

THE Harbinger of Light.

A 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."

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It is a singular fact in connexion with all Spiritualistic Associations that the principle of disintegration seems inherent in them; they spring into existence, grow, flourish for a time, and then decline and pass out of existence, giving place to new combinations which have their day and then decay as their predecessors did. It seems to be the object of the wise intelligences directing the movement, to prevent any individual or body of individuals attaining undue prominence and thereby chrystalizing into a church. Hence we find the most prominent speakers and teachers connected with Spiritualism are nomadic, travelling from place to place, scattering seeds of Truth as they go, but leaving others to gather and use the fruits; the seeds germinate, the trees grow, and the fruits are appropriated, while the name of the sower is forgotten. The less nomadic are seldom permanently associated with any body, they speak or write something appropriate to the time, and come into prominence for a little while, then retire into obscurity, anon appearing, comet-like, to shed another ray of light upon the world. Our remarks are pertinent to the recent dissolution of the Victorian Association. Five years since a few Melbourne Spiritualists affirmed the desirability of associating for mutual edification, and diffusing the truths of Spiritualism, and at a meeting held at the Trades' Hall, Lygon Street, October, 1870, the first Committee and Officers were elected. Mr. John Ross being President, Messrs. McIlwraith, Manns and Dr. Richardson, Vice-Presidents, and Mr. Terry, Secretary. Shortly after its formation, the Society rented the Masonic Hall and held a series of morning services, consisting of essays, readings and music, by members of the Association, which attracted considerable interest and steadily grew in favor, until Mr. Tyerman's engagement by the Association, when the Hall was for a time found to be inadequate to accommodate the audience, and the Turn Verein Hall was

engaged. After a trial of six months it was found that the income of the Association was not adequate to sustain a permanent paid lecturer, and the Association returned to its old quarters at the Masonic Hall, holding evening services only, the Hall being occupied by the Lyceum during the morning. About this time, Mr. Peebles arrived in Melbourne, and during his Sunday lectures at the Theatre, the usual services of the Association were suspended. The impetus given to Spiritualism by these lectures, and several articles which appeared in the local press, gave a favorable opportunity for Mr. Tyerman to start a new Association, which remained in existence until his departure for Sydney. Through some misunderstanding in connexion with Mr. Tyerman's withdrawal from the original Association, the two bodies remained distinct though their objects were the same, they, however, held a pleasant reunion in the Survey Paddock in the summer of 1873. Previous to Mr. Tyerman's engagement no difficulty had been experienced in obtaining volunteer lecturers; but the withdrawal of the necessity for their efforts appeared to have induced an apathetic condition in many, and on the resumption of the services, after the interregnum, considerable difficulty was experienced in providing original discourses; services were continued for about twelve months after this, when the difficulty increasing it was deemed advisable to try an experimental course of paid lectures, and the services of Mr. Charles Bright were secured, for a course of 13 lectures, which were delivered in the Temperance Hall, and attracted considerable public attention, the audiences generally exceeding a thousand. Mr. Hughes followed with a course, in the same hall, although the lectures were of a high order, they were not a financial success, and no suitable lecturing talent being available, the Association resumed its Sunday services at the Masonic Hall. The recitals at the Town Hall, during the month of August, considerably lessened the attendance at these meetings, and not being able to obtain original essays, the Committee deemed it advisable to suspend the Sunday evening meetings for a month. During the interim some overtures were made by the Committee to the members of the late Spiritualistic and Free-thought Propagandist Society, inviting their co-operation, and with the view of

bringing this about, a meeting of Spiritualists and Free thinkers, was held at the Masonic Hall, on Sunday, Sept. 19th, no scheme was submitted by the conveners, and a new aspect was given to the affair by Mr. Williams (one of the Vice-presidents) rising and proposing, without notice, that "the Association be dissolved," with the view of re-construction on a broader basis. The proposition sounded well, and after some discussion, a resolution recommending the dissolution was carried, a meeting of the Association was called a fortnight later, it was attended by a limited number of Members, the majority of whom accepted the recommendation of the previous meeting, and dissolved the Society, which is now a thing of the past. A series of resolutions for the formation of a new society were then put to the general meeting and carried, and on the following Sunday the new Association was formed. Since the dissolution of the old society considerable dissatisfaction has been expressed by many of its members who did not attend the meeting, at the result, for this they have only themselves to blame, had they exhibited less apathy the event they deplore would not have occurred. It remains now for all true Spiritualists and Progressionists to put their shoulders to the wheel and give the new combination a fair start, the best way to correct the evils which they predict from the alliance of Spiritualists and non-Spiritualists, is by combatting them, let them come in with the determination to aid all movements of a progressive nature, and to oppose all discord, and whether successful or not, they will have the consciousness of having done their duty.

COMMUNICATION

ON THOUGHT-READING, &c.

Whether intelligences in the spirit world can perceive through the medium of your mind the thoughts or teachings which you derive from books or elsewhere depends on certain conditions, conditions both as to the state of the spirit as well as that of the individual.

The mind, which is engaged in thinking or reading, must be of that clear and transparent order as can thoroughly grasp the subject in hand. So, on the other hand, the spirits who have this power which you term clairvoyance, differ very much in their temperaments and capacities. There are some that read the brain very distinctly; others who do so very imperfectly. In the former case, it is easy for spirits to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the thoughts of people on earth. But from a want of discipline, or difference in temperament, it very seldom happens that it can be said that they have a distinct idea of the brain. This may be likened to a shadow cast upon the water, when all is silent and still the shadow is distinctly marked upon the water, but when the wind rises and disturbs the surface of the lake, dashing and waving the trees hither and thither, then the form of the shadow is indistinct; indeed in many cases it cannot be seen at all. So are the ideas in man's mind when it is troubled and disturbed. In the case of the questioner, his thoughts could be easily read, because there is a degree of lucidity in the mind, and the ideas assume distinctive form, and remaining in your mind a certain period, become what might be called your own, and during that period they are seen by spirits. To put the case in a more practical manner, you sometimes feel an impulse as you say to take up a particular book. It might sometimes be regarded as a possibility, but certainly, not often; that such impulse arose from an instigation on the part of the spirit intelligences to find out what was in this book. There is a connection between other spirits and the one within

your body, of which you oftentimes are not conscious. The desire to know the contents of this book, arose from a certain clairvoyant power within you, by which you were drawn towards it, as you are drawn towards certain men, and under specific conditions are repelled from others. There are many impressions which at the moment you think are derived from an outside source, when they really spring from within; sometimes from a process of reasoning during sleep, in which impressions, unconsciously to you, have been brought up before your mind in its waking state.

Only, under certain circumstances can you rely on the communications which you receive having an origin outside yourselves. You may submit certain questions to influences outside yourself and through your own organisation you may receive a certain reply. If this is new to your intelligence altogether, you may rely upon it as being derived from an outside spiritual influence. There are many who believe they receive communications from the spiritual world, and do deceive themselves. Those of you who have closely enquired into the science of mind and the peculiar action or state of the spirit during sleep, must be aware that very often when the body indicates rest, perfect rest, there is great activity spiritually. Even in some cases so active is the spirit that during certain operations of the brain, it maintains control over the organs of the body, and makes use of them to walk and do many things that it could not do in its waking or normal state. Many can perform on musical instruments and do many things with much greater ability than they are able in their ordinary condition.

There is a vast barrier between the internal and external consciousness of man's spirit. The action of the spirit may be forever hidden from man's external consciousness.

It is possible for you, when under the influence, to do certain things, the result of which you can never know till you arrive in the spiritual world. It is possible for you to write a letter to-night, and during your life on earth be unconscious of the existence of such a production.

In such calamities as injuries to the brain, when not sufficiently severe to cause the severance of the soul from the body, though a certain amount of vital force is maintained by the spirit, it still has a tendency gradually to decay. There not being sufficient power to keep up the connection of the brain and the different organs of the body by which you live and move. The fluid or electricity passes on to that portion of the brain which is diseased, and operates on it entirely uncontrolled by the individuality within. Lunatics may sometimes be restored to a perfect state, provided the conditions are favourable. A musical instrument, if in proper tune, can be played on, and it will respond to the touch of the player, and give forth his exact idea of the melody, and so long as that instrument is in a perfect state, you can produce harmony; but let some of the notes be removed, or injured, and your ability to play is gone. You cannot draw from that instrument the music you could when it was in perfect condition. Once more restore the instrument, your ability to play will not be changed, but in the one case, the result will be discord, and in the other, harmony. A wise man, knowing his instrument is defective, will cease trying to use it, but will wait till an opportunity has been afforded of mending it, when he will once more be able to derive pleasure and satisfaction to his own soul. So it is with the spirit of man. The brain is but an instrument, and you might as well say that if the fingers were cut away or paralyzed, that there was no longer any man because there were no fingers.

In the case of lunatics, it often happens that while the external consciousness of the mind is in a defective state, the internal is sound as a bell all the time. But their inability to derive benefit from the experiences of the world interferes with their spiritual progress and attainments as a matter of course. They are like children that die young; they are not entirely prevented from gaining that knowledge of the physical world which they were prevented from obtaining when on earth.

Poetry.

TRUTH IN NATURE.

WHAT wonders lie in Nature's Book

For all who wish to learn,

Its mighty wonder working power

Meets man at every turn;

'Tis a vast Encyclopedia

For every clime and nation,

A faithful, true, unerring guide;

Embracing all Creation.

Look in the Mighty volume

And what doth it unfold,

A cycle of Eternal Truth,

More precious than her gold.

Her royal law no error knows,

Her fiat none can change;

Her ruling is impartial,

And of universal range.

The lofty snow clad mountain

Or the burning arid plain,

The peaceful waving corn fields;

Or boisterous stormy main.

All bow in homage to that law

Permeating through the whole,

Whose mighty empire arches in,

The zenith and the pole.

Her guidance is sufficient

For Eternity and time,

Conformity brings happiness;

Rebellion is a crime.

Progression is her watchword,

Truth and purity her goal;

The summit of Eternal bliss,

For Man's Immortal soul.

Come ye misguided worshippers

Of the Genus—Orthodox,

(For surely priestcraft's shattered barge

Is drawing near the rocks.)

Throw off the yoke,—discard the badge,

Exound the Truth in Love,

God's laws and Nature's are but one,

And point to joys above.

W. J. SMITH.

Barnawartha,

Sept. 7th 1875.

To Correspondents.

Communications for insertion in this Journal should be plainly written, and as concise as possible.

SPIRITUALISM AT CASTLEMAINE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—In compliance with the suggestion of "a Spiritualist" in your last number, I beg to forward you the result of our sitting in circle on Sunday evening last, October 3rd., at the house of Mr. P., in company with his good lady, another young lady, and myself. Before sitting down I bolted the door, and searched the room, as I always do, with Mr. P.'s permission. We took our seats and blew the candle out, and in five minutes after, we heard something fall on the table, we lit up and found a leg of mutton on it, we blew out the light again, and in less than eight minutes after we heard something drop, we lit up and found a cottage loaf on the table. The light was again extinguished, and after about twelve minutes, we heard two objects fall on the table, when we lit up, we found two more loaves of Mrs. P.'s own baking. The whole sitting lasting forty-five minutes. I will describe one more sitting that took place some months ago. Four of us, besides Mr. and Mrs. P. sat in a circle one mile distant from the home of Mr. and Mrs. P. We heard nothing coming on the table, but were requested to light up, when we found a large bouquet in a large glass vase

with water, recognised by Mr. and Mrs. P., as belonging to them, and the flowers were plucked that day and left in their parlour.

I am Sir, &c.

K.

