

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 14, 1851.

NO. 45.

The Principles of Nature.

THE MINISTRY OF TREES.

BY FRANCES H. GREEN.

Every one knows that there is nothing more refreshing than shadow in a hot and burning day; but all are not so deeply acquainted with the philosophy of vegetable life and growth—and, thereby, with the sanative power of green foliage. Carbon is the basis of the vegetable body. This substance, which exists in our atmosphere in the gaseous form, is absorbed by the leaves, and, after certain changes, is converted into material for the nutriment and growth of the plant.

In cities and large towns, carbonic acid gas is given off abundantly from the various decomposing vegetable and animal substances, with which all such places abound. This gas, it is well known, is most deadly in its nature, and, in its concentrated form, destroys life instantly. Now green and growing leaves, under the action of light, absorb large quantities of this gas, and at the same time evolve oxygen, which is an invigorating and life-giving principle: and as trees contain a very large amount of foliage, they must contribute in an equally high degree to purify the corrupt air of cities. Boards of health should take this into consideration; and as a matter of economy—of absolute physical interest and comfort—they should enjoin their cultivation; for healthful is their presence, not merely to the physical, but to the inner man.

But there are other points of view in which the philosopher looks at trees, conceiving ideas far more important, as they relate to the higher nature of man. In every beautiful object there is found, lying beneath its mere external qualities, a principle by which it connects itself with the soul. Thus, in a flower, the irised hues of the petals, the delicate structure and tender green of the leaves, the beauty of form and coloring, the more spiritual perfume, all address themselves to the senses; yet there is a something more than these, even for the common mind—a shadowing forth of the Divine Power—the mysterious Life—connecting it, as it were by fraternal ties, with all other life: and this is the great end and use of beauty—it is a revelation of the Unseen, the Spiritual, the Infinite.

Every humblest flower that lifts its modest head along the beaten way-side, is invested with a mission to the soul, is planted and reared *there*, to speak of purity, of beauty and sweetness, of which itself is but a type and an emblem. Clouds are ministers of love; waters are tuneful prophets, unfolding sweet philosophies of life—calling to us ever to return, to restore the harmony we have violated. The sea-shell is not merely the habitation of a stupid fish, but its roseate lips are bright with the smile of angels—angels that are forever whispering to us the divine mysteries of Nature,—“unwritten poetry,” which is but another name for the fullness of indwelling life.

In rocks, and caverns, and mountain-peaks, we find sculpture and architecture in their grandest forms; and glowing in sunset skies, or the diviner cheek of beauty, is the original type of the painter's eye. The great ocean itself is a poem, written in language that is intelligible only to the soul. It embodies episodes of awful power—tragedies of terrible effect and interest—yet all giving utterance to the one great thought of a present Divinity, that speaks in every voice of Nature, whether it be in the whispering zephyr that kisses the drooping cheek of the love-sick floweret, or the deep-heaving thunder of the surges, that make holiday in the destruction of life.

In all these are the primitive ideas of beauty and sublimity, pre-existing in the mind of God; and when their true spirit and

relationship is perceived, they may be appropriated and developed by the kindred human mind, which is Genius. But of all sensible objects, there is nothing fuller of this thought than a living tree. There it stands, in its fullness of leaves, in its beauty of outline, in its majestic proportions; and if we would behold it, we must look up! So is the thought drawn upward. We are lifted out of our senses, and all the wants which they impose. We forget that we are machines, created with express relations to the fact of being fed and clothed, or of ministering to the food and clothing of others—a philosophy which our daily life, with all its multiform and growing necessities, but too truly teaches. Even the selfishness which is fostered by every process of education, by every onward step in life,—which is made the bottom line of our religion, and the sum total of our morality, until the heart becomes the most wonderful of petrifications—even this is softened; and, like the rock of old, acknowledges the presence of the Divine Power.

In the country, where the works of God are bountifully spread abroad, in all the fullness of their variety, their beauty and sublimity, the presence of these voiceful ministers of good is not so deeply felt nor so sorely needed. There, too, the very occupations have a tendency to preserve inviolate the original bond between sense and soul. But in cities, where the main business of life is to drive a bargain, to overreach, to plot, to advance the deified self to the highest possible niche in the temple of wealth and honor, without regard to the prostrate human necks that may lie athwart the passage of the monster's car, much need is there of something to lift the heart out of its unnatural littleness—to pluck the soul from beneath its indurating selfishness, that it may be relieved from the cramp of its growing deformity, and expand itself though but for a moment.

And what can do this like trees? He who comes within the circling gloom of their cooling shadow; whether he bear with him the small heart and the narrow mind of a penny-dealer in tapes and shoe-ties, or the harder heart and narrower mind of a millionaire, cannot get away without having been made something better for having been there. He may struggle against the influence, if he will. But the soul is true to its birthright, and how deep soever it may lie imbedded, it *will* struggle upward, it *will* dilate and expand itself, until it attains to something more nearly approaching the true proportions of the HUMAN. At the very worst the shrinking process is for a moment suspended; and he goes away a larger-hearted, and a better man than he came.

How much of the world's history might be told by a single Tree. There it stands, an untiring witness of the Ages, with its roots driven deep into the soil of the Past, and its towering head looking over the dim horizon to the distant Future. Physically, we are but ephemera in the comparison. Races of men successively come forward on the stage of Being—they play their parts in the great Life-Drama, and retire—to be seen no more; yet there stand the Trees, sentinels of eternity on the out-posts of Time, watching the flight of centuries, as they come and go: and their life is measured by cycles and not by years. Yet from studying this life, our thought gathers stronger wings; we sweep through the immensity of uncounted ages, we penetrate the depths of Being, where neither time nor space is known—where the Past and the Future are lost in one immeasurable Present, which we call eternity—and we find it all within the soul, the true life of man, before which all other periods of duration vanish as the fleetest shadows.

