

Harbinger of Light.

A
NEW MONTHLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO

ZOISTIC SCIENCE, FREE THOUGHT, SPIRITUALISM
AND THE HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY.

"Dawn approaches, Error is passing away, Men arising shall hail the day."

No. 1.

SEPTEMBER 1st, 1870.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE object of this Journal is purely progressive. It is intended to act as a vehicle for all subjects which are the outgrowth of natural thought and intuitive reason, and calculated to enlarge our perceptions of nature and appreciation of the Divine Laws which regulate all her operations. It will be our endeavor to give to our readers, food for thought, interesting facts and phenomena in spiritualism and mesmeric science, and to present evidences of the unity of science and religion. In matters pertaining to religion, doctrinal points will be studiously avoided, and we shall reject all matter that is intolerant or dogmatic. We should wish our friends who desire to use our columns for discussing religious matters to write their communications in a spirit of kindness and brotherly love, seeking only to enlighten or be enlightened.

In short, our object is to cast as much light as possible upon many interesting subjects which are at present to the multitude shrouded in darkness. We solicit the co-operation of all progressionists and reformers, and shall be happy to publish any contributions that are interesting or instructive, and in accordance with the spirit of our paper.

JUDGING from the numerous lectures and discourses that have recently been delivered, Spiritualism is attracting considerable attention among the clergy of various denominations. On 11th July, the Rev. A. Gosman delivered a lecture at the West Melbourne Congregational Church, to an attentive audience, the Rev. gentleman seems (unlike the majority of anti-spiritualists,) to have made some investigations into the phenomena; and hence his views on the subject are much more moderate than those of many of his brethren, who consider themselves competent to explain and dispose of the matter without attempting its investigation. The Rev. gentleman related some of his personal experiences, and considered that we had abundant evidences of the occurrence of the various physical phenomena, attributed to spiritual agencies. He considered it useless to deny the existence of the phenomena, and equally absurd to attribute them to the Devil, the lecturer did not attempt to account for the phenomena; but whilst denying that he himself was a spiritualist, he expressed his opinion that were these facts proved to be the product of spiritual agencies, there would be nothing antagonistic to Christianity in their reception.

On the Friday following, the Rev. the Dean of Melbourne delivered a lecture at the Town Hall, Footscray, on the same subject, but the Rev. gentleman differed in his conclusions from the previous lecturer. The first portion of

his discourse was devoted to a recapitulation of the facts and phenomena, which were very fairly stated, and accompanied with extracts from a little book which has been largely circulated in Victoria.* The Rev. gentleman admitted his belief in the occurrence of all he had stated, but attributed them all to the machinations of the arch fiend. The rev. lecturer then quoted from Scripture a number of texts bearing upon witchcraft and familiar spirits; and, evidently expected his audience to couple modern spiritualism with ancient witchcraft and divination. One of the audience ventured to ask the lecturer how it was that the majority of spiritualists were men of good moral character and religious sentiments, but the Rev. gentleman was not at all disconcerted thereat, but promptly pointed out to the inquirer the improbability of the arch fiend, making use of inferior instruments to accomplish his ends. The simple inquirer who had evidently not thought of it in that light, hid his diminished head.

On the 12th August, Mr. Jas. P. Oliver, of Fitzroy, delivered a lecture in reply to the Dean's, a report of which appears in our columns. The proposition of Mr. Mitchell requires no comment, it instances the length to which some persons would go if society would encourage them, we pity him and wish that he "a professed Christian," had a more Christian spirit. Passing over the address of the Rev. J. C. Cameron, at the Geelong Ragged School Association, which is ably treated in another column, we come to a more recent lecture, delivered by Mr. N. Kinsman, at the Free Church of England, Abbotsford, on Sunday, August 14th. This lecture would scarcely be worthy of notice, being little more than the reading of an account of some superficial investigations, conducted many years ago by some intensely orthodox American, but at the conclusion of his discourse, Mr. Kinsman challenged any spiritualist to confute what he had stated, and the gauntlet was taken up by Mr. J. P. Oliver who was present. An arrangement was made for the matter to be discussed on Monday, the 22nd inst, accordingly on the evening of that day, the respective champions met, but the locale for the discussion was evidently ill-chosen, few but enthusiasts cared to venture through the long, unlighted streets, "ankle deep in mud" of Collingwood flat, hence the audience was composed principally of Mr. Kinsman's congregation, the denizens of the flat, who took every available opportunity to

* What's o'Clock.

express their disapprobation of anything *un-kinsmanlike*.

On the same evening, the Rev. A. Gosman delivered another lecture in the Independant Chapel, Emerald Hill. His lecture, though varying from the previous one in detail, contained essentially the same views as before enunciated by him, it was extremely liberal and tolerant. He considered it was our duty and not a dangerous one, to investigate the subject of spiritualism, and we fully endorse his views; but, at the same time would advise all weakminded people who have not confidence in their own reason, to leave it alone. It is to man's God given reason we appeal, and are content to abide by its decision.

MR. BRIGHT'S LECTURE ON ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS.

On Thursday, August 8th, a lecture was delivered at the Trades' Hall, Lygon-street, under the auspices of the Carlton Mutual Improvement Society, by Mr. Charles Bright. The subject being "Andrew Jackson Davis," well known to spiritualists and many others as the founder of the harmonial philosophy. The lecturer gave an outline of the birth and early life of the modern seer, interspersed with readings from the biography of that individual. In the course of his lecture he summarised the most notable evidence in favor of Davis's pretensions, viz., the poor and humble circumstances of his early life, his known gentleness of disposition, and constant truthfulness in his life and actions, his almost utter want of ordinary education, the early manifestation of his peculiar and wonderful powers in the Diagnosing of Disease. The production of his great work "Nature's Divine Revelations," whilst under the mesmeric influence of Dr. Lyon, and in the presence of credible witnesses, before he was twenty years of age, his subsequent further developments and later writings. The lecturer concluded by saying, that whether he was an imposter, or self-deluded person, or had really genuine truth to tell, he was still worthy of study, as in an undoubtedly practical age he had created a wonderful impression upon the minds of thousands of the people of an undoubtedly practical nation. The lecturer was very attentively listened to, and received a cordial vote of thanks from his audience at the conclusion of his interesting discourse.

