THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

"Brethren, fear not: for Error is mortal and cannot live, and Truth is immortal and cannot die."

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The Principles of Nature.

THE PRIMEVAL HISTORY OF THE EARTH.

FROM SHARP'S MAGAZINE.

Among the millions of human beings that dwell on the earth, how few are there who think of inquiring into its past history. The annals of Greece and Rome are imparted to our children as a necessary and important branch of education, while the history of the world itself is neglected, or at the most is confined to those who are destined for a scientific profession; even adults are content to receive on hearsay a vague idea that the globe was in being for some undefined period preceding the era of human history, but few seek to know in what state it existed, or what appearance it presented.

This is owing, partly, to the hard names and scientific language in which geologists have clothed their science, and partly to ignorance of the beauty and attractive nature of the study. We dread the long, abstruse-sounding titles of Ichthyosadrus and Plosiosaurus, and are repelled by the dry disquisitions on mineralogy into which professors of the science are apt to stray. The truth is, however, that geology properly is divided into two distinct branches. One of these consists of the less attractive, though equally useful investigation of the chemical constituents of the strata, and the classification of the fossil flora and fauna which belong to the various formations. This, which may be styled geology proper, is the department which belongs almost exclusively to men of science; and, inasmuch as it involves the necessity of an acquaintance with the sister sciences of chemistry, mineralogy, zoology, and botany, is least adapted to the understanding of the uninitiated. The other branch, which may be called the history of geology, presents none of these difficulties; it is as easyof comprehension, and as suitable to the popular mind, as any other historical account; while it presents a variety of interest, and a revolution of events, before which the puny annals of modern history sink into insignificance.

Such of our readers as are unacquainted with the science, will probably be inclined to doubt the possibility of our being aware of events which took place ages before Adam was created. Here, however, nature herself steps in, and becoming her own historian, writes "in the living rock" the chronicles of past ages, and so accurately and circumstantially, that we can say positively, "Here existed the sea at such a period, and here the tide ebbed and flowed for centuries;" nay, she shows us the footmarks of extinct animals, and tells us the size, nature, habits, and food of creatures which have for unnumbered ages been buried in the grave of time She informs us that here the ocean was calm, and there a river flowed into it; here forests grew and flourished, and there volcanoes vomited forth lava, while mighty earthquakes heaved up mountains with convulsive throes. Such are the events that mark the world's history, and we now propose giving a short sketch of the various eras in its existence.

Hundreds of thousands of years ago, the earth, now so busy and full of life, rolled on its ceaseless course, a vast, desolate, and sterile globe. Day and night succeeded one another, and season followed season, while yet no living form existed, and still the sun rose upon arid, verdureless continents, and hot, caldron-like seas, on which the streaming vapors and heavy fogs sat like an incubus. This is the earliest period of which we glean any positive record, and it is probable that previous to this era the universe was in a state of incandescence, or intense heat, and that by the gradual cooling of the globe, the external surface became hard, and formed a first crust, in the same manner that molten lead, when exposed to the cold air, hardens on the surface. The vapors which previously floated around this heated mass, in like manner became partially condensed; and gradually accumulating in the hollows, formed the boiling seas, which, in after ages, were destined to be vast receptacles teeming with life.

How long such a period continued, it is impossible to say, and were we even able to number its years, we should in all probability obtain a total of such magnitude as would render us unable to form any accurate idea of its extent. Our ideas of time, like those of space, are comparative, and so immense was this single period in geological history, that any interval taken from human records would fail to present an adequate idea of it.

As might be expected, this era was marked by vast and violent convulsions; volcanoes raged and threw up molten granite, earthquakes heaved and uplifted continents, seas were displaced and inundated the land, and still the earth was enveloped in vapor and mist arising from the high temperature, and the light most probably penetrated only sufficiently to produce a sickly twilight, while the sun shot lurid rays through the dense and foggy atmosphere. Such a world must have been incompatible with either animal or vegetable life, and we accordingly find no remains of either in the rocks which belong to this early period; their principal characteristics is a highly crystalline appearance, giving strong presumptive evidence of the presence of great heat.

After this era of desolation and gloom, we enter upon what is technically termed the "transition period," and here we begin to mark the gradual preparation of the globe for the reception of its destined inhabitants. The change is, however, at first very slight, and there is evidence of frequent convulsions and of a high degree of temperature; but the action of fire appears to have declined in force, and aqueous agencies are exerting themselves. The earlier portion of this formation is rendered peculiarly interesting by the fact, that during it the most ancient forms of life sprang into existence. It is true that merely a few species of shell-fish, with some corals, inhabited the depths of the ocean, while the dry land remained untenanted; nevertheless, humble and scanty as they were, we cannot fail to look with interest on the earliest types of that existence which has subsequently reached such perfection in ourselves.

The presence of corals shows, that although the transition seas had lost their high temperature, yet they retained a sufficient degree of heat to encourage the development of animals requiring warmth. These minute animals possess the remarkable property of extracting from the elementary bodies held in solution in the waters, the materials for forming new rocks. To the coral animalculæ or polype we owe much for the vast limestone beds which are found in every part of the world, and many a vessel laden with the riches and productions of the earth, finds a grave on the sunken reefs that are the fruit of its labors.

As ages elapsed, and the universe became better adapted for the reception of life, the waters swarmed with zoophyte and corals, and in the silurian strata we find organic remains abundant; shell-fish are numerous and distinct in form, and in some instances display a very interesting anatomical construction. As an instance, we may mention the Trilobite, an animal of the crustacean order; the front part of its body formed a large, crescent-shaped shield, while the hinder portion consisted of a broad triangular tail, composed of segments folding over each other like the tail of a lobster; its most peculiar organ, however, was the eye, which was composed of four hundred minute spherical lenses placed in separate compartments, and so situated that in the animal's usual place at the bottom of the ocean it could see

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every thing around. This kind of eye is also common to the existing butterfly and dragon fly, the former of which has thirty-five thousand, and the latter fourteen thousand lenses.

Continuing to trace the history of this ancient period, we reach what is called among geologists the Old Red Sandstone age. The corals, and the shell-fish, and the crustacea of the former period have passed away; and in their place we find fishes; thus presenting to us the earliest trace of the highest order of the animal kingdom—vertebrata. The plants in this system are few, and it would seem as if the condition of the world was ill adapted for their growth. Another peculiar characteristic of this era is the state of calm repose in which the ocean appears to have remained; in many rocks the *ripple mark* left by the tide on the shores of the ancient seas is clearly visible; nevertheless, considerable volcanic action must have taken place, if we are to believe geologists, who find themselves unable to account otherwise for the preponderance of mineral matter which seems to have been held in solution by the waters.

