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CONTENTS: FIRST PAGE—Vital Issues of Spiritualism; A Discourse by Miss Emma J. Nickerson...

THE ROSTRUM.

(Specially Reported for The Better Way.)

VITAL ISSUES OF SPIRITUALISM.

Lecture Given by the Guides of Miss Emma J. Nickerson, Sunday, Sept. 15, 1889...

FRIENDS: The question has been asked us "What are the Vital Issues of Spiritualism?" We reply: To us they are all the interests that affect in any degree the temporal or spiritual welfare of mankind...

Our English poet, Tennyson, says in noble lines: "Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control: These three alone lead life to sovereign power."

The environments of the past have been barriers of fear. Through the eventful vicissitudes of past history, man has been crippled by rules and limitations man-made. Narrow experience retards growth and gives imperfect form to character...

Philosophy, alone, is a mere abstraction; crowned with the light of science, and revealed through intuitive soul perception, it blazes forth from a tall dip to an electric headlight that illuminates the world. In forty odd years we have seen cobwebs swept from the eyes of the blind; we have watched the mists of error rise over the mountain tops of despair...

Court liveries are the badge of servitude, verily, the courts are many; all eyes look forth from prison windows. The spirit world is in rapport with those whom you call sensitives. They awake to the divine in nature and blossom like the rose from roots and branches into a stonger and purer growth of spirituality...

Modern Spiritualism has ushered in a new era of thought; it has entered the house of mourning, and banished the sorrow of hopeless night; a new star is set in the firmament; this last Christ-child of the centuries unheralded save by love is the grand evangel of the world. The finger marks of time are upon the pages of the past; the dim corridors of dusty ages bear the impress of footprints that point beyond...

The spirit realm is open to discerning minds and back of these effects, back of the grind of civilization, the ceaseless energy of directive will is shaping the destiny of future ages. It is the will of the spirit individualized, acting as mind upon mind that constitutes the Spiritualism of to-day...

Living inspiration in the now is the necessity of the hour. The first and last issue of interest to us is life. A million sails upon the sea of change will only speak a universal language in desire and aspiration whose interpretation is soul quickened by spirit. "Proth rides the stormiest wave," but fathoms deep beneath the sunken rocks, the calm currents run in steady undertow. So while questioning eyes are turned heavenward, the undercurrents are advancing...

the Theological waters are agitated; Science is discussing facts, and correlates known phenomena into a defence against the network that is spreading over the sky. Our banner is unfurled to the breeze and adoption is the passport of "knowledge before faith." The Herods of authority have crushed the children of the brain with fabled tales of torture, but motherhood is strong and speaks the freedom of those unborn. Give us a truer childhood and the man is already made. We can live in the basement of being where no light penetrates or we can climb the winding stair and dwell in the star-chamber of inner mysteries and commune with angels...

The Sphinx may hold the unsolved riddles unguessed, but prophecy reveals the estate of future years. The sway of all hearts is but the divine expressed through highest unfoldment of sense and reason. Truth's golden seeds are falling every hour—all men are sowers—reapers all. The fruitful soil will yield a goodly store. Each issue bravely met leads on to more. The grace and strength of your effort must determine the future issues with which Spiritualism has to deal...

Miss Nickerson gave a large number of psychometric readings at the close of her lecture, but space forbids their reproductions in these columns. They were very clear and distinct and most were recognized. When the readings were finished, Mrs. J. H. Conant assumed control of her and said:

Good evening, Friends: It is Fannie and I come to make way for those who love their friends and whose friends love them, to give evidence of their return. I see before me the name of Stella H. Stillman, and I want to go away from this place and reach out to friends in another locality. She says, Covington, and to tell mother not to worry; that Hosea, her father, is with her. She says, tell mother we have seen her sadness and we are with her and endeavor to help her carry the heavy burdens. Father sends his love and we are so happy. You may say, I am Stella H. Stillman, of Covington, Ky. Recognized.

I now see what looks like a mist rising before me and in it I see the name Covington, Ky., and I get the presence of a spirit who is anxious to communicate. He does not seem to understand how to do so. He has communicated once before and he comes with a feeling of great pleasure. He says he has many friends and relatives whom he would like to reach. He gives the name of Albert Yelton. Recognized.

