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Literary Department.

THE EXPERIENCE OF A SPIRIT ON ITS ENTRANCE INTO THE INNER WORLD.

The deep and increasing interest which all feel for a knowledge of that world toward which we are rapidly hastening, renders the narratives of those who have gone there and are permitted to return to us and report some of their experiences, interesting.

The following history of one who was thrown into the interior life suddenly, by the accidental burning of her clothing, is given just as it came to the medium to whom she returned shortly after her death.

In the month of October, 1861, a gentleman who is quite imprudent, was awakened about one o'clock in the morning with violent pain in the chest, and intense mental and physical suffering. This continued for about two hours and a half, when it suddenly disappeared. During this time he was conscious of the presence and influence of spirits, but was unable to recognize and identify them.

On the afternoon of the same day he was in the company of a medium, when he asked the following questions in regard to the occurrence of the night preceding:

First question.—Can you tell me whether any spirit or spirits visited me about one o'clock this morning?

After a short pause the medium replied:

"I see a spirit here now. It is that of an old friend. He says his name is Arthur Howell."

"Well," said the gentleman, "I am somewhat acquainted with his history, and also with some members of his family, and have long had a high respect for him. I am glad he visited me. Was he alone?"

"No," replied the medium, "he brought a girl, who was burned to death recently."

The gentleman said:

"I am desirous to know more about this, and would like you to come again if you think it will be a benefit to you; but if you can arrange it so as to come at a more suitable time, I would like it better—say five o'clock in the afternoon."

The next evening at that hour he experienced a violent pain in the chest, and was scarcely able to sit up for three hours, when it suddenly passed off. On the succeeding evening it occurred at the same hour, but was much less severe, and soon passed off. On the third evening there were some slight pains about the same hour.

On the evening of the 13th of October, a communication was received from Arthur Howell, through this medium, as follows:

"I wish to say that whenever the spirit of a person who is not connected with any religious organization enters this life, and there is a funeral service performed by a minister of any religious sect, the spirit is generally introduced into a circle of spirits who are attracted to that particular sect. In the case, however, of this poor child, there was no one who took a particular interest in her. I saw her surrounded by a few friends on the same place with herself, and who could do but little to put her in a way to unfold and develop herself. Seeing her in this destitute condition, my sympathies were awakened, and on conferring with my friend Job Scott, he said that if I could bring her to this gentleman, she could receive from him that which would be very beneficial to her in her present condition. I approached her several times, and endeavored to speak to her, but she shrunk away from me and was very timid. At length, on the morning above alluded to, I came sufficiently near her to hold a conversation with her, and having assured her that I was only seeking her good, she consented to go with me to the person in question. I knew it was an improper hour, but I dared not delay the visit, lest her fears might overcome her and I should have difficulty with her. We made the visit, and though I saw that it produced considerable suffering to this brother, I knew that a great good would come to both of them. Indeed, so happy was she with the influence that she received, that I could scarcely prevail upon her to leave, when I perceived that it was not judicious to prolong the interview. She begged to know how soon she might renew her visit, saying that she felt so much stronger and better. After four interviews all the painful sensations which had been experienced by my brother who still walks in the earthly form, passed away, and now she visits him daily, and will soon be able to converse with him and to give her experience to the world, and there are many thirsty spirits now up and down in the land who will gladly listen to the story of this poor girl. I will come with her and aid her in reciting her experience."

On the same evening, and through the same medium, the following was given from the spirit herself:

"I have two sisters, who were burned at the same time I was, but we have not been near to each other."

A spirit said:

"This is necessary, in order to prevent too much sympathy at this time."

She continued:

"I still experience considerable suffering, though not near so much as I did before I came to you. I was so glad you let me come, and spoke so kindly to me. I thanked you with all my heart, and I never felt so happy in my life. It is very difficult for me to communicate. I was afraid of the old Quaker, I expected to have a long sermon on the sin of dancing, but he never said a word about it."

A few days after, she commenced her narrative as follows:

"I draw the veil of oblivion forever over the last few days of my earthly existence, from the first fright of that awful fire, until I found myself unconscious in the arms of that blessed angel. DEATH, it was, one continued scene of suffering, and which no language can describe."

"I had been a gay, giddy girl, and yet, there had been moments, when the fleeting shadows that surrounded me, led me to think of death, and I had often said to myself, 'I will come with her and aid her in reciting her experience.'"

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me and that made up so much of my life, stood out before me in all their emptiness and vanity, and I felt that that things were not different. Yet I saw no way out of it, though I always had a beautiful ideal before me, that I fondly hoped to realize.

Amid all those hours of suffering to which I have alluded; there were no moments when I could bring my mind to realize anything in regard to religion, and yet I felt sometimes both conscious and thankful that I had led a blameless life, and that amid all the frivolities of the scenes through which I had passed, I had preserved my integrity, so that however the world might look upon me, I felt a consciousness of rectitude within that always sustained me.

I knew not, when the pangs and anguish that had racked my poor body for so many hours were lulled, that it was the kind angel of death that had come to release me and let a prisoner free. I had always felt such a dread of death that, had I known it was approaching, I should have clung to life, even amid all the sufferings that I was enduring. So entirely ignorant was I of the change that was going on, that when I rose, as I did, from that bed of anguish, I supposed some miracle had been wrought, and that I was suddenly restored to health; but on looking around me, I perceived among the first objects that I recognized, my body lying upon the bed, lifeless. I shrunk from it, for I had always had a great fear of a dead body. What, did this mean? "Am I dreaming?" said I. "Where am I?" I saw but few persons. I could recognize some of my earth friends, and there were some that I afterwards found to be spirits there, although I then supposed them to be persons still in the form.

I was not able to stand or move, only as I was assisted. They led me away from the room where I had been lying, and as I passed out of this, I became bewildered, and lost all consciousness. How long I remained in this state I cannot tell, but when I awoke I was in a very beautiful place, where all seemed calm and quiet, surrounded by a few friends, among whom I recognized, at a distance, a brother who had passed to this life through a similar fiery ordeal, and my father, who also came here by an accident. They did not come very near me; but an old lady who had a very motherly way about her, was taking care of me. I looked around me, and I seemed to be in a room where everything was pleasantly arranged, and so clean and beautiful that I felt it was very nice indeed to have such a place to rest in. Oh, how tired I felt!

I had no clear idea that I was dead. I could not make out where I was, but it seemed a mystery to me. I could remember all the scenes of my past life from my very early childhood. I seemed to turn over these very rapidly, and every time I thought them over they grew brighter and plainer. The good that I had done made me feel very happy, and then I would think of things that I had done that were wrong, and I felt very sad, and the old lady said:

"Do not cry, my child; you will have a better time now. It is a hard life that you have come from."

And then the bright side of the picture turned round, and I was quite happy again. I wanted to know what to do. Oh, how badly I wanted somebody to tell me all about where I was, and what it all meant. One came and looked at me, and then another, but nobody seemed to know what to do for me.

The old Quaker gentleman came up toward me, but I hid my face, and whenever I looked up that way I saw he was looking at me. So one time when I was feeling very badly indeed and crying, he came right up and stood alongside of my bed and said:

"You are a dear little lonely child; you must not be afraid of me. You are so weak now that you cannot sit up. I want to take you where you can get strong, and sit up and walk about like the rest of us."

"Ah," said I, "that is just what I want; but how can I do it?"

"Why, come along with me," he says; and taking me up in his arms, he carried me to a very kind gentleman, and I began to feel stronger immediately. Oh, how happy I was. I felt just as a person does who has been very sick and is relieved of all pain and sickness, and who feels that they are getting well all over. He said I must not stay too long, as it gave the gentleman much pain to have me near him. I did not think this could be so, for I felt so happy myself that I thought everybody must be happy.

When we left him, the old man told me that I was what people called dead; and explained to me about my leaving the body and being carried away. I did not know how to believe him, but I felt that it must be true, for many things were so strange. When I got back I did not have to lay down, and the old lady was very glad that this good Quaker had taken me, for she said she did not see how I was going to learn to walk. I could not go very far nor very fast. The old friend told me how we would come soon and take me again to see this gentleman. He did so, and I enjoyed the visit very much. They all seemed very kind to me, and never scolded me. He told me that spirits that come out of the body suddenly, as I did, and when they were young, had to suffer a great deal, and had a good many hard things to go through before they got strong and right.

I found I had just such a body as I had on earth; the same kind of hands and feet and limbs and head, and they all seemed to be just as hard as they were when I was in the other body. I now began to walk and talk and sing, just as I had formerly done, and I found myself getting stronger. I wanted very much to see my sisters, but I could not. I could see mother, who was still on earth, but I could not talk to her.

The gentleman seemed to hear some things that I said, and the old friend told me that after awhile I could learn to speak, so that he could hear me better, and that he would write what I wanted to say, and that would make me very happy, so I have been trying ever since to learn to speak in the way he tells me.

After a few weeks she continued as follows:

I have met with many kind and loving friends here, have been able to see my sisters on several occasions. Each one of them has had the care of kind guardian spirits to lead them up out of the condition in which the sudden death overwhelmed us.

But the most interesting part of my experience was with the gentleman to whom I have so often alluded. I found I could visit him alone, and without producing any pain or unpleasant feelings. I could meet

around him a circle of spirits who took me in their charge, and it is the happiest and best school I have ever known. One of these spirits gave me the following explanation of my case:

The intense pain that suffering that you passed through when you came here, was caused by the sudden and violent manner of your death at your time of life. The spiritual body, or as we call it, the spiritual body—physical body—for it is the part here of a body for a short interior soul—was imperfectly developed at that time. These spiritual bodies are formed in and by the action of our material bodies while on earth, and within the body of every human being, even in the most embryonic condition, there exists a spiritual body—at first germinal, or very crude and imperfectly formed; so much so that some believe that it cannot maintain its identity of existence if separated; but I have never seen an embryo so imperfect as to be lost, nor can I find a point where true would be immortal in identity and another not. To me human form and immortality of identity are synonymous terms.

In your case, the physical body was well formed and developed, and the spiritual body had a corresponding growth and expansion; but when these bodies are rudely torn asunder, as they were in your case, there is violence done to both of them. The spiritual body is unable to gather up the elements and materials from the physical body which are adapted to its development and unfolding. Driven from its home in the physical body suddenly and with great violence, it is compelled to flee in the best manner it could, and depend upon the resources of those among whom it was thrown for power to obtain the necessary elements for improving and expanding its condition.

Much suffering generally ensues when such sudden changes take place, and as you have realized, it is a severe ordeal to pass, and you have now experienced the worst of your trials; each step now brightens and lightens your labor, and makes life a scene of continued and increasing happiness.

Human life may be compared to a grand painting. Each individual has his picture furnished to him, and in his own painter. In every life simple plants of innocence and beautiful hopes of promise are sketched upon the canvas, and the outlines of the picture are sometimes laid out, and in after life and mature years scenes and figures are introduced, and if the mission of life has been fulfilled, a deeply instructive and interesting picture is produced. Every thought and every act makes its mark upon the canvas—poisonous weeds, representing dark scenes of vice and crime, or imperfect figures that are evolved by ignorance or error, are stamped upon that canvas. These, however, are not so permanent and permanently fixed; but that they may be covered by other colors and by different pictures, if there be a desire to change the course of action. Emblems of cruelty and hardness may be entirely covered up and eclipsed by acts of love and kindness. Flowers of beauty may be made to take the place of useless weeds. Yet it must be remembered that the most magnificent and perfect picture requires that every day should produce its proper and appropriate figure on the canvas, adapted to the whole; that the covering over of faulty scenes is always attended with loss of time.

It is always to be regretted when the canvas must be stripped from its frame and taken down when it is but partly finished, as it is when death comes prematurely and separates the spirit from the body. Thus snatched from its position, and rudely rolled up with its imperfectly formed figures, the colors of some of which are not yet dried, you can readily perceive how it must appear when brought here.

On the other hand, when it remains during a long life, and the scenes and figures are arranged and completed so as to make a harmonious blending of the whole, it furnishes an important and interesting feature, not only as the record of earth-life, but as a study for those artists who have passed on to the bright land of the hereafter.

Every one who has seen the outlines of a picture rudely sketched, even though by one of the most skillful artists, knows that it is impossible to judge of the character that it will present when finished. So of those whose lives are prematurely cut off. The plan and sketch may be good, but it is sorrowful for earth friends to contemplate such an unfinished work, and it is much more difficult to proceed with and complete the picture after the spirit has thus thrown off the mortal coil.

We know there is a strong feeling on the part of humanity to look with charity upon these unfinished pictures that are left by their friends; but there is always an inward feeling of sadness that the picture is thus incomplete, and that it is necessary to hold a veil over many of the defects.

It should be the desire of every one to so paint, each day, and every hour, that they may dash their earthly picture when the time shall come for them to take it and their brush and easel to the beautiful land of the spiritual and interior, for with such a well-finished picture as a foundation and starting-point, they can at once begin to sketch the picture of the scenery and surroundings of their new home—a picture that shall far surpass anything which earth's inhabitants, with their clouds and shadows around them, can realize—a picture which embodies their highest thoughts, and most ennobling feelings. For the true art of painting is, thus to embody the soul's highest thought, and to fix on canvas an impress of the feelings that thrill it with the best and purest emotions.

How beautiful do the stern and practical realities of a real life stand forth in the living pictures of the divine artists of the celestial home, where each spirit is to give the proper start and hue to the scenes which they are presenting to those around them.

On another occasion she said:

The most singular thing which I have yet experienced was in regard to locomotion. When I first came, I was carried by my friends from one place to another, and where they placed me, there I was obliged to remain, till some one was kind enough to come and move me either where I wanted to go or where they chose to take me—mostly the latter, for I had scarcely any distinct feelings of desire about it.

