



Written for The Progressive Thinker.

ORGANIZATION.

Some Remarks From a Man Up a Tree.

In THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER of December 27th, the following editorialists of Ft. Dodge, Iowa, make a plea in favor of State organization. They think the State organization is a necessity to the certain continuance of the local ones, and especially recommend the employment of a State lecturer at a stated salary, whose duty it will be to organize new societies and keep those already organized on a working basis. They note that there is a "lack of something" and feel "like a ship without a rudder," drifting at the mercy of the elements.

As this touches upon a point of vital interest to every true Spiritualist, I would like to publicly express my views upon it, well knowing, however, that two persons seldom see the moon alike.

Upon first thought it seems as if it was aiming to get the cart before the horse to attempt State organization as a means of holding the local ones from disintegrating. Instead of organizing the State organization as a natural outgrowth of the other. But the success of such an attempt will largely depend upon the strength of the interest manifested in other parts of the State; and should it fail in meeting sufficient support from individual contributors it will most probably come back upon the strength of the local organizations, thus showing that they in reality are the true basis of all extended operations of this nature.

A good State lecturer in every State would be a thing to be desired by the Spiritualist philosophy, but it seems as if the abilities of any one man is overrated when it is expected that he will hold in unison a number of charges scattered over a widely extended territory. No doubt a grand work could be accomplished, but it should be looked upon as only a means to an end, not as a finality.

There is a widespread notion among Spiritualists, which almost amounts to a prejudice, that there can be no extended union amongst them, and that it is not desirable on account of the fact that they are not of the same mind, or that they are not of the same spirit, or that they are not of the same blood.

To affirm that it is impossible for Spiritualists to organize and maintain an organization is about as reasonable as to say that none, from the Royal Society down to the American Society of Naturalists, can maintain an organization if they set about it in a proper manner. The essential thing is to find the principle that can be maintained, and which will hold the attention and interest of the individual members. This being found, the main thing to be maintained is the link which will bind the individuals in a bond of unity upon some one point, an organization depends for its strength on a rope of sand. In nearly all secret societies the tie of union is based upon honors, imaginary or otherwise, the secrets of getting things done, and the power of the individual members.

It is of great importance for Spiritualists to organize. By no other means can they gain the respect and attention that will be given to them by the world. The time is eminently that of organization, and without that great lever for protection the probabilities are that it will be overshadowed and menaced by the strongly-knit powers of the opposition.

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A HAUNTED HOUSE.

It is Genuine in All Respects.

I send you the following statements of a haunted house in Jay Co., Ind., because I think they have some stunning evidences of the fact of spirit identity. It seems necessary, in order to make the tellable what I am about to relate, to give a short biography of the only family that occupied the house prior to 1884, which is as follows: Henry Smith came to Jay Co., Ind., in the autumn of 1860, and lived there until 1884. He was a householder and moved into the house in 1884. His family consisted of a second wife, Susan, two step-daughters who soon married, two sons and one daughter by his first wife, and one daughter by his second wife. He and his wife were members of the Universalist church. His daughter by his first wife died, I think, in 1863, and his youngest son, Eddie, died in 1880, and his wife in 1877, and he married Mrs. Sallie Baker in 1880, and died in 1884. His daughter, daughter married previous to the death of her parents and she and her step-sisters and all of their husbands were zealous orthodox church members.

The first disturbance was a plain, distinct, simple rap which would occur in any part of the house at any time, and it continued for several hours. It appeared to proceed from a mantel clock which kept good time, was clean, respected, and nothing wrong discovered. This continued several years, which was previous to the death of Henry Smith. After his death, the report was rumormongered that things were so uncomfortable that his widow said she could not and would not stay in the house, although she had two sons and two daughters all grown, or nearly so, living with her. She was always very kind and was much loved by all the family. The house remained unoccupied until the summer of 1885, when it was rented by Thomas Puchelmyer. They heard so much noise, like thumping against the wall, that his wife became frightened and could not stay about the house. She was away, and they left the ensuing winter.

In the spring of 1886, Dexter Pence married Louey Smith and moved into the house. They were soon greeted with a noise like hammering against the wood work in the house, and a noise like a rattling overhead like a turkey gobler strutting and dragging his wings on the plaster, there being no floor above. There were noises in the kitchen, as if the rats were on a regular bender. They took pains to sift corn meal over the kitchen floor one evening, and the noise was not heard until the next morning, but the next morning there was not a track of any kind to be seen in the kitchen. One night in the summer a door opened into the bedroom from an adjoining room that had no other outlet except one window which was securely fastened. The door was open, Dexter got up, and he shut it and it carefully latched it, and it came open again; and he then shut it, bolted it with the thumb bolt, it being a common knob lock, and said, "I will fix it this time," but had not much more than got to bed before it opened again. The noise was not heard until the next morning, but the next morning there was not a track of any kind to be seen in the kitchen.

It is of great importance for Spiritualists to organize. By no other means can they gain the respect and attention that will be given to them by the world. The time is eminently that of organization, and without that great lever for protection the probabilities are that it will be overshadowed and menaced by the strongly-knit powers of the opposition.

A desire is everywhere apparent amongst all good Spiritualists to give Spiritualism a better tone and place in the community. But how is a better tone to be gained? Is it reasonable to suppose it will be, so long as Dick, Tom, Harry and the devil are allowed to be members of the organization upon terms of an equality with those who are true to moral grounds in the more intimate relations of social life? Has it ever occurred to any one that a line should be drawn somewhere? A line between those who are trying to lead better and purer lives and those who have learned that hell is a myth and that there is no gratification? It is impossible to say so, to attempt to elevate Spiritualism together with all the immoral elements that will or might cling to its skirts and claim its protection. Its true elevation will begin when every local organization is so organized as to hold itself high enough upon the plane of benevolent morality so as to meet the respect of its members and the outside world.

Our friends from Ft. Dodge say there is a great demand for phenomena, there. That is the case, but the demand is for phenomena cannot always be had, and when it is obtained it is too often monopolized by those who should give to the real inquirers for truth. But in the frequent absence of phenomena, provisions must be made for something else that will attract the attention of the regular attendance at the place of meeting. Were the real churchly attractions of nineteenth-century church-goers made public they would be found to be mainly due to music and the friendly associations of brothering, or even to a powerful attraction for factious on the opposite side of the house. Spiritualists may draw a lesson here—not from the pretty faces—but from the music. Almost every locality has more or less good musical talent which should be the interest of every Spiritualist organization.

The first step to take is to organize a band of singers and instrumental performers, and giving up a good portion of the time to musical exercises, an organization need not fear an empty house when the best speakers are present. If they do not allow their music to get stale or their energy upon this point to weaken and fall flat. Why is it not just as easy for Spiritualists to maintain "Sunday clubs" where music is usually present as it is for them to furnish in rivalry to their high-church Presbyterian and Methodist neighbors, and where truly "glad tidings" can be dispensed in opposition to the moldy and worn-out ideas of an ignorant age?

To convey a better idea as to what I mean by the elevation of Spiritualism, I have formulated a Bond of Union which seems to cover the point upon which all Spiritualists may unite without loss of dignity, on the one hand, or a