

THE  
PRACTICAL OF SPIRITUALISM.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

ABRAHAM JAMES.

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HISTORIC DESCRIPTION

OF HIS

OIL - WELL DISCOVERIES IN PLEASANTVILLE, PA.,

THROUGH SPIRIT DIRECTION.

BY

J. M. PEEBLES.

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*'By what authority do you demand it?' said Delaplace. IN THE NAME OF THE GREAT JEHOVAH AND THE CONTINENTAL Congress! thundered Allen, proud of his Green Mountain boys. \* \* \* \* Col. Ethan Allen, a man of strong mind, vigorous frame, upright in all his ways, fearless in the discharge of his duty, and a zealous patriot, was intimately connected with the Independence of this country.' \* \* \* \* —HISTORY OF THE REVOLUTION.*

*Buried cities shall be unmasked; the hidden treasures of the earth discovered; and, based upon the material, the spiritual shall bud, bloom and bear golden fruitage extensive as Humanity.—SKES.*

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District of Illinois.

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## GREETING:

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When a new discovery is made professing to change the tides of thought and business, the world has the right to ask, "Is it practical? is the discoverer or inventor equal to his claims?" As to this matter, let this little volume speak for itself.

There was a time when innovation was considered criminal, when he who dared to advance beyond the "old landmarks," fearlessly tearing them up to widen the area of civilization and religion, was considered infidel to God and man, and deserving only of death and eternal burnings; but the innovator, or "infidel," so-called, has proved himself to be the benefactor of mankind. These days, new ideas, new systems of business, that open up hidden treasures of truth and wealth, are not only tolerated, but sought and demanded by the very necessities of the age.

This humble volume, written under the direction of spirit intelligence, urged forward with great force of inspirational will amid numerous cares and toils, claims to be the *Practical of Spiritualism* in matters of real life, and, as such, occupies a position in utilitarian literature that must, we think, engage the earnest attention of the public generally. It proves that religion and science are a unit; it furnishes a key to unlock the mysteries of life and the long buried wealth underneath the tread of busy populations; it brings prophecy, seership, clairvoyance, alchemy, astrology, into the market of practical trade, to bless mankind by adding to its store of material and mental riches. A book of fact, having a heart for the needy, a soul of sunshine on every page, it invites to the useful, the beautiful, the good, and true.

THE AUTHOR.

CHICAGO, Sept., 1868.

# THE PRACTICAL OF SPIRITUALISM.

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## THE NATURAL INQUIRY.

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF VICTORIA Each of the fading centuries has produced great men—deep, earnest and original thinkers, shining like stars along the midnights of the ages. These still live in song and tradition; live upon historic pages; live in the burning words they breathed, and the humanitarian works they wrought. God permits no good thought, or deed, to die. The true and the beautiful, innately immortal, live forever.

Whether a man acquire greatness by constant personal effort, or whether fame and greatness are thrust upon him under circumstances over which he had little or no control, are minor considerations with the masses. The practical world takes men precisely as it finds them, and seldom pauses to inquire about pre-natal conditions, or primal causes; yet human nature, partaking of the divine, is naturally loyal. It bows to superior wisdom, and from its fathomless depths admires the heroic and good. Accordingly, whenever an individual rises above the multitudes from whatever cause, swaying influence through material wealth, or wielding a scepter of moral power, the inquiry naturally arises, Who is he? To what country are traceable the ancestral roots? What of the immediate parentage? Where the birth-place? What the nature of the early education? What influences and unseen forces combined to place him in the eminent position he occupies before the world?



## ORIGIN AND ANTE-NATAL CONDITION.

Something from nothing is an absurdity. All that is in the universe is substance. All substances are, in essence, eternal. Forms alone change, or come and go as sea-waves. The divine, the essential innermost of every mortal, is a portion, a fac-simile of God. Consequently, earthly parents do not create human souls, but simply through the relational forces, positive and negative, they afford the conditions for soul-germs, as emanations from the infinite Universal Soul, to pass into a more external consciousness of circling life for diverse experiences and the attainment of life's highest uses.

Secondary characteristics are modified more or less by parents. The organization of the father relates more directly to the physical; the mother to the mental. These primal souls of the heavens, pure and conscious, were designed long before their earthly incarnation to act a particular part in the drama of life. The orderly or disorderly observance of the laws of generation, however, in connection with social surroundings and mental impressions, especially upon the maternal side, has much to do in shaping the future of individuals. Every immortal soul, contemplated from the highest stand point of the Spiritual Philosophy, must necessarily be considered as pre-formed, and pre-impressed with distinctive innate tendencies, which natural birth cannot completely overcome, and which, in some future, stretching along the golden distance—withstanding the temporal ills, discords and deformities—will shine forth in its predestined beauty and brightness.

There are marked specimens of humanity, who, against all obstacles, follow out more distinctly the original bent of in-born genius. Such, bending circumstances to personal uses, believe in fate. Their will-power is mighty; though under the wave to-day, their ship proudly dances upon billowy crests to-morrow. Bonaparte awoke to conscious life on earth amid the clangor of arms and the commotions of war

in his own sunny Corsica. The gestative life of Byron was under the alternate sunshine and shadows of impassioned poetry, tragedy and comedy. The mother of Garibaldi, inspired with a love of freedom, gave the world a son, who, putting his foot down firmly in Sicily, drove out a reigning tyrant and gave to Victor Emanuel a kingdom. These, singled out, are sometimes termed men of destiny. But a wider vision shows that ALL in a greater or less degree are the subjects of destiny; for God governs the universe by fixed and established laws. Specials pertain to finite expressions, and adaptations are ever co-related to the eternal laws of cause and effect.

Under-tone whispers inspire, and the ever-rising wave-currents of life seemingly combine to sweep souls on to loftier altitudes with spiritual presences, interested and loving, as heavenly guides. This divine guidance frequently commences with embryonic existence. Angels and celestial beings, seeing that individuals of certain characteristics are wanted on earth—poets, orators, philosophers, reformers, clairvoyants—conspire to throw sweet and harmonizing magnetic influences around susceptible mothers, thus operating upon the ante-natal lives of the unborn, so far as reigning psychologic laws will permit. Upon no other hypothesis can we satisfactorily account for the timely appearance of peculiar media and eminent leaders, just adapted to certain crises, whose strange mystic lives impart significance to and round out great periods of history.

### ABRAHAM JAMES' PARENTAGE.

Under the sign Gemini, Jupiter the reigning planet, and Venus exercising a controlling influence, ABRAHAM JAMES, a twin brother, was born on the 16th day of June, 1827, in Chester Co., Pa., eighteen miles from Philadelphia, under the shadows and literary moldings of the famous "Weston School"—a Quaker institution of learning. His parents,

though originally Quakers, were sufficiently awake to the inalienable rights of individuals and the dawning age of mental and religious freedom to marry outside the church. This departure from custom in that early day, when the priesthood was a terror to and power against all non-conformists, when each sect watched with jealous care its little fold, was considered a heinous offence by the Quaker fraternity. Should the Jews have marital dealings with the Samaritans—the chosen with the unwashed, unchurched, straying along the border-lands of outside Israel? This marriage act placed them under the ban of genuine orthodox Quakers, and doubtless had much to do in imparting that firmness of purpose, fixedness of principle, and manly independence which characterize the subject of this sketch.

Mrs. James, the mother, tall and slim in person, noble in nature, and endowed with a fine mental temperament, was highly mediumistic and clairvoyant—a sort of oracle in the presence of her immediate friends. She once took this son to an astrologist in the city, and the first professional words uttered, were, “You are a twin brother!” Then, after a minute description of family matters, he was told that a “charmed life lay mapped out before him—that he would acquire great wealth from the earth—gain an eminent position—travel in foreign countries and leave a name on earth immortal.” These predictions, so far as they relate to the early part of his life, have been literally fulfilled. There is a mighty truth in what Shelley termed, “This overmastering destiny.”

In the lineage of each human being we read in a measure the history of the ante-natal life. What the mother sees, hears, feels, weaves its web around and leaves its impress upon the child. Intellectual, moral and spiritual qualities are transmissible by an easy and usually quick descent; though sometimes they fail to crop out till the third and fourth generations. “One of these striking examples known to us,” says Lewes, “is that of the family which boasted Jean Sebastian Bach, as the culminating illustration of a musical

genius, which, more or less, was distributed over *three hundred* Bachs, the children of various mothers." Whenever one or both parents have been distinguished for marked traits and tendencies, if there have been no obstructing causes, which is generally the case to some extent, then the result in the offspring is found to be in consonance with a regular law. Mr. James' mother, often conscious of being "moved by the Spirit," was endowed also with what the Highlanders of Scotland term "second sight," as well as an acknowledged Seeress in the Society of Friends; the son, therefore, came very naturally by his sensitive organism, fine mediumship and remarkable clairvoyant powers.