I get now the sensation of one anxious to reach his friends. I feel a peculiar sensation in the head terribly confused. This comes I think from the sudden manner in which this person passed out. I hear some one saying to "Fire up" and hear the sound of steam escaping from an engine, and I get a sensation of my side and arm being

crushed. He passed out from a railroad accident, and gives the name of Charles Fox. Recognized.

The services closed with an exquisite improvisation of a poem from topics bandied in by the audience. The especial characteristics of her improvisations are that they are poetry, not merely jingles.

Written for The Better Way. SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY.

Whether spirits have been or can be photographed is in the minds of many, still a mooted question. When the subject was first brought to public notice the law of optics applicable to such cases which science had promulgated and adopted, required that a subject to be photographed must be to a certain extent opaque; in other words a perfectly transparent body could not be photographed, it must be dense enough to reflect sufficient rays of light to project a visible image on the ground glass of the camera. At that time I believed these views to be correct, therefore, when questioned as to my belief in the truth of statements made, that through certain mediums spirits had been photographed, I pointed out the obstacles in the way and stated that to my mind, as I understood the laws governing such cases, they would be insurmountable.

At that time Spiritualism had developed but a limited variety of phenomena and occupied a very different position in the world from what it does to-day, and the scientific theories which prevailed thirty years ago have in many instances, been modified, and entirely changed in others. Whether or not we know anything more about light than we did then, we merely know more about some of its properties. The drift of scientific investigation with reference to the constituent properties of light, point prophetically to the probability that in the not distant future, science will adopt the theory that electricity and light are identical. Should this be so it will not follow that we shall know practically anything more about light than we do now.

When photography was first introduced, and for many years after, science claimed that the action of light on the haloid salts of silver was a chemical action. This claim went undisputed and unchallenged until about the year 1865, when one of our most noted American chemists published the result of a series of experiments bearing upon this question. In his published statement he says that he became thoroughly convinced that the action of light on the sensitive film was purely mechanical and not chemical. The theory was that light travelling with the velocity which has been demonstrated, must, in coming in contact with any substance, exert a degree of physical force corresponding to its density and rapidity of motion, therefore, when the light impinged on the delicately prepared film, sufficient mechanical action resulted to produce the photographic image.

He states that one of the experiments which he made and which to his mind was conclusive, was in submitting the prepared sensitive film to the delicate pressure of a medallion or uneven surface, (I think he used a fifty cent piece) in his dark room and then applied the developing solution and an image was developed the same as if the plate had been exposed to light in the usual way. This fact demonstrated the possibility of producing an image equivalent in all essential respects to a photographed one in a dark room without the interposition of actinic light in any form. This was exceedingly interesting to me and furnished stimulus to further experiments in occult photography.

The fact would seem to have been established that a photograph could be formed on the prepared plate by physical manipulation in the dark room, and I had many times witnessed the exercise of spiritual force infinitely greater than that required to affect a sensitive plate by an invisible, individual intelli-

gence, and the question arose in my mind why images could not be formed by some invisible expert without the use of light and with much less effort than is required to write between two closed slates. Additional evidence of the physical force of light was furnished by experiments conducted by Prof. Wm. R. Crooks, one of the most distinguished scientists of England, and editor of the Chemical News of London.

He constructed an instrument which he called a radiometer, which was made by placing in a glass globe or bulb a wheel with four delicate fan-shaped arms, so arranged as to revolve something on the principle of a wind mill. After exhausting the air from the glass bulb, it was hermetically sealed; the wheel was then in a vacuum and it was found that this wheel would revolve when a ray of light was permitted to fall upon it, and furthermore, the rapidity of the revolutions was in the ratio of the intensity of the ray of light. I have used this instrument to accurately measure the comparative quantity of light necessary to effect the sensitive surfaces prepared by different manufacturers of photographic plates.

In the early part of my experiments the idea of full form materializations had hardly been broached, and therefore did not form an essential element in my methods as it did afterwards. It is not my purpose in this article to detail any of my experience with the many mediums who have kindly volunteered their services, as that alone would make a long article; suffice it to say that I obtained two or three pictures which were produced by spirit power, and about which fact there can be no reasonable question. My purpose mainly is to point out a way by which any medium who believes him or herself an instrument for producing spirit photographs, can know beyond a peradventure that whatever results are obtained of an abnormal character on the sensitive plate through their mediumship can be relied upon as genuine.

