

THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

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

VOL. I.

SPRINGFIELD, SATURDAY, JUNE 7, 1851.

NO. 44.

The Principles of Nature.

MEANS OF HUMAN IMPROVEMENT.

BY CHARLES CALDWELL, M. D.

To improve, in some way, the condition of man, and thus enlarge the general stock of human happiness, is the professed object of every one who appears in a public capacity. A declaration to that effect is a sort of standing preface to all enterprises, in which the interest of the community is concerned. Every one who acts on a broad scale, whether in civil or military life—in church or state affairs, in commerce, agriculture or the arts, in the conquest of nations, or in defense of their rights—endeavors to persuade others, as well perhaps as himself, that his design is to prove a benefactor of his race. Nor is this true of those alone who more directly serve the public. Others of humbler standing, and in narrower spheres, indulge in the same philanthropic pretension. Even the day-laborer at his task, the fisherman at his net, and the solitary huntsman, as he strays through the forest, flatter themselves with the persuasion, that their toils have not an exclusive bearing on themselves; but that the condition of others will be, in some shape, amended by them. Each one, moreover, if interrogated on the subject, will offer a plausible reason for his belief.

Such, I say, and so multiplied are the schemes and the modes of accomplishing them, that have, from time immemorial, been devised and practiced, with a view to the improvement of the condition of man. But has the success of the experiment equalled the pomp and parade that have attended it, and the number and talents of those that have been engaged in it? Has the condition of the human family been actually improved, in proportion to the extent of the effort made to that effect? If history and observation furnish the reply, it will be decidedly negative. I do not say that the state of society throughout the civilized world is not improving. On the contrary, I admit that it is. In its extent and depth neither misery nor crime is comparable now to what it was at the commencement of the revival of letters. But it cannot be denied that the march of improvement is exceedingly slow. In several countries, not excepting those that rank with the most enlightened and the wisest, it would seem, for some time past, to have been, in certain respects, retrograde. Whole classes of their inhabitants are not a little deteriorated in both mind and body; and, among no inconsiderable portion of them, misery appears as deep, and prospects as disheartening, as adversity, coupled with despair, can render them.

Since it is true, then, that the improvement in the condition of man is greatly disproportioned to the united and long-continued efforts of so many millions of individuals for the promotion of it, the failure must be owing to some powerful and deep-rooted cause. For, that he is a being highly susceptible of improvement, cannot be doubted. To detect that cause, then, and point out the means, by which it may be successfully counteracted, removed, would constitute a memorable, not to call it a glorious epoch, in the history and progress of human happiness. Philanthropy would rejoice at an event so auspicious, at which all philosophy hail it as a boon of peculiar value, and every man himself could scarcely fail to bid it welcome. Let me draw your attention, then, to a few thoughts on this subject.

As respects the cause why the efforts hitherto for the amelioration of the condition of man have proved so ineffectual, it may be easily rendered. They have been in vain, on various grounds. Neither has Science directed, nor has Religion exhorted them. On the contrary, both have con-

nouncing them wrong, and in dissuading from the prosecution of them. That the end aimed at by them, then, should be attained, was impossible. It is an axiom in philosophy, that nothing in opposition to nature, or apart from it, shall succeed. The authors of the efforts referred to had not a correct knowledge of the human system, the complicated machine which it was their object to improve. Of all earthly things that are highly important, men would seem to be least acquainted with themselves and their external relations. Under such circumstances, to look for human amendment as the result of their labors, is unreasonable; not to use a more condemnatory term, and pronounce it absurd. That man should be deteriorated by the ignorance and mismanagement of those who attempt to better his condition, is much more probable.

The human family is made up of individuals. Its prosperity, therefore, in the aggregate, is composed of that of all its separate members. The greater the number of its members, and the more prosperous the condition of each, the higher will be the prosperity and comfort of the whole. These postulates will not be denied. The questions, therefore, to be solved in the present case are, "In what does individual prosperity consist?" and "In what way can it be promoted most certainly, and in the highest degree?" Satisfactory answers to these questions will be tantamount to directions for the best mode of improving the condition of the human race.

Apart from wealth, station, and other incidental considerations, which cannot be embraced in the present discussion, individual prosperity, when as perfect as it can be made, consists in a capacity for the highest degree of personal efficiency and rational enjoyment. In plainer terms, it is a fitness in man to be as happy in himself, and as useful to others, as the laws of his being admit. And that fitness is the result of a fair development and sound condition of all the various organs of the system; of that which constitutes man's greatest good—a sound mind in a sound body. And, to a certain extent, these are inseparable. Let the corporeal condition be as here set forth, and the intellectual will correspond with it as certainly as, in any other case, the effect harmonizes with the cause.

The brain is as truly and obviously the organ of feeling, sentiment, and thought, as the glands are of secretion, and the muscles of motion. A large, healthy, well-toned, and well-formed brain, therefore, gives strength of intellect and soundness of virtue to the philosopher and statesman, as certainly and directly, as large, healthy, and well-formed muscles and nerves do to the arm of the blacksmith or the leg of the dancer. The wisdom of Ulysses was no less the result of organization than the swiftness of Achilles; and the morality of Seneca equally so with the strength of Milo. To Homer this truth appears to have been familiar. Hence, he has given a large and finely formed head to the Prince of Ithica, and great volume and symmetry of muscles to the son of Peleus. All that is requisite to be learned, therefore, to insure the highest improvement of the human race, is, how to bestow on individuals the best organization. It must not be forgotten that I mean the organization of every portion of the system. On this I say depend strength, activity, elegance, beauty, genius, and moral worth, and every other excellence, physical and mental. To the truth of this, all times both modern and ancient, and every country on earth bear testimony. In no age, and in no community whose individuals are well organized, is most powerful, prosperous, and happy. We refer, in ancient times, to the Greeks and Romans, and in modern, to the inhabitants of Great Britain, and the United States. To the superior organization of the human system, every fact in history relating to the sublimations of sculpture and painting, amply attests, and is indebted to it alike for their splendor in

peace, and their glory in war. And, as to the latter, the reference to them is equally correct, and equally calculated to sustain my position. They are the best organized people in modern times. A fair comparison of them with the natives of other countries proves the fact. Some portions of the Germans, Spaniards, and Italians come nearest to them, but are still inferior. To this superiority of organization are the British, French, and Americans indebted for pre-eminence in their intellect and morals, prosperity, and power. In referring to these points, it must not be forgotten, that the power and efficiency of every description of organized matter, are increased by the proper kind and degree of excitement and exercise.