### CHILDHOOD YEARS.

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Abraham's early life was farm-life, spent upon those noted lands deeded to the original owner by the sainted William Penn, just after his second voyage to this comparatively new continent. Much spiritual significance attaches to the infantile departure to the spirit-world of his twin brother. The effect of such a promising bud, shooting out and up into the spiritual, would naturally tend to maintain with great precision a nice balance between the earthly and spiritual sides of the life of the counterpart—the remaining earthly brother. Owing to this oneness of pre-natal life, the chain of sympathy would by an all-pervading magnetic law hold them together as with bands of steel. This principle of attraction in connection with their spherul soul-blendings would inspire them to grow—to unfold as mutual educators of each other—a beautiful illustration of the law of reciprocal compensation.

Whether contemplating Grecian mountains, Persian valleys, Italian vineyards, Indian hunting-grounds, or the cultivated fields of civilized life, this is certain—childhood, plastic and susceptible to every influence, is, to a wonderful extent, fashioned and toned by all the early scenes of objective life; by rocks, rills, forests and landscapes; by the

mountains that kiss the sky; by the mineral emanations that rise flame-like, and by the wave-currents of magnetism that sail like sheeted clouds over given districts of country. Chester county is distinguished for its delightful scenery, its rich farming lands, its rugged hills in the distance, clothed with green, its pure sparkling springs of soft water gushing from hill-sides, its fertile valleys burdened with grains and grasses; and its orchards, too, bending in autumn-time 'neath their mellowed fruitage, would all tend to charm the eye and cultivate a refined taste. Amid picturesque scenery, like this, was the birth of ABRAHAM JAMES.

When not within the sweet sheltering atmosphere of the mother, confined to the house from delicate health, he was out in the fresh air, under shimmering sunbeams, and picture-galleries of stars. Then, jubilant with sunny thoughts, he would hie away to some running brook, and, gathering the shifting sands, study them. Pebbles and fragments of rock that other lads passed heedlessly by, he turned over, and, examining, wondered from whence they came, and what their purpose in the vast economy of creation. In these peculiarities the mental philosopher would read the budding genius of a blossoming future—the shadow-promises of important coming events.

Attending the common school, instead of being off a truant, playing at marbles, or engaged in frivolous sporting, he might be found by the brook-side, scanning with observant eye rude strata of rocks, or nestling in some quiet retreat, shaded by overhanging cliffs, half asleep, half entranced, dreaming of travels, of peopling castles in the air, and of painting gorgeous pictures upon the roseate sky of a sunny future—all dimly defined ideals, destined at length to be outworked into sublime realities.

“ He dreamed that beautiful angels came  
And stood by the school house door,  
And a wondrous light from their raiment fell,  
And shone on the sanded floor.”

## HIS EARLY CLAIRVOYANCE.

Clairvoyance, of French derivation, signifies *clear seeing*, and is perfectly reliable within the limits of the sphere in which it is operative. There are independent clairvoyance and dependent clairvoyance. The latter, produced by the direct intervention of spirits, is colored more or less by surroundings and the aural emanations of such grades of immortals as conspire to induce this comparatively clear vision at irregular intervals. Symbolic pictures and psychological presentations, bearing a certain undefined relation to, are often mistaken for, this priceless gift. These are unreliable. Dependent clairvoyance varies in degree and exactness of vision. With certain individuals, clairvoyance is a normal faculty. They were born with open vision. This was the case with the subject of this brief biography. He cannot remember when he did not have prophetic visions and see spiritual beings.

This gift looms up and gleams all along the olden ages. The ancient seers of India sung praises to the gods whom they saw winging their way through the concentric circles of the heavens. The old prophet of the Hebrew scriptures and his servant beheld the shadowy hosts that peopled the ethereal regions; the Woman of Endor saw and described the anointed Samuel; Moses and Elias were visible to the disciples who witnessed the Transfiguration upon the mount; Jesus, by this clairvoyant power, "Knew what was in man;" the heavens opening to Peter and Paul, they saw things not lawful to be uttered; and John, when upon the Isle of Patmos, the invisible world becoming clear as a crystal sea, saw angels robed in white, wearing golden girdles, who, joining with the harpers, sang "a new song."

When six and seven years of age, and even earlier, Mr. James distinctly remembers seeing "dead men," as he termed them, walking the floor of his bed chamber at

night-time, and, wondering, thought it passing strange his bed-fellows could not witness the same. Longfellow, referring to such occurrences, says:

“The stranger at my fireside cannot see  
The *forms* I see, nor hear the sounds I hear;  
He but perceives the shadows, while to me  
All that has been, is visible and clear.”

At first the presence of these immortals in his room frightened him; but he soon became familiar with their appearance. Speaking of these nightly visitors, in all the simplicity of a confiding nature, to his parents, the father would call the singular phenomena dreams; or what was more chilling, accuse the son of indulging in wild freaks of the imagination. But the mother, no stranger herself to these meaning glimpses from the inner life, would take her child aside and plead for full descriptions of the beautiful beings he saw. To her they were realities—living evidences of the presence of ministering angels.

At this time, and later, also, he was so gifted with the power of premonition, or one phase of prophecy, that the pictured scroll of the future unrolled, and, rising before his vision, he would describe removals, coming accidents, and prophesy that deaths would transpire at certain times in the neighborhood, when the parties were in the full flush of health. Usually, about three days before the departure of the mortal, he would minutely describe the funeral ceremonies, the features of the corpse in the coffin, the span of horses following nearest the hearse, and the course they took towards the cemetery. The father, doubtless from mingled dread and fear, forbade his thinking of, or mentioning, these things; while the mother, more sympathetically allied to the child of her love, listened to his weird words as mystic oracles, or as divine voices from the land of souls.

This perception of coming events is in harmony with natural law. All richly gifted souls are prophets.



“As the sun,  
Ere it be risen, sometimes paints its image  
In the atmosphere; so often do the spirits  
Of great events stride on before the events,  
And in to-day, already walks to-morrow.”

These spiritual avenues of perception may be opened in individuals, either by a process of natural development, or by the superterrestrial influences of spirits. Illumined souls, not understood because standing within the veil, breaking the seals of the book of destiny, have graced all the historic periods. Such, unheralded, almost unknown, walk quietly in our midst to-day, familiar with the hemlock, but strangers to the bay and the laureled wreath. A compensating future, however, will do them justice.

### A STEP UP THE GOLDEN LADDER.

Unfolding out of artless childhood into youth, an unaccountable impulse amounting at times to almost absolute propulsion, urged young James out into the wide world. Shadows imply substances somewhere. The controlling intelligences saw that he must be taken from the paternal residence and thrown upon his own resources; saw that he must gather experiences by methods inverse and diverse; must quiver beneath the crisping flames of fiery furnaces, and for a season tread with blistered, bleeding feet the thorny thoroughfares of time. All higher births are preceded by struggles. Defeats strengthen incipient manhood. Trees gather nutriment from wandering winds and washing rains, as from silently descending dews. The very strength we so admire in towering oaks has been extracted from a thousand tempests. Storms gave them stability. So adversity calls forth the nobility of human nature, and enables aspirational men to transform every obstacle into a monument of skill and grandeur.



Leaving home for a clerkship, he gave great satisfaction to the parties employing him. But he was restless. There were growing mental wants springing up in his nature that trade did not meet. Education alone could satisfy these higher desires. Getting permission, he attended a select school, and finally, Unionville Seminary, preparing himself for a teacher. At this age the earnest student, pale and slender, with the air and dignity of maturer years, was cordially beloved by all who knew him. The friendly are ever blessed with friends.

Under the inspiration of a romance common to youth, he embarked the subsequent autumn with a fellow-student for Charleston, S. C. In the Southern States he taught school and traveled quite extensively. Here he forgot, in a measure, the ills and disappointments that lay like dark shadows across his pathway, among which was the death of his student companion. The hours of occasional rest in orange groves, the soft southwest winds, fragrant with blossoming magnolias, the warm improvised friendships, and the generous hospitalities everywhere tendered, all afforded profitable experiences comparable to variegated and silken-textured threads, woven into and glistening in the life-web of after years. But the appetite for adventure, somewhat satiated, the purse not overcrowded, and the tendrils of early affection not severed by absence, his mind often reverted to friends and home scenes.