After my first visit to the gentleman to whom I have alluded, I found I could stand alone and walk a few steps upon a level plane. I saw others move with different degrees of velocity, and rise from the position in which they stood, and float away into the air in any direction which they pleased to go. This puzzled me very much, and I began to ask how it was that they could thus rise up and move whither they would. A spirit friend explained to me then about the currents flowing through the human body and passing out more freely at the extremities than at any other part of the body. He told me to place my hands together as in the attitude of supplication, to kneel down and cross my feet, and remain in this position for a short time, saying, "You will find that the currents, instead of passing off freely at the extremities, will circulate through the system and accumulate there, so that you will feel very buoyant."

I did as he directed me, and was very much surprised and pleased to find that I not only felt this buoyancy, but I gradually rose up from the place where I was kneeling, and floated off in the most graceful and easy manner conceivable, to a point at a considerable distance from that I had occupied. Having thus discovered a new mode of locomotion, I continued to practice upon it, and in a very short time found myself able to move quite rapidly in almost any direction that my inclination led me, it being only necessary to assume the position described and keep my will firmly fixed upon it.

This was an entirely new experience to me, and I assure you, it gave me great pleasure, for, as my spirit friend remarked, next to life itself locomotion is the source of the greatest happiness that men or angels can realize on the physical plane. I could not only move along the earth's surface, but I could ascend to a very considerable height in the air. By this means I was enabled to visit many distant places, and to meet with circles of spirits who were floating over different parts of the earth. I am told that there are certain conditions attainable by spirits, which enable them to visit the different planets, but of this I know nothing now; it is joy enough for me to roam at pleasure over the fields of earth, and sit at ease poised in the mid heavens, and watch the scenes that are going on around me.

I will say here that there is this peculiarity about the enjoyments of this life: that in the present realities there is so nearly all that we can desire, that all that remains is a slight wish for progression, and this does not seem to detract from the happiness of the moment. I well remember that in my happiest moments on earth there was always a something beyond that I longed for. It is not so here, for the completeness of everything is impressed upon me, and leaves a feeling of almost entire satisfaction.

Soon after I began to move about freely, I discovered that I was attracted toward certain spirits and repelled from others. I had felt, as all persons do, drawn toward certain individuals, and driven from others by repulsive feelings. But this was different, for I could see nothing about these individuals that influenced me. I found that the more freely and readily I moved, the more sensitive I became to this influence. Thus I would set out for a particular point, and find myself drawn out of the line on one side, or repelled from it on the other, by spirits who were not very near me, and whose influence appeared to be entirely on my physical body. When I first came here I did not see many persons on earth, nor many spirits around me. It seemed rather a small place and thinly populated; but after a time my vision seemed to improve, and I could see many persons and spirits that were not visible to me before. I had often noticed shadows sitting before me, without being able to perceive what they were. After a time I learned to distinguish a great number of spirits around me, and also extended my vision so as to take in a much more extensive field than I had at first realized. I can now see much more distinctly what is going on on earth.

My first perceptions were confined to a few particular friends; but now I can see others more or less distinctly, and I follow my earth-friends when I desire to do so. Thus far, however, I have been much distracted by the gentleman to whom I am indebted for so much assistance, and I find myself gravitating to his sphere more frequently than to any other point.

I was somewhat at a loss, when I first came here, to know how time was passing. The phenomena of day and night do not occur here. There is a soft, mellow light every where here that is perfectly enchanting, and each spirit has a peculiar light of its own. When a number of congenial and progressed spirits meet in a circle, there is a magnificent halo around each, and around the whole a perfect blaze of glorious light. The light of each spirit is peculiar to itself, and we soon learn to distinguish our friends by this, even when at a distance from us. Since I have become so intimately associated with the gentleman alluded to, I have had no difficulty in marking the passage of time, and this I am told is the only way in which spirits keep themselves posted as to many of the events of earth—the passage of time, &c. To those who have become familiar with the ordinary course of events on earth, it is not very difficult to follow these in their association with persons still in the form by an occasional glimpse at the state of things. Thus, for instance, we know that morning with its cares and duties is followed by evening, &c., and any one event in this succession suggests that which will follow. Those who come here early in life, and have had little or no earthly experience, have not this basis of knowledge by which a single hint may shed light over a whole chapter of events.

When I first came here I did not perceive much difference between the spirits that were around me. I seemed like a person in a foreign country, who saw only the points of similarity among the inhabitants, and thought them all very much alike; but when I perceived the attraction and repulsion to which I have alluded, I began to notice the difference in spirits. It seemed to be not only in their form and in the light which surrounded them, but also in their interiors, and I was strongly impressed with the correspondence between the external and internal conditions of all that I now saw. I have found here no gaudy, pompous, hollow-hearted hypocrites, who assumed "a little brief authority" because of some external possessions or surroundings, but I perceived that influence and merit were linked together perfectly; and so general is this law, that every one finds his own level, and neither riches nor poverty nor titles nor buoy up any in the society of intelligent spirits. You cannot

any direction which they pleased to go. This puzzled me very much, and I began to ask how it was that they could thus rise up and move whither they would. A spirit friend explained to me then about the currents flowing through the human body and passing out more freely at the extremities than at any other part of the body. He told me to place my hands together as in the attitude of supplication, to kneel down and cross my feet, and remain in this position for a short time, saying, "You will find that the currents, instead of passing off freely at the extremities, will circulate through the system and accumulate there, so that you will feel very buoyant."

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conceive of the pleasure this discovery gave me. I had been living in society where things were very different from all this, and I was heartily sick of it. I give this, therefore, as one of the happiest experiences of my spirit-life.

I had seen in earth-life persons who boasted of their defects; but I perceived that this equality of influence and merit would not permit anything of this kind. On the contrary, it revealed so distinctly to each one that which they needed, that there was at once a desire to remove all defects, and to bring up the weaker parts of the system, so as to produce a harmonious blending of the whole character.

I want to say, here, that I have never heard a word of condemnation from one spirit to another about their defects. Indeed, so delicate and refined are the feelings, that not the most remote allusion is ever made to these things. Just as in good society, among you, no one would speak of the physical deformities which exist among their friends. I remarked to a spirit friend that this seemed very beautiful.

"Yes," said he, "and it is the true philosophy of reform. We seek to exhibit in our lives the beautiful and the true, so that those who are deformed for want of these shall see and feel what they need, and shall not have any additional suffering on account of unkind reproach from those who have been more successful in attaining a better condition. Even when reform comes to an individual through reproof and censure, it is a painful process; but it seldom comes. In most cases this course awakens combativeness, and thus injures rather than benefits the person on whom it is bestowed. We therefore always avoid this, and trust entirely to the influence of the example of a pure life, endeavoring to throw each individual on their own responsibility, so as to make them feel that their best interest requires them to improve their condition as fast as possible; and others, seeing them do this, are encouraged to go and do likewise. The world has yet to learn that example is far more powerful than precept." It was the pure life and the benign precepts of Jesus, much more than the few bitter and severe remarks that are attributed to him, that made his example so powerful for good to mankind. He knew well that the loudest preaching was a true life. And there are few more injurious teachers now than those who, while offering good precepts, say, 'We wish you to do as I say, and not as I do.'"

I listened in rapture to these words as he uttered them, and as

"On the wings of remembrance my soul was away," there came up no pictures that are more vivid or more indelibly impressed upon the tablet of my being, than those in which, with address, I have wept great tears of agony, at account of the severe rebuke of some loved one to whom I looked for strength and counsel in sympathy, rather than burning words that produced pain and sorrow. How often have I felt, even when I have done what I knew to be wrong, that "my punishment was greater than I could bear," and then it has often happened that all my attention was diverted from the act, to that which I felt to be an unjust condemnation of it. When I was not conscious of having done wrong, as was frequently the case, I felt that the rebuke was cruel; but most of all, when I felt fully conscious of the rectitude of my actions, and saw that those who condemned me understood neither my motives nor the surroundings that prompted them, did I regret the course; and I now see that it very often led me to do the very thing I was condemned for.

My spirit friend says, here, the narrative of our young friend brings us to a point in which it will be proper for me to give you some thoughts on the divine character of human individuality. You may use your discretion in regard to putting them into her narrative. She will repeat the words as I give them.

I consider Delity to be the great center of the Universe, positive to all else save Himself, around which all the innumerable hosts of worlds move as negative circumstances. Each individual human being, as a divine and eternal spark, is a center, surrounded by a train of circumstances peculiar to and varying with themselves and their progress; and each individual holds a positive relation to this train of circumstances in degrees similar to the positive relation which Delity holds to all things. It is this central condition of man, positive to the circumstances around him, that makes him in the image of God, and just in proportion to the extent and number of circumstances which he controls is he Godlike. This is a point of sufficient importance for us to dwell upon some of the particulars. Let us therefore consider man as a physical and intellectual and spiritual being.

First, as a physical being. Man, in his embryonic condition, passes through the various conditions which are presented in the lowest animal kingdom, from a simple germinal cell, through that of the reptile, the fish, &c., up to the mammalia. In all these conditions he possesses a positive power in a certain degree, known under the name of vital force, which from the first enables it to perform the function of assimilation, thus converting some of the surrounding elements into its own structure, and after a time the function of circulation is established. It is, however, very much dependent upon its surroundings for the power to carry on these wonderful functions. When the embryonic condition is completed, the positive power is increased and new functions are manifested: Digestion, by which the new being prepares its own elements of nutrition preparatory to their assimilation. Respiration, by which the blood is oxygenated, &c. And for these the positive power is extended, and yet it is a common remark that man, at birth, is one of the most feeble and helpless beings in the whole range of life.

It is one of the most interesting fields of observation to watch the development and unfolding of this positive power, as it gains step by step new control over surrounding circumstances. Throughout the entire period of man's growth as a physical being, there is, or should be, a gradual increase of power over the material surroundings, and man will long continue to push his physical powers in various directions, under the guidance of his will, so as to exhibit a far more perfect physical organism than has ever yet been presented, and to obtain a far more extended, and powerfully controlling influence over the elements of the material world, around him. You ask, How shall he gain this power most effectually? I answer, First, by the observance of all the physical laws. Every act in

conceive of the pleasure this discovery gave me. I had been living in society where things were very different from all this, and I was heartily sick of it. I give this, therefore, as one of the happiest experiences of my spirit-life.

I had seen in earth-life persons who boasted of their defects; but I perceived that this equality of influence and merit would not permit anything of this kind. On the contrary, it revealed so distinctly to each one that which they needed, that there was at once a desire to remove all defects, and to bring up the weaker parts of the system, so as to produce a harmonious blending of the whole character.

I want to say, here, that I have never heard a word of condemnation from one spirit to another about their defects. Indeed, so delicate and refined are the feelings, that not the most remote allusion is ever made to these things. Just as in good society, among you, no one would speak of the physical deformities which exist among their friends. I remarked to a spirit friend that this seemed very beautiful.

"Yes," said he, "and it is the true philosophy of reform. We seek to exhibit in our lives the beautiful and the true, so that those who are deformed for want of these shall see and feel what they need, and shall not have any additional suffering on account of unkind reproach from those who have been more successful in attaining a better condition. Even when reform comes to an individual through reproof and censure, it is a painful process; but it seldom comes. In most cases this course awakens combativeness, and thus injures rather than benefits the person on whom it is bestowed. We therefore always avoid this, and trust entirely to the influence of the example of a pure life, endeavoring to throw each individual on their own responsibility, so as to make them feel that their best interest requires them to improve their condition as fast as possible; and others, seeing them do this, are encouraged to go and do likewise. The world has yet to learn that example is far more powerful than precept." It was the pure life and the benign precepts of Jesus, much more than the few bitter and severe remarks that are attributed to him, that made his example so powerful for good to mankind. He knew well that the loudest preaching was a true life. And there are few more injurious teachers now than those who, while offering good precepts, say, 'We wish you to do as I say, and not as I do.'"

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obedience to these strong tendencies and increase the positive power, while every act in violation of it has a reverse tendency. It is not, as elsewhere, which is but a repetition of acts, showing that there is an increase of power as the result of each act, as the repetition is always easier than the original act.

Nor is it less interesting to witness the beautiful display in the gradual unfolding of the intellectual powers, developing as they do the positive force on this plane. The intellect, guided and propelled by the will, gives man dominion over vast fields of nature, and a similar observation in regard to obedience to the intellectual laws and the influence of habit is applicable here.

In the moral or spiritual field the same simple law of positive force operates; by every moral act man becomes more positive to the influences around him, while by every violation of the moral law man loses a portion of that positive condition which alone enables him to withstand temptation and shun error. Oh, how beautiful is the strength and heroism of true moral power! And when man, in all the departments of his being, shall realize the grand ideal that is even now before the world, he will stand forth as a grand positive center, radiating through a vast realm, in which he holds positive control over the material circumstances and elements around him, exercising a dominion over these worthy of a child of the Infinite.

Narrative continued:
Among my early experiences, was a dissolution of old associations and the formation of new ones. I found that most of the relations which had existed among my earth friends and myself were the result of external influences and conditions; and although they were a source of pleasure and profit on that plane, yet as my interior nature became unfolded, I found these associations gradually dissolving and the attractions weakened without any pain or regret, for their places were always supplied by others of a more pleasant and profitable character, based upon more interior and permanent attractions. Even the family relations are subject to this law, and there are instances where parents and children find that the law of consanguinity is superseded by a higher law of spiritual and interior attraction. It might seem that such changes could not take place without regret and sadness at the severing of old and long cherished ties, but I am told that such is the beautiful compensation of this law, that no tie can be severed until a higher boon is conferred upon all parties.

You will perceive that, as I proceed with my narrative, it brightens. Let me repeat some things here, as I can do it better now than I did some time back. At first my general feelings were somewhat like those of a person under the influence of a narcotic; and the contrast of these with the intense agony which I had suffered during the last hours of my earth-life was very pleasant, but it did not continue so. There came brief intervals in which I experienced pain very similar to that which I had suffered in the body, and this confirmed me in the impression, which lingered with me for some time, that I was not dead. I gradually came into a more natural condition, and the pain was less severe. I was then in that helpless condition to which I alluded, when the old friend came to me and carried me in his arms to the gentleman.