We now pass on to the Carboniferous period, and a marked change at once strikes us as having taken place. In the previous era few plants seem to have existed; now they flourished with unrivaled luxuriance. Ferns, cacti, gigantic equisetums, and many plants of which there are no existing types, grew and lived, and died in vast impenetrable forests; while the bulrush and the cane, or the genera nearly allied to them, occupied the swamps and lowlands. This is the period when the great coal beds and strata of ironstone were deposited, which supply us with fuel for our fires, and materials for our machinery. The interminable forests that grew and died in the lapse of centuries, were gradually borne down by the rivers and torrents to the ocean, at whose bottom they ultimately found a resting place. A considerable portion of the land, also, seems to have been slowly submerged, as in some cases fossil trees and plants are found in an upright position, as they originally grew.

There is no period in geological history so justly deserving of examination as this. To the coal beds then deposited Great Britain in a great measure owes national and mercantile greatness. Dr. Buckland, in speaking of this remote age, remarks in his Bridgewater Treatise, that "the important uses of coal and iron in administering to the supply of our daily wants, give to every individual among us, in almost every moment of our lives, a personal concern, of which but few are conscious, in the geological events of these very distant eras. We are all brought into immediate connection with the vegetation that clothed the ancient earth before one-half of its actual surface had yet been formed. The trees of the primeval forests have not like modern trees undergone decay, yielding back their elements to the soil and atmosphere by which they have been nourished; but treasured up in subterranean storehouses, have been transformed into enduring beds of coal, which in these latter ages have been to man the sources of heat and light, and wealth. My fire now burns with fuel, and my lamp is shining with the light of gas derived from coal that has been buried for countless ages in the deep and dark recesses of the earth. We prepare our food and maintain our forges and furnaces, and the power of our steam engines, with the remains of plants of ancient forms and extinct species which were swept from the earth ere the formation of the transition strata was completed. Our instruments of cutlery, the tools of our mechanics, and the countless machines which we construct by the infinitely varied applications of iron, are derived from ore, for the most part coeval with, or more ancient than the fuel, by the aid of which we reduce it to its metallic state, and apply it to innumerable uses in the economy of human life. Thus, from the wreck of forests that waved upon the surface of the primeval lands, and from feruginous mud that was lodged at the bottom of the primeval waters, we derive our chief supplies of coal and iron, those two fundamental elements of art and industry which contribute more than any other mineral productions of the earth to increase the riches and multiply the comforts, and ameliorate the condition of mankind."

This may be justly styled the golden age of the pre-adamite world; the globe having now cooled to a sufficient temperature to promote the growth of plants without being injurious to them, is for the first time clothed in all the rich verdure of a tropical climate. Doubtless the earth would have presented a lovely aspect, had it been possible to have beheld it—the mighty forests, unawakened by a sound save that of the sighing of the wind: the silent seas, in which the new-born denizens of the deep roamed at will; the vast inland lakes for ages unruffled but by the fitful breeze—all present to the mind's eye a picture of surpassing solitary grandeur.

The creatures that existed, though differing from those of the previous age, were still confined to the waters; as yet the dry land remained untenanted. The fishes give evidence of a higher organization, and many of them appear to have been of gigantic dimensions. Some teeth which have been found of one kind, the Megalichtys, equal in size those of the largest living crocodiles.

There is one peculiarity respecting fossil fishes, which is worthy of remark. It is that, in the lapse of time from one era to another, their character does not change insensibly, as in the case of many zoophytes and testacea, on the contrary, species abruptly and at certain definite intervals. A celebrated geologist has observed, that not a single species of fossil fish has yet been found that is common to any two great geological formations, or that is living in our own seas.

Continuing our investigation, we next find the fruitful coal era passing away; scarcely a trace of vegetation remains; a few species of zoophytes, shells, and fishes are to be found, and we observe the impression of footsteps, technically called ichnites, from the Greek ichnon, a footmark. These marks present a highly interesting memento of past ages. Persons living near the sea shore must have frequently observed the distinctness with which the track of birds and other animals is imprinted in the sand. If this sand were to be hardened by remaining exposed to the action of the sun and air, it would form a perfect mould of the foot; this is exactly what occurred in these early ages. and the hollow becoming subsequently filled by the deposition of new sediment, the lower retained the impression, while the upper one presented a cast in relief. Many fossil footmarks have been found in the rocks belonging to this period.

It is evident from the fact of footmarks being found, that creatures capable of existing on dry land were formed about this time, and we accordingly find the remains of a new order—Reptiles. These animals, which now constitute but a small family among existing quadrupeds, then flourished in great size and numbers. Crocodiles and lizards of various forms and gigantic stature roamed through the earth. Some of the most remarkable are those which belong to the genus Ichthyosaurus, or fish lizard, so called from the resemblance of their vertebræ to those of fishes. This saurian, Dr. Buckland describes as something similar in form to the modern porpoise: it had four broad feet, and a long and powerful tail; its jaws were so prodigious that it could probably expand them to the width of five or six feet, and its powers of destruction must have been enormous. The length of some of these reptiles exceeded thirty feet.

Another animal which lived at this period was the Plesiosaurus. It lived in shallow seas and estuaries, and would seem from its organs of respiration, to have required frequent supplies of fresh air. Mr. Conybeare describes it as "swimming upon, or near the surface, arching its long neck like the swan, and occasionally darting it down at the fish which happened to float within its reach."

This reptile, which was smaller than the Ichthyosaurus, has been found as long as from twelve to fifteen feet. Its appearance and habits differed from the latter materially. The Ichthyosaurus, with its short neck, powerful jaws, and lizard-like body, seems admirably suited to range through the deep waters, unrivaled in size or strength, and monarch of the then existing world; the Plesiosaurus, smaller in size and inferior in strength, shunned its powerful antagonist, and, lurking in shallows and sheltered bays, remained secure from the assaults of its dangerous foe, its long neck and small head being well adapted to enable it to dart on its prey, as it lay concealed amid the tangled sea-weed.