"Take the bright shell from its home in the lea,  
And where'er it goes it will sing of the sea ;  
So, take the fond heart from its home and its hearth,  
'T will sing of the loved to the ends of the earth."

Returning in spring-time from the South, and visiting the old homestead—dearest spot on earth—loving hands pressed his, and hearts throbbed in holiest fellowship with his own. The welcomings glad, joyous and prolonged, were mingled with not a little surprise to note how soon the youth had assumed the dimensions and dignity of the man.

## HO! FOR THE WEST!

This was an important period; a decision must be made, individualism asserted, responsibility assumed, and a life, so often strangely shadowed in dream and vision, must be outwrought. Mr. James, full of enthusiasm and earnest hope, started for the broad, free, growing West—the Mecca that then and now welcomes the feet of millions. The railroads then threading and opening up the immense wealth of those prairie-lands, that annually laugh with autumnal harvests, immediately offered employment. Strict attention to business, coupled with a correct deportment and an unsullied integrity, soon attracted the watchful eyes of those having the supervision of the Illinois Central Railroad. The officer of the section upon which he was employed as a station agent, ordering him to report in person to Chicago, promoted him to the conductorship of a mixed train, and, in a few months, to the best express train upon the route, at a fine salary. This position, bringing him in closer relation with the traveling public and with certain illustrious minds, afforded a rare opportunity for the study of human nature. Conscious of the privilege, he closely scanned physiognomies, and actually sensed the magnetic spheres of the passengers passing him their tickets.

All things from grains of sand to plants, from these to men and angels, have their own peculiar surroundings. These electric aromas extend in spray-like flames around every person, reaching off into the circular distance several feet, depending upon the health and the internal power of the soul-forces. Clairvoyants, seeing this aura as an open book, read from it the moral status of individuals; while the spiritually sensitive sense spheres, their organisms being as the iodized plate to the light. Character is thus read. Deception belongs more to the past than the present. Emerson says: "No secret can be kept in the civilized world. 'T is as hard to hide, as fire. There is no privacy that cannot be

pierced, for society is a masked ball where every one, trying to hide his real character, reveals it by hiding."

What in these days seemed strange to Mr. James himself, (because unconscious of half-slumbering, yet remarkable mediumistic powers), he was often warned of approaching dangers, and, taking the prompted precaution, accidents were avoided and human lives saved. On one occasion, just after violent winds, a long heavy train, approaching the "round house" from the south, coaches well filled and hearts all merry, he felt, as the train began to hug the shores of Lake Michigan, an irresistible impulse to tell the engineer to watch with untiring vigilance. Reasoning a moment, however, he said to himself, there can be no danger; the Michigan Central train has just come down from the city, and is now, with engine snorting defiance to winds and storms, only a little distance eastward; "all must be right," and, saying this, he settled back comfortably into his seat. But again the impression came with all the voiced power of a command—"Up, hasten quickly, tell the engineer to check the speed!" Starting, he passed through the baggage car, clambered over the machinery in the dark, the storm still raging, and said to the engineer, "Hold up! proceed slowly and with great caution; I fear there's danger ahead!"

"Guess not," replied the unconcerned engine driver; "the Central has just passed all safe."

The night was fearfully dark, save now and then a momentary light from a flash of lightning. The lake in deep commotion, was heaving and rolling like a giant thing of life.

"Be cautious—*slow*—SLOWER!" exclaimed our conductor again with firmness.

"I see it!" cried the engineer.

The head-light throwing glimmering corruscations into the dim distance, revealed the scene of threatening danger. The frightful storm had undermined the track. The brakes down—the shock sudden—a little alarm, but all were safe.

Had Mr. James given no heed to the impressional voice of a guardian spirit, this train moving at the usual rate of speed, would have precipitated hundreds into the waters of the lake. Little did the passengers realize that despised Spiritualism had been instrumental in saving them from disaster and horrid death. Frequently was he thus timely warned, saving thousands from a sudden and unnatural transplanting into lands immortal. Unknown to his employers, it was mediumship that gave him the reputation of being such a safe conductor.

In the future, when mental science stands the equal of physical science, when mediums are better appreciated and the laws of clairaudience and spirit impressions more thoroughly understood, presidents and other officers controlling the railroads, steamers and other modes of perilous travel, will employ only mediums for conductors and engineers. Saying nothing of utility and finance, and considering the solemn responsibilities they occupy attendant upon their official position, this selection of media will make travel in this and all other countries infinitely safer. How important then, a knowledge of Spiritualism to the world!

Extensively known to the principal men and officers of Western companies as a man every way reliable, high toned and honorable, as well as capable, he was appointed to a position equivalent in care and responsibility to the General Superintendent of the Burlington and Missouri River Line of Railroad for a year. This brought too much care and responsibility for an organization so frail. Though giving universal satisfaction, the constant press of increasing business, the annoying of time-tables, and the frequent necessitated night travel, seriously impaired his health. This must be repaired. The position he could resign—business drop; but what should he do? where go?

“ Eastward roll the orbs of heaven,  
Westward tend the thoughts of men.”

Railways so intersect, and steamers so girdle seas and oceans now, that people, in a few years, traversing lands and seas, may inspect the furs of the North, the spices of the South, the pines of Oregon, the orange groves of Mexico, the vineyards of Bohemia, the benzoin of Sumatra, the silks of Japan, the pulu of Honolulu, and the gold fields of California.

## EL DORADO.

A pleasant voyage over the depths of two blue oceans, the "golden gate" passed, and Abraham James placed his feet in the city of San Francisco. The Pacific coast opens to all observant eyes a new world. If Paris is France, then San Francisco, the great commercial emporium of those shores, is California. A few days in the city with a friend, and a few hours of each day studying among other curiosities the characteristics of Chinamen constantly threading and crossing the streets in loose sacks, Asiatic hats, and long cues dangling to their heels, and then he was away to the gold diggings in Sierra county, under the shadow of the Nevadas. In this rough region he found his brother tunneling for gold. He had already reached the distance of 1400 feet. The shaft was deep and the mountain above crowned in perpetual whiteness. Here was a wild region ripe for exploration and geological pursuits, and all leading under the guidance of exalted spiritual beings, to the future mediumistic work of Mr. James, in tracing subterranean water courses, and discovering oil veins and minerals. These hydraulic and extensive quartz mining operations presented new fields for observation and investigation. Mountains pierced like polished shafts the storm-clouds above. Measureless caves were beneath. Those vast amphitheatres, roofed with stalactites and decorated with spar and crystalizations, thrones and altars, spoke to his appreciative soul of the might and majesty of the Infinite.

"How do you like California?" wrote a friend.  
This was the gist of the reply :

"The scenery is absolutely magnificent; the stars are so bright, the mirage so bewitching, the flowers so fresh in the valleys even in January, the landscapes so varied, the vineyards so burdened with purple clusters in autumn time, and then the people are so thoroughly in earnest in every department of business, that I am delighted with most that I witness; and then the clear, dry, bracing atmosphere, the saline winds from the ocean in connection with the emanations from these yet only partially explored mineral regions, have greatly improved my impaired health."

While in this portion of California, he was thrown into the society of Mr. James K. Chandler, a young man of Quaker descent, possessed of considerable medium powers, who, introducing the subject of Spiritualism, handed him Andrew Jackson Davis' first work, "Nature's Divine Revelations." This, a feast of reason, lifted him into new cosmic realms of thought, and opened the portal-doors of the universe. Diligently perusing, he clearly saw that nature's outward processes, the mineral, vegetable, animal, human, all, in orderly method, demonstrated the existence of inward forces—divine formative potencies residing in all matter. Also perceiving that molecular deposits, chemical changes, geological formations, and all structures depended upon inherent forces, he clearly grasped the theory that this visible world was but the phenomenal exhibition of that superior spirit-realm which comprehends the energizing forces, the primal forms and the eternal laws of the Universe—the DIVINE LIFE in and over all things.

