

BANNER

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NO. 3.

LITERARY.

The Origin of Hell.

From out the mass of men, the Priests first sprung;
They were, in fact, an avaricious band;
In payment for their easy use of tongue,
They took the fairest products of the land,
And gave their charities with an ungodly hand!
They multiplied exceedingly; were soon
Possessing "highest seats" in Church and State:
And then, behold, they sang a different tune—
"Repent! repent! before it is too late,
Or ye are wholly damned—the small and great!"
And lest some time men caviled at their trade,
Each Priest brought in his offering of Evil;
And thus is seen how ancient Hell was made
To be the home of every modern Devil!

H. ARINGTON DYM.

Freedom's Promise.

(Suggested by the late Political Defeat.)

BY MISS E. P. THORNDIKE.

"Freedom's battle, once begun,
Recked not from bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft, is ever won."
Be still, O anxious hearts! and calmly wait
The coming hour that tells a people's fate.
Curb the deep throbbings of your heaving breasts,
O lowly ones, who long have been oppressed!
And ye, who stand upon the watchman's tower,
And read the record of each passing hour,
Nerve your brave hearts with a diviner glow;
For aspiration, like the ocean's flow,
Is swelling up from souls whose latent power
Will break nor meet nor bounds to Freedom's power.
O subtle souls! whose boon it is to know,
By Reason's power, and Inspiration's glow,
The deeper current of this moving life,
Whose every phase with higher thought is rife—
Work nobly, earnestly, and proudly dare
To urge the conquest of a realm so fair.
Upon whose grander heights the coming man
Shall walk triumphant to great Nature's plan;
No more the fool, the plaything, of the hour,
He stands a god, nor fears the tyrant's power!
But ere that distant goal shall be attained,
To banish ills the good will be profaned,
While demagogue, in robes of ermine clad,
Corrupt the nation, Meek-eyed Justice, sad,
With mournful gaze surveys the passing scene,
Yet sees, beyond the mists that intervene,
A radiant future, tinged with golden beams—
A full-orbed Freedom, on whose summit beams
The culmination of long toiling years,
Outwrought through agony, and blood, and tears.
Roll back the curtain of the starry dome!
Survey the grandeur of the spirits' home!
"Let there be light!" the cheering strains prolong;
And O, ye Nations, swell the magic song,
Till earth's remotest mountain shall proclaim
A people's birthright is no idle name!
Hail pope and potentate from earthly throne—
Justice and right shall circle earth's zone;
A higher Faith will cheer the coming age,
Redeeming death, and brightening History's page.
The maudlin priest, with creed and parchment old,
No longer leads; Truth is not bought and sold,
But comes untrammelled from the spheres above,
And draws the people by the power of love.
It needs no organ peal, no steeples high,
No mitered crown, nor hypocrite sigh,
But throws its holy spell o'er high and low,
Embracing Nations in its hallowed glow.

COMMUNICATIONS.

RATIONAL ASPECT OF SPIRITUALISM, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

NUMBER THREE.

Commencing with the earliest possible dates of human history to which any remarkable credence can be given, we find at least one feature the same in all parts of the known earth; and that is the tribal system, very similar in character to that of the North and South American Indians, of the past and present type. This characteristic of the race is fully borne out by the historic records of the Bible, where not alone the twelve or thirteen tribes of Israel are spoken of, but many other tribes, with whom they almost constantly warred and plundered. In this connection, a very important question, full of significance, comes up for elucidation, on rational grounds of natural phenomena. Has the past history of the race of man presented to us any change in the unfoldment or development of his intelligence, differing in any manner from what we are made acquainted with by and through the history, which we know to be authentic, of the last two or three hundred years? If the answer shall be in the negative, as I conceive it must, by what rule of anthropology, or ethnography, can it be made to appear that such an exalted condition of humanity existed at so early a period of the world as the Old Testament writers claim for the Hebrews, while they were yet not only living in tribes, but nomadic or wandering tribes, having less of what constitutes civilization, by far, than the Indian tribes inhabiting the States and Territories of the Union. After making all due allowance for any difference there may be in the relative development of various tribes of ancient date, it is yet difficult to understand how