This has been called by geologists the "age of reptiles;" their

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remains are found in great numbers in the lias, oolite, and wealden strata. These creatures seem to form a connecting link between the fishes of the previous era and the mammalia of the Tertiary age; the Ichthyosaurus differed little from a fish in shape, and its paddles, or feet, are not unlike fins; the Plesiosaurus on the contrary, as its name denotes, partook more of the quadruped form. Dr. Buckland, in describing it, says: "To the head of a lizard it united the teeth of a crocodile; a neck of enormous length, resembling the body of a serpent; a trunk and tail having the proportions of an ordinary quadruped; the ribs of a camelon, and the paddle of a whale." Besides these animals we find the Pterodactyle, half bird and half reptile; the Megalosaurus, or gigantic lizard; the Hyheosaurus, or forest lizard, the Geosaurus, or land lizard, and many others, all partaking more or less of affinity to both the piscatory and saurian tribes.

Passing now to the period when the great chalk rocks which prevail so much in the south-eastern counties of Great Britain were deposited, we find the land in a great many places submerged; the fossil remains are eminently marine in character, and the earth must literally have presented a "world of waters" to the view. Sponges, corals, star-fish, and marine reptiles inhabited the globe, and plants, chiefly of marine types, grew on its surface. Although, however, a great portion of the earth was under water, it must not therefore be supposed that it returned to its ancient desolation and solitude. The author whom we last quoted, in speaking of this subject, says: "The sterility and solitude which have sometimes been attributed to the depths of the ocean, exist only in the fictions of poetic fancy. The great mass of water that covers nearly three-fourths of the globe, is crowded with life, perhaps more abundantly than the air and the surface of the earth; and the bottom of the sea, within a certain depth accessible to light, swarms with countless hosts of worms and creeping things, which represent the kindred families of low degree which crawl upon the land."

This era seems to have been one of peculiar tranquility, for the most part undisturbed by earthquakes or other igneous forces. The prevailing characteristic of the scenery was flatness, and low continents were surrounded by shallow seas. The earth is now approaching a state when it will be fit for the reception of man, and in the next era we find some of the existing species of animals.

It is worthy of observation, that at the different periods when the world had attained a state suitable for their existence, the various orders of animal and vegetable life were created. In the "dark ages" of geological history, when the globe had comparatively lately subsided from a state of fusion, it was barren, sterile, and uninhabited; next, the waters having become cool enough, some of the lowest order of shell-fish and zoophytes peopled them; subsequently, fishes were formed, and for ages constituted the highest order of animal life; after this we enter on the age of reptiles, when gigantic crocodiles and lizard-like forms dwelt in fenny marshes, or reposed on the black mud of slow moving rivers, as they crept along towards the ocean betwixt their oozy banks; and we now reach the period when the noblest order of animal life, the class to which man himself belongs, Mammalia, began to people the earth.

The world now presented an appearance nearly similar to what it does at present. The land which in the chalk formation was under the water, has again emerged, and swarms with life; vast savannahs, rich in verdure, and decked in a luxuriant garb with trees, plants, grasses and shrubs, and inland lakes, to which the elephant, the rhinoceros, and the hippopotamus, with many extinct races of animals came to slake their thirst, form the principal characteristics of this period.

There is something peculiarly interesting in looking back to this early age, while Adam was yet dust. We picture to the mind's eye gigantic Deinotherium, the largest creature of terrestrial life, raking and grubbing with its huge tusks the aquatic plants that grew in the pools and shallow lakes, or, as Dr. Buckland describes it, sleeping with its head hooked on to the bank, and its nostrils sustained above water so as merely to breathe, while the body remained floating at ease beneath the surface. We see its twin brother in greatness, the Megathrium, as it comes slowly stalking through the thick underwood, its foot of a yard in length crushing where it treads, and its impenetrable hide defying the attacks of rhinoceros or crocodile. In the waters we behold the mighty whale, monarch of the deep, sporting in the pre-adamite seas, as he now does amid the ice bergs of the Arctic ocean; the walrus and the seal, now denizens of the colder climes, mingling with the tropical manati; while in the forests the owl, the buzzard and the woodcock, dwelt undisturbed, and the squirrel and monkey leaped from bough to bough.

Arrived at the close of the pre-adamite history, after having traced it from the earliest ages of which we possess any evidence down to the eve of human existence, the reflection that naturally presents itself to the mind is the strangeness of the fact, that myriads of creatures should have existed, and that generation after generation should have lived and died, and passed away, ere yet man saw the light. We are so accustomed to view all creatures as created solely for human use, rather than for the pleasure of the Divine Creator, that we can at first scarcely credit the history, though written by the hand of Nature herself; and the human race sinks into insignificance when it is shown to be but the last; nevertheless, that such, however humbling it may be, is the fact, we possess indubitable evidence; and when we consider, as Mr. Bakewell observes, "that more than three-fifths of the earth's present surface is covered by the ocean, and that if from the remainder we deduct the space occupied by polar ice and eternal snows, by sandy deserts, sterile mountains, marshes, rivers and lakes; that the habitable portion will scarcely exceed one-fifth of the whole globe; that the remaining four-fifths, though untenanted by mankind, are, for the most part, abundantly stocked with animated beings that exult in the pleasure of existence, independent of human control, and in no way subservient to the necessities and caprices of men; that such is and has been, for several thousand years, the actual condition of our planet; we may feel less reluctance in admitting the prolonged ages of creation, and the numerous tribes that lived and flourished, and left their remains imbedded in the strata which compose the outer crust of the earth."

Geology.

Of all the studies which relate to the material universe, there is none perhaps, which appeals so powerfully to our senses, or which comes into such close and immediate contact with our wants and enjoyments, as that of geology. Our temples, palaces, and sometimes even our houses, are built with the rocks of a primeval age; bearing the very ripple marks of a pre adamite ocean. Our apartments are heated and our victuals cooked with the carbon of primeval forests. The granite obelisk which transmits to the future the fame of the hero, the poet, or the statesman, and the pure white marble which the sculptor employs to embody his dream of the ideal, have existed long before the appearance of man on the earth. In the precipices which protect our rock-girt shores, which flank our mountain glens, or which variegate our lowland vallies, and in the shapeless fragments at their base which the lichen colors, and round which the ivy twines, we see the remnant of uplifted and shattered beds which once reposed in peace at the bottom of the ocean. Nor does the rounded boulders which would have defied the lapidary's wheel of the Giant Age, give forth a less oracular response from its grove of clay, or from its lair of sand. Floated by ice from some Alpine summit, or hurried along in torrents of mud, and floods of water, it may have traversed a quarter of the globe, amid the crash of falling forests, and the death shrieks of the noble animals which they sheltered. The mountain range too, with its catacombs below, along which the earthquake transmits its terrific sounds, reminds us of the mighty powers by which it was upheaved; while the lofty peak, with its cap of ice, or its nostrils of fire, places in our view the tremendous agencies which have been at work beneath us.

