

# BANNER LIGHT.



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## Original Poetry.

### A VISION.

The following inspirational Poem was given through Mrs. Cora Scott Daniels, on the evening of Dec. 19th, at the residence of Mr. George A. Bacon—where a Congressional debate was held, which was attended principally by Senators and Representatives.

Under the control of Theodore Parker, Mrs. Daniels engaged in a deeply earnest and characteristic conversation for upwards of an hour, upon "The State of the Country—its Duties and Dangers," the various Members of Congress questioning, cross-examining and testing her in every possible way, but invariably eliciting the most satisfactory responses, and otherwise giving proof of superior power.

The poem purports to come from Shelley.

I see a marble column rise from out the ocean's foam;  
I see the waves divide and break where Neptune's car has come;  
I see them surge and dash around a bleak and rock-bound shore,  
And part their snowy bosoms, to be blended nevermore;

Where the ocean wave  
In each coral cave,  
And the mermaids fair  
Bound their amber hair,  
And the sea-gods trode  
In their deep abode,  
And the crystal arch  
Formed for those who march  
In Death's long line,

I see the gleaming columns of a mighty temple shine;  
Its corner-stones are laid on mountains of the sea;  
A continent arises, framed for human liberty;  
And as the pillared temple rears its form against the sky,  
Broad pennons float on every breeze for Truth's great victory.

I see the continent of earth submerged beneath the sea;  
And where the waters once have been, there no more shall they be;  
The shores of Time shall meet the Ocean of God's Will,  
And all its newer Governments His wisdom shall fulfill;

While the dark flood  
Of human blood,  
The scold and sneer,  
The sigh and tear,  
Shall no more curse the land which I behold,  
Shall no more desolate mankind with woes untold,  
For lo! the temple which I see is formed of living thought,

Its brightness from the Fount of Light in purity is caught,  
And the bright continent is but a prophecy  
Of all the world when Truth and Love shall make them free.

I see the towns and cities, reared in human shame and crime,  
Pass from the sight of those who dwell upon the shores of Time;  
Mountains and valleys, hills and plains engulfed beneath the sea;  
And newer, better lands appear—the Islands of the Free—

Peopled by sun-bright beings, all radiant with youth,  
Who in that marble temple bow before the shrine of Truth;

And children fair,  
With shining hair,  
And women sweet,  
With bright smiles greet  
The sun and flowers  
Within their bowers;

And man no more, in pride and scorn and hate,  
Robs from his fellow man his holy state,  
Nor mocks Heaven's smiles. Peace dwains, though late,

Upon the world, and incense pure doth rise  
From flowers and hearts of men to the bright skies,  
And no more human souls are made the sacrifice  
O wondrous clime! O temple vast!  
Whose sun its brightening ray doth cast  
Over all worlds and souls and minds,  
Like that which angel wisdom finds  
Within the realm of Thought,  
Whose essence eye is fraught  
With majesty and peace,  
The soul's perfect release!

This snow-white palace shall arise on earth  
When man doth lay the corner-stone of worth,  
When love of truth and wisdom shall control,  
And in its light reveal the veil of soul!  
Each thought a gem shall be  
Within the boundless sea  
Of God's Eternity!

Written for the Banner of Light.

### THE NEW ERA.

BY J. M. JACKSON.

[Lieutenant-Colonel Beard says of the colored troops, "They behaved splendidly under the gallant fire to which we were exposed; I did not see a man flinch."]—

They who bent the servile knee,  
In conquering marches tread;  
Beneath the stars of liberty,  
The stain of earth has fled.

The vessel's chains are broken,  
Justice now shall reign;  
Enthroned by Northern men,  
Who never fight in vain.

Triumphant over wrong,  
Sweeps the tempest's roar,  
With a wild, avenging cry—  
Slavery exists no more.

The God of Hosts has won  
The battle for the free;  
Trotter hands can ne'er destroy  
Our flag, or liberty.

No more sincere or bitter tears  
Dropped for our martyr chief,  
Than those which fell from eyes  
Unnoticed in his grief.

## The Lecture Room.

### THE OLD YEAR.

A Discourse by Fred. L. H. Willis, M. D.,  
Of New York, delivered in the Melodeon,  
Boston, Dec. 31st, 1865.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

There is a belief among the superstitious portion of a certain class of people that the season between Christmas and New Year does not belong to time; that time ends at Christmas and begins at New Year; that there is a pause in the natural order of events—a silence of the revolving wheels of time—a hush in the music of the spheres. Something of this consciousness is perhaps felt by all. There is a sort of silence of the soul, a looking backward and forward, finding what has been and what is to be. Is not this retrospect natural to the spirit? We love to call up beautiful pictures in the chambers of memory, and hang them about with golden and rose-tinted drapery. And ah! how we linger about the shrouded shrines where we placed our dearest joys, and try to find the golden glow of a divine joy even there.

Yes, Memory, thou art the spirit's being; the life of what has been is with thee, and it is a part of what is now. I have seen enameled tablets, golden and black most beautifully wrought; the golden brightness in them twines about the black, and one is not perfect without the other. Life is just such a tablet: the golden setting encircles the dim shadows; the delicate, rich tracery of light is within and around all the darkness.

The heart turns backward to find what has been, and lingers over the past to make it significant of what is to be. Perhaps this is not wise. It is said to be wise to live in to-day; but living in to-day shuts us out from yesterday, for we have taken into ourselves what was the life of yesterday. The soul of the past has entered into our soul, and makes us what we are. Is it not so? Has not the past its certain record in the present?

The earth had revolved ages on its axis, and men had lived and thought for centuries before there was the first recognition of the great law of waste and supply; and science declared that no particle of matter was ever lost, but that the economy of Nature was perfect, and all that seemed lost was forever flowing back through some channel. This is recognized now as a fact not to be disputed; but it is only in this day that the workings of a similar law have been recognized in the world of thought.

The higher life evolved from matter, called electricity, has come to be considered as an element, but it is still too much regarded as a force in Nature, rather than an existent substance. The higher magnetic life is still less understood, and thought is considered as having no inherent power, and only existing through its expression. But as true as it is that no atom is without its perpetual significance in the world of matter, so true is it that in that higher world of existent life—the world of thought—nothing can be lost. Facts are rapidly accumulating to prove this. It has been tested again and again, that each individual is linked to all his past individual existence; that even through his handwriting can be traced each event of his life, not only up to the time when the writing was executed, but to any future period, proving that we give enough of our own individual self to a slight transcript to hold us forever chained to it. It is thus the past has its sure record in the present. One fact is sufficient to establish this great law. Yet Denton, in his "Soul of Things," presents us with a volume, and though we are not conscious just how the law operates, yet we are certain that it is universal. We do not understand just how all the exhalations of the earth return to it again, or how the gases rise and become the food of plants, insects and animals. But a law that has been declared and tested, we trust as universal. We know that the past bears its relation to the present through what we term memory, or consciousness, and we have been led to believe that that which memory did not retain could have no existence in the mind. But here again facts have enlightened us. I know a man who, in a moment of imminent peril at sea, remembered in one instant of time every event of his past life—the record of seemingly forgotten events existed somewhere; made perfectly clear and plain was all that which by no effort of memory could be possibly have brought to light. There have been many instances of this same wonderful psychological phenomenon.

Then there are two records: the one made constantly on all that receives of our life, and which holds its sure link to us let us be where we may; the other within our own selves, with which our own consciousness holds somehow a perpetual relation.

We know that the keen scent of a dog will detect his master's steps in a crowded thoroughfare, or bring back his lost garment, proving that there is a constant emanation, individual in its character, from every person. A clairvoyant will, from a shred of a garment, or a lock of hair, take hold of the mystic thread of life, and come into direct sympathy with the person to whom they belong. This also proves that there is an existing life, individual in its character, and which holds its certain connection with each one.

Written history is merely a record of the past; but the past is still living, and has its vital power in the present.

At this season, when we are about to commence a new external record, we incline to look back. By years we measure life. Events are designated by times and seasons—they are the milestones on the way. We commence with a sort of solemn earnestness the first steps. We recall the past, and estimate its good and ill. We bring up in memory its glowing pictures. Images of beauty sit before us. We feel a renewal of joy at the memory of all that has brought us gladness,

With fresh and unsoothed pain we live over again that which has brought us woe. Only the record of sorrow seems stern and unchanging.

It is well to let the past thus speak to us, and through our memory to take lessons from it. The dead past will never bury its dead. The living present holds also the living past. It is a solemn lesson to learn, that all that we have been lives in what we are. But oh! it is a glorious knowledge to gain, that we hold certain links to all our past individual existence, and to know, if memory fails us, the divine law of existence cannot fail us, and that by it is our means of redeeming the past.

We live in an age of activity and conquest. Great and stirring events mark the days and the years. If we review but one year, how full it is of import. Science, art and literature make their full and significant marks. We are constantly being taught some new truths. We take the gifts of all climes and hemispheres, and rightly esteem ourselves wiser for every enlarged view of men and things. We have come to consider a new discovery as quite a natural and to-be-expected-for event, and we read with perfect calmness of that which would have filled our forefathers with wondering admiration or with superstitious fear, and our only surprise is that the world had not known it before. The stupid past gets no credit for the marvelously brilliant present. But this living present is only a subject of the past, a recipient from it.

All the forces of Nature operate so harmoniously that we can scarcely detect the change from one form of life to another. Each distinctive type seems individual, but each higher holds all the lower. Decay and reproduction go on, and all mineral and vegetable and animal life, as it exists to-day, is the result of all the ages since life took creative form. We feed to-day on food whose elements antediluvian ages had stored for us. All that we touch and handle has on it the record of times that history can tell us nothing of. We are filled with wonder as we read of the grand old monuments of the past. We are filled with awe as men tell us of trees whose first shoot reached heaven's light before the dawn of the Christian era. But the little flower that springs and withers in a summer's day, has in it the life that is older than those years. In living transcript are all those ages recorded, and the to-day of Nature has all the yesterdays within it. To outwork, to reorganize, is the constant effort of Nature.

We have shown how thought fixes its indelible seal on all that it produces, and thus unites the individual to each individual expression. This thought was evolved from the spirit. The indwelling spirit of man gave its life to it, and thus individualized the record. Then there is a constant and unbroken chain of life that unites all spirit to that which it has produced. Behold how Nature operates here. The same unchanging law of life-force produces, from all that has been, what is. I am taking from all the centuries of thought and feeling that have preceded me. In each age there has been a life, up-springing and active, and though I realize it not, yet it is mine.

But the history of individuals is more wonderful and certain still. Each one is the constant producer of that life which represents himself, and makes the record with unvarying certainty upon all that he does. Is this a solemn lesson to learn at the close of an Old Year? Solemn as it is glorious; for not merely unto that which produced the thought is the record forever bound, but to all that shall henceforth spring therefrom. All that I have done I am closely linked unto. Then it must be through living bonds. All that lives is active. There must of necessity flow along these myriad threads the living present. Then if all that has my impress on it is bound to me, of necessity, it receives constantly of my life.

Suppose that one year ago a man lived a profligate and worthless life. The record of that life was made sure and unchangeable. Through myriad links he connected himself with the testimonies of all he there individualized. But, within this year, he has come unto a nobler and better life, and to-day he stands up in the strength of his integrity. Yet he has lost no hold upon the past; the unbroken chains bind him to it. Is this pitiable to learn of? Yet see how his redemption is thus perfected: Flowing back through all the wrong and folly of his past is his present; its good bears the blessing with it. This truth may strike some as being visionary. Yet the facts of psychometry—the power of mind to read all that has been from any trifling connection with an individual—demonstrate the thing to a certainty. If I give to a slip of writing enough of my individual self to enable a person of acute sensibility to declare what I then was, and also, what I now am, the numberless acts of each day must make up my recorded history.