Castlemaine,
October 6th., 1875.

ADELAIDE NEWS.

(From our local correspondent.)

The Hon. Sir Richard Davies Hanson, Chief Justice, who some years ago published a valuable theological work called the "Jesus of History," is announced to shortly issue from a well-known London house a sequel to that work, containing an examination of St. Paul, and a review of Christianity, from the death of Christ until the fall of Jerusalem. The work is expected next mail, and I will endeavour to send you a copy for review in your valuable journal.

The other evening Miss Turner delivered a lecture in White's Rooms on "Ill-used Men" to the largest and I suppose the most fashionable audience she ever addressed. His excellency the governor Sir Anthony Musgrave, K.C.M.G., Lady Musgrave, and several members of the vice-regal household were present, also the honrs. W. Everard (chairman), and W. Sandover, M.L.C.'s, Messrs. Kay and Townsend, M.P.'s, and many other influential gentlemen. Miss Turner in commencing threw out an uncalled-for and most contemptible sneer at the Melbourne Spiritists. I do not know whether Miss Turner assumes the power of infallibly, determining right and wrong, but as she belongs to a church which contends for freedom of thought, she might allow "her spiritual friends," as she called them, the same freedom that she claims for herself.

Mr. Willard announces to imitate the manifestations of Spiritism under the strictest test conditions without the aid of a cabinet. I hope to be present on the occasion, and shall not omit to send you particulars next month.

J. H. R.

Adelaide, 19th October, 1875.

THE ENERGETIC CIRCLE AND ITS SPIRIT GUIDES.

DEAR HARBINGER,—

I fear after that letter of yours in your issue of October, giving a plain, unvarnished account of what you saw at our circle, you will be set down by *he* of the *Australasian* as one of the "weak-minded persons." Well, I suppose it won't put you about much, because you know that you are in good company. All advocates of new or unfashionable truths are first laughed at and derided, but if, as experience has abundantly taught us, we but hold on our way neither bending nor breaking before the storm of ridicule which surrounds us, these unpopular truths will take root, and ultimately the "weak-minded persons" of to-day will become the teachers and guides of to-morrow. To all true souls, therefore, who may be suffering for the truth's sake, I would say as one said of old: "Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." It is satisfactory to have one's statements corroborated to the letter by the "we" of the *Harbinger*, and an encouragement for our circle to persevere, and to publish their proceedings no matter how extraordinary they may appear to the uninitiated. Since your visit—and you may consider yourself a highly-privileged person to be admitted after some of the highest persons in the colonies have been refused the boon—our circle has continued its regular bi-weekly seances. For some time, however, it has been obvious to the members of the circle that from some cause or other our manifestations had received a check, and that our progress was stationary. This was not very satisfactory to such earnest investigators, and, accordingly, it was resolved to consult our spirit guides on the matter. We had all come to the conclusion, that a little new blood was wanted, as there seemed to be a lack of mediumistic power. King said in reply to questions: "You have yourselves principally to blame for the want of power. Punctuality

and harmony are essential to success. Irregularity of attendance is what keeps you back more than anything. When one member and then another comes the one night and stops away the next the manifestations are kept in abeyance, and it should not be permitted among you. We could do with one or two new members, but be careful, and before you admit them first submit their names to me. There will be a change shortly, but until then the manifestations will continue pretty much the same as at present. George Abell will manifest on Sunday and address you." On Sunday, in accordance with this promise, Abell controlled the medium, King not being present. Abell claims to be my guide. I called the attention of the circle—ten members being present—to the fact that it was principally through Abell that we got the finest test of direct spirit-writing ever we had, many months ago, when all hands were joined, the medium bound and sealed at the wrists, and three spirits were seen to write on the numbered papers on the centre of the table, and the profile of every member present being visible during the time the writing was done. Abell then said—per the entranced medium—"If you wanted a reason for the slow progress which you have been making for months past, you have but to look round the circle to-night to see who are absent—to find it. * * * Can you wonder, therefore, at the character of the manifestations under such circumstances? But those present are punctual, though their minds are not as I could wish them to be. If all their minds were as yours what is so much looked for would soon come. I can only manifest when the harmony is good. It would be of no use to give the dimensions of the cabinet yet, you must wait until we are ready. About the sealed packets they are in my possession, and they will not be returned until your minds are different. Do not think if in one day, I could take out of this room a numbered paper and bring it back again with a drawing of the cabinet on it, I cannot also take care of the packets and return them as desired? It will be done as I said when your minds are ready for them. In this circle we have much to do, and regularity and patience are more required in it than in any other circle in the colony. It will be advisable for you to get some new blood, but you must be very careful who you introduce. You must use your own observations in the matter, as if persons are admitted who require to be absent more than once in three months excepting from unavoidable causes, it were better for them not to come at all, as spirits might come with them with whom we are not in affinity, and thus you might be thrown back for months. Your experience of the past in this respect ought to be a sufficient guide to you. Remember if you have not been advancing much lately you have not been going back, and that is something. One thing I wish to impress upon you all is this, not to interfere with the phenomena, nor be suspicious or hasty in your judgment of them until you see them complete. A house when finished has a very different appearance to the eye to what it has when only in course of erection. All that has been promised will be fulfilled." In answer to a question, Abell said: "The reason you have not felt the materialised heads, faces and hands near the floor as you formerly did, is because of your imprudent interference with the phenomena; but they will come back again. The circle must not admit visitors, as they keep you back very much." The circle thanked Abell for his address and promised as far as possible to attend to his and King's instructions. Abell's light then appeared, and a small draped figure with a star on its forehead and the medium, were both seen at the same moment. Then the medium standing up and a very tall draped figure close to him. The chairman reported that he had felt a head and face fully formed near the floor. The head was covered with very soft, white drapery and luminous. A lady member was also allowed to feel the head. At a subsequent seance a lady and two gentlemen were permitted to feel the draped head of a little child, its tiny hand being placed in those of the latter two persons, King being the controlling spirit on the occasion. I have thus given your readers a plain statement of how matters are with us. We have no great reason to complain seeing how many and varied and truly wonderful

our manifestations have been since we first became a circle. I am happy to inform you that the result of the Energetic Circle's late "Evening at Home" and the special collection we made on Hospital Sunday, is regarded by the public of Sandhurst as highly creditable to us. The total amount raised by us for the two local charities this year being £40 3s. 6d. Last year it was £35 14s. May our dear spiritual cause flourish, and may a knowledge of its truths find its way into the hearts of all God's children everywhere—irrespective of creed or country—is the prayer of

Yours truly,

Sandhurst, 20th October, 1875. THE CHAIRMAN.

P.S.—Several of the Energetic Circle have observed lately, that just before the tall figure of King is seen in a standing posture, the short figure of the medium is seen standing and with white drapery on his head and body. He is then seen bare-headed and the white-draped figure of King standing by his side. I mentioned to the Circle the other night that I had read in the *Banner of Light* about the spirits manufacturing the white drapery out of the dark dress of a powerful medium named Mrs. Compton, and was of opinion that what appeared on the spirits at our Circle was made from a similar source, as there always was some strange process going on with our medium's dress before King's light disappeared. When King—per the medium—immediately rapped three times in approval. Please take a note of these things readers of the *Harbinger*.

EVENING AT HOME.—We regret that in our list of the names published in our previous issue of those ladies and gentlemen who were present at the above reunion of the Energetic Circle, Sandhurst, the following were inadvertently omitted, namely—Miss Barker, Mr. J. Sutton, Mr. W. Webb, and Mr. G. H. Miller.

REST FOR THE WEARY.

No mortal man lives who does not yearn for the spiritual; who, losing a friend, does not long for some positive evidence of immortality and the reappearing. What beseeching at the gates of Heaven! In the effort to supply the fainting pilgrims, the popular church digs up old dead roots from Judean dirt for food. They give a serpent for a fish. Hence almost everybody is sick, weary, wrecked in hope, bewildered in darkness.

But there is a rest. At the inspirational fountains of pure Spiritualism is rest for the weary. They who have felt the magnetic currents of spirit life coursing in body and mind, drinking deep at the springs of God, do enter into that rest. And what a rest! How unspeakable—how ineffable—how full of glory, is this rest of the soul!

SPIRITUALISM TRUE.

How do we know this? You enter any court of justice to take human evidence, to assemble a certain number of witnesses, three of whom shall be acknowledged as wholly unreliable, wholly untruthful; you examine these separately, and despite their unreliability, they shall each separately confirm each other's statements; and this is evidence which no court of civilization can reject—evidence which for hundreds of years has been accepted as testimony in all courts of judicature. Now enlarge upon your position: let your three witnesses be truthful; the fact that they shall confirm each other is no additional weight—none at all. It is deemed by the keenest analyst of human nature impossible that three persons separate from each other shall represent the same circumstances exactly, unless those circumstances have a common origin in truth, no matter whether the witnesses be reliable or not. But double the number of witnesses, treble it, multiply it by hundreds, by thousands, by millions—remove your witnesses to every part of the world, separate them by oceans and continents and spaces of time that it is possible to bridge over; and when, instead of three millions, you have three times told three millions of persons, each testifying to the same general points of faith, that is authority which we think we are justified in presenting to you, and it is upon such authority Spiritualism rests.—*Emma Hardinge.*

GHOSTS THAT ARE GHOSTS.

A GODDESS OF FLOWERS SEEN BY MR. OLCOTT IN BOSTON.

THE MOST ASTONISHING MEDIUMSHIP YET—FLOWERS, PLANTS, BIRDS, AND BUTTERFLIES BROUGHT TO MRS. THAYER'S GUESTS—A HAUNTED HOUSE AND A BANQUET WITH THE GHOSTS.

BY HENRY S. OLCOTT, IN THE NEW YORK SUN.

TO THE EDITOR.—The Imperial University of St. Petersburg, prompted thereto by the strange experiences, during the past season, of two of its Professors—Wagner, the great Zoologist and Boutlerow—with a French medium named Bredif, has decided to make a thoroughly scientific investigation of the physical phenomena called spiritual manifestation.

The Society of Experimentalists in the Physical Sciences, a body existing within the University, has assumed charge of this matter, and a sum of money is to be appropriated to meet the necessary expenses. The Hon. Alexander Aksakow, Councillor of State in the Imperial Chancellery, has accepted the duty of inviting famous mediums of various countries to present themselves before the commission and display their alleged psychical phenomena under test conditions. This gentleman has done me the honor to request me to act, in conjunction with a Russian lady of great learning and high social position, now resident in this country. Madame H. P. Blavatsky by name, as his American representative, and recommend through him to the University such persons of the class described, as we may think worthy of being asked to attend the coming seances in the Russian capital. With this object in view, I recently visited Boston to witness the beautiful phenomena which were said to occur in the presence of Mrs. Baker Thayer, of 12 Pembroke Street; and for the information of your readers, which is almost the same as to say the public, I shall now give a fair and impartial account of what I saw.

POINTS FOR INVESTIGATION.

It will be readily conceived that the circumstances of the case made me more than usually cautious in my observations. It was necessary to become satisfied pretty thoroughly upon several points, for instance: 1. As to Mrs. Thayer's antecedents. 2. Her personal character. 3. The strength of her manifestations, and whether uniform or subject to periodicity. 4. The conditions indispensable to their occurrence, and especially whether they could only be produced in a certain house or room, of a peculiar magnetic, electric or other atmosphere, or whether they could be observed indifferently in any house or place whatsoever. 5. And as might be said, primarily, whether they were real phenomena, or only exhibitions of charlatanry.