There are nations who worship trees, and not wholly heathen, not wholly void of life, can he be whose God is so enshrined. We will not, then, sneer at the simple African, who bows down and worships beneath the bending arch of his beautiful Mazamba tree, which is both temple and divinity. Better thus than to

bend with prostrate brow into the very earth, delving forever, searching ever for a yellow dust which we consecrate, and enshrine, and worship—with all strange rites and fearful sacrifices, even of human life, under the name of gold. If it be, then, but to teach us looking upward, to give to the human brow its erect position, which is the true external God-image, there should be trees. It has been said by one of old, as an incitement to hospitality, that he who gives cordial reception to strangers, may, unaware, entertain angels. Let us, then, bring hither to grace our burning side-walks, these beautiful strangers of the neighboring forests—doubting not but we shall find, and our children after us, to remotest generations, that we have won to ourselves the ministry of angels.

WONDERS OF PHILOSOPHY.

Music began, the glittering stars awoke,
And brilliant suns upon creation broke.

The study of Philosophy reveals to us the interesting wonders of the visible creation, while it leads the mind beyond the regions of sublunary objects to contemplate and expound the unseen workings of the hand of God.

The eyes of the ignorant stare with incredulity when told of the wonderful operations of nature—when the man of science points out the stupendous truths of philosophy, and accounts for the multiplied phenomena of the universe.

Time was when Galileo the Astronomer was consigned to the damp walls of a prison for advancing the theory of the sphericity and motion of the earth. The Theologians of Rome declared his opinion expressly contrary to the Scriptures, and in the sight of the Pope he was compelled to kneel upon the ground and abjure his belief, but as soon as he rose up, he struck his foot upon the earth and muttered "E pur si move." (It moves nevertheless.)

The progress of science since those days of almost Pagan superstition, has been unceasingly onward. Mysteries have vanished like mist before the noon-day sun, and the powers of the human mind now reveal the vast workmanship of the created universe.

The Astronomer now searches with unscaled eye the immeasurable space in which worlds on worlds revolve in perfect order and harmony. He measures with accuracy the distance between the heavenly bodies; numbers the satellites attending each planet, and shows the relation existing between them. By the aid of mechanical skill he is enabled to give wings to his sight and explore the barren surface of the moon—to count her oceans and rivers—trace the windings of her vallies—measure the height of mountains and witness the sublime majesty of her flaming volcanoes. Its unwearied flight stops not here. It soars still farther into the boundless magnitude of space—observes the revolutions of the most distant orbs, and ascertains the length of their days and years. It follows the blazing comet in its wandering course, among the millions of stars and suns, and investigates the innumerable worlds that compose the majestic windings of the Milky Way.

The Philosopher now governs the course of the thunderbolt and makes it obedient to his will. The causes of the wind, rain, and the tides are no longer mysterious, for the perceptive faculties of man have fathomed them all.

The Geologist traces the age of the earth in its strata of rock, and defines the different periods of time in which the several classes of animated creation sprang into existence by vestiges found in the bosom of the earth.

How mighty are the works of Nature! In every object, from the planets that roll in the immensity of space, to the grain of sand upon the sea-shore, we trace the wonder-working power of the Almighty Being. And how diminutive is man compared with his Creator!

A knowledge of Philosophy reveals our own ignorance and illustrates the delusive character of our senses! We speak of the rising and setting of the sun when it does not move in an orbit. We speak of the flight of time, when it is a philosophical fact that there is no such thing as the lapse of time. Yesterday and to-day are the same moment! We speak of sound, but

there is no such thing! The rose that we admire is not red itself, or the violet blue; in reality they are devoid of color. We do not see objects themselves, but the image of them. We speak of fire, yet no one ever saw it; we have only seen its effects! It is just as proper to say *down* to heaven as *up* to heaven, for really there is no such thing as *up* and *down*, for what we call *up* the Chinese people who are situated opposite to us, would call *down*. They would hold the arm down to point the same way that we would to point upwards.

Thus we perceive that our very senses deceive us, and that without a knowledge of philosophy we cannot know the real nature of objects by which we are surrounded.—*Palmer Journal*.

Electricity.

The Science of Electricity, from its interesting connection with every department of nature, opens a very wide field for contemplation and research. As the season approaches when this element presents itself in some of its most terrific forms, it may be important, and lead to some beneficial results, to give the subject a passing notice; for it is only when we have a perfect knowledge of the laws by which natural agents are governed, that we can control them, subdue their energies and make even their violence work for our good. Usually, we seek first to guard ourselves against the fury of the more violent and terrific energies of nature, and then we strive to make them labor for our benefit. The time has come when the lightning of heaven yields to man's control, and its mighty energies are employed to extend his dominion over the material world.

Electricity is supposed to be a very subtle fluid, which seems to surround the earth, to pervade every material body; existing in a latent or concealed state, so that we are not aware of its presence, till we take some means to excite it. It seems to be one of the great stimulating and invigorating principles by which life is sustained, both in the animal and vegetable kingdoms.—The term electricity usually involves the idea of matter, and yet it seems not to possess some of the qualities essential to matter.

Though we cannot define what its nature or essence is, yet we can examine its effects and learn something of the laws by which it is governed. In this way we can change it from an instrument of destruction to an agent promoting our happiness.—We can appropriate its medical properties to the healing of many diseases; can apply its invigorating influence to accelerate the growth of vegetation, and often make it the scape-goat to bear away many of the ills of life. There is no element in nature better calculated to produce in the mind of reflecting man the emotions of wonder and sublimity. He is charmed to admiration, when in the stillness of night he beholds its bland and beautiful corruscations shooting forth and changing their hues as exhibited in the *aurora borealis*. He is inspired with the deepest awe when it assumes its more majestic and terrific appearance, filling the heavens with fire, sending forth its furious thunder bolts, rending the clouds asunder, and threatening instant destruction to man and his works. But he is overcome with amazement, when he sees how easily this leviathan can be managed, and even made an intelligent agent to come and go at our bidding; to bear away our message with a rapidity literally out-stripping the rays of the sun. Its speed is two hundred and eighty thousand miles in a second,—“swifter than the post or the eagle that cuts the air.” Surely it waits not for the wings of the morning. We have heard it utter its thunders with a voice louder than many waters, making the heavens and earth quake; but we knew not till recently that it had a silver trumpet with which we might speak with our friends at a distance with all the ease and grace of the muse. If such things have been accomplished, who can limit what may yet be accomplished by it in the vegetable and animal kingdoms? Who has yet entered all its secret chambers and examined all its hidden magazines of power?—This science presents an extensive field for exploration.—*Purit*

Those islands which so beautifully adorn the Pacific, were reared up from the bed of the ocean by the little coral insect, who deposits a grain of sand at a time.