If we will recognize this as a law of spirit, we can readily understand how the spirit-world is linked unto this world, and that there is perpetually flowing unto us a blessing therefrom. As the spirit puts off more and more of its grossness, the links that bind it to mortality must grow less and less distinguishable to mortal consciousness; but with more certain blessing comes the living current.

This great and unchanging law of spirit-force is overlooked in the history of the world, and we can scarcely hope for its recognition yet. But it has been revealed to the Christian world in the record of the life that has studied as the grandest of all lives. The connection of the spirit of Jesus with all his past life is plainly declared. The blessing was to flow back even in greater measure. His friends could do even greater works than he did, because of the influence of that direct power upon them. Thus he became the redemption of those he had taught; his very life flowed back to them. There is no end to the prayers that are offered up for the redemption of the world. But let us learn this simple yet glorious law of existence, and they will learn that it is to be LIVED FOR, not prayed for merely.

Each soul that lifts itself above its low desires

and comes into a condition superior to the past, redeems that past up to the present condition. Each step of progress sends its redeeming influence back. We accustom ourselves to estimate life in to-day. The activities of the present engross thought and feeling; and this is all right, for the present is all of life. We look back to yesterday; we turn to the coming morrow; but we live in to-day.

Let us seek to review in a few words the active life of the present. Art has kept busy her magic hand. The past year has brought us new creations of beauty and grace. Active brains have created ideas, and willing hands have outworked them. Some men think lightly of a statue or a picture. But let such a one remember that the ideal—the thought of grace or beauty—thus sought to express itself; and men by such expressions, testify that in each son of God is the creative desire, and that each effort is an human attempt to perfect itself, to express in the external world the inner life. And he will find a significance in the fine arts that is infinitely beyond the mere admiration of the senses.

Bierstadt and Church, the greatest living landscape painters, are receiving in their own America the just tribute their genius so richly deserves, showing that it is appreciated even amidst the whirl of political strife and of business activity.

And women, too, are taking their position as artists, as physicians, as editors, as inventors, as scientists, as orators and preachers. Miss Hosmer sends from Rome her model of Thomas H. Benton, and Miss Stebbins hers of Horace Mann, to be molded in imperishable bronze and stand as monuments forever of womanly genius and manly excellence. Science, also, has stepped grandly forward. The past year has been fruitful in fresh discoveries. We know more of the principles of life. We understand better the controlling causes. In mechanics, too, the world has not stood still, and nerves and muscles yield their labor to wood and iron. In all that is achieved we find the daily increasing effort to control matter. Look at the splendid inventions of the day. Miracles of human ingenuity, by means of which what the tolling hands once achieved by weary drudgery, a little labor accomplishes now like magic.

And literature, too, has showered down her perpetual offerings. Broadcast over the land is spread the wealth of the human brain. When it combines also the wealth of the human heart, there results a life that cannot die. And the literature of the past year has in it more of the glowing life of spirit; it is not dead and formal, going back to the past; but it tells us of a spirit-power in the present. Scarcely a book that makes any mark upon the times, but has the vital faith of spiritual presence and spiritual power wrought as its brightest and most glowing figures. Yes, the faith that is so dear to us has infused itself into the literature of the day. We read it in all sermons of consolation. We know that it is preached from many of the so-called Evangelical pulpits—from Unitarian and Universalist pulpits. I do not know how much more popular it is to be called a Spiritualist to-day than it was a year ago; that matters nothing; it is a trifle of the supreme significance. But I do know that Spiritualism to-day is taking a tremendous hold upon the heart of humanity, and silently and secretly working everywhere, and making its power felt as never before. The external manifestations of Spiritualism, with the opposition they stir up, are of very little moment compared with its fundamental principles, which are eternally true, even as God is, and which are at work, even as God works—silently, secretly, but powerfully and ever triumphantly.

All these advances in politics, in religion, in art, science and literature have been accomplished through struggle and hard toil. The contest gives the victory. The march onward in every department of life is gloriously grand; and the sublimest feature of the whole is the fact that the human mind will no longer be enslaved; it asserts its Godlike supremacy. This, I repeat, is the most glorious feature of the day. It is thought becoming the active force of matter.

But let us for a moment try to ascertain what thought is. Is it not the creation of spirit—that which is the inmost of our being becoming the outward? We think from the activity of our highest life; thought is the necessity of life; it is the action of the spirit through the brain. Then if we find that the world is becoming daily more and more governed by its thought—if the effort is to subject all to thought, then the world is becoming more and more spiritualized. Spirit is getting the control. Call it human spirit, if you will; it is spirit nevertheless. Now we see in this great effort of the day, which evinces itself in all the arts, sciences and professions, wonderful significance. We recognize flowing back with its blessing through all that has been, the spirit force of the universe. The living threads, the wondrous links that bind life to life, bring back a freighted treasure. I will not claim that any individual thought is necessarily at work—any direct agency operating; but the general benediction from a life that is beyond the life of the external, quickens human thought, and expresses, through infinite channels, the higher force of spirit.

In the moral world, what changes has a year brought. Through the whirling movements of events, men have begun to comprehend that there is a public virtue called Justice; and when men learn this, the first step is taken toward its execution. As soon as a virtue raises its standard in the spirit, it becomes a part of the spirit, and it has gained a power that it can never wholly lose. Justice is not an unnatural attribute, to be gained by some miraculous process; it is a natural virtue of the soul.

Dr. Cheever tells New York that God hides his personal justice; but we know that he reveals it in man, just as soon as man becomes a power of good. It is hidden through the low standard of human morality, when men deny the equality of

their fellows, and their equal and inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; but it is hidden by man, and not by the divine.

Let us mark, then, an era of the world when justice is at least acknowledged as a political necessity, and a great nation comes up to a platform that has fewer broken timbers, and from which we can behold the firm foundations of a National Government that bases its strength on equal rights and the laws of a true republic.

I am no politician—I am not here to speak on political matters. But my subject were incomplete and my task but poorly executed without a few words in this direction.

The tide of events in our country is moving us on. With majestic sweep comes the future. What it shall unfold to us and for us, we know not. But do we not know this, that the Infinite God and Father of us all is supreme? And yet circumstances press upon us demanding self-reliance, as well as reliance upon God.

The events of the time have great import in them. It does no good to speculate about them—to theorize as to the future. The question put by the times is not a party question, nor can parties decide it. It seems to me as if the powers above us had lifted far above all party strife and bickerings the standard of human progress, and all true men are called upon to rally around it.

The great question of our day is, of the Fatherhood of God. Are all men our brothers, in the sense of relationship to the Infinite God? Are we to accept as true that preeminent Declaration of Independence—all men are born free and equal, with inalienable rights?

If we settle the question of the Fatherhood of God, then the question of human rights, the golden rule, the gospel of good will to all, regardless of caste or color, comes before us. Shall we arise with our hearts imbued with the love of God and declare all men our brothers? And then shall we see to it, that, as individuals, we proclaim the doctrine of social and political freedom?

I say events demand that party strife shall be quenched, party feelings assuaged, party measures silenced, and that Humanity shall arise and unite—the true and earnest—in the one desire to advance the human family.

The year past has done much, it seems to me, to make this possible.

Many martyrs have fallen in the sacred cause of Liberty. But the year whose hours are now almost numbered with the past, has seen laid upon her altar the noblest and most glorious of them all. Unparalleled in the history of the world were the circumstances of that event that plunged a nation into the profoundest depths of sorrow. But the assassin's hand made Abraham Lincoln immortal in the hearts of his countrymen, and placed him by the side of Washington on the pedestal of Fame, to be associated with him forever—the one the Father, the other the Saviour of his land.

I have confidence in the man whom destiny made his successor. I trust in his clear head, his strong heart. I have faith in his loyal purpose. I rejoice in his determined will and untiring energy. I believe in Andrew Johnson, and though I could wish that he might take one step in advance of those he has already taken, yet I remember that God is never in a hurry, and if he can wait, I can. I have no sympathy with those who denounce Andrew Johnson as false to the principles of the party that put him in power, or as false to the great cause of Liberty. I believe that we owe to his reconstruction policy, the fact that we stand out to-day as the most glorious nation on the face of the earth; for under the workings of no other system could a sufficient number of the Southern States have been brought to accept the Constitutional Amendment Act, abolishing Slavery throughout the length and breadth of our beloved country.

The changes of the year are not for nothing. They seem to me to tend toward the great issue, viz: Shall we as a nation love and maintain true speech, free thought, free suffrage—freedom in every sense? Not love it as a Democratic sentiment; not love it as a Republican sentiment; but love it in, of, and for itself alone.

What think you the man who is seeking power—political power, political aggrandizement—cares for human rights? It is strange that men do not see that principle does not require party. The time is hastening when it will be country that shall become the rallying cry; when it shall not be deemed best to make a party answer for individual responsibilities. This throwing one's influence upon one side or the other, as policy demands, is not acting nobly or well. "Stand up! Be men," cries the voice of the highest. In our relations to the human family, we must not, cannot dwarf our ideas or cramp them. Everything that has God's life in it, progresses, marches on, presses forward. Are we to say that one form of legislation is for all time? that, for instance, a constitution framed by man, human and fallible, is to be the highest standard around which to rally forever? No! Human words cannot yet embody the noble, the glorious state of society which the future is to bring to us. As if moving before me, comes the record of the future. And what is the first promise? Man shall love his fellow man. The second? God shall be revealed in the love of human hearts.

But visions of the future bring not the work of to-day. I was to make for you a record of the Old Year. Perhaps one word will include the whole—Progress. Humanity moves forward and upward. But ever as truths arise comes the contest. "I come not to send peace, but a sword," is ever the voice of truth.

But I must hasten. To sum up the events of the year as relates to our country, is needless; you know them all, or those of most importance. Some are regretting the loss of power to their party; others are rejoicing in the gain of theirs; but oh, my friends, let us unite in the one desire

to help forward every reform, every good thing, and to destroy all that is hurtful as fast as we can. We cannot govern the world or others; but we can see to it that our own standard is a high one, and that we act up to it. We can see to it that we do not lose sight of principles, in parties; and that we look with earnest hope forward, trusting that if events are solemn, or of evil import, with the light of love in our hearts we shall be able to make them all as beacon lights to the world, showing how far Humanity is asserting its life, and how far we are able to become in the human family as instruments of God, doing his work, serving his will.

In the religious world freedom of thought has so extended itself, that Churches cannot hold it, or creeds bind it. Those who once trusted in what their fathers told them of penance and duty, have cut from their leading-strings, and hold themselves accountable to none but God. The general effect of this is a higher religious faith, and a more truthful obedience to the requirements of heaven. Its extremity is an infidelity to all that is most sacred. When the earth has been dry and parched with the drought of summer, the beneficent rain, that blesses and invigorates, sweeps down upon a tender plant of beauty; sometimes the ripened harvest is destroyed, and the loss and destruction seems sad and mournful. But see with what quickened life all Nature expresses the blessing. The trees lift up their grateful hands to heaven, the grass uplifts its praise on every spear, and the good triumphs a thousandfold over the ill.