After this I was often sad. The veil of uncertainty that hung over the past, the present, and the future, seemed like a cloud of gloom; and yet I now perceive that this was a state of discipline that I very much needed, and that all that I then suffered was essential as a basis for my progress, and I rejoice that I have passed through it. Whenever I came into the presence of this gentleman I was relieved of all physical pain, and was not stupified, as I had been before, whenever the pain was lulled. So perfectly happy was I, that I could not realize that he was suffering on account of my presence; and when I yielded to the entreaties of my friend to come away, I was not half convinced that he had suffered, as he did not complain or blame me, nor does he now, for I was only a child. It was not until he came several times that I could perceive that it had been painful to him, and was becoming less so at each visit.

During this time I saw the spirits around him, but was not aware that they had any particular interest in him. One occasion as I visited him I was very much surprised at the information which a spirit gave me. Taking me by the hand, in the most cordial manner, and with a benignant smile upon his countenance that removed all fear from me, he said:

"As the representative of a circle of spirits who have influenced and communicated through this gentleman, I wish to say that we have watched with deep interest your visits to him, and have been much gratified by their influence upon both of you, and we see that they will continue to be mutually beneficial."

This was so unexpected to me, that I began to feel that perhaps I had been doing something that I ought not to have done, but before I could say anything, he continued:

"Don't be worried. It has all been ordered aright, and you will soon see that it is so. I will introduce you now to some of the members of our circle."

He did so. My introduction into this circle began an entire new experience to me, and after the first excitement of the strange scenes around me had abated, I asked this spirit to explain this to me: Was it a common occurrence for such circles to exist in spirit-life? Or, is this a single instance of rare occurrence? He replied:

"Such unions as this, formed by spirits whose aspirations are for higher development, newer and more beautiful unfolding of the Divine Life, form a very general feature in the progressive condition of the interior. These circles are formed of spirits in various stages of development, some much more advanced than others, but all bound by ties of congeniality, and all seeking to fulfill the laws of progression—first, in themselves, and then in those around them. These circles are not confined to the dwellers of the inner life alone, but reaching down to the inhabitants of earth, they hold within their loving embrace those whose physical, mental and moral conditions are such as to place them in rapport with us, and establish between us those relations which enable us to give and receive that which is most essential to the growth and development of all."

With this explanation and the introduction to these kind and loving friends, I found a new home of peace, amid bowers of celestial beauty, where truth and light shine forever. Here I waited calmly for the new unfoldings that I felt were to come to me. I soon saw how beautifully these bands worked together, each member bringing treasures and making them part of the common stock. And when any important subject came before the circle, I perceived that those spirits who had drank most freely and profoundly from the fountain whence flowed light and knowledge upon that subject, stood forth and spoke, one after another, in simple words of eloquence, that all might understand.

I felt new-born impulses in my soul, that led me to aspire after draughts of knowledge, pure from the fountain. I had always had a lively curiosity to know of things around me, but now a new field was opened before me. I not only desired to know many things, but I found, readily, the means of obtaining knowledge on many subjects.

I saw that, whatever knowledge any individual member of the circle received from it, seemed only to make the knowledge of all the rest on that subject still brighter and clearer. And that wherever and whenever a germ of truth was drawn from the realm of spirit-life, it was like kindling anew the altars of the Divine.

I saw that we came to you for draughts from the

realm of matter and mind on earth, and that every new idea or revelation that you received upon these planes, was immediately reflected in the interior, and became part of the general stock of knowledge. Thus each and all are bound together by a common bond, and the beautiful reward of our labor is in our own interior growth and development.

I have not yet explored this circle, and therefore cannot say how far it reaches, nor how many it embraces. Like a central sun in the firmament, it has many stars and satellites revolving around it, each in its proper orb. And I am told that from central suns like this, formed by the nuclei of bands of spirits, there flows out and is irradiated that moral and intellectual light and heat that is essential to the life and growth of those who revolve around them, as stars around a central sun in the physical universe.

My spirit friend says I may say to you that in this you will see a beautiful illustration of the great law of correspondences.

"It must be evident to the thinking mind," he continues, "that the theory of heat and light, coming from your sun in the outward universe, is the result of central fires, cannot be true; not only because it would be impossible for such fires to give forth uniform heat, but because the laws of radiation are such that no possible degree of heat could extend to the distance required. The radiating currents of our earth and of all earths will explain the whole phenomena; for, by the discussion or crossing of these lines all the sensible heat and visible light of the universe is produced. So in the interior or spiritual world, an idea emanating from the sphere of an individual passes out into the sphere of another, and if the relation between the currents of the two individuals is of a certain character, intellectual heat and light are evolved, by which both are warmed and enlightened. These radiating lines, in the spiritual sphere, flow out to great distances, and whenever a susceptible person comes within the lines of these radii of thought, they then receive communications. Hence you can understand how spirits may and do communicate without being present or in close proximity; and how, too, it is possible for different persons to receive communications from the same spirit, at the same time, even upon different subjects, as various thoughts may flow out at once."

In order that knowledge may thus be communicated, it is not only necessary that the currents should thus meet, but that they should bear a positive and negative relation to each other. Where they meet, and both are either positive or negative, antagonism and conflict must ensue, and that, generally, without benefit to either party. Where this antagonism exists it is almost impossible for any interchange of thoughts or ideas to take place. Neither party will understand the other, and misrepresentations constantly ensue. Here is an explanation of the fact, that positive skeptical minds often interfere with the free flow of communications to sensitive minds, by disturbing the relations of the currents. Many of the incidents of life are dependent on the operation of these currents. The fact that many persons very frequently feel the most intense antagonism to those to whom they have been most strongly attached when in health, is attributable to a change in the character of the currents. Family quarrels, proverbially the most bitter, are so for the same reason. How often are the most enthusiastic friendships changed by their very intensity, reversing the character of their currents.

Permanent and enduring union of two individuals must be based upon the proper positive and negative relations of the entire being; then, when the physical structure shall be shattered and eleven, and its loves and desires shall no more kindle with enthusiasm, or burn with ardor, and when the mental fires shall glow with a new heat from the inner sphere, the union of the spiritual natures will remain as a glorious and enduring bond that shall outlive all the lights and shadows of the narrow and fleeting circle of time, and the two beings, breaking away from the shores of the finite, shall launch their bark as one on the Ocean of Infinity.

To continue my narrative: I discovered that the mode of communicating knowledge here was peculiar, and based entirely upon the simple law of demand and supply. No spirit is ever compelled to study or to receive any undesired or unpalatable truth from any source. The pearls of Truth and Wisdom flow all around us, yet no one is forced to drink. Gems of thought, that will gladden as diamonds on the brow of spirits, lie all along our pathway, but never in a spirit made to gather them with unwilling hands, and place them there.

No slavish conscript treads here with faltering step up the rugged steep of knowledge; but, fired alone by a divine impulse that thrills through the innermost soul, each free spirit marches with firm tread, eager step, and earnest desire along the flowery paths of Wisdom and Truth, plucking everywhere gems of beauty that gladden the eye and feed the soul. This subject, though grand and sublime, shall not lead us away into the shadowy regions of imagination, where we cannot make practical statements. The world needs that we should give a plain and simple description of our labors, and our loves, our pleasures and our duties. In this narrative, thus far, I have spoken to you with familiarity, and shall continue to do so, endeavoring to state plainly what I have seen and learned; and now, as a medium for the circle, I give you these thoughts as they would have you receive them.

Our labors are, as yours, upon three planes; the physical, the intellectual or mental, and the moral, each of which we may now describe to you. We have frequently told you that spirits have material physical bodies. The law in relation to all living physical bodies, is waste and supply, decay and renewal; this is universal and without exception. Our labors on the physical plane are of vast importance. We will first refer to the case of one who is born into the inner life through natural death, which is but a transition almost imperceptible: one who has lived long and well, and whose physical system has supplied the interior spiritual body with all its elements and organs as perfect as it is possible for the gross material organism of earth to furnish, under these circumstances, which are extremely rare, the new-born spirit has a field for physical labor. The lungs must be adapted to breathe the pure air of heaven, and there is a constant demand for food to supply the waste of elements, that exercise, which is much more regular and continuous here, causes, and that excretion and exhalation, which are also much more regular and active here, are constantly throwing off. So perfect are the latter, that we have no instances in which the physical body of a spirit has accumulated so much effete matter that it must be cast off entire and laid aside as a worn out garment, as is the earthly body at death.

There are two modes by which all physical bodies are supported and sustained. The one acknowledged by the most superficial observers—the introduction of elements into the system by bringing them into contact either with the walls of the stomach, or with some portion of the body, whence they may be absorbed into the system, and thus become a part of it. This action, as the cause of the phenomena of hunger and thirst, is the source of much pleasure when properly carried on, and of great suffering when abused or neglected.

Another mode much less understood, even among the educated and intelligent classes, is by the influx and absorption of imperceptible currents, which exist in various states almost everywhere, and which mingle with and supply the vital force with much that is essential to its continued control over the material organism, and these currents supply elements to that physical organism. A comprehension of these modes by which your physical bodies are sustained, will aid

you in understanding what we have to say in regard to the support of our physical bodies here. Of course those who do not realize the latter mode of obtaining a renewal of the wasted elements and energies of the system, cannot attach much importance to it. These know not why persons should fast at times in order to receive spiritual impressions, nor can they understand why certain individuals may live for a great length of time upon a very small quantity of food.

Viewed from the spiritual standpoint, we know this mode of absorption to be as essential as the other, and there are many persons now in your sphere, who are coming to realize this, and to feel that it is "not by bread alone" that they live, but by the emanations from many of the beings and objects that surround them, are they furnished with much that is essential to their well-being.

Mankind, supposing that they derived all their sustenance from materials taken into the system in the form of food, have concluded that spirits must derive all theirs from their surroundings, without taking anything into their systems, by an act of the will. They are in error in both instances. Spirits do eat! Do require food to be taken into their systems to supply the places of certain elements that are being constantly eliminated, and thrown off. To obtain these elements they are obliged to labor. If you could comprehend the nature of the physical body of a spirit, you could be able to realize the character of these elements; but at present you cannot. The nearest approach to it among the finer imperceptibles, and as these are only known to you by some of their effects, you cannot have any very distinct idea of them. We say that the elements of this character are accumulated by spirits, and taken as food at regular intervals, according to the demand of the system. They supply certain essential parts, but they are not considered by us as any more important than those which are received by absorption from beings and objects which surround us; our means of obtaining these is only under the control of the will, so far as the change of our position in relation to these surroundings.

We have spoken of a spirit who has entered this sphere under the most favorable conditions. When you consider how seldom such a case can occur, and when you contemplate the condition of almost all who are ushered into this life, you will perceive that there is a very wide range of labor required to bring up these even to a tolerably well developed standard. By far the larger proportion of spirits who enter here are very deficient in many of the elements essential to their true development. Then are all compelled to return to earth, and earthly associates, to obtain those elements that will enable them to start well on their journey through this sphere. Little does mankind know how much they are called upon to do to those who have passed prematurely into the inner life. The time is coming when this will be better understood. One of our pleasant labors is to procure the food needed by these bodies.

Another very interesting labor is the study of physical laws and principles, and the application of these to our systems. Every one finds something to do here. Some undeveloped part of the system, some weak organ or tissue, that, in order for perfect harmony, must be brought into a better condition. Here the labor and its reward are gratifying, and all are seeking to bring their systems to a proper condition of harmony, which, by the way, is no uniform standard; but that due proportion of parts which is best adapted to each one.

Another field of labor opens before us here, broad and extended in its character. Everywhere around us we find those who, have physical defects similar to those which we have removed from our own systems, whose aspirations are ever inviting us to aid them in those works wherein we have had practical experience. There are other labors on the physical plane. All the phenomenal manifestations made by spirits, are made through this plane, often, too, without as much wisdom as we should desire to see regulating them. The various forms of mediumship, especially the healing power, are produced through this plane. A band of spirits well developed in their physical natures, strong and vigorous, guided perchance by some one deeply versed in the laws of physical development and health, meet and concentrate their forces, and pour out through some well developed medium still in the form, powerful currents, that carry health and vigor to the sick and suffering.

There are other fields of labor on the physical plane; but we need not dwell on them now—they will be suggested to the thinking mind. We have no hard work here! No overtasked hours, nor yet any idle moments; that impulsive condition that prompts to the former and leads so naturally to the latter; is confined to the earth-sphere, and to the early conditions of this sphere.

We may now consider the mental labor which belongs to our life. Many persons have supposed that this and moral labors constitute the entire employment of the dwellers of this sphere. We do not refer here to the silly notion entertained by some on the theological plane, that we are forever engaged in slugging palms and playing on golden harps. Such labor would not only be termed physical here, but extremely irksome. We have mental labor here, but of various kinds. The study of philosophy and science is here prosecuted with zeal and acumen; and here, as with you, the perpetuity of the mental vision is very much dependent upon the condition of the physical body.

Every one has experienced more or less the effect of a disordered stomach and an aching brow, in clouding the mental horizon, so that it was impossible to define clearly the most simple and plain propositions in logic or philosophy. It is so here, and until the physical comes into that condition in which all the functions play freely, and are well carried on. The step is light, motion free and graceful, and thoughts play as clearly through the mental organism as light through the ether of heaven. We are not prepared to enter into the mental labors of this sphere with satisfaction; but when all this is the case, then on the forum and in the mental arena are exhibited the more gigantic feats of intellectual power and beauty, dim and shadowy reflections of which are sometimes repeated in the brilliant efforts of some impressive and intuitive light of the world—as a medium.