It must be borne in mind, that tone or intensity makes an important element in organic efficiency. Improve organization, then, especially in certain parts to be hereafter designated, and you improve the race in every excellence; in intellect and morality as well as in animal power. Carry this improvement to the highest attainable pitch, and man is as perfect as he can be made.

Is any one ready to allege that I am about to engage in a discussion fanciful in its nature, and which can never either develop a truth, settle a principle, or lead to any practical good? If so, he will permit me to ask him, why it should be deemed more visionary to believe in the practicability of improving the race of man, in all their attributes, mental as well as corporeal, than in that of improving, to the same extent, the breed of our domestic animals? And why an attempt to produce the former result, should be held less useful in its object, than one to produce the latter? Is there, in the nature of things, any impediment, either physical or moral, to render an effort to the one effect more hopeless than an effort to the other? No cultivated physiologist will reply affirmatively. Nor would a reply from any other source be worth listening to. The two cases are strictly analogous; the end the same, and the means of attaining it precisely alike. This is true, however reluctant false pride may render the superficial and the unthinking to believe it. We are, in the literal sense of the expression, much more assimilated to the worm, than most of us would be willing to admit. Our organization, consisting of similar materials united in a similar manner, is as susceptible of being changed, for either better or worse, as that of the inferior animals; and it can be changed on the same principles. We have an organization superior to theirs in degree, but not in kind, a few portions of the brain excepted; and even they can be altered and amended only on the same ground. Every enlightened and practical agriculturist knows that he can, by proper feeding, exercise, and training, ameliorate his breed of horses and cows, hogs, sheep, and dogs. And he does so. He renders them not only larger and better formed, stronger and fleet, but more intellectual, mild, and docile. He improves them in all the attributes of their races. But previously to suggesting any means for the attainment of the same end, as relates to man, I must offer a brief physiological exposition.

It has been already observed, that the human body is a very complicated apparatus. It consists of many different organs which are again made up of other organs, each performing its specific functions. But these organs, instead of acting, every one for itself alone, act also for each other, individually and collectively, and are united in a system, by function and sympathy. The condition of one organ, therefore, whether sound or unsound, influences and modifies that of many others. If it be a principal organ, it influences the whole machine. There are three great sets of organs, which, while they are intimately and indispensably connected with each other, control all the rest, and assimilate their condition, in no small degree, to their own. These are the chylipoetic organs, the blood-making and blood-circulating organs, consisting of the lungs and the heart—and the brain, spinal cord, and nerves, which, as already mentioned, are the instruments of intellect and feeling, and are essential also to voluntary motion. To the heart must be added its appendages, the blood-vessels. These three sets of organs have been said to control all the others; and this they do chiefly, by mutually controlling themselves; by exercising, I mean, such a reciprocal influence, as to be all, at the same time, somewhat

assimilated in condition. They are as necessary to each other, as they are to the whole. Is one of them materially deranged in its action? The two others suffer immediately, and all the rest of the system in its turn. Is the brain diseased? Its healthy influence, which is indispensable to the well-being of the two other sets of associated organs, is withheld from them, and they also fail in their action, as well as in their sound and sustaining sympathies. The chyle and blood are deteriorated. This proves a source of further injury to the brain, which, unless it be supplied with well-prepared blood, is neither itself in good condition, nor capable of contributing to the health and efficiency of the other parts of the body. It cannot prepare, from a scanty and bad material, the substance, or agent, of its own influence, whatever it may be, in sufficient quantity, and of sound qualities. The general mischief, arising from a primary morbid affection of either of the two other sets of controlling organs, is equally demonstrable, and depends on similar principles. But it is needless to dwell longer on this subject. To every physiologist it is already familiar. It is known to him, that out of chyle of bad qualities, or deficient in quantity, a sufficient amount of good blood cannot be prepared; that if respiration be defective, the latter fluid cannot be duly vitalized; and that if the heart be enfeebled, it cannot throw the blood with the requisite force into every part of the system.

The organs which compose the brain, with the faculties dependent on them, are divided into three classes: the animal, the moral, and the intellectual strictly so denominated. The latter class is subdivided into the *knowing* and the *reflecting* organs; or, as they are sometimes called, the *perceptive* organs and those of *relation*. For the comfort and happiness, as well as for the efficiency of man, and his usefulness as a member of society, it is requisite that these three sets of organs be well-balanced in power and action. If one or two of them preponderate, especially in a high degree, some deficiency, irregularity, or impropriety of conduct will occur, to the inconvenience, injury, or ruin of the individual. In proof of this many striking examples might be cited. But the truth is already so palpable, that it would scarcely be extravagant to pronounce it self-evident. In attempting, therefore, to improve the condition of man, a point of peculiar moment is, to produce and maintain, in his mental powers, the requisite balance. Let each class of organs and its dependent faculties have a full measure of power, but suffer neither of them greatly to predominate over the others. Should the animal class be too feeble, the individual will be defective in practical energy; he will want general vigor and activity of character; and should it be too strong, the danger is great that he will indulge in practices indecorous and degrading, if not vicious. He will be too much of the animal, in forgetfulness of the man. If the intellectual organs be too feeble, the individual will want both knowledge and the power to use them. If any one, two, or more of them be disproportionately strong, he will be likely to attach himself inordinately to some favorite pursuit, to the neglect of other requisite ones, or to engage in study with an ardor and intensity ruinous to health, and perhaps productive of mental derangement. Excessive weakness in the moral organs is tantamount to too much strength in the animal, and may become a source of crime; while excessive strength and activity in some of them produce a stern and inflexible resolution, or an ungovernable enthusiasm, in relation to the objects of them, which misleads the judgment, subverts discretion, and prevents usefulness.