MR. OLIVER AT FOOTSCRAY.

A lecture was delivered at the Town Hall, Footscray, on Friday evening, the 12th inst. by Mr. Jas. P. Oliver, on "Spiritualism; what it is, and what is not," in answer to a lecture recently delivered by the Rev. Dean Macartney. Notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, about one hundred persons assembled to hear the lecturer, and showed the warm interest they took in the matter by their approbation. The heads of the subject were as follows:—Spiritualism demonstrates that the spirits of departed human beings now hold tangible intelligible intercourse with men on earth; that the present age of spiritualism is nothing less than a full return to the ancient faith of the church, and a complete revival of the doctrines of Christianity; that all the modern forms and phases of spiritualism are in perfect harmony with the so-called miracles, revelations, and angel visitations recorded in the Bible.

The lecturer went on to say if spiritualism is rejected because its teachings are not understood alike by all, must not the Bible, and all scientific and philosophical systems be condemned on the same ground? since there are hundreds of conflicting sects to be found in the world. Paul said that there are diversities of gifts, but all by the same spirit; and in his epistle to the Corinthians, he asks the question, how is it brethren, when ye come together every one of you hath a psalm, hath a tongue, hath a doctrine, hath an interpretation? Does not the Bible as well as history prove that some phenomena like spiritualism has occurred in every age of the world?

It is passing strange that one however ignorant, should quote the Bible, to prove that good spirits cannot

communicate with men in the body, will the Dean deny that the Bible is not a continued series of spiritual manifestations from beginning to end. Was not a portion of it dictated to John by an angel, or a messenger of Jesus Christ, who was the departed spirit of one of the Prophets. The manifestations were so grand that John was bewildered, and mistaking the angel for God himself, fell down at his feet to worship him, but the angel informed him that he was only man, and of his brethren, and urged him to worship God. Rev. ch. xix. v. 10.—ch. xxii. v. 8, 9. The fact that revelation by means of angels, was gradual and progressive from age to age for more than four thousand years, is evident to any ordinary mind, which furnishes strong presumptive evidence, that others and further revelations were to be given afterwards, Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth in me the works that I do, shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do.—John xvi. 12. This passage proves distinctly that the truths of the divine law are to be communicated to man gradually, as they are in a condition to receive them. The Dean might argue that the age of so-called miracles is gone, but there is no scriptural warrant for such conclusion. Was Jesus partial in his promises to his people? No. Was not the promise to Abraham and his seed for ever, to meet this objection, did not Christ say to those believers who should come after him, "Goye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out devils. They shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them. They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."—Mark ch. xvi. 15, 17, 18. How absurd and anti-scriptural for the Dean to say that those spiritual gifts ceased at the death of Christ and his apostles. Spirits are now curing through the mediumship of some of our brethren, and can write and speak in divers tongues. Therefore, I exhort you in the name of Paul earnestly covet the best gifts.

There is nothing plainer laid down in the scriptures than the unchangeableness of God's laws, and as God's laws are immutable, the same method by which men of old communicated with spirits from the angel world, is open to-day for man to commune with God, and receive foretastes of the Divine life. The wise man Solomon, taught us to expect these spiritual gifts, who says, "that which hath been, is now, and that which is to be, hath already been, and God requireth that which is past."—Eccl. iii. 15. If the spiritual manifestations referred to in the Bible ever occurred as there stated, have we not reason to believe similar manifestations will occur again, as we have manifold proofs every day.

At the conclusion of the lecture, a vote of thanks was proposed to the lecturer and chairman, upon which an amendment was moved by Mr. Mitchell, a presbyterian; and seconded by Mr. Dunn, that the proposer of the original motion, and the lecturer, be taken from the room to the Junction, tied to a stake and burned alive. The chairman refused to put the amendment, which was insisted upon by the mover and seconder. The chairman however remained firm, and after some discussion, the meeting dispersed, the chairman hoping that Mr. Oliver would regard the proposed amendment as the result of a diseased brain.

DISCUSSION ON SPIRITUALISM.

As a result of the challenge thrown out from the pulpit of the Free Church of England, Park Street, Abbotsford, by Mr. N. Kinsman the pastor, a discussion on spiritualism took place at that church on Monday evening, August 22nd. The discussion was opened by Mr. Jas. P. Oliver, who in an able discourse of forty minutes duration, gave a good outline of what spiritualism is, supporting his position by scripture, and insisting on the analogy of ancient and modern spiritual manifestations. He accepted Christianity as taught by Jesus, but depreciated creeds or dogmas, he quoted Paul on the diversity of gifts, and his recommendation to seek the best gifts. The lecturer alluded to Jacob's ladder and the prophecy of Christ, "Hereafter ye shall see Heaven opened and the angels of the Lord ascending and de-

ascending, &c.," and considered the spiritual dispensation the fulfilment thereof. In reference to evil or unprogressed spirits, he considered that there was abundant evidence that evil or untruthful spirits had communicated through good and pure mediums, in scripture times. He instanced Ahab's deceiving spirit that led him to destruction, Jonah's unfulfilled prophecy of the destruction of Ninevah, Christ's temptation, &c., and, expressed his belief that God had ever communicated to man "Mediately" through his ministering angels or spirits, that it was a misapprehension on the part of those who professed to have seen God in person, and contrary to the text "No man hath seen God at any time, neither is it possible for man to look upon his face and live." As an instance he cited the case of John when in Patmos; who, after his long spiritual experiences mistook an angel of the Lord for God himself and would have worshiped him, but the angel enlightened him, by saying, "See thou do it not, for I am of thy brethren the prophets, worship God." He considered the popular ideas of God were degrading and belittling, and repeated a communication said to have come from Demosthenes which runs as follows:—(*The question being "Had he ever seen God, and what were his views regarding him?"*)

"If you asked me a thousand years ago, I could have told you all about him; but now, after having walked the high way of celestial worlds for more than two thousand years, I am so far lost and overpowered amid the beatific splendor of God's uncreated light and infinitude, I can say nothing. Height on height, beyond the penetration of finite vision, I see dim outlines of a Deitific universe, I feel the flood tides of Divinity flowing down through all the avenues of my immortal being. I hear peal after peal of arch-angel eloquence ringing throughout the endless arch-ways of the empyrean, evermore sounding in my ears the name of God! God! God! I am silent—dumb.