First, however, I wish to say something more about light, so that the reader can more readily understand the whole subject. A photograph can be made in light from which the visual ray has been abstracted. It must be borne in mind that the visual ray in the solar spectrum is the ray which excites the optic nerve and produces the phenomena we call seeing; therefore it follows that light from which this ray has been abstracted will be, as far as our vision is concerned, darkness.

In analyzing the solar ray for the purpose of experimenting, the prism used should be made of transparent rock salt, as this does not absorb the heat ray, which glass will more or less. By passing a delicate thermometer along the spectrum it will become manifest that the heat rays reside between the visible rays and increase in intensity as we approach the least refrangible end of the spectrum, and we find the greatest heat some distance beyond the red ray. This ray is not, however, the one which produces chemical action.

It will be found that the chemical ray is also invisible but increases in power as we proceed toward the most refrangible end of the spectrum, and the greatest energy is manifested some way beyond the visible violet ray; these two invisible rays acting with increased energy as we approach opposite ends of the spectrum.

It is evident that neither of these rays excite the optic nerve or produce the phenomena we call vision, and neither of them are coincident with the visual ray, and therefore do not focus at the same point when transmitted through a single meniscus lens upon the ground glass of the camera.

You will now more readily understand the following experiments, for which purpose use any ordinary camera and achromatic lens. Set up the object you wish to photograph—a good steel plate engraving answers an excel-

lent purpose—focus it on the ground glass. Have prepared a glass cell large enough to cover the front of the lens and about three eighths of an inch thick. Fill this cell with bisulphate of carbon, which is a perfectly white, transparent liquid. Into this liquid put a small quantity of iodine sufficient to change it to a deep violet color. This liquid so prepared has the power to absorb all the visual rays from the solar spectrum, which pass through it. Place the cell so prepared directly in front of the lens and in contact with it in such position as effectually to exclude all white light from the camera; there can, therefore, no white light or a visual ray enter the camera through the lens, and by placing the focusing cloth over your head and examining the interior of the camera, it will be found to be perfectly dark, yet the actinic ray is not excluded and, if under these conditions you expose the sensitive plate on which you have focussed, you will be surprised to find that the photographic image has been produced on the sensitive plate nearly as quick as if the cell of violet colored liquid had not been there. As wonderful as these results are, they are but a small part of the wonders revealed in experimenting with light, but only a few of them are pertinent to this subject.

The absorption of light by certain substances and its retention for a limited period, may properly be noticed briefly here, from the fact that it has been alleged that some mediums for spirit manifestations have made use of this fact to deceive their patrons. Whether this be true or false I have formed no definite opinion, for the reason that so far as I know there has been no reliable evidence produced to prove such statements to the satisfaction of a conservative and careful searcher after facts. In the hands of a crafty and designing person, having knowledge of this peculiar property of light, I admit it would be possible to impose upon the ignorant and inexperienced, but any one at all familiar with experimental exhibitions of light held by absorption would not be likely to confound it with any of the most ordinary spirit lights. The major part of what I have read in Spiritualist papers touching upon this subject have been exhibitions of ignorance regarding the whole matter.

Any medium for spirit photography should have for a photographic outfit a stereoscopic camera. With such an apparatus there is necessarily made simultaneously two pictures of the same object, as the camera is arranged with two perfectly matched lenses. If on a sensitive plate exposed in a camera so arranged there should appear an image on one part of the plate from one of the lenses, there must of necessity appear an exact duplicate on the other part of the plate from the other lens. Now as all so-called spirit pictures which are fraudulently obtained are made by manipulating the plate either before or after exposing when there is no visible image to guide the operator, it is with him either the work of measurement or of guessing where the figure which he improves shall be placed; therefore it will readily be seen how impossible it would be to produce two fraudulent pictures exactly alike such as the stereoscopic instrument would produce.