To produce, therefore, the highest perfection of which man is susceptible, a fair equilibrium must be established in his system, and the whole rendered as powerful as may be practicable. Weak organs must be strengthened, and too vigorous ones reduced, if not actually, at least comparatively, until the requisite balance be attained. In one point, of great moment, the living body of man resembles not a little the body politic. The stronger parts of it have a prevalent tendency to oppress and injure the weaker. Hence *local debility*, of whatever description, is an invitation to disease, or some kind of discomfort. In every scheme, therefore, for human improvement, to prevent or remove it, should be a leading object.—*Buchanan's Journal of Man.*

Psychological Deptmt.

EXPERIENCE OF A CLAIRVOYANT.

BY CAROLINE CHESEBRO'.

"FOLDED eyes see brighter colors than the open ever do."—E. B. Barrett.

My vision was not of the night; I was not reveling in the land of dreams. A mortal, a human being, held over my bodily powers a monarch's sway; and thus my spirit was set free from the bondage of sense.

This person by whose aid I was loosened from consciousness of the fetters of flesh had exerted his power, thinking to guide my thoughts, to direct the workings of my mind also, by mere exercise of his will. But he had attempted that which was beyond his power of accomplishment; he could not control and enslave, even for an instant, the spirit which fled in that moment far beyond his empire, away from the things of time. He had looked upon me, and I know not how it was, but his strange gaze overpowered my nervous system, induced a sleep of the animal life; and then this panting, struggling soul escaped his influence, as it had that of the body. It went forth as the prisoned bird at the opening of its cage; it soared away from the earth which so long bound it. From the earth, I repeat; for its course was not, as had been anticipated, "to the far and foreign lands."

I was sick nigh unto death with the tumult, strife and confusion which had been my portion since my birth hour. To a place of rest and peace, of holiness and contentment, to a "house not made with hands," like a weary child I bent my course, and for the nonce time had no more dominion over me.

How pleasant, oh! how beautiful was that *going home*! At the moment of my release, remembrances of pre-existence, of a life which had been mine before ever I became a stranger and a pilgrim in the world, began to crowd upon me. Those moments of exaltation and of intensest yearning which I had known on earth now found a perfect exposition.

Never had the loves, the hopes and the aspirations of my mortal life satisfied me. It had seemed to me always that I had given for my earth-home an existence that was deeper, fuller, grander. Forever a mournful conviction of unfitness, incompleteness and imperfection had attended all my toil. Now for the first time could I understand that most sad, sweet saying, which, while it sets the "apocalyptic NEVER" on all the hopes of the mortal, sheds brightness and glory on the aspiration of the immortal: "*Whatsoever thou desirest shall be granted thee the moment of thy death*;" for now had I anticipated the joyousness of that release, the glory of that freedom, which is the attendant of death. I understood then how it could, how it must be, that the human, groping in thick darkness on the earth, rarely accomplish the deeds and the work for which they are capacitated. They labor under constant difficulties, which astonish, and bewilder, and try the only half sentient soul. I knew at this moment how it could be that in death the veil was removed from their eyes; how they would perceive then, and clearly, the work which is their birthright, which the ALL-MERCIFUL will suffer them to carry forward to illimitable perfection in the eternal ages. For what is death but the mere closing of eyes on the temporal, that they may open again, and look with perfectly-discerning and clearly-penetrating gaze, on the eternal, the immutable?

As I said, when the mortal had so unwittingly set my spirit free, I felt that I was going home. Not to the Heaven, the World of the Resurrection, for that only may be entered by those who are forever done with life; and did not one of the earth guard for me my garments of mortality, which must be re-assumed? Neither to the homes of the dead went I; but into the wide and glorious soul-land, into the realm of the pre-existent

Going home! to my mother, my blessed angel-mother, my spirit-mother; she who gave me to that beloved, my foster-parent, that we might for a few years be a joy and a help to one another. I was going into that land which the darkness knows

not, which the light of purity enlivens; from whose altars ascend the incense of knowledge, whose foundations and pillars, whose rivers and whose fruits, whose thought and whose all-in-all, is God!

How can I tell with *words*, how can I speak as to be understood, of that realm upon which rests the eternal calmness, the everlasting beauty? By what terms common among men can I speak of the splendor and the blessedness of soul-land? Can you fix on the blind man's mind an idea of the glory of flowers; of the setting sun; of the face of beauty? Can you by prayers or groans or shrieks give to the dead assurance of your love? Can the heart of the deaf thrill at the glad tones of your voice, or conceive of music?

Weakly, most faintly can I utter, and that with tears as I feel my weakness, what cannot be fully comprehended. How *could* one, save in soul-language, tell of the soul-life? Or how, with the types and figures of the dull insensate, can be made known the surpassing majesty of *that* intellectual, *that* unfading?

I made my journey "thought rapid," with a consciousness of freedom that was ecstasy itself. I had sought clairvoyance in a vague hope of being for a moment released from the sorrows which haunted me, even in my dreams. My last thought on earth had been of struggle and weariness, of disappointment and want. In the hard labor for daily bread I was exhausted. I no longer reveled in the idea of a better day. The exultation and defiance with which I had pressed on in the path of exertion was over; the strong will had become paralyzed by incessant reverses and rebuffs.

The awakening from despair, by the communication of glad tidings which overwhelm the troubled one with tumultuous joy, may afford an idea, most shadowy, it is true, but still an idea, of the exultation with which I went forth to my mother—to my home. If ever you have known such moments of sudden, unexpected bliss, you will remember how, when the wild joy had calmed into a blissful certainty, you cradled yourself in an intoxicating kind of *rest*; you will have a conception of the steady and buoyant and blessed peace which continued with me as I went my way.—*Knickerbocker*.

Clairvoyance.