It is thus in the world of thought and feeling. The storm-torrents come and go, but ever with healing on their wings. The march is onward. Not a tread of the years, or a beat of the ages but has in it the eternal significance of the Infinite. Sublime and full of wonder is each step, tending so surely to that which is beyond and above the present.

We need not revert again to the proofs of religious liberty that are constantly showing themselves. One light after another breaks out where least we expect. Thoughtful Germany, superstitious France, grim England—all send up their revolving beacon-lights. And in vain do Cardinals and Bishops and Priests strive to extinguish them, or to beg the eyes of the people. Colenso, Renan, Maurice, Williams, and a host of others, are men of the times, doing the work of the age for religious liberty inside the ecclesiastical ranks, just as Lincoln, and Grant, and Sherman, and Farragut, and so on, have been doing it for political liberty during the last four years.

If we review any particular era in the world's history, we find it full of startling events. On its surface it bears the mark of contest. Men would seem to have been contending first for one esteemed good, and then for another. But if we look beneath the surface, do we not find a moving cause that is the inspiration of all effort? It is the one effort for freedom. In individuals its effect is often to repress and narrow; but in the multitude the cry is ever for greater light, more knowledge, a wider range. The conquest by mere brute force has this divine meaning in it—the effort to extend and enlarge not merely the activities, but all acquisitions. At the present day conquest means more than subjection by brute force.

The legions that swept over the old continents, are represented to-day by the armies of ideas and principles that troop forth from men's brains; they are strong, and mighty, and irresistible; they contend, and there are fields of defeat and victory, and the retreating vanquished.

Sometimes the battle is to the Right; sometimes Error gains the day, even as Monarchy and Despotism triumph over Republicanism and Democracy. But though Poland, Hungary, and Greece were swept away, and their noble martyrs perished, yet the general principles of freedom triumphed. France could not bear her day of triumphant independence, and many mourned over the blight that fell upon their awakened hopes when she again became a slave to power; but the indwelling life-force was not crushed, and the lesson was only one of patience. In those other struggles for freedom in all that concerns individual and personal thought and feeling the battle is not always to the truth-loving, earnest souls. There has been many a poor Hungary in the religious world, when Truth and Right seemed crushed, and all lost to intolerant Oppression; but it was only seeming; fresh champions sprang forth, and a diviner enthusiasm gave life for fresh struggle. Men are constantly falling, lest their effort failing, the universe shall go wrong, and God's great cause fall. There is fear and anxiety in the ranks of conservatism when the lever turns the wheel with a too sudden jerk, lest the whole beautifully-arranged and seemingly perfect structure should be overturned. And so, also, the radical free thinker repines when a spoke in his wheel gets loose, so that he has to lay by for repairs; but there stands the great mountain, firm and unmoved; still moves the world, uncheeked, unjarred. The sublime triumph of truth—the constant upspringing, through the life-force, of better and higher expressions of that truth—should satisfy us all of the indwelling God, who, in his infinity, holds all things.

We accustom ourselves to estimate the knowledge of others, and the world at large seems very benighted. There seems little room for an enlarged faith. We do not see how light can creep in; but behold how the sunlight penetrates the darkness; how through each little niche and crevice it brings the blessing of the day. The light that lighteth every man is from the infinite light. None are without it; underneath all the logy of sect, all the conservatism of party, there lies the vital, energizing spirit-force. It is creating, producing, perfecting; its life is inherent. The natural desire of mankind is for freedom; they would not be cramped or confined; they reach forth to the gladness and beauty, to the joy and perfection of life. Not more does the child rejoice in the freedom of the field, and the gladness of the sunshine, than maturity rejoices in enlarged ideas, in an expanded selfhood.

The result of this love is not to make men infidel to truth; it is to create an unbounded trust in it; it is to build up no theories, no plans, no schemes to save a world; it is to trust all plans and theories in the Infinite perfection.

Why do men seek to brand those who honestly differ from them with lack of faith? Why do we hear the cry of "Infidel" spread through the land, as some man, more free and fearless than the rest, steps forth and declares his honest convictions? It is not infidelity to truth that is the heresy; it is infidelity to popularity—it is infidelity to dogmatism, to slavery, to logy. It is the love of creed, of sect, of party, that makes men fear. It is not the love of God they are jealous of—it is the love of power. We halt every step toward an enlarged selfhood in the individual, and an enlarged faith in the community, with unpeakable joy. We need have no fears for the year that is coming. See how the divine love works in the hearts of men. All the efforts of bishops and priests cannot stay the voice of truth; it will be proclaimed, whether men hear or fear; the living inspiration will flow forth, energizing and blessing the world, and already men respect the fearless speaker far more than they do the timid one. The multitude listen. Men begin to think for themselves. It is less matter what men say, than that they speak the honest convictions of their souls. We can hear with patience absurd doctrines and false theories preached, if he who utters them feels in his heart he is declaring the truth, because we so respect sincerity; but the man who measures his word by the popular ear, who feels his way timidly along, who declares just so much as shall best satisfy the selfish pride of his hearers, needs no anathemas—his soul has not yet grown so that it can take in a large idea.

Let us bid adieu to the Old Year without regret. Ere we meet together again the New Year will have presented to us its clean white tablets. We need have no fears concerning it. Whether our particular form of faith shall seem to be more widely accepted, or rejected, matters little. Truth does not always appear on the surface. We must be careful how we claim that others receive what is truth to us. We must only pray for more freedom, that the shackles of fear may fall from the human heart, and that men may dare to lift their eyes and behold the wonder and beauty, the perfection and order of the universe, and exclaim, with instinctive devotion: Oh God, thou art the Infinite. I fear thee not; draw me nearer to thyself!

Every thought that reaches beyond the narrow bound of the present, is as a messenger to the courts of heaven. Every aspiration that seeks a wider and freer scope, is like the opening of a window to the free air of freedom. Every prayer that goes forth for more truth, is like drawing back a curtain to let in the glorious light of noonday.

Let us commence the New Year without one fear. Let us trust all times as in the hands of God. God's year! Who can fear for it? Let us seek a whiter charity. As we cannot fear, so we cannot despise. What seems to us false and pernicious, lies within the infinite power. Let us cease measuring truth, or estimating what others possess of it. Truth cannot die. You might as well try to stay the dawning of the morning, or draw a curtain to shut out the sun's splendor from the rejoicing earth, as to hope to prevent the shining of the divine light. Only be careful that you do not deem that you alone dwell in the sunlight, and that others must come to your day. The day of the Lord dawns not here or there, but perpetually in the universe. This wider charity must be cultivated as an individual means of progress, and as an associative one. The moment we attempt to sectionalize, or limit, then we narrow our faith. Questions of individual faith belong to the individual. As individuals, the wider our range of thought on all subjects, the wider is our associative influence. We wish to concentrate no power, but to extend it; not by means of any promulgated faith, but through our own freedom to help other men to be free. We do not call on a single individual to adopt our thought. All the effort we make is to awaken thought. This freedom of opinion is deemed heresy. It is the declaration of God's word written on every living thing. No form of life dictates to another. The spontaneous expression of each is from the indwelling life. The same sap, sun and dew nourishes each leaf on the tree; yet behold their diversity; each has its distinctive life. The same aspiration of being flows through all minds. The same God sheds divine light. The same blessings of grace descend. Yet behold men, each one created in the image of his Maker, yet each distinct and separate.

Let us commence the New Year with entire faith in its general blessing. It is God's time, and cannot fail of its good. What it has in store for us, we know not; but it must be good, and good only; the seeming disorder must tend to order. And yet as individuals, we must have something more to seek for than a general faith in the result of all that shall come. We must make that faith the inspiration of each effort and the triumph over each ill.

No moment is without its import, and each helps make up eternity; each has its gift into us. As the breath of heaven comes bearing us the life that supplies our bodies, so the breath immortal feeds and nourishes our spirits. We have learned, also, that we give forth constantly of all that we are; that we stamp ourselves on all that we do; that we constantly bind our spirits to matter, and give to matter the life that reveals ourselves. Do we need to be told of a retribution more solemn than this? Is there a retribution more glorious than awaits the spirit that, through its own perfection, has perfected the past?

How reverently do we learn of that past which has brought no such blessings for the present. We seem allied to the good and wise of all ages. We take from all that has been. We are also giving to all that shall be. We cannot conceive of an eternity beyond that which the influences from ourselves flow unto. No wonder that Jesus, recognizing this law of spiritual life, sought to make his followers understand the everlasting reward and punishment, meaning the far-reaching influence of good and ill. The prophetic promise, "I will draw all men unto me," shows his recognition of the great spiritual law of sympathy that shall elevate and purify the world, drawing it into vital connection with the unseen, the spiritual and eternal; the world that floats like an atmosphere around this world of sense.

We believe the law underlying those words of Jesus. As he kept his link to his loved ones, after he went to the purely spiritual life, by sympathy, so are we kept by the loving and glorified ones of our hearts, who have entered that life. This past year what golden threads, that centered in our hearts, have drawn their linked glory out, and bound earth by new ties to heaven. There are bright, glowing threads, held by strong, ardent hearts; and their life, flowing back through all its past connections, is so much power of love and life for the redemption of the world. There are bright and luminous threads, delicate and tender, that it seems as if any circumstance could break; but they are strong as God himself; and on those tender threads of life go up the purest aspirations of the soul, and then descends the chaplet of hope, though it may come wet with tears, and its breath of sweetness be a sign of pain. Yes; each such link bringeth nearer the day of redemption from all ignorance, error and wrong. To every soul thus united to the world of immortal life and love, the Redeemer cometh, even the spirit of love, purity, holiness.

As the sunlight blesses the day; as the dew blesses the night; as perpetual life flows through the air to all that lives; so the warmth of God's love, the benediction of God's tenderness, the inspiration of God's truth, flows to all mankind through the spirit of just men made perfect; through sanctified affection; through every channel of spirit-life.

Oh, let us take the gift with grateful souls; and as we receive, so let us give—Truth, Virtue, Holiness.

Oh, ye to whom has come this glad new gospel—so speak the voices from the higher life—shine out as lights to the world this New Year. Ye are set for the light of the world; and he who, centuries ago, had no earthly treasure, nothing but persecution and death; he who has now found the true riches, and strength, and grandeur of life, will send his ministering angels to bless, comfort and strengthen you in every good and noble work.

And ye who have treasure on earth, will ye not remember whose stewards ye are? Oh, listen as the spirit-voice speaks to your inner ear: Work for us; sacrifice for us; yield up your treasure for us, and tenfold shall ye receive in the kingdom of the eternal and infinite.

And oh ye who have forgotten to love much, will ye not hear the voices of love calling to you and bidding you fulfill the work of God by the warm, life-giving currents that shall flow through you to the earth, too cold and chill to put on the beautiful garment of the eternal spring?

Ah! this New Year, we, ye, from the angel-home, bless you, and promise with solemn word, that if you will fulfill the highest mission to truth, love and justice, the life of heaven shall descend upon you; angel hands shall help you, and you shall receive the wishes of your hearts in spiritual blessings manifold.

Original Essay.

THE AGE OF VIRTUE.

BY GEORGE STEARNS.

SIXTEENTH PAPER.

TEMPORAL OBSTRUCTIONS TO ITS EVOLUTION; AND HOW TO REMOVE THEM.

THE MISSION OF REFORMERS.

FOURTH SECTION CONTINUED.

The Moral Precedence of Woman.