## RETURNING TO THE STATES—SPIRITUALISM.

Health in a measure restored, Mr. James resolved to return to "America," as Californians phrased the homeward trip. Safely arriving, and visiting old scenes and dearly remembered friends, he designed returning again to the Pacific coast, taking his family with him. But a strange series of fortuitous circumstances, or rather, unseen intelligences, purposed otherwise. Every effort in that direction proved abortive. A spell as mysterious as potent, holding him, every plan, however well devised, looking California-ward, was rudely thwarted. Finally, in a state of mental unrest, stepping one day into a neighbor's house, his eye glanced upon a copy of the *Banner of Light*. "What paper is that?" he inquired, taking it in hand.

"That's the *Banner of Light*, printed in Boston, and devoted to the propagation of Spiritualism."

"Spiritualism! are you a believer in Spiritualism?" he asked, a curl of scorn playing upon the lips.

"Not exactly—I've passed beyond the phase of mere belief. It is to me positive knowledge."

"How is that? Do you mean to say you *know* that spiritual beings are about us, and permitted to communicate after this manner?" pointing to the sixth page of the *Banner*.

"Most certainly! I have received evidences, proofs, and unmistakable tests enough to convince any man of ordinary ability. Have *you* never given it any investigation?"

"Why, yes, a very little—and then while reading Davis' 'Divine Revelations,' some strange personal experiences occurring in past years flashed vividly before my mind."

"Then why not give the subject a critical investigation?"

"Well, to be frank, while feeling there must be *some* reality—some wheat in such quantities of chaff,—I have, nevertheless, heard and read so much in the newspapers of

the day, touching the evil effects of these phenomena in different communities, that I have studiously avoided them."

"But you must know that 'hearsay' and floating newspaper paragraphs, often in the interests of bigoted clergymen, are unreliable guides. Furthermore, every true man, imbued with the genius and spirit of the nineteenth century, should faithfully examine this momentous matter for himself."

"I should certainly like to do so. Where is there a good reliable test medium?"

"Mrs. M—— of ——, is considered very excellent for personating, and then, when there's sufficient passivity, in connection with a genuine sincerity on the part of the individual investigating, her tests are often remarkable."

This conversation with his spiritualist neighbor lingered in his mind like a meaning dream.

"Some chord in unison with what we hear  
Is touched within us, and the soul replies!"

Availing himself of an early opportunity, Mr. James, with mingled curiosity and hope, called upon this trance medium, a perfect stranger. Only a few moments passed before she became spasmodic, turned pale, then purple in the face, then strangling, struggling, the blood settling, the breath shortening, she "seemingly died." Though frightful to witness, it was a *fac-simile* of the scene connected with his mother's last hours! While seeing, this conviction became each moment more deeply seated. The place was for the time being consecrated and holy.

This death-trance passing partially away, the intelligence controlling the organs of speech, spoke thus:

"Abraham, I am thy *mother*! No language can express the joy I experience in thus speaking to thee face to face. I have watched over thee, my child, in thy devious wanderings, with all the tender affections of maternal nature. Remember, that true affection never dies. That pure love is a half buried bud on earth, which unfolds and blows beautifully in heaven. Thy real life has hardly yet commenced. A band



of bright immortal spirits is ever hovering near thee, preparing thee for a work on earth. It would not be well for thee to know its full importance yet. The divine apostle said "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." This is applicable to thee, my son, in thy future career. Be true to that silent voice within. It will guide thee aright, while holy angels above hold thee in charge. Thou art a medium thyself, and if obedient to heavenly visions vouchsafed unto thee, and to the teachings of thy spirit guides, thou shalt prove a blessing to the children of men, and departing leave foot-prints precious with sacred memories."

During this interview, the mother gave her full name, referred to the twin-brother, to the remaining members of the household, and in various other ways gave such convincing proofs of her presence, that every doubt fled. It amounted to absolute demonstration. Future sittings with this lady, and other noted mediums, not only revealed in a distinct manner his own mediumship, and the spiritual import of past premonitions and prophetic visions; but gave to his aspirational nature, seeking "light—more light," golden glimmerings of the great work he was commissioned to accomplish.

## THE KEY DISCOVERED.

This was a new birth—a new era in the life of Abraham James. Spiritualism unlocked the weird mysteries of a strange dual existence—a constant blending of the earthly and spiritual. The seals of the book were loosened; clouds of doubt cleared away; belief became knowledge; chaos assumed proportions of symmetry and order, and a pathway heretofore blindly trodden began to glow with increased light and wisdom.

Possessing nearly every phase of mediumship; clairvoyance, clairsaudience, trance, prophecy, and psychometry, were the most prominent. And oh, how refreshing to mortals

treading in comparative poverty the rock-paved highways of time, burdened with cares and crosses, to catch occasional breezes from Eden-lands, songs of encouragement from triumphal hosts of reformers, martyrs, apostles, prophets, and familiar words of sympathy and love, from the glorified dwellers of eternity! Spiritualism is the "heavenly witness," the long foretold "gift of the spirit," that should be "poured out upon all flesh," the "living manna," the "crystal river," proceeding from under the throne; the "other angel," flying and crying "come up hither," and the promised "New Jerusalem" seen of John in vision descending from God out of Heaven! As a gospel adapted to the nineteenth century, musical with the love-ministries of angels, it is a perpetual baptism from on high, a continual regeneration, a succession of higher births and endless privileges, a gentler dispensation of divine love guided by wisdom, the strength of the weary, the balm of healing for the sick, the consolation of the dying, the comfort of the mourner, and the sweetest answer to prayer! As a moral power in the world, its influence is exalting, its aim constructive, its work apostolic, its inspiration continuous, and, with divine elements suitable for all redemptive purposes, its grand design is to lift humanity through the moral power of angel ministry into present higher physical, mental and moral conditions, preparatory to that future progressive existence that stretches in increasing loveliness along the measureless eras of eternity. Spiritualism, turning the key, opened to the external consciousness the past sealed book of our brother's life, letting into his soul's treasure-chambers not only the departed, the unseen, the loved—a divine throng of heavenly guests—but, lifting the glass of memory and reverting backward, it revealed the eternal purpose of good from seeming evil—of sorrow blossoming into joys, of thorns transformed into roses, and tears crystalizing into pearls of matchless brilliancy.

## THE FIRST ACQUAINTANCE.

Sometime during the year 1863, speaking a Sunday in Chicago, Ill., a mutual friend accompanying us the following day, we were introduced to Mr. A. James, who was considered at that time a very powerful yet singular medium. The room, thoroughly magnetic from the constant presence of spirits, attracted our earnest attention. It seemed good to be there. The refined aural atmosphere of the apartment inspired us with a quiet subdued grandeur, rising afterwards into the joyous intensity of a partial transfiguration. The tables were covered with maps, drawing paper and pictured scrolls; while the walls were hung with strange paintings and pencilings sufficiently unique to challenge deep study. Antique, beggaring our powers of description, they were evidently geological, but in a wider sense, cosmical. The practised eye could trace all through them the law of progress. There were discernible the outlines of rocky strata, the oldest fossils, Asiatic shells, mineral veins, subterranean rivers, old cities in ruins, and human faces in configuration unlike to those described in any history extant. A calm influence virtually chaining us in the apartment, this band of immortals, approaching nearer, entranced the medium, speaking some in modern, others in unknown tongues; but all in tones sweet as angels use. Those deep, rich, intoned utterances of an ancient spirit, lingered in our soul for months like strains of distant music.

## PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

Whenever that great artist, Sir John Reynolds, drew a portrait, it was also his endeavor to produce a picture—a picture conveying a distinct idea. Patience, then, while we try our hand at pen-painting, the living subject in our midst. In

person friend James is tall and of rather a spare slender figure. His gait is easy and unstudied. The first glance at his countenance indicates candor and sincerity. Constant scrutiny and after acquaintance confirm the first impression. The face, rather long, is quiet and subdued in expression. The forehead is well-developed, and high rather than wide. The nose presents a fine illustration of the blending of the Roman and Grecian, the latter prevailing. The mouth is skillfully chiseled. The eyes, blue and mild in expression, rest in calm repose unless a little animated from conversation; when brightening, they twinkle with a genial good nature, and glow with a speaking soul-sympathy. The hair is brown, touched with now and then a silvered thread; his countenance has in it something of the paleness of the deep thinker; while the graceful cut curves and angles speak to the physiognomist of fidelity, energy and a fixed determination of purpose. A phrenologist would say, this individual, full in the mental, large and rounded up in the moral, high and broad in the spiritual brain region, is upright, candid and conscientious—a man of the strictest integrity. Neat in person, unassuming and rather retiring, his general appearance is prepossessing. His bearing toward all, whether in a social or business capacity, is gentlemanly, and his spiritual sphere truly ennobling.