The editor of the Buffalo Express, who, by the way, declares that he is a "born-skeptic" on the subject of clairvoyance, animal magnetism, spiritual rappings, &c., gives the following account of a recent visit of himself and others to witness the exhibition of a clairvoyant:

We stepped on Saturday evening into McArthur's Garden, to attend the exhibition of the manifestations of clairvoyance by Miss Martha Loomis. She was put by her mother in what is called a magnetic state. We and two other disinterested persons, blindfolded her so closely that we knew positively that she could not see with her eyes anything whatever—not even the strongest gas light. In that condition, the young lady read all sorts of written and printed words, of which she had no knowledge, except what she gained after they were placed in her hands. She described with perfect accuracy persons standing at a distance, their dress, attitude and complexion, to the minutest particular. All this was done without prompting or apparent collusion from any quarter. She exhibited no hesitation and made no mistakes. There was no guessing at answers—they were prompt and to the point and *is* what, or a part of what, we saw with our own eyes. The first time we are bothered by this thing they say, "We cannot say we believe in it, any more than you can; but for our life, we cannot give a reason why we are only certain of two things,—1st, that she read correctly with her eyes. And 2d, that she read correctly every thing that was handed her. We do not know how it was done. We are compelled to believe either clairvoyance or a deception so wonderful that it is worth seeing on account of the skill of the clairvoyant former."

THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

R. P. AMBLER, EDITOR.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., JUNE 7, 1851.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNICATIONS.—No. 5.

WHAT GOOD HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED?

Three years and more have now elapsed since the spiritual communications commenced in a way to convince those who heard them of some intelligence that was about them, but unseen; and yet, it is averred that the great mass of the hearers have received no important instruction, and that the world is, as yet, no wiser for having been permitted to hold communion with those that have passed to a higher Sphere. It is constantly demanded by many persons to be told what good has resulted, or is likely to result, from the new development—why some great questions that have been in doubt, have not been settled—and why knowledge and goodness have not been suddenly thrust upon the world by the spirits in communication with it.

If, such impatient inquirers will look about them a little, they may see some things that, in their haste, they had entirely overlooked. There has been much accomplished, and much good done; discussion on spiritual philosophy—a searching into the nature of the life to come—and a general desire for that kind of knowledge has received a mighty impulse. This is not all, nor by any means the most important work, it has accomplished. It is within the personal knowledge of the writer, that a very large number of persons who either denied a future existence altogether, or were in doubt and suspense in regard to it, have had their doubts dispelled and their minds quieted and settled on this subject. This, with all the religious world, is a great point to be gained, and one which missionaries have encompassed sea and land to attain, without making any very considerable progress with that class of minds who require their reasoning faculties to be convinced by a presentation of logic, or facts, instead of a reliance on some written or traditional authority that never was very clear on this point. It is a matter of surprise—or would be, were it not a general characteristic of Sectarianism—to see them now objecting to this new proof of immortality, because it has not come through their crooked channel, but is presented directly to the senses as a fixed fact. It is by facts that this class of minds are convinced, and the various arguments of old theology had no effect upon them. From an aged man we have a letter wherein he says, "For the last thirty years I have been a firm believer in the total annihilation of all that pertains to man, at his death; but here something comes up and gives me the most undeniable evidence of the existence of those whom I supposed to be in the endless sleep of annihilation!" Another—a woman of strong intellect and known a few years since as a powerful advocate of Atheism, rejecting all ideas of future existence, now writes that she is thoroughly convinced of the continued existence and progression of all human beings. The number of such converts is already legion, and they include some of the best minds in the country, which only needed reasonable proof to be convinced of the truth. If this were the whole, could it be said that the spiritual manifestations have done no good? Have not these rather made the settlement of one of the most important questions that has even been agitated and unsettled in the world? It may be said that, notwithstanding the number converted, they are yet so few in comparison to the whole, that it cannot be claimed as any thing like a general settlement of such a question. "Wait a little longer," every day adds to the catalogue, and if it is of great consequence to have a person convinced of immortality, then is a great work already accomplished.

But a proof of immortality is not all that is accomplished. The whole matter has progressed with remarkable rapidity—as rapidly as ever a new discovery or idea was known to—and the demonstrations have been so varied, wonderful and wide-spread,

that the wonder should not be how slowly it has progressed, but how rapidly. It would have broken on the world like an overwhelming avalanche, if all the light from the spheres above had at once been let in upon us, and the effect would have been dazzling and bewildering in the extreme; and the transition from darkness to marvelous light would have worked evil instead of good. Like all things in the progression of the human race, this came at its appropriate time, and in the best manner to secure attention and elicit thought, without startling the falsely educated world who were to receive it, and it has advanced rapidly enough. Indeed it could not be improved upon by mortals if they had undertaken to present a plan. The telegraphic sounds and vibrations had nothing really alarming in them, and therefore their cause was searched for, not with that superstitious awe with which the listeners would have looked for the appearing, or for the voice of a departed friend. When it was ascertained that there was intelligence in the source of the sounds, enough had been heard to convince the hearers that there was no real danger in them, and nothing to fear. Thus it has advanced step by step, until there are now many ways of making us realize the presence of our spirit-friends. From one obscure family in New York, it has spread to many hundred families, and is heard from in nearly half the States of the Union. Thus is spreading the great initiating idea to a more familiar and reliable mode of communication; and we are inclined to the belief that the present mode will not essentially improve, until there is a very general belief and acknowledgement of the fact of the possibility and probability of the present demonstrations being made by spirits. When this knowledge becomes general, we shall be prepared for another step, and when this comes, it will probably be received with the same skepticism and astonishment by some that now characterize the opposers of the present mode.

Let it not be said that there has been no important objects accomplished; the world may not estimate the value of the most simple truth, and when it is known that this is a fact, however insignificant it may seem, it needs nothing more to prove it to be of vast importance to mankind. Let us not be in haste; we cannot force the order of Nature to conform to our ideas of progress, and she will work out this spiritual problem—this most important truth of the age—in spite of the bigotry of its opponents, or the impatience of its friends.

c.

Freedom.