It would be the height of folly for any one with a reputation at stake to send off to so distant a country and before such an inexorable tribunal, a medium who might prove dishonest, malicious, or, when the critical moment should arrive, incapable of doing what was promised of her. I addressed myself to my task, then, with as impartial a spirit as it was possible for any one to feel; knowing nothing of the medium beyond newspaper report, and caring absolutely nothing as to what might be the issue of my experiments. I shall doubtless give your readers the most intelligible and satisfactory idea of the results by taking up my points *seriatim*, and describing the evidence collected under each head.

First, as to her antecedents: I had not to search far to find acceptable witnesses to substantiate her personal good character. Some ladies and gentlemen, as trustworthy as any in Boston, and occupying as good social positions, certified to having known her for several years—one lady since 1863—and their testimony as to her sincerity, excellence as a medium, and integrity was unanimous. The lady in question, who lives in a fashionable square at the South End, had employed her as a dressmaker for ten years before she became a public medium, and having been an eye witness at every stage of her progress in this direction, unequivocally testified that a more transparently honest woman she never knew.

WHAT WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON SAYS.

Mr. William Lloyd Garrison had seen evidences of her rare powers under test conditions, and had full confidence in her good faith. A partner in one of the greatest mercantile houses of New England had shared Mr. Garrison's opportunities, and arrived at the same conclusions. Mr. Charles Houghton, the well-known lawyer, and his wife joined with the others, and gave me the particulars of seances which alone would have convinced a sceptic that he was not dealing with a wilful impostor; and so I might proceed to catalogue a score of her well-wishers, whose names if appended to a certificate of bad character would effectually damn a person in the eyes of all Athenians, and whose testimony in her favor cannot be ignored.

But the strongest evidence that Mrs. Thayer could present to my scrutiny was her own bonny face. It is an open, frank face; marked with lines of care, wearing a shade of weariness, and indicating more of passivity than force, of amiability than aggressiveness, but inviting confidence. She must have been a beauty once. Her head is of moderate size, oval, well arched in the crown, and the proportion of crown to base symmetrical. Her hair is a dark chestnut; eyes blue, complexion fair, mouth pretty, nose straight, face oval, height five feet six inches, and, with increasing years and a sedentary life, she has grown stout enough to turn the scale at 160 pounds. Her voice is soft—not guttural or strident, as are those of many of our modern pythonesses—her manners are free from embarrassment or affectation. I have been particular as to these details, for these very details go a great way towards helping us to estimate the person we have to deal with.

A PAGE OF FAMILY HISTORY.

In all my investigations of spiritual mediums I have been careful to inquire as to the heredity of the psychical power; for a discussion with Dr. Charles Elam, in England, five years ago, and the subsequent reading of his work entitled "A Physician's Problems" made me very anxious to discover whether these temperamental peculiarities were transmissible from generation to generation, like the physical and moral qualities. In the case of the Eddys and Mrs. Compton, the greatest mediums I ever saw, this appeared to be the fact, and Mrs. Thayer presents no exception to the rule.

She was born in the township of Concord, Maine, of rustic parentage, December 11th, 1836. Her mother was of Scotch descent, and her paternal grandmother, Mrs. Baker, came from England. Her mother was a seeress, a physical medium, and, among other manifestations, had flowers brought to her by the invisible powers. One day in midwinter, when Mary was about ten years old, she and her two brothers, one older and the other younger than herself, were about to start for school, when the mother came out of the house weeping, and holding in a hand a freshly plucked blush rose, which she said was brought to her from heaven as a sure warning of the death of one of her children. The farm was in the heart of the Maine woods, the snow lay thick upon the ground, and there was not a flower pot in the house, nor a greenhouse within many miles, but the children saw nothing ominous in the fragrant flower, only thanking the angels for bringing them something so pretty. Mary recalls how they talked it over among themselves as they trudged through the snow that morning, and laughed at their mother's fears that either one of such a tough lot as they should die. But the rose spoke truly; the youngest brother of all sickened and died before spring of a malignant fever. She was always having these forewarnings—was this mother of theirs. Sometimes there would come a heavy knocking at the door, and no one there when they would look; sometimes the tread of invisible feet would be heard overhead; and before John died, as they were together one evening, there came a crash at the side of the house, as though some invisible spademan had thrown a shovelful of course gravel with all his force. The mother did more. She saw the forms of dead relatives stalk through walls, partitions, and closed doors, and would talk to them in a way to make a superstitious sceptic's blood curdle.

FAIRY PLAYMATES.

And the children soon began to have their own experiences of the same sort. Elfin boys and girls used to come (or seem to come, for they were as real to them as unreal to all others) every day or two, and play with them hours together; and they were up to all sorts of pranks, hiding the playthings so cunningly, sometimes, that they would give them up for lost, and then suddenly bringing them back again; and often after the children were in bed the mischievous creatures would carry off their clothes and put them up in the crotch of some neighboring tree. They had heard the old people talk about witches, and so, for want of a better name for them, they called their spirit playmates "the witches," and were careful not to offend them, but keep in favor by putting aside bits of their candy and cake, which were duly carried off, and the receipt acknowledged at the next meeting. Once Mary had a knotty example in arithmetic to do for the next day's recitation, and laid her slate aside in despair of working the problem, but in the morning she found it all done, and won the medal offered as prize.

So things went on more or less incessantly, and gradually becoming more insignificant in their character, until her marriage to Anson H. Thayer, of South Braintree, Mass., which occurred in 1856. When her first child was three weeks old, the bed in which she lay was lifted clear of the floor, and the nurse, running in, saw it gently settle down again in its place. She began after a while to have her mother's experience as to portents, knowing, by various mystic signs, of impending deaths or other calamities. Before her husband's decease she saw a bright light shine in her room, and in its centre his face, which, as any of Mrs. Crowe's readers will admit, is considered to be a genuine forerunner of death.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

Left a widow, with two children to support, she had to take to dressmaking, and it was not so very long after this that the Boston lady above referred to (whom I am permitted to say is Mrs. Dora Brigham, daughter of the famous missionary, "Father" Taylor) encountered her. In 1865 Mrs. Thayer was forewarned that in course of time she would have to pass through a dangerous sickness, during which "something very wonderful in the way of mediumship" would come to her. The prophecy came in 1872, when she was taken down with gastric fever, and lay at the point of death. In her ravings she turned prophetess, announcing the great Boston fire, and timing in advance every visit of her physician to the very minute. Upon her recovery she went to live in the capacity of housekeeper with one Mme. Barker, an old lady who kept a dancing school in the chateau like mansion on Washington Street, known as the Deacon House. (The Bostonians pronounce it Dee-Kahn). This is a great rambling structure, occupying a whole square of ground, which was built some thirty years ago by an impecunious son-in-law of the late Peter Parker, who liberally invested that gentleman's money in a residence fit for a Norman Seigneur. The fine house did not bring good luck, for Deacon died, his wife lost her reason, and the place was shut up for at least ten years, becoming meanwhile, it seems, the roosting place of a troop of ghosts, who made its empty rooms ring with noises calculated to send the belated by-passer in panic to the other side of the street. It got such an ill name that when the family were ready to rent no tenant could be found, until the valiant Mrs. Barker installed herself, and in due course received Mrs. Thayer as housekeeper, as before stated.

TERRIFYING PHENOMENA.

Bad as things were before, they now became ten times worse. The spirits would open locked and bolted doors and slam them, carry articles along corridors and from one locked room to another, and the dead Deacon and other canny prowlers would once in a while show themselves. But the plucky women stood it like veterans, and soon Mrs. Thayer's new mediumship showed itself. Mrs. Brigham and other friends would drop in, and they would improvise "circles" about a table and get all sorts of startling physical manifestations, such as the

floating of the table in the air, the lifting of Mrs. Thayer, chair and all, upon the table, the bringing of coats and hats from the hall tree into the room, and I have actually been told by two eye witnesses that the medium herself had been whisked away in a moment, and immediately was heard knocking outside the locked door and calling for admittance. This is tough, but wait until I have finished!

Mr. Garrison was a visitor at this period, and from his lips, as well as from those of Mrs. Brigham and the merchant previously alluded to (who, I am sorry to say, has not the courage to tell what he has seen, and let those who don't like it please themselves), I received the particulars which follow as to a

BANQUET OF THE GHOSTS,

which occurred in the month of October, 1872, in this Boston Otranto.

One evening by preconcert a supper was spread in the dining room for twelve persons. The bill of fare was chosen by the spirits themselves, and there was as brave an array of linen, glass, silver, and china as though the ghostly banqueters had not passed out of the sphere of finger bowls and damask napkins. There was a chicken fricassee, with rice, bread, an assortment of cakes, grapes, and other fruit, candy, and a bottle of wine. A memorandum was taken by Mr. Brigham of the number of each article, and after a last glance at the table the mortals retired. Mr. B. T. Stephenson locked the door and handed the key to Mr. William Lloyd Garrison, and the spectators were left to themselves.

The company numbered eighteen ladies and gentlemen, and by desire of the spirits they retired to another room fifty feet from the dining room, locking two doors behind them, and assembled about another table after the fashion of the Orthodox circle. The gas was extinguished, and they sat in silence and darkness for some two minutes, when suddenly some solid object was heard to drop upon the table, and then a rattling noise, as if pebbles or other small, hard substances were being scattered about. A light was called by the raps, and then the astonished sitters discovered before them the veritable bottle of wine they had left in the dining room, with part of the wine gone and the cork undrawn. The bottle was identified by a private mark placed upon the label, and upon the cork remained the dust which they had not brushed off. Scattered about were pieces of broken candy and sugar plums, one leg of the chicken, and portions of the cake and fruit, while in the bosom of a lady's dress had been deftly thrust a wine glass. Returning to the dining room, they found by actual count that when they added the articles brought to them to those remaining in the dishes and upon the plates the tally was exact. But some of the wine—perhaps a third of the bottle—had disappeared, and in every glass was a heel pat that seemed to indicate that the jolly elves, or bacchantes rather, had pledged their mutual healths in social fashion.

Then they placed the bottle again upon the table and seated themselves about the board, pushing their chairs about a foot or two back from the same, and joining hands after putting out the gas. By the glimmer of the fire in the stove they saw spectre hands, detached from any body, flitting hither and thither over the surface of the table, taking things out of the dishes and putting them upon the plates, and occasionally tossing a candy, cake, or fruit into some lady's lap. Then they pulled the slippers off one lady's feet and the boots off another's and flung them against the door; and finally wound up the banquet, as many another of mortal kind has concluded, by dragging the cloth off the table and tumbling the crockery in a mass on the floor.

A CHARMING MEDIUMSHIP.

But these manifestations, although twice repeated, were less to be accredited to Mrs. Thayer's mediumship than the surcharged atmosphere of this haunted house. Her mediumship is far more attractive than this; the spirits bring her flowers, fruits, and birds, of all sorts and kinds. Its beginning was apparently unpremeditated, and occurred in this wise: One evening Mrs. Baker, Mrs. Thayer, and a visiting gentleman sat

around a table reading an account from an English journal of the flower phenomena of Miss Nicholl (now Mrs. Guppy) of London; whereupon the visitor remarked how pleasant it would be if they, too, could have flowers brought to them. Mrs. Thayer assented, saying that she had had a passionate love for flowers since she was a child. They agreed to try if the spirits would not gratify them, so the gas was turned off, and presently they smelt the perfume of a flower. Joyfully they lit the gas, and there lay a full-blown tuberose, which I take to be a very curious choice of avant-courier to the multitude of flowers which have since descended for it typifies voluptuousness, according to the authorities. But stop! Perhaps I am hasty, since it is of Oriental origin, and so in that sense fitly indicates the source from which we get not only all our Spiritualism and its parent, White Magic, but pretty nearly everything else we know or are ever likely to discover. One of Moore's pretty verses says:

The tuberose, with her silvery light,
That in the garden of Malay
Is called "The mistress of the night,"
So like a bride, etc., etc.