## THE ARTESIAN WELL—PRELIMINARY.

This important Chicago enterprise of drilling and boring, under spirit direction, for *water, oil, gases*—all materials containing several primary elements in common, brought Mr. James to the notice of thousands and hundreds of thousands throughout the country.

In a pamphlet before us, entitled "*History of the Chicago Artesian Well*," written by George A. Shufeldt, Jr., a clear

thinker and excellent writer, we are informed, speaking of a piece of land near the city, that,

"It was further declared and stated that underneath *this ground* would also be found a well or stream of the best, purest and healthiest water known anywhere, which would rush to the surface with great force and power, and was in quantities sufficient to supply the people of this city for all time to come, and that this water would be found and used for that purpose. No very great degree of attention was paid to these statements until after many earnest repetitions of the same story *and a specific location of the land was made.* The medium, Mr. James, was taken to the ground, was there entranced, and, in that state, selected a point for boring the first well; and at that precise spot the well is now flowing 600,000 gallons per day of the best and purest water in the world. \* \* \* \*

"It is as clear as crystal, as pure as the diamond, free from all animal or vegetable matter, and from any injurious mineral substances, and its composition is such that it is better adapted for drinking purposes, and for health, than any other water known."

Referring to a second well, and boring for oil, he writes:

"This well has been pumped for about three weeks, and about seventy-five to one hundred gallons of petroleum secured. But this surface stratum of fossiliferous limestone, before mentioned as being saturated with petroleum, is so broken and distorted by the upheavals that it seems to be impossible to exclude the surface water and produce a vacuum below so as to draw the oil into the well from the seams and crevices. That oil exists here, and can, with perseverance, be obtained, there is no manner of doubt.

"This second well, like its predecessor, was located through the clairvoyant powers of Mr. James. In a state of unconscious trance, the spiritual intelligences through him selected the precise spot, on the surface beneath which the water would be again found; and here the drill went down, and here the water was found.

"This fountain lies deep down in the bowels of the earth, concealed from the natural sight. The physical senses cannot perceive it, and man cannot find it, but the intelligence which made this revelation, with powers of vision which pertain only to the immortal, said to us,

‘Come, and we will show you the exact location of this water, and we will demonstrate at once the truth of clairvoyance, and the fact of spiritual communion.’

“While we frankly admit the existence of a bare possibility of coming upon the first well of water by chance, accident or guess work, yet the discovery of the second well by the same means, and through the same source as that which indicated the first, reduces this possibility to a very slight thread; in fact turns the scale the other way, and as a mere matter of evidence the predicted result twice recurring, seems conclusively to demonstrate the fact that these things are what they claim to be, and not chance, accident or guess work.

“The second well is located about nine feet distance from the first; is 694 feet 4 inches in depth, to the surface of the water; was commenced on the 8th of May, and reached the water on the 1st day of November following. There are no striking geological differences in the two wells, the rock penetrated being almost the same in character, and exhibiting the same signs of oil. The water in the new well is entirely free from the odor of sulphur perceptible in the first well; this is owing to the fact that the vein of sulphuretted hydrogen gas which enters the well before it reaches the fountain, was not touched in boring the second well.”

This writer, intimately acquainted with Mr. James, says in reference to his education, mediumship, social and mental characteristics:

“It is known to me to be a *fact* that he is entirely ignorant of any language except the English; does not know the meaning of a single French, German, Italian, or Spanish word. He is a simple minded-man, in the sense that he knows nothing of frauds, trickery, or imposture—perfectly truthful and upright in his character, unostentatious, and seeking no publicity or notoriety—he pursues his own way in the world, a natural, honest man. His mind is as free from a knowledge of the sciences as that of a child of five years. He has had no instruction in drawing, and, in his normal state, has no knowledge of the art of any kind or description. There are hundreds and thousands of people here among us who know him well, and who can testify to these facts. Now, with a full knowledge of this man—his antecedents, education, and history—I know it to be a perfect

impossibility for him, in his natural state, or unaided by the higher powers, to do what he has done and what he is doing every day of his life."

In explaining a certain phase of his mediumship, this author further says:

"The medium labors in an unconscious state, with from two to six pencils, and with one or both hands, the pencils are placed between the fingers, and the hand moves with a rapidity which troubles the eye to follow, each pencil doing a separate part of the work at the same time, and it makes no difference whether in the dark or light; indeed his best pictures are made in a dark room. I have frequently bandaged his eyes, and held a paper between his face and his picture, and it made no difference; the pencils did their work equally as well as when his eyes were free and there were no obstructions.

"There is another fact illustrated in these works, *i. e.* the medium draws a square or circle to accurate measurement, without other implements than the mere pencil, and this with the right hand or left.

"Mr. James has gone further than these physical manifestations of the spirit power. In common with hundreds of others who can verify the facts here stated, I have for the past two years heard through him a series of discourses on all conceivable subjects, political, scientific, and philosophical, which would not disgrace the greatest intellects that ever lived. With equal freedom and facility he discusses questions of political economy and political science, geology, chemistry, medicine, astronomy, the philosophy of life, the structure of the earth, and all of the physical and natural sciences.

"A distinguished professor of the science and a State Geologist, after listening to a discourse from Mr. James on the subject, remarked, that 'I have met a man who knows more about geology than I do.'

"I have also heard him speak fluently, and with an evident knowledge of the whole, in French, Italian, Spanish, German, and an Indian tongue, and I am confident of the fact that he is, in his natural state, wholly ignorant of any other than the English language. There is neither deception nor fraud about this man. He is beyond *all question* above *suspicion*. He makes no exhibition for money, gets no money out of it, lives a retired and secluded life. Now what is it? Upon what hypothesis can this seeming mystery be solved? These things are



facts—hard, stubborn, unyielding facts. Let those who do not believe as I do in the intelligence which operating through this instrument, performs all of these wonders, solve the mystery; it is not for me."

It was evidently the purpose of these immortal intelligences to pursue a systematic course in the development of their medium; also to continue their work systematically after obtaining full control of his organism. "Order is heaven's first law," and method is an element of success in any great undertaking. These positions true, all may perceive the wisdom of his commencing with artesian wells and subterrene water veins. Water is very nearly allied to the physical organization. It constitutes, according to the calculations of scientists, about 4-5 of the weight of each human body.

A physiologist of much note, writing of the constituent elements of the outer physical man, gives the following estimate: "In the body of a man weighing 154 pounds, there are about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  pounds of mineral matter; consisting of phosphate of lime, 5 pounds 13 ounces; carbonate of lime, 1 pound; salt, 3 ounces, 3.76 grains; peroxide of iron, 150 grains; silica, 3 grains; making 7 pounds, 5 ounces, and 49 grains, with minute quantities of potash, chlorine, and several other substances. The rest of the organic system is composed of oxygen, nitrogen and carbon; 111 pounds of this oxygen and hydrogen being combined in the form of water."

This analysis, showing the relational basis, explains the sympathy existing between human bodies and the waters of the earth. Mr. James' first mediumistic work, therefore, would naturally be tracing pure, clear, crystal springs, locating artesian wells, and pointing out vast underground reservoirs of water.

With an eye to move in consonance with the law of adaptation and method, he would rapidly pass to the development of those petroleum treasures hidden like bubbling fountains in the rocky crevices of the earth. Oil,



though containing several of the primary elements in common with water, is more intimately related, however, to the mineral kingdom. Water the alphabet, oil wells seem to have been the second lessons in this school of design, originating in the heavens.

In the approaching future, stepping up angel-guided, this medium will be moved to strike out in a truly scientific manner to develop mineral territory; the softer minerals first, such as coal, lead, copper—then the harder and more valuable, silver and gold. And finally, directed by ancient spirits from the wisdom spheres, he will proceed to discover and exhume, “though deeply sanded o’er,” the dust-shingled cities of old, bringing up to the sunlight of this century quaint trophies of art now unknown. Uncovering, he will also reveal and read from the buried tomes and archives something of the literature and science that pertained to those magnificent civilizations that characterized the golden ages—ages that hung like glittering pearls along the horizon of an almost measureless past.

“Many golden beams shall the Orient throw  
O’er the midland ages brought.”

