstrated the *modus operandi* of the laws by which it is performed.

But in numerous instances, under different circumstances, men of common observation and general reading and information, have ceased to question the fact of the power of one mind to control the organism of another.

Admit now that man is an immortal being, and passes out of the material body, since it was his experience before leaving the body that the will power could under certain conditions, control an organism not its own, who shall say, if he lives after having passed out of his own body, he shall not exercise the same kind of control over others that he had while in this state of being. Recollect that if two individuals that are in the material form can thus influence each other, it proves that mind can operate upon mind. In order that one mind may express itself through the organism of another, there must be a magnetic union of the forces.

If the spirit withdraw from the body with the same powers that it exercised while in the body, that are in the material form can thus influence power, which is mental, and hence the control must be more perfect than it was in the psychological subject here.

We say that this power of the mind exists, it has always been known. The phenomena has always been recognized. But men have not always understood that this was simply the exercise of natural powers of the mind. In the spiritual manifestations there are several classes so called. There may be a partial control of the physical organization, or the entire control. There may be a suspension of the power of the liver over one organ, or over the entire system. Thus the spirit may control a single set of organs, as the hand or the fingers or the organs of speech, or it may control the entire form. There is no limit except the entire organism.

We have, then, this class of manifestations produced by spirits that have passed out of the body, and we have accounts of similar manifestations in all ages, which, however, were never before so well understood as they are to-day. There are four classes of manifestations, known as Physical, such as rapping upon bodies, moving ponderable substances, tipping tables, writing with planchette, and other manifestations of a physical character.

To explain these we must have recourse to other laws or powers. Mental laws do not answer the purpose; there must be the exercise of certain physical laws. Ponderable substances must be operated upon; they come not within the direct operation of the laws of mind. When you would move a table or produce a concussion upon the atmosphere, you are operating upon substances that do not come within range of your mental powers. In this connection, we shall mention another phenomenon of Spiritualism, that is, the power of spirits in the presence of certain mediums to allow their features to effect the sensitive plate of the daguerrotype, and leave a faithful delineation of their features upon that plate. You ask if this can be done.

We answer it has been done and can be done again. How is it done? In chemistry the law of presence action is the law that governs when it has been discovered. You may bring two chemical articles together, and they will not unite; introduce a third, without any union of this or change in its character, but simply by its presence, it will bring about a combination of the two chemical constituents, which would not have taken place without the presence of the third, which enters not at all into combination with the others. This is a law in nature, called presence action. Now, suppose a ponderable body is to be moved. The spirit has not the power to do it; it lacks an intermediate body or substance or element through which it shall operate upon that ponderable body and move it, or act upon the lens with a power which shall daguerrotype upon the plate a form the representation of itself. To do these there must be a medium present.

There again is the influence of presence action, for a medium does nothing but remain passive. The medium stands between the spirits operator and the material substance to be effected, and furnishes from his or her system something by which a connection is established between the two. This is the explanation of the law by which spirits produce these various results. We designate certain individuals as mediums, because their presence is necessary for the production of these phenomena.

You will observe that the classes of mediums are numerous and that they are very different, and in some the phases are entirely distinct, while in others, several of these blend. We have already mentioned two classes, one of which is entirely controlled, directly by the will.

Under these influences, the individual performs various acts, just as he or she would do if they were their own,—sometimes better than the individual could do if unaided and uncontrolled by these outside influences.

These persons, who in such cases are entirely unconscious of all that occurs, when in such conditions, yet you will see it is a kind of training school, and the individual will be found to be much improved by it, and frequently this condition is only temporary, and the medium comes to have, at first, dim, and afterwards more clear

and distinct impressions of the truths that are given through them.

Many of these individuals have become highly educated through this process of spiritual training, where it has not been too much interfered with either by the material world, or by the world say in passing, that this class of mediums are saved a vast amount of suffering by even the limited amount of knowledge that Spiritualism has presented to the world.