All branches of mental labor on earth find a stimulus and a strength from the throbbing impulses of the inner life. The Arts and Sciences, Poetry and the Fine Arts, Philosophy and Mechanics, each and all, drink from this fountain, and are successful in proportion to the depth and purity of the draught they take. We have mental labors, which correspond to all those of earth, and we have those which belong entirely to the inner life, and which can only be appreciated and realized when you shall have penetrated more deeply into the arcana of this life.

The two principal functions of mental labor are here as with you. First, the acquisition of knowledge, and its application to ourselves and our needs; and second, the transmission of that knowledge to those around us who are in conditions that fit them to receive it.

On the Third plane—the Moral. There is a vast field for labor here, not made less by much of the theological teachings of earth. We do not consider it wise to make much effort at moral teaching, while the physical system is polluted and debased, by gross violations of the laws of its being; and the mental horizon is obscured from the same unhappy causes. The world has yet to learn and duly appreciate the fact, that true and permanent reform must begin in the physical, and gradually send its genial warmth and enlightening rays up through the intellectual and moral natures. Then, and not till then, will labor in this field be truly successful.

There are certain fundamental principles in the morals of universal application, which all admit as soon as they are fully comprehended.

Thus, the sentiment presented to the world in a negative form, through the noble Confucius, and afterward rendered in a positive form by the gentle Nihilism, and now known among you as the Golden Rule. Another equally universal in its application, is the immediate and inseparable connection of cause and effect, clearly illustrated on the moral plane by the violation of law and penalty together.

Another, That the law of progress is universal, and that it is by regular and perfect steps of advancement in accordance with the Latin maxim—"Mora non facit soltem." (Nature never makes leaps.)

Another, That exercise of any function tends to strengthen both the function and the organ through which it acts.

Another, That the increase in the number of elements in a compound, is one of the essential conditions that favors permanency, and from this follows the axiom, that immortality of identity can only exist where there is a compound, either embracing all, or having a capacity to embrace all the different elements or primes, from the entire range of the material and spiritual universe. These we believe to be confined to the Supreme Being, and to the souls of men, which are emanations from that Being.

Our moral instructions cover the entire field of the physical and intellectual. We perceive as true, a divinity in these spheres, as in the moral. The chief feature of the moral sphere is to shed a halo of living beauty over the others, and make all of life a glowing fire of love. Here, then, is an ample field for all laborers, and the most earnest and ardent will find all that they wish for. From this field opens avenues to all that can be desired in the interior life.

The narrative continues:

After such a revelation as the foregoing, unfolding, as I perceive, far more of truth than is new to me than it does to you who have long been engaged in similar studies, I feel no little embarrassment in pursuing my narrative; but they say, go on, relate your impressions and experiences, and we shall in due time have other revelations to give through you.

The uniform kindness with which I have been thus far aided in my walks in this sphere, satisfied me of two things; first, that we need aid in the physical plane here; and secondly, that there are laborers here ready and willing to work for us. I have frequently met Dr. Abraham Ackley here. He tells me that you published a narrative of some of his early experiences. He was with us when you received the communication in regard to our labors here, and was much pleased with it. He says now:

"My experience differs from yours, and yet I can see the cause of this, and have been much instructed by these circumstances. I too felt intense physical pain when I first came here, but having by habit cultivated a strong appetite for stimuli, I was attracted to the haunts of men where this appetite was still indulged, and I found physical ease and gratification by associating with persons that I loathed and despised, and, but for this one desire, should have shunned. There were intervals here, as there had been on earth, in which, after having indulged for a time those feelings and appetites, (and I found the same gratification from such indulgence here as I had on earth,) there came a state in which I resolved, as I thought, very firmly, never again to touch a drop of stimulating drink; but, alas, the chains of habit bound me, and, like a creaking slave, I begged them to me, and in mockery I said, 'I will be free to drink what, and when I please.' I want you now," he continued, "to tell, for you can do it much better than I did, how I escaped from those chains and this cruel bondage. I was in the habit of using profane language at all times, but more especially when my system began to demand stimuli. It was on an occasion of this kind that I was introduced to our friend here, accidentally, as I then supposed, but as I now perceive, under the guidance of that Wisdom that is always profitable to direct. My language to him on that occasion through the medium was much more strong than polite; it was extremely profane, and accompanied by vile oaths. The rebuke I received will never be forgotten by me. If our friend had spoken to me in similar language, I should have returned the compliment with interest, and we should have had a grand exhibition of profanity, from which neither of us would have retired benefited. But how different was it! Not one word of rebuke was uttered, but in soft and kindly tones, such as I had not heard for many long years, tones that brought to memory a fond mother's loving voice, and touched the same deep chords that had vibrated when I had listened to the sweet cadences of her voice, he said: 'Brother, I perceive you are not in a happy condition, but we can help you to a better state of feeling, and we shall be glad to do it. We know there is a good time coming for you and for all.' These words and the manner in which they were uttered, overwhelmed me. I felt self-condemnation thrilling through my entire being, and at that moment determined that I would never again use profane language; and so complete was the influence, that I have never felt any inclination to do so since. More than that, this habit was the link that bound me to my profligate associates; and though at times I felt a return of the appetite for stimulating drinks, yet with this golden key I locked the gate of temptation, and always shunned these associates, and, led to my friends, in whose presence I was safe; and, although the desire still returns, I rejoice to perceive that it grows less and less powerful, as I am enabled to keep away from the fires which fed it."

On another occasion, I asked this question: Do you seek in a manner somewhat similar to that which we do here? Do you sleep? We reply, no, except for a brief period after entrance here, and give this explanation. Sleep and Death are sisters. We have said that excretion here, within the system, and exhalation without, it is so regular and perfect, that we have no accumulation of effete matter in our bodies that require us to lay them aside as worn out garments, as is done by mortals at death.

With you the particles of matter which have fulfilled their function are divided into three classes: one of which is the effete, or dead matter, and which is or should be continually cast out of the system, either by excretion, or exhalation, and constitutes daily death. The second class of particles is thrown into the thoracic duct, with the newly made chyle, and is mingled again with the blood, and plays its part again in the grand drama of life. The third class of particles remain in their position, somewhat exhausted of vitality, and under the recuperative force of "lived Nature's sweet restorer," are again prepared to play their part in the economy of the system.

Sleep, therefore, being only necessary as a remedy for imperfect excretion and exhalation, the necessity for it diminishes in proportion as these functions are improved, and ceases altogether when they become perfect. Thus you will understand why spirits need sleep occasionally, when they first come here; and those who draw their conclusions from observations on this plane, feel very certain that spirits sleep here, and have as much need of it as they had while in the rudimentary sphere. You will now draw your own conclusions. We have stated what we believe to be a fact, and given our reasons. Here we leave it.

You ask if the function of sleep exists for a time, and then ceases. May it not be the same in regard to taking food into the body which you have described? We answer to this, that although there are conditions in which for a long period we do not need to take any food into our systems, still the observation of the members of our circle, which extends to some centuries before the Christian Era, does not lead us to the

conclusion that the time will come when the condition of the system will be such that we shall not need to take any materials to it in this matter. Here, as before, we only give our opinion, and the reasons for adopting it, wishing all to judge for themselves.

In resuming our account of the labors of spirits and their enjoyments, we may remark, that the connection between labor and enjoyment, is more fixed and positive here than with you. Indeed, enjoyment can only flow from the accomplishment of desires, and it always flows more freely and beautifully when this accomplishment is the result of our own labors. The realization of this fact, while it stimulates us to labor, gives us rest and force to our enjoyments.

Among the keenest and most thrilling pleasures that we realize, are, after the physical condition is brought into a good degree of harmony, those which result from the action of spirits in their labors, and especially their studies. We perceive the interior condition of the minds around us, and can judge who are prepared to cooperate with us. Thus coming, we divide the labor, and multiply the enjoyment, as we sit calmly and serenely together, gazing deeply into the arcana of Nature, witnessing simultaneously the beautiful coruscations of the light of truth, as they flow out in a grand and harmonious blinding, each illumining the other. Every aspiring mortal has felt, when a brilliant gem of thought has dawned in effulgence and beauty upon the mind; a desire that may be thus expressed: "Oh, that I had here some kindred spirit, and could communicate all the beauty and sublimity of this thought to a congenial mind, who would see and feel as I now do."

We realize this more fully as we feed together before the altar-fires of truth, beam forth great and loving truths—truths which we comprehend in beautiful concord as one spirit—the power and beauty of which are vastly increased by this union of investigation.

The medium having been somewhat indisposed with a catarrhal affection, she said: "You have had a cold, and I have felt too. Do you know what a cold is?" It is an obstruction first of the invisible currents which flow everywhere through your system, and afterward of the tangible fluids which cannot pass freely through their natural channels in the physical body. Both of these are compelled to force their way against these obstructions, and hence all the unpleasant feelings you realize. The passage of these currents through the body involves many important considerations.

The law of life finds its origin in the Great Central and Divine Source of all motion, as manifested in the great trine powers of attraction, repulsion and sensation. That same primordial essence, that in its grand and majestic sweep formed solid worlds out of rude and chaotic matter, through the operation of radiating and revolving currents, and, through the operation of the same power, obtained these in the magnificent train of the Universe, where they must roll on forever, in harmony and beauty, is operating no less lawfully in the simple formation of a globular tea-drop, or the more complex and interesting forms of the simple cell of the primitive vegetable or animal life, the basis of the multiplied and manifold forms of organic existence. There are currents flowing out of, and around every object and substance in the material universe. It is by and through these currents that there are all held and bound in one grand and universal whole. The first and lowest of these currents produces that universal and all-pervading law which you call gravitation—namely, the attraction of masses to masses. This, and the next class above it, in the scale of currents—chemical affinity—or the attraction of particles to particles, embraces the entire range of matter. Not an atom is exempt, though they may at times appear under the influence of other forces, not to be controlled by them. Thus the life force will, to a certain extent, overcome gravity, and heat will destroy chemical attraction, so as to appear to destroy it entirely.

The first current which produces gravitation, we call from the fact that it flows out in right lines from a central point in all bodies, large or small—radiating currents. The only evidence we can furnish of the existence of these currents, is that which is manifested in some of their effects. The principal one is the well known fact that all bodies are drawn toward each other by an invisible force. We perceive these radiating lines just as you may perceive the rays of light from a luminous body in a dark place. The power of these lines, as well as the power of attraction, diminishes in proportion to the distance.

Chemical affinity is produced by currents that flow around atoms and masses, and hence we call them rotary or revolving currents. These are manifest in every atom and in every combination, from the small mass of matter to the largest planet. We can several illustrations of this force. One of the most prominent and palpable is the revolution of the globe on its axis; a phenomenon of universal occurrence, whenever and wherever the mass, be it large or small, is freed from other controlling influences which would interfere with this motion. Thus all fluids will form globular drops, and the shot as it falls from an elevation, not only forms a globe, but revolves on its axis as it descends. Water in drops seeks a globular form, and when thrown upon a red-hot substance will immediately form globules that revolve upon their axes.

In the formation of compounds on the mineral plane a few elements, varying from two to six or eight, are generally aggregated. When, however, the compound is formed under favorable circumstances, each of these revolving currents, as it controls its particular atom, arranges it in a certain and definite order, producing crystals.

When eight or more elements combine under favoring circumstances in a fluid mass, so that these currents may have more freedom of action, a gelatinous substance is formed, in which, under the field of the microscope, we may discover cells or globular life. This is the beginning of vegetable life. Let us for a moment contemplate it. From a point called the nucleus, the radiating currents carry out the elements to a certain distance, at which place they are arrested by the revolving currents, and the ring or cell is formed. These radiating currents, after passing out a certain distance, are changed from positive to negative, and return to the centre whence they started, bringing with them certain elements or particles, which are deposited on the surface of the cell. Thus is there internal subterranean growth. And this flow of the currents furnishes an explanation of law of endosmosis and exosmosis, imbibition and transudation, a law which lies at the basis of the growth and waste, renewal and decay, and consequent existence and continuance of all living bodies, as such. The revolving currents, by changing the position and arrangement of the elements directly in the cell, enable the new ones to take their place, and those which have become old and worn out to be removed. This history of the formation, growth and decay of a primitive cell is an epitome of the history of all life everywhere. It is the alphabet from which are formed all the eloquent tones and magnificent melodies that constitute the grand and sublime orchestra of life.

By a similar operation of these currents, playing in and through a larger number of elements, the primitive cell of animal life is formed; so similar are these to the former that no external difference can be discerned. The additional elements given to the cell are a power of revolving and conducting their currents, which enables them to move and act. This is the beginning of the animal kingdom, and the more magnetic it produces the phenomena of polarization and of the magnetic needle.

1863.

Once more the earth has been round the race-course, and the three hundred and sixty-five revolutions are counted, and the last figure in the Christian Era changed from 2 to 3. It is well to post up the accounts and balance the ledger at the close of each Christian year, and ascertain if it will pay to continue the business, or if our lives are profitable to ourselves or others. Here is mine in brief.

Traveled in sixteen States of the nation; lectured in eleven of them, giving, in all, one hundred and thirty-six lectures—thirty-one on the causes and effects of the rebellion, one hundred and five on Spiritualism, including two funeral discourses on deceased soldiers—one in Hardwick, Vt., and one in Taunton, Mass. Have visited many persons and families, both sick and well, some of which I know have been benefited, and I hope none injured; if any have, I have not been informed of it.

I have written nearly one thousand letters, by which Uncle Sam is benefited, if no others. They would make a very large and curious volume, if printed; but many of them are hardly legible in manuscript—often puzzling me to read before they got cold. I expect some never are read correctly, and I am often surprised at the correctness of the printer and proof reader in the BANNER office. Have written a book of eighty-two pages on the Cause and Effect of the Rebellion. Just published by Bela Marsh, and for sale by him and me, and at the Banner of Light Office, and Herald of Progress Office, and bearing the title of AMERICAN CHAINS, or, Trial and Triumph of Democracy. Price twenty cents—in which I have given my views of the causes of the rebellion, as lying deeper than slavery, and causing it and using it as an instrument for the most unjust and cruel tyranny, to rob, ruin and brutalize a large portion of the whites who are fighting for their tyrants and against their own posterity and their own interests, deceived, cheated and robbed of both natural and acquired rights and every advantage of civilization.