In the deep mysteries of Nature which the superficial eye may not fathom, are truths enrobed in celestial glory.

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THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

R. P. AMBLER, EDITOR.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., MARCH 22, 1851.

CONDITION AND CHARACTER OF THE SPIRIT IN ITS HIGHER SPHERE.

In this new era of the world, when a medium of intercourse has been established between earth and heaven, and the clear streams of wisdom flow from a superior fountain, the inquiry becomes pressing and earnest in relation to the future destiny of the spirit. Hitherto, men have been mostly content to indulge in vague and indefinite ideas of spiritual existence, without being able to obtain any thing near a proper conception of the condition and character of the soul after it leaves its earthly temple. But a new light is now beaming on the minds of men, and they are no longer satisfied to grope in doubt and uncertainty. A deep and insatiable yearning begins to move the soul—a yearning for the vision of its celestial home, and the revelation of more beautiful and harmonious truth. Hence man is searching, with an eagerness never felt before, for the knowledge of his final destiny; and, straining his gaze through the distant depths of time, he can discern the dim shadows of that world of beauty which lies beyond the curtain that veils the Future. It appears, however, that, with all the increased facilities enjoyed for the investigation of this subject, a difference of opinion has arisen with regard to the character of the future life; one entertaining the idea that the Spirit-world is bright, beautiful, and glorious, being pervaded with the element of purity, and another indulging the supposition that millions on millions of spirits are "dark, deformed, spiritually destitute, disquieted." It is well, perhaps, that the different views connected with this great theme should be presented to the public mind, that it may be able to arrive more surely at an intelligent judgment; and hence, while we do not desire or intend to engage in controversy, we may be allowed to express the opinion which has been the result of a somewhat careful reflection, though it may be opposed to the theory of certain individuals who are professedly horrified at the "presumptiveness" of clairvoyant revelations. We trust, however, that in unfolding the ideas which have been naturally suggested, we shall not be found guilty of favoring any "*frothy, unphilosophical, injurious dazzle* of glory and immortality." It is important that Reason should be made the guiding star of all investigation, and the path by which our minds are led to Truth, must be always radiant with its light.

There evidently exists a certain relation and dependence between the material and spiritual world; and, since death is but a change in the mode of being, the soul on leaving its earthly organization, must naturally carry with it the same internal state which it had here attained. In order, therefore, to ascertain the condition and character of the spirit in its higher sphere, it will be necessary in the first place to gain a correct understanding as to the manner and degree in which this is affected by its situation in the body, and the influences of earth. That we may obtain a complete and satisfactory illustration of the subject, let us examine the case of the lowest and most degraded of human beings. In almost every community there are those who subsist on the fruits of iniquity, whose home is in the dens of pollution, and whose days are spent in accomplishing the deeds of crime. Such individuals have perchance been born in the very situation they now occupy;—they have been educated in the school of vice, and have been ever surrounded by depraving influences which it were impossible to resist; so that they have been compelled by an absolute necessity to pursue an evil course, and remain in the low and miserable condition in which they are viewed. Let us observe now the precise effect which this unfavorable situation has upon the spirit. This effect, we may suppose, will be precisely similar to that produced upon the tender plant by chilling winds and choking weeds. Beneath the uncongenial influences referred to, the spirit would be stunted and dwarfed—its growth and development would be retarded; and this we suppose to be the principal effect produced by the unfortunate situation of the lower classes of society. We have, I think, no just reason to conclude that the spirit is rendered actually *impure* in its connection with the body, or that it necessarily partakes of the character of the outward actions. In other words, we are not justified in presuming that the evil conduct of the vicious essentially proceeds from an evil spirit. On the contrary, does it not appear on careful consideration, that what we term vice and crime are dependent on outward circumstances acting on the outward organization? Remove from man all the debasing influences of a corrupting situation, and relieve him from all the lusts, passions, and propensities connected with the flesh, and where would be the impurity of earth? It is not, then, the *spirit* which engages in vice and crime, but these arise from the necessity of circumstances acting on the external man. Therefore we conclude that the chief effect produced on the spirit by outward depressing circumstances, lies in the suppression of its development—the retarding of its growth. The more gross and sensual an individual becomes, the less is the spirit exercised;—the appetites of the flesh being allowed to predominate over the inward being, the latter remains in a dwarfish and undeveloped state. From a necessity involved in its very situation, it is choked with the thorns of earth—it is overwhelmed with the burden of fleshy corruption, so that, in the lower spheres of life, man appears as an animal in which the spiritual principle has been almost entirely suppressed. Nevertheless, even in that spirit which is least unfolded, and has been most affected by the chilling influences of the world, there dwells a celestial germ—a spark of Godlike purity, which, could it be once enkindled by the breath of Heaven, would burn with a deathless flame. However much humanity may be crushed and degraded in appearance, the image of God impressed upon every soul, can never be entirely defaced. Far back in the recesses of the soul, there is a fountain, which, though closed and sealed, contains the living element of immortality. The spirit may be chilled and dwarfed; it may be buried, as it were, beneath the rubbish of materiality and sensualism, yet it must still retain that indwelling essence of purity which the defilements of earth may never reach.

We should now observe the condition and character of the spirit thus undeveloped, on its entrance into a higher Sphere. Through the natural process of death, it is at once relieved of all the incumbrances which prevent its advancement here; it is elevated to a state where it is free from all fleshly lusts—from all temptations to wrong, and where the internal germ which constitutes its living essence, may expand and bloom like the unfolding flower. It is true that the particular *position* which the spirit will at first occupy, will correspond with the degree of its development; so that, in being dwarfed and degraded here, it will enter one of the lower societies of the Second Sphere, to which it will be naturally drawn by the attraction of affinity. It would seem unwise, however, to say that the spirit in this condition is absolutely impure or corrupt; for every thing undeveloped is perfect in its degree and state of being, and the rose is beautiful even in the closed bud. Freed from the material organization, purified by the ordeal of death from the taints of earthly corruption, and subjected to the holy and genial influences that descend from higher spheres, the spirit may be clothed with a brighter garment, and send forth more beautiful scintillations of purity, than the earth-bound mind may be able to conceive. We discover, then, that in the case of the most degraded and sinful classes, the effect of the unfavorable circumstances of earth is to prevent the growth and development of the spirit in the body; but that, through the ministry of death, it is placed in a condition where the germ of internal purity which dwells within, may be gradually and gloriously unfolded.