However, we are after facts, so I will not dip into poetry, although the pudding is better for an occasional plum.

This auspicious beginning was followed up with natural assiduity, the casual visitor regularly installing himself as a member of the impromptu circle. One evening he asked the spirits to bring him one pink for each child he had in the other world, and straightway three were dropped on the table, each stem varying in length from the others, to express, as it was said, the relative ages of the children. The next phase was the dropping of flowers in the daytime, a lovely Bonne Celine rose falling at Mrs. Brigham's feet as she stood talking to Mrs. Thayer.

SHOWERS OF FLOWERS.

The flowers now began to come more numerous, until finally they fell in perfect showers, albeit it was in the dead of winter, and the medium was too poor to purchase them from greenhouses out of her wages of four or five dollars per week, even if she were so minded. Mrs. Brigham tells me that probably not less than 400 or 500 dollars worth were brought in this way that season, and not a cent. was charged any visitor for the seances. Besides flowers of every imaginable variety, some very rare and expensive, and many unfamiliar to all but the most learned botanists, living canary birds, doves, butterflies, birds from the wild woods, goldfish, a toad, lumps of Quincy granite, and pebbles of different kinds were dropped in their presence, and one evening a unique addition was made to their collection in the shape of a smoking cap, which the unseen carriers brought from the house of Mr. Emerson, Sixteen Chester Square.

Of course this sort of thing could not go on long without creating a great talk, and the poor woman was finally obliged to give up all other employment for that of a public medium. She began with weekly circles, which were changed to semi-weekly ones, and so have continued to the present time. This brings us to a consideration of our third point, viz.: Whether the manifestations are subject to periodicity, which from personal observation I can answer in the negative. The testimony of all the hundred persons with whom I have talked about the case confirms my conclusion that the phenomena occur at one time as well as another, except that the presence of certain persons seem to destroy the conditions most effectually. Professor Wagner remarks upon the same circumstance in his highly interesting and scientific report of the Bredif seances of last winter, a translation of which has recently been published in the *Spiritual Scientist*, of Boston; Professor Tyndall sneeringly alludes to it in his letter to the London Dialectical Society, and a very well-known professor of philology in an English university who has given great attention to the subject writes me, in a letter just received, that he knew of the phenomena of a most promising circle being completely stopped by the mere entrance into the house, not even into the room, of a person antagonistic to the experiments, and that

Crookes had told him that Florence Cook had been spoiled for a seance by merely brushing against the people she encountered in a stroll down Regent Street. The fact is that our conceited scientists do not yet know the A, B, C of psychology, and if we desire knowledge we must dig it out for ourselves; they are too busy with their bugs and tadpoles to give attention to so trifling a subject as the psychical powers of man.

STRIKING TESTS FOR COL. OLCOTT.

As to our fifth point, there can be no room for doubt. Mrs. Thayer's phenomena occur equally well in all houses and even out of doors. In a proper condition of the atmosphere, and the favoring conditions as to the persons present, she can often receive into her hand, thrust out of the window of an upper room, flowers and birds, and I have had both brought to me, in daylight and gaslight, in the elegant house of Mr. Charles Houghton, in West Roxbury, where both she and I were guests, and where fraud or collusion was impossible. By daylight I sat with her in the dining room, behind a simple curtain of glazed muslin, hung across a corner, and while I held both her hands, a fragrant crimson rose was dropped into my lap; by the bright light of the hall chandelier, as she sat upon the stairs, and I stood within two feet of her, reading to her that most vivid passage in chapter iv. of "Zanoni," where Glyndon encounters the Dweller of the Threshold, a young canary suddenly sprang from my head and flew toward the closed door, where I caught him, and I have him now. As to the rose, I must remark that it was uncrumpled, freshly plucked, and its petals glistened with dewdrops; while as to the canary, that was apparently one of a young brood from the cage of a friend in Philadelphia, brought by the invisibles in compliance with secret request, and since identified by the lady as the bird which suddenly disappeared from the cage some days previously.

A SEANCE IN BLACK'S PHOTOGRAPHIC GALLERY.

I have also talked with Mr. Black, the well-known Boston photographer, about a seance held in his gallery one evening, at which some fifty persons were present, and at which many flowers were brought; and with an editor who met Mrs. Thayer at the house of a brother journalist, where flowers, birds, and goldfish were brought by the invisibles, and the medium and her chair were lifted up, as he held her hand, and placed upon the table.

When the canary was brought to me we were alone. My reading was interrupted by an ejaculation from her and upon looking at her face I saw it turn deadly pale; her eyes closed; she raised her both hands as if to grasp something over her head, and at the instant and before they could reach the spot, the bird flew away, as previously described. The palms of her hands were turned towards me, and I saw them from the commencement of the movement until they dropped into her lap, so that I can positively testify that no mortal hand touched the bird until he lay panting and fluttering within my grasp.

WHAT A PUBLIC SEANCE IS LIKE.

The first public seance I attended was at her house, on the evening of July 4, and the company numbered seventeen persons, twelve ladies and five gentlemen. An extension dining table with the leaves in, ran diagonally from corner to corner of the back parlor, which communicated by folding doors with the adjoining room. Mrs. Thayer seated herself at the centre of the table with her back to the mantle, and the rest of us were placed in such an order that so far as possible persons of the two sexes alternated. The doors of the two rooms opening into the passage had previously been locked, and I placed the keys in my pocket; the windows were fastened down and the blinds closed. The single candle was then extinguished, and we were left in profound darkness. My station was next to the medium at her left hand, and Mrs. Houghton sat at the other side. I was permitted to place my foot on her two feet, and to lay a hand upon her's, so that fraud on her part was impossible. We fell to singing, of course, as this seems necessary in all spiritual seances, and the capabilities of the human ear were fully tested. The music was so bad at times that Mrs. Thayer expressed a con-

viction that we would scare all the spirits within twenty miles of the place, which gentle hint produced a sensible effect in moderating the volume and improving the quality of the sound. After a time I felt the medium growing uneasy, as though she were struggling with some great gushes of electricity that passed through her frame; her hands grew cold, her breath labored, she sighed and emitted suppressed groans, and her whole system seemed in labor. Presently I heard a patter of leaves, and then a thud, as if a clod of earth had fallen upon the bare mahogany table, and as a flower, cool to the touch, dropped upon my hand, there came a whiff of sweet odors to my nose, and all around the board people would exclaim that something had been dropped before them or thrust into their hands.

A light was then demanded, and when the candle was lit a charming sight presented itself. The table was nearly covered with flowers and plants, all fresh and sparkling with dewdrops. Let me attempt to catalogue some them. There was a bunch of flowering almond, a calla lily, sprays of fern, two great leaves of palm, two Bonne Celine roses, a blush rose, two crimson roses, a number of double and single pinks, heliotrope, pansies, snow berry, a patch of growing moss, with dirt adhering to the roots, as though it had just been torn from its bed, and a wax begonia, with a potful of dirt attached, just as if emptied out of a pot a moment before and laid upon the table. This was in front of a lady who informed the company that it was a perfect test to her, as her spirit sister had told her the day before that if she would come here, that she would receive this plant as a present from her, and she had come two hundred miles to make the experiment.

I made careful count of the various plants lying before us, and found they numbered eighty-two. Considering the bulk that such a collection would make, and the facts that the flowers were fresh, uncrumpled, and the petals covered with dew, it appears conclusive that neither Mrs. Thayer nor any possible confederate could have brought them into the room. But I received from a gentleman whose acquaintance I was fortunate enough to make, either this evening, or upon a subsequent one, proof of Mrs. Thayer's good faith which is very satisfactory.

A HEATHER FROM THE GRAMPIAN HILLS.

The gentleman is Mr. McMurtrie, a civil engineer by profession, and brother-in-law of one of our most eminent astronomers. He has latterly been looking into the spiritual phenomena and experimenting in various ways with caution and intelligence. One day, in a private seance, with some Boston medium, he received a communication from the alleged spirit of a relative who died in Scotland, of which country he was a native. The spirit told him if he would go to the flower medium's circle, he would bring him a whole living heather plant from his native mountains. It happened that Mrs. Thayer was to hold a seance at a private house, with a picked company of ladies and gentlemen; so, keeping his own counsel, Mr. McMurtrie obtained permission to make one of the company. The first thing that was dropped on the table was a full-grown heather in bloom, with a clod of dirt on the roots, and three angle worms wriggling in the same.

Of course I examined the stalks of the plants and flowers at my first seance with attention, to see whether they had been cut off, broken or torn. I noticed a very strange phenomena. The stalks had been broken off—not short off, but with a thin ribbon of bark at one side—and around the fracture, in almost every case, was a little ring of black, as though, it appeared, an electric current had effected some chemical action in the chlorophyl.

TEST SEANCE AT MR. HOUGHTON'S HOUSE.

Two evenings after this I met Mrs. Thayer at Mr. Houghton's house, and we had a private seance. There were only present Mr. and Mrs. Houghton, Mrs. Thayer, and myself. The sitting began in the library, but finished in the room adjoining. The gas was extinguished, and we joined hands. We waited long before any phenomena occurred, and the medium was ready to cry in her disappointment that just when it was most

essential for her reputation that something should come she was powerless. I confessed that I shared no such feeling, for to my mind the best proof of real mediumship is often the failure of the phenomena to appear at the very time when the medium most desires them; tricksters suffer no such misfortunes. Patient waiting, in this case at least, was no loss; for just when we were ready to quit the room there came a patter upon the table, and immediately after the odours of flowers. We lit the gas, and there we found one blush rose, one Bonne Celine, two crimson rosebuds, and one white pink. The gas was turned out again, and after awhile there came a louder sound, and upon relighting we found a long stalk of the Annunciation lily bearing ten buds upon it, which Mrs. Houghton subsequently verified as broken from one of her plants in the garden. This was the only flower of the evening that could have come from the place, for the worms had destroyed every rose bush, and the only white pink in bloom was found by us upon its bush after the seance.

THE FLORAL GIFTS OF ONE EVENING.

Mrs. Thayer's public circles are held each Wednesday and Saturday evening. The admission is one dollar, and usually from fifteen to twenty persons are in attendance. At the seance of July 11, the following articles were brought in, my catalogue having been made from left to right all around the table:—One monthly rose, one ripe orange on its branch, one tea rose, one Bonne Celine rose, one sprig of sweet honeysuckle, one branch of cypress, one brown heather, two white and carnation pinks, a stalk of three crimson rosebuds, one tea rose, a whole plant of parlor ivy, thirty-seven inches long, with a potful of dirt attached to its roots, the whole weighing four pounds; a Scotch heather and a spray of sweet honeysuckle (both mentally demanded by the recipient, Mr. McMurtrie); a heliotrope, several pansies, a Bonne Celine, asked for mentally by the recipient; a fern leaf (*Onichium auratum*), one white pink, one carnation, and one pansy; mignonette and oxalis; one pansy, two ferns (*Pellaea Viridis* and *Adiantum hispidulum* of the East Indies), four tea roses, one carnation, one wax begonia, with dirt and all, just as lifted out of the pot; one crimson rose, a patch of short moss, with dirt; one fern, one honeysuckle, one calla lily, placed in my bosom, and a large bunch of smilax which dropped on my face from a height, as I had my head thrown back to relieve the tediousness of my position. All the flowers and plants were gemmed with dewdrops; all the stems were broken off and showed the faint black rings around the fracture, and all the petals and leaves were cold to the touch instead of being warmish, as they would had they been long gathered and kept about the person of some one. When I add that on this occasion, as upon every other, the doors were carefully locked, the window shutters fastened, and the premises searched, the improbability of trickery will be apparent.