How sweet to enjoy the boon of liberty! All nature seems to rejoice in this precious blessing. The free winds float over hill and dale, bearing on their wings the fragrance of opening flowers; the rolling waters of the deep flow joyously through the wide expanse, and the all-expanding light, descending from its mighty source, goes forth to cheer the dark realms of space. Thus the floating elements of nature, though subject to the action of established laws, teach the beautiful lesson of freedom—a lesson to which the heart of man yields a ready and earnest response. Yet how many of the great mass of mankind are willing to be enslaved!—how few among those who have sighed for liberty, are willing to be free! It is not only in the dark dungeon, with clanking chains, or beneath the tyrant's rod, that man groans and suffers; but it is a slavery of the soul—a restriction of the noblest powers with which the human being is endowed, that has wrought the deepest wretchedness of the sighing millions. Within the dark temple of superstition, bound with the chains of ignorance, and surrounded by the high walls of sectarian bigotry, the soul has groaned and toiled in unavailing woe. But courage!—the Deliverer is near; he comes to give strength and freedom to the oppressed. Then arise, O man, and put off thy chains. Behold! the light is already streaming from the east—the fragrant breath of Heaven fans the aching brow, and all creation seems thrilled with the melody of the morning song. Awake, then, with the rising day, and unfold thy interior life as the bursting flower-buds; for all things fair and beautiful invite the soul to freedom, and whisper of the higher Sphere where there are no chains.

R. P. A.

CHARITY—PATIENCE—JOY.

In the light in which the progressive Religionist now labors, few duties seem more imperative than to cherish that charity which ridicules not men for their folly, nor censures them for their faults. For to him it is given to know that the act of every individual is of as noble a character as his stage of progress, or mood of mind, at the time of its performance would admit; and his thought is as elevated and pure as he is able, at the moment it arises within him, of conceiving. And doubtless the reason man is so prone to frame excuses for his shortcomings, is because of the existence of this eternal truth—a truth which all contrary teachings never entirely eradicate from the soul, viz: that *we always act from the dictates of an inevitable necessity, and therefore our conduct is always in some way justifiable.*

Here let me for a moment congratulate my brother man on the important steps he has taken towards overcoming the ignorance-engendered idea of "individual responsibility." Let him look back, that he may see how he has really advanced in the past, and thus gather hope to follow the still upward way of the future. Let him recall how, formerly, society punished physical defects and weaknesses, precisely as it now punishes moral ones.

Among the Jews, to be sick, lame, blind, or imperfectly formed, rendered a man unworthy to enter within the temple: but he was debarred therefrom as a "profane thing." The bald, too, were esteemed "unclean." The leper was cast "without the camp to dwell alone." With the savage, also, it has ever been customary to destroy those having physical defects.

All this civilized man has outgrown. He pities where once he condemned; he kindly alleviates where once he cruelly neglected; he cherishes, he restores where once he persecuted and destroyed.

Behold our asylums for the deaf and dumb—our establishments for the blind—our hospitals for the plague-stricken;—institutions where these unfortunates are placed not merely to be "out of the way," but for the purpose of overcoming, inasmuch as enlightened science and care can overcome, their physical deficiencies and diseases.

Beyond this pitying love for the mere body, Philanthropy has made yet one step farther. For him of imbecile and deranged intellect, she has reared her asylums, from which the idiot-born comes forth a useful being, and the raving lunatic is restored to the world "clothed in his right mind." Let us rejoice in what an enlightened benevolence hath thus accomplished—let us have faith that the ministry of pity, and love, and wisdom is not yet over—let us hope that in its flow for those bodily-disordered, the fount of human kindness hath not exhausted its healing waters, but that on the *morally* lame, halt, blind, and lunatic, it will yet pour its pitying power, its renovating influence.

Under the old, less-advanced system of theology, upon which present society is founded, the *habit of censoring* has been so far instilled into the mind, that even a disciple of the purer and more practical religion may occasionally detect himself nearly *condemning* those who shock his sense of justice. One has much need of watchfulness, to eradicate this crooked offshoot of an imperfect early education.

When a friend is physically diseased, we feel for him more pity and love—we treat him with more care and skill than when he was in health. If he be *morally* diseased, how do we feel towards him—how do we treat him? Let the reply of our consciences to this interrogation, be understood as testing how much our hearts contain of real genuine charity.

The advocates of the New Philosophy, however, are, I believe, without exception, adopting that mild and gentle tone in the treatment of opponents, befitting the true followers of him whose soul yearned so pityingly over unbelieving, self-conceited Jerusalem—who condemned not the erring one, but who rather *shamed* him the way of life when his eyes could see it, and *led* him into it when his feet could walk. And as true christians become more and more imbued with that love and wisdom which perfected Christ, will their powers of persuasion be enlarged, so that they too can open the eyes of him even whose spiritual understanding

has been blind from his birth! In the meanwhile have *patience!*—patience with the world and patience with ourselves!

Surrounding adverse events—a mind fatigued—nerves disordered—body diseased—or old established habits which an unwatched moment may bring back upon us,—these and many others are circumstances which, in the present stage of human progress, require the exercise of self-patience, in view of our own shortcomings.

For another generation it will be easier to be always "temperate, calm and wise," for they will be, comparatively speaking, earlier and better taught, and their spirits will not like ours, have to divest themselves of old, mouldy accumulations which will, despite our every endeavor, leave some stain upon our garments. Still let those be glad who feel that their toilings and experiences are making smooth the way for the swift young feet of coming posterity. I know they must rejoice in this their mission, for though here and there the way is very rough—though now and then some sharp thorn presses pitilessly into their hearts—or the low growl of some crouching foe startles them in their march,—yet have they inwardly the happy consciousness that they are God-sustained always! Besides, the way is not utterly pathless, for Jesus hath gone before them!—neither do they lack protection, for legions of angels are around and about them!

O. S. W.

Rockwell, Ill.

Interview with the Spirits.