To all who clearly see what I have been endeavoring to show, that Man and Woman resemble each other in respect to all the essential attributes of Human Nature, it must be evident that they differ from each other in regard to the same attributes; just as any person of either sex differs from another of the same sex. It is a trite observation that no two men are precisely alike, nor any two women; but it is not always and immediately apparent that one person is in all respects superior to another. In fact, the contrary is very commonly obvious; that in special points of comparison unlike characters diversely excel each other. Now, if we will compare Man and Woman in the same way, and estimate their relative endowments with the same fairness with which we do those of any two persons of either sex, it will be to a like result, and we shall clearly see

II. That Man and Woman are contradistinguished by equivalent excellences and defects.

Regarded superficially in their mere physical aspect, Man is seen to be personally larger than Woman, and Woman handsomer than Man. This is true only of an aggregate comparison of the sexes; for some women are ugly, and some men are dwarfed in stature. But the average weight of men is some thirty pounds apace more than that of women, while most women are fairer than most men.

Now this relative beauty of Woman is more than skin-deep. It belongs as much to her physical as to her spiritual nature, and implies not only that her organism is made of a finer material than Man's, but that her very soul is more ethereal and sprightly than his. Since form, though not the creator of life or other principle of being, is yet its representative—since the special body of everything in Nature inevitably corresponds to its abiding essence, the personal comeliness of Woman becomes in Reason's sight an infallible expression of her inherent loveliness—the natural phasis of an amiable spirit.

But, recurring to their extrinsic characteristics for a more appreciable footing of argument, it is evident that Man, in keeping with his brawny proclivity, excels also in strength; while Woman, in keeping with her excellence of form and feature, excels also in agility. And this second contradistinction, though rooted in the physical, projects like the first into the mental constitution of each. Man is stronger than Woman, and Woman quicker than Man, in mind as well as body. For Man's greater muscular power and Woman's greater nervous energy are both due to the ultra-physiological truth that mental action is the spring of bodily motion. And since cerebral confirmation is the mode of mentality, every contradistinction of male and female character consists with a corresponding diversity in the shape of the masculine and feminine heads. It is therefore immaterial whether we compare the phrenological developments, or the actual lives, of men and women, for a discovery of the personal equivalence of their respective excellences and defects. But a combination of both these methods, by alternate recourse to the two sources of information by which the contradistinctions of sex are doubly authenticated, may be advisable for their ready discernment by inquiring minds. To the end of perspicuity also, the induction is properly prefaced with a succinct statement of masculine and feminine attributes, in juxtaposition with their partial negations, in this wise:

1. Man is stout, but homely; Woman, though slender, is fair.
2. Man is strong, but clumsy; Woman, though weak, is agile.
3. Man is brave, but harsh; Woman, though timid, is gentle. He has more courage than fortitude; she has more fortitude than courage.
4. Man is self-reliant, but selfish; Woman, though dependent, is confiding. He is more provident than generous; she is more generous than provident.
5. Man is mechanical, Woman esthetic. He is the better artisan; she would be the better artist. He has more ingenuity than taste; she has more taste than ingenuity.
6. Man is a nascent philosopher; Woman is a nascent poet. He is more cognoscentive than sensitive; she is more sensitive than cognoscentive.
7. Man is more rational than moral; Woman is more moral than rational. He is less ignorant than depraved; she is less depraved than ignorant. Man is Woman's preacher; Woman is Man's exemplar.

Here then are seven traits of character, each an essential attribute of ideal Human Nature, (I do not pretend to name them all,) wherein Man excels Woman; and as many equivalent though unlike endowments wherein Woman also excels Man. It is only the last-named, however, that I wish to set forth as being especially relevant to the present attitude and object of my pen.

That Man is intellectually superior to Woman, and Woman morally superior to Man, is evinced by proper comparison of their respective phrenological endowments. "In form," says O. S. Fowler, "the female head is higher and longer than that of the male, but less developed at the sides, or in the animal and selfish range." This statement is literally true, though partial, and not explicit enough to insure most readers against erroneous inference. No well-read phrenologist will fail to look through its fallacious implication as

due to the indifferent wording of a significant fact. But a mere phrenological scollist would be very apt to stumble over it into the same misconception that frustrated the pen of Mrs. Farnham when, in attempting to contrast the cranial structures of the human male and female, she reduced her notion of a man to that of an excellent animal. The following quotation is a clear statement of her heretical thought:

"The masculine type gives breadth, volume, in the middle and basilar regions, and is narrowed at the top. The nisus is toward animal development. The feminine type reverses these proportions: slender base, long antero-posterior and vertical diameters, expanded top. Nisus toward the super-animal life. It is the crown of her head which is the autocrat of her intellectual and physical powers; it is the base of man's."—*Woman and her Era*, page 75, Vol. I.

Reader, if you are a man, can you swallow that, and yet respect yourself as a human being? Or, if a woman, conscious of superior worth, do you accept such a description of manhood as fitting your ideal of conjugal want? Who, then, knoweth the spirit of a man as going upward from that of a beast that goeth downward to the earth? If the natural tendency of the masculine conformation of brain be thus toward mere animal development, then, verily, as one of Mrs. Farnham's disciples has added to her scandalizing thought, "the more there is of a man the worse it is for him," and therefore the less he can make of himself, even to annihilation, the better—better for him and Woman too, with all their intimate relations. What a motive to self-culture is here! or rather, what a forbidding conclusion, and how it flouts the premises of this pretended phrenological induction.

But, from this unwitting libel, as I am constrained to call it, since it occurs in the process of a woman's argument which concludes with a like-unwitting retraction, I appeal to the significant works of Man to prove that he is something more than an animal. I refer to the archives of human progress, as containing the better credentials of his human nature. I bring out thence the entire catalogue of human arts and sciences, and challenge the defamers of the masculine side of humanity to say which, if any of them, originated in either the top of Woman's head or the base of Man's. These are intellectual achievements, (not moral nor animalistic,) and almost exclusively those of men; there being no historic connection between the name of any woman and any considerable discovery, or any important invention, in either department of rational investigation. The superiority of Man in the masculine sphere of capability is thus indisputably manifest. But while insisting upon the acknowledgment of this truth, I confess that my respect for the male representative of human nature is a good deal lowered by the fact of his moral inferiority. Men do not always behave as well as they know how, and not so generally as women. I need not now repeat what I have written in a former section touching the perpetrations of depravity, for proof that Man, in the present stage of human development, is as capable in the spheres of vice and crime as in the laboratories of art and science; and as much more at home than Woman in those as in these. Therefore, taking another look at their respective phrenological characteristics, who should wonder that Man's head is perceptibly wider and somewhat lower than woman's, in proportion to their unequal size? these distinctions signifying—but before saying what they signify, it is proper to remark parenthetically that they alone suffice to make Woman's head apparently higher and longer than Man's; though it is not absolutely either. Yet in this instance one is practically right in judging according to the appearance; because Woman's head is really as large in proportion to the size of her own body as Man's; while the relative smallness of her brain is counterbalanced by its finer texture, as the basis of a more vivacious temperament. Hence the manifestations of mind depend less on bulk of brain than on its structure, or the relative fullness of its organic convolutions. It is only force of character that is indicated by that, and not its estimable qualities, the different combinations of which, both in degree and kind, constitute all varieties of mentality; and therefore these are deducible respectively from given capacities of skill, only with regard to the cranial figure. That of manhood is remarkably consonant with the actual lives of men, the above distinctions signifying, as I was about to say at the intervention of this parenthesis, that the lateral organs of mentality are more expanded in the masculine brain than in the feminine; whereas the coronal are more fairly developed in the feminine than in the masculine; in other words, that Man has more Alimentiveness, Acquisitiveness, Destructiveness, Combativeness, etc., than Woman, at the same time that she is more largely endowed with the moral impulses to Benevolence, Reverence, Hope, Conscientiousness, etc. The effect of this contrast is unduly disparaging to the masculine side, of humanity inasmuch as it is made under the vulgar impression that the tendency of animal endowments is necessarily sub-humanish. But I would have it made with the understanding that every faculty is useful to its possessor in proportion to one's grade of development, or position in the scale of intelligence; because no endowment, either of body or mind, is available in an isolated capacity, but only by its correlation with all the proper constituents of mentality; for which reason muscular powers and physical appetites are serviceable to mankind in ways which quite transcend the nature and discernment of brutes. And let it be distinctly understood that human character is never degraded by the natural tendency of what are sometimes improperly styled the selfish propensities; nor does it ever seem to be except in cases wherein there is an evident lack of moral endowments, to which in well-balanced minds the physical appetites are properly subject. Indeed, a fair development of both the lateral and coronal organs is essential to a normal constitution of mind; and to lack the forces of either is to be less endowed as a human being than one whose evenly expanded brain embraces both. Thus it appears that Woman is not exalted by her comparative deficiency of those attributes of mentality which are common to men and brutes, but is rather inferior to Man in respect of this deficiency. Neither is she so much superior to him in a moral aspect as she would be with as large an income of the intellectual faculties as he possesses. But this assertion involves the very fact which I have been thus far only preparing to demonstrate.

Before coming to that, however, there is one other thought to be uttered here, as tending to palliate the vulgar disparagement of a wide head; and that is, that breadth of brain denotes a fuller development not only of the lowest, selfly organs named above, but also, oftener than otherwise, of the superposed, medio-lateral range of executive faculties, including Constructiveness, Ideality, Sublimity and Caution; each of which is mentally exalting, and the combined effect of which, being greater in Man than in Woman, renders him by so much her superior. But this is not their cardinal contradistinction.

The careless saying that "the female head is proportionally longer than the male," which would

seem to be only another way of saying that it is much narrower, is of no certain consequence without a further affirmation as to whether the fact consists with an equal or un-equal expansion of the anterior and posterior portions of the brain. A closer observation assures us that the group of affectional organs in the region of the occiput are better developed in Woman's head than in Man's; whereas the opposite group of the perceptive are larger and more effective in Man's forehead than in Woman's. This double phrenological contradistinction is fully sustained by the diverse conduct of the sexes—on the one hand by Man's greater achievements in natural science and the mechanic arts, and on the other by Woman's greater interest in the social sphere; in human manners, domestic affairs, and all personal relations. Thus the claim of Woman to a longer head than Man's, when it is duly penetrated, results as unfavorably to her intellectuality as her claim to a higher head does to his morality. But the reader will probably demur at this point, and fancy there is something unfair in the comparison of skulls from which this induction follows. If so, I shall only contend that it is as fair in the present case as in that canvassed above—the very contrast of heads from which Mrs. Farnham deduced the mental superiority of Woman. I shall rather insist on a comparison of homogeneous endowments, or of male and female capacities for representing given departments of mind, as the only method of measuring human character, and as serving best to elucidate my conception that the intellectual faculties shape the career of Man, whereas the moral forces sway the mind of Woman.