From this reasoning we may now easily derive a principle which forms the basis of a substantial philosophy. The human spirit, in connection with the body, is presented in various stages of development, according to the nature and power of the influences by which it is surrounded. So, in view of the relation es-

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tablished between the worlds of spirit and matter, we conclude that the condition and character of the soul in its superior Sphere, will bear a perfect correspondence with the different degrees of spiritual progression on the earth. If the spirit here has risen superior to the depravity of its earthly nature—if it has been cultivated, improved, and expanded, then will it be prepared to enter one of the higher circles of love and wisdom in the celestial abode. But if, on the other hand, it has been here unfavorably situated, being suppressed and dwarfed by the predominance of sensual appetites, it is then fitted only to enter one of the inferior departments of the heavenly mansion. In each of these cases, however, and through all the innumerable links in the chain of spiritual being, there exists no absolute corruption or unhappiness, but the interior germ of purity implanted in all, is seen in different stages of development. Thus, in comparison with earth, the Heavenly Spheres present a scene of brightness and glory inconceivable. Spirits, groveling no more in the impurities of the flesh, and surrounded by the attractive influences that flow from the great Source of love, are advancing to higher spheres of refinement and perfection—soaring along the upward pathway that leads through bowers of celestial bliss, to the sublimest mansions of the Father. E. F. A.

THE QUINCY TRAGEDY.

The lamentable occurrence which recently took place at Quincy, Mass., has now become so generally known that its details may be properly omitted. It appears by an examination of this case that a young man by the name of John R. Grieve, laboring doubtless under a derangement of mind, was induced to cause the death of his youthful wife, and then to commit the act of self-destruction. The father of this young man, residing in Zanesville, Ohio, has written a brief letter to Mr. Lewis Bass, Coroner of Quincy, in which he recognizes the deceased as his children, and at the same time attributes the cause of their death to the writings of A. J. Davis, the works of Fowler & Wells, and the Spirit Messenger. As a reply to this, the following interesting letter has appeared in the Hartford Daily Times, which we take pleasure in presenting to the reader.—Ed.

HARTFORD, CONN., March 13th, 1851.
58 College Street.

John Grieve, Esq., Zanesville, Ohio.

DEAR SIR: — I am moved to write to you, prompted by a letter which I have this morning read in the "Hartford Courant," purporting to be the copy of one written by you, and sent to Coroner Bass, of Quincy, Mass. The letter judges and condemns the writings of Mr. A. J. Davis, and similar "*humbug*" works by Fowler & Wells, &c., and proceeds to say that John and Hannah Grieve were "captivated," "deluded," and "*murdered*" by such "trash." It gives directions for the following epitaph to be inscribed on the tomb of those unhappy victims:

"To the Memory of John R. Grieve, aged 22 years, and Hannah Banks, his wife, aged 15 years. Both of Zanesville, Ohio. Deluded by the writings of A. J. Davis."

I have thought that the letter might be a forgery, a thing got up by some ignorant persons with the endeavor to cast disrepute on that which they know nothing about. It has not the tone of Christian sorrow breathed from the pure heart of a bereaved father. It is harsh and condemnatory. Had the writer of it ever read Mr. Davis' works, he might have learned therefrom a spirit of religious gentleness, forbidding accusation and teaching charity. And had the unfortunate victims of their own diseased imaginations—John and Hannah Grieve—had they ever read these works *understandingly*, they would have been led from the error of their ways, and guided away from their weak contemplations. They would not have committed suicide, because they would have learned that all violation of Divine Law is followed by inevitable punishment. We know that suicides are often committed by persons under what is called a high religious excitement. Our lunatic asylums are filled with such "*deluded*" victims; and many a grave-stone covers the mortal remains of those so "*murdered*." But we do not see inscribed upon their tombs—

"*Deluded by the writings of Moses, John and Paul.*"

And yet how many diseased minds become maniacal from the contemplation of those doctrines; but it is only the ignorant who will say that these things have made them insane. Their insanity takes that turn, but it originates either in some physical derangement of the system, or some hereditary disease of the mind. Perhaps you yourself, Sir, or the mother of your son, bequeathed to him the germ of his delusion—ask yourself what nature you gave your child? If that letter and that epitaph were penned by you, it is evident that you gave him a misdirected mind; in the twenty-two years of his life here, could you not have taught him so to walk uprightly that he could have continued in the way you should have shown him? Had you led him in the path of truth, he would have pursued it onward up to God; and you may be sure, Sir, that Mr. Davis would never have led him from it. Could he have spoken to him, his language would have been—"Go on, be just, be sure, be pure, obey the laws of God, and Heaven is yours." Mr. Davis uses no other language.

I have pitied, I do pity your son, Sir—his was a much deluded mind—*murder* and *suicide* are harsh epithets, but they are the world's words to designate what your child was. I should call him diseased and misdirected; the little girl whose earthly life he took away, has called loudly upon the sympathies of my nature; she followed him with a woman's love—was ready to go wherever he should lead. Had his mind been rightly directed, he could have led her to the highest heights of virtue here, and made her a bright example on the earth; but he was weak, and so they fell together. But, Sir, Mr. Davis never told your son to take that innocent child by the hand, and lead her forth and slay her, and then take his own life—the writings of Mr. Davis teach no such things—they teach a perfect and entire obedience to nature's laws. You son violated those laws—but it is not for us to judge him—I only pity him. I wish he had received a different organization with his birth—I wish he had been better directed. Let his tomb-stone proclaim a *lie*,—it will be consistent with what has been his apparent training, it will be consistent with his unhappy end, the termination of his earthly life. All those who have read Mr. Davis' works, who see that inscription, will know that it is a *lie*—and a few years hence all will know that falsehood was inscribed on the grave of the murderer and the suicide.