## THE FUTURE DIMLY SHADOWED.

While yet a resident of Chicago, parties frequently calling upon Mr. James sought to induce him to engage in wild speculative schemes, to go on exploring expeditions, and especially to visit at once the oil-well regions of Pennsylvania. No offers, no temptations, could cause him to swerve from his convictions of right. His uniform reply was: “Gentlemen, I must move in these matters as I’m moved upon.” At length, half entranced, the spirit of prophecy upon him, the controlling circle said:

“The time is not yet; be patient and firm; there will be a tide in your affairs that we shall see is taken at its flood; the future has

wonderful things in store for you and others, who, like an old apostle, are obedient to the heavenly vision. Some of those oil-associations you refer to are doing comparatively well; but they are all at work in the dark. It is with them opinion, guess-work and surface calculation; hence the few fortunes and many failures. The time, however, is near when we shall take this medium into that country, and open up a vast territory in strict harmony with the principles of geological science; a territory rich in this production, not even dreamed of now by oil companies. The oil stratum will be fully reached by drilling through the fourth sand, making the receiver in the underlying slate. So sure as the prophet said, 'the rocks shall pour forth rivers of oil,' so sure will this work when commenced eclipse all others in that direction."

This communication seemed designed both for the medium and those present. The band withdrawing their more positive influence, the purport of their words bloomed out fully into the outer consciousness and memory of the medium. He had seen the same imaged in vision. Leaving his body, he had also visited the locality in company with the geological portion of his spirit circle. "Coming events casting their shadows before," other media had similar visions of the successes that would attend his movements in a petroleum country.

## ORIGINAL OIL DISCOVERIES.

Petroleum, derived from the Latin word *petra*, a rock, and *oleum*, oil, literally signifies *rock-oil*; and as such it has been known and used to a limited extent for ages. A celebrated writer upon the subject says :

"The 'Greek fire' of more modern times was probably compounded of petroleum from the Zantean springs. From the time of Zoroaster the Naphtha of Baku has been sent all over Asia for the service of the sacred fire of the Parsees. The liquid streams spontaneously through the surface, and rises wherever a hole is bored. But especially at Belegan, six miles from the capital village, the sides of the mountain

stream with black oils, which collect in reservoirs constructed in an unknown ancient time, while not far off a spring of white oil gushes from the foot.

\* \* \* \* \*

"As a fuel, petroleum enters into numerous French patents. The people of the Caspian Sea mix it with clay; the Norwegians with sawdust and clay. The refuse charcoal of the French furnaces is mixed with charred peat or spent tar, and tar or pitch is added, and the whole ground or coked. As an illuminating agent, coal oil is fast supplanting the animal and vegetable oils. It has always been a lamp oil of India. It lights the streets of Genoa."

All Indian tribes have their prophets, seers, medicine men. The future is often revealed to them in dreams. Their traditions are handed down from chief to son. Here follows a portion of one of their legends relating to the healing properties of this oil:

"Many years ago, as the Seneca Indians have the tradition, the Great Spirit appeared to one of their chiefs in a dream, and told him that if he would proceed to a certain part of the country he would find, oozing up from the earth, a liquid which would prove a balm for the cure of many ailments to which red men as well as white men were heirs to. The chief proceeded to the spot, and there found the balm flowing copiously from the bosom of the earth. The instructions of the vision were complied with, and sure enough the liquid proved a healing ointment to the tribes of the Senecas."

The "Historical Recollections of Pennsylvania" throw additional light upon this matter. The following is to the point:

"There are several natural curiosities in the county [Venango], the most remarkable of which is the peculiarly inflammable oil found floating on the surface of Oil Creek. The Seneca oil, from the Oil Creek, was used by the Seneca Indians as an unguent, and in their religious worship. With it the Senecas mixed their war-paint, which gave them a hideous, glistening appearance, and added great

permanency to the paint, as it rendered it impervious to water. What a startling spectacle the oil-anointed warrior of the Senecas must have been, as he gave forth the fearful war whoop, or paddled his light canoe along the dark-blue waters of the Alleghany or Venango! Another use made of the oil was for religious worship. Here I cannot better describe it than in the imaginative language of the commandant as Fort Du Quesne to his Excellency General Montcalm, the unfortunate hero of Quebec. 'I would desire,' says the commandant, 'to assure your excellency that this is a most delightful land. Some of the most astonishing natural wonders have been discovered by our people. While descending the Alleghany, fifteen leagues below the mouth of the Conewango, and three above Fort Nenango, we were invited by the chief of the Senecas to attend a religious ceremony of his tribe. We landed, and drew up our canoe on a point where a small stream entered the river. The tribe appeared unusually solemn. We marched up the stream about half a league, where the company, a large band, it appeared, had arrived some days before us. Gigantic hills begirt us on every side. The scene was really sublime. The great chief then recited the conquests and heroism of his ancestors. The surface of the stream was covered with a thick scum, which burst into a complete conflagration. The oil had been gathered and lighted with a torch. At the sight of the flames the Indians gave forth a triumphant shout, that made the hills and valleys re-echo again. Here, then, is revived the ancient fire-worship of the East;—here are the children of the Sun.

\* \* \* \* \*

" 'On the rocks in some portions of this Country, are carved strange mystic figures; among others may be distinguished the *turtle*, the *serpent*, an *eye*, an *arrow*, and a *sun*. These are symbols, or hieroglyphics. They record the exploits and illustrious actions of departed and forgotten nations, and their battles. Who shall decipher these wondrous characters?'

"The question, for the present, must remain unanswered. The only intelligent answer we can give, is that they are the same kind of symbols used by the ancient Egyptians, Persians, and Asiatics, as a means of communicating their thoughts; but in what manner they were brought to this country, we are not now prepared to say.

"A more appropriate region than this could hardly have been selected for the residence of an Indian tribe. The rugged hills, clothed with forests and abounding with game,—the pure, sparkling streams flowing

from the hills, furnishing both excellent fishing and hunting grounds, and bordered here and there with fertile bottom-lands, as sites for their villages and cornfields, and overlooked by remarkable headlands and 'high places' for the burial of their departed braves, and for their places of worship.

"Accordingly, we find, in almost every direction, traces of a numerous Indian population once inhabiting this region.

"The developments of this great region of oil country really commenced about ten years since. 'About the close of the year 1859,' says S. P. Irvin, Esq., 'an enterprising Yankee from the State of Connecticut, by the name of Drake, made his appearance in the vicinity of Titusville, where he announced his intention of boring a hole in the ground, for the purpose of ascertaining if there were not valuable minerals concealed in the bowels of the earth. He accordingly located a well on Oil Creek, a short distance below the town, and commenced operations. He prosecuted the work with a degree of energy characteristic of the Yankee character, until his means became exhausted, his credit impaired, and he was regarded, by persons of contracted views, as an impostor. A certain blacksmith in the borough of Titusville refused to trust him for the price of a centre-bit. But neither the tongue of the calumniator nor the harsh treatment of the miser could abate his courage or relax his energy. Failure, instead of discouraging, only stimulated him to a renewed and more vigorous effort.

"It is said that faith will remove mountains. In this case it failed to remove the mountain; but it penetrated the flinty rock and caused the earth to yield up her oily treasures, as a fitting reward for the indomitable energy and perseverance of a man who believed in the immutable laws of nature and acted according to that belief. Seeing the small bubbles of oil, as they rose to the surface, he very rationally concluded that there must be a larger deposit underneath.

"He succeeded in procuring the necessary assistance to enable him to prosecute the work, until he had reached a depth of about one hundred and seventy feet, when he discovered that he had struck a crevice in the rock, which in the language of Scripture, '*poured him forth rivers of oil.*' The report of this extraordinary development was too incredible for belief; for, although it was known to geologists that oil existed in many parts of the world, that oil-wells were worked in Birmah, Babylonia, and the island of Trinidad for many centuries, it was startling intelligence to the great mass of the people in this region of country. When Mr. Drake put the tubing into his well it commenced

flowing at the rate of twenty barrels per day. The accumulation of gas, which forced the oil through the pipe, was another freak of nature, which more than ever filled the beholder with wonder and amazement.'