the nomadic tribes of Israel could have been so far in advance of contemporary tribes, inhabiting a country equally favorable to the employment of human intelligence, and offering all the facilities and opportunities enjoyed by the Hebrews in gathering around them food, raiment, and shelter. We have the evidence before us, that the tribes of red men, now living among or near us, differ essentially, in their mental capacities, one tribe from another. The Araucanians of the South American confederation may be considered the most advanced, perhaps, in Indian civilization, of any others on the American continent; and yet their manners and customs, their mode of life and religious views, their polygamy and political condition, rest on a low plane of development, which may be understood by a simple statement made by Mr. Reuel Smith, who spent some time among them in getting a knowledge of their country (Chili) and their habits:—"Manin-Huano (the grass of heaven) is very old, estimated at from ninety to one hundred, and even more, though his appearance presents little to indicate such an age; erect, though not vigorous, with a bright, piercing eye, and his long black hair but sparsely scattered with gray, he might be taken for a person of sixty." "The dress of the grand *toqui* was not, it must be confessed, such as might have been expected, considering his exalted rank. He wore a shirt that probably had been used for several months without washing, a ragged military vest, and a poncho tied round the waist, and falling to the feet like a petticoat; a red and yellow handkerchief surmounted his head, and completed his costume." Their numbers are said to be not much short of 100,000; the males all trained to rugged endurance in war, or the chase, like the ancient Spartans. These Araucanians fought successfully against all the forces that Old Spain could bring to bear against them, when she held in her embrace the South American Republics; and their independence was acknowledged by Spain. Since then Chili has endeavored to subdue them to her rule; but, so far from succeeding, she was glad to make terms of peace, and, it is said, pays an annual tribute in cash, as per treaty stipulations. Of the Indians of the United States, the Cherokees are evidently much in advance of all other tribes; the gradation of development descending until it reaches its minimum, or lowest point, in the Digger Indians of California. The Hebrews, Israelites, or Jews, are of the Semitic race, whose ancestry no doubt runs back to the early dawn of the history of mankind. Their origin seems to have been somewhere in the vicinity of the Euphrates, the Jordan, and the Nile. History informs us that they began as nomads, migrating from nation to nation, from state to state. They have been oppressed and persecuted by all the ruling powers of the old world, and suffered the martyr's doom at the hands of bigotry and intolerance, wielded by emperors, sultans, popes, and kings. That they were proud, haughty, superstitious, and intolerant toward other tribes and nations, is made clearly manifest through the history that reaches us from various quarters. It is chiefly owing to this pompous regard for themselves, as being better and holier than others, that drew down upon them a large share of all the difficulties and hardships that befell them in their wanderings over the then known portions of the earth. Unlike other people, the Jewish history is an all-pervading admixture of religion, politics, and literature, woven into one mass, so closely connected, that no separation can be made one from the others without doing violence to the record itself. And although their chronology is said to embrace upwards of 4000 years, yet there are but five principal actors in the whole drama, or tragedy, as you please. There are Adam, Noah, Abram or Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. With Abram, (who is said by some eminent archeologist to be no other than the Bram of the Hindoos) seems to have commenced the life and character of the people since known as Hebrews, *brim*, *Bene-Israel*, *Jehudim*. Abram, the son of Terah, and brother of Nahor and Haran, is made the progenitor of not only the Hebrew nation, but of several cognate tribes. Abram is supposed to have been born B. C. 1996, in Ur of the Chaldees, in Eastern Mesopotamia; and that which seems to give coloring to the idea of Abram and Bram being one and the same individual is the well established fact that he was known and venerated all over Asia, and especially to the Mohammedans. The Arab traditions make Abraham and his son the builders for the fourth time of the sacred house over the holy black stone. Theologians tell us that these traditions found in the Koran have been borrowed from the Old Testament, and also from the Rabbinical traditions. Of the latter, there is one story told of Abraham's having destroyed the idols which Terah not only worshipped, but also manufactured; and having been cast by Nimrod into a fiery furnace, turned into a pleasant meadow. It is said this legend is traceable to Abram's birthplace, which may have been interpreted from Ur, light, or fire. Abraham, which means Father of the Faithful, or Father of the Multitude, figures as a man who was not only righteous and divinely holy in his life and character, but one who walked with God in close communion; and so faithful he is represented to have been, as to have received

the promise at the birth of his son Isaac, from God himself; yet, when he visited Egypt with his wife, he practiced a piece of deception unworthy the name of anything higher than a base moral delinquent, in passing off his wife for his sister.

J. D. PREPSON.

THE DEVIL.

But Satan is a creature of another sphere. The might of his intellectual nature is victorious over the extremity of pain. Amidst agonies which cannot be conceived without horror, he deliberates, resolves, and even exults. Against the sword of Michael, against the thunder of Jehovah, against the flaming lake and the mariburning with solid fire, against the prospect of an eternity of unintermittent misery, his spirit bears up unbroken, resting on its own innate energies, requiring no support from any thing external, nor even from hope itself.—Macaulay.

The Devil's in the people, cropping out in their words and ideas, and almost visible, when Spiritualism is mentioned! I received a letter the other day from an old acquaintance, from which I extract the following:

"I perceive that there are many 'gifts and blessings' manifested among the Spiritualists, by spiritual agency. Do you believe with Paracelsus, that the sick can be healed by the agency of evil spirits? that 'it matters not whether it be God or the Devil, angels or unclean spirits, who cure a man, so that he be eased; if he falls into the ditch, what matter is it whether the Devil himself, or any of his ministers, by God's permission, redeem him?' I do not dispute the power of spirits to cure diseases, but I dispute that an evil power could cure or help the sick; for the Devil's aim is to destroy, and to cause disease rather than cure it. Satan will not cast out Satan, for then his kingdom would not stand. However great the power of Satan, he cannot forgive sins. Jesus said not only, 'Take up thy bed and walk,' but he said also, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.' Jesus asked, 'Whether it were easier to say to a man, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee, or Rise, take up thy bed and walk?' showing that equal power was required for each. I think that no spiritual power can heal the sick but that of the atonement of Christ, over which Satan has no control."

I have not yet fully satisfied myself as to whether the "healing power" is a gift from spiritual agencies, or a faculty peculiar to some organisms. I incline to the latter idea, but, for argument's sake, we will suppose that spirits do assist in the matter. And if they do, just so far are they removed from the character of being absolutely evil. We ought to speak well of the bridge that carries us safely over. (See 2 Peter ii. 10-13.) Ay, if the personification of all evil—the Devil himself—be pleased to help us, let us be grateful accordingly. Our friend says the Devil cannot forgive sins. I can hardly blame him; for centuries it has been the fashion to malign and abuse him; he has been "numbered with the transgressors," and "on him hath been laid the iniquity of us all." If he had not been the most patient of devils, as "Prince of the power of the air," he would have raised hell long ago, with hurricanes and storms, compared with which that which occurred at St. Thomas, lately, would be a calm. But, though he is long-suffering and merciful, there may come a day, when he will by no means clear the guilty, but will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation, as most surely becomes a devil who holds himself in respect. But to speak seriously, I do not believe in the forgiveness of sins; that even God can forgive sins; nor in the efficacy of the atoning blood of Jesus. This, to the theologians, is blasphemy! But, when they tell me that an innocent person can be held accountable for my sins—nay, that I can exchange my sins for his righteousness—the idea shocks me, and to me the principles of Justice and Truth are blasphemed and perverted. They are the blasphemers. It is time that we ceased viewing the principles of Nature through the smoked glass of theology—smoked in the sulphurous fumes of hell. It is time we would dismiss what A. J. Davis calls "the regement and administration of that wifeless melancholy trinity of co-equal gods—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with the quaternity which includes their equal—the Devil." Their equal: your pardon, Senor Diablo! I mean their superior. For throughout theological history the Devil has invariably gained the day, when competing with the Almighty; and though, for the present, a truce has been declared till the grand battle of Armageddon takes place, it is difficult to say who shall eventually gain the prize; of course the organ of the Trinity, the *Revelation*, prophecies in favor of F. S. H. G. & Co.