When the lunatic in an insane asylum takes his knife and plunges it into the heart of the victim seated next to him, and declares that "God bade him do it," do we believe that God thus commanded? No, we know that the diseased imagination of the fanatic spoke—so with your son, Sir.

It is not since Mr. Davis has written, that our insane hospitals have been built—it is not only since he has written, that murders and suicides have been committed on the earth. Let the instructions which flow through him be obeyed, and these things shall cease—let his teachings be *rightly understood and followed*, and we shall have no murderers, no suicides—no insane hospitals, no prisons—no slanderers, no falsehoods—children shall not be born the heirs of crime, because of germs implanted in their natures; they shall inherit virtue, and the good parent shall rejoice in the pure loveliness of his offspring; and God's kingdom shall come on earth.

I would advise you, for the good of others, to change the inscription on your son's grave, and let this truth be there recorded:

The victim of a diseased imagination; the inherit[or] of a healthy intellect; one not guided and directed from ch[ildhood] to good; the unhappy destroyer of his own earthly life [and] the bane here of one who loved him.

And I would respectfully recommend to you, [to] make yourself acquainted with the writings of Mr Da[vis] that you may no longer ignorantly suppose that they incul[cate] that you can understand them and will discipline your[self] that you may become a christian, (I do not mean a [creed] abusive sense of the word) but a true christian—

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not, condemns not; is gentle and full of loving kindness. Be such, and you will have within yourself, that peace which the world gives not, nor takes away. Such have Right and Heaven within them and they are not "*deluded*" from it by Mr. Davis, Mr. Fowler, or any other man.

May you, Sir, and the mother of your son, if she is in this world—also the bereaved friends of the young misguided Hannah, receive comfort from above, for great must be your sorrow because of the misdirected course of those it was intrusted to you to guide—you have my pity and my sympathy.

CATHERINE D'W DAVIS.

Influence of False Education.

The mind in its natural state, when unshackled by the restraints of a false education, is comparatively free; and before it has quafed the benumbing errors of the world, or becomes bound by the icy fetters of a creed, it seeks for truth as naturally as the hart panteth for the water-brooks. In the first unfoldings of the infant mind, we see the freedom and simplicity which were given as the birthright of the soul. The child looks upon Nature, and, as he gazes, its sublime instructions steal in silence upon his heart. He sees beneath this outward veil the presence of the pervading God. From the broad green earth, and the deep blue sky, he receives the inflowing of sacred truths, and in the simple, yet earnest searchings of the soul, he propounds questions which the wisest philosopher cannot answer. But now the trainings of a false education are commenced. The child is taught first of all that he must not trust in reason—that Nature is a blind and unreliable guide, and that all the truth which it is necessary he should obtain, is to be found within the lids of a certain volume, or the limits of a particular creed. Thus the mind in the first stages of its development, becomes perverted and trammeled. The glorious and expansive powers which enable it to roam through the wide fields of space, are contracted within the prescribed channel of an established faith; and the free aspirations for truth which move the unsophisticated mind, are changed to a blind and slavish reverence for the teachings of popular tradition.

The melancholy effects of a false education are visible in every portion of the earth. Beneath its unsparing rod the very soul of humanity has cringed and bowed, yielding the priceless gift of liberty, and entering tamely the most degrading bondage All classes, embracing the wealthy and the poor, the ignorant and the wise, have been in some degree affected by this cruel tyranny. Instead of enjoying the privileges of reason, and following Truth in her bright and flowery paths, men, in receiving the doctrines of spiritual despots, have bowed at the shrine of superstition, and paid their devotions to an imaginary Deity. From this cause, the earth, to the free mind, presents a dark and repulsive appearance. The difficulty is not that man has no exalted powers—no enlarged capacities of mind, for in these consists the brightest glory of his nature; but it is that these powers and capacities have been perverted by a false education—that the pure thoughts and feelings of the soul have been crushed and stifled by the teachings of ancient creeds, like the precious ore that is mingled with common dust. Let us behold the masses who repair to the altars of the Church. They are the slaves of popular education. From childhood their minds have been depressed and trammeled by the rigid doctrines which their fathers enforced; and now in the lapse of time, the seeds implanted in their early years, have borne the fruits of bigotry and ignorance. Nothing is now regarded as good and true, but that which is sanctioned by their particular faith;—everything contrary to this, however attractive and beautiful it may be, is looked upon and condemned as destructive heresy. If there is one yearning for freedom—one sigh for higher truth that rises in the heart, it is suppressed by the threatening frowns of a false Theology. Lamentable indeed is the condition of those individuals who are thus enslaved; and yet—deluded souls!—they fondly dream that the narrow enclosure in which they grope embraces the universe of truth, and that the tainted air they breathe is the very atmosphere of Heaven!

The time has now nearly arrived when the influences of a false education shall be removed, and the chains which have bound the human mind shall be broken. Then shall man be educated, but not enslaved—instructed, but not debased; and, turning from the dark prison in which his soul was bound, he shall go out beneath the broad canopy of eternal Truth, and rejoice in the power of redeeming Reason. R. P. A

The Bursting of the Bubble.

The time has arrived for all who profess to have seen or heard what are called Spiritual Manifestations, to hang their heads in shame—to make their exit from all respectable society, and mourn in solitude that they were ever born into this world to be so egregiously deceived. The great bubble which has for so long a time been growing larger and larger, has at length collapsed, and resolved itself into emptiness. Like a shell thrown into a fortress, it has burst and scattered misery and death among the inmates. Yes, this great bubble has burst—so say certain wise lecturers who are now endeavoring to impress upon the minds of their audiences this melancholy fact. "The Humbug Exploded." appears in print, and is echoed from mouth to mouth. The doctrine of Knee-ology and Toe-ology has been discovered and banishes all former theories from the land. Ten thousand respectable mediums may be found. A hundred thousand of our citizens may have test questions answered through these same mediums; they may see material substances move under circumstances which convince them of the presence of some invisible agent;—no matter; we of the Knee-ology and Toe-ology *know* it is all a humbug; we can account for it all; there is nothing easier than to explain it. *Wires and collusion, dislocating of knee joints and snapping of toes*—there is the secret. No matter how good may be the character of these ten thousand mediums, or however innocent they may appear; little children and children of a larger growth are all playing a deep game on the credulity of the public. And those one hundred thousand of our citizens!—how they, poor fellows, are deluded. Scientific men, lawyers, clergymen and physicians—men of all trades and professions, are cheated by these same mediums. Fudge! Away with such nonsense. To waste words on lecturers of this character, would be to incur the folly of casting pearls before swine. Let us exercise to the best of our ability the faculty of reason, in investigating this interesting subject, and dive deep after the truth. If Messrs. Burr, Lee, and others have burst this great bubble, as they profess to have done, why do they not come forward to claim the reward of *One Thousand Dollars*, which will, in good faith, be given by Mr. Davis of this city, provided such is proved to be the fact? G. E. H.