\* \* \* \* \*

"The next well to which we wish to call the attention of the reader is the one familiarly known as the 'Evans' well, in the borough of Franklin. Mr. Evans is a blacksmith by trade, and is an old resident of the place. A short time prior to the commencement of the 'excitement,' he sunk a well on the lot where he now resides, and, at the depth of seventeen feet from the surface, struck a fine vein of fresh water, which soon became covered with a thick scum of oil, so as to render the water almost unfit for use. When he learned that Colonel Drake had obtained oil by drilling down into the sand-rock, he came to the conclusion to sink his well. Not having the means to procure the necessary implements to carry his resolution into effect, he sought assistance, for some time without success. Finally, a merchant in Franklin, who became enlisted in the enterprise, sold him the iron, and he manufactured the tools himself. He then erected a derrick, and by means of a spring-pole, with the assistance of his two sons, bored the well to the depth of seventy-two feet, when he struck a heavy vein of oil, which flowed over the top of the conductor. \* \* \* \*

"The news of the discovery of the Evans well, the extraordinary supply of oil, and the strong probability of its becoming a leading article of commerce, spread like a flash of electricity, until the whole country was enveloped in a perfect blaze of excitement."

From this time the "oil bubble," as it was termed in Eastern cities, began to expand and assume gigantic proportions. Companies were formed, and stocks sold to multitudes, from millionaires to servant girls. All kinds of fabulous stories were told, false representations made, and swindling operations resorted to for the purpose of selling shares. And then, there were little system and no science exhibited in putting down these wells. Hundreds were sunk to the proper depth and no oil obtained. Traveling through the country one may see thousands of weather-beaten derricks standing as symbols of disappointments and financial oil-bubble explosions. All through those first

years, locating, digging, boring, was chance-work, the merest hap-hazard business. Compensations follow upon the heels of all transactions. Owing to the uncertainty attending them, lands and stocks depreciated in value, and many an inflated air-castle came rudely down. Extremes follow each other. There is a vast difference between a wild oil-excitement fever, resulting in the organization of oil companies for speculation, with the aim to fill the coffers of individuals, and a steady legitimate business such as Mr. James prosecutes under spirit guidance, for the noble purpose of aiding the true and faithful in disseminating the beautiful principles of the Harmonial Philosophy.

Occasionally mediums invited visited the oil regions ; but, owing to the peculiar electrical conditions of the locality, the dependent phase of their clairvoyance, or perhaps—what was more potent to prevent success—a powerful psychological influence would be thrown upon them by the parties securing their services. This defeated the purpose, however wisely conceived. When mortals attempt to dictate, or control, high spiritual intelligences, there is certain to be discord, and generally absolute defeat, touching the matter under consideration.

### MR. JAMES' FIRST VISIT TO THE OIL COUNTRY.

Though frequently visiting these Pennsylvania oil regions, as a spirit, accompanied by his spirit-guides, yet to the outer world that cognizes only time, space and physical forms, it must be recorded, that he first planted his feet in the borough of Pleasantville, Venango Co., Pa., Oct. 31st, 1866. At this time he was accompanied by Mr. C. P. Eaton, Laona, N. Y., Mr. Geo. Porter, Fredonia, N. Y., and Mr. Geo. McBride, Sheridan Center, N. Y.,—all on their way to examine some property a few miles South of Pleasantville, belonging to two of the above named gentlemen.



Seated in a buggy with Mr. Eaton, they had proceeded but a little distance, when Mr. James became violently influenced by his attending spirit-guides. This invisible power increased, till Paul-like, he hardly knew whether he was "in the body or out." The control soon becoming absolute, he was taken over the fence into a lot on the east side the road, moving rapidly and his companions following. Nearly unconscious, the locomotion seemed to him like gliding or sailing. The last he distinctly remembers was being hurriedly forced over the fence. Proceeding towards the south side, then back and near the north end of the field, he moved more cautiously, as though tracing some lode or vein. Reaching a certain locality he was thrown heavily upon the ground, and making a mark with his finger, thrust a penny some inches into the earth. He then fell upon the bosom of the earth, stiff, and apparently lifeless. His eyes were closed, the face pale, the pulse feeble, and the limbs rigid as in death. Messrs. Porter and McBride, unaccustomed to witness this superior condition, or trance-state, were frightened, till assured by Mr. Eaton—a gentleman long familiar with the spiritual phenomena—that there was not the least danger to be apprehended. As Peter "fell into a trance," as Paul, the Apostles, and primitive Christians were frequently entranced, so trance is common in the ranks of Spiritualists. There are three general divisions of spirit-control, the mechanical, the psychological and the inspirational. In the trance-instance referred to above, Indian spirits controlled his body mechanically, while wisdom spirits induced the trance condition.

Lying upon the surface of the earth, calm and pale, apparently at death's door, some little time, he was partially raised up by these unseen influences; and then, controlled by highly intelligent spirits to address those present. The intelligences gave them to understand in language at once pointed and positive, that they were then upon a superior oil-producing territory, extending many miles in a certain direction. That directly under their feet then, were flowing



streams of oil that if opened, would yield rich supplies. This was the spot—the precise location of “Harmonial Well, No. 1.” The accompanying parties noted the point; measured from it certain distances, and adjusting the stakes, left the penny in the earth at the precise point designated by the spirits.

The gentlemen present were further informed by these immortals that a certain class of minds on earth, quite devoid of selfishness and full of philanthropy, had, unconsciously to themselves, called to their aid the intelligence and guidance of a large number of exalted spirits, who, when clothed in mortality, were deeply interested in the study of chemistry, geology and the natural sciences. Remember, that passing into spirit life does not immediately change the loves, the desires and tendencies of the individual. Poets court diviner muses in the summer climes of the spirit land; musicians sweep their golden harp-strings, and the geologists further acquainting themselves with *this*, delight to probe new earths in process of formation. Accordingly, during this same entrancement, those listening were assured by the geological portion of the circle, that they had long been aware of these petroleum deposits, and had patiently awaited the opportunity and conditions to develop them for the purpose of promoting the spiritual interests of the children of men upon earth. And now in developing this oil territory through spirit direction, the trance and other spiritual phenomena, they felt they could at the same time demonstrate their own conscious existence; could show that changing worlds does not destroy identity; does not effect individuality; that all true knowledge gained here is retained there, and that the future life is one of intense activity and progress. Furthermore, they could put into the hands of many true and faithful workers such a competency as would aid them to be more serviceable instruments and missionaries under the supervision of guardian angels for the upbuilding of the great temple of the Harmonial Philosophy.

Pleasantville, formerly small and very quiet, is situated on high land some 500 feet above Oil creek, and entirely out of the supposed immediate petroleum region. At the time of locating the first Harmonial Well, Mr. James entranced, the spirits breathed many prophecies from his lips. Some of them seemed incredible; and others absolutely impossible of fulfillment in the space of time mentioned. Among others, it was said remarkable changes would be wrought in this whole vicinity of country within the next two and three years. Strangers would gather from different points; the streets would be lined with people; a vast amount of business would be done; many poor would exult in a competence; old buildings would be repaired, and new ones erected; more liberal religious principles would be taught; and the first well, though put down amid the jeers and sneers of the thoughtless and creedal, would become a Mecca whither thousands would flock to behold the oil bubbling and flowing, as from a perpetual fountain. To-day, Aug. 7th, 1868, less than two years, several of these prophecies have been actualized, and the others are in the process of a speedy and liberal fulfillment. Let it no more be said, "a prophet is not without honor, save in his own country."

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## NORMAN POTTER AND FAMILY.

During Abraham James' first tour to Pennsylvania for the purpose of examining oil territories clairvoyantly, he formed the acquaintance of Mr. Potter, a sound, substantial, clear-headed man of Puritan descent, who, formerly engaged in railroading in the Western States, had more recently been operating in various ways in the petroleum country. He was at this time a resident of Titusville, and highly esteemed by his fellow citizens. Candid, energetic, executive even to details, and withal exceedingly mediumistic, he was just fitted both by organization and previous discipline, to

engage in the practical department of this great work, so frequently foreshadowed in prophecy. The spirits purposed that in this heaven-conceived movement, the spiritual should be acknowledged as the "power behind the throne." The prophetic, the ideal, must be out-wrought into the objective real. In all probability, therefore, it was a part of the original plan in spirit-life, that these individuals (James and Potter) should meet. They came together as magnet and steel. The fraternal attraction, the cohesive sympathy from the first meeting was mutual. Each seemed constitutionally fitted to do his appropriate work upon this Temple, whose basic foundation resting down among dark strata in the earth was to rise majestic into the sunlight, and ascending still, was to become more and more symmetrical, and more strikingly beautiful, even to the key-stone in the polished arch. Understand, that not only locating, but the sinking of these Harmonial Wells, even to mechanical suggestions, has all been made under the direct superintendence of the spirit-world. Though friend Potter, balanced and self-reliant, is in and of himself a very firm, capable business man, he is true as needle to pole to his spiritual impressions and the voices of those spirit-guides controlling Mr. James. Having perfect confidence in them he carries out their directions to the letter. Never did he, through forgetfulness, or from any other cause, deviate a particle from the course marked out, without suffering loss in consequence. Furthermore, he has been timely warned of accident; been informed whom to employ as assistants; and brought safely out of the most perplexing difficulties through entire reliance upon this band of invisibles.