Psychological Department.

OBSERVATIONS ON MAN'S DEPARTURE.

While attending medical lectures at Philadelphia, I heard from the lady with whom I boarded, an account of certain individuals who were dead to all appearance, during the prevalence of the yellow fever in that city, and yet recovered. The fact that they saw, or fancied they saw, things in the world of spirits, awakened my curiosity.

She told me of one with whom she was acquainted, who was so confident of his discoveries that he had seemingly thought of little else afterward, and it had then been twenty-four years. These things appeared philosophically strange to me, for the following reasons:—

First: Those who, from bleeding or from any other cause, reach a state of *syncope*, or the ordinary fainting condition, think not at all, or are unable to remember any mental action. When they recover, it appears either that the mind was suspended, or they were unable to recollect its operations. There are those who believe on either side of this question. Some contend for suspension; others deny it, but say we never can recall thoughts formed while the mind is in that state, for reasons not yet understood.

Secondly: Those who, in approaching death, reach the first state of insensibility, and recover from it, are unconscious of any mental activity, and have no thoughts which they can recall.

Thirdly: If this is so, why, then, should those who had traveled further into the land of death, and had sunk deeper into the condition of bodily inaction, when recovered, be conscious of mental action, and remember thoughts more vivid than ever had flashed across their souls in the health of boyhood, under a vernal sun, and on a plain of flowers?

After this, I felt somewhat inclined to watch, when it became my business, year after year, to stand by the bed of death. That which I saw was not calculated to protract and deepen the slumbers of infidelity, but rather to dispose toward a degree of restlessness; or, at least, to further observation. I knew that the circle of stupor, or insensibility, drawn around life, and through which all either pass or seem to pass, who go out of life, was urged by some to prove that the mind could not exist unless it be in connection with organized matter. For the same reason, others have contended that our souls must sleep until the morning of the resurrection, when we shall regain our bodies. That which I witnessed myself, pushed me (willing or unwilling) in a different direction. Before I relate these facts, I must offer something which may illustrate, to a certain extent, the thoughts toward which they pointed.

If we were to stand on the edge of a very deep ditch or gulf, on the distant verge of which a curtain hangs which obstructs the view, we might feel a wish to know what is beyond it, or whether there is any light in that unseen land. Suppose we were to let down a ladder, protracted greatly in its length, and ask a bold adventurer to descend and make discoveries. He goes to the bottom, and then returns, telling us that there he could see nothing—that all was total darkness. We might very naturally infer the absence of light there; but if we concluded that his powers of vision had been annihilated, or that there could surely be no light in the land beyond the curtain, because, to reach that land, a very dark ravine must be crossed, it would have been weak reasoning; so much so, that if it contented us we must be easily satisfied. It gave me pain to notice many—nay, many physicians—who on these very premises, or on something equally weak, were quieting themselves in the deduction that the soul sees no more after death. Suppose this adventurer descends again, and then ascends the other side, so near the top that he can reach the curtain and slightly lift it. When he returns, he tells us that his vision had been suspended *totally*, as before, but that he went nearer the distant land, and it was revived again; that, as the curtain was lifted, he saw brighter light than he had ever seen before. We would say to him: "A

certain distance does suspend; but inaction is not loss of sight: only travel on further, and you will see again." We can understand that any one might go to the bottom of that ravine a thousand times; he might remain there for days, and if he went no further, he could tell, on his return, nothing of the unseen regions.

Something like this was illustrated by the facts noted during many years employment in the medical profession. A few cases must be taken as examples from the list.

I was called to see a female, who departed under an influence which causes the patient to faint again and again, more and still more profoundly, until life is extinct. For the information of physicians, I mention, it was uterine hemorrhage from inseparably-attached placenta. When recovered from the first condition of syncope, she appeared as unconscious, or as destitute of activity of spirit, as others usually do. She sank again and revived: it was still the same. She fainted more profoundly still; and when awake again, she appeared as others usually do who have no thoughts that they can recall. At length she appeared entirely gone. It did seem as though the struggle was forever past. Her weeping relatives clasped their hands and exclaimed: 'She is dead!' but, unexpectedly, she waked once more, and, glancing her eyes on one who sat near, exclaimed: 'Oh, Sarah, I was at an entirely new place!' and then sank to remain insensible to the things of the *place* we live in. * * * * *

A revolutionary officer, wounded at the battle of Germantown, was praised for his patriotism. * * * * * His life was such that those who knew him believed, if any one ever did die happily, this man would be one of that class. I saw him when the time arrived. He said to those around him: 'I am not as happy as I could wish, or as I had expected. I cannot say that I distrust my Saviour, for I know in whom I have believed; but I have not that pleasing readiness to depart which I had looked for.' This distressed his relatives beyond expression. His friends were greatly pained, for they had looked for triumph.—His departure was very slow, and still his language was: 'I have no exhilaration and delightful readiness in my travel.'—The weeping circle pressed around him. Another hour passed. His hands and his feet became entirely cold. The feeling of heart remained the same. Another hour passes, and his vision has grown dim, but the state of his soul is unchanged. His daughter seemed as though her body could not sustain her anguish of spirit, if her father should cross the valley before the cloud passed from his sun. She (before his hearing vanished) made an agreement with him, that, at any stage as he traveled on, if he had a discovery of advancing glory, or a foretaste of heavenly delight, he should give her a certain token with his hand. His hands he could still move, cold as they were. She sat holding his hand, hour after hour. In addition to his sight, his hearing at length failed. After a time he appeared almost unconscious of anything, and the obstructed breathing peculiar to death was advanced near its termination, when he gave the token to his pale but now joyous daughter, and the expressive flash of exultation was seen to spread itself through the stiffening muscles of his face. When his child asked him to give a signal if he had any happy view of heavenly light, with the feelings and opinions I once owned, I could have asked: 'Do you suppose that the increase of the death-chill will add to his happiness?—Are you to expect, that as his eyesight leaves, and as his hearing becomes confused, and his breathing convulsed, and as he sinks into that cold, fainting, sickening condition of pallid death, that his exultation is to commence?'