There are other classes of mediums. There are seeing mediums. It has been the testimony of all these in all ages, that spirits maintain the form of the human body; that these human forms have their correspondences in spirit life; that the spirit of man here and there has a tendency to express itself in this peculiar form, and the spiritual here corresponds to the external there. Here we know that magnetic or vital currents are set in motion by the spirit, and act through the physical by means of the nervous system. Under certain conditions of severe mental excitement, deeds of superhuman strength are performed; this is an evidence that spirits who have passed out of the body, can at times, under favorable circumstances, produce superhuman power,—since all power is in the nervous system. Under certain conditions, they may seem to give evidence of an actual physical presence.

The rappings or concussions are produced in the presence of certain persons called rapping mediums, some of whom are not conscious of anything except the sounds; others feel a shock in the nervous system. The spirits tell us that the magnetic and electric forces of certain human systems can be concentrated and made to explode under the influence of mind, and so act very similarly to the click of the electric telegraph. We have the facts everywhere, and this is the explanation of them.

The movement of physical bodies is produced by charging those bodies with magnetism from the system of the medium, and thus obtaining a power over these. With regard to the best means of developing the various forms of mediumship, there is very much to be said.

In the first place, we would remark, that if any one of the external senses be closed, the others become more sensitive and acute. Thus, if you destroy the power of seeing, the organ of hearing becomes more acute, so also the power of feeling; it may become unduly sensitive. If you use your right hand continually, and the left one not at all, the latter will become weak and insensible. The spirits tell us that the system which are exercised properly will be strengthened, while those which are not exercised will become languid and weaker. On this principle we may cultivate the memory, the taste for poetry, or any other faculty or power of the mind or body, while those to which we do not use our faculties, will be so generally weakened throughout the physical and mental organisms. The same thing applies to the powers of the spirit. If there be a spiritual power by which one may come in contact with spirits, may catch their thoughts, their emotions, their sentiments, and transmit these to those who are weak and strengthened, the more fully it becomes developed, and this power is capable of almost infinite cultivation. Cultivation can be made to such an extent that emotions in the minds of those around the medium will be read. The medium of Nazareth was a good illustration of this. He was so exceedingly sensitive that he knew what was in the minds of some of those around him, and some believed him to be God,—hence it was that he was Deified.

Those who perceive this faculty of inspiration in themselves, will have but little difficulty in cultivating it, by exercising it properly, but those who do not realize the power of their selves,—in whom it has not been awakened,—will not know how to develop it. We would say to all such: Associate with those who have cultivated this faculty; withdraw yourselves, at times, from all external excitement, and seek to find the germs of this faculty in your souls, and let them grow. Do not let your mind be so busy growing more sensitive, perhaps suffering more intensely, but calmly enjoying more vividly the pleasure of life.

Thus this faculty will become beautifully unfolded, and a foundation will be laid for a more rapid development in the land of spirits.

When you are thus unfolded here, and the spirits come to you and breathe their loving influences upon you, how readily they are understood and enunciated by the medium. Thus you will find yourself enunciating thoughts and principles of which you had not the least conception before. Only require a proper degree of sensitiveness for the spirits to present the highest and most profound truths; but it does not follow that they will be received and understood by the individuals through whom they come. The faculty must exist, but it may only be awakened into activity and intensity for the time, by the spirit influencing the medium, and it may slumber again when the influence is withdrawn. Thus individuals may become the mouth-pieces of angels, and give forth the most sublime truths, and not retain a trace of the memory of them. Historical facts may be presented through the organization of an individual, whom they have never known, and do not, at the time, receive for themselves.

But, as we have said, this is an educational process, and these individuals will, sooner or later, come to have this knowledge which flows through their organism impressed upon their minds, and they will retain it, and catch more readily the thoughts, feelings and emotions of the spirit world by which they are surrounded.

This condition, while it gives so much as desirable, also renders them susceptible to influences that lead to folly and imprudence. But you should understand this and be careful how you exercise these. We are not here to apologize for

wrapping anywhere, but we would have you to tear up your old mantles of charity and weave them anew out of that beautiful material, by a better understanding of the laws by which spirits operate in controlling their mediums. Understanding that from the susceptibility of these they are subject to many influences, both from persons in the form and out of it, we advise the closest scrutiny and strictest justice on the part of mediums, and never to throw the responsibility where it does not belong.