He considered the text in reference to familiar spirits rather favorable than otherwise to his position, but it was evident that these laws in Deuteronomy were given to and for the Jews, and were not binding upon other people. In the same code were the following, "If thy son is a stubborn, or a glutton, thou shalt stone him to death!" "Thou shalt not wear garments of divers materials such as linen and woollen mixed, &c." He asked his audience whether they were prepared to abide by these laws, or whether they would justify a man in court of justice for killing his son. He referred to Paul and Jesus on spiritual gifts, and to Jesus's statement that those who believed in him and followed in his footsteps, should do all those things that he had done and greater things also. He thought reason was of infinitely more value to us than theology, that our object in life should be to live as much like Jesus as possible; and, by so doing, make our homes more like heaven. It was unreasonable to accept scripture and reject spiritualism, if spiritualism was a myth, the Bible was worthless, being based upon it. He asserted that the same power which produced modern physical manifestations produced ancient ones, and that spiritualism was based upon infinite truth.

Mr. Kinsman in reply objected that Mr. Oliver had not touched his sermon, but commenced his reply to Mr. Oliver by telling his audience that their spirits were grander and better than those of spiritualists. He had never heard such terrible unchristian denunciation of the word of God. Spiritualism was the doctrine of devils. He hoped what had been said would be a caution to the members of his Bible class, and followed up with a conglomeration of sorcerers of Egypt, witches and diabolical agents. He believed in the spirit world and spirits, but not in the Spiritualists' conclusions. It was a lie that good and holy spirits communicated with men, they were all evil, and a belief in them would consign us to a darkness worse than Sodom and Gomorrah. He quoted some answers to questions from some unprogressed spirit to a Mr. Wm. Lannin, which were so ridiculous, and given with such solemnity, as to provoke the risibility of one or two of the audience to whom the lecturer administered a stern rebuke. After some further expressions of horror at the dreadful doctrines of the spiritualists, the lecturer expressed his belief that if the law of stoning disobedient children were in vogue now, it would be a great blessing to the country. The spiritualists took credit to themselves for converting Atheists, but they had only converted them from Athe-

ism to Demonology. After confounding spiritualists and free lovers, Mr. Kinsman concluded amidst applause.

Mr. Templeton made a few remarks, chiefly to the point, that spirits he had communicated with, would not confess that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh, he had therefore pronounced them evil.

Mr. Bowley stated, that all the communications he had received were in accordance with the teaching "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and with all thine heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." After a few unimportant remarks from two or three other gentlemen, Dr. Richardson, the chairman, asked permission to say a few words, which were to this effect, he ridiculed the idea of the Devil, as only fit for children in this enlightened age. He expressed his regret to have heard the rev. gentleman endorse the Levitical law and advocate the stoning of children. He also regretted the religious turn the discussion had taken. He had no doubt of the fact of the wonderful physical manifestations that were occurring, they were too well attested to be denied, he thought it was a matter that demanded investigation. After votes of thanks to lecturer and chairman, the meeting dispersed, Mr. Kinsman declining to adjourn the discussion, Mr. Oliver announcing his intention of answering Mr. Kinsman's sermon in a lecture, to be delivered within one month.

SUNDAY EVENING LECTURES AT CASTLE-MAINE.

G. C. Leech, Esq., Barrister-at-Law, is a true friend of progress. His recent Sunday evening lectures at Castle-maine and Sandhurst, have caused quite a ferment among old-fashioned orthodoxy in those places, and champions have sprung up, in many places, to defend the Devil and his dominions from the assaults made upon him, by this modern teacher of simple Christianity. Mr. Leech's lectures, based upon the love and justice of God, embodying pure Christianity as taught by Jesus, and exempt from even the odour of brimstone, are refreshing, instructive, and elevating. They appeal to the reason and good sense of the reader, and although not professedly given on the spiritualist basis, accord very nearly with the belief and teachings of the most advanced spiritualists, many have expressed a desire to hear a lecture from Mr. Leech, in Melbourne; if those desirous to hear him will call upon us, we will endeavor to arrange the getting up, and forwarding, of an invitation to him to deliver a lecture in the Metropolis.

To Correspondents.

Communications received from Bacchus Marsh and elsewhere, and several other articles are unavoidably held over through want of space until next issue.—[Ed.]

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—Amongst the strings of leaders daily spun by the Melbourne *Telegraph*, I see one referring in an unfair spirit to the issue of this magazine. The gentleman who sometimes writes on the subject of spiritualism in that journal must either be ignorant of the subject or greatly wanting in candour. But a short time ago he informed the readers of the paper that spiritualism was dying out, now it appears to him to be reviving, and he seems to have awakened to find that there are still some who as he funnily puts it, yet desire to peep through the keyhole, endeavouring to gaze into futurity, &c. It would be easy for me to pass over an article which is flippant and coarse, but that I can scarcely think the editor of a Metropolitan journal is justified in permitting an unprovoked attack of this nature, founded upon a substratum of tortured statements. I learn for the first time that the writings of Andrew Jackson Davis have been pronounced destitute of common sense or even of coherency; this may be a matter of opinion, and it is just possible that of the *Telegraph* writer is by no means to be recognised as an authority in the matter. Much abler critics have pronounced a different verdict, and

have under the knowledge of the man's life which the "Carlton lecturer" set forth, arrived at conclusions by no means in accordance with those of the critic I allude to. The spread of spiritualism in America is amongst the most practical people in the world, and, notwithstanding that America is the resort of many of unsettled opinions, it is the country of all others, the quickest to detect trickery or imposture. If this gentleman is, so ignorant of the subject he writes about as the article referred to indicates, I would advise him to read the works of Judge Edmonds, and of Professor Mapes, of America, and study the path of investigation by which they arrived at a belief in spiritualism. I would advise him further to read Professor De Morgan (Professor of Mathematics in the London University), upon the same subject, and it may just come within the region of possibility that he will find that neither an attempt to be funny or coarse can hide ignorance.