As has been announced in the public journals, Mrs. Ann L. Fish, one of the best known mediums for spiritual manifestations, has recently paid a visit to Cleaveland, Ohio, where the subject of the mysterious sounds is being investigated by several of the most intellectual persons in that city. The editor of the Plain Dealer gives the following account of an interview with the invisible agents, at which information was received relating to the principles of spiritual philosophy. He says:—

After sitting awhile, and hearing a great variety of rapping sounds, there was a loud knocker appeared which was simultaneously recognized by several who had heard it before, as the signal of BEN. FRANKLIN. He was a long time questioned concerning spiritual matters, sometimes answering by raps, and sometimes using the alphabet. It was in substance as follows:

Spirit is the great positive of all existence, and matter the great negative. There is an elemental difference between matter and spirit. Electricity and magnetism are always connected with matter and belong to it. The dividing link between matter and mind is between magnetism and vitality.

There are different degrees of refinement in the electrical and magnetic media. Chemical affinities are electrical and magnetic. Cohesion and gravitation also depend on similar principles.

The time has not yet come when the true philosophy may be explained, but will soon. Investigation and experience will hasten it on.

Repulsion in nature is caused by stronger attraction. The ascension of a balloon from the earth is a fair illustration of the principle of repulsion.

Everything in the universe takes its appropriate place by virtue of its elemental affinities, and can occupy no other place, without changing the relation of itself and every other body in existence.

The earth and every other heavenly body is caused to move in its appropriate orbit by the united action of every other body in existence, and cannot be made to come in contact with other bodies; for the combining influences of all the separate bodies, mark out separate paths for each.

Thought is mental motion, and is conveyed from one mind to another through an intermediate medium, which is put in motion by this mental action. This medium in its refinement lies between the nervous medium and spirit, and exists in every degree of refinement from the nervous fluid to spirit.

Clairvoyance consists in insulating the mind of the subject and in proportion as the mind is brought into clear contact with

higher refinements of this medium, will the subject become clear-sighted.

Biology, as used by Burr and others, is an improper term. Psychology would be a better word. The word Biology was used to make the subject a humbug.

The phenomena attending Psychological (Biological) experiments, belong to the lower class of mesmeric influences—and pass from them through every degree, to perfect clear-sightedness.

Much further information was given which we failed to note. As the Dr. promised to meet the circle again, we hope to report a more complete theory. After which the circle drew up close to the table, and various rapping sounds were heard upon the chairs, the table, the floor, &c. The sound of sawing boards, driving nails into a box or something hollow, was repeated several times.

THE LAWS OF GOD.

It has been a common and prevailing idea that the Deity has given to his intelligent creatures a code of moral laws, to which all are obligated to conform; that these are given as arbitrary and extraneous regulations, a lack of obedience to which will inevitably expose the transgressor to the most fearful inflictions of divine wrath. This view of the subject represents God as standing apart from his creation, and ruling in the character of a tyrant—publishing certain laws which man is made to obey merely because he is commanded to do so, and because if he does not he will be visited at some future time with vindictive punishment. The conception here noticed, which is evidently of heathen origin though it has prevailed in the church, is entirely inconsistent with the pure and elevating principles contained in the volume of Nature. If we carefully study the lessons which are here unfolded, we shall find that God is not separate from, but most intimately connected with his works—that He pervades every part of the immense and inconceivable Whole, and that the principles by which all things are governed are not the result of a special and arbitrary authority, but are established inherently in every existing substance. Thus what are termed the laws of God are really and emphatically the laws of Nature; and the distinction which is sometimes made between these terms by the religionist, is but the consequence of a confused and perverted conception.

The essence of the Divine Being pervades, and is made manifest in, all his works. He is the interior Soul of the great body of Nature, by which the latter is animated, moved, and governed. Hence He gives no arbitrary commands and no extraneous laws, which are separate from, and independent of, the works with which He is so essentially connected. Do the orbs of heaven perform their revolutions at the arbitrary command of Deity, or are they moved on their eternal rounds by means of the innate forces and principles established in their constitution? Do the forms of vegetation spring forth and unfold their beauties by the mere proclamation of an extraneous law, or are they governed in their progressive development by those inherent and unchanging influences which are essential to their very nature and being? Every reasoning mind will concede that in the production of these results, Deity operates on matter, not as though He were a foreign agent entirely separate from his works, but as the interior and all-pervading soul of the universe, who governs all its movements through the agency of those laws which are the unchangeable and eternal expression of his own mind.

The same principle here recognized will be found to apply, also, to our own moral and spiritual nature. The laws which are designed to govern the soul are established within, and form a part of, the very being to which they belong. This will be seen when we consider that the human spirit is but one of the higher developments of Nature, and therefore that the divine law must be manifested here in the same manner as in the material creation. It should be understood that the laws of God are written upon the soul as well as upon the body, and that in all cases they are eminently *natural*. Many persons, we are aware, have made a mistake on this point. They have sup-

posed that in the spiritual constitution of man there exists no inherent law, but that it is necessary for God to establish some arbitrary regulations which are particularly applicable to this department of his being. If such persons would reason on analogical principles, they would avoid this unnatural conception. Thus there are certain laws established in the physical system by which its health and harmony are preserved; and we endeavor to obey these laws, not because they have been given us as the express mandates of God, but because they exist in our very nature, and a violation of them would be inevitably followed by painful results;—as, for instance, we do not avoid exposing our limbs to the action of fire, merely on the authority of a divine command, but because we know that the inherent law which is thus violated, has its own penalty and its own reward. So, also, there are principles which govern the action of the soul—principles which are essential to its very being; and these should be observed, not merely as the commands of some foreign power, but as the necessary elements of internal harmony. If these principles or laws have been unfolded in any written revelation, they were first impressed upon the inward being; and no law, moral or physical, should ever be recognized as authoritative, be it written in the Bible or any other book, except it is already established in the constitution of man, or, in other words, except it is natural. Indeed, we shall find on reflection that all the pure precepts and truthful principles contained in the Primitive History, are but the reflection of what previously existed in the soul, and have their authority in human nature itself. Let it be clearly understood, then, that the laws of God are the essential and eternal expressions of the Divine Mind, manifested in Nature; that they are not given as arbitrary commands, but as inherent principles operating in the great body of Deity. This consideration will serve to remove the superstitious fear which has prevailed in relation to future punishment, while it imparts a more truthful conception of the presiding Power, and leads to a more cheerful obedience to the laws of the universe.