This postulate is directly in the face of Mrs. Farnham's assertion of "the Supreme Self-Love of Man," whose "ruling activities," according to her showing, are

1. Ambition—Love of Power,
2. Acquisitiveness—Love of Gain,
3. Sensuality—Love of Pleasure."

This was true of Man in the earlier ages, and is true of many men to-day; but not of all men. Why should the undeveloped boy-man of antiquity be made to represent the more manly Man of advancing centuries? There are some men in every community who are better characterized by

1. Love of Science,
2. Love of Art,
3. Love of Progress.

Why are not men of this class as much entitled to representation in an impartial estimate of manly qualities, as their inferiors in development? Surely, there can be no worthy reason for rejecting the claims of Mr. Emerson's "Representative Men" to personate Manhood, and selecting instead of them the worst men that have ever lived—"the Neros, Domitians, Vitellines, Louis Elevens, Philip Seconds, and Henry Eighths," with "their hosts of imitators in private life," as Mrs. Farnham has done. It is remarkable, moreover, that she has pursued the very opposite course in commending her conception of Womanhood. Beside making no account of the extant Woman as represented by the sex's notorious love of Fashion, Frivolity and Flirtation, and not being satisfied with the best living examples of feminine excellence, of whom she has cited several names as illustrating Woman's claim to pre-eminence in certain departments of mental activity, she has put the ideal for the actual by pertinaciously insisting that Woman shall be known and her capabilities estimated from first to last, not by what she is or has been, but solely by what she is to be; of which conception she says rather presumptuously:

"Reader, the Ideal Woman sketched in these pages exists, though you may not find her in your family, your circle, or your community. I draw from Nature, who has kindly sat to my poor skill, for want of a better to employ. I have put in the lines and shades that are visible to me; they seem extravagant, perhaps, to you; but they will be faint and cold to your grand-daughters; and the women of the fifth generation hence will wonder how their fathers and mothers could ever have been questioned. For a positive, clear, intelligent, purposeful development of Womanhood will bear date from about these years of inquiry and agitation in regard to its capacities and offices."—*Woman and her Era*, Vol. II, page 409.

Very true and well said of a quite monocular vision. But I can't help asking whether the advent of this Ideal Woman is to be expected in the character of an old maid, or as the wife of that same old boy that Mrs. Farnham spited. Certainly neither; for Mrs. Farnham herself believed in Harmonical Marriage as prerequisite to "Artistic Maternity"; a future attainment of Woman which is practically only in the atmosphere and sunshine of Conjugal Love. Where, then, is the Ideal Man? Mrs. Farnham, if she ever thought of him, has taken no pains to describe him. She seems to have determined to know nothing but "Woman and her Era"—nothing of the Masculine but the mere *historic man*: a character for whom she signified her small esteem by writing his name without a capital, over against that of her own sex promoted thus—"the grossness of man and the goodness of Woman." Man, by her way of thinking, is a dog that has nearly had his day. She is quite sure that Woman is greater than the best of men in all ages have verified; and this mainly because they, in their submission to men, have never been allowed to show themselves; whereas Man, with nobody to hinder him, has done his best and completely made his mark. There is no more to be expected of him. This is the drift of her whole labored argument, and her only show of reason for comparing, as she has insidiously done, the *Actual Man* with the *Ideal Woman*; and the only reason she could ever have given for this, is that she has no other standard of manly disparity of the sexes. Who doubts that Woman is to be greater than Man has been? Nobody will dispute her right to triumph in the assumption of feminine superiority in this belittled sense. I shall grant her more than that logical reach of her argument, yet claim no less for Man.

The truth is, Man and Woman are both progressive beings. It is only by the larger development of both that either can be elevated in condition. If Man has hindered Woman, it is because of his moral littleness, from which his moral enlargement will surely save her; or if her failure to show herself hitherto is due to her intellectual inferiority, as I have said, then she is to be self-saved through her own intellectual enlargement. That is one item of truth. Another is, that Man and Woman are contemporaneously progressive. They are so mutually dependent that they must grow together, and one cannot grow much faster than the other; though they grow in different directions, as we shall presently see. Mrs. Farnham's assumption that the past and passing ages are exclusively masculine, or any more Masculine than Feminine, and that the dawn of a brighter future is emphatically that of "Woman's Era"—that one age of human progress is any more Man's or any more Woman's than another, is simply false. It was a mistake of the "Announcer," as she complementarily styles a feminine thinker, unreasoning as women generally and proverbially are, and due to her remarkable conceit of "holding naturally a position in relation to Truth that man labors to reach," that is "between man and the Creator," whereby such a thinker oppositely "receives the lower attributes of Truth as practically rather than logically." Both as it may, what she called "the Era of Woman" is no other than the *Era of Human Maturity*, that is of Masculine as well as Feminine Maturity. That will be the Era of Harmony, not only of the sexes, but of mankind as individuals; because it will be the result of universal righteousness, otherwise denominated the *Age of Virtue*. Past generations have witnessed the reign of "the wild Adam," not that of the Ideal Man any more than of the Ideal Woman, for whose equal advent men and women have alike waited with hope—*are waiting still, and shall not wait in vain.*

[To be continued in our next.]



SPIRITUALISM DONEDREARY.

BY SOTHERN, ALIAS STUART.

The letter which Mr. Sothern some time since addressed to the *Utique Citizen*, is going the rounds of the secular press of this country. Intriguingly, it is of little or no consequence, inasmuch as its improbable, crude and contradictory affirmations can have little influence in the minds of those who possess even a moderate share of discrimination. Nor does it derive its chief importance either from the character or the ability of its author; but rather from the fact that respectable journals have given it a wide publicity. It is on this account that I propose to review this poor effort to damage the just claims of Spiritualism, and to defame the characters of its honest disciples.

Conceding, for the present, that whatever occurred in the so-called "THE MIRACLE CIRCLE," was produced by the conscious and voluntary agency of Mr. Sothern's letter. I will consider the contents of Mr. Sothern's letter. I will do him justice. He shall have the full benefit of his own statements—by his words and deeds he shall be fairly tried, and his case left to the public judgment. The ostensible purpose of the gentleman who organized the circle, of which Mr. Sothern was a prominent member, is thus expressed in his letter:

"I was a member of high position in their respective professions, and of a common curiosity and interest, joined by a common purpose of an exhaustive investigation of the phenomena of Spiritualism. We were quite ready to either believe or disbelieve, but we were not to be deceived. The result, at least, resolved, in due time, to expose it."

Now I find no evidence whatever in Mr. Sothern's communication that he ever investigated Spiritualism at all, except it may be found in his assertion that he once paid some fifteen shillings sterling, more or less, to see the Davenport. Was this the "thorough, practical, and exhaustive investigation" which was either to establish Spiritualism on an enduring basis, or to result in a fearless exposure of its fallacies and its falsehoods? If this was not all, by what other means did he pursue the alleged investigation? We find the only proper answer to this question in the following description of his own peculiar method:

"My practice was that I succeeded in producing not only all the wonderful manifestations of the professional media, but other effects still more startling. We studied to produce the appearance and the results which we had heard of, and read of, and seen, and succeeded. I do not hesitate to say that we could exhibit every attempt or accomplishment of the home, or the Davenport, or any of the other more notorious spiritual exhibitors. Not the least of our successes was, that the whole thing was a myth."

I may remark in passing, that a myth is a fabulous narrative, having an analogy, more or less obvious, to some remote event or actual occurrence, the history of which has been obscured by time, or otherwise. Pray what and where is the reality to which Spiritualism sustains this relation? But if it be true that Spiritualism really consists in the present practice of such jugglery as Mr. Sothern affirms that he was engaged in, how did he make the important discovery "that the whole thing was a myth," or, in other words, a fictitious story which vaguely presents the shadows of distant objects and events?

It is sufficiently obvious that the "exhaustive investigation of Spiritualism" that we read of (we cannot see it), consisted in practicing tricks of jugglery, which he and his associates succeeded in making their visitors believe were the manifestations of human beings who had "put on immortality." This was the "expensive sell" to which Mr. Sothern refers. To be sure it was practiced at the expense of truth; it required the operators to sacrifice their integrity—who, unlike common jugglers, never intimated that they were deceiving, or attempting to deceive their visitors. However, in this aspect of the case, the expense may not have been so heavy, after all, as to be particularly oppressive to those who were pleased to subject themselves to this voluntary taxation. But whatever sacrifice of veracity and humanity may have been made, it was not the result of any extenuation from the force of ordinary circumstances. The vagabond cheats who amuse idle boys, for a few pence, at the corners of the streets, practice their vulgar tricks that they may procure bread; but, according to Mr. Sothern, the "twelve gentlemen of high position in their respective professions" had no such plausible excuse for their conduct—they practiced their profane and cruel deception merely for their own amusement. This man would have us believe that twelve distinguished gentlemen spent much of their time for years in amusing themselves by deceiving other people. While he never exhibited his powers in public, he yet claims to have carried on the business of deception on a larger scale "than any of the professional exhibitors." Others may have been honestly deluded, or subject to some foreign and irresistible power; but this is a case of unblushing imposture—the result of deliberate design and elaborate preparation.

Mr. Sothern presumes there are no swindlers but those who are paid for deceiving their fellow-men. I entertain a different opinion, and strongly suspect that among the most distinguished examples of that class are those who are willing to serve their master without pay. The great philosophical and dramatic poet makes one of his characters regard his purse as "trash" when compared with the wealth of a good name; and I believe there are several things, in heaven and on earth, more valuable than money. They, surely, are the most incorrigible deceivers who are ready and anxious to work for nothing. The professional telegrapher who entertains a promiscuous crowd for a few shillings an hour, but frankly tells the spectators that he is all the while practicing a deception, is a paragon of moral excellence compared with the man who invites his friends and neighbors to visit him—ostensibly at the request of "Ben. Johnson"—to witness a private spiritual exhibition, and yet permits them to go away without so much as intimating to any one that he has only exhibited his counterfeit appearances of the most sacred realities. The profane trifier who thus purposely, and for his own amusement, leads the sincere inquirer astray from the truth; who artfully deceives others—inspiring delusive hopes, and deepening convictions that lay hold of the noblest faculties of the mind; who tantalizes his visitors with phantom shapes and mystical voices of the loved and lost, only that he may ridicule their credulity, and mock like a senseless jester when at last the crushing disappointment comes home to his victims—surely, of all swindlers such an one is most to be dreaded. If one is constitutionally prone to select so base an occupation, he should go to Hindoostan and experiment on the wandering pariah that people the deserts. Let those, at least, be spared whose sensibilities have been refined by the better forms of civilization and religion.

If we may credit the statements of Mr. Sothern, he practiced this heartless deception for years, making "some of the most intelligent men in America believe" that they were really holding intercourse with spirits. And yet, strange to say, he now considers himself "free from the imputation of having... encouraged idle superstitions or perpetrated blasphemous burlesques of sacred things"! Civilized communities have enacted laws to punish all the ordinary forms of swindling, and also against torturing the animal crea-

tion; and if our legislators have hitherto made no provision for the suppression of such wanton and criminal cruelty as I have described, it is doubtless because the iniquity is so monstrous a character that no humane legislator could have anticipated the necessity for such legislation.

Mr. Sothern says: "The things that these people do, are not done by spiritual or supernatural means. I know that—I have proved it—I have done all that they can do, and more." Evidently he neither knows nor has proved anything of the kind. Assuming to have produced all the essential phenomena of Spiritualism, and others of a still more extraordinary nature, he abruptly concludes that there are no genuine spiritual phenomena. Were we to admit the antecedent propositions, we should certainly question the shape of his conclusion. A limited acquaintance with the principles of logic will not enable us to perceive their relations. If we grant that Sothern, with the aid of his confederates, produced such appearances, by methods which he does not choose to disclose, it by no means follows that true Spiritualists produce all the phenomena that occur in their presence by voluntary effort, and in the same fraudulent way. The huckster who pretends to straddle an ass and ride to market, may as logically infer that neither post coaches nor railroad conveyances have any real existence, and that all the better informed and well behaved people whom he meets must have come to town by his own conveyance.