I am, Sir, &c.,

NEW ENGLAND.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—I have heard much doubt cast upon the experiments recorded by Baron Reichenbach during his investigations into animal magnetism, and it may be interesting to some of your readers to know that the writer of this letter has stumbled across two healthy sensitives, both of whom feel the passes of the horse-shoe magnet, one can detect the blue flame from the negative pole, and follow the movement when the magnet is carried about with the armature removed. If there is any farther information required by any of the savans of Melbourne I will be happy to give it. You have my address.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

OBSERVER.

THE SPIRITUAL VIEW OF ANNIHILATION.

Communication received August, 23, 1870.

THE hope of a hereafter has always been present in men's minds. In it they have found a solace for all the griefs and trials of humanity. The only originators of the doctrine of annihilation by death, have been those cold hearted philosophers who look upon Nature as a mere concatenation of chances, and Nature's God as a Chimera of the imagination. All those who regard nature as the outward expression of the Deity, and look upon God as a God of Love, feel in their inmost souls the necessity for a hereafter. In the whole of God's vast cosmogony you can find no instance of annihilation. The rule is always change and (as far as we can yet trace it) progression. To our minds the very conception of annihilation is derogatory to the idea of an All-wise and All-powerful God. It would be a confession of weakness, a confession that He had not, *i.e.*, had not been able to make all things work together for good. We very much grieve to find that such a doctrine should have found place in your community, and have sprung from the mind of a man placed in the position of a teacher of youth, and whose opinions are looked upon with respect by his fellowmen.

How widely different are the doctrines which we teach you. We look upon the future of all men as progressive. As we have often told you, every one with a naturally organized brain, (we except of course such things as monsters without the intellectual part of the organism), as containing within himself a particle or germ of the God-principle.

In some this beams and glows with vitality, and has sparkled and dispensed light and warmth to themselves, and many others even while in the body, and needs but the freedom of spirit life to expand into the effulgence of a planet fitted to take its place in the bright constellation which surrounds the Throne of God. In many more alas! this spark lies dormant, like the life in a hibernating animal. The dark, cold winter of materialism wraps it like a shroud. Though the animal organism may be throbbing with life and warmth, the spirit is dead—dead meaning in our sense of the word, the dull meaningless sleep which shews stupor and unconsciousness of man's real life and his all important future. But this death, though it may last for centuries, nay cycles in spirit life, is not eternal. God's infinite power and boundless love has provided by one of His Eternal and All-merciful laws, that no sooner does the faintest ray of hope or desire for the better flicker in the mind of a spirit, however low or depressed its condition may be; no sooner does an upward look take the place of that low and grovelling despair in which so many live both in the body and spirit life, than one of His ministers is ready, like the flash of the electric current, to instil the spirit *clair vite* into his mind, and to fan the smouldering spark into a flame. Oh! if men would only see the beauty and harmony of the brotherhood of God's vast scheme for man's regeneration. The help comes through his brethren, and probably (though not necessarily), those of his own people and family. It comes from a mind however, superior

in development, but in which exists a portion, however small, of congeniality with his own, and thus the spirit world is tied together with the bonds of brotherhood far stronger than that of blood, for it is a reflection from the Author of all, a humanized ray from the Great Central Sun of God's own Love.

We pity that man's state of mind who can suppose that an All-powerful, All-loving God can find nothing better to do with his erring creatures than to commit them to nothingness. No! the Almighty Artificer can make use of the meanest materials. He can find a place, however low and menial it may be, in the vast structure of the spiritual world for any intellect, however lowly constituted it may be. However great the sins a man may have committed, however low he may have sunk into the mud and slough of sensuality, or however wilfully he has degraded His God-like form, and God-like mind, God himself has willed that the God-principle that there exists shall never wholly die, and ultimate happiness for all is the end for which all were created.

But do not let any suppose that because all will ultimately be happy, that therefore wilful sin goes unpunished. Far from it. There is a place in the spirit world which corresponds very exactly to the description that the more enlightened of the scripture commentators have described as Hell, where the worm of remorse never dies, where the torment of the sense of utter unworthiness to rise never fails, and where the dull depths of despair seem to sink before the appalled and sin degraded mind in gulfs of endless profundity. In this condition many a mind lies for thousands of years. We could if we would, mention to you historical characters who entered spirit life long ages ago, who are at this moment in the same state as when they left the body. The God-principle still lies dormant, so great has been the defilement of their intellects by their wilful degradation during earth life, that many many centuries must yet elapse in to them seeming hopeless misery, before the spark will be visible to God's messengers above, so that they can take advantage of it to come over and help them. For by God's Eternal law of Justice, the wish to rise must precede the power to do so, the mind must be receptive of good before good can be poured into it, however anxious the angel friends of the sinner hovering over him may be, they cannot infringe God's wise and changeless law.

It forms a portion of our plan for your development to give you all a glimpse of the various phases of life up to the level to which you yourselves have arrived. Farther than this we cannot take you. To commence with the lowest spheres would seem the most natural, but we will not do this out of regard to your own good feelings and natural susceptibilities. We will give you a glimpse of the joys of Heaven before we shew you the terrors of Hell.

You will see by the purity and facility of our inspiration this morning the result of what we have so often impressed upon you as absolutely necessary, attention to our direction as regards conduct of mind and choice of diet. A few more weeks of a like disposition would place you in a position in which we could write what we really intend to impress. For you must not suppose that these teachings, imperfect as they are, in consequence of the imperfect development of the medium, express all that we wish you and the world to know. They contain indeed the general doctrine or idea in its broad features, but the filling in of the picture is what you will see when a further development of the medium brings his mind into a condition more allied to ours.