You know that I generally make thorough work of my spiritualistic investigations, and it will be inferred that in coming to conclusions favorable to Mrs. Thayer's mediumship I was not hasty. It would, however, be unprofitable to your readers for me to describe in detail the seances, public and private, I held with her during the five weeks of summer vacation I devoted to this case; one almost suffices for all. It is the most charming phase of mediumship I have ever seen, and, unlike every other, has no disagreeable side. To sit in a sealed room and be rained upon by fragrant flowers, brought none know whence, by unknown and invisible hands, is to enjoy a rare pleasure. Charming the "circle" surely is,

When opening roses breathing sweets diffuse,
And soft carnations shower their balmy dews;
Where lilies smile in virgin robes of white,
The thin undress of superficial light,
And varied tulips show so dazzling gay,
Blushing in bright varieties of day.

Not only the flowers of the garden, the field, and the greenhouse, and exotic plants are brought to Mrs. Thayer's guests, but also flowers and shrubs which grow only in swamps, leaves of forest trees, branches of native and foreign fruit trees, bearing their juicy spoils, bunches of grapes, and sometimes to the confusion of

vulgar doubters, onions, cucumbers, and other vegetables they satirically call for. A fat butcher—one of your clever ones who are “not to be fooled by spirits”—actually had a four pound string of his own sausages flung around his neck, and his best coat, as an eye-witness told me, was finely besmeared.

I must add a few paragraphs to my note-book before closing, and at the same time express regret that the circumscription of space forces the exclusion of many facts of equal interest.

PRESENTS FROM THE GREAT JOHN KING.

On the evening of July 7th, a select party of ladies and gentlemen sat with Mrs. Thayer around the table in Mr. Houghton's dining room. There were rappings and poundings for a while, and then there came a sharp crash upon the mahogany which induced us to light the chandelier at once. We found before us two stones half as large as one's fist, and a common iron-bladed table knife of a most quaint shape. The point of the blade was half as wide again as the rest, a semi-circular protuberance being made at the back, as though it were intended for a person to eat his food, peas and all, mostly with the knife. My benign and distinguished spirit friend, Sir Henry Morgan, alias John King, whose wonderful performances for me in Philadelphia are detailed at length in my book, “People from the Other World,” informs us that he had brought this curious implement from No Man's Land, and the next morning it has mysteriously disappeared from the place where I had lain it before retiring.

One afternoon in the course of a drive I visited Forest Hills Cemetery, and passing through the green house my attention was struck by a curious plant with long, narrow leaves striped with white and pale green, the white preponderating. It was the *Dracena Regini*. With my blue pencil I marked upon one of the leaves the cabalistic sign of the interlaced triangles, commonly called “Solomon's Seal,” and requested the spirits to bring it to me at the circle on the following evening. I purposely sat at Mrs. Thayer's right upon this occasion, and held her hands, when suddenly I felt something cool and moist drop upon my hand, and when the candle was lit found it to be my marked leaf. I went to the green house again, and found that the leaf selected by me had actually been broken off.

At the seance of July 21, there were brought to me (as alleged by some Oriental spirit who claimed to be interested in my recent readings of the Occultists' authors) a bud of the Egyptian Lotos and a branch of that most curious of plants, the *Coccoloba Platyclada*, or flat-branched lobe berry, which was discovered by Milne, at Wanderer Bay, Solomon's Island, during the voyage H.M.S. Herald.

MRS. THAYER BAGGED.

My last evening with Mrs. Thayer was a test seance, specially arranged for me by the courtesy of Mrs. Brigham, who feels a deep interest in her protegee, and was determined that I should not leave Boston with a single doubt as to the genuineness of Mrs. Thayer's mediumship. The seance was in Mrs. Thayer's parlor, and there were present Mrs. Brigham, Mr. G. P. Reed, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Houghton, Mr. G. W. Train, Mr. Mitchell (the best clairvoyant I ever met), Mrs. Thayer and myself—eight in all. Every person present allowed himself and herself to be searched for concealed birds or flowers, and I put Mrs. Thayer in a bag, made for me of mosquito netting, with a single seam and a draw-string at the mouth. It had not been in Mrs. Thayer's hands, and the seam was carefully examined just before she stepped into the bag. I drew the string tightly about her neck, and tied and fastened it behind in such a way that it was impossible for her to tamper with the knots. In fact, I had to cut them, after the seance, to release the medium from the duress. I took the additional precaution of searching Mrs. Thayer's dress before bagging her, as a stupid lie was in circulation that she wore a rubber bag in which to carry flowers and keep them moist. The light was put out at 8.25. We sat ten minutes, relighted the candle, found nothing, although the medium had given the usual signs of the passage of the force through her system, in groans, shudders, and involuntary muscular movements.

FLOWERS, BIRDS, PEACHES AND PEBBLES.

The light was extinguished again, and after the elapse of another ten minutes relighted. This time there were flowers. There were four beautiful rosebuds; one Bonne Celine for Mrs. Brigham, whose favorite it is; two ferns (*Pteris flabellata* of Africa, and *Andeanum cuneatum* of Brazil), and one wax plant with a flower upon it. As the match was struck a little bird of the size of the common English sparrow flew off the table, and was caught and secured. Encouraged by this success, we darkened the room again, and almost instantly the medium exclaimed that “they” had put a pebble in her mouth. We lit up, and found her, sure enough, holding a small, flat, smooth, white pebble in her mouth, which she could not have put there herself. We extinguished the candle again, and sat for some time without any results. Mrs. Thayer had been quite ill all that day, and said early in the evening that she wished the spirits would bring her some peaches. Suddenly we heard some hard substances dropping on the table, and then there came a great flutter of wings, a rush as of something through the air, and a light being had instantly, there lay before Mrs. Thayer eight ripe peaches, and near the ceiling of the room flew a milky-white fantailed pigeon. This was enough for one evening—we had had flowers, fruit, birds, and a mineral brought, so with expressions of mutual satisfaction we congratulated the medium and took our leave.

That I was satisfied as to the genuine mediumship of Mr. Thayer, her general good character, her honesty of purpose, and her inheritance of her strange powers, will not be doubted. But I will not undertake to say that she is different from the majority of mediums, and never resorted to trick. This would be impossible. But that I detected her in any such attempt during a series of experiments extending over five weeks is not true. Mediums, especially the women, are given to mutual slander; like painters, musicians, and actors, and one is not safe in believing all one hears from them of each other, or, for that matter, what they say of their own performances. There have been isolated cases of flower-bringing in the presence of other mediums, but Mrs. Thayer is the true American Flora. In England they have her counterpart in a Mrs. Guppy (Miss Nicholl), whose mediumship will be found fully described at pp. 153, 200, 277, 271 and 372 of the London Dialectical Society's “Report on Spiritualism,” a work which may be had in this country.

HENRY S. ALCOTT.

ADVERSITY.

No life is secure from adversity. “Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward.” Back through the years of human existence none were ever exempt, and in the moving mass of intelligence of to-day there is no exception. Suddenly, or by the forecast shadows of future events, sorrow approaches the sunniest heart. How the soul shrinks, trembles, rebels, and rouses its energies to resist it, as with sharpened blade it cuts away at the pride, stabs the affections, and overpowers the will. Ah! somehow it has entered with its smart and its sting. Wherefore, why is the hallowed ground disturbed? Why does death, deceit, or untoward fortune, attack that which is dearest, till hopes lie low, and ambitions are crushed? Is it not that a voice unheeded in the tumult of joyous life, may here speak, be heard, be obeyed? With the upheaval of the soil, are deposited germs, from which spring buds of patience the tenderest love, appreciation of others' woes, and all heavenly aspirations. Just here, the soul learns something of itself, its littleness, its poverty; and far away is able to trace to its source the light that thus reveals itself to its own consciousness. It learns to be still, and know its God. With purposes all hushed in the will of another, under the cloud and darkness, it reads the lesson of a father's gentle leading, and in trustful submission confides all to Him who never slumbers.—*Summerland Messenger*.

ANOTHER MINISTER EMBRACES SPIRITUALISM.

LETTER FROM REV. WM. ALCOTT.

I HOLD it to be a solemn duty, Mr. Editor, (binding upon my conscience, at least,) that when, from light received from whatever quarter it may come, I am led to discard all preconceived ideas of religious thought and doctrine, and adopt a new and entirely antagonistic theory of principles, to openly and boldly proclaim such change of views. Especially is it due to the dear friends who in years past have listened eagerly to my teachings, and who have regarded me as an honest, truthful and sincere exponent of the Armenian theology, that I should plainly and emphatically publish to them and to the world my entire and complete recantation from all the doctrines and theories that I have previously sincerely believed and honestly taught.

To-day I declare, with a rich feeling of joy unspeakable, I am a Spiritualist! Yes, a Spiritualist, accepting all that the term implies; believing all its teachings, accepting its doctrines joyfully, drinking in its pure, delicious streams of life-giving truth, wisdom and purity, revelling in the rich fullness of its beauteous inspirations, and feeling my inner nature throbbing with pulsations of joy under the influence of its bright unfoldings.

For many years I have been a believer and a teacher of the doctrines taught by Mr. Wesley; and permit me to say I was honest in that belief and earnest in my teachings. I went about from place to place, telling the story of the cross freely. Without money or price I dispensed my ministrations; I endured hunger, fatigue, privation, and encountered persecution and pecuniary loss because I deemed it my duty to endure reproach for Christ's sake. Like Paul I labored with my hands that I might be chargeable to no man, and I feel proud to-day that during a period of eight years of earnest ministerial labor, the entire compensation I received did not amount to one hundred dollars. I feel proud of this fact on the ground that no man can grieve for having supplied me with funds for teaching him doctrines that I now clearly see were not only untrue, but pernicious in their tendency.

But a change has come over my mental nature, and little by little, during the past two years, the scales have been falling from my eyes. At first I began to see the utter injustice of the doctrine of endless misery, and the gross blasphemy of charging the loving Father with malignancy and hatred, ascribing to his pure, wise, just and loving character, the hateful propensity of partiality to some of his creatures, because they had imbibed the chimerical idea that if they only mentally acquiesced in certain creeds, or believed in a simple abstract doctrine, the Father of all, too wise to err, too good to be unkind, would give them a home in the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and consign all the rest of his creatures to utter and irredeemable woe. I saw how utterly at variance with all recognized principles of justice it would be to take guilt and consequences of guilt from the shoulders of the real criminal, and place it upon the back of an innocent person. I learned to believe that if I would walk in the way of righteousness and be holy in life and conversation, I must not rest secure in the imputed righteousness of another, nor like a crippled soul lean every moment upon another's strength, but, if I wanted to be pure, I must cleanse myself, I must plant my feet in the way of truth, and stand upon my own merits.

At some future time I may detail some of the experiences that led me to adopt the Spiritual Philosophy, but let me briefly say now that I fully and completely believe the doctrine of a continued life; that spirit forms draw near to their loved ones on earth. I do know of a truth that spirit messengers have come to me; that they visit me daily, and although invisible to my physical sight, they sweetly manifest themselves to my sense of hearing, feeling and touch. I know these manifestations are of God, because I find my spirit nature soaring daily into a higher plane of purity. My thoughts, my aspirations, my faith in God, my hopes

of the ultimate happiness of humanity, are all heightened and brightened by the rich unfoldings of this beautiful religion which has come to me in the later days of my earth life.