Mr. Sothern's description of Spiritualism is indeed a very dreary affair. It requires no genius to execute such a picture. When no lights are admitted, no objects are revealed that are worth seeing, and only darkness is visible. Viewing the whole subject through the confusion and degradation of his own mental and moral constitution, he thus sums up its European and American history: "On the one hand a chronicle of imbecility, cowardly terror of the supernatural, willful self-delusion and irreligion; and on the other, of fraud, impudent chicanery, and blasphemous indecency."

After "such a practical investigation" as few other men have made," he of course felt authorized to denounce the species of Spiritualism with which alone he was familiar—which he had practiced "for more than two years"—as "a mockery, a delusion, a snare and a swindle." If the shadows preponderate here, it is because this doleful picture was executed in the absence of light, by one whose "exhaustive investigation" of Spiritualism consisted in the tricks whereby he deceived many sincere and earnest inquirers after truth. Spiritualists believe in reform and acknowledge the necessity for a work of grace and practical improvement among themselves. But it is respectfully suggested, that if they are to enjoy the labors of a missionary, to redeem them from their irreligious character and indecent blasphemies, they may have a right to express their preference in the selection of a suitable person. We cannot expect to find the most acceptable preacher of righteousness in one whom common fame and his own profession have declared to be most at home in the character of a cockney or a juggler, and whose boast is, that he has achieved high distinction in the art of deception.

The author of *Spiritualism done dreary* speaks of the believers generally in terms of unmeasured contempt. The shadows in his picture deepen, and the darkness becomes palpable as his charac-teral delineation approaches completion. By implication he compares the conductors of the *London Spiritual Magazine* to "pickpockets." Again he says, "I look upon any Spiritualists as either an impostor or an idiot;" and when he visited the Davenport, he "came away powerfully impressed with the conviction that... their supporters and believers were mad." If Sothern's tricks "made some of the most intelligent men in America believe" that they were really holding intercourse with spirits, it is inevitable that he has exerted a most mischievous and desolating influence on the minds and morals of the community. In other words, and according to his own showing, he has multiplied the knaves and fools when there were enough already; and it will require a new and skillful illustration of his jugglery to evade this responsibility. For these melancholy results of his efforts he should be held to a rigid accountability by the conservators of the public welfare.

But Mr. Sothern is convinced that the believers in Spiritualism are "mad." Among the indications of madness, which first and chiefly attract the attention of the ordinary observer, are a want of coherency of language and consistency of conduct. The individual talks at random and exerts himself without a rational motive for action. It will be perceived that Mr. Sothern answers the description very well, though it may be admitted that he exhibits less "method in his madness" than ordinary lunatics. We search in vain for any plausible pretext for his conduct. He devotes himself to a most thankless task without the least hope of reward. He is not prompted by his necessities; nor can he so much as offer the poor excuse for his conduct which avarice might suggest. With no rational purpose in view, he labored for years, with untiring zeal—worked for nothing and found himself. And this was not all.

He even assures us "that the evening invariably wound up with a jolly little supper, provided solely at his own expense." This is surely more than could rationally have been expected of human nature in its normal condition. If we set aside those whom Providence designs to crown with martyrdom, it must be apparent that such utter self-abnegation is wholly incompatible with the natural instincts of a sound mind.

What I have written involves the implied admission of the truth of Mr. Sothern's present claim, namely, that he was not a spiritual medium, but only a mere trifier, who amused himself by jesting about things which possess a sacred significance; and in making (as he virtually assumes) knaves and idiots of "some of the most intelligent men in America." And yet I am reminded that many things occurred in the "miracle circle" which do not favor the supposition that they originated with Mr. Sothern and his confederates. Among other things I refer to the stern reproofs and earnest moral lessons that were often expressed and forcibly inculcated; to say nothing of the threats of a public exposure of the secret conduct of a number of those "gentlemen of high standing in their several professions." It is not usual for men, whatever may be their moral condition, to threaten and denounce themselves; much less would they be inclined to do this in the presence of strangers. And yet such threats—purporting to have emanated from a spiritual source—were made in my presence. The writer was an invited guest at the Miracle Circle, (courtesy of "Ben. Johnson") but went away with an empty stomach. A fair opportunity for personal observation leads to the conclusion, that the "jolly little supper," with which "the evening invariably wound up," may have been "a myth." A generous hospitality requires but a small sacrifice, so long as it is distinguished on paper. Some of the "distinguished gentlemen" were thus brought to a severe reckoning for alleged secret practices that could not be reconciled with the "Ten Command-

ments." The subject might be edifying to the reader, but as it is not altogether pleasant to the writer, and may not be agreeable to the parties most concerned, a special reference to a single example must suffice.

The persons forming the circle, being properly seated around the table, with their hands on the table, and of necessity visible to all, one of the parties was directed to hold one hand under the table, whereupon a sealed package was placed in the hand. On breaking the seal it was found that the envelope contained an open confession that the several parties whose names were underlined had been guilty of violating the Seventh Commandment. This confession was expressed in humble and penitent language, and seven men who were present—a majority being among the alleged authors of that "expensive sell"—found the names by which they were respectively known attached to the confessions, each in his own peculiar chirography. This paper was carefully inspected by every member of the company, and I have not forgotten the sensation it occasioned. Now I submit that whilst men of depraved morals may converse with each other respecting their illicit practices, they are not likely to invite in strangers to listen to such a confession. If this was not the work of those who managed the affairs of the circle, where are we to look for the author or authors of that humiliating confession? If, on the contrary, it was dictated by themselves, it is not manifest that they were hardened enough to glory in their own shame? If this was one of Mr. Sothern's practical jokes, he is entitled to the writer's thanks for having graciously omitted to place his name on the roll of infamy. Moreover, such a confession, voluntarily made, in the absence of religious convictions, and of any and every circumstance requiring such an indecent revelation, would naturally be regarded as conclusive evidence, that its author was as unsound in his mind as he professed to be in his morals.

It is alleged to have been the original intention of Mr. Sothern to expose the falsehood of Spiritualism had his investigation of the subject resulted in such a discovery. Now if he really ascertained that it had no foundation in truth, why did he not admonish the public at once by a speedy and fearless exposure? It appears that his sluggish sense of duty permitted a period of several years to elapse without one word of condemnation, publicly expressed. It is a suggestive circumstance that his exposition only comes to us, at least, when a contributor to a foreign journal had taken the liberty to openly identify his name with the subject. However, had Mr. Sothern been satisfied with a simple denial of the spiritual origin of the facts observed in his presence, I should not have taken up my pen, and his communication would probably have elicited no reply. But when he makes his denial the occasion for an unmerited assault on the characters of a large and respectable portion of the people of both Europe and America, he deserves to be sharply rebuked.

Spiritualism has nothing to fear from the childish passion and opposition of its enemies; nor can it suffer from any ordeal which the progress of civilization and the developments of science can possibly institute with a view to test its claims. Old falsehoods must die and be buried; materialism returns to the dust from which it sprang; the theories of popular skepticism change like the shifting sands beneath the waves; the deceivers go their way and the scoundrels to their own place; they doubtless perish and disappear; those who mock become silent, and darkness covers their memory. All infidel philosophies and soulless systems are left to decompose together. No light shines above their common sepulchre, save the pale, phosphorescent illumination that reveals the scenes of corruption and defines the empire of the dead.

But Spiritualism has the inherent elements of an indestructible life. It rests on the fundamental laws and relations of the human mind; the Religions of all periods and countries are based upon its positive facts and eternal principles, while its illustrations are found alike in the sacred books of Pagans, Jews and Christians, and in all history. The illuminated seers and spiritual heroes of other times are not dead—such men never die. The hour of their martyrdom is the hour of their resurrection. They ascend to the conditions of a more exalted life and yet remain with us in spirit to strengthen the weak, and to rebuke the unworthy. The effigies of the Apostles are still in the temples of our religion; Jesus is risen from the dead; and every great inspired teacher also rises in spirit and in power as the world advances to the comprehension of his teachings. Confucius, Pythagoras, John and Swedenborg are living teachers of to-day; and, in some sense, every saint stands before us a vital and inspiring presence. Great souls shine out like stars in the firmament to light our pathway, and the common faith of mankind is a prophetic revelation of their sublime estate. Here and there, even now, the light breaks through the clouds of time and sense. Strains of broken but divine music float down to us through the still atmosphere of our spirit; and forever "beautiful upon the mountain summits of human life, are the white feet of those who bring good news."

S. B. BRITTON.

To the Spiritualists of Massachusetts.

Brothers and Sisters—The Call for a Convention, which you have seen in the *Banner of Light* for some weeks past, has been responded to, and the result is before you in the report of said Convention. The object of this appeal is to invite your careful attention to the affirmation of principles there made, the Constitution adopted, and the practical measures proposed to spread the new Gospel everywhere in our State, and also to solicit your cooperation in the good work. What we wish and hope to secure is from one to three thousand names appended to this Constitution within the next few weeks, together with the dollar, or more, as the expression of our determination that the work shall go forward. But if any one objects to signing the Constitution, they can still aid in sending the Agent through the State on his mission of good. If every place will equal Worcester, we shall have more than that sum very soon. We have no idea that we have made our plan perfect at first, but we have made a beginning, and you can perfect, in the future, what is defective in the present. The old organizations are making the most gigantic efforts to maintain the supremacy of falsehood, and the mental slavery, and spiritual degradation of man. The world looks to us, and rightly, too, for light and help. We ask you, not to dispense your worldly means by the hundreds of thousands, and even millions, as do the Churches; but we do urge that the Spiritualists of the Old Bay State expend a few hundreds, the present year, in the way proposed in our Constitution. Brothers and Sisters, let us do one practical thing. Send in your dollars to the Corresponding Secretary, care of the *Banner of Light* Office, and they will be promptly acknowledged through that paper, and paid over to the Treasurer.

In places where any of the officers reside, it may be more convenient to pay over to them, and they forward it. In any way you please to send your name and money, will be acceptable to the Association, and we doubt not to the angel-world, which has inspired this movement. For the Executive Committee, J. S. LOVELAND, Cor. Secretary.

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Banner of Light.

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LUTHER COLBY, EDITOR.

Real and Rational.

It appears to have become a positive need with certain preachers to bring the claims of Spiritualism before their congregations, at stated intervals. Some do it from one motive, and some from another. On one side, there is an admitted necessity for discussing this matter, on account of its growing influence over the minds of their flocks. On the other, there are, here and there, men who are willing to study the matter in the light of growth, and an inward desire for more light, and one of the phenomena of human progress. We have little or no sympathy with the former class, while with the latter we should have far more if it were not so patent beforehand that they were of all practical purposes prejudiced as to the result at which they mean to have their discussions arrive.

The Rev. Mr. Frothingham, of New York—certainly one of the most advanced among liberal Christians, who styles himself a Unitarian, and has been thought by many to be the man worthy to be named before others for the place left unoccupied by the death of Mr. Parker—Mr. Frothingham, we say, is at present engaged in delivering a series of what are called "eloquent discourses" on Spiritualism before his congregation; the burden of which is, we are glad to say for once, not the old stock objections to Spiritualism on the score of prejudice or hatred, for of that he shows none—but the fact that spirit communion is no new thing, nor modern fact, no recently developed faith, but has rather been an inspiration for the mind of man for centuries, and would really be of practical value to the race now if it were fairly laid by the side of reason, and demonstrated to be sound and reliable by the patent process of Rationalism. Mr. Frothingham insists that this is the age distinctively of Rationalism to which all things must be rightly referred, and by which their value must be proved.