I have spent only one month of the year at my little cottage home, near Battle Creek, Mich., where May soon slipped away from us; and the circle was complete, except our eldest son, who is an assistant surgeon in the army, and has served through the administration of Gen. Butler in New Orleans, and is still there under Banks. In his place at the cottage was a pale-haired grandson—so our number was full. We were happy, knowing that the absent one was engaged in the most holy mission of the time—an effort to save the best institutions of the best government in the world, not excepting any Christian government.

During the year I have met and made the acquaintance of many excellent persons, and had the fullest and best proof that Spiritualism has lightened the burdens and brightened the prosperity of many individuals, and been a sunshine in many houses, while in a few, no doubt, the phenomena have been used as a pretext and covering for wicked and selfish purposes; but these cases are growing less, and the others more.

I have felt fully its effects on me, and bless the day I found it, for to me it has truly been "the pearl of great price," and I bless the spirits for the many messages of encouragement and words of sympathy they have given me. I know they have blessed me and many others, and I am sure they have been a blessing to our country in this year of her peril and trials. I can hardly realize how we could have passed through this terrible struggle, but for the encouragement of angels and the knowledge of a bright and beautiful future, both for our nation and the race, and for the here and the hereafter. But I must leave this personal subject, which is of interest only to my many friends, with my kindest thanks for the past, and a "Happy New Year" wish for the future.

Taunton, Jan. 2, 1863.

[Reported for the Banner of Light.]

BOSTON SPIRITUAL CONFERENCE,
TUESDAY EVENING, Jan. 6, 1863.

Subject—WAR.

DR. CHASE.—The best barometer by which to determine the spiritual progress of an individual, or a nation, is the state of the war element in the human bosom. The rising and the falling of this element indicates the results of opposite influences; when it runs high, the hell-power influences more, when it runs low, the heaven-power influences more.

MR. WETHEBURN.—"My voice is still for war." We live on death, so death is lawful to life. War is for death, and death, not being wrong, I cannot see wherein war is wrong. I regard the revolutions that war makes as producing good results. We are our present condition of civilization to the revolutions of war. I think, contrary to the ground that Dr. Child has taken, that war is a good thing for mankind in a physical sense. We are more indebted to war for the development of heroic greatness, than to any other cause in the world.

DR. BOWEN.—I believe in fighting. I believe that the only way to get through the world is to fight through. Fight is the backbone of everything in human life. Success is always indebted to energy, and energy is only a war impulse. The whole system of life for each individual is a fight, from infancy to manhood; and an individual's life is the type of a nation's life. Everything we gain in life is the fruit of war and its consequent suffering.

DR. LYON.—This subject involves great principles and great problems. I am neither for war nor for non-resistance. Is war for further curse this earth? I look for better conditions than the conditions of war. To the present condition of the morals of the world war is as necessary as rain is to the present condition of the earth. I must lay the curse of war upon the threshold of popular religions. War belongs to the animal nature of man, not to his better, spiritual nature.

MR. PARDEE.—The word war is used in various senses, the most significant of which is, men in arms against each other. In this sense war is a natural thing; it is as much so as evil is. War is divine. Men may rise above the plane of war, but war will forever remain upon its own plane. War is the necessity of a condition; and what is a necessity has always a use, and all uses are divine. A want of equilibrium in the natural world causes eruptions, volcanoes and tornadoes, and these in the natural world are types of the moral world. So wars in the moral world are natural; they are the result of a want of equilibrium among men, as volcanoes and tornadoes are the result of a want of equilibrium in the elements of nature.

Mrs. THOMPSON.—I fully agree with the sentiments advanced by Dr. Lyon and Mr. Pardee.

MR. ENOCH had confidence that Spiritualism would unfold human affection and love that would supersede the need of human war. [Loud raps in various parts of the hall.] I believe that peace on earth and good will toward men shall be initiated by the advent of Modern Spiritualism. Victories on the battle field, accomplished by the warlike inclinations of men, may be counted great and glorious, but they are not to be compared to the peaceful, spiritual victory of Christ upon the cross.

Subject next week: What constitutes practical religion?

This Paper is issued every Monday, for the week ending at date.

Banner of Light.

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FOR TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION SEE SEVENTH PAGE.

LYNNER COLBY, EDITOR.

The Old.

Cleopatra wrote a treatise on Old Age, and showed that it was the most desirable part of a man's life. Theodore Parker preached a discourse on the same topic, and clearly made it out that the blessings and joys of human existence were nowhere so thickly strewn as along over this particular period. We call wiser excellent, in proportion to their age, virtue and years, in their case at least, going together. Old books are better than new ones—that is, if we have been used to thumbing their precious leaves well, and love to let our thoughts sit down, as it were, on the margin of some happy illustration, delicious sentiment, or pleasing conceit. No friends are equal, for value, to the old friends, whom Time has tried, and who are as fast and firm as the very rocks on our estates.

And so it is, the world through. Young America may pout, and scream, and kick, as much as he likes—he can change no hair of the living truth either white or black. We are no better men and women than our dear old ancestors were, merely because we are able to get about from town to town and city to city at the rate of from forty to fifty miles an hour. Speed has nothing to do with character. It may intensify enjoyment to take it at the rate and after the style denominated "fast," but the woe that comes afterward need not counterbalance all. Young America need not rail at his daddy so; he cannot become so wise as his father until he has lived as many solid and substantial years as his father; he cannot acquire the riches of experience, for which alone life is worth the having, without taking valuable time for it; he cannot have without paying for it, as Old America has been obliged to do before him.

There are sadly erroneous notions current respecting this most interesting and important matter of age. It was but a little time ago, when we heard a man under thirty declaring, with that dogmatic positiveness which he never could have at fifty, that no man ever did anything worth talking about or remembering, after he had passed thirty years! It made us almost shudder, to think how little that man actually knew: the kind of him looked excessively green and immature. He will live—some where—to pity himself for his own perfect ignorance.

Better far, to our way of thinking, the conclusions of those who continually assert that nothing and nobody is of particular virtue or value except as connected with age. Years ripen and perfect. Youth is no more than a promise of what may be: it takes time to test these countless promises, and prove that they were at all good. When we look over the history of remarked individuals, we are more forcibly reminded than ever of the truth, that only with matured powers can a man hope to accomplish anything. Webster was fifty years old when he gave utterance to that powerfully sublime piece of oratory in reply to South Carolina Hayne. Dr. Johnson acquired a new language after he had passed sixty. Even our own Dr. Holmes did not blossom out with such suddenness as a writer of prose fiction, until he was full fifty years old. Our Minister to the Court of St. James—Charles Francis Adams—had been quietly qualifying himself all his previous life for the responsible post to which his government summoned him. Irving wrote his inimitable Life of Washington, in five stout duodecimo volumes, after he was seventy. And we might extend the illustrations till our readers would tire of them.

But what we chiefly desired to do was, to warn our younger friends against the baseless and vulgar notion that nothing is worth speaking of unless it has been done by an immature person. Where the mysterious line lies which exactly divides vigor and ripeness—each essential to the perfection of any purpose or the completeness of any character—we do not pretend to assert; but we do declare, and for the benefit of youthful and unreflecting persons especially, that mere strength and animal spirits and courageous enterprise are of little account in themselves, unless they are yoked, closely and firmly, with the maturity and ripeness of judgment which are of prime importance in conducting measures to a successful issue. The New is of no value by itself, for it is raw and utterly untried: it delights us chiefly because it is so far from pleasant promises; but marry it lovingly with the Old, heap up its granaries with the harvests of other times, gathered by other or older men, and instantly its whole character undergoes a transformation before the eye, and it is the very top and glory of the world.

Labor and Prices.

For a novelty, prices go up now-a-days and labor goes up with them. It has not always been so. Generally, when all the commodities and even the necessities of life have been abundant, it has gone hard with the workman to obtain them, labor being the very last thing to advance, and simply because it never yet has been able to command its own wages and prices. It ought not to be so, but herein is one of the most atrocious arrangements of the whole social system. The large draft of able-bodied men for the army in what causes laboring men to be in such demand, and they will of course be in greater demand for next year's agricultural operations than they will be for the work of the winter. The harvests must be put in, and they must be tilled and afterwards gathered. All this requires muscular force. We shall have to have it next year, even if it is imported from abroad, which will be the case to a larger extent than we now think of. The armies must be fed, and those who stay at home must be fed; and it will take labor, and any quantity of it, to supply the demand. We are glad that there is such a prospect ahead, both for the husbandman and for those who would be glad to assist him in his work for good wages. Even war has its compensating advantages, just like any other evil.

A promise is a just debt which should always be paid, for honor and honesty are its security.

Shaking Faith.

We believe we can see it, every month more and more plain to all observers, that the mass of people are losing faith in past creeds and formalities, and looking around to see where they are to go for security. The pulpits no longer exercise their old authority—the legislators of the land are no longer deemed Solons in wisdom or Catos in integrity or Bacons in legislative greatness—what is old has lost all its value save what is truly within itself—and the popular heart and thought is reaching out for something which it has not, but which it instinctively feels it may soon have and ought to possess.

These symptoms have shown themselves, this long time; they are just now making a deeper impression on the popular mind than ever. There are thoughtful men in secret places, unknown, perhaps, to what is styled fame, who may be, nay, who certainly are pondering the future well, careless if they are to have a hand in the great work in reconstruction or not; and these are the very men who are yet to be called forth to perform the work required of them. Nature takes good care of her pets. Those whom she chooses to honor with her choice, she keeps carefully out of sight until she needs them, that they may be fresh, innocent, and inspired, when she calls them. We need have no fears that the right men will not be forthcoming at the right time.

But it signifies a great deal, that we see men asking one another now, what is going to be done next—what is to be the order of operations—what is going up and what is going down. It goes to show the fact that we are all adrift again, and must turn and discover newer and safer anchorages. It means, that the old has really passed away at length, and that the new is truly at hand. Men did not do this once; that they are putting themselves such questions seriously now, argues a change of sentiment that no common set of circumstances could possibly have wrought.

False Pleading.

It is sometimes amusing, sometimes annoying, and sometimes calculated to excite one's positive anger, to see how adroitly mean men will wrest words and deeds from their true and plain meaning. For instance, the New York Chamber of Commerce assembled and agreed to contribute, on their own behalf, a large amount in money and provisions for the suffering operatives of Lancashire in England. Other influences in New York aided to swell the amount of this voluntary offering to a noble figure, that could not, as everybody thought, fail to excite the liveliest feelings of friendship and gratitude in the hearts of the entire English people, and this very end it may actually have accomplished, for aught we know, as yet, to the contrary. But the London Times pretends to view the gift in a different light, and one which we need not say was the very last intended by the generous donors; that journal avers that this act on the part of the people of this country, is a proof, long needed, of our returning sense and fairness, and of the fact that at length we have come to appreciate, as it should be appreciated, the disposition of England toward us. Could assumption and impudence make a longer stride than that? We should think that the most wretched of the poor of Lancashire, or London, either, could see through the gloss of this sort of reasoning.

Of California.

Small and insignificant are the ideas generally entertained here in the East of the resources and wealth of the great State of California. It is a wonder, a perfect marvel, of productiveness. It is now discovered that the article of tea can be cultivated in certain sections of the State with remarkable success. Coffee has likewise been cultivated there, with considerable success. The raising of tobacco is attracting wide attention there; it is computed that it will yield at the rate of from six to seven hundred pounds per acre. Chinese sugar cane, both for forage and for molasses and sugar, has recently been raised with great success, experiments with it showing that it can be raised on all soils that will produce corn, at the rate of from fifteen to thirty tons per acre, or some twenty-five hundred pounds of sugar. The soil also produces hemp, flax, cotton, rice, and, indeed, all other staple articles for consumption and export. But California is peculiarly the land of the vine. Over three hundred varieties have been cultivated there with marked, if not astonishing, success. It is, furthermore, the granary of the Pacific hemisphere, producing more grain to the acre than any other soil on the continent. Besides all these, we have but to mention wool, barley, gold and silver, and the mind of the reader is filled with unspoken astonishment.

On Skates.

Glorious, is n't? Whirling in a maze of circles and curves—gliding like the wind over a surface where resistance is not felt—shores flying past as if they were winged, or running as if they were winged with ourselves—the wind of Winter flinging the cheeks and the ears, and kindling all the secret fires of the blood—earth, air, sky, all in a whirling swirl of a motion, indescribable and inspiring—what winter pleasure can be compared with it for life—what summer delights are its parallel? He was a benefactor of the race who first invented skates, even if he was a Dutchman, or a Russian, or a Tartar. Skating has many an advantage over ballooning, for it enables one to retain his claim to earth while he flies in the air and swims in the congealed water. There is no dancing that has such perfect "poetry of motion," as this. We need not urge everybody out into the air to try skating, since everybody seems hitherabouts, to be doing so already.

Be More Particular.

Subscribers who change their place of residence must be more particular, when they write us to have the direction of their papers changed, to state where the papers are directed at the time they write. It is impossible for us to find their address on our books, except at a great expenditure of time, as we have nothing but their names to guide us. The name of the town and the State should be given where the paper is last sent. For example: John Windie writes: "Please send my paper, the BANNER or LIGHT, to Cherry Valley, instead of Leicester," etc.

Evil Appetites.

Andrew Jackson Davis says with much truth: "The true man knows he has the will-power to place his foot upon the head of every evil appetite, that he can overcome and crush all devil within his constitution. Spiritualism comes beautifully to teach us, that we can purify all the chambers of hell; that the individual can cast out all that is evil, and unfold that spiritual harmony which shall cause his bodily wilderness to blossom as the rose."