WILLIAM ALCOTT.

Late Local Preacher of the M. E. Church, Williamsburg, Mass.

Buckland, Mass., February 20, 1875.—*Banner of Light*.

LIFE ETERNAL.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY C. W. RÖHNER.

AS the readers of the *Harbinger of Light* are only very rarely supplied with accounts of the progress of spiritual science and literature on the Continent, especially in Germany and France, English and American spiritualism offering a readier and less difficult access in consequence of the obvious identity of the idioms used in those countries, it will, I hope, not be necessary for me to apologise for now, and then bringing under the notice of your subscribers such specimens of French and German spiritualistic literature as I deem worthy of preservation and propagation through the medium of our only auroral herald of a new era in Australia. I shall, therefore, with your permission, translate for this month's issue, a highly instructive communication selected from the last chapter of Adelma von Vay's celebrated work, entitled "Studien über die Geisterwelt," studies about the world of spirits. Those acquainted with continental spiritism will know, without my mentioning the fact, that Adelma von Vay is a disciple of the late Allan Kardec, and consequently an adherent of the reincarnation theory, which, until now, has met with so little favor both in England and in America. As true spiritualism is the last "ism" in the world that will lend itself to a stubborn and unyielding dogmatism, I deem it unnecessary to do more than merely mention the fact that the article below is slightly tinged by a belief apparently substantiated by facts, a large number of which are adduced in the book in question, that under certain circumstances the spirits of human beings, after their physical death, remain on this earth manifesting themselves as such, and often only waiting for an opportunity to be reborn again for the purpose of progressive purification and development. I shall now, without any further prefatory remarks, proceed to my task.

"The very thought of an *eternal life* is to many minds incomprehensible, inexplicable, nay, highly distasteful, and utterly repugnant. Very many recoil with an unfeigned shudder from this sublime thought; it is really painful to them to believe that this earth life of yours is not the *finale* of the human lot, and that man is compelled to live for ever. Adding to this thought that other one of renewed incarnations, or incorporations, in this and other worlds of the universe does not seem to lessen the difficulty of the scientific (?) sceptic in comprehending the undying nature of the human soul. On the contrary, to the confirmed materialist the thought of a perfect and absolute death (a logical impossibility) of the spirit of man, that is, of total extinction and annihilation, rather furnishes a certain amount of consolation, for, then all responsibility for good and bad actions ceases, there is neither reward or punishment, there are no more cares and troubles, in short, all is over and ended. At the bottom of this ardent desire of extinguishing the idea of a future existence of all future responsibilities, pains, joys, cares, and sorrows, lies a sort of self-contradictory egotism; in his contest with this idea the blind materialist sacrifices willingly and joyfully all the bliss of spiritual life and being, which he is only too glad to accept as a fable invented to satisfy the vain and silly cravings of weak brains after immortality. But, how could things be otherwise? How can the inhabitants of the earth think differently? Are not the men of this earth all fallen spirits? (?) Is it not possible, nay, even positively known, that many materialists have in anterior existences committed faults and crimes which make the thought of a never-ending life an intolerable burden to them? Is this not a sufficient reason for the materialist, although, perhaps, unconsciously so to himself, to smother the memory and recollection of a past

life under a stout and obstinate denial of the possibility of a future existence? Considering your life on earth as the only possible life you have, it becomes quite natural to you to detest the idea of an eternal life on such a planet as yours, and under conditions over which the mind of man has little or no control. But on the other hand, if enlightened by a refined intuition and a deeper kind of reason, you believe in the transformations of the spirit, if you cling to the idea of eternal life, progress, and invariable amelioration, then will you learn to love and appreciate your present incarnation, were it never so hard and sad, then will you plant your foot triumphantly on this terrestrial step of the celestial ladder which leads through dense clouds to an abode of light more sublime and ethereal. Consider, O man, that thou art a spirit, who would not dwell on this earth if he had not a mission to fulfil here. Strive, therefore, to fulfil this mission; have patience, make good use of your time, and reflect that this earth life is for thee only a second in the eternity; let it be a well employed useful second; for then only will it be to thee a step in the ladder of the universe towards God, failing which, it will be an impediment to thy progress, and a sheer loss of time. Eternal laws, let me assure thee, are ruling over you all, and there is no such thing as chance. This word, this idea, is purely human, an expression of mental weakness, and utterly unknown in the sphere of spirits. (?) This word is also the most unscientific term in the Babel dialect of materialistic philosophers, who, while plastering up the ugly cracks and gaps in the patchwork of their falsely so-called mental science with matter force and chance, think they have explained everything. Believe me there is no chance, for all is subordinate to law. It often happens, however, that a law is counteracted by an opposite law, and is in consequence thereof compelled to accomplish its end in a round-about manner, not unlike the process of vicarious circulation, when a larger blood vessel becomes stopped up, and the course of the blood has to be completed by the collateral veins or arteries. Never say, for instance: 'I found it out by chance or accident.' No, not by chance did you make the discovery, but by the unerring laws of your life, which is your real guardian spirit. It is of the utmost importance that the mental horizon of the inhabitants of the earth be enlarged, not only with regard to their life on earth, but also with respect to the life to come. The love of life is almost in everyone of you; some have a tender affection for the material life, some are more inclined for a spiritual life, be not afraid, therefore, lest eternity last too long for you. The loss of life makes every moment of its course short, and thanking and praising your Maker, you will at last enter into the true and pure life of the spirit in the spheres, from whence you are at liberty to survey the whole universe, so minute a portion of which is now accessible to your limited organs of vision. Eternal life! What a grand thought! A thought that can only be fully understood and realised by a pure spirit; for, too frail and feeble is the evanescent structure of your thinking apparatus, the brain, to compress it joyfully and without mental writhing and agony. Mark this, however, we do not condemn the materialist who styles himself a deep thinker, and denies everything we assert, for we know full well he is unable to think and act differently; he must begin to learn first, for strength of mind is only gathered by degrees, and not in sudden jumps. And there can be no doubt that it requires an immense strength of mind to conceive this grand eternal life, and this strength is wanting in the sceptic who denies it."

Here ends this communication.

In my next I shall, with your approval, give you a translation from the same chapter, entitled "Thoughts about War," which were received inspirationally by the celebrated medium, Adelman von Vay, and which are highly interesting on account of the prophetic spirit which pervades them; for dating back as far as August, 1870, they contain several facts, the meaning and bearing of which has only lately become manifest and intelligible to the close observer and student of the phenomena of social and political life.

Chiltern, 19th October, 1875.

SCIENTIFIC RELIGION. EVIDENCE.

HAVING examined the evidence contained in the New Testament concerning the Atonement, the belief in which doctrine is held out as the criterion of salvation by our intolerant persecutors, and shown how unsatisfactory it is, we shall only remind them before turning to the evidences in favor of Spiritualism, that they have forced us to this exposure, and assure them that there are other portions of Scripture we can refer to, which would astonish the public, and confound our opponents still more than those we have quoted, which (if our bigoted friends persist in interfering with us and denying us the right of private judgment, which they exercise for themselves) we will have recourse to; though we would rather assist in establishing truth, and in disseminating the sound, beautiful and natural truths, which the Scriptures contain, than exposing the corruption which have been introduced into the text, by the ignorant but well intentioned, or by wicked and designing men, during the dark ages. Yet some exposure must be made, or the deception will still remain.

I shall now show that the Scriptures harmonize with our views, with respect to the spirits who have left this state, having the power under certain circumstances, of communicating with their friends in the flesh.

Mark informs us that Moses and Elias appeared to Peter, James and John saying, "see thou do it not, I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy Brethren that have the testimony of Jesus, worship God." In both these cases we have examples of the spirits of the departed, communicating with and appearing to men in the flesh, and yet our orthodox opponents declare such communication between us and our spirit friends, to be unlawful, and wicked; though sanctioned by their divine Master.

As so many eminent men, who have paid much attention to the phenomena of Spiritualism, have published their experience to the world; I shall only refer our readers to a few of their publications; to enable those who are investigating the subject to examine their writings.

Mr. Wallace's late work on that subject will we have no doubt, by the general reader be found among the most instructive and the best, as it furnishes a digest from twenty two writers on that subject, all distinguished and highly educated men; of literary, scientific, and professional attainments; some of whom have been conversed with, and shook hands with materialised spirits; who afterwards vanished from their presence.

We would also refer our readers to the June number of the *Spiritual Magazine* by Dr. George Sexton, L.L.D., as containing a valuable paper on the evidences of Spiritualism.

Dr. Crookes has furnished an excellent article of a similar character, which appeared in the *Quarterly Journal of Science*. We would also recommend attention to the last edition of *Chamber's Encyclopedia* on the subject of Spiritualism. Many other works on the subject may be had at Mr. Terry's, the office of this paper.

It is not a little remarkable that most of our distinguished Spiritualists are not "ignorant and unlearned men" but men of literary and scientific attainments who had rejected the Scriptures through their not harmonizing with the sciences and the laws of Nature, and who had consequently become Materialists; but a careful examination of the phenomena of Spiritualism, has convinced them of the existence of a future and progressive state after death. Most of these men believe not in a personal God like that of the Jews, but in a Great intellectual intelligence that pervades the Universe, governing by unmistakable laws.

We have shown that some of the Apostles had visions of the spirits of the departed; the belief in Spiritism, which does not therefore constitute a religion, though most certainly a great and glorious hope, which has a powerful tendency to purify the life; notwithstanding which we are sorry to say, that all Spiritists and even all Mediums, are not sound moral characters. The writer of this paper knew a very powerful medium who was a very dissipated man.

In our opinion it is not the belief which depends on circumstances, and is involuntary, but the conduct which constitutes a good man; we perfectly concur in the statement that "in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him," independent of the faith he may profess; but that as the body without being supplied regularly with nutritious food; cannot be expected to enjoy sound health and to progress in strength; neither can the spiritist in morality and virtue without regular and sound instruction and devotional exercises. We do not therefore advise separation from churches, where that may be obtained, if more enlightened and better instruction cannot be had, in connection with some society of Spiritists. Yet we should bear in mind that the great majority of teachers in modern religions build their faith upon assumptions, traditions, authority, and opinions, books, and creeds; while they all ignore the standard of Nature as wicked and immoral. This is the standard which in common with science has been adopted by Spiritists.

All the antique faiths disagree with each other as to their standards for Divine truth. The Jews adopt the Old Testament with their traditions; the Mahometans the Koran, the Romanists the Bible as interpreted by their church, and each division of the christian church adopts the same principle; thus Romanists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and Quakers, Mormons, and Shakers and a hundred other sects, tell us that their ministers are the authorised *Ambassadors of God, and their sect His own peculiar people! and that they possess His Holy Spirit which leads them into all truth, while they are all divided in doctrine* among themselves!

In two things however they agree: First, in ignoring the standard for truth adopted by scientific men, and spiritists. And secondly, in each assuming that they alone, are right; and all the rest are wrong.

I have somewhere read "Every kingdom divided against itself, is brought to desolation, and every city, or house divided against itself shall not stand." If this be true, Alas for our Zion! the Household of Truth! the Kingdom of Heaven! as each is pleased to dignify their cause.

R.

SHOOTING AT A "SPIRIT."