God of Infinite mercy, Justice and Love, guard our minds against the foolishness of supposing Thy scheme for man's future to be so imperfect as to result in the falling away to nothingness of even the meanest of our race. Teach us to regard Thee as the Almighty Father of all, both the just and the unjust; may our minds be ever guided upwards and onwards by true inspiration from those loving friends who watch over our spiritual interests, and may we finally enter our spirit home in a state in which we can rapidly rise to a place where we may serve Thee, and do Thy work in deed and in truth.—Amen!

[We were present at the circle where the foregoing was received some remarks had been made in reference to Dr. Bromby's new theory, which may have suggested the communication, it was written with great rapidity, occupying only about 30 minutes in its reception.]—ED.

Poetry.

The influence of Poetry—Lizzie Doten—Warren Barlow.

The human soul has been compared to a garden in which the muses carol, and arrange their sweetest lays. He who is without a vein of poetry in his nature, is like the arid desert, with no beds of flowers, no murmuring streams, no bubbling springs, or green carpeted earth to greet the vision. Human nature has poetry within it, and it comes forth like the flower from the parent-stem; like the spear of grass from the tiny seed, and reflects the beauty and grandeur of the human soul. The human mind is, in one sense of the word, an instrument, and all nature plays upon it. The singing bird, the prattling talk of innocent childhood, the plants in the garden, a flowery lawn, pleasant quiet retreat in the forest, all touch the poet's mind, and it responds thereto in verse. The poet acts by being acted upon. If there were no flowers, he could not sing of their rainbow tints. Nature inspires him, and he sings as she impresses him, and the

joys of a blessed immortality! God forbid, we say. God forbid that we should compel ourselves to believe a doctrine so contradictory to all His Fatherly love and care for us, that we should suppose for one moment a state of things so impossible for His Eternal Justice.

"By their works shall ye know them, do men gather grapes from thorns or figs off thistles?" This text is of itself an answer to the Pandemonic objector to all spiritual intercourse. For the last nine months a series of communications have been received in circle through the hand of the writer of this article, purporting to come from spirits of an elevated grade, and chiefly on theological subjects. They are written with excessive velocity, nearly always without a pause from commencement to conclusion, and the medium has but a general idea of what has been passed through his brain and arm till he afterwards reads it. Some of these writings are very voluminous, as much as fifty pages or more of large paper being closely written; but in not one of them do the doctrines taught vary one tittle. Purity of mind and body, temperance, anxiety to progress, Love of God and man; the fact that material life is but a preparation for the higher and better life of the future, such are the subjects which are week by week instilled into our minds. "Glory to God in the highest, Peace on Earth, Good will towards men" is the text which our spirit guides tell us is their favourite watchword, and the loving spirit of the Gentle Jesus seems to breathe in their every word. If these be "goblins damned," they are certainly defeating their own object, for true it is that every member of our circle is wiser, better, and purer than before it was formed—As an example of the writings the following was given at the first meeting—"Should you earnestly desire to receive impressions from the higher sources, you will get them, but you must have patience, nothing great or good is easily earned. The first and most important thing is harmony of mind, and the pure and high aspirations of minds anxious to progress." Let these conditions be present and you will not fail to have all you desire. Fix your minds on the abstract idea of God the all wise and good, by this you will attract the highest influences that can communicate with man, and will receive lessons of wisdom and truth, that will purify and elevate your minds to a position far above what you can now imagine. Always commence your meetings with prayer. This brings your minds into harmony, and raises your aspirations for good. Little food and no stimulating drinks should be taken for some hours previously. You can form no idea of how our difficulties are increased by these physical obstacles to spiritual influence. The matter which you receive will be in accordance with your condition and your desires. Thus it is through all man's spiritual history whether in or out of the body. From himself must come his development, without himself we can do but little to help him. The following prayer was written for use at the circle.

"God of all power but also of all Love! look down on us assembled here! Let a ray of thy Divine Spirit traverse the vastness of space and illumine the dark places of our material intellects. Give us strength to cast off our material clogs and soar on spiritual wings to a companionship with thy bright angels. Teach us ever to look upwards. Let us never cast a longing look behind to the mean and worthless dross of worldly occupation and sensual desires, for we are born to that higher and better life that awaits all thy children in the vast infinity of the future. May this future always shine before us as a guiding star, to which we may look in the darkest night of our spiritual sleep, a pole star to which our tempest tost bark may steer amidst all the shoals and quicksands that beset us in our voyage through material life. Father! look down on us this night, give us of thy Holy Spirit to bless us and keep us from all Spiritual Evil."

Now if this be the work of the Devil, all that can be said is that he has disguised himself so excessively like an angel of light that no one can distinguish between them, and we may as well take this opportunity of informing him that he is "biding his time" in the sheep's clothing rather too long for the success of his own wicked purposes, and that if he really is going to pour any of the "juice of damned Hebenon" into our ears, he

had better be quick about it, for he has played the saint so long and so successfully, that really he will soon forget how to play the Devil at all, and our little circle may be the means of giving him a step in the right direction in which he is bound to go sooner or later as every good spiritualist believes.

But a truce to irony—neither of these objections to the doctrine of desirable intercourse with man in these latter days will hold water, they are both found wanting, judged by any standard whether that of reason or revelation.

But it is said by some that even allowing the doctrine of angelic teaching to be true, there is no need for it, and that the Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to Salvation. By the same argument we might do away with preachers, teachers, and expounders of every kind, and assist in a gigantic holocaust of religious works as superogatory. Our spirit guides do not pretend to be omniscient or to propound any new doctrine. Their teachings are principally expositions of Scripture, they have been men like ourselves, and now looking at things as they are, free from the hindrances of prejudice, the turmoils of business, and the drawbacks of fleshly lusts, that war against the soul's welfare, they come to point to us the way of life and to help us along its rugged road. Those persons who consider themselves above the necessity of assistance from the intelligence of minds of ten times their age and experience, and who besides have gone through a process of purification that none in the flesh can undergo, had indeed better not enter on the study of spiritualism; but to the "poor in spirit," those who in meekness and humbleness, gladly receive any aid towards the fostering of the kingdom of God which we are told is within us, we would say, pray earnestly to Him for spiritual help, ask and ye shall receive the blessing which was given to Abraham, to Lot, and to Paul, seek, and ye shall find that His illimitable love has supplied a harmonious relation between the two worlds, by which we may enjoy a "little heaven below;" knock reverently and with no vulgar curiosity, and the portals of the grave shall be opened to you, you will see beauties and meanings in His word which you never saw before, and receive palpable, audible proofs of that glorious immortality which God in his infinite mercy has laid up in store for all that love Him. In how many minds as in Thomas', does there still linger a doubting sceptical spirit, which hangs like a millstone round the neck of their understanding? as Jesus said to Thomas "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side," so the ever tender loving Father, by the mouth of His holy angels, bids us take evidence of what we believe, and fill both our understandings and our senses with proof of man's immortal nature, and the bright future that awaits his finer, better part, when freed from material hindrances his spirit shall mount like a strong-winged, strong-eyed eagle towards the Sun of Righteousness.