"It did then commence. Then is the time when many, who enter the dark valley cheerless, begin to see something that transports; but some are too low to tell of it, and their friends think they departed under a cloud, when they really did not. It is at this stage of the journey that the enemy of God, who started with look of defiance and words of pride, seems to meet with that which alters his views and expectations; but he cannot tell it, for his tongue can no longer move.—*Cause and Cure of Infidelity*, by Rev. David Nelson.

The dark valley and shadow of death are but an entrance to the realms of endless day.

THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

R. P. AMBLER, EDITOR.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., JUNE 14, 1851.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNICATIONS.—No. 6.

NATURE OF THE OPPOSITION.

In drawing these articles to a close, for the present, it may not be unprofitable to spend a few moments in reviewing the onward march of the truth of the actual existence of spiritual communications and to see how weak and puerile has been the opposition in fact, while attempts have been made to render it really formidable, and many have flattered themselves that there was power in the weapons they had brought to bear against truth and facts. Having access to a large number of papers and magazines from different parts of the world, the writer has, within the last three years, preserved enough of the newspaper discussion on this subject, to make several goodly sized volumes. By referring to these, the nature of the opposition is at once revealed, and it is a striking comment on the want of candor in the publications of the age.

From the time the first public examinations took place at Rochester (N. Y.), to the present, the opposition has been divided into two general classes, the first being the lower strata of human society, who have never been in a position to cause them to think of any thing of a spiritual nature; and the other, that body of men to whom the world is indebted for standing in the way of all improvement and reform in all ages of the world—the theological teachers and their well-trained pupils. At the first lecture ever delivered on this subject, these two phases were exhibited—the genteel rabble were noisy and boisterous, while the theological teacher gravely arose and declared his belief to be that the demonstrations, as related, were true, but that it was an excursion of his Satanic Majesty, for the purpose of winning souls to everlasting destruction. These two main trunks have numerous branches, and use various arguments to substantiate their common theory that “it can’t be so.” It has not been the religious theologian merely, that has opposed the spiritual idea, but the equally sectarian and bigoted anti-religious school of theologians. Both of these classes have argued from the same premises; both have taken the ground that (excepting the especial privilege granted to his Satanic Majesty) spirit is an immaterial substance, and is entirely incapable of making any manifestation whatever. This is the language of the religious and anti-religious organs—the tone of the New York Observer, and the Boston Investigator. Most arduously and faithfully have such as these labored to theorize away the new proof of immortality. The religious sectarian was opposed to any new proof, and was irritated to think any other process than theirs should be found by which to arrive at a settlement of that great and somewhat mooted question. The anti-religious annihilationist disliked to have his glorious uncertainty disturbed, and would use columns to prove that all that has transpired is no proof. The venal press of the country have, in accordance with popular opinion, almost universally denounced the whole as a gross imposition; and so united have been this class of opponents, and so much influence do they possess with the mass of community, that they have been, and still are, mighty giants standing spear in hand, to turn honest inquirers from investigation, and nothing but a simple sling armed with the pebbles of truth, has enabled them to keep on their way in spite of all opposition. It has been a favorite mode of proceeding with these papers, to inform, or rather misinform their patrons that they were in possession of the secret, and would give it to their readers in a few days. In looking over a New York paper of February 1st, 1849, the following is found as the beginning of a long article: “The wonder-swallowing must find new food for their credulity, for the Rochester mystery has been exploded;” and yet this “mystery” has already outlived the author of that information, as he has passed to a sphere where he has, proba-

bly, become wiser on that subject. From the beginning it has been pronounced a “clumsy trick,” a “transparent humbug,” but the clumsy manner of doing the trick has not yet been transparent enough to be seen through by the wisest of the world, unless by acknowledging the spiritual theory. Over and over has it been announced that it was all found out—all confessed,—lately a story was started, under the name of a “deposition,” which many looked upon as quite conclusive, and yet twenty lines of facts served to prove the impotency of falsehood, and the potency of truth. Let the whole force of the opposition be scanned, and what has it consisted in?—surmise, insinuation—falsehood—nothing reasonable, and nothing tangible. How story after story, and slander after slander, and falsehood after falsehood, has been rolled away by the omnipotent power of truth and facts! Not a single fact stated in the first pamphlet on this subject, has ever been contradicted—not a jot or tittle of the promises made by the spirits to continue and increase their communications has failed—but the glorious development is still onward. Will the believers in the spirituality of these communications falter when they have so much proof, and sustained as they are by facts that have ever, and will ever, overwhelm and put to flight all the theories and suppositions brought against it? Those who have arrived at an absolute knowledge of the facts, can no more be shaken in their belief than they can discredit their own existence, for it is forever engraven on the mind, and cannot be eradicated by time or sophistry. Amid all the clamor of opponents and sectarian feeling among believers, let the cool and the philosophical keep calmly on their way, and patiently investigate to the end.

In closing, we cannot refrain from adding an extract from a letter of that good man, John O. Wattles, which will always be applicable to seekers after spiritual knowledge: “They (spirits) have been bending over us and flocking around the world, peering into every crevice in the cold cast-iron heart of man, bearing at the door of every mental temple for admittance, and shouting at the top of their voices to the walking corpses that stalk above ground, ever since they have left their bodies. They labor as intently now for the good of man as they did in the body, and perhaps more so, and only need access to man to guide him out of the wilderness, over the desert and up the hill-tops to the land of Redemption. So don’t let us bother them about minor matters, but go right into the great work at once. That, eventually, will furnish the world with the best evidence that they are from God, and all will seek to be with them, or rather, enjoy and realize their presence. Above all things keep it from being made a mercenary matter. There is nothing so deadening to spirit life as venality, unless it be the denial of the ever present angel-spirits. Beg, dig, grub, and starve, but don’t traffic in angel-intercourse. If the gate of heaven has been opened, don’t let us have Mammon for gate-keeper. If Franklin, or Rogers, or Swedenborg, or Gabriel have come to our aid, don’t let us set them on the auction block to sell to the highest bidder. Let us seek such information as shall enable all the race to come up and talk with them face to face, behold their glories, and be like them.” c.