Boston, March 17, 1851.

Truthful Reflections.

A distant subscriber, with whom we have not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance, indulges in some truthful reflections which may be of interest to the reader. He says:—

"I am myself too old, and perhaps too dull of apprehension to enter fully into the spirit of your journal;—yet we are never too old to learn. 'Every day of a man's life, in his passage from the cradle to the grave, should be marked not only by some useful act, but by some useful addition to his store of knowledge.

I admire, however, the tone of candor and benevolence which pervades your columns. I have long considered it the first, the most important part of education, to *cultivate the benevolent affections*. What is the great object of human desire? Happiness. How can this be attained, how communicated, without the cultivation of the better feelings of humanity? Save me from a cultivated intellect, and a barren heart!"

☞ Those of our patrons who can conveniently spare Nos. 1, 4, and 9 of the Messenger, will confer a favor by returning them to this office, as our edition of these numbers is exhausted. To such as can oblige us in this way, a due equivalent will be given.

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Poetry.

LINES TO LIZZIE.

WRITTEN FOR THE SPIRIT MESSENGER,
BY S. B. BRITTAN.

The mazes of thy auburn hair
Float lightly o'er those sunny eyes,
As cloudlets 'mid the silent air
Soften the splendor of the skies—
Making the very shadows 'round me bright,
And filling the soul with a rapt delight.

When away from that fond retreat,
And the light of thy placid smile—
Where Truth and Love together meet,
To cheer my lonely heart awhile,
I feel a presence in the viewless air,
That whispers to my spirit, Thou art there!

We meet at eve in golden dreams,
With our spirits all light and free,
And drink from the celestial streams,
Or bathe in the immortal sea—
When the pure, the beautiful and the brave,
With Angels in the crystal waters lave.

In the beautiful twilight hours,
When deepest shadows veil the skies,
And stars amid their azure bow'rs
Shine brightly as an Angel's eyes—
Oft, in the silent night, I think of THEE,
While I pray the angels to visit me.

THE DYING GIRL.

I'm dying mother, soon I'll leave
The friends I fondly love,
And this tired soul shall wing its flight
To starry climes above.

Come near me, mother, let me clasp
Thee, in these arms once more;—
Ere life's pale, faint, and flickering beam,
With me, is dimmed and o'er.

O bless thy child;—forgive each fault—
Each heedless word of mine,
For soon this spirit shall depart,
Far from its earthly shrine.

And when within the shade of death
This wasting form shall rest,
O! kindly gaze upon the mound,
That veils my icy breast!

And, mother, when the spring time comes,
And flowers the earth array,
O plant that fav'rite rose of mine,
Above my sleeping clay!

'T will bloom there, mother, O so sweet!
And when thou comest near,
Thou'lt softly gaze upon its tints,
And weep for me a tear.

Thou'lt water it with many drops;
And as it springeth fair,
Thou'lt point to heav'n and say—"Like it
My child now bloometh *there!*"

Miscellaneous Department.

The Grave of those we Love.

BY WASHINGTON IRVING.

The grave is the ordeal of true affection. It is there the divine passion of the soul manifests its superiority to the instinctive impulse of mere animal attachment. The latter must be continually refreshed and kept alive by the presence of its object. but the love that is seated in the soul can live on long remembrance. The mere inclinations of sense, languishing and declining with the charms which excite them, turn with shuddering and disgust from the dismal precincts of the tomb; but it is thence that truly spiritual affection rises purified from every sensual desire, and returns, like a holy flame, to illumine and sanctify the heart of the survivor.

The sorrow for the dead is the only sorrow from which we refuse to be divorced. Every other would we seek to heal—every other affliction to forget; but this would we consider a duty to keep open—the affliction we cherish and brood over in solitude Where is the mother who would willingly forget the infant that perished like a blossom from her arms, though every recollection is a pang? Where is the mother who would willingly forget the most tender of parents, though to remember be but to lament? Who, even in the hour of agony, would forget the friend over which he mourns? Who, even when the tomb is closing upon her he most loved, when he feels his heart, as it were, crushed in the closing of its portal, would accept of consolation that must be bought by forgetfulness? No: the love which survives the tomb is one of the noblest attributes of the soul. If it has woes, it likewise has its delights; and when the overwhelming burst of grief is calmed into the gentle tear of recollection—when the sudden anguish and the convulsive agony is over, the present ruins of all that we most loved, is softened away into pensive meditation on all that it was in the days of its loveliness—who would root out such a sorrow from the heart? Though it may sometimes throw a passing cloud over the bright hour of gayety, or spread a deeper sadness over the hour of gloom, yet who would exchange it even for the song of pleasure or the burst of revelry? No: there is a voice from the tomb sweeter than song There is a remembrance of the dead to which we turn even from the charms of the living. Oh, the grave! the grave! It buries every error—covers every defect—extinguishes every resentment. From its peaceful bosom springs none but fond regrets and tender recollections. Who can look down upon the grave of an enemy, and not feel a compunctive throb that he had ever warred with the handful of earth that lies mouldering before him.

But the graves of those we loved—what a place of meditation! There it is that we call up in long review the whole history of virtue and gentleness, and the thousand endearments lavished upon us almost unheeded in the daily intercouse of intimacy; there it is that the tenderness of the parting scene,—the bed of death! with all its stifled griefs, its noiseless attendance, its mute, watchful assiduities, the last testimonials of expiring love! the feeble, fluttering, thrilling—oh! how thrilling pressure of the hand! the last fond look of the glazing eye, turning upon us even from the threshold of existence! the faint, faltering accents struggling in death to give one more assurance of affection.

Aye, to go to the grave of buried love and meditate! There settle the account with thy conscience for every past benefit unrequited, every past endearment unregarded, of that departed being who can never—never return to be soothed by thy contrition.