We know that the spirits tell us to be self-reliant; but we also know that those mediums who are under the control of the spirit world, are negative to that world, and being negative to that, they are also negative to their earthly surroundings. This has its evil as well as its good tendencies. You see that the high and holy tendency is to open the spiritual nature,—to enable them to hold converse and exchange sympathies with the spirits. The evil of it is; the medium himself, for he is negative to mundane influences.

You ask why spirits do not protect their mediums from this. We answer: They do all they can, but it is not in their power to do all they can. You might ask: Why do not spirits take away the propensity of man to do anything wrong? This would destroy man's morality, and culture away all responsibility. Man must exercise his own normal powers and functions, or he cannot grow strong. If spirits are always to be on hand and direct in everything, man would sink his own individuality before the power and influence of the spirit world. This is not in God's economy. Man must take his own character, whatever it is, to the spirit world; his integrity, his individuality must go here; if redeemed from the power of temptation; if not, it must be done there.

Mediums must stand in their own individuality, and outgrow all their weaknesses. By a better understanding of these things, man will be able to distinguish in the ages to come, the influences that had to various acts.

Recollect that it is only a few years since man entered intelligently upon the investigation of these facts.

You ask the question again: How shall man become fully developed,—that he shall receive communications from the spirit world? We say: Practice and that of others. There is no more to be said. His attention is turned to these, he finds sometimes one and sometimes another faculty, that with a little culture and training, will come forth with increased power, and enables him to answer these questions to his own satisfaction and that of others. There is no more certain method for developing mediumistic powers than to sit in circles. We know there are certain individuals who are developing mediumship, in whose presence these latent powers may be called out. This is a matter of experience, and cannot be taught. We cannot tell you more than I'll be able to do for you. There are some who cannot sit in circles without suffering, owing to some peculiarity in their organisms. There is a general law by which spirits are enabled in the presence of certain individuals to control their mediums.

When you meet with those who produce this effect upon you, it is well for you to sit with them. Again, there are healing mediums,—those who generate a great deal of vitality,—hence, when they come in contact with certain organisms that are suffering for the want of that which they have in abundance, they receive something which benefits them.

Disease or a want of vitality in certain organs, may thus be removed, and cures are daily being performed in this way. You ask if this is the natural power? Certainly it is. It has been used every day and every hour of this man's life of healing. He has repeated it every day of your existence. You see the evidence of it everywhere. Whenever you get a headache you place your hand upon it. You have the toe, toeache, and before you have thought of anything, your hand is upon your face. Thus with your pain, you hear G. G. voice telling you of the best manner of healing. He has repeated a hundred thousand times. You place your hand upon the seat of pain, and if that does not relieve you, you get it out of some one else, and the two vitalities are joined, and here again is presence action. Two hands are laid upon the seat of pain, and if the medium be in harmony with you, you will be relieved and cured. There are those who give to you a magnetic influence that is painful, that you cannot endure. It will cause you to be sick. These facts are to be learned by experience.

How shall the healing medium increase his or her power? By increasing his forces, observing the laws of health, by increasing their powers, and by yielding to the influence of spirit. Healing mediums need all these, and especially the latter. There are bands of spirits who come around them, and give them strength. You ask now if you shall sit in circles. We say if you are harmonious to yourself in them. Let the positive and negative forces balance each other as much as possible.

Indifference, or too great desire for communication alike disturb the conditions. Passive condition alone enable the spirits to do this work well. Hence, it is said, "You must wait in prayer." The passive is the spirit world! Do some they come best in silence, to meet with music, or they may be reading or conversations which act upon the same principles by producing a passive state. Use your powers to ascertain what you are receiving. Use every means that you have while you reach for the purpose of calling them into effective exercise, and bringing the spirits to your knowledge. You must not forget that spirits are human beings,—that they are not omnipresent. If you have an engagement with the spirit world to sit for manifestations, do not neglect it. Spirits have

their business in the spirit-world as mortals have in the mundane. Be punctual to all your engagements with the spirits. Show that you have confidence in the spirits when you have made an engagement with them. Treat it as a positive business transaction. With regard to the kind of communications you would receive, it depends upon the character of the spirit, and also of the medium.