If we may believe the *St. Louis Republican* of August 10th, Spiritualism has been put to rather a severe test at an exhibition which took place at the concert-hall of that place, when Mr. W. C. Clark, a St. Louis medium, permitted one of his materialisations to stand the test of a rifle shot. It has for some time been contended by the sceptical that the true way to prove the spiritual nature of these phenomena was a shot-gun. If a face smiling through an unglazed window could receive a charge of shot and still smile, it was thought the test might be accepted as proof at least that the face was not human. The exhibition grew out of a challenge to Mr. Clark from Henry Timkens, a carriage-maker. Mr. Timkens offered 50 dols. for the privilege of loading and firing a rifle at a face which Mr. Clarke should produce at the aperture of a cabinet, the medium to disrobe before entering the cabinet and put on clothes which the challenger should produce. After this the challenger was to fasten the medium to the bottom of the cabinet. This was done to the satisfaction of every one present. After the usual noisy demonstrations within the cabinet, the story runs: "Suddenly the curtain moved aside and the face appeared. There it was, a pale, ghostly countenance, that looked as though it might have belonged to a girl of seventeen at some previous time of the world's history. All who saw it were fairly transfixed with astonishment. The features were perfectly clear and distinct, being illuminated by a soft light. There was not the slightest movement of a muscle or an eyelid that could be distinguished. While all were eagerly gazing at the vision there was an explosion that caused a rude interruption to the imaginative reveries the more superstitious had fallen into. As soon as the

face appeared, Mr. A. B. Cunningham, at Mr. Timken's request, had coolly sighted a small rifle at it. The wide open eyes looked almost into the muzzle of the gun without any sign of flinching. Without the tremor of a muscle, Cunningham fired, apparently thinking no more of shooting a couple of girls than a Comanche would. At the shot the face remained steadfast. It wasn't scared, and didn't wink. A few seconds it remained as before, and then the curtain mysteriously slid across and obscured it from view. After about ten minutes' waiting the medium asked for a glass of water. This was given him, and in a little time after he asked to be let out. When the door was opened he was found tied just as he was left when the doors were first closed. The cords had evidently been strained a little, and that was all. Everybody said it was a good thing, and nobody could tell how it was done if the spirits didn't do it. The medium professed to be very much exhausted by the exhibition, and said he wouldn't do it again for anything. The bullet certainly went through the aperture and through the face, whatever it was. This was ascertained beyond a doubt by the finding of the ball, it having passed through the back of the cabinet and imbedded itself in a board."—*The Globe*, August 25.

WHAT IS SPIRITUALISM?

BY HENRY T. CHILD, M.D., OF PHILADELPHIA.

EACH individual has his or her understanding of what Spiritualism is. I overheard a conversation between two persons on this subject, and one of them said in real earnest, "I know what Spiritualism is; "it means going into a box and being tied!"

Spiritualism means to each mind just what it is capable of comprehending of the spiritual. There are those who are on a plane on which they can only realize the tangible physical manifestations; and blessed are they, for through them these are led to a consciousness of immortality, a knowledge of life beyond the grave which can only come to them through these manifestations; and the Christian should be very thankful that God has provided some means by which this class can be reached, for the appeals to faith or even reason do not have much influence upon them. There are others who can accept Spiritualism on the plane of reason, its logical character appealing to them in such a manner as to satisfy their minds. But the largest class of mankind are on the plane of faith, their spiritual intuitions leading them to accept much that either of the former class cannot. To these Spiritualism is an ever-living fountain, sending forth its pure waters to satisfy their thirsting souls. Each one, therefore, will define Spiritualism very properly according to what it is to them. I believe in that Spiritualism which tends to unfold man's nature uniformly and harmoniously. To me the basis of Spiritualism is included in the fact that man is a spirit now and here; that that spirit has continued existence, unbroken by the change called death; that under favorable conditions there is inter-communication between those who have passed over the mystic river and those who still dwell upon this side.

The examination of these three propositions may lead in various directions, but I am inclined to call all persons Spiritualists who accept them. I find among the members of the different churches many whose spiritual natures are unfolded to the reception of these truths, who may have had very little to do with spiritual manifestations, perhaps have not seen any. Believing that such knowledge as this, in conjunction with strict morality in our lives, tends to prepare us for the proper realization of spiritual things, both in this life and on the other side, it becomes a very plain duty for us to teach these things, not only by our words, but by that more powerful preaching—our lives, our example among men.

The recognition of our spiritual nature and the relations we sustain toward spiritual beings gives us a realizing sense of true dignity, and awakens proper self-respect, so that we shall understand our true relation to

our fellow-beings. We are commanded to "love our neighbor as ourselves," but we cannot love ourselves unless we respect ourselves. If our physical conditions, our habits and our education lead us to do that which is wrong, we sin against the spirit which ever seeks to do right, to be true and good. Spiritualism becomes more and more a practical work, its prayers are good deeds, its preaching true and noble works, its benedictions kindness and love to all humanity.—*Spiritual Magazine.*

THE MELBOURNE SPIRITUALIST AND FREE-THOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

IN our last we reported a meeting of Spiritualists and Freethinkers held at the Masonic Hall on September 19th, at which a resolution was passed recommending the dissolution of the Victorian Association of Progressive Spiritualists, with the view of forming a new one on a broader basis, the principal object being to enable Freethinkers who were not Spiritualists to join without being considered Spiritualists. A meeting of the members of the Association referred to was called by circular on Sunday, October 3rd. About one-half the members responded to the call, and, after some discussion, the recommendation submitted was agreed to, and after voting any surplus assets to the Lyceum, the Association was formally dissolved. The scheme prepared by the committee (who had been deputed by the September meeting for the formation of a new society) was then submitted to a general meeting which had been called to follow the first, and, with some slight modifications, adopted. On the following Sunday a meeting was held for the formation of the new society, when the following officers were elected, viz.:—President—Mr. John Ross; vice-presidents—W. H. Terry and J. T. Kelly; treasurer—Mr. F. W. Stevenson; secretaries—W. C. Davies and S. B. Bonney; committee—Messrs. Powell, Williams, Deakin, Griffiths, Frost, Jury, Syme, and Stow. Twenty-three members were enrolled, and the meeting adjourned. A meeting of members and friends was held on the evening of Sunday, 17th October, at which there was some reading, discussion and music, and new members were enrolled. The first public service was held on Sunday, October 24th, when, after a short preliminary address by Mr. Terry, Mr. Drew delivered an essay entitled "Better than Atheism," the tenor of which was that a belief in God and a future state, even if a fallacy, was better than Atheism, and tended to man's greater happiness here. In the debate which ensued, no substantial arguments were brought against this position. The musical adjuncts consisted of two hymns, and a solo, by Miss Octavia Lane, which was most excellently rendered. There was a good attendance, and a lively interest was manifested in the proceedings by the audience.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT'S OPENING ADDRESS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, (or it should be more apropos to say,—Sisters and Brothers,) It is in keeping with the occasion, and probably will be expected of me as your acting President that I should precede this evening's lecture with a few introductory remarks, indicative of the scope and tenor of our Association. In brief, as embodied in one of our primary resolutions, the objects of the Association are as follows:—"Mutual improvement, the encouragement of Free-thought, and the investigation and diffusion of a knowledge of the Spiritual Philosophy." Mutual improvement is mentioned first, and I think justly so, it is the primary object. It is necessary that we should improve and elevate ourselves, before we can hope successfully to improve others. This object I opine can be best attained by bringing together and throwing into one common stock, our highest conceptions of truth on all subjects of moment to ourselves, and humanity at large. Some have many talents, some but few, but it is to the interest of the richest among us to throw in his all of wisdom, for he loses nothing by so doing, but besides the consciousness of having done well, he takes from the minds of his less favored brethren many germs of wisdom that he had not. In my humble opinion

"inspiration is universal" and its forms innumerable. Some are so constituted that they can only *intuit* one class of idea, but this one idea if distinct and original is of value to many a wiser man.

Our second feature "The encouragement of Free-thought" is an important one. How many intelligent men and women there are in a state of mental torpor on all subjects pertaining to religion, their spiritual faculties benumbed by the lifeless creeds with which perhaps from childhood they have been walled in. Wake these from their lethargy, set them once thinking for themselves, and the scales fall rapidly from their eyes, but at the same time they become aware that the ground on which they stand is but sand, and as they clear away the rubbish from their feet they sink down to the solid clay of materialism. But we must not let them stay here, if we can help them to something better, and this leads me on to the third object of this Association, "The Investigation and Diffusion of a Knowledge of Spiritualism," I, and many others amongst us say to those of our brethren whom we see standing on the sand, or clay, we once stood where you do, but we were told that by pursuing a certain track, it would lead us to more elevated ground, hills covered with verdure, from which could be seen a brighter and a better world, tenanted by our brothers and sisters who had passed away. We doubted, hesitated, but at length resolved to test the truth of the information; as we travelled along the road, gleams of light from some invisible source encouraged us to pursue our course, until at length we reached the looked-for goal, proved the truth of the information, and realized a happier condition of being. The road from the lowest depths of materialism, or sandy bottoms of orthodoxy, is often steep and tortuous, but I never yet knew one who steadily pursued the track who failed to reach the light.

A few words now as to the means by which we propose to further the objects set forth. Our present scheme is the delivery of essays or lectures, not only by members of the Association, but by any friend who has light to diffuse on social, moral, or religious subjects. As there will, doubtless, be considerable diversity of opinion on many subjects brought before us; provision has been made for a limited debate after each essay, and in reference to this, I would wish to say a few words. The true spirit of the debate should be to elucidate truth, not to gain a victory for our opinions. If the debate is carried out in a right spirit, *he who is legitimately defeated, is the greatest gainer.* I most sincerely trust that all debates under the auspices of this Association will be characterized by a kindly spirit, and that where it is necessary to lop off a brother's excrescences of thought, it will be done in as gentle and loving a manner as possible. I must not omit the matter of music, it is an important adjunct to harmony and tends to elevate the mind; we have the use of a good harmonium, and the committee have secured the services of a talented performer, but our choir is yet in embryo. There is no music equal to the cultivated human voice. Will our friends who can sing lend us their voices? we do not wish to sadden you with heavy psalmody, that is not our forte, but to discourse sweet and cheerful music, adapted to equally cheering and instructive sentiments. It should be our aim to make these meetings agreeable as well as instructive, and if we can succeed in making them so to ourselves, it is a fair presumption they will be so to our visitors. I will not trespass further upon your time, but call upon the lecturer for the evening, Mr. Drew to deliver his essay on "Atheism and Better."

Arrangements are being made with Mr. Bright, to deliver a course of lectures at the Princess Theatre, commencing Sunday, Nov. 7th.

FREETHOUGHT AND SPIRITUALISM IN BRISBANE.

We extract the following from a letter received from one of the committee of the Brisbane Freethought Association:—

"Freethought is very common in Brisbane, and amongst all classes of society; judges, lawyers, merchants, the editors of both daily papers and the principal weekly, are all known as free-

thinkers, although they have not thought fit to grace our meetings with their presence. They are rather aristocratic in their freethought it seems. Although the number of pronounced and partly-developed members of this class, are very strong in Brisbane. I find also that Good Templarism has been the means of enabling members to throw off the yoke of spiritual bondage, and I think it is a splendid field for planting the seeds of Freethought. As regards Spiritualism proper, I have very little to report. We formed a large circle three months ago, of which I was chairman, but from the inharmonious elements brought together, I could not expect much success, only that possibly mediums might be indicated and harmonious circles formed out of this large one. (I think there were between thirty and forty members.) It proved to be what I had expected; it was broken up and several smaller circles are now sitting with fair results."

ITEMS OF NEWS BY THE MAIL.

The *Spiritualist* of July 30th contains an account of a seance held by the Brixton Psychological Society (Mrs. Hardy being the medium), at which very satisfactory results were obtained; numbers of materialized spirit-hands appeared, palpable to the touch as well as sight, and in some instances recognized by the sitters. In a letter to the "Medium," referring to the same seance, the Secretary, M. H. E. Francis, says:—"I, in conjunction with some dozen other members of the Brixton Psychological Society, have had our theories narrowed down to the laws governing spirit intercourse."