A Deserving Officer.

LEUT. R. B. ALOOKE, the adopted son of Dr. John Scott, of 407 Fourth street, New York, was severely wounded at the battle of Fredericksburg. He was formerly a member of the celebrated Seventh Regiment, and accompanied that corps to Washington, on the 19th of April, 1861. When the Regiment returned, at the expiration of the brief period of enlistment, he was unwilling to withdraw from active service, and soon after joined the New York Fifty-Seventh. From that time until he was wounded, he was never absent for one hour from the post of duty and of danger. On the memorable 18th of December, he commanded Companies I and H, of the Fifty-Seventh Regiment, and was within two hundred yards of the enemy's works when he received a ball in his left arm which so shattered the bones as to render its amputation necessary. Four days after the battle, though greatly reduced by the loss of blood, he started for home with no attendant but a wounded companion, arriving on the evening of the 18th ultimo.

LEUT. ALOOKE has been repeatedly promoted, and always for gallant conduct in the field, without the exercise of the least outside influence in his behalf. As the loss of an arm renders it impossible for him to pursue the business to which he was formerly trained, his friends indulge the hope that the Government may be induced to give him a Lieutenant's Commission in the Regular Army.

The country furnishes no better material for a soldier. LEUT. ALOOKE is but 27 years old; he has a strong vital constitution, unimpaired in the least degree by exposure to the elements and the rough discipline of war; his muscular system is compact and equally fitted for vigorous exercises and great endurance. He has still his right arm left, and whilst that remains, and the Government requires his services, his sword will not rust in its scabbard. His record proves him to be worthy of further promotion. There lives no man with a braver heart. The bloody fields of Fair Oaks, of the seven days before Richmond, Antietam and Fredericksburg, attest his undimmed courage, his soldierly qualifications, and his entire devotion to the cause of his country. S. B. B.

Hawthorne on English Women.

In a recently published paper on a quiet English watering-place, Mr. Hawthorne goes into a "some, what minute description of the matured English woman, which is really as full of subtle humor as it is of rigid fact. He says he has heard a good deal, in times past, about English ladies retaining their beauty and freshness much longer than American ladies do, but it strikes him that an English lady of fifty is apt to become a creature less refined and delicate, so far as her physique goes, than anything that we Western people class under the name of woman. "She has an awful ponderosity of frame; not palpy, like the looser development of our few fat women, but massive with solid beef and streaky tallow; so that you inevitably think of her as made up of steaks and airloins!" He declares that her walk is elephantine; and that when she sits down, it is "on a great round space of her Maker's foot-stool, where she looks as if nothing could ever move her." The manhood of her personality impresses awe and respect, so that one gives her far more credit for moral and intellectual force than she can fairly claim. And, on the whole, she is overrated and overestimated, and we may as well begin to "look at home" for the perfection of female beauty, as to hunt up and down the highways and byways of Old England.

About Health.

Having that, we possess all. Money confers nothing save what an artificial society demands that one shall eat and wear, in order to be considered "respectable" and pass muster in its chosen circles. There is something priceless in Health. Ask the sick man, who has more money than he knows what to do with, what portion of it he would give to enjoy the appetite of the coalheaver, whom he hires at a dime an hour. Butler declares that health, to its utmost perfection, is seldom known after childhood, and we seriously question if it is. He declares, from his own positive and prolonged experience, that it cannot be enjoyed to the utmost by those who overwork the brain, or admit the sure wear and tear of the passions. There is nothing for this like youth—the old youthfulness that used to dwell in Arcadian scenes, never wearing itself out with false or artificial demands, nor troubled itself about a future which would not begin to compare with the blissful present. In perfect health, there is happiness in the mere sense of animal being. The joy diffuses itself gently around one's existence like an aroma, not to be described by pen or lips of mortal.

Getting Along.

We are glad to hear that the railroad interests of the country are all getting along so swimmingly. The money-writer for a leading commercial paper in New York, says that there is likely to be an early development in regard to the railroads of the country, that will take the public by surprise. It is already known that, during the current year, the gross receipts of most roads are largely in excess of last year's in some cases, enormously so. It is known, also, that some of them are getting higher rates for the same service than heretofore, being all the way from fifteen to twenty-five per cent. But the development which, it is insisted, will tend to surprise the public, is the reduction in running expenses. It is providential—though that means, too, according to the laws of things—that just at this time of our national trial we should be so blessed with the substantial means and instrumentalities which help make a nation great. Labor is in large demand, and will continue to be called for yet more urgently. Trade is good; railways are thriving and busy; and we ought to be entirely thankful.

Mr. H. B. Storer

Lectured in this city, on Sunday, Jan. 4th, to good audiences of Spiritualists and others, in Lyceum Hall. All listened, with marked attention and evident satisfaction, to his able discourses, which were delivered in an earnest and eloquent manner, upon the subjects of "The Power of Ideas," [which we shall print in our next,] and "The Missionary Spirit."

We wish to say, in this connection, to our friends in places where Mr. Storer has not lectured, that he is one of the most able, eloquent and reliable advocates of the spiritual philosophy now in the land. No Society will regret having employed him, we feel confident. We hope, therefore, that our friends will avail themselves of his services. He may be addressed at 30 Pleasant street, Boston.

New Publications.

THE GORILLA HUNTERS: A Tale of the Wilds of Africa. By R. M. Ballantyne. Published by Crosby & Nichols, 117 Washington street, Boston, 1862. This is a beautiful new book of four hundred pages, handsomely illustrated with life-like engravings. It is characterized by the author's wide reputation for writings that are useful and interesting to youthful minds. In his own clear and interesting way he describes Central Africa, and portrays in glowing colors exciting and daring encounters with wild beasts, and also with the most ferocious man-monkey, the Gorilla. Every boy should have a copy of this book to add to the series already written by this author. The whole series are full of useful information and thrilling incidents, and are for sale by the same publishers.

THE RAVEN SPIRITS, for December, published in Paris by Allan Kardec, contains: The Causes of Obsession and its Remedies; Spiritualism at Rochepot; Is Spiritualism possible? Charles Fourier, Louis Jourdan, and the Reincarnation; The Lodge and the Parlor; Study of the Spiritual Customs; Spirit Dislocations; Magnetically Dispersary.

We have also received from the same publisher, "THE VOYAGE SPIRITS" for 1862. It contains: Observations upon the state of Spiritualism; Instructions given in the different assemblies; Instructions upon the formation of assemblies and societies, and a system of rules for their use.

This is a very interesting pamphlet, and gives an accurate account of M. A. Kardec's visits to the different spiritual societies in France during the year 1862, and shows the rapid increase of Spiritualism. We quote the following:

"On our first visit to Lyons, in 1860, there were only some four hundred believers; the next year there were five or six thousand; and this year it is almost impossible to count them, numbering some twenty-five or thirty thousand. At Bordeaux the number has doubled within the last year."

By these figures we see that France is in no way behind us in making converts to the cause.

SOMEONE'S LOGGERS. By Charles Dickens. This is Dickens's last Christmas story, and pronounced a good one. The Illustrated News says it is being read by half London. It is all about "Somebody's Loggery" having been left "till called for," and manuscripts being found in "somebody's" boots, portmanteau, &c., &c. It is conceived in the happiest vein of Dickens's humor, and is told by the lips of Christopher, a head-waiter of renown. For sale by A. Williams & Co.

We are under obligations to J. F. Hartley, Esq., of the U. S. Treasury Department, for a copy of the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury.

THE AMERICAN ODD FELLOW.—This is one of our most welcome exchanges. It is the official organ of the Order of Odd Fellows in North America, and is ably conducted by John W. Orr, 75 Nassau street, New York. The editor is a man thoroughly imbued with progressive principles, and wide awake to the things of the present day. The Journal contains much miscellaneous matter of general interest and of a high character. Among its frequent contributors we find the names of our and everybody's friend, Prof. S. B. Britten. The monthly is published for \$1.00 a year, thirty-two pages, and illustrated.

Trying the Taxes.

This is a new experience with the American people. We have been without the enjoyment of this luxury all our lives. Our fathers meant that we should get along with as little loss as possible, and planned matters so as to secure our relief from such trials as long as possible. Now we shall have a new caller at our doors. The new comer is to be the tax-gatherer—no popular personage in any part of the world. Taxes will be higher, living will be higher, clothing will be higher, and taxes will be laid upon every imaginable item that enters into the consumption of our national family. But we feel that we are paying our money, and putting forth our extraordinary exertions for an object which is worth a thousand times more than them all. It is the cheap price which we pay for our national liberty—for feeding the torch that is steadily to illumine the world. Were we to have gone on as we were going, making money and spending it on the mere show of life, everything like nobleness and heroism would soon have gone out of fashion with us, and perhaps become extinct; but now we have hope, because none of us can make fortunes as fast as they have been made in the past, or spend them with the same vain and senseless prodigality.

Jealousy among Literary Men.

Why is it that a person who gives his days and nights to a pursuit that is ennobling and redemptive, should still be full of a low and unworthy jealousy toward others of his own profession? Why are not wood-sawyers and hod-carriers jealous? Why do they not indulge in a habit of degrading one another's work, and running down one another's character generally? It passes our understanding altogether. To harbor, to nurse, to be fully inspired with, and to finally give utterance to, liberal thoughts and generous sentiments—to be grammared with a variety of reading—to commune with cultivated minds—to be poetic, of a graceful and genial turn of soul, and possessed of ideas that others scarcely have time to entertain fully—how is it that such a professional habit combines to make those who follow it testy, jealous, low, and thoroughly disagreeable to themselves and everybody else, passes our comprehension. Authors are generally envious. Perhaps they do not take the fresh air in large enough doses. They need to shake off their moroseness, which collects upon them like gray moss, and become of sound digestion, like common people.

What Weather?

The delightful weather vouchsafed to us, on and about the opening of the year, is unparalleled. It makes one think of Spring, as he pushes aside his curtains in the morning, and instinctively listens for the blithe song of the bipedbird. They had no weather for their four or five days' bloody work at Fredericksburg, however; it seems wicked to contemplate the two facts together. The old saying is—"A green Christmas makes a fat graveyard," but what a bright, cheerful, and spring-like New Year's will do, we are not just now advised. Reasoned as we all are, and more deeply so with the passing of every day, by the great events of this year, it is a surprising instance that the "Nature" to know that the new-born year brings its life smiles as fresh as if they came with the "merry" of pretty birds, and gleam and babble of little brooks.

Message Department.

The messages which the communications under this heading are given are held at the office of the Editor, No. 117, East Broadway, Room No. 8, (up stairs), every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, and are free to the public. The doors are closed precisely at three o'clock, and no one is admitted after that time.

Each message in this Department of the Banner is given by the spirit who speaks it, and is not a mere transcript of the words of a human being. The messages are not published on account of literary merit, but as a means of spiritual communion to those who may recognize them.

These messages go to show that spirits carry the characteristics of their earth life to that beyond—whether good or evil.

We ask the reader to receive no doctrine put forth by spirits in these columns that does not comport with his reason. Each expression is much of truth as he perceives—no more.

Our Circles.

Notice.—As these circles, which are free to the public, subject us to much expense, those of our friends who take an interest in them, and desire to have them continued, are solicited to aid us in a pecuniary point of view, or we fear we shall be obliged to suspend them altogether. Any sum, however small, that the friends of the cause may feel inclined to remit, will be gratefully acknowledged.

We are fully aware that much good to the cause has been accomplished by these free circles, as many persons who have been awakened as sleepers, now believe in the Spiritual Philosophy, and are made happy in mind thereby. Hence we hope to be sustained in our efforts to promulgate the great truths which are pouring in upon us from the spirit-world or the benefit of humanity.

MESSAGES TO BE PUBLISHED.

Tuesday, Dec. 30.—Invocation; Questions and Answers; Gen. Felix K. Zollinger; Florence Reed, to her parents; Philip Quinlan.

Thursday, Jan. 1.—Invocation; Questions and Answers; Gen. Villeneuve of South Carolina; Leonard Baldwin, civil engineer, to Gen. Lee; John Dixon, to his mother in New Bedford; Edward Bonner to his father, Captain of the rebel steamer Alabama.

Monday, Jan. 5.—Invocation; Stephen A. Douglas; Benj. Croxon, of Baltimore, Md.; Clara Pillow to her father, Gen. Pillow; David Daniels, to his father, in Danvers, Mass.

Tuesday, Jan. 6.—Invocation; Questions and Answers; Jane Alden, to her uncle and aunt in New York; Miss S. Davis to his uncle in Boston; Benj. Powers of 10th Indiana Regiment, Co. O.

Invocation.

Oh, ye Holy and True, to thee we would commend ourselves and utterances. Smile upon us when we do right; frown upon us when we do wrong; for by thy smile we shall gather strength, and by thy frown we are powerless to do wrong. We seek thee much for the sake of humanity and our own selves, that we, in common with the great multitude that people the earth, may be enabled to end up renewed songs of thanksgiving to the Great Author of Life.

Nov. 25.

A Natural World prior to the Spiritual.

"Must there not have been a natural world before there could have been a spiritual world?"

This question we have been desired to speak upon this afternoon. Biblical history tells us of a class of beings called angels, who are said to have had an existence prior to the formation of this earth, or any other world. It tells us that this distinct race of individuals or celestial beings were of divine origin; that they were angels living in the celestial atmosphere of Jehovah, and were entirely exempt from Nature. Geology tells us a different story. Now geology and ancient religion seem to be at war with each other upon this subject, and we shall presently determine which is right and which wrong upon this point. But we cannot do this unless we lay aside all erroneous opinions, whether they belong to religion or pertain to things in the mundane state.