GREATER WORKS.

It is a singular fact connected with the history of that most singular subject, which is denominated spiritualism, that the arguments of those who denounce it are unsupported by a single explanation that can grapple the simplest of the phenomena. The enemies of spiritualism appear to be divided into two classes, those who call it Diabolism and those who effect to laugh at the "absurdity of its belief," which enters in the domain of the ghost experiences of the imaginative and superstitious, and revives the bogieism of childhood. Spiritualists bring forward witnesses to prove that they have had the evidences of all their senses, corroborating each other as to the supernatural manifestations induced at *seances*. The table that "appeared" to rise under the nose of Sir David Brewster is just as obstinate in its "appearances" as it ever was. The writing without human intervention, is quietly being repeated night after night in London, and learned professors who have had the honesty to investigate for themselves, retreat, staggered, and silent from a subject, that sets at nought all previous scientific deductions, and melts away from them that pinnacle of knowledge upon which they thought they stood. One of the most amusing facts in connection with this subject, is the blind and wholly ignorant manner in which it is treated by a portion of the press.

One journalist assures its enlightened readers that concealed machinery, magnets, and the like *are not always* used and that much is made up by the imagination of credulous and, of course, weak-minded persons. Writers such as these who afford a not inconsiderable amount of laughter to experienced spiritualists, are of

course welcome to their opinions, but it is scarcely fair that men who are ignorant of what they are writing about, should make statements and convey imputations buoyed by a moral hardihood that would be worthy of admiration, as a distinction and useful quality in the cause of truth. It is not yet on record that the means by which the phenomena are produced, have been exposed and the imposters scattered; but, it is on record that charlatans have tried to gain money by pretence to gifts which they did not possess much as they have done in reference to any great movement or agitation. History repeats itself in spiritualism as it has in Christianity, medicine, and the like, and the repetition will probably be continued *ad infinitum*. That those who pooh pooh spiritualists are an unthinking class, it would be absurd to state, some of the ablest men of the time are amongst them, but it has not yet been shown by the small fry following in the track that a fair investigation has been given by those of their leaders who deny it. But the other day, Professor Tyndall lectured upon electricity in London, to an audience of advanced thinkers, assisted by Professor Varley, whose aid was requisite to illustrate some of the more subtle facts in connection with the subject, the latter, who is the ablest practical electrician of the age, is an avowed spiritualist.

But a short time since, a conference of the most distinguished men in London, (distinguished for their attainments in science,) agreed to enter upon a systematic inquiry into these manifestations, some of their reports have been published, which, honestly admit the *bona fide* nature of phenomena of a description which no known mundane agency could produce. It is but a few months since Mr. S. C. Hall the well-known *litterateur*, stated that he had reason to believe the final report of the society alluded to, would, when issued, admit the reality of those manifestations, which some colonial journalists are so fond of laughing at, in the face of these facts we can easily afford to wait and smile over the "pop and duel" paragraphs which Professor De Morgan describes with so much humour, as being drawn out by this very subject. An English paper of high standing, reporting on what has been seen by witnesses and by the writer himself in connection with spiritualism, finishes the article somewhat thus:—"What are the Diablotical society about? In the meantime, we rub our eyes and wait." It is very easy with all the knowledge, which spiritualists possess of the reality of the manifestations to bear good humoredly the silly attacks which are from time to time made upon their belief. A subject into which the most learned men of England and Germany, are examining with interest and anxiety, can afford to bear with the witticisms and misrepresentations of a few funny or ignorant writers the Atheist snaps at the Divine, who must with due regard to truth, admit the witnessing of those strange things which he has both seen and heard; and, who must in loyalty to testimony, receive many of the facts which are strange to his experiences. The divines in turn, preach that the spirits who thus manifest themselves are of the Devil, and thus wilfully put away from them the power which Jesus Christ left them as a legacy and a test. So the battle goes on, infidelity on one side, and fierce denunciation on the other. It seems strange that men educated into habits of close thought can wilfully close their eyes to the rapidly withering kernel of the church of which they are the teachers and the leaders.

Jesus Christ with all his power, and amongst those of Galilee, who received his teachings gladly, called that which is denominated miracle to his aid. He with the prescience of the prophet saw the whole way down along the busy stream of time, and gazing with immortal eyes deep into the farthest vista left behind him, as the required heritage "Greater works than these shall ye do." But teachers mightier than he have sprung up who need none of these "Greater works" to commence. Resting upon the respectability and morality of their teachings, battling about immersion faith and predestination and plenary inspiration and church government, they strike wildly at the air without seeing that their feet are slipping, and the ground moving from beneath them. They deny the need of the "Greater works" although the merest husk but remains in their grasp. Although their churches are split up by the fierce dissensions so characteristic of latter day, Christians and their people possess the form without the spirit of Godliness; although their ministers are showing debauchery amongst them, and their conclaves, are scenes of anger and contention, although the struggles for the "higher place at the feast" are as visible now, if not so shamelessly manifest as in the days of Hypatia, and finally although their walk and conversation are as different from the example set by their master, as was that of the Ebionites from the earlier sects, whose jealousy they aroused, they disclaim the need of the "Greater works." The evidence which Jesus left as a means at once to prove and to convict, we need go no farther back than to the North of Ireland revivals to prove that these "Greater works" are waiting; and, as close within the reach of man as they were 1,800 years ago. If ever there was a need for the "Greater works," that need is on now, when the churches are steeped in ritual and hypocrisy, and when the simple, pure, loving, and democratic Christianity of Jesus Christ, is being swallowed up by the absurd entanglements of creeds; and, the pretensions, ceremonies, which one sect screams at as a mummary, and the other elevates as an essential to salvation, the avoidance of the admission that "Greater works" are requisite or possible is wisdom in a certain direction, for in this must follow the terrible witness, the inexorably true test of the existence of that spirituality, which the master left, and which the master communicated, should be proved in those who professed to follow in his footsteps.