His Satanic Majesty is said to be the personification of absolute evil. This is a mistake: he is the personification of intellect, nobility, and freedom. For proof, trace the march of intellectual development since Christianity extinguished the light of Pagan philosophy at the beginning of the fifth century. Every attempt to reason has been deemed as fraternizing with the Evil One. Every step taken beyond the circumscribed superstitions of the Church—every discovery in art or science—every invention, from gunpowder to steam—has been viewed with suspicion, or open, denounced as the wiles of Satan, to seduce the unwary. I

have heard a Rev. gentleman declare Mesmerism to be from the Devil; in short, I should like to know what there is that is noble, patriotic, and humanitarian, that has not been placed to the credit of the Devil, and accepted as evil by the perverted intellects of priest-ridden bigots.

The name of the Devil suggests that of another great reformer. Than Thomas Paine, no nobler man ever trod the earth; and America is what she is to-day, in freedom and independence, by his disinterested labors. Than Thomas Paine, no man has been more abused, misrepresented, and maliciously spoken of; perhaps even more so than the Devil. And why? Because he would be free and untrammelled in the exercise of his intellect; because he would not be "cabinéd, cribbed, confined" by antediluvian legends, and soul-withering problems of priestly invention. Thomas Paine and the Devil! Their enemies of the cloth will surely not object to coupling these names together. And Thomas Paine, in his own free spirit-home, will not object, I am sure.

Paine was the first to declare that "man has no property in man," and the first to propose America's independence of Great Britain, and the world's independence of superstitious theology. The Devil was the first to intimate that knowledge was of any use to the human race; and he spoke the first truth in Eden: "Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil"; and, Christianity bearing me witness, he has been the first in every noble enterprise since the world began. I feel sad, when I think that the Devil is only a myth after all. I wish the surmise of the Church were true—that spirit communications were by the Devil's instigation and direct support. If I thought so, I would go to Mrs. Foye's next public séance, and, if I did not raise the Devil there, it would be because he had no proper respect for his sincere well-wisher.

P. S.—The anniversary of the birth-day of Thomas Paine is on the 29th day of January. Will the "Friends of Progress" and the Liberalists of San Francisco suffer it to pass by unnoticed? Do something to celebrate the day, and prove your gratitude to that noble man—a hero scarcely second to the venerated Washington. I wish I knew when was the Devil's birth-day!

In Relation to a State Convention.

The following communication on this subject has been received from a subscriber at Woodland, Yolo county. Our comments upon the same matter may be found in an editorial on the second page.

EDITORS BANNER.—Your remarks upon the communication of "T. E." of Napa, relative to a call for a State Convention, present some peculiar views. You say that you do not see that "a necessity exists for either State or National Conventions." It seems to me the necessity is indicated by the demand. You speak of certain ones claiming affiliation with us, who are "only exorciseses sloughed off from old religious organizations." Now, Brother, when I realize that very many of the Spiritualists have, in consequence of the light of modern Spiritualism, exhibited the manliness and moral courage to come out from the churches and openly avow their belief in its facts and philosophy, truly calling upon their devoted heads the anathemas of the Church and the ridicule of former friends, I think a better return should be made them by progressive teachers and writers. These very "exorciseses" are as much in need of the benefits of organization as any others. All have more or less influence in the scale of human progress, and that influence should be kept for us when it is faithfully offered. I hope soon to hear that an organization has been effected, broad enough and free enough for all, and yet sufficiently well defined to be of practical effect in combining the efforts of all true Spirit-

Yours for the cause of Truth and Spiritualism,
L. B. RUGGLES.

Friendly Words.

GIASS VALLEY, Jan. 3d, 1868.

EDITORS BANNER OF PROGRESS.—One year has passed since your paper unfolded its BANNER to the Pacific breeze. How much good it has done in that one short year, you will never know in earth life. But the unseen are guarding it, and nothing is more sure than that success will crown your efforts. You are working for the cause of God, truth, and humanity. And whoever thus worketh shall never work in vain.

Your paper has grown out of a want of the times, and Spiritualists on the Pacific coast will have it. Thus, I say, work on. Nothing valuable is gained without labor, though the darkest hours sometimes precede the brightest days. My BANNER, on Saturday, is truly a luxury. I could not think of dispensing with it, for double the amount it costs. All Spiritualists should read and encourage its spread among the people. It is one of the indispensable institutions of California, and cannot but succeed. Its present editors are both men of indomitable energy and perseverance. Let subscribers, friends of progress, and liberal thinkers, do their duty, and we shall have

a paper on the Pacific, that will not fear the united efforts of a "forty parson" power, but will carry to every careworn child of earth the glorious news that there is a better and a happier home, when the toils of life are ended. It comes to tell you that God is a God of love, and not of hate—a God of kindness, and not of malevolence—a God of mercy, and not of vengeance. Let this God of ignorance and superstition be buried among the rubbish of a worn-out past. Let us have a God who is able, and has the disposition and will, in His own good time, to light up the almost extinguished spark of life in the humblest form of man.

Yours, in the cause of humanity,

FAIR PLAY.

The Races of Mankind.