He makes a show of candor, in fact, in his approach toward his subject, that he may gain advantage for coming to his insufficient conclusion with the more apparent fairness and force. While he admits the antiquity of the belief in the presence and personal communications of spirits, and quotes Milton and Longfellow in favor of that universal belief, and refers to literature as being a complete treasury of allusions to the fact and subscriptions to it also—he nevertheless is resolutely unwilling to put any credence in any of the theories or philosophies that are erected on the countless evidences of spirit-communication, until such time as they shall have first fully commended themselves to his reason. In this conclusion of his, he is simply inconsistent with himself. He does not deny facts at all, and yet he insists that reason shall dominate over them. This is in order to make it appear that the present is the age of reason indeed. The inductive method teaches us to first collect our facts, then classify them according to their natural relations, and then proceed to the conclusions to which they manifestly point us. But Mr. Frothingham wants the facts to give way to the reason. How this can be, he does not pretend to make plain to us, nor even to touch upon at all. In his zeal for Rationalism, he becomes just as irrational as possible.

He admits the full reality of Spiritualism, therefore, but demands to be satisfied of its rationality. If the former, then the latter follows as a matter of course. But to make the facts of Spiritualism insufficient and comparatively unimportant, he speaks of them in one passage as being the same with the delusions, trances, oracles, and other manifestations to which he obviously attaches no rational importance. But in another place he comes back again to the truth, and admits, because there is no other way left open for him, quite all that we could ask of him. And he frankly confesses that it will not do to exercise positive disbelief—respecting these manifestations. They are matters, he says, on which human judgments are to be suspended; men are neither to believe nor disbelieve. "We neither accept nor scout; we suspend judgment"—is his language.

And hence he passes to a word of praise for the good, and true, and pure men and women who do believe, and profess their belief, in these well ascertained facts of Spiritualism. In spite of their character, he refuses to accept their hypotheses. His mistake is in supposing there is any hypothesis about it. Had he personally investigated it, as many another man of at least equal capacities has done before him, he would not speak now of hypotheses; he would be stating the facts, and upon them building the philosophy which is their merited superstructure and crown. If Mr. F. would for once let his own preconceived theories go, particularly on the single subject of Rationalism, and open his mind to the reception of facts wherever he found them, he would find that he had come nearer to a truly spiritual faith than ever before.

The Rescue from Shipwreck.

Boston has scarcely recovered from the excitement caused by the appearance of nearly three hundred shipwrecked emigrants in our midst, two Sundays ago. The incident was excellently adapted to work just the results it did work. Our people showed that the instincts of humanity were stronger, after all, than selfishness, by pouring most bounteously of what they had into the laps of the sufferers. The whole scene was calculated to move the hardest heart. It is not often that the popular sympathies are so powerfully appealed to. It never does them any harm, but, rather, good. We all need to be told, now and then, that we are brothers by birth, and that blessed charity is as blessed for those who give as those who receive.

Dr. Willis's Lecture.

Our readers this week will find a mental feast in perusing Dr. Willis's able lecture delivered in this city before the Lyceum Society of Spiritualists. All will be interested in it.

Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

This life-long champion of human rights and human liberty went out of editorial service on the 1st of January, at which time the *Liberator* went out of existence. He said that, inasmuch as slavery was overthrown in the United States, his special work was done. For thirty-five years he has wrought with untiring zeal and energy for the cause nearest his heart, and feels that he has received his blessing in advance by reason of having lived to see the consummation of his wishes and the perfect realization of his hopes. Human slavery does not exist as an institution in the United States. This single fact is the crown to his long-continued labors.

The *Liberator* had numerous enemies during its historic career, as was naturally to have been expected of so distinct an enterprise. Slowly but surely it grew to be a power, and a great political party at length came up to the plane on which it had originally taken its position. The name of Mr. Garrison is known wherever the word slavery is spoken over, the face of the civilized globe. He will be remembered by friend and foe alike; and it is but a proof of the soundness of his principles, that those who began with bitterly opposing him, now freely accept the conclusions to which they inevitably lead. Some of the strongest abolitionists are to-day to be found in the Southern States themselves.

Suicide of a Clergyman.

On Thanksgiving Day, Mr. Reuben Townsend, residing in Wilton, Me., committed suicide by hanging himself in his barn. He was a preacher of the Calvinist Baptist denomination, and was one of the most respected citizens of the town. He was in good circumstances.—*Boston Herald*.

Wonder if *Spiritualism* was the cause that induced Mr. Townsend to commit suicide? Being a "Calvinist Baptist" preacher, he think not.

Seeing that the theological and secular press are strenuously endeavoring to fasten murders, suicides, and the whole catalogue of human crimes, upon the backs of Spiritualists, by the circulation of the grossest falsehoods ever invented by man, we have been requested by several friends to chronicle everything that the Church has really been guilty of from time to time, and what sins are daily occurring in their midst; but we shall not do so, for the reason that the catalogue would occupy more room in our columns than we could possibly spare.

It is about time this mean, contemptible business of people who call themselves *Christians*, cease. Spiritualists are just as respectable as any other class of people in the community, and their Scientific Religion has more backbone in it than anything of the kind that was ever vouchsafed to mankind.

Chelsea.

The Spiritualists of Chelsea are in a very flourishing condition. They have had, some of the finest speakers in the land to address them, and of every variety. Whilst Lizzie Doten and Mrs. Smith held the audience spell-bound by their beautiful and transcendent eloquence, Todd, the fearless pioneer, blazed forth like the rays of a rough diamond, his native and powerful eloquence, which penetrated the thick gloom of the old school of Theology, and showed it forth in all its deformities, contrasting it with the new and glorious light of Spiritualism. Like unto the oak which sprung from the acorn, in his own words, so has he grown up from the Old Theology; and it would be as possible, so he says, to crowd him back to his starting point, as it would be to push back the sturdy oak into the acorn.

The Children's Lyceum is thriving well. Next Wednesday evening, some of the friends of the Lyceum will give an entertainment of *Tableaux*, &c., for the benefit of the Lyceum. We hope that a goodly sum will be the result, for a little material aid is needed to help this new and glorious institution along.

Adin Ballou, the good old solid veteran in the cause, lectured to a full and appreciative audience a week ago last Sunday night.

F. L. H. Willis next Sunday.

We are pleased to announce that arrangements have been completed whereby F. L. H. Willis, M. D., of New York, is to speak before the Lyceum Society of Spiritualists in this city, next Sunday. He will repeat the two splendid discourses he gave here in December, on a very stormy Sunday, which discourses many have asked to have repeated, viz., "The Gospel of Spiritualism," and "The Experiences of Theodore Parker on entering Spirit-Life." Two more interesting discourses are rarely heard even from spiritual platforms. We hope he will be able to speak here the Sundays during the month. The public are invited free to attend these meetings, and no doubt those who feel any interest in the spiritual philosophy, will take this opportunity to attend. We know they will hear something that will interest, and, if they so desire, benefit them.

The Indians as Voters.

A bill has been introduced into Congress by Mr. Raymond, of New York, making provision for what its author supposes to be equal suffrage, by allowing almost every class of males in the country to vote, under certain qualifications, except the *Indians*. These are not to be entrusted with the elective franchise on any terms. The Constitution prescribed that those Indians who were taxed should be counted in with the representative part of the general population; which is as far as it had authority to go; but modern legislation travels out of its way to brand Indians as unfit, under any circumstances, to exercise the elective franchise. We protest against the grossly cruel character of such an assumption. Let the Indian be treated at least as fairly as the black, if not the white, man.

The Anti-Slavery Societies.

The American Anti-Slavery Society held a session in this city last week. The question of dissolving the Organization was freely discussed and defeated by a large majority. The Society will continue to work for what its members consider the unattained rights of the colored race. The Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society also met in this city last week. It also resolved to continue its organization, and engage more zealously in the work of securing to the colored race their entire freedom and equal rights. John T. Sargent was elected President and Charles K. Whipple Corresponding Secretary.

Meetings in the Melodeon.

Fifteen hundred people were crowded into the Melodeon on Sunday, Jan. 21st, to hear each lecture given by Mrs. Cora Daniels, and many more went away for want of room. Education was the subject spoken upon in the afternoon. In the evening, the controlling influence purported to be that of Mrs. Eliza Farnham, who spoke with great ability upon the Position of Woman.

DEATH OF A WRITER.—The late foreign papers announce the death of Frederica Bremer, at Stockholm.





Obituaries. Passed to Immortality, from East Princeton, Mass., on the 24 Inst., Mrs. Sarah M. Mirick, wife of Moses Mirick, and eldest daughter of Deacon Joshua T. Everett, in the 57th year of her age.

She was one of the purest, most benevolent and most lovely of spirits that ever inhabited our earth, and she was loved accordingly. No wife, daughter, sister, relative, friend, or neighbor was ever more devotedly or affectionately attached to her than she was to her dear friends. Her companion, left in charge of their darling boy, the young to know his loss, breathes the sorrowful atmosphere of affliction, outflowing from her exalted spirit, and serene virtues, make the contrast almost unendurable to him, yet, with the proportionate spiritual consolations which dwell in his soul, he looks up the bright pathway of his ascension, and hopes on.

Her heart in the stricken family circle melted with his, and she shared his grief, and sympathized with all the circles of social life in which she moved. She has passed through a long and trying sickness of more than two years continuing, which she has borne with a gentleness, patience and patience worthy of herself. Not a murmur, complaint, or expression of weakness, she bore up against the surging waves of disease, till death could no longer be withheld, when she gave up her arms, to be borne in triumph to her spirit home. She was a true Spiritualist, of the practical Christian school, and her faith, as well as her whole character, was ever responsive to the testimonies of truth and righteousness—the reforms and progress of the age—to the demands of the times, and to the laws of divine love. She lived on earth, and lives in heaven, and is still a blessing to the spirits of the departed, and to the souls of the living.

North Fairfax, Va., Dec. 22d, 1865, very suddenly, Sarah A., only child of widow Sarah Ann Wells, and granddaughter of Joseph Story, aged 18 years 5 months and 11 days. At an unexpected time the death angel came, in the form of a fond and devoted mother her only child, and one who was the source and delight of an aged grandfather, and a host of more distant relatives and friends, who had learned to love her by witnessing her sweet temper and kind and obliging ways, and who were her dear and happy home of the blessed immortality.

Thus a golden link is broken In the chain of earthly bliss; Thus the distance shortens this "Twixt the brighter world and this."

North Fairfax, Va., Jan. 14, 1866. Passed to Spirit-Life, from Hermon, Me., Jan. 8th, Solon L. Miller, aged 45 yrs. With full faith in the Spiritual World, he prepared himself for death, and met it with cheerfulness, happy in the thought that he should be released from suffering, and with added powers would be able to do more good in the world of consumption, and for two years struggled with his pains, the body wasting, but the spirit growing nearer the great truth of immortality.

Funeral services by the writer. Mrs. H. T. STEARNS.

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Banner of Light.

WESTERN DEPARTMENT: CINCINNATI, OHIO.

J. M. PEEBLES, RESIDENT EDITOR.

The Child Murderess of Battle Creek.

Only because pressed by private letters of inquiry and slips cut from secular prints, do we pen this article. It is no pleasant task to refer to the vices and errors of a common humanity. The instincts of our nature rather prompt us to see the good than the ill—the sunshine than the dark shadows of civic life.

Though we had resided in that city the past nine years, (our family still living there,) lecturing six of them every alternate Sunday to a highly intelligent congregation of Spiritualists, the parties involved, with one exception, were entire strangers to us—newcomers, in fact, into the city.