Triumph of the Right.

It is a sentiment which is clearly truthful in itself, while it flows from a much revered source, that we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. Men may labor with all the zeal and blindness of fanaticism to overthrow what they may term “heresy” and “delusion,” yet while the structure at which their blows are aimed is founded on the rock of truth, they will not only fail to do any injury in their warfare, but will assist to strengthen and advance the very cause which they are seeking to destroy. In this light there appears to be a philosophical truth in the assertion that “God will make the wrath of men to praise him;” for it is not only the earnest seeker after truth who aids in extending her sacred principles, but even the angry persecutor who breathes out fiery indignation upon his fellows, is unconsciously preparing the materials for that mighty temple, which, reared to the shining heavens, will reflect the light of the divine glory. Work on, then, both friends and foes; for though

the old temples of the past may crumble, and the flood of desolation sweep over the ruins of human error, the strong altars of Right, and Truth, and Freedom, must stand as the monuments of eternity.

R. F. A.

MOURNING APPAREL

The custom of manifesting the sorrows of bereavement by wearing garments and ornaments of sombre hue, has almost universally prevailed even in this favored land of christian faith. This custom has appeared to us to be inconsistent with an enlightened and truthful view of the departure of man. If, on the dissolution of the earthly frame, we recognize our friends as *dead*—if we feel that they are swallowed up in the dark abyss of oblivion, from which they may never rise to greet us more, we might in this case be naturally moved to clothe ourselves in sackcloth and ashes; but if we look upon death in the light of true philosophy as but a *birth* into a higher and more perfect sphere, and realize that those who have departed are not far away, but may linger around us still as guardian angels, we may then naturally express an emotion far different from that of unmingled sorrow, and manifest the passing sadness of the heart in more appropriate symbols than the dark weeds of mourning. We must acknowledge that to us a glittering tear-drop from the heart, and the sad, sweet smile of resignation, are far more expressive and beautiful than all the usual trappings of the mourner.

As a supplement to these remarks, we desire to append the following from the Carpet Bag, which are deemed appropriate and useful in the consideration of this subject:—

It always seemed to us a most melancholy waste of money and time in trapping one's self with extra articles for an occasion of bereavement. We could hardly conceive how it was possible the head could think of the fashion of a bonnet if the heart were breaking. We for a long time supposed that the matter lay entirely with the milliner, but we were undeceived once by having to carry a mourning bonnet back, intended for a young and pretty widow, because it was not becoming, and another, as the funeral did not occur for two days thereafter, was forthwith made that suited to a charm. We of course concluded that the milliner theory wasn't valid.

The wearing of mourning is harmless enough, but what benefit is there in it? Does it remove grief? or make the briny tears to fall the faster? or awaken one brighter thought of an immortal future? No. It does neither of these. And while by some it is adopted to represent the sombre depth of the gloom they really feel, (and it enfolds as deep grief as ever cleft the human heart), it is as often assumed to mask the blackest hypocrisy and extremest heartlessness. We know a man who within a week has buried his wife, and walks about with a weed the entire depth of his hat crown, who for years has treated her brutally and beaten her when she was ill enough to keep her bed, and who barely now escaped a coroner's inquest in his house through the lucky fact of there being some one besides himself present when she died. Can there be any doubt of the sincerity of that emblem on his hat?

It would be useless to cite cases where the heartlessness of these trappings is most evident; the profligate son—the poor relative, who sees afar off a gleam of sunshine for himself out of somebody's else cloud; a community smitten by a great man's dying, who has left it some rich bequest at death, after having neglected it all his life-time; a step-child, the victim of domestic malignity; a relative mourning for one whose foot has been for a life-time on his neck. We might make a long list, but it is needless. The heartless hollowness of wearing mourning by such as these is but too apparent with the observing. It is an insult to those who really grieve by assuming as much as they do, and its hypocritical pretension gains with the mass as being "respectable" and "decent." Some person very rich, who has allowed a poor relative to toil for years in poverty within his own town, without caring for her, will, now that her poverty can no longer reproach him, mount a weed for her sake, and look solemn as he throws a handful of dirt upon her, half spitefully, as the man of God reads "dust to dust."

Wearing mourning is very expensive to poor people who are bound to be fashionable, and who must appear as well as their neighbors in their affliction. We have seen such scraping and pinching and contriving among people who were really distressed for money whereby to live, as has been absolutely painful to witness. But herein lies all the argument in favor of wearing mourning that we have ever heard: this desire to appear respectable, and this itch to conform to the old custom of mourning by the yard, drowns the grief in the canvas of ways and means as to how it is to be done.

Heartfelt grief needs no outward symbol to signify its presence. It speaks in a thousand forms and ways which a hypocrite could not feign—in delicate acts of the living rendered in loving tribute to the dead. It shows no braceleted arm or jeweled neck, gleaming amid the weeds of widowhood; but it has "that within which passeth show."

But if there is one thing in the matter of wearing mourning that we should condemn, it would be that of dressing children in black—crowding these bright spirits into integuments so uncongenial and gloomy. They put rosebuds in coffins to make children beautiful in death, more beautiful by associate loveliness. This is not inconsistent. The rosebud does not seem out of place there. But an infant in black becomes a barren object, a strange inconsistency; and we almost shrink to hear the sweet bird-like laugh of a child proceed from among the sombre gloom that surrounds it. We feel a sense of danger for it, from which it should be extricated.

Letter to the Church.