In deciding upon relationship and affinities between races, Prof. Huxley considers first, complexion; and he finds four great classes of complexion, which I must suggest are by the words white, yellow, red, and black, though neither of those colors are completely represented in any race or any man. He then relies upon the shape of the head, which he finds divisible more or less into long, short, round, and prominent, or otherwise, in the lower face. He then relies on texture of the hair. Next he considers the language as traced by comparative philology; then the similarity of customs, of beliefs, of habits, etc. Beginning with the Australians, he finds but one tribe related to them, and that is a small tribe in the south of India. He finds that there existed, in the neighborhood of the Caspian and Aral Seas, in ancient times, the one at the North, the other at the South, a light and blue-eyed, and a dark and black-eyed, people. The dark people are found adhering to the coast, and may be traced from Persia, all around by Italy, to their great western center, the Basque region of Spain; thence they skirt France, Wales, Ireland, and are the immediate ancestors of the swarthy Britons, Welsh, and "Milesian" of Ireland of this day.

From the Aral Sea to St. Malo, in the West of France, there is such a level country that one may drive a wagon all the way without upsetting it. That was the path by which the migration of the fair race took place, and when they arrived here they mixed with the Basques, and to that mixture Prof. Huxley attributes the varieties of Europe. He strongly opposes the idea that difference of climate could ever have produced the modification of races and races that the mixture of races accounts for all. He traces no resemblance between the Africans and any other race, and finds "there is a geographical reason for believing that the Northern or Old-Sahara part of Africa was a part of Europe, and ultra-Sahara Africa was an island. The Egyptians passed over from Italy and Spain, the physical connection between these and Africa being almost traceable now at low tide. From the Egyptians came the Syrians, Arabians, Armenians, etc. The Chinese, Tartars, etc., skirt northward into Scandinavia. But beyond the limits of the island, they resemble the Indians of the extreme north of America. These are very different from the aborigines of South America.

The Professor finds that each great kingdom, or race had its several and original civilization. There was an Egyptian, a Chinese, a Greek, a Mexican, a Peruvian civilization, and neither of these can be regarded as having been produced by the other, though our later centers of civilization may be traced to the one or the other of these. The details he gave concerning these civilizations were extremely interesting. He quoted from very ancient Chinese writers (of date several thousand years before Christ) the golden rule, and found that with them originated the idea that government existed for the benefit of the people governed, instead of the government. (Some one present observed, after the lecture, that he thought it would be advisable to get the Chinese to send missionaries to Europe.) When considering the ancient Egyptian civilization, the Professor read us an Egyptian novel, deciphered from monuments that existed long before the days of the Pentateuch, which was clearly the original of the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, and has a good deal of the style of the Arabian Nights in it.

With reference to the great question of ethnology, whether all races migrated from a single center, as Agassiz thinks, were originally formed in the lands where they are found, Prof. Huxley finds in the Darwinian theory a point where those who assert one, and those who assert many centers for the human family, may unite. He thinks that in entirely pre-historic times the geographical structure of the earth was very different from what it is now, and that there were links and paths between the islands and continents, which exist no longer. Over the whole earth was distributed some very low primitive stock of the human type, and in the progress of ages these were separated, the one from the other, by vast geologic and geographical changes. Then, by gradual selection, the weaker and uglier of this stock in each place passed away before the stronger, until they were improved, and gradually culminated in their various civilizations. Thus, each in its present form was created in its own island or continent.—*Boston Investigator*.

THE SECRET OF MATRIMONIAL HAPPINESS.—Zachokke, in one of his tales, gives the following advice to a bride: "In thy first solitary hour after the ceremony, take the bridegroom and demand a solemn vow of him; and give him a vow in return. Promise one another secretly, never, not even in jest, to wrangle with each other—never to bandy words or indulge in the least ill-humor. Wrangling in jest, and putting on an air of ill-humor merely to tease, become earnest by practice. Next, promise each other sincerely and solemnly never to have a secret from each other, under whatever pretext, with whatever excuse it might be. You must continually see clearly into each other's bosom. Even when one of you has committed a fault, wait not an instant; but confess it. And as you keep nothing secret from each other, so, on the contrary, preserve the privacies of your house, marriage state, and heart, from father, mother, sister, brother, aunt, and all the world. You two, with God's help, build your own quiet world; every third or fourth one, whom you draw into it with you, will form a party, and stand between you two. That should never be. Promise this to each other. Renew the vow at each temptation. You will find, if you do this, that your souls will grow as it were together, and at last will become as one. Ah, if many a young pair had on their wedding day known this secret, how many marriages would be happier than they are!"

The English Reform Bill has received the assent of the Queen, and is now the law of the land. Thus the masses of the English people see themselves, for the first time in the history of their country, endowed with the right of suffrage, and admitted to a great share in Parliamentary Government. The result of the next election will be looked forward to with intense interest.

The tanners in Japan are proscribed in society. No other class will associate or internary with them.

The Banner of Progress.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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"Physical Impossibilities."

In that rare, rich, and racy report of the Committee upon Spirit Manifestations, at the late Cleveland Convention, in which said Committee stultified themselves in the eyes of every sensible man, occurs the following passage:

"We have no proof that they (the spirits) can create and dissolve, instantaneously, bodies and clothing, a *fac simile* of those they used on earth; that they can create or dissolve, as is claimed, flowers, iron rings, hair, ropes, etc., or put twenty-seven lands at one time through an opening six or seven inches in diameter, sufficient only to admit the passage of five or six; in a word, that they can do physical impossibilities."