R. F. A.

Davis and the Bible.

Often now when reading the Bible, I am inclined to think that popular theologians overlook some of its most sublime excellences; and that even those who deem this book the only medium of divine Truth, might be less ignorant on many subjects, were their minds receptive of the rays of light which it really pours on many topics, which they still consider hopelessly obscure and utterly "past finding out."

Let me instance the theory so clearly demonstrated by Davis, that the germ of man always existed in matter, and has been progressively developed, up through the subordinate kingdoms of nature. Behold! was not this fact, or at least the shadow of it, stated long ago by David, in the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm? It is as follows: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and *curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth*. Thine eyes did see my substance *yet being imperfect*; and in thy book all my members were written, which *in continuance were fashioned*, when as yet there was none of them." o. s. w.

☞ We are pleased to observe the lively and increasing interest which is now being manifested in almost all parts of the country on the subject of spiritual philosophy. The irresistible tide of truth is rolling rapidly onward, and the glorious light which gleams from the inward sanctuary, is fast breaking upon the world. Truly, "our path is progression"—"Excelsior" is made the inspiring motto of the race, and love, wisdom and harmony are the beautiful unfoldings of the soul.

☞ We are authorized to state that the "CONSTITUTION" to which allusion has been previously made, and which is designed to be employed in the formation of the proposed Harmonial Brotherhood, will be offered for publication in the course of two or three weeks.

Poetry.

THE DYING CHILD'S VISION.

WRITTEN FOR THE SPIRIT MESSENGER,

BY MARIA F. OHANDLER.

Fairest blossom, thou art fading
Gently from thy native bough;
As we gaze, Death's wondrous shading
Pencils soft thy sculptured brow.

O, what raptured vision meeteth
Thy illumined spirit's eye;
Thou thy guardian angel greeteth,
Radiant forms are hovering nigh.

Eye-lids fringed with silken lashes
Joyously have open sprung;
As to reach the vision lovely,
Beauteous arms are upward flung.

"Mother," from those sweet lips breaking
In affection's softest tone;
Echoes in our hearts are waking
Its subduing power to own.

Now the blue-veined eye-lids closing,—
Powerless now the fair arms fall,—
On its mother's breast reposing,
Pain nor sorrow more may thrall.

THE REQUEST.

WRITTEN FOR THE SPIRIT MESSENGER,

BY J. B. WEBB.

Bury me not when the wordy prayer
O'er the gathered throng may fall;
And no mourning weed for the sleeper wear
To the grave where goeth all.

Sound no dirge from the tolling bell,
To bring forth the heart's deep moan,—
There's not a tone in its funeral knell
To tell where the spirit's flown.

Go seek, where the pleasant winds may breathe,
Bright flowers in their mossy bed;
And their living forms in a garland wreath,
For the cold brow of the dead.

And lay on my heart a young white rose,
All fresh with the morning air,—
'T will speak of heaven to all of those,
Who gaze on its beauty there.

Then lower me slowly to the tomb,
While your hymns of joy arise;
For the spirit's called to a brighter home,
While the form so darkly lies.

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All natural objects have  
An echo in the heart. The flesh doth thrill,  
And has connection by some unseen chain  
With its original source and kindred substance.  
The mighty forest, the proud tides of ocean,  
Sky-cleaving hills, and in the vast of air  
The starry constellation and the sun,  
Parent of life exhaustless—these maintain  
With the mysterious mind and breathing mould  
A co-existence and community.

## Miscellaneous Department.

## THE POETRY OF CREATION.

BY A STUDENT OF NATURE.

As the stars pale before the sun, so does the poetry of man lose its brilliancy when compared with the wonderful *poem* of the CREATOR. God is the SUPREME POET, and he deals not with words—mere shadows of things that are—but with the actual embodiments of poetry themselves: for there is in every object which He has made something beside an outward, mechanical form; there is a spiritual meaning, a living lesson to be drawn from everything.

This world is not merely the rugged spot on which we are to struggle for a foothold on life—to toil for daily bread; but a bright member of the starry brotherhood that range the fields of space, raising from every corner of the universe the harmonious anthem of praise; a region of still waters and cooling shades, and bright birds, and blessed things, for the comfort of God's weary children. This world is a poem written in letters of light on the walls of the azure firmament.

Man is not merely a creature displaying the endowment of two legs, and the only being qualified to study grammar; not an animal browsing in the fair fields of creation, and endeavoring with all possible grace to gild and swallow the pill of existence; but the master-piece in the mechanism of the universe, in whom are wedded the visible and the invisible, the material and the spiritual; before whom the waves of the ocean crouch, and on whom the winds and lightnings and the fire all wait to do his bidding; the great gardener in this garden of the Lord; the keeper of His great seal, for he alone is stamped with the image of God. Man is a glorious poem; each life a canto, each day a line. The melody plays feebly at first upon the trembling chords of his little heart, but with time gains power and beauty as it sweeps onward, until at last the final notes die away far, far above the world, amid the melodies of heaven.

Nature is not merely a senseless, arable clod, through which runs the golden vein, and o'er which waves the golden harvest; not a monster to be bowed down by the iron fetters of railroads and telegraphs; but it is a grand old temple, whose star-lit dome and woodland aisles, and bright and happy choir, invite the soul to worship and to gratitude. Nature is a sweet poem: each downy-cheek'd floweret, each uncouth stone, and frowning mountain, and silvery river, are the bright syllables. And though man may have thrown them into confusion, they shall be arranged once more in harmony; and the burthen of that song shall be beauty and praise to Him from whom all beauty radiates.

How often when the quiet night woos us forth to commune with Nature in her chastened robes, is our spirit thronged almost to oppression by thoughts new and inexpressible! When the bright moon, just risen above the hill-top or the peaceful waters, tinges the cloudy curtains that hang about the couch of the departed day, draws out the long mysterious shadows, and locks in her white arms the slumbering earth; then as we look above, can we say with him who knew so well to express his lofty thoughts:

"Ye stars which are the poetry of heaven!