The lawyer of Ypsilanti that, as counsel, obtained her divorce, told me that "Leonard, the husband, was a quarreling, drunken Irishman." This, with other troubles, anxiety, poverty, and a psychological infatuation of one Dr. Baker, no doubt drove her into insanity, ultimately in the poisoning and death of the three children.

She confessed the whole matter, with including causes, which were not spiritual. Certainly, no mother, aglow with a mother's love—a mother's tender affections—could in a calm, sane state of mind, poison and destroy her own dear children!

The whole sad affair had just about as much to do with genuine Spiritualism as the rebellion had to do with the glorious "Republic of Heaven." True, she had professed to be a Spiritualist; so the Rev. J. S. Harden, Methodist clergyman, of Belvidere, N. J., professed to be a Christian, yet was hung for poisoning and murdering his wife, giving her said poison in an apple, while she was tenderly caressing him.

Suppose we moralize upon the facts and figures, as stated above, relative to the terrible crimes of clergyman and Church-members, as is customary with secular and sectarian journalists concerning Spiritualism. Oh! the demoralizing tendency of Orthodox theology! It opens the flood-gates of vice, and is ruining the morals of the country.

Oh! the danger of modern Presbyterianism! This modern Methodism, &c. They are VERY "modern" when compared with the old Mother Church of All-Roman Catholicism! Why did not the secular and religious papers mention that, at the time of Mrs. Haviland's crime, a deacon of the Presbyterian Church in Battle Creek, was under arrest for stealing "Government Bonds," and lay it to the influence of modern Presbyterianism?

We know sectarists who are honest and good, in spite of the baleful influences of their creeds; and, also, believers in Spiritualism who are depraved and fragmentary, notwithstanding the healing and holy influences that a belief in the ministry of spirits and angels should naturally produce.

Justice and charity with the wise beautifully blend. Faith and hope are upliftings; but an apostle declared that "Charity is the greatest of all." Berries and cherries, chaff and wheat, flowers and weeds abound in close proximity on earthly grounds; and, in eradicated the weeds, let the reformer be careful not to trample down even one tender, half-hidden plant that is struggling to get up into the clear sunlight.

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Congratulatory Letters.

We have received letters of congratulation, relative to our position with the "Banner of Light," from Hudson Tuttle, Cora Wilburn, Moses Hull, and many, very many other authors, lecturers and prominent laymen in the ranks of Spiritualism, with some officiating clergymen, all of which we not only appreciate, but derive strength and courage therefrom.

Dr. J. H. Rutledge.

This celebrated Magnetic Physician opens rooms in this city, Feb. the 5th, for the healing of the sick by the "laying on of hands." See his advertisement in another column.

Cincinnati Meetings.

The Religious Society of Progressive Spiritualists of Cincinnati held their annual election for officers Sunday morning, Dec. 31st, 1865, and the following persons were elected to serve as the Executive Board of the Society during the year 1866: President, Hon. A. G. W. Carter; Vice-President, M. W. Cary; Secretary, A. W. Pugh; Treasurer, Joseph H. Taylor; Trustees, A. Huntington, Henry Beck, H. T. Ogden; Collector, J. B. Taylor.

The last report we sent you of our meetings was up to the first of October. During October E. V. Wilson occupied the desk, eliciting the usual amount of interest in lecturing and delineating character. Bro. Wilson is doing a good and "big" work along the Ohio river, having been the messenger within the past few months, of startling several new organizations.

Rev. J. G. Fish spoke during the month of November, and was received with the usual appreciation due him as an earnest worker in the cause of humanity.

Nelle L. Wiltse, in December, created such a lively interest it might be termed a "revival." She brought out minds that do not often frequent our hall. As a speaker she ranks among the best. Her voice is clear, distinct, and well toned, and fills every part of the hall; periods well rounded, and no confusion of sentences.

Rev. J. M. Peebles is with us now, for his next month. His many bearing, and true, noble qualities insure for him success, and no doubt the audience that frequent our hall will feel more than glad to have sat under his ministrations.

We have not yet been able to institute a "Children's Progressive Lyceum," because we cannot procure the hall at the proper time to hold the Lyceum; but we hope that Cincinnati ere long will not be behind in this God-given movement.

Proceedings of the Massachusetts State Convention. HELD IN HORTICULTURAL HALL, WORCESTER, JANUARY 18TH AND 19TH, 1866.

We closed our report of last week with the afternoon of the first day. It was then thought that the Committee on Permanent Organization would be able to report a plan during the evening session; but as they could not perfect their report, the time was devoted to speeches and discussions. The regular half-hour speech in the afternoon was made by Mrs. M. S. Townsend; and in the evening, J. S. Loveland and B. Todd were the first speakers to be followed by several others, all of whom urged immediate, practical action.

On Friday morning, the Committee on Permanent Organization reported a Preamble, Platform of Principles, and a Constitution. The report called out quite an animated discussion. The Declaration of Principles was subjected, article by article, to a most critical examination, and with a few verbal alterations, unanimously adopted, as were, also, the articles of the Constitution and the Preamble.

As soon as the instrument, as a whole, had been adopted, the members of the Convention commenced the practical work of giving their names, and also their dollars, thus proving that they were in earnest, and had assembled for a purpose higher than mere talk. They had not appointed an agent in name merely, but one for work, and their part of the contract was to see him sustained. Considering the smallness of the number present, a handsome sum was paid over on the spot; and if other places equal Worcester in the liberality of their offerings, the Executive Committee will be able to put two agents into the field instead of one. Friends from out of the State were present with words of hope, and dollars of help. Maine, Connecticut, New York, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island were represented by glorious souls, who are workers in the field of spiritual reform. We thank them for their presence, sympathy and assistance.

olly an improvement on theirs, both in the manner and the result. We were free from the restraint of priestly forms and priestly pretensions, and therefore, there was no impediment to the full flow of the genial soul life. We shall long remember the pleasant hour passed with those noble and devoted ones, who work for the up-building of Truth and Justice.

Whereas, the so-called Christianity of the world, known in modern times as Popular Theology, has for many years of constant effort, failed to meet the present religious demands of mankind; and instead of bringing about a state of harmony between man and God, has, on the contrary, taught that there is an eternal enmity existing between them; and still further, has sought to close up all means of communication between humanity and the spirit-life; it therefore becomes us as Spiritualists, enjoying, as we claim to be, the light of a superior, more complete and definite revelation to make to the world a clear and full declaration of what Spiritualism teaches, and the benefits which flow therefrom.

II. We affirm the absolute oneness, or Brotherhood of Humanity, both in the earthly and spiritual life; that between the seen and the unseen exist the same sympathies, interests and fraternal converse, (so far as conditions admit) as between those in either of those departments of human existence.

III. We affirm that true freedom consists only in the complete disenfranchisement of the human soul from all the Creeds, Institutions and Customs of the world, which imply in any degree the spirit of Caste, or selfish partiality; or, in any way subjugate the individual man to the will, or caprice of one or many; and includes the unrestricted, untrammelled exercise of every power of his nature in accordance with the spontaneous, normal promptings of the same; and any interference therewith is the very essence of tyranny, which we will steadfastly and forever resist.

IV. We affirm that this Freedom is in entire harmony with the most perfect order, and the most absolute justice, so far as personal, social, or political life is concerned. The Freedom of Humanity, both in the earthly and spiritual life, embodying as it does the most perfect phenomena—the grandest philosophy—the most complete, wide-spread inspiration; and therefore, the strongest motives to goodness of any religious system ever presented to man, is worthy of all acceptance, and justly demands the earnest attention of all, as the only possible way for man's salvation.

V. We affirm that in arraying ourselves against the Popular Theology of the so-called Christian world, we do not assail the adherents of its creeds, but only the demoralizing dogmas which enslave them.

VI. We affirm that all happiness, or misery of all men is necessarily so linked in a common fate, that we must labor for the good of all in order to secure the welfare of any.

VII. We affirm that all happiness or suffering is the natural consequence of moral and other conditions, existing in the constitution of things, and not the result of any special enactment of Deity; consequently the only way of salvation is through a correct knowledge of that constitution, and harmony with its principles.

VIII. We acknowledge that the only true method of testing any system of principles is by the practical application of the same to the many complex principles; therefore we, as Spiritualists, propose to submit ourselves to such test by instituting the following method of practical effort, as embodied in the following CONSTITUTION.

ART. I. This Convention shall be known as the Massachusetts Convention of Spiritualists, and shall hold annual and quarterly meetings at such times and places as the Executive Committee shall determine.

ART. II. The officers of this Convention shall consist of a President, Vice President, a Corresponding and Recording Secretary, Treasurer, and an Executive Committee, which shall be composed of the above named officers and three other persons, all of whom shall be elected at the annual meeting.

ART. III. It shall be the duty of the President of this Convention to preside at its public meetings, and also to preside at the Executive Committee, to exercise a general oversight of the interests of the Convention, and see that its will is executed.

ART. IV. It shall be the duty of the Vice President to act as the assistant and proxy of the President, and in case of his disability or refusal to act, to assume and discharge his duties.

ART. V. It shall be the duty of the Corresponding Secretary to conduct all the correspondence of the Convention, to initiate and maintain a fraternal correspondence with all similar organizations, to issue all calls for meetings, at the order of the President, and be present at such meetings and keep a record of its doings and hand them over to the Recording Secretary, whose duty it shall be to make and keep a permanent record of all the doings of the Convention and its agents.

ART. VI. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive, hold, and pay out all moneys for current expenses, according to the direction of the Executive Committee; but he shall pay out no funds without a written order from the President, countersigned by the Secretary. He shall also keep a true and just account of all moneys received or paid out, and make annual and quarterly reports of the same to the Convention.

ART. VII. It shall be the duty of the Executive Committee, in the interim of Convention's sittings, to carry out its purposes to the utmost of their ability.

At the Conference in Hope Chapel, on Sunday afternoon, Jan. 14th, Rev. Mr. Benning spoke of a picture he had witnessed, that represented an angel with wings. He thought that there were no angels but what had once inhabited the world of materialism, and if they had no wings here, they would have none in the spirit-world.

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upon the mother, situated in the Summer-Land, she then no doubt acted from her standpoint, and sent her children to that home and Lyceum, thinking she had done her highest duty. She did not believe in teaching that there was such a beautiful spot there, but that we are required to stop on the earth as long as we can, and work out our destiny here. To prove it, she cited the healing art as natural, and would not have been required if it were better to go to the Summer-Land in infancy. She gave the audience the impression that such teaching as is taught the children at the Lyceums was bad in its results in many cases. Weak-minded persons would get the impression that life in the material was worthless, so try and get to a better life as soon as they get tired of this. Her remarks were received with great applause. She also spoke of the Spiritualists organizing, and thought it impossible while each one held his own idea of God; but if they would lay aside God altogether, they might get nearer in unity, &c., &c.

Dr. Young and others spoke, and the debates created quite a lively interest amongst the listeners. SHAWMUT.

Quarterly Meeting. The next Quarterly Meeting of the "Northern Wisconsin Spiritualist Association," will be held in the village of Omro, in the brick school-house, on the first Saturday and Sunday, being the 3d and 4th days of February next. N. Frank White and Mrs. S. E. Warner are expected. J. P. GALLUP, Sec.

LECTURERS' APPOINTMENTS AND ADDRESSES. PUBLISHED QUARTERLY EVERY WEEK IN THE BANNER OF LIGHT.

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