Here is a denial that constitutes a total repudiation of the whole fabric upon which the philosophy of Spiritualism is based, viz., the performance of acts that are "physically impossible." It is physically impossible for an embodied spirit to raise his own body into the upper air by an effort of will; yet disembodied spirits do raise the bodies of mediums into the air, and cause them to float over the heads of spectators for some time. In proof of this, consult both the witnesses and the subjects of these wonders, in the cases of D. D. Home, J. Bovee Dods, Dr. Redman, and many others. Again, it is a physical impossibility for the greatest scientist we have among us to put gold coins into a hermetically sealed glass phial, without unsealing it or breaking the glass; yet this astonishing thing has been done, and the coins removed in the same way; as testified to by Professor Hare and two or three witnesses. It is a physical impossibility that tables should follow mediums as they walk from room to room, and leap and frisk about like lambs, no person being near enough to them to cause such movements by application of the hands or feet; yet the whole history of spirit manifestations is full of well attested cases of this kind. It is a physical impossibility for a piano or other musical instrument to play itself; yet this has seemingly been done in numberless cases, because the spirit performers were unseen by natural vision. And in relation to the objection of orifices or apertures being too small to permit the exhibitions of numbers of hands at the same time, we can bring to bear many instances of tables being suddenly carried

up, which, on being measured, were found narrower than the width of the tables; and, on the witnesses coming to take them back through the same doorway, it was found "physically impossible" to do so!

Too many of these "physical impossibilities" have been performed before skeptical but credible witnesses, in broad daylight, the record of which has been for years in print, to allow of their being now gainsayed by any egotistical committee, wherever and however appointed. Even the particular manifestation through the mediumship of the Davenport Boys, which the Committee attempted to discredit, has been tested in the presence of thousands; yet no detection of fraud or mechanical or optical deception has ever taken place in regard to it. Others have seen spirit hands form and dissolve when the Davenport Boys were not within a thousand miles of the locality, but where other mediums were present.

Let those pseudo-Spiritualists, who affect to despise the humble alphabet by which millions have learned the language of Spiritualism, and by which the mysteries of spirit life and spirit power have been unfolded to us, reflect that there are many childlike souls who are yet to be taught in the same way; and that, when the elements of a knowledge of Spiritualism are taken away, the whole subject will be again left in the darkness of doubt. Should the tiny rap, and moving table, and the self-performing piano, and hundreds of other "physical impossibilities," wholly cease to be the means of leading man to a knowledge of spirit existence, the world would again lapse into the state of gloomy skepticism in which it was when the "Rochester knockings" first awoke the consciousness of men to the reality of spirit life.

In short, the attempt of this over-wise Committee to ignore all the facts of physical manifestation, and to make great numbers of people believe that their senses have belied them, is on a par with their efforts, in another part of their report, to reduce all spirit manifestation and communication to their own narrow views of what they should be, and how they should take place. Spirits choose their own time and method of exhibiting their power and presence; and the scientists in the other life know better than we do, what are the conditions necessary for the performance of "physical impossibilities." If they prefer darkness for any particular manifestations, it is because darkness is necessary to their performance in that particular case. If they choose to write, rather than to rap, it is because writing is more convincing or suitable to the witnesses present, or because the medium is better for that purpose. Every act they perform is in accordance with natural laws with which they are more familiar than we can possibly be; and therefore, what appears impossible to us, with our limited knowledge, is to them perfectly simple and easy of performance.

"NATIONAL FREEMASONRY."—This is a weekly journal, published in New York city, devoted to the interests of Masonry. It has twenty-four octavo pages of reading matter. The subscription price is \$4 a year.

Our second article on "Modern Demonymy," in reply to the *Occident*, the Presbyterian organ is deferred till next week.

Spiritualism.

Spiritualism stands unparalleled, compared with all other religious ideas that have been given to the world, in its scope, power, truth, and benefit to mankind. Other religions have had their day of usefulness, from the most ancient Grecian mythology down to its last relics, as exhibited in the present form, the so-called Christianity of to-day. But in the wildest hungering and thirsting of the human heart, out of which the varied religious ideas of the world have grown, there has been a foreshadowing, a prophecy of what the womb of Nature held in thrall, waiting for the growth of man's intellect in spiritualism, that he might be made the happy partaker thereof. It is pleasant, and perhaps profitable, to trace the religious growth of mankind, as step by step they have risen from the darkness of the past to the glorious unfolding of the present day. Leaving those religious ideas which existed long prior to those revealed in the Old Testament, let us notice some of those contained in the latter book. Each had its modicum of truth and adaptability to existing needs; but the rapidity of the changes in the upward scale, in obedience to the law of growth, establishes beyond all doubt the proposition that none of them were designed as a finality. Commencing first with the Adamic Church, (admitting the history to be true,) though it was on a low plane of existence, it had its use, its renown, and its benefits; but, like all other religious institutions from that day down to the present, when it became strong in numbers, it grew tyrannical, arrogated to itself special privileges as a God-favored class, and hence became bigoted in opinion. From that very moment men ceased to grow spiritually, declaring that they had attained unto the acme of truth; and that whoever taught more than they, were innovators and infidels. Consequently, when Noah came, with his flood of light, he was treated with contempt and scorn. Nevertheless, in the midst of their deridings, the Adamic Church went down beneath the stronger and clearer light of the Noachic teachings. We should not fail to notice the discouraging circumstances under which Noah commenced the introduction of his new and advanced ideas; for they contain a most excellent lesson to reformers of to-day. He had only seven followers, and they were of his own family. This was a small number indeed, with which to attack the old and well entrenched institutions, bastioned by prejudice, ignorance, and bigotry. Yet, strong in his inspirations, with an unshaken confidence in the mighty power of his great central truth to cope with error and conquer it, he fearlessly assailed their rotten institutions, caring naught for the slanders and anathemas hurled against him. He had the satisfaction of seeing truth triumph over error, and abundant success crown his efforts. Next came the Patriarchal dispensation, with its rigorous rites and stern character; but that went down in Egyptian bondage, and an apparent stagnation, as far as the growth of that people was concerned, threw its shadow over them for four hundred years. But, in fact, it was no stagnation, after all. It was only the retreating wave, that rolled far into the sea, as if to gain new power, that, on its return, it might carry them with its augmented force to a higher position than they ever before attained. Moses' dispensation, though pregnant with licentiousness and crime, (tried by the moral standard of the present day,) and written in blood from its earliest history to its close, was a grand advance upon what had subsisted previously. He displayed remarkable powers in the exodus of that downtrodden people from Egypt, in bringing order out of that chaotic, heterogeneous mass of humanity. What though it did require forty years for its accomplishment?—it was a herculean task, and great credit is due to his ability. His grand focal idea, namely, the unity of the Divine Being, was a glorious advance upon all the ages that had preceded him. What though he did individualize Him as a partialist, and endow Him with all the passions of the human soul?—yet this did not destroy the great central idea that, by the power of inspiration, had been born of his thought. Undoubtedly it was to this central idea that Moses owed his success. Under the strong impetus given by Moses' inspirations, the signs of progress flowed down for centuries through the line of Judges and Kings, until at last the inspirations of the Hebrew and of the old Pagan world blended in one stream, and formed the basis of what is known as the Christianity of the present day. All the various sects that have arisen during the last eighteen hundred years have been led by men of new inspirations, superior to their times; and all have contributed more or less to the great store of truth which the world possesses. But the grand crowning act in the great drama of the religious world has been reserved for Spiritualism. This soul-beautifying religion, born in answer to the needs of humanity, and cradled in the arms of the angels, is indeed the keystone of the arch, that shall unite the earth-life and spirit-life indissolubly. Of its objects and attainments we shall speak in our next article.