There are those who attract to them undeveloped spirits, and you may say that they naturally attract these because they are undeveloped,—but there is another thing that we would call your attention to, and it is of the utmost importance, and you are guilty as Spiritualists, if you receive not this truth. It is this, that very frequently those spirits who are undeveloped are brought to you by others who have an interest in them,—not for the purpose of troubling you, but to make you suffer, but in order that they may receive some help, and thus be able to rise to a higher plain of development. Your mission may be to the spirit world just as truly as the mission of that world is to you.

There are those in earthly conditions who have the means of helping the spirits,—of "preaching to spirits in prison," by word and act. And when they come to you thus for help, if you receive them kindly, and with a desire to do all you can for them, the benefit then will be mutual, and the two spheres will blend, and as they are blessed by your ministrations, you will also be blessed by theirs.

IMMORTALITY DEMONSTRATED.

A Little Girl Returns to Greet Her Playmate.

LETTER FROM HENRY ROUSSEAU.

S. S. Jones.—Dear Sir,—Reading the very interesting article in your paper of the 25th entitled "Compact" reminded me of similar manifestations attending the decease of my daughter, Julia Frances, which occurred Jan. 31st, 1870. Five years previous to her death, a relative, Mary Kate Cripps, of the same age of Julia, resided with us. At this time, I was a member of the first Spiritual Circle formed in Troy, N. Y. It was held at the house of Anson Wood, the pioneer of Spiritualism in this region. Occasionally the girls accompanied me to the circle and, without my knowledge, formed a "compact," as young as they were,—being only fourteen,—that the one which should die first, if there was a future existence, should notify the other if possible. When my daughter departed this life, her friend, Katie, was visiting an uncle in Washington City, D. C. I wrote to her home, supposing she was there, and sent a paper to Washington. At midnight, previous to the receipt of the paper, Katie, whose room was on the second floor, with the other sleeping apartments, was awakened, a circumstance which had not occurred to her for a long time. While endeavoring to account for her wakefulness, she heard a voice very near her, saying, "Katie! Katie! Mary Katie!" In her fright she covered her head, and for some minutes she lay motionless, and weeping for fear the call was a warning of death. Katie finally overcame her fears sufficiently to use her head. As she did so the same words with greater emphasis were spoken close to her face. "Katie! Katie! Mary Katie!" This time she was frightened almost to frenzy, and screamed, "What is this? What is this? Speak slowly and understandingly." "Katie, Katie, Mary Katie!" and then all was still. The poor frightened girl did not till morning. When she awoke, the family were alarmed about her condition. She told them her strange story, and added, "This call I hear me stand upon the floor and see after this, but I was crying and weeping for fear the call was a warning of death. Katie finally overcame her fears sufficiently to use her head. As she did so the same words with greater emphasis were spoken close to her face. "Katie! Katie! Mary Katie!" This time she was frightened almost to frenzy, and screamed, "What is this? What is this? Speak slowly and understandingly." "Katie, Katie, Mary Katie!" and then all was still. The poor frightened girl did not till morning. When she awoke, the family were alarmed about her condition. She told them her strange story, and added, "This call I hear me stand upon the floor and see after this, but I was crying and weeping for fear the call was a warning of death. Katie finally overcame her fears sufficiently to use her head. As she did so the same words with greater emphasis were spoken close to her face. "Katie! Katie! Mary Katie!" 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Philadelphia Department.

H. T. CHILD, M. D.

Subscription will be received, and papers may be obtained at wholesale or retail, at 631, Race street, Philadelphia.

The Cases of the Welsh Fastings Girl and her Father.

On the Possibility of long continued Abstinence from food; by Wm. M. Wilkinson, with Supplementary Remarks by J. C. Witherspoon, 3d edition with notes furnished by Dr. Brown Seward, J. Brown, Southampton Row, London.