But a short time since, a clergyman, (the Rev. J. C. Cameron,) delivered a lecture on spiritualism at Geelong. He admitted, if I remember rightly, both on the grounds of testimony and experience, the truth of these spiritual manifestations. He informed his hearers that some of the most scientific minds in England

had endorsed their truth, but here he drew back suddenly, and denies that the spirits revealing themselves, were those of the departed. According to Mr. Cameron they are devils, so they are according to Bishop Perry, and so they are according to every orthodox divine who is afraid to deal with the subject. It would be interesting and highly important, taking the view from the stand-point of the Christian churches to know by what system of ratiocination Mr. Cameron arrived at his conclusions; and, by what system of induction he branched from the spiritual revelations into Diabolism. Considering that "millions are being led away" by this belief, Mr. Cameron has a great duty to perform. It will remain for him to show how he could believe in the truthfulness of the influences as to what they represent themselves to be, and yet denounces them as untruthful as to their individuality, the same system of reasoning that follows up the investigation to a certain point, must be pursued to the end. Mr. Cameron admits the "spirit," but it is impossible to halt here. In the form of a deceased friend with the knowledge and characteristics possessed by that deceased friend, his or her affections and peculiarities, the individuality of the deceased must be admitted, judged by the mind and reasoning powers which God has given us. If the spirit of a man's wife advises, consoles, and strengthens him; if she speaks to him of the minutest and most private family affairs showing herself in the earthly form by which she was known, speaking to him in the familiar voice, and the old-living tones, the individuality is established. Let Mr. Cameron read the life of Oberlin, and that of a host of others, of whom time would fail me to tell; and, if he still hide himself under the Diabolic shield, his candour in reasoning must have left him. It is strange that "ghostly advisers" should be so frantic in denying "ghosts." It is strange that they, whose duty it is to point to comfort beyond the dark curtain, should deny this greatest corroboration of this teaching. It is strange that they will snatch from the earthworm and the weary, the substantiality of a blessing which can enable them to leave the rivers brink; knowing that the lost ones are waiting and before.

It is beyond belief that they should so seek to trample on the spiritual contemplation; except, indeed it be that the living and Christian doctrine of Luther's Hell as a deterrent and a final place of everlasting horrors combined, is preferable as a contemplation in the coming life. We know that those we love are about us, and around us, ministering spirits by whom the great living Creator sees fit to act mediately, that there are evil influences and tempters to evil we know too; but we do not know that the evil should possess the greater power of appearing and winning us, or that they should have this further power to lead us astray given them by him from whom all power comes. Surely the struggle according to Mr. Cameron is unequal enough, with our evil natures, over worldly temptations, and our birth in sin put into the balance. Spiritualism is described by Mr. Cameron as the reaction from materialism. The former, he says is not an undiluted lie, the latter is. What poor judgment the evil spirits, the fathers of all lies must show, to try and win materialists from an undoubted and undiluted lie, to even half a truth! The cunning of the Devil is sinking to a low ebb, he by no means, sustains that credit for ability which till the present has been very generally accorded him.

The period for the "Greater works" is coming, because the need has arisen. The time for denying the necessity for the master's test, will soon have passed away, and the "Greater works which ye shall do if ye are his disciples," will soon be asked for as an evidence of that faith and power which we are told, should be indwelling in the followers of Jesus of Nazareth.

THE A. B. C. OF SPIRITUALISM.

(BY SIGMA).

EVERY thoughtful and reading man must at some time in the course of his researches have been surprised into a smile of incredulity or wonder at the accounts which he has sometimes perused concerning that modern wonder which has sprung up amongst the people of America and Europe, denominated Spiritualism. As the prospectus of this publication sets forth, there is nothing of which the popular mind is so profoundly ignorant, and yet, strange to say, there is nothing which possesses so many attractions for the impartial investigator.

Spiritualism came before the people of Victoria like the distant echo of some far life that was big with revolution, and potent to the upsetting of some of our earliest teachings and strongest prejudices. It has eddied to the surface of our society for a time with a momentum and force as startling as it was sudden, and appeared to sink back to obscurity and forgetfulness. Those who read the daily and weekly papers still find that its buoyant power is by no means lost. Now and again it floats up before us with apparently as much vitality as ever. It appears in the form of a lecture from some of our eminent divines, or as a convenient strop upon which the wit of our journalists is periodically sharpened. Stray paragraphs like aimless waifs tell us of strange writings being received in one place—strange drawings in a second, and yet other and stranger manifestations in a third. We read timid accounts of occurrences in