THE CAUSE IN GRASS VALLEY.—We returned to Grass Valley from Los Angeles on the 3d inst., and entered into an arrangement with the friends of our noble cause to speak to them regularly on Sunday evenings for a month or two. Although only twenty-four hours' notice was given, we were greeted with a crowded house, made up of earnest and attentive listeners, on the first evening. A furious storm had been raging all day, and still continued; yet there were about three hundred present, anxious to listen to free thought and free discussion of the philosophy of the present and future life. A freedom of sentiment on religious questions is largely on the increase in Grass Valley. As an evidence of this, the list of subscribers there, to the BANNER OF PROGRESS, has more than doubled with the commencement of the second volume. The prospect is fair for the formation of a society of Liberals and Spiritualists, that will outnumber all other religious societies put together. We should not forget to mention the gentlemanly courtesy of Mr. Hamilton, proprietor of the Theater, who, although not an avowed Spiritualist, gives the use of his building for a mere pittance, sufficient to pay for gas light, etc. How strangely this kindness and liberality on his part contrasts with the conduct of hall-owners in many other places!

A State Convention.

There seems to be a general desire that a State Convention of Spiritualists be called as early in the spring as practicable, and that the State Central Committee should begin to act in the matter immediately. We have not taken a stand in opposition to the assembling of a Convention constituted on the right basis; but to the calling together, en masse, of an assembly composed of all sorts of material—by and from which nothing consistent, or coherent, or definite, could be enunciated as a declaration of principles—we are inflexibly opposed. A wise selection of persons best qualified to represent us truly, chosen from among a large number in each locality, should be enjoined in the call to be issued by the Central Committee; and the number to which each body of Spiritualists in the different sections of the State is entitled should be specified. The delegates chosen should be furnished with credentials from the officers of the meetings at which they are elected; and no others should be allowed to take part in the business of the Convention. In this method only can we secure an assembly that will not repeat the foolishness enacted at the late Cleveland Convention. We do not want either fanatics or neophytes to misrepresent our views and traduce our mediums. The Convention should not sit as a court having jurisdiction to try Spiritualists and mediums, and condemn others without trial, as did the late National Convention. Neither do we wish the body to be called together for the purpose of adopting articles of faith in the form of a creed, to which all must subscribe or be tabooed. The principal object of the Convention should be to effect an organization for the sake of a union of influence and example, and of imparting vigor and "backbone" to those who are lacking in those requisites to independent thought and free inquiry. This object can be accomplished with little difficulty, and without any of the disgusting concomitants we have mentioned above, if the friends throughout the State will select the right material to represent them in the Convention. But let the Central Committee, or as many of the persons composing it as can be induced to act, first issue the call; and should they neglect to do so in time, then the leading lecturers and mediums should assume the responsibility of doing so, prescribing the conditions mentioned above.

Our Common School System in Danger.

The first fruits of a change in the political administration of our State and city are beginning to show themselves in an effort to subvert our common school system, and to substitute another, which shall admit of the introduction of sectarian religious education along with the usual branches. The Board of Education of this city have already granted permission to Father Gallagher, a Roman Catholic priest, to bring a school into the Department, with the privilege of an extra session each day for religious exercises, according to the ritual of the Roman Church. The same privilege will next be sought for by the different sects of the Protestant Church; and then will be exhibited the spectacle of our great system of free schools—free in thought as well as in privileges—made use of as a means for enslaving the plastic minds of the young to religious dogmas of one kind or another. In this way, a "snap judgment" will be substituted for the future mature and untrammelled one which the pupils would be free to form for themselves, and the present seditious and narrow religious views be perpetuated indefinitely in thousands of minds. Against this state of things it is the duty of all liberal and progressive people to protest in word and deed. Parents who have freed themselves finally and forever from the thralldom of religious bigotry should prefer rather to pay for the tuition of their children in private schools, than to subject them to the teachings of theology. We hope, if this innovation is extended, or even continued in the present instance, that the people will show, by petition and remonstrance, their disapproval of all attempts of a retrograde character, calculated to change the present system of free schools into one for enslaving the mind, and inducing by early education still greater discord on religious questions among the rising generation than has hitherto subsisted.