Biblical history also tells us this earth was made in six days, and that it is little more than six thousand years old. Geology proclaims this must be false; for we can prove to the mind of man that this fair earth is not only six thousand years old, but is six hundred times ten thousand years old. And when we go back even as far as that, we find that we have still evidences around us, above us, and beneath us, proclaiming that that which you have received as God's infallible word, could not be so, for God or Nature was never known to speak an untruth.

"Must there not have been a natural world before there could have been a spiritual world?" All things spiritual are born of Nature, or have outgrown the material world. The spirit is not ashamed to own that this material or natural world was once its own dwelling place or home, and that only through a vast variety of changes it has come to the celestial world. And why should it be? Is not this beautiful kingdom, or natural world, as divine, as spiritual, as the celestial world? Surely it is; and we believe there must have been a natural world, ere there could have been an individualized spiritual world. Now you are not to understand that life does not refer to spirit, but life and spirit are, in one sense, the same. Life is an impersonal spirit, and spirit is personified life, or individualized life, and it is just as necessary for the spirit to pass through life in mortal before going to the spirit-world as it is for the seed to rot in the ground ere it can come forth in beauty that is apparent to your external senses. You, as individuals, are dependent upon each other in the same way this world is dependent upon the spirit world for its existence. There is a mutual dependence throughout all Nature, and science teaches us that the crude materials—gases, solids and fluids composing this material world—are the basis of everything spiritual.

Now if we are to suppose that the spirit-world existed prior to the formation of this earth, then we may as well believe that we can command yonder glowing sun to come down from its place in God's firmament and do our bidding. There is a fixed and immutable law governing through all Nature. No miracles does she perform, but slowly and step by step she accomplishes her great work; and though a thousand arduous rise and proclaim that your earth was made in six days, and that your earth is at the present time but six thousand years old, you should rise and proclaim them all liars. Humanity has too long called its bark on the bosom of the sea of religious error, and thousands of minds have shut themselves up from the grand revelations of Nature, simply because they did not dare to launch out and seek for themselves. They said, "We have a belief handed down from the past, and 'Sacred' is written upon it, and therefore it is our duty to accept it without questioning the truth of it. Who says you are in duty bound to receive this traditional belief, without first weighing it in the balance of your own common sense and reason? Why, your surroundings, the influences of the world in which you live, have brought you up to this standard of intellect. These conditions of your outward nature, these external influences have thus far kept you in error and darkness; but the Almighty Spirit is forever striving to lift you out of the night of ignorance, up into the starry realm of intellect, and to give you those gifts you have denied yourself."

"Must there not have been a natural world before there could have been a spiritual world?" Travel with us in thought only, if you please, to the Old World. Stand with us upon the plains of Bethlehem, and behold, according to Biblical history, the conditions of time. Take particular notice of the minds at that time dwelling upon the earth, and follow, step by step, through the vista of ages, up to the present day. Take special notice of the changes constantly going on from time to time, of the progress of civilization, and then you will declare there must have been a natural world before there could have been a spiritual world.

We have ever sought to lead weak humanity out from the dark mazes of religious error, ever sought to give them the strength of will to work out their own salvation, and to come into a condition of peace and happiness. It is no use for you to rely upon Christ's intercession, for you will sooner or later find you must turn to yourself for strength to work out your own salvation.

Life, we have said, was an impersonal spirit, and spirit is an individualization of life, and we believe that a spirit cannot become individualized except through a human organism. We believe a spirit cannot take upon itself a human organism until it has passed through all the various stages of animal life; step by step it must come up the scale and unfold itself in every possible variety, ere it is fit to take upon itself a human organism. And there never was an individual spirit abiding in spirit-life that had not previously lived and unfolded itself through humanity. Angels there may have been, angels there are, walking in human forms, but of the vast company of individuals peopling the earth at the present time, the majority of them fail to perceive the good that is everywhere around them, fail to understand that it is only by their own efforts that peace and happiness can be theirs in the future. And thus they have prayed for a Jesus of Nazareth, a something upon which they could lean in their weakness, and through whose mediation they hope to be saved.

Oh, poor benighted humanity, we would lift you up out of the darkness that surrounds you; we would open wide the volume of Nature—not the volume that could give you no light, no wisdom, but that which is spread before you upon all sides. Oh, study this sacred volume. It is the only sacred one we know, and we take pleasure in presenting it to you for your perusal, for hath not the Infinite Power presented it to you? Is not the Almighty Spirit of Truth and eternal Reform constantly urging upon you "to seek and ye shall find"? Oh, long upon you "to seek and ye shall find" the great truths to study down into the lowest strata of animal life, and continue your researches until we shall be enabled to shake hands with you in that celestial kingdom that has its basis in the natural.

Nov. 25.

Captain Samuel J. Locke.

I wish it was in my power to give my earthly friends and relations some little knowledge of this beautiful spirit-world, but I am almost powerless, as though I was taking a step in the dark, for I know that my friends are not at all acquainted with this Spiritual Light. They hug their religion so closely to their hearts, that I am afraid I shall have hard work to take it away from them and give them a newer and more beautiful belief.

I have been here since last March. I lived seventy-one years on earth, and I saw something of life in those seventy-one years. But oh, it was a mere movie in comparison with what I've seen since last March, for I have learned more since I came to the spirit-world than I learned in all the seventy-one years I was upon the earth. I was disappointed when I was told that I must not expect to realize what I believed on earth. Oh, I felt terribly, but when I came to understand my condition in the spirit-world, I saw at once that had I realized my expectations in regard to heaven, my experience would have been like that of the little child when it desired to possess itself of the candle and got burned, I am sure I should not have been content to have lived in heaven all the time. Our active, untrusting and restless spirits—just think of their being shut up in a heaven that is fenced in, and compelled to sing songs of thanksgiving and praise all the time! Now, if God is a God of progress, I don't believe he'll ever oblige me to do any such thing. Not but what I like singing and music, but I feel that I am a creature of variety and change, that I can't be contented to dwell in one place forever. We are like children who do not know what is best for them; and if our God were to give us what we wished for, we should be the most dissatisfied and unhappy creatures it were possible to conceive of. It's well we don't receive all we ask for, for if we did we should not half appreciate God's gifts, nor feel as well satisfied with his care of us as we do at present.

I lived in Rye, New Hampshire. They called me Captain Samuel J. Locke. I was chosen to represent that locality for two years before my death. I shall be known, but not for the religious opinions I had vacillated here to day; but I would invite the attention of my friends to truth. They need not feel afraid to shake hands or to walk through life with it, and though it sweeps away their foundations of error, it will give them a newer and firmer basis upon which to build their faith hereafter.

I made up my mind as soon as I got free from my body, and knew what I was, and what I was destined for—that I'd return to earth and enlighten poor and ignorant humanity. I feel as if I'd got a great mission to perform, and but little strength to do it with; but we are told that sufficient unto the hour shall be our knowledge or strength. I want my friends to seek out some place where I can come and speak with them privately. I may be obliged to take away their Bible; but if I do, I'll pledge myself to give them a better one. I've nothing more to say to-day, Mr. Chairman. [Did you mean to say that you were a representative?] I did.

Nov. 25.

Horace Mason.

I'm from Hagerstown, Md. [What State?] Maryland. My father's name—does it make any difference? [All are welcome here.] My name was Horace Mason. My father's name is Alexander. I was fourteen years old when I died. I ran away from home, went to Frederick, where I joined your army. I'm no seer, stranger. My father is; my mother is n't. My mother has suffered a great deal since my death, and I hope to get a letter across to her.

My father said he hoped I'd gone to hell. I ain't there. I got killed, but I don't see any hell. My father's fond of reading, and gets all the Northern papers he can, and I thought perhaps he might get yours. [I'll send a copy of the paper containing your letter to Hagerstown, if you think it would be likely to reach him.] I think it would. You may tell him I forgive him for saying that he hoped I'd gone to hell, that I'm very well off, and I think if he'd stop a minute and reflect, and not think too much of the pay he gets for thinking as he does, he'd be better off. Mr. Stranger, if my father didn't think he should get pretty well paid for being seer, he wouldn't think the way he does now. I don't want to say it, but it's true.

I'm not sorry I went away from home and joined your army, except on my mother's account. She gave me her blessing and all the money she could spare, and let me go to join the Federal Army. I lost my life by doing so, but I want you to tell her I'm happy, and would n't come back any way now if I could. [Does your mother know of your passing away?] Yes, sir. My father says he don't want to hear anything about me, and he hopes I'll never trouble him any more. I took my time, stranger, when I was here. I guess I'll take it now, and go wherever I've a mind to. Humph, my father says that it was a good thing that I did as I did; that I never was obedient in anything, and he never could do anything with me. Well, stranger, that may be true, but there may have been some blame on his part as well as mine.

Well, tell him I'm not in hell, as he hoped I'd be, and if he wants to feel as well satisfied with himself hereafter, as I do with myself, he'd better turn around—well, I may as well out with it—and treat me as I want to, and if he don't like it he can do the other thing. You know what that is, stranger, don't you? [Yes.] I don't care; I ain't going away without saying I'd like to, when there's no knowing whether I'll ever have a chance to come again. You don't blame me for that, do you? [No, indeed.] That's true; if he turns around and treats me better he'll be better off himself. You've got my age, ain't you? [Yes.] Because my mother might think it was my other brother who was two years older than me. [Is he with you in the spirit-world?] No, but he's away from home, and mother might think he's dead. But I've told you my name, so that will make that matter all right. Call upon my seer father for pay. [I'll. He'll pay me in time, I've no doubt.] Uncle Sam may postpone some of his traps before he knows it, I don't suppose you care for that.

Nov. 25.

Address to America.

Oh, America, it is midnight with thee! Darkness hath covered the face of thy mountains, and thy valleys are red with the blood of thy sons. Oh, America, what hast thou done that the Infinite Father hath so passed judgment upon thee? America! fairest child of earth, why hast thou arrayed thyself in filthy garments, instead of the wedding garments of Purity and Justice, which were prepared for thee? Oh, America! we fear thou hast deeply sinned. We fear thy God is weighing thee in the balance of eternal judgment, and will find thee wanting.

Oh America! child of our love, we would offer in thy behalf a prayer to our God and thy God for strength in this hour of your trial. And what answer we ask of the Father for thee, we cannot ask that thou mayest not receive judgment. Oh, Father, we look into the future, and we behold thee mirrored in thy beautiful creations; we behold thee mirrored in eternity, and despite the darkness and the sorrow that surrounds thine earthly children, we perceive, oh, Divine Wisdom, that thou art doing all things well. Yet because we are still allied to humanity, and must ever be attracted to them, oh our Father, we send up our petitions and our prayers in their behalf unto thee at this time.

Oh our God, visit in mercy, thy sons and daughters, who are mourning the loss of dear ones; who are lifting their prayers unto thee for strength and comfort in this their hour of grief. Oh, may they be enabled to see the messengers of spirit-life; that they may be able to minister to their necessities; oh, may their eyes be opened, their ears unsealed, their every sense be opened to the influences of spirit-life. And may they thus be enabled to know, oh God, that they have sinned against thy law, and thus be able to bear the punishment indicted upon them. Oh, our Father, we know thou hast no need of our prayers at this time, but we feel that thy children have need of thy forgiveness, and must rise upon the wings of prayer and touch the hem of thy garments.

Oh, Spirit of the Hour! baptize us anew with Divine Inspiration, and give unto thine earthly children that wisdom which thou alone hast the power to impart. And thus may they learn that they are wedded to one another, and are, and ever must be, inseparably bound together in all the relations of life, whether material or spiritual. And to thee, oh our Father, in the midst of the darkness of the hour, in the midst of the wild clashing of arms and ideas, we lift our souls in thanksgiving, for we know that of this midnight shall come the morning of brighter joys; and that this people shall rise Phœnix-like from the ashes of their own desolation and turn their faces unto thee, oh Holy One. Oh God of the Modern and Ancient! we send our prayers unto thee in behalf of all thy children, whether rich or poor, low or high; bond or free, oppressor or oppressed. In behalf of all, Almighty Justice, we pray, and we know thou wilt answer our petition.

Dec. 29.

The Present Hour.

My friends, the present hour is pregnant with great events; and although many of you are slumbering, or seem to be slumbering, paying little or no heed to the great changes that are continually going on around you, nevertheless you are living in a transition state, and those who are wide awake are feeling the influences of the present hour, and in spite of yourselves are being drawn into the great whirl of events, and are doing something of the work God desires you to do.

You are about to enter upon a new era; you are standing upon the threshold of the Temple of Reform, and although you enter it through bloodshed and war, enter it you must, for the decrees of the Almighty have gone forth, and you must obey it. Whom you have chosen as your leader, hath taken the greatest step toward inaugurating this great reform that has ever been taken since you were born among the nations of the earth. Many suppose that your Chief Magistrate hath rushed heedlessly toward the taking of this great step, but this is not so; for he has carefully considered all the pros and cons of the case, and has come to the decision that God Almighty desired he should. But while your Chief Magistrate carries in his right hand the sword with which to cut off all heads of error that may come in his way, he is nevertheless weak. He needs your strength; he needs your prayers, and that vital force that you as individuals have the power to impart to him, in order that he may not be slow in performing the duties imposed upon him by his God and countrymen.

Do you know that your feet are even now being moved to enter the Temple of Liberty for the first time since your existence as a nation? True, upon your banners you have written Liberty, and have inscribed it on your walls. True, you have declared to the world that you were a free and independent nation, but all the while you have been living a lie to yourselves and to God, and have unconsciously been fostering in your midst, a serpent, which has at last turned and stung you. It is well that you suffer, for by suffering you are to learn how to dwell nearer to God, which is to live in harmony with yourselves.