If however it were possible by an ingenious person using careful measurements to produce two pictures apparently simultaneously so near alike as to deceive an inexperienced person, its genuineness can readily be determined by having prints made from this negative and mounted in the usual stereoscopic manner, which is to cut the print in two pieces through the center and place the right hand picture on the left of the card mount and the left picture on the right end, then look at it through the stereoscope, and if it is a genuine stereoscopic picture the figures will stand out in relief, if fraudulent they will be flat. Any medium for spirit photography who will adopt this method will avoid all danger of ever being called a fraud if they obtain a genuine stereoscopic picture of a spirit.

I have in my possession a stereoscopic spirit picture made in Central America by a friend of mine and I have also seen the negative. The story of its production and the recognition of the spirit picture by relatives in London gives additional interest and value to the picture.

Thomas Paine lived a long, laborious, and useful life. The world is better for his having lived. For the sake of truth he accepted hatred and reproach for his portion. He ate the bitter bread of sorrow. His friends were untrue to him because he was true to himself, and true to them. He lost the respect of what is called society, but kept his own. His life is what the world calls failure, and what history calls success.





ANCIENT GEOGRAPHY.

BY F. VAN DYKE.

At what time geography first began to be studied, as a science, is not definitely known.

Thales, of Miletus, was one of the "seven wise men" of Greece. This Grecian philosopher lived 640 years before our era.

For two centuries after the death of Thales but little advancement was made in the science of geography.

Timocharus and Aristillus were the first who attempted to fix the latitude and the longitude of the fixed stars by considering their distance from the equator.

Forbes tells us, in his "Five years in China," that geography has been cultivated in the Celestial empire from the most ancient times.

The Jews must have made a map of the land of Canaan when they gave the different portions to the nine tribes at Shiloh.

The first Grecian map on record is that of Anaximander, mentioned by Strabo.

Athenicus quotes Bæton as being the author of a work entitled, "The Encampments of Alexander's Marches."

Erastosthenes was the first who introduced a regular parallel of latitude. This was traced over certain places where the longest day was of the same length.

The Mongolians and men of Franklin's day attempted to solve the problem by changing the specific gravity of the machine or flying creature, with not a single analogue in Nature to justify them.

AIR NAVIGATION.

The latest thoughts issued regarding the theory of aerial traveling is contained in the following extract taken from a book on this subject published by Mr. Thaddeus Hyatt, entitled "The Dragon Fly, or Reactive Passive Locomotion; a Vacuum Theory of Aerial Navigation based on the Principle of the Fan-Blower."

Birds propel themselves. The dragon-fly, holding itself on an even keel, travels as well backwards as forwards, being under the influence of a wind-pressure external to but created by itself, a wind pressure that the creature by its own will controls at pleasure and can with the quickness of thought shift from one side to the other—to front, to rear, to up, to down—to any and every point within the hollow concaves of the domed sphere of which it is at once the centre and the animating soul.

Spirit Teaching.

The spread of modern Spiritualism is principally due to the direct influence of those members of the spirit world who, while they have left the flesh are nevertheless still attracted to the earth sphere.

Some writers of the past have stated that those spirits who wait on their friends as in class 2, usually remain on the earth for 30 or 40 years. This is, as a rule, true.

Thus it is that in many instances it has been deemed advisable by spirit friends to assume to know less than they really do know, so as to leave each mortal to work out his life's labor without unfair favoritism towards the few to the prejudice of the many who are forever struggling through one wave after another to attain to those uncertain will-o-the-wisps, the joys and pleasures (whether intellectual or bodily) for which most men long during their earth existence.

The Sunday Law Question.

A Portland parson has been giving special attention to the necessity of "a Sunday law." Do not the laws of all the states recognize Sunday as a day of exemption from business duties and responsibilities? What more can be expected of the State, considering that the religious observance of the day is a matter of church ordination, not even expressly authorized by the book that is held to be the common authority of the class of churches so ordaining?

Forest and Streams.

That remarkable man, Humboldt, reduced it almost to a demonstration, that the streams of a country fail in proportion to the destruction of its timber. And, of course, if the streams fail, our seasons will be worse; it must get drier and in proportion. Everybody knows, he said, who can number 20 years back, that the water courses have failed considerably, and that the seasons have been getting drier and drier every year.

A very bright three year-old girl in an Eastern kindergarten was selected to "show off" the merits of the school even for mere babes, to a party of visitors, and was asked to count. She reflected credit on her home by doing it as follows: "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, jack, queen, king!"

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