THE SAN FRANCISCO *Daily Times* publishes a long account of spirit manifestations, which, it alleges, recently took place in this city; but it conceals the locality of them, and prints only the initials of the persons who were the subjects of the visitations. It is rather late in the century for the daily press to begin to get up sensations of this kind, after the Spiritualistic papers, for twenty years past, have published column upon column of facts, attested by the full names of well known witnesses, and given the precise locality and time of such occurrences. Parties who are afraid or ashamed to have their names connected with a statement of facts in relation to spirit manifestations, in these days of free inquiry and investigation, are liable to a suspicion of untrustworthiness as to any assertions they may make in regard to the circumstances alleged. We receive their statements with caution, and many qualifications.

PROGRESSIVE SOCIAL ON THE EVENING OF THE BIRTHDAY OF THOMAS PAINE.—The friends of progress will give an entertainment for the benefit of the Progressive Lyceum, on the above named occasion, which dancing, good music, and other attractions will be afforded. Mrs. Foye and Mrs. Gordon will be present, and a general social reunion may be anticipated. Liberals in the city and vicinity are solicited to aid the movement by the purchase of tickets, which are furnished at one dollar each, admitting a gentleman and ladies. The entertainment will take place at Dashaway Hall, on Wednesday evening next, commencing at 8 o'clock. Tickets may be obtained of the officers of the Lyceum, and at the office of the BANNER OF PROGRESS.

BANNER OF PROGRESS.—This spicy little sheet has entered on its second year of labor in the cause of Satan and the spirits of wicked men. It is a faithful worker, and is continually after all who run across its path. We admire its pluck. It tells the truth in many respects. It takes off the inconsistencies of sectarianism, and shows the logical result of the doctrine of free salvation and a miraculous conversion by God's Spirit. It forgets, however, that everything is not taught by the Bible that is found in human creeds. In its "progress" it has gone beyond the perfect standard.—*Pacific Gospel Herald*.

Pray tell us what "the perfect standard" is. Who has it? And what proof is there that it is perfect? If the Bible is meant, we are satisfied that no book is more imperfect, either as to facts or doctrine. It is not standard for anything.

Landlordism.

A "Landlord" complains, in the *Morning Call*, that his poor tenants leave him without paying their rent, and that in some cases even the law is not strong enough to give him possession of his premises when he would eject non-paying tenants from them. He contrasts this state of things with that at the East, where, he says, "I could write my own warrant, give it to the constable, and in ten days have my money or my premises." He also says that his "shingles covered from twenty-five to thirty tenants," at his former place of residence. We commend to the prayerful attention and remembrance of this plaintive "Landlord" the following passages from Jeremiah, chapter ix, verse 23: "Let not the rich man glory in his riches." And from the Epistle General of the Apostle James, chapter v, verse 1-5: "Go to, ye rich men! howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth, and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter." And from Luke vi, 24: "Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation." And most particularly would we advise him to read, in Isaiah, chapter v, verses 8, 9: "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!" This troubled "Landlord" is, doubtless, a member of some "Evangelical" church, and these passages from the great text-book of the teachers of his "persuasion" may afford him some consolation in his grievous affliction.

A WRITER in the *Daily Times* thinks the recent spirit manifestations, an account of which appeared in that paper a few days since, should be "scientifically" investigated, in order to determine the question whether the spirits of the departed do actually return to earth, or not. The latter clause of the proposition, (that they do not return,) is the very one the Harvard Professors undertook to determine; but those "scientific" gentlemen have never yet reported! unless, indeed, the epitaph on Professor Felton's tombstone be considered as a tardy recognition of the truth. That inscription is in Greek, and to the effect that the Professor had afterward "considered these things, and found that they were true." The *Times* man thinks that the reporters of the daily press are the most competent persons to sit as a committee of investigation of the spiritual phenomena, and set the question at rest "scientifically." A more flippant, scoffing, and reckless set of men could not easily be found for such a duty. Their want of candor and fairness, and their frequent untruthfulness, in all that relates to the subject of Spiritualism, is notorious. The egotism exhibited in such a proposal is unbounded.

"OUR MUTUAL FRIEND."—This is a new candidate for favor among "temperance" people, published once a week by John C. Robinson, at \$3 per year to subscribers, in advance. While advocating temperance with vigor as a specialty, it makes a most intemperate attack upon our foreign population for their aversion to our puritanical Sunday law, and seems to desire to make a religious question of the cause of temperance. We can predict the fate of any hebdomadal that attempts to make the canting, hypocritical religion of the day a basis for social reform in any direction—more especially in that of total abstinence from intoxicating liquors. You can convince a man that the use of brandy, gin, or whiskey is injurious to his health, reputation, or business, and induce him to forsake it on that ground; but when you add that it is necessary for him to believe in the holiness of Sunday, in the Trinity, in the vicarious atonement, or in any other religious dogma, in order to be considered a temperance man, you will fail in your object. Let *Our Mutual Friend* take warning in time.

Mrs. FOYE'S SEANCE, at Dashaway Hall, on Tuesday evening last, was one of the most interesting and satisfactory that have taken place in this city. There is just sufficient amusement, without descending into levity, at these meetings, to prevent monotony; at the same time, the facts exhibited are immensely important, and contribute an incalculable amount of consolation to the human soul. Among the amusing incidents, and one which furnished also a capital test, was the sending up to the table, by an eccentric genius, of a request that "His Satanic Majesty, the Devil," would communicate. A friend of the inquirer, who departed only a few months since, answered that His Majesty was not present, but that he would reply in his stead. These meetings will be continued at the same place every evening, till further notice. Mrs. Foye also gives private sittings daily at her rooms, No. 42 Geary street.

Mrs. GORDON'S FOURTH LECTURE, on last Sunday evening, was upon "The Philosophy of Mediumship," and was well attended, although not so fully as it would have been, had the weather been fair. The subject was treated with her usual ability by the lecturer, and many points made clear to her hearers, upon which doubts have been entertained even by Spiritualists. One or two opinions, however, were advanced during the lecture, from which we are compelled to dissent, and which we shall make the subject of a future article.