In looking broadcast over your beautiful continent, we perceive deep sorrow here and there, and a degree of ignorance prevailing among the people of the South, hardly to be expected in a country like yours. But we behold also a very striking contrast of frivolity upon the part of the people of the North. We are sorry to say it, but it is true. Feeling sure, as you do, that victory must turn on your side, sooner or later, and that God would eventually give you peace, you have too many of you been slumbering, or rushing wildly on, careless of the misery and woe, and of the broken hearts scattered all around you. But the time will come when, both these careless and slumbering ones must awake to the realities of their situation. The voice of the Angel Gabriel will come to sound in their ears, and he will sound it to them as individuals in a way that will not be mistaken, so that no one will believe that he is calling another instead of himself. And like Adam, the fallen Adam of old, he will call for you, and you must answer him.

In a few days a new spiritual banner is to be flung to the breeze. We prophesy that it will be drenched with blood, and that where you have lost your thousands, you shall lose your ten thousands, and where your pockets have heretofore been touched, your souls will in the future be touched. You may ask, is it well to unfurl this banner at the expense of so much life and bloodshed? We answer, it is. This new banner is the banner of Liberty. It comes in time, and though it is drenched with the blood of America's fairest and best sons, yet it is well that your leader fling it to the breeze, and show to the world that you are at last a free people. But it is only through woe, by probing your sores to their very cores, that you will ever learn wisdom. Your freedom as a nation can never be achieved, but by plunging you into the vortex of individual reform, that you may come up from thence a better people.

We beseech you to devote yourselves to prayer and earnest thought for the next ten days. Oh, leave your scenes of frivolity, and dwell for the time in the midst of the angels, who stand anxiously watching your every movement. Oh, leave your couches, where slumber comes, and go forth into the world, to labor where duty calls, that you, as a nation may rise, and not fall. We beseech of you, if you would write your name upon the page of Spiritual History, to do this, and let your whole soul be thrown out for one purpose, namely, that of being weighed in the balance of Eternal Judgment, and not found wanting. We commend you to God, and to do this, is to commend you to your own common sense. Look around you and behold the spirits of the departed, and while you look upon that vast throng who once peopled your fair earth, who loved your continent and are attracted to it, behold them in tears in your behalf, and surely, surely you will then come up to duty.

Dec. 29.

Lieutenant Benjamin Gaines.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am from South Carolina. [A rebel?] Yes, I am, and I stand, at present at least, upon the Abolitionists' platform. I am aware that I speak through lips that sometimes ad-

vocate one side, sometimes another. I have been told we each and all have the privilege of speaking according to our own desires here, I suppose it is necessary to give some facts concerning myself, by which I may be known. [Are not your friends acquainted with this method of return?] They are not. I am a novice in this thing myself, having never attempted to come before.

My name was Benjamin Gaines. I was wounded at the battle of Shiloh, and died some five days after that. I held the rank of Lieutenant. Previous to entering the Confederate Army I was a lawyer by profession; living most of the time in Charleston. The speaker who preceded me spoke to you with reference to your President's Emancipation Proclamation. He said you would enter this new Temple of Reform through great bloodshed. I believe he spoke the truth, for so sure as it goes into effect, and I have every reason to believe it will, the contest will be a severe one. I am not disposed to declare that it is either right or wrong for your President to do this. I have thrown my all into the scales, and am lost so far at least.

I now have a son in the army, with whom I should be pleased to commune. He was wounded in your last battle of Fredericksburg, and I believe is at present in a condition where I shall be able to reach him. [Is your son at Richmond?] No, he is not. He is about four miles this side of Richmond at present. There are many things I desire to say to him, which I might like to say to him aside from coming to this place, and giving my ideas in this public way. [There are mediums I dare say in his vicinity, which he can consult.] I presume there are, but I am not able to dictate any way or means for him to pursue in regard to this matter. He is young, scarce seventeen, and is at present even more to commune with his father, as he is too far removed from this place for my message to reach him, except I do so through my son. Should he ever return to her, I desire him to inform her of my coming here; that I am comparatively happy; that this spiritual life is not what I expected to find it; that I for one am not at all satisfied with the course my party have recently pursued in regard to this war, nor would I wish to advise either for or against it. What I desire most is the privilege of privately communing with my son. I cannot say I am content in my present situation, for there are many things left unperformed upon the earth which I should have attended to, had I in the least degree anticipated my death; but we all think we shall live, you know, sir. [The feeling is a natural one.]

I have Union friends living at the North, who suppose I was pressed into the Confederate service. In this they are mistaken. I took up arms against the Federal Government of my own free will; gave my all to the cause I espoused, and I may say I gave my life of my own free will, although the latter is not true, as I tried hard to save my life to the last. I should be happy to commune with those friends at the North, and with one in particular, who bears the name of Price. He was a graduate of West Point, an intimate friend of my brother, and a strong Unionist, as the course adopted by him since the breaking out of this war will serve to show. [Can you give his initials?] There are many persons by the name of Price at the North. His name—let me see. Give me your patience a few moments. [Certainly.] It is Jason—Jason T. Price.

I am sad, sir, and cannot avoid it. I thought I would do the best I could toward coming here to-day. [Do you wish a paper directed to your son?] No, I do not. I have been told that great efforts are being made by those who have charge of such matters, to forward our letters to their destination, but inasmuch as I do not know how long my son will remain in his present position, I would not think it well to ask you to send to him. [Very well.]

I am known, sir, in South Carolina. I am no stranger there, and should my message fall into the hands of most any one across the lines, I am confident it would be recognized. May I ask, is it possible for me to visit you again, should I desire to do so? [Yes.]

I may be well for me to state in what manner I was wounded. I was wounded in the right shoulder and arm, and had my arm amputated at the elbow. Erysipelas and inflammation ensued, which extended to the lung, and from thence to the brain. The work was very rapid, and I believe it was only five days after I received the wound that I found myself in the world of spirit.

Dec. 29.

Jane Van Buren.

I thank God I was taken before this dark hour. I have been anxiously striving to find a way by which I could open communication with my kindred living upon the earth. But the truth is, they are in darkness, total darkness, and what is worse than all, they seem to be afraid that God will send them a ray of light; this goes to prove, I think, that there's something with my friends that's afraid of light. They don't know it, but it really is, but so it is.

I have been away from earth since the 10th of July, 1858. I died at Kinderhook. My name was Jane Van Buren, and I was the sister of the man who was once President of the United States. Now I come back, after having passed through all these years spiritually, to my friends, and ask to be received, that I may do them good. I know that I've shaken off the Church, that I've no longer any belief in the heaven and hell which the religion of earth teaches, but I know, thanks be to God, that I shall be able to make myself known to my friends. If they will meet me in my old home, in a way that no power on earth can gainsay.

Now I've a way to perform for them, and there's but one member of our family that is in the least degree acquainted with this Spiritual Philosophy, and he's afraid the light will shine upon him. He's afraid God will open the door, and that some one of his departed friends will come in and commune with him. Yes, God has opened the door, and poor Jane has come in. Oh, thanks be to his holy name!

You will please say that I earnestly desire to be welcomed among my kindred, that I may make my identity positive to them, and then I will do them good. They have the way and means with them. God has not withheld his gifts from them, but has been very liberal. In the few short and uncomely sentences—if I may so call them—which I have given here this afternoon, I feel satisfied there is something by which I shall be recognized, something that will go further than my name, age, time of death, and those things that belong to time. Farewell, sir.

Dec. 29.

Isaac Sumner.

Ahem! A woman, hey? [It seems to be.] It's tough work, General. [I presume you'd find it hard work to go through with the manual in that uniform.] I'd try it, General, but I'm afraid I'd fail. What's the password? Come, tell us, I'm green, and don't know what to do. [I suppose you came here to manifest to your friends, didn't you?] Yes, that's so. [Give such facts, then, as will enable you to be recognized by your friends.]

Well, to begin with, I'm from Jersey City. My name was Isaac Sumner. I was twenty-two, and something little better than three months over. I belonged to the Ninth New Jersey. I've got not a great deal of your gift of talk, stranger. [Can you give the name of the company you were in, and your captain's name?] Company C. Let me see; our captain's name was Case, I'm pretty sure. [You wish to speak with your relatives, do you not?] Yes, my wife first, and then my father, and mother afterwards. You want these things you call tests, don't you? [Not for ourselves, but for your friends, in order that they may recognize you.]

I was married just three weeks before I went off; that one, [a low whistle.] You've got a crowd of rebs here, sir; well, as big as I care to meet, but it's nothing to me so long as it goes down with you. I suppose you invite them here. [Are they not your brothers?] Not by a good deal; you can't make me believe that doctrine. It's all right so long as they are where they are, but if they were where I was once on the earth, it might not be so well for them. [Here the medium assumed a fighting attitude.]

I'll be civil, just as civil as I can, be to them. [That's right.]

Well, won't you be kind enough to tell my wife—Caroline is her name—that I'm here to-day, and a little unhappy—just a trifle or so. And about that affair that troubles her, about my father and mother's taking those things that rightfully belonged to her, tell her to let them have them, for they are worth fighting about, and there's no use in her giving herself any more trouble about them. And tell her to go over to New York and I will meet her there. Who knows what place to go to—and I'll tell her just what to do. And about my suffering, never mind that. I've got over it now, though it was pretty tough to bear for a time.

Now, General, what's the password, supposing I should want to come here again? [Only to repeat the truth.] Well, I'll do the best I can.

Dec. 29.

Written for the Banner of Light.

LEAF FROM THE BATTLE-FIELD.

BY ANNIE EMMERSON.

A dark green leaf, with the brownish tinge,
Of the early autumn night,
And an hundred veins intersecting it
With a network soft and bright;
A dear hand gathered and sent it here
From a twice fought field of woe.
God grant his blood may not stain the red,
Where the Southern catalpas grow.

It is more than a year since he left his home,
In New England's rugged clime—
Since he saw the slope of her spring-green hills,
And heard her Sabbath bells chime.
But he knows when he curls his night-black horse
To the thrilling bugle's tone,
Though friends are far and dangers near,
He knows he is not alone.

He hears the oath and the rhinal jest,
He lists to the cannon's roar,
But plainer than all to his spirit comes
A voice from the further shore—
A voice that whispers, "My boy! my boy!"
"Bove the order to 'Charge!' the foe—
Or the gentle words of the old time love,
Recalling the long ago.

Oh! strange wild fancies come thronging up,
At sight of this simple leaf!
A vision of joy when the war is done—
Or, darker, of possible grief!
But safest wath hath our soldiers brave,
Mid the perils of camp and fight,
In the faithful trust of dear friends at home,
And the household prayer at night.

Experience with a Spirit Medium.

It is more than probable that all we witnessed last evening on the occasion of a visit of Mr. C. H. Foster to our home, has been experienced by many of the readers of this paper, while it is not less true, probably, that many others never have seen anything of the kind, do not care to, and possibly may object to any recitation of the facts made apparent to us. Mr. Foster, we will state, is what is known as a "test-medium." He is equally well known in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and the larger Western cities, and likewise has a European reputation. He is now in Lowell for the first time, and has taken rooms, for the present week, at the American House. Last evening, (as we have already intimated,) was spent by him with us, and so far as we could see he was independent of all artificial appearances and obnoxious to all he did. Two gentlemen besides himself and a lady, took seats around a table with Mr. Foster, making five in all. He proposed to give what is known as the alphabet test, which he did in several ways. The names of half a dozen persons written by each one present (excepting Mr. Foster,) upon slips of paper, which were rolled up tightly, so as to conceal every mark upon them, and all were placed together in confusion in the centre of the table. After ascertaining that spirits were present, an ordinary alphabet was taken, and the person holding it commenced going through it, touching first A, and so following on till at a certain letter three raps would respond to the touch; in this way the name of a person was spelt out. Then the person holding the alphabet touched, one after the other, with his pencil, the little pellets of paper in which were written the names referred to; three raps designated the right one, which was drawn aside, when Mr. Foster, who all this time had been allowed to see the alphabet, and who had not touched the pellets seized a pencil, and with the quickness of thought, wrote the name that was indicated the paper, and passed it to the person who had deposited it on the table, and to whom alone of all the company it was known. This was repeated several times.

Another means was adopted to show that there could be no sympathy between Mr. Foster and ourselves in these experiments. We wrote the names of two persons, both long since dead, folded and rolled them in such a manner that when they were put in with the others, we could not tell them again. The gentleman on our left took the alphabet, and readily spelled out the names of the persons who had written, then selected it from the collection of names on the table; and finally Mr. Foster repeated the name, gave the month, year, and the disease of which he had died, all correctly. Fifteen minutes later, when an effort was made by any one to receive intelligence from disembodied spirits, Mr. Foster, and only called the first name and the first syllable of the second name of the person whose name we had deposited on the table in the second paper ball, which he had not seen or touched. The name was an odd one, and had been indistinctly written. In this way he also told the name of one of the gentleman's brothers; that he was drowned, and where, and when. Verbal questions were also answered. Questions committed to writing (sometimes half a dozen at a time) were on the table, folded so that they might not see them, were answered long after the matter had escaped the mind of the person who asked them. A little paper ball, in which the name of one of our well-known fellow-townsmen had been written, was taken up and tossed across the table by Mr. Foster, who simply said, "He is alive." He also wrote the name reply to a question that had been asked in writing, concerning a person whom the writer of it knew to be alive, but asked to test the gentleman's power of divination.

We might continue to cite many things to us as remarkable, but will close with one more instance of his peculiar power. Turning to the lady at the table, he said, "I see the spirit of a child near you," and he directed that she should take the alphabet and ascertain its name. This was attempted, when it suddenly arrested her, saying, "She says she will impress upon my hand the initials of her name." He laid his hand on the table before all present; the back of it in a moment flashed up with a red, flaming look, when gradually the red began to run into lines, and in less than three minutes there stood out plain and distinct to the view of each person, the letters "F. D.," which were at least an inch long, and in good proportion. When the finger was drawn away, the letters "F. D.," which were at least an inch long, and in good proportion. When the finger was drawn away, the letters "F. D.," which were at least an inch long, and in good proportion. When the finger was drawn away, the letters "F. D.