The following communication was written by Miss G—— of Newtown, Conn. while in the entranced state, and was addressed to the Baptist Church, in that place, as a notice of withdrawal in behalf of several individuals, who have been enlightened with the principles of the Harmonial Philosophy, and were moved by a desire to escape from sectarian bondage:—

Brothers and Sisters: Having long been in fellowship with your society, and feeling that our minds are expanded and can more clearly comprehend truth as it is in Nature, we cannot consistently with our present views and the articles of your Church, remain longer members of the same. Since many of you from want of correct information have received erroneous impressions in regard to our new faith, we feel influenced by the purest motives to state a few points in the belief which we now cherish.

We believe that the light of spiritual truth and manifestation is now dawning—the same light which shed its illuminating rays on a few minds at the time when Christ, the human embodiment of divine love and wisdom, dwelt on earth. The interior or spiritual discernment which many now enjoy, was in a degree possessed by Jesus. He was able to read the minds of his disciples and of the surrounding multitude, who were attracted by his mysterious and wonder-working power. All who beheld were astonished at the manifestations of this interior vision, and called witnesses to testify of this spiritual Savior who could discern the inmost workings of the heart. The will-power which he possessed in a very high degree, was used in the mysterious healing of the sick. Thus to the woman who came in faith, he stretched forth his hand and touched her, saying, "*I will*, be thou clean." An insight to this remarkable power was also given to his disciples, which they manifested in following the example of their Teacher. Numerous are the facts in the history of this individual which lead us to believe that there is diversity of gifts, but that all are of the same spirit. And we feel that hitherto we have seen as through a glass darkly, but that now ministering angels are coming to shed light upon our minds, and dispel the dark clouds of superstition, sectarianism, and bigotry, which have so long overshadowed us. Towards our Maker are our hearts raised in thanksgiving for the dawning of this day; and towards you, brothers and sisters, and all mankind, are our souls enlarged with love, earnestly desiring that we may progress in truth, fitting ourselves for those mansions in our Father's house—those circles of glory where all is peace and har-

mony, and that our spiritual sight may be often opened, so that we may be able, like the disciples of Jesus, to discern the spirits of the departed.

At the time when Christ was upon earth, mankind were not sufficiently enlightened to discover the cause of these mysteries as they were termed. But we are impressed that one of the most prominent laws of Nature is progression, and that if we are governed by the principles of harmony and affinity which the great Positive Mind has established, we shall receive greater outpourings of his spirit in Manifestations, Gifts, Prophesying, Discerning of Spirits, and all this without money and without price. The teachings and precepts of the angelic band bid us extend the hand of love and forgiveness to all who have thought we despised the pure principles laid down in the Bible. Our present views have made us feel to worship God in spirit and in truth;—and for this reason do we desire to withdraw our names from the articles of sectarian faith, while we earnestly pray that the time may soon come when you shall enjoy the intercourse of ministering angels, when the holy influence which we feel shall steal over your minds, and when you shall realize as we have done that sincere and earnest seekers after spiritual truths, shall be spiritually enlightened.

Education.

A spiritual communication on this subject has been received through the sister of a friend in Newport, R. I., which we are pleased to lay before our readers. It is as follows:—

Error, superstition and darkness, are on the decline, and there will not many more years roll away ere they will have gone to their kindred shades. Truth, all radiant with resplendent lustre, will take her stand, and education will be taught in a proper manner. Children will not be forced to drill at a problem, which when solved, does them no good. Arise, ye men of true reform, and do away with such perversion. Call on the people to look and learn—rouse up ye sleepers and grapple with error; let not sloth overcome your high sense of duty, but make a bold attack, all ye receivers of the light which is being shed to you through the spiritual teachers from on high. Now is the time to be up and away to your work of love, truth and wisdom,—creep up,—creep up the rugged and towering mountain of true science and education—begin at the foundation—lay low everything which is not in accordance with the true spirit of progression—own every man a brother and help him ascend upward to wisdom. Commence ye at the beginning, like little children—let no one think himself wise until he can look with a clear conscience on all mankind as of one common Parent, and feel that his goods are, and of right ought to be, the world's. Own ye nothing, for the earth is the Lords and the fullness thereof; use it as belonging to another,—it is only loaned to you while you sojourn on earth. Let not a pin lie in your house to rust when it might hold together the shattered garment of some poor child—teach your children love and charity to all their fellow creatures; suffer not gossip or slander to escape their lips, but bring them up to become fit followers of the great and incomprehensible Mind. Teach them to be ever awake to progression—that their work is never accomplished, but the better and more loving they are, the sooner they will become the heirs of higher and holier spheres.

I exhort ye, parents, to be aroused upon this great subject of true education. Send not your children to a cheerless school-room for the mere purpose of whiling away from six to seven hours per day—studying a few rules here, and a few there, thus spending the best part of their lives to their great disadvantage. It is true that I would have children learn many things which are in books, but the manner in which they are taught, and the many things which they will have to unlearn, are not in accordance with the spirit of the age in which they now live. I call on you with a loud voice, and one full of truth, love and power, to awake at once to wisdom. Attend to the great laws of Nature here, and thus fit yourselves for higher and holier laws in the Spirit-land. The time is fast approaching when you will become conversant with spirits who will teach you great and glorious

truths; the light will not all break upon you at once, but gradually you will ascend. Having great works to perform, *be up and doing.*

DAVID P. PAER, Spirit-land.

Conversation with the Departed.

During the recent visit of Mrs. Fish at Cleaveland, Ohio, many interesting and consoling conversations have been held with departed friends, which have served to impart a new light to the mind and a new joy to the heart. Among these we extract the following from the Plain Dealer, which, though brief, contains matter of some interest:—

Miss Steele being present inquired, "Have I any guardian spirits present?"

Ans.—You have.

How many?

Ans.—Seven; six adults and one child.

What was the name of the child.

Ans.—Mary. [Miss Steele remarked that she had lost a little sister by that name.]

I then inquired "Mary how old was you when you died?"

Ans.—3 years—[correct.]

How long have you been in the Spirit-Land?

Ans.—35 years—[correct.]

Have you often been present at the entry of your friends into the Spirit-world?

The Alphabet was called for and the following spelled out:

I come to the chamber of death, and escort the free and happy spirits to the elevated spheres; and hereupon I will add to you, my dear friends, let no vain regret or deep sorrow take possession of your souls for the loss of your little ones;—they are transplanted in a richer soil where roses bloom eternally, yielding fresh fragrance, and where no wintry blight can soil the beauty thereof.