THE account of "supernatural phenomena," about which the *Times* makes so much ado, was offered to us for publication, provided we would pay five dollars for the facts. We refused to pay even five cents—believing that events of so much importance, if they had actually occurred, should be published to the world, free of the suspicion of speculation. The *Times* people are welcome to all the profit, over and above what they paid for their timid report of the facts.

A Rebuke to Stinted Benevolence and Lack of Charity.

"O, my mortal friends and brothers!
We are each and all another's,
And the soul that gives most freely, from its treasure, hath the more."
Would you lose your life, you find it;
And in giving love, you bind it,
Like an anvil of safety, to your heart forevermore!"
—*Algar A. Poe, in the spirit.*

Sectarian religious organizations are more or less open to the objection of partiality in the distribution of aid to the poor. Self-righteous Phariseism is frequently exhibited by the almoners of what are called charitable institutions, and a disposition to arrogate to themselves the right of judging the conduct of their fellow-men, and of making it an excuse for refusing all assistance of a pecuniary kind. We have instances of this character recorded against the San Francisco Benevolent Association and the British Benevolent Society. The following stern rebuke of this uncharitable disposition is from a contributor to the *Morning Call*. It is evidently from the mind of some professing Christian, who sincerely wishes to follow the example of Jesus of Nazareth, which example, by the bye, is a constant rebuke to modern Christianity.

PITY THE POOR.

"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that borrow of thee, turn not thou away." (Matt. v. 42.)
O, stay not thy hand, when the Winter winds rude
Flow cold through the dwelling of want and despair!
To ask if misfortune has come to the good,
Or if ill has wrought the sad wreck that is there!
When the heart-stricken wanderer asks thee for bread,
In suffering he bows to necessity's laws;
When the wife moans in sadness, the children unfed,
Too much must be bitter; O, ask not the cause!
When the Savior of men raised his finger to heal,
Did he ask if the sufferer was Gentile or Jew?
When thou wast fed with the banquet of love,
Did he give it alone to the faithful and few?
O, scan not too closely the frailties of those
Whose beams may be lost on a cold Winter's day!
But give to the friendless, who tell thee his woes,
And "from him that would borrow" turn not away!

RELIEF COMMITTEE MAN.

CALIFORNIA PRISON COMMISSION.—The annual report of this Society, for the year 1867, is published, and also a memorial of the Secretary to the Chairman of the Assembly Committee on the State Prison. The latter document contains some suggestions and information not embodied in the report, to which the attention of the Legislature is called with great force and earnestness of language. The good that this Society is doing, in the amelioration of the rigors of our administration of the penal laws, is incalculable. If the amendments of prison discipline advocated in the report and memorial are adopted by the Legislature in the form of laws, and faithfully executed, we may hope to see the California State Prison become what it should be, viz., a school for the education of offenders in their duties as citizens, instead of what it now is, a place where society is avenged upon its ignorant members for acts which owe their origin to the bad constitution of society itself; and where the extremely bad and the novice in crime are associated and confined together, and thus the evil is aggravated which is sought to be eradicated. The necessity of prisons will be abrogated when society reforms itself in its own constitution, and deals equally and justly with all its members through equal laws; it can never reform its individual members by revengeful punishments, while itself practicing all manner of injustice toward them. Anything, however, which tends to soften the rigor of imprisonment, to benefit the prisoner by instruction instead of punishment, and to make orderly and grateful citizens out of enemies to society, should be adopted and put into effective operation. This is the aim of the California Prison Commission, and it deserves the support of all philanthropists and reformers.

"Why don't the spirits tell us something that we don't know and that is worth knowing?"
The above we cut from the *Dramatic Chronicle*, of San Francisco. It is to the point; and we would like to see a fair, candid reply in good spirit, to the *Chronicle* man's proposition, and no more badgering and evasion.—*Virginia Tresspass*.

We fear Forbes will have to wait a long while before he will get a straightforward and satisfactory reply to that query, with "no more badgering and evasion." We have been trying for several years to obtain such a reply; but thus far it is not forthcoming.—*Dramatic Chronicle*.

Both the *Tresspasser* and the *Chronicle* belong to that class so perspicuously pointed out in Jer. v. 21: "Hear now, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not." What amount of replying would ever be "satisfactory" to such people? Verily, it is casting "pearls before swine!"

A CASE DEMANDING RELIEF.—Mr. W. J. Johnson, formerly Lecturer for the Sons of Temperance and Good Templars, lies dangerously ill at the house of Mr. Luelling, in Clinton, Alameda county. He is without means, and the family are unable to furnish him with the comforts and medical care necessary in his case. It is to be hoped that some of those who have been acquainted with his efforts in the cause of temperance, and others benevolently disposed, will render him aid in his hour of distress. A list of contributors for this purpose is open at this office.

At a spiritual meeting a short time ago, the prophet Balaam was called up, and asked if there were any jackasses in his sphere. "No," he replied, indignantly, "they are all on earth."—*Diechange*.

Balaam's repartee was excelled by the reply of a spirit at the Chicago Spiritualist Convention, a few years ago, to the question, Why do we have so many lying communications from the spirit world? "My dear friends," said the spirit, "if you did not send so many liars to the spirit world, there would not be so many returning to earth with lying communications for its inhabitants!"

DRS. SPARKS AND BENTON have postponed their proposed Psychological Lectures of next Wednesday afternoon and evening, on account of the Social of the Friends of Progress taking place at Dashaway Hall on the same evening.

THE TOAST.—The "Four Eighties" is the reigning toast of the working-men of London:
"Eight hours' work, and eight hours' play,
Eight hours' sleep, and eight snail's a day."

PROFESSOR AGASSIZ thinks the coral insects have been seventy thousand years building up the Florida reefs.

THERE are ninety-two religious sects in England, besides the established Church and the Roman Catholics.