Henry Ward Beecher has come out strong on the subject of Spiritualism. In a sermon last June, after speaking of the nearness of those dear ones gone before, he says:—"I know there is a cloud of witnesses who watch me as I toil on. I am under their supervision, and they encourage me, raise me, push me onward and upward, for they have walked as I walk, and toil as I toil."

In the *Medium* of August 6th, is an interesting account by Mr. Burns, of a seance at Mrs. Guppy's, at which that lady was levitated and carried about the room by the spirits, her feet frequently touching the heads of the astonished sitters.

A medium for physical manifestations and music named Mrs. Mary Young, having signified her willingness to submit her mediumship to a thorough test before the New York Protective Committee, that committee numbering fifteen, met at the rooms of the chairman, Dr. J. B. Newbrough on July 21st, for the purpose. A piano, weighing 260 lbs., was placed in the middle of the room, the medium sitting at the front, and the committee facing her, at the back. She began to sing and play, and as she did so, the piano rose and fell at the front about three inches, keeping time to the tune. By request, the medium stood up, but the movement continued the same. Five gentlemen were then allowed to sit on the piano, when a lifting power equal to 881 lbs. was exhibited. The instrument was made light or heavy at the request of the Medium, and moved in the presence of the committee several times without contact of her hands.

There has been a most successful camp meeting of Spiritualists, lasting several weeks, held at Lake Pleasant on the Vermont Railroad; numbers of noted media and speakers were on the ground, and the papers contain accounts of wonderful manifestations occurring, and interesting lectures given. Two thousand people attended an open air seance of Mrs. Blair, spirit artist, and on Sunday, August 22nd, Professor William Denton lectured to an immense audience, about ten thousand people being on the ground.

Death has been using his sickle freely among the Spiritualists; by last mail we have intelligence of the departure of Mrs. J. H. Conant, the celebrated "Banner of Light" Medium. Mrs. C. has been in bad health for years, and lately has been too weak to attend the Public Circle. She passed away on the 5th of August last, and her funeral obsequies were attended by a large number of her friends. The communications given through her mediumship, have long been a feature in the "Banner of Light," and have brought consolation to many a sorrow-

ing heart. Dr. P. B. Randolph, author of "Dealings with the Dead," "Pre-adamite Man," "After Death," &c., &c., has also passed away. Two other eminent American Spiritualists, Hon. Selden J. Finney, and Dr. A. B. Child, have been removed from this sphere. A. J. Davis pays an eulogium to the worth and ability of the former, in a short letter to the "Banner of Light." Apropos of the latter journal, the numbers to hand by the last mail, are particularly interesting. The account of the Camp Meeting and its incidents, Mrs. E. H. Brittens' paper on "Spiritual Gifts," "Spirit Materializations," Hazard's "Spirit Messages," Colonel Olcott's paper on Mrs. Thayer's "Manifestations," &c., make up a most entertaining and instructive budget.

J. M. PEEBLES' HOME.

While J. J. Morse was filling a late engagement in Philadelphia, he visited Mr. and Mrs. Peebles in their home at Hammonton, N. J. After referring to Mr. Peebles' extensive travels, and the lecture work he did in behalf of Spiritualism in England, he says:—

"June 23rd, at 5 p.m. I arrived at Hammonton. Calm and pleasant, it formed a grateful contrast to the noisy city life we had left behind. A brief walk of about fifteen minutes, along a good, firm and broad road, lined with trees and well-kept farmsteads, brought us to Brother Peebles' domicile—a modest frame house, standing upon a lot of some four acres, and approached by a winding carriage drive. A fencework of dwarf evergreens faces the main road, and lends quite a pleasant effect. A magnificent cherry tree, full of rich fruit, shaded the porch, and made the piazza a cool retreat. With a smiling face and a cheerful voice Mrs. Peebles advanced to receive us, and in a little time England and America were seated at the supper-table discussing things in general, and friend Peebles' strawberries in particular.

The results of many of Mrs. Peebles' artistic labours adorn the walls of our Pilgrim's home, in the form of a number of handsome pictures, showing alike the lady's taste as an artist and her excellence as a medium, while scattered round the different apartments are innumerable evidences of Eastern travel. Ascending to an upper chamber I was ushered into the *sanctum sanctorum* of our friend. It is at once a *library* and a *museum*—a library of between one and two thousand volumes, many of which are old and rare works gathered in distant countries. In the collection are many unique maps and manuscripts, and all the different bibles of the world, beginning with the Vedas of the Hindoos, and so on down the tide of time to the Sacred Roll of the Shakers and the Book of Mormon. This literary workshop contains also relics, antiquities specimens from Chinese pagodas, Buddhist temples, porcelain from the Mosque of Omar, shells from the Jordan, pebbles from the Dead Sea, head-gearings and other paraphernalia of the Orientals, every article an object of interest, and every object eloquent of some mystic story. This library is a fit retreat for its erudite possessor.

Out in the grounds, in the fruit orchard, are peach, cherry apple, pear and other trees, all giving excellent promise of an abundant yield, while other articles of food are also spreading their emerald ensigns to the breeze on all sides. Mr. P. usually spends the summer months at home, dividing his time in working in the garden, writing in his library, and occasionally lecturing to the Spiritualists of his town. The Spiritualists of Hammonton, be it noted, are out of debt, and own a capital hall. I held a public meeting on the evening of my visit, with the most gratifying success. Next morning at 8:14 cars started for Philadelphia, and at 9.5: I again trod the pave of the Quaker City, Mr. Peebles being with me; we parted, he going to Dubuque, I to my residence. Our regrets at separation were mutual, for I much esteem our good brother, and I have every reason to believe he does me. Thinking these few items concerning one so well and favourably known as Brother Peebles might be of interest to your readers must be my excuse for writing."

New York, July 7, 1875.

Banner of Light.

MESMERIC EXPERIMENTS.

BY J. M. GULLY, M.D.

THE debate on Mesmerism at the Brixton Psychological Association on the 18th inst., and report in your journal of the 27th, tempts me to record two experiences of no ordinary character, of mine in mesmerism. I should not do this were it not that the mesmeric influence seems in some way, which I admit to be obscure, to bear upon the spirit influence which it is the function of *The Spiritualist* to investigate. It is forty years since I first gave myself to inquiry into mesmerism, and in my long medical career I had abundant opportunity of putting the subject to practical test. Here are two such, for the complete accuracy of which I pledge my veracity.

In the year 1847 a married lady patient of mine was afflicted with neuralgia of the most aggravated and almost universal kind—face, head, limbs, loins. The pains came on every night about nine o'clock, and destroyed her sleep the whole night. All kinds of opiates, tonics, aperients, had been administered ineffectually for more than two years. My own hydrotherapeutic treatment failed. The purely neuropathic character of the complaint suggested a trial of mesmerism, which, indeed, I used in many and varied cases. I mesmerised the patient myself; every night at nine o'clock I was making passes all down the body, at first for two hours, then for one, and so *diminuendo*, until at the end of four months I obtained such mesmeric influence over her nervous system that it sufficed for me to look for five minutes on her closed eyes to stop all pain and put her in a profound sleep for seven, eight, or nine hours. In this way the periodicity of the pains was broken, and in about seven months they were cured by mesmerism alone. During these months I made varied experiments on her susceptibility to the influence. Oftimes when she was seated at any time of the day, talking to her husband or to her sister, I would, from the further end of the room, and behind a newspaper or book, which I pretended to read, will her to sleep, and after five or six minutes the crocheted needle, or whatever she might be holding, would fall from her hands, her head would fall on her chest, which heaved a deep sigh, and she was asleep for an hour or more. I then used to will her to sleep from an adjoining room, totally unsuspected by her, and the same sleepy sigh and sleep itself followed in ten or twelve minutes after the exertion of my will. At length I judged it better she should have a change, and she and her husband went to Cheltenham, twenty-one miles from Malvern, where I then resided. I told them I was about to try to influence her at that distance at nine o'clock on that night, Wednesday; the same on Thursday, but that on Friday I should be in crowded company, and could not. After that date I told them nothing, and they expected nothing. On the Wednesday I willed her to sleep from Malvern at the hour, and she fell to sleep soon after nine, on Thursday the same; on Friday I did not will her to sleep, and she did not sleep until past midnight. On Saturday I did not will her to sleep, and she did not sleep; she did know what to expect, be it remembered. Sunday night came, and, employed in writing, I forgot all about her until I gave up writing at half-past eleven; then, which was the usual hour, I willed her to sleep. The account sent to me by the husband was this: "As no sleep came on Friday or Saturday nights we concluded you had given up trying to produce it. On Sunday evening we thought nothing about it, and were conversing with two friends, when, at about half-past eleven, my wife suddenly heaved that well-known sigh and dropped her head, and in two minutes she was fast asleep. I laid her on the sofa, and at half-past two in the morning carried her to bed, still in a profound sleep." Here there was a crucial experiment, sleep coming when the will influence was employed, and not coming where it was withheld, and this when both the patient knew and when she did not know what course I should take regarding her.

The second instance is that of a lady of twenty-eight years, who had lost walking power for nearly two years, though I had no doubt that the palsy was of the

hysterical kind; if she attempted to stand, her loins and legs gave away immediately, and she dropped like a stone. The very first time I mesmerised her she stood up firmly for ten minutes. After a dozen times the influence was such that she could not resist following me about the room, although she held by the sofa and declared she would not come to me as I beckoned her from the other end of the room. By this sort of applications she totally recovered her locomotive power in the course of three months. All this time, if, when I was in the room at some distance from her, any one else touched her or even brushed by her dress, the most powerful convulsions seized her whole frame, and she foamed at the mouth just as the epileptic patient does; but this all ceased the instant I took her hand or laid my hand upon her shoulder, and always after mesmerising her I took the precaution of moving the air strongly about her. If I failed to do this, as was once the case, the convulsions came on as soon as her sister touched her, and they were obliged to send for me instantly. She left Malvern for Essex; and now comes the most curious part of the story. Although she had recovered her walking she had not recovered her sleep, which was very bad when I did not procure it by mesmerism. When she left, therefore, I proposed to send her three or four large amber beads in a small silk bag or closed in a jeweller's card box every second post, which beads I had carried in my pocket for forty-eight hours. These beads she tied on the crown of her head, and they invariably produced a good night's sleep. I always put them up and despatched them myself, so that nothing should touch them but my own hands. But it happened one day being in a great hurry to leave home I only placed the beads in the bag and box, and told my amanuensis to cover and seal and post it. As soon as the post could let me know, I got this note from the lady: "What have you done with the last set of beads; I am sure some one has touched them since you did, for the instant I placed them on my head one of the old convulsions came on. Do inquire about it." I did so, and found, sure enough, that my amanuensis had opened the bag and taken out the beads before posting them, his curiosity being keen to know what it could be that I always put up and posted with my own hands. These are two facts as certain and accurately given as my own present existence. What was the agent at work in both of them? "Imagination," says one learned gentleman; "cerebration," says another. But these are mere words, until they tell us what the action in both is, and how it is produced. Since no agent at present recognised by scientists can account for them, it is our duty as sincere seekers not to pooh-pooh them because those agents cannot explain them, but to go on seeking until we find by what force I caused sleep at a distance of twenty-one miles, and what force I and my amanuensis sent in the beads that caused the violent act of convulsion in a third person one hundred and forty miles distant.—*London Spiritualist*.

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