MARY.

Organization.

This is a subject to which many friends of our Philosophy are now giving their attention, and which seems to increase in importance the more fully it is considered. Those who are accustomed to study the lessons of Nature, cannot fail to observe the tendency of all animate forms to a higher and more perfect organization; and if we recognize the correspondence existing between these forms and the several stages of human progress, we shall find that in order to reach the highest pinnacle, the numerous minds which are more fully developed than the mass, must be drawn together into that higher order by which they shall be able to perform more successfully their exalted mission. We are in favor, therefore, of organization; but it is necessary that this should be of the right kind. The imperfect and ephemeral structures of association in which undeveloped and conflicting materials are concentrated for a time, will not constitute the appropriate basis of this great reform. It is necessary that we should aspire to a more complete organization; we must aim to reach the stature of a perfect man—to form a body of individuals which, in the office and position of its members, shall correspond with the human organism; and while we arrange and perfect the external structure, we must see to it that this is animated with that pervading life and indwelling spirit, without which it can be only a dead and useless frame-work.

R. P. A.

☞ The "CONSTITUTION OF THE HARMONIAL BROTHERHOOD" as written by A. J. Davis, will appear in our next number. This will be found a strong, philosophical, and highly practical document, unfolding the true principles of social organization, and constituting a useful guide to Harmony. Those persons who have applied to us for instruction in regard to the mode of organizing Harmonial Societies, will find their inquiries clearly and we think satisfactorily answered in this article. In this connection we may state that Mr. Davis is now engaged in preparing and delivering, in the city of Hartford, a series of philosophical lectures, which are exciting a profound interest.

Poetry.

SOLITUDE.

WRITTEN FOR THE SPIRIT MESSENGER,
BY J. B. WEBB.

I love to roam where darkly meet
The forest's spreading boughs ;
And 'neath their shade the rivulet
In limpid beauty flows.

Then through the ever-rustling leaves
I watch the deep, blue sky ;
And dappled clouds that ceaseless weave
Their fairy work on high.

There's silence in the far-off glen,—
All but some trilling bird ;
No harsh, discordant sounds of men
In hate or mirth are heard.

Here let me rest, for here alone
My spirit finds its rest ;
When flowers in dewy brightness bloom,
And woods in green are drest.

Not all alone am I, for here
While dreamingly I lay,
And gaze into the boundless blue
All glorious with the day,—

It seems I walk no more this vale
Of selfishness and strife ;
But far off in yon ocean-depths,
I seek a brighter life.

Not all alone, for some sweet voice
Borne on the wings of light,
Has bid my drooping soul rejoice,
And filled me with delight.

What thus in solitude can bring
Such calmness to the heart ?
And all our stormy passions hush,
And bid our cares depart.

O let us roam alone for aye,
Within some sunny dell ;
When flowers spring to greet the day,
And birds their chorus swell.

Then freed from earth's conflicting jars,
Our prisoned thoughts expand ;
And view beyond death's gloomy gate
The radiant Spirit-land.

THE SPIRIT'S FLIGHT.

FROM THE GERMAN.

When to yon bright celestial spheres
My spirit soars to view its home,
How sweetly then shall friendship's tears
Bedew the roses on my tomb !

Eager this mournful scene to leave,
Yet tranquil as the moonlit bower,
And smiling as the sun at eve,
I wait the calm, the blissful hour !

O that 't would haste and waft me there,
Where worlds shall roll beneath my feet ;
Where palms immortal flourish fair,
And friends on earth beloved shall meet !

The woes of earth are chains that cling,
Released but by the hand of death ;
His joys—the blossoms of the spring,
That fall before the zephyr's breath !

Miscellaneous Department.

THE VALUE OF LIFE.

Lo ! there stands an aged man supported by his staff, who now sees vanity engraved upon the pleasures of every scene of life. He is discoursing upon the shortness of his earthly existence.

"What is life ? Go ask the rainbow, whose crescent arch rests upon the earth, which is lit up with the purest rays of light which ever greeted the skies, and ere your faltering voice dies about you, its painted throne has departed !

"Go ask the wild flower, that springs up in the traveler's path, and which fills the air with its fragrance, and ere your parting lips are closed, it droops its head and dies.

"Go ask the sunbeam that rests upon the Western hills, and soon darkness is scattered in your path—ask the running rivulet, and in silent majesty she glides along in her course, and disheartened, ask echo of the woods, and she sends back your words from over her forest's top.

"Oh ! what is life but a vapor and a fleeting show."

Thus discoursed an aged pilgrim, who had traversed the brightest scenes of earth, and drank at its sparkling fountains, as he stood upon a projecting rock which overhung a chasm beneath. There he stood, a faithful representative of Time. His white, silvery locks dangled down his snow white cheeks, and his eyes still shone with the luster of youth ; he had been looking back upon the fast spent seasons of his existence, and had found its joys insipid—its employments vain. In a moment more, he would have flung himself down into the charnel house of death. He had raised his mantle, and having disentangled his feet, was about taking his awful leap. He gazed about him to view the far-reaching plains beneath, when he saw a form approaching. He started with affright. It drew nigher, decorated in a robe of virgin white, wearing the crown of immortality—it was the spirit of Truth.

He looked up to the spirit, and casting an imploring look at her, he inquired once more, *What is life ?*

"Weary pilgrim," said she, "life is the greatest earthly gift from the hands of your Creator. It is an existence which He has been pleased to bestow upon man as a foretaste of that heavenly state which shall be attained in the upward progress of the soul. Earth, though it has sorrows, has also joys. The hands of the Creator have scattered garlands in the path of his children, and twined a wreath ornamented with the fadeless flowers of paradise for every brow. It was that existence in which he saw fit to create beings after his own image and train them for the skies. But what mean those tears that fall from thy cheeks ? Say, dost thou weep for the shortness of human life ? Then look upward to the higher and diviner life above ; and let the reflection of celestial beauty, as it falls upon thy heart, dry those tears that bedew thy sorrowful cheeks, disperse the doubts that cast gloom upon thy soul, and give thee joy during thy sojourn here below. Come, pilgrim, come with me ; my bowers are ever green, and joy the employment of my children."