English papers which it would appear cannot be accounted for by mundane agency. The Americans with their millions of converts to spiritualism are bolder, and describe what they see with a circumstantiality that leaves the reader halting between belief in a deliberately planned falsehood, or the acceptance of a most startling truth. Periodicals for believers in spiritualism are being started everywhere. Books displaying much research and ability are preaching forth the doctrines, and finally, one of the most learned societies in the world—the Dialectical Society of London—are now busily engaged in examining into the *bona-fide* nature of the alleged phenomena. If these are facts, and they are not likely to be disproved much less contradicted—we must all admit that the subject is an important one. For the sake of society at large, an error that counts so many adherents should be exploded, or a truth that is making such rapid strides should be most closely considered. I think I may fairly assume that those who read *The Harbinger* know what spiritualism means, and I need not therefore occupy unnecessary space in dealing with the primaries of the subject. Those who care to investigate the matter with impartiality will regret as I have often done, that there should have been so much bitterness imparted into the ventilation of a subject which should in the first instance have been upset, or found a basis on the verification of the mere phenomena which it presents, rather than be snarled and growled at over religious or creedal points. Those who care to pursue this subject in a spirit of fair enquiry, should seek in the first instance to demonstrate to their own satisfaction whether that involuntary movement of the hand—observable in those whose peculiar organisms fit them for media—which causes the pencil or planchette to write, proceed only from the mind of the writer, or from some outside intelligence. This I regard as the great debatable point, once this is assured, the whole fabric of spiritualism crumbles away, or is built up with a solidity that is fixed and abiding. If I were to tell my readers that I am a believer in spiritualism, I imagine that this article would be read with that degree of caution which is very properly observed in the reception of any argument that savours of special pleading. This much I will say, that I commenced the investigation of the subject in a spirit of impartiality, or, at least, a frame of mind which if it had any bias was towards scepticism in the phenomena of which I had read so much. It is not my intention to describe the various gradations of conviction and doubt which I alternately experienced during the process. I met with instances which seemed to prove to me most clearly that the whole of the communications received proceeded from some occult force, governed by the mind of the writer. Illiterate media wrote in an illiterate way, even the idiom of expression was visible in the sentences, and this phase of the phenomena I am free to admit is still a stupendous difficulty, it surges up between when breakers like these appear to have been passed, and the sailing looks plain and convincing. It is very common to find in the course of an investigation of this nature that although what the medium knows to be correct is correctly written, such writing being involuntary; yet what is foreign to the knowledge of the same mind is absolutely incorrect. Here lies the *Pons Asinorum*, and beyond this but few enquirers will get except with considerable difficulty, perseverance, and what may be termed good fortune in respect to the conditions. But I can pit against this the fact which I have now often proved, that educated media write in an illiterate manner, both as regards diction and spelling, often much to their annoyance. I have seen what are called by believers “spirit messages” written out wholly against their wish and convictions, and finally, I have known those unacquainted with any language but English, write in good French. For this latter fact to which men holding high positions in science and literature have subscribed their testimony, I can vouch from personal experience, and I adduce it because it is one that a patient investigator can prove to his own satisfaction. It has been said in reference to this that the mind of some one present may unconsciously to himself (the speaker of French) or the media, influence them and enable them to produce a foreign language correctly on paper. This argument

would have much weight under the experience which experiments in mesmerism gives us, but when it is found as indeed it repeatedly is, that a language is written unknown to any present, and only translated subsequently when a linguist was found, the reasoning loses all its force. The idea of a distant mind coming from somewhere and infringing upon that of the writer, is quite as difficult to believe as that the mind of some one who has left this world, acts through the mind of the medium. But if either of the hypotheses be admitted, so is the outside intelligence, and if it be able to give a correct answer in French, so is it able to reply correctly as to whether it is the mind of a Frenchman living at Calais, or the spirit of a Frenchman who died at Calais 50 years ago. In every instance, and they are legion, the reply has been the same. There is another phase of manifestations which any patient investigator can prove for himself, that circumstances occurring at a great distance have been communicated to the surprise of the medium, and on the instant of the occurrences, that subsequent enquiry has found their perfect truth to the minutest details. This also points to some outside intelligence. That “spirit messages” are often incorrect, or more properly that they are very frequently untruthful, may, if the outside intelligence be admitted, be fairly referable to what is called the communicating spirit, and often to the peculiar organisation of the medium’s mind. We know very well that Baron Reichenbach’s sensitives all saw the odic flame issuing from the poles of the magnet, but they did not all agree as to the color or strength, or shape, or size of the flame, although wherever moved in a darkened room, the sensitive could find her way to the magnet guided by this flame, about which such diversity of opinion existed as to appearance; some of the sensitives felt the upward pass of the magnet warm, and some cool, some described the odic flame from fire or moonlight in one way, and some another, although as nearly as the most rigid precautions could seem, the conditions were similar, and yet it would be absurd to arrive at the conclusion that the flame did not really possess the same color, or that a flame did not exist at all. Thus in the manifestations of spiritualism it is asserted that we have the outside intelligence existing, and because it is lying in one instance, and appears to clothe itself with the medium’s style of thought and expression in another, we are not to conclude that the intelligence whatever it is does not exist apart and separate from the mind through which it is presented. If in one case or in twenty, we find information conveyed which the writer or speaker could not possibly *know*, by virtue of his own speculation or knowledge, the outside intelligence must be referred to as the motor—although in a hundred other subsequent experiences nothing can be procured that is not either known to the writer or false. An article written by a Cambridge man appears in the *Argosy*, which came by the last mail, in which it is shown with, I presume, the view of upsetting the spiritualistic belief, how two students at a seance *willed* the medium to write a certain communication, and that it was written as willed; farther that they composed a democratic speech for a weak-minded conservative student, who delivered it verbatim, greatly to his own confusion. What does this prove? Simply that the highway exists by which one mind or spirit can act on that of another. Certain phases of the phenomena are explainable to some extent by what is termed a mundane theory. But it is remarkable that such explanations are only attempted through the operations of the mind or spirit, or purely on psychologic principles, that is to say, the action of the incarnated spirit. This, as I said before, proves if the theory be correct, and if it proves anything that mind in the body can take advantage of, the same means of communication as that through which spiritualists say the mind acts which has left the body. If I even go farther and state the probabilities of an inter-co-relation of incarnated minds producing the various different writings and drawings from the same hand, which spiritualists describe; we have the fact behind, that notwithstanding the tangle such action must occasion, the communications are always coherent when beyond the normal power of the medium. The heaviest fact remains yet to be disposed of, and that is, that no theory or explanation can be

satisfactory that does not cover the phenomena. The facts which spiritualism embrace are singularly irrepressible. No sooner is one phase knocked down by such a theory as "Cambridge man" in the *Argosy* gives, than another rises more irrepressible still.

In the foregoing article I have tried to deal with the simplest phenomena in the simplest manner. I purpose resuming the subject in a future number.

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Printed by E. Purton & Co., at their Office, 106 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, for the Proprietor, W. H. Terry, and published by him at 96 Russell Street South, Melbourne.