If thou art a child, and [illegible] a sorrow to the soul, or a furrow to the silver [illegible] thou art a husband, and [illegible] fond [illegible] ventured its whole [illegible] to doubt [illegible] ment thy kindness [illegible] ever wronged in [illegible] ly confided in [illegible] unmerited pang to [illegible]

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beneath thy feet, then be sure that thou wilt lie down sorrowing and repentant on the grave, and utter the unheard groan, and pour the unavailing tear—more deep, more bitter, because unheard and unavailing.

Then weave the chaplet of flowers, and strew the beauties of nature about the grave; console thy broken spirit, if thou canst, with those tender yet fertile tributes of regret, and take warning by the bitterness of this, thy contrite affliction over the dead, and henceforth be more faithful and affectionate in the discharge of thy duties to the living.

Unwritten Music.

There is unwritten music. The world is full of it. I hear it every hour that I wake, and my waking sense is surpassed some times by my sleeping—though that is a mystery. There is no sound of simple nature that is not music. It is all heaven's work, and so harmony. You may mingle, and divide, and strengthen the passages of its great anthem, and it is still melody—melody. The low winds of summer blow over the waterfalls and the brooks, and bring their voices to your ear as if their sweetness was linked by an accurate finger; yet the wind is but a fitful player, and you may go out when the tempest is up, and hear the strong trees moaning as they lean before it, and the long grass hissing as it sweeps through, and its own solemn monotony over all—and the dimple of that same brook, and the waterfall's unaltered bass shall reach you in the intervals of its power, as much in harmony as before, and as much a part of its perfect and perpetual hymn. There is no accident of nature's causing which can bring in discord. The loosened rock may fall into the abyss, and the overblown tree rush down through the branches of the wood, and the thunder peal awfully in the sky; and, sudden and violent as these changes seem, their tumult goes up with the sound of winds and waters, and the exquisite ear of the musician can detect no jar.

I have read somewhere of a custom in the Highlands, which, in connection with the principle it involves, is exceedingly beautiful. It is believed that, to the ear of the dying—which, just before death becomes always exquisitely acute—the perfect harmony of the voices of nature is so ravishing, as to make him forget his suffering, and die gently, like one in a pleasant trance. And so, when the last moment approaches, they take him from the close shieling, and bear him out into the open sky, that he may hear the familiar rushing of the streams. I can believe that it is not superstition. I do not think we know how exquisitely nature's many voices are attuned to harmony, and to each other. The old philosopher we read of might not have been dreaming when he discovered that the order of the sky was like a scroll of written music, and that two stars—which are said to have appeared centuries after his death in the very places he mentioned—were wanting to complete the harmony. We know how wonderful are the phenomena of color; how strangely like consummate art the strongest dyes are blended in the plumage of birds and in the cups of flowers, so that, to the practised eye of the painter, the harmony is inimitably perfect. It is natural to suppose every part of the universe equally perfect, and it is a glorious and elevating thought, that the stars of heaven are moving on continually to music, and that the sounds we daily listen to are but a part of a melody that reaches to the very center of heaven's illimitable spheres.

Beautiful Thought.

There is but a breath of air and a beat of the heart between this world and the next. And in the brief interval of a painful and awful suspense, while we feel that death is present with us, that we are powerless and he all powerful, and the last faint pulsation here is but the prelude of endless life hereafter; we feel, in the midst of the stunning calamity about to befall us, that earth has no compensating good to mitigate the severity of our loss. But there is no grief without some beneficent provision to soften its intenseness. When the good and the lovely die, the memory of their good deeds, like the moonbeams on the stormy sea, lights up our darkened hearts, and lends to the surrounding gloom, a beauty so sad, so sweet, that we would not, if we could, dispel the darkness that environs them.—*Geo. D. Prentice.*

The Lightning and the Lantern.—A Parable.

It was midnight. The loud storm was abroad on the face of the earth. The lightning flashed incessantly. The thunder shook the skies. The wind blew a hurricane. The rain fell in torrents. And a wanderer passed along on the lonely road. He had lost his way and was uncertain where he was going. And oftentimes he stumbled in the dark, and went astray from the road, and fell into pools of water, and tottered on the brink of a precipice. And ever the loud storm roared after him—and danger yawned around him—and his heart was nigh sinking within him. Now and then a lightning flash, broad and blending, lit up the heavens and the earth, and for miles before him his road was illuminated, and for a few seconds shone as in the broad daylight. But in an instant all was dark again, and again he stumbled and went aside—

For he trusted to the lightning to guide him.

Then I saw a hand reach through the dark towards him, and in the hand was a lantern—and the lantern followed at his side till the wanderer reached forth and took it with joy—for he saw that it sent forth a steady clear light in the dark. And I saw that he watched the sky no more for the lightning flash, but committed himself unto the lantern which he bore in his hand, and walked steadily and safely by its light till he reached his home.

And the Interpreter said to me—"So it is in the straight and narrow way that leadeth unto life. He who trusts to sudden flashes of good feeling and excitement, follows no safe guide. For though they seem to come from heaven—they are not in the highest heaven where the calm light of the stars shineth—but are too much of earth, and come and go—are glorious for a while, but leave the soul in as great or even greater darkness than before. It is only the steady light of habitual religion, seen and felt, and followed at all times, which can be a "lamp to our feet and a light to our paths." Good feelings—religious excitements—revivals—can do us no good unless they can be arrested and made to minister to constant and habitual good works. The light we follow must be steady, calm, unfailing, or it can be of no use in guiding us to our heavenly home.—*Christian Register*

The Human Heart.

The velvet moss will grow upon the sterile rock—the mistletoe flourish on the withered branch—the ivy cling to the mouldering ruin—the pine and cedar remain fresh and fadeless amid the mutations of the dying year—and, Heaven be praised! something green, something beautiful to see, and grateful to the soul, will in the coldest and darkest hour of fate, still twine its tendrils around the crumbling altars and broken arches of the desolate temples of the human heart.

☞ The Books and Chart of Mr. Davis, comprising all the works on the Harmonial Philosophy that have been published, can be had at our office, and forwarded by express or otherwise, to any part of the Union. Price—Revelations $2; Great Harmonia, Vol. 1, $1,25; Chart, exhibiting an outline of the Progressive History and approaching destiny of the Race, $1,50 Philosophy of Special Providences, $0,15.

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