A beauty and a mystery, ye create

In us such love and reverence from afar,

That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves a star!"

Why should we, then, give way to the absurdly-named practical spirit of these days? Physical good is not the only good of earth. The mind, the soul must be fed as well—ay, infinitely rather than this feeble body. We are in the world to make ourselves blessed; and is not the bliss that comes from purifying the heart and enlightening the intellect more to be desired than the gratification of our sensual appetites? Let us, then, learn to analyze whatever we meet in the pilgrimage of life, and read

the lesson of truth and beauty that God has stamped upon it. Then will the desert of the world gush out in fountains to refresh our flagging spirits and to brace our sinking frames.—*Knickerbocker.*

### HOME.

I know of no passage in classical literature more beautiful or affecting than where Xenophon in his *Anabasis*, describes the effect produced on the remnant of the ten thousand Greeks, when after passing through dangers without number, they at length ascended a sacred mountain, and from its peak on the summit, caught sight of the sea. Dashing their bucklers, with a hymn of joy they rushed tumultuously forward. Some wept with the fullness of their delirious pleasure, others laughed, and more fell on their knees and blessed that broad ocean. Across its blue waters, little floating sea-birds, the memorials of their happy homes, came and fanned their weary souls. All the perils they had encountered, all the companions they had lost, all the miseries they had endured, were in an instant forgotten, and nought was with them but the gentle phantoms of past and future joys. One was again scouring on his fleet steed across the hoof-trodden plains of Thessaly; another reclined beneath the flower-crowned rocks of Arcadi, and gazed into the dreamy eyes of her whose form, amid battle and bivouac, was ever with him; a third recalled that proud day when, before the streaming eyes of his overjoyed parents, and amid the exclamations of all Greece, he bore off from amid competitors the laurel wreath of the Olympian victor.

Oh! home, magical spell, all powerful home! how strong must have been thy influence, when thy faintest memory could cause these bronzed heroes of a thousand fights to weep like tearful women! With the cooling freshness of a desert fountain, with the sweet fragrance of a flower in winter, you came across the great waters to those wandering men, and beneath the peaceful shadow of your wings their souls found rest!

### Teachings of Spring.

Spring is here, though young and tender, and still staggering with gusts of parting Winter. The autumnal fruit trees are spreading forth their spring blossoms—most beautiful. "They toil not, neither do they spin;" yet, verily, the World's Exhibition shall not show handiwork like to these. True, was that two thousand years ago; as true still. Frail are these flowers, and tender, yet is there a power which sends the gentle germs through the rugged winds with certitude unerring. States fail, ministers hang suspended in uncertain fate, troubles come and prosperity, revolutions and restorations; but each year the almond blossoms smile upon the world. Institutions decay, "property" wastes; but the blossoms fail not, neither does their source grow lifeless. We repeat this truth from time immemorial,—may we never forget it.

The rainbow was a hope, as these are and forever. Let us strive, with loving and trusting hearts, to learn the laws by which, while evil and imperfection alone pass away, goodness and beauty are ever renewed; for, wherever we see those laws working, there is goodness. When we have learned to wish to obey, we shall forget to quarrel about creeds and aggressions; we shall cease to set class against class; we shall unlearn to covet only wealth to build prisons for poverty, and to make either abodes or laws that, denying nature, erect foulness into institutions. Yes, blessed be God! *our* plans pass away and cannot stand; but the model is forever renewed to us, so long as the blossom hangs upon the bough. And yearly we cry out with joy at the sight; for the sound instinct, the immortal faith cannot die within us. But we are working, and ever is the sign lifted to our sight.—*English Paper.*

Deal gently with those who stray. Draw them back by love and persuasion. A kiss is worth a thousand kicks. A kind word is more valuable to the lost than a mine of gold. Think of this, and be on your guard, ye who would chase to the grave an erring brother.

### Mountain Scenery.

Of all sights that nature offers to the eye or mind of man, mountains have always stirred my strongest feelings. I have seen the ocean when it was turned up from the bottom by the tempest, and noon was like night, while the conflict of the billows and the storm, tore and scattered them in foam and mist across the sky. I have seen the desert rise around me; and calmly, in the midst of thousands uttering cries of horror, and paralyzed with fear, have contemplated the sandy pillars, coming like the advance of some gigantic city of conflagration, flying across the wilderness, every column glowing with intense heat, and every blast death; the sky vaulted with gloom, the earth a furnace.

But with me, the mountain, in tempest or in calm, the throne of thunder, or with the evening sun painting its dells and declivities in colors dipped in heaven, has been the source of the most absorbing sensation. There stands magnitude, giving an instant impression of a power above man; grandeur, unnumbered; beauty, that the touch of time makes only more beautiful; use, exhaustless for the service of men; strength, imperishable as the globe; the monument of eternity; truest earthly emblem of that ever-living, unchangeable, irresistible majesty, by whom and from whom all things were made!—*Croly.*

### Music in Every Thing.

The elements of music are in everything around us; they are found in every part of creation; in the chirpings of the feathered choristers of nature; in the voice or calls of various animals; in the melancholy sound of the waterfall, or the wild roar of the waves; or the hum of the distant multitudes, or the concussion of sonorous bodies; in the winds, alike when the dying cadence falls lightly on the ear as it agitates the trees of the forest, as when the hurricane sweeps around. All these contain the rudiments of harmony, and may be easily supposed to have furnished the minds of intelligent creatures with such ideas of sound as time and the accumulated observation of succeeding ages could not fail to improve into a system.

HAPPINESS and sorrow are the measures of our mortal life. We willingly record the moments of gladness, and sorrow's hours make their own impress.

THOUGH man may die, none of his actions ever die. Each is perpetuated and prolonged forever by interminable results, affecting the beings in every age to come.

Always do as the sun does—look at the bright side of everything. For while it is just as cheap, it is three times as good for digestion.

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Printed for the Publisher, by G. W. WILSON, Book and Job Printer, corner Main and State Streets, Springfield, Mass.