The pilgrim had listened eagerly to this reply of the Spirit, the tears that had coursed down his cheeks were dried, and a smile was playing about his countenance. He was subdued, and his future history proved that although life was short, there was sufficient time to engage in the sweet pleasures of the soul.

The gentle spirit never forsook him, but journeyed by his side through life, accompanied him to the grave, and breathed sweet whispers to his heart ; and ere he closed his eyes in death, he could regard the rainbow and sunbeams, as emblems of his Maker's glory, and could hear in the murmurings of the rivulet, voices chanting his Creator's praise.

Then, dear reader, do *you* ask, what is life. Let me answer,—it is the foretaste of Heaven.

A happy home is a glorious and instructive sight ; one which it does the heart good to see, and which, once beheld, leaves an ineffaceable impression on the mind.

Parables of the Day.

THE CANDID MINISTER.

An humble hearer of preaching who was never absent from Church on Sunday, became much puzzled with the meaning of a phrase often used by his pastor. The phrase was this: *Means of Grace*. After much labor of mind, being unable to comprehend its meaning, he went and asked of the Minister an explanation of it. The Minister received him kindly, but was loath to explain the mysterious phrase. So he proposed to his inquirer to guess what it meant. Then the humble hearer asked—does it mean the Bible? No, said the Minister, the Bible is a good thing, and helps make the *means of grace*, but that is not the meaning. Does it mean "the Spirit"? No said the Minister, not wholly. Is it preaching? That is not the meaning, said the Minister. Then the inquirer struggling a little with the pressure of the thought, asked almost in a whisper—does it mean *Money*? That is it, said the Minister. The other things you mention are something, but money is the essential ingredient in the *means of grace*. That, too, is what we mean by *divine instrumentalities*. Then they smiled on one another, and the inquirer rejoiced that he had discovered what was meant by the *means of grace and divine instrumentalities*.

THE MILLER'S STORY.

A Catholic and a Protestant were disputing about their churches, and each claimed that his church professed the true religion. While they were warm in the dispute a Miller passed by, and taking note of the subject of their contention, he told them a story. Two farmers, said he, came to my mill with wheat to be ground. And after it was ground, I put each man's flour in his own bag, and laid each bag on his owner's horse, and in each bag I put the *shorts* and bran in one end, and the flour in the other. So mounting their horses they set out for home together. And on the way, they began to boast of the quality of their flour, and each said his own was better than the others. So hotly did the quarrel rage, that they rose in the stirrup and struck one another with their riding whips. Now one of them dismounting in order to fix his bag in its place, discovered that his flour was all gone; for a rent in that end of the bag where the flour was, had let it all out. But the other farmer missed his companion, and looking back saw him righting his bag. Thereupon he thought of his own, and putting his hand over to one side found the flour end of it empty; for there was a hole in his bag too. Now they were both very disconsolate, and stood gazing back on the road they had come, along which for a mile, there extended two lines of flour. But finding it impossible to remedy the loss, they mounted their horses and without saying a word to each other, rode home with nothing but bran and shorts in their bags. Then the Catholic and Protestant asked the Miller the meaning of his story. I mean by it, said the Miller, to hint to you whether it would not be well, before attempting to settle whether the Mother of Harlots, or her Daughters possess the *true religion*, to decide first whether either party has any.—*Anti-Slavery Bugle*.

The Infant Prisoner.

Very small children are sometimes found among prisoners. Sitting one day in a Police Court, I observed the door open, and a mere child was ushered in. The officer who accompanied him was a tall man, and the child was so short that he could not easily reach down to take his hand without stooping so low that he could not comfortably walk. With his hand on the top of the child's head, he in that way urged the little fellow onward.

Supposing the child was to be used as a witness, I wondered that one of such tender age should be expected to know the nature of an oath.

Addressing a friendly officer of the Court, I said, as I pointed to the child,

"What have you there?"

"A prisoner," he replied."

"But he does not know enough to commit a crime?" I said.

"What is the offence of which he is accused?"

"Assault and battery," he answered.

Turning to the child, I said—"Where do you live my son?"

"In Peggy's Alley, sir."

While I was endeavoring to ascertain from the little prisoner where Peggy's Alley was, never having heard of the place before, the Clerk of the Court called his name.

He was now arraigned, and the complaint was solemnly read to him, gravely charging him with the commission of the crime of assault and battery, "against the peace and dignity of the Commonwealth, in such case made and provided," not a single word of which did the little fellow understand.

"May it please your honor," I said, "the prisoner is not seven years of age. He does not know enough to commit a crime."

"I cannot help it," said the aged judge, looking over his spectacles down upon the child with compassion, "he has been complained of, and the complaint cannot be withdrawn; and besides, the offence is of so serious a character that this Court has not jurisdiction of the case. I must bind him over to appear before a higher tribunal."

"But if the poor child is sent to Jail," I said, "to be kept until he can be tried, who will take care of him while he is there? He does not know enough to undress himself, and put himself to bed at night."

"A cradle should be sent to the Jail for him," said the clerk, indignant that a mere babe was to be imprisoned with thieves and robbers.

"I am sorry for him," said the Judge, "but I cannot help him."

"I trust your Honor will not put the bail high," I said, "for I should be exceedingly sorry to have so small a child sent to Jail."

Put the bail at fifty dollars," said the Judge to the Clerk.

"Will your Honor take me for bail?" I inquired.

"Yes," said the Judge.

I bailed him, took him to my house, gave him food, found his parents, put him to school, and when the grand Jury came together, I got word to them of his tender age; they refused to find a bill against him, and he was discharged.—*John M. Spear's Labors for the Prisoner*.

Amidst the most adverse circumstances, there are still reasons for cheerfulness. So long as there are motives to gratitude, there is a cause for joy.

Love is the golden key that throws open the palace of eternity to the dying sight, and brings to view the glories of the invisible world.

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