We have received a pamphlet of eighty pages under the above title, the substance of which was published in the London Spiritual Magazine.

It is a matter of profound interest, not only to the medical profession, but to all intelligent persons.

Sarah Jacobs, "the Welsh fasting girl," has stated this subject before the public. It was brought that she had lived two years without food, and that at length a committee was formed on the recommendation of medical men, for the purpose of settling the question at rest, and this committee obtained the services of four skilled nurses from Guy's Hospital, who scrupulously watched her to death in eight days.

According to the testimony of the father, she was about two years old, and a very healthy child till about two years ago. One morning, on coming from school, she complained of pains inside, and spat blood. "They sent for a doctor who gave her medicine for a few days, and then said he could not relieve her. Another physician was called who treated her for inflammation of the brain." She could not take food, and from the beginning of October, 1867, till her death, which occurred two years later, "she took no food." She had fits—sometimes several in a day. We pass over the very minute description that is given of the case for want of room.

The case attracted little attention during the first twelve months after its commencement. During the last year the girl was visited by a large number of persons, and about the close of the second year, a number of nurses were engaged to watch her in this country, and on the eight days after this, she died.

Medical men are not always competent to decide what is the cause of death, and the same is true of the people. We remember, nearly thirty years ago, when a student in the wards in the hospital at the Blockley Almshouse, an advertisement was introduced into this country, and our worthy preceptor, Dr. R. Bley Dungeness, was in the habit of spreading a large white napkin over the chest, when about to apply the ear in listening to the sounds.

One day a patient positively refused to allow the napkin to be laid upon his chest. He informed me confidentially that the professor, who left, had had noticed that he laid such a towel over a patient a few days before, and he grew much worse, and actually died, and he would never submit to such a thing. It is evidence that this girl was hysterical, and subject to fits, and we have seen in this country, and in France, and this is the explanation of her living so long without food.

Numerous cases are presented in this pamphlet of long continued abstinence, and several medical men have offered valuable suggestions. E. L. Doherty, M. D., says where there is no physical activity at all in the case of a hysterical animal, vitality is sustained during the winter months, without any perceptible respiration, circulation, or nutrition.

During the winter sleep of cold blooded animals, respiration, circulation, and nutrition are almost, if not quite, dormant, as in hibernating trees. In hibernating animals, physiological vitality is maintained during a long winter sleep with almost no perceptible signs of respiration, circulation or nutrition.

Semi-hibernating animals, such as bears, for instance, in frigid regions, live through the winter in a torpid state, without any food, although not entirely unconscious of the time, or with intervals of semi-wakefulness.

Physiological vitality, therefore, with little or no physical activity in the highest orders of hibernating animal organisms, may be sustained or partially suspended during many months without food, and almost without any perceptible respiration, circulation, or nutrition; and the hysterical or cataleptic temperaments of human beings are somewhat analogous to those of semi-hibernating animals. We have given the above account of this interesting case, with a view to present a few reflections. We are very thankful to our English friends for the extensive manner in which they have presented these facts.

The laws of assimilation and of secretion and excretion, which are common to all organic beings are subject to a variety of influences, which may either retard or accelerate their action, and which may tend more or less rapidly to their suspension in the condition which we call death. The familiar illustration of the steam engine,—yielding a power proportioned to the amount of fuel consumed within a given time, all other conditions being equal, representing the action or power of living organisms, is not without truth.

The conditions which favor long continued abstinence from food, are catalepsy, somnambulism, or (what we think is more expressive of the condition) trance. From the best information we have received from spirits, in regard to this state, and from personal observation for many years of those under both the spontaneous and evoked conditions, though we find that those which have been called spontaneous are produced by spirit influence, and from having almost all our life been subject to conscious inspiration, and during the past spring in the treatment for a severe and painful disease, having been many times thrown into a cataleptic trance, which once occurred, we continued for seventeen hours, we feel inclined to offer a few suggestions on this subject.

Our observation has for many years confirmed the statement of the Apostle, "That there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body," and also the statement frequently made by spirits, that in the trance these bodies are more or less perfectly separated.

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