Right here, the good reader inquires, would you advise each to put such implicit confidence in *all* spirit-guidance, purported and real? By no means! Individuality is the *pearl* of pearls, and reason the crowning gift of God to man. It is only such spirits as have been "often *tried*, never denied, and are willing to be tried again," that are worthy of so abiding trust in their wisdom. "Beloved," said the

Apostle John, "believe not every spirit, but *try* the spirits." Those you have long conversed with, those you have tried months and years, finding them unselfish, truthful, aspirational, calm, pure, and wise—*trust*—rely upon and *trust* in *them* as do scholars in noble, self-sacrificing teachers, or children in fond, loving parents.

In this connection it is but justice to say that Mrs. Nellie B. Potter, a most estimable lady, became, with Mr. Potter, her husband (upon meeting Mr. James), immediately and deeply interested in this work of developing material wealth basined in the earth, for the purpose of extending still wider the principles of Spiritualism, and making them practical as a means of human redemption. Mrs. Potter was born with the *gift* of clear-seeing—a phase of mediumship very acceptable in the direction of this enterprise.

When a child, seeing spirit children and playing with them in garden and grove, she thought it strange that others could not see the same. Attending the dedication of the Universalist Church, Kelloggsville, Cayuga County, N. Y., when about seven years of age, the church, to her vision, became magnetically illumined; while a peculiarly brilliant light encircled us and the other clergymen present. Becoming tremulous and feeling strange from this partial spirit control, she wept and begged her mother to go home with her. Those Universalist churches then, twenty and twenty-five years since, were truly *lights* set upon hills; and those believers in the "Abrahamic faith" were liberal and progressive. Now the leaf of Universalism is withering! The angels of inspiration have left it, and the liberals of the age are preparing the corpse for burial! In fine, Universalists have crystallized into a *sect*. They have a *creed*—a strict Baltimore interpretation of it, and formally trying their clergy, disfellowship them for heresy with all the gravity of the "Orthodox" in the palmier days of Calvinism! All along Mrs. Potter's earlier years she saw landscapes, weird cities, fields, forests and mountains, clad in emerald and gold. She was blessed, too, with beautiful visions and occasional

glimpses of the glories that gladden the upper kingdoms of God. Conditions right, she leaves (save connected by a magnetic cord) her frail organism, travels in spirit space, meets and recognizes other spirits, yet connected sympathetically with their forms, and also locates oil-lands. Her clairvoyant powers, acting in concert with those of Mr. James, mutually corroborate each other. Some of her prose writings and poetical effusions, written either in the trance or under inspiration, are worthy of publication. Finally, as friend, sister, wife—a mother to *all*—she is as universally esteemed as known. Not from the beauty of the goddess; not from the flowery dells of Arcadia; not from queens crowned and swaying sceptres; but from such women as *these*, angels of our households, do men gather moral strength and purity of purpose to perfect in themselves a more true and divine manhood.

### VISIONS CORROBORATING MEDIUMSHIP.

Nights follow days. Music has its rests. After storms sea-waves recede, and tremulously reposing for a moment o'er the blue depths below, are kissed into a deep quiet by stars and sunny skies. Mr. James required relaxation. A change of magnetic conditions was indispensable before commencing the momentous project of sinking these wells. Travel loomed up as the inspiration of the moment. Journeying, he related in each locality the thrilling incidents connected with locating these petroleum streams and deposits, under spirit control.

In parlors and at social gatherings, in the presence of Spiritualists and sectarists, he expressed the most positive *faith* in his spirit-guides, his unequivocal conviction of success, and his firm belief in the fulfillment of all the prophecies made relating to the depth of the oil basins; the immense quantities that would be brought to the surface;

the increase of price in the markets, and the wealth that would flow into his possession for exalted purposes. He furthermore enunciated and dwelt upon these facts in his public lectures in some of the Western cities, and also before the society of Spiritualists worshipping in Dodworth Hall, New York.

This course of lectures concluded, the Spiritualist papers published the following :

"The First Society of Spiritualists of New York were addressed at Dodworth's Hall, last Sunday again, February 24th, by Mr. Abraham James, the celebrated trance medium, and discoverer of the famous Chicago artesian well.

"Mr. James gave us a most graphic description of his mediumistic experience, which was listened to by a large and appreciative audience, with the most profound attention. He related incidents in his life most intensely interesting, and of great importance to the seekers after truth. The *manner* in which they were related, as well as the matter, was most pleasing and impressive, causing all who heard him to feel perfect confidence in their truth.

"Mr. James is pleasing in his deportment as a speaker, possessing a voice of great volume, and pleasing in its intonations. He must, if he would devote himself to that calling, become one of the brightest lights in the country as a public speaker.

"We hope we may be able to prevail upon him to stay with us and address our meetings, instead of going to the Pennsylvania oil regions as he intends. He informs us, however, that he has certain engagements to fill there, before he can make any positive arrangements for speaking. He has suffered much during the winter from ill health, and the severe process of spiritual development he has been undergoing, being exceedingly sensitive to all surrounding conditions and spheres of individuals, as well as changes of atmosphere.

"COMMITTEE,  
"First Society of Spiritualists at Dodworth's Hall."

Remaining in the city several months recruiting his health, he met, at spiritual seances, Emma Hardinge, Wm. Blanchard, the artist Andersons, the Jacksons, E. H. Green, Esq.,

of England, and others prominently identified with the Spiritual Philosophy. At these times he would relate his psychometric oil-discoveries; and spirits controlling his organism would re-affirm, in the most pointed manner, their former prophecies, adding, that finances sufficient to sink the wells, (thereby proving the truth of their declarations), would be forthcoming, and from Spiritualists, too, at the appropriate time.

During this winter of 1867 he had many significant visions touching the future of the territory in and about Pleasantville. He saw at one time a dark cloud hanging over those highlands. Ere long it gradually arose, and floating away, left a glaring, gaseous light. Men gathered from the different points of compass, and standing out boldly among them were a number of very large tanks. A little distance therefrom he saw a railroad with cars dashing off at full speed, bearing away a large number of tanks filled from two enormous iron reservoirs. At another time, rapt in the visions of night, he saw in this region an almost innumerable number of derricks shooting up like mainmasts from shipping in commercial ports, and under them were wells producing a rich abundance; others partially down, and others still just commenced. Beneath them all were little streams and bright veins shining like liquid fire. At some points several of the streams would seemingly cross, or rather blend with each other, and wells located at such centers yielded large products. There were no failures in the wells sunk on this oil-belt, or the spurs running therefrom in a certain direction. This line his clairvoyant eye clearly traced in the vision.

William Porter, of Pleasantville, an excellent man, now along in the sere of life, and one of the pillars of the Baptist church, had dreamed long before that oil flowed over this part of the country, and in the somewhat strange dream fixed upon the same locality afterwards pointed out by the spirits through their chosen medium. Many dreams, so-called, are impressions daguerreotyped upon the spiritual



sensorium by ministering spirits. Angels "of the Lord appeared in dreams" in Bible times, and why not in this, thus fulfilling the ancient scriptures? "And it shall come to pass in the last days," (of creeds and sectarian dogmas) saith God, "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." (*Acts ii: 17.*)

Near the close of the winter 1867, Mr. Eaton was in the neighborhood of Pleasantville with another medium whom he avers "knew nothing of the location made by Mr. James." This young man, under spirit influence, followed almost in his very footsteps, until halting, he fixed upon the identical spot as the place to commence drilling. Here, under the surface, the penny previously deposited was found.

In May, 1867, Mr. James, calling at the hospitable home of Mrs. Maynard, Buffalo, N. Y., was introduced just in the gray of evening-time to Mrs. C. She passed almost immediately into a superior spiritual condition, portraying with great accuracy his disposition, tendencies and mental characteristics. Then the psychologic influence partially changing, she saw him climb a fence, pass into a field, and fixing his eyes intently upon the ground he seemed to remain stationary. Very soon his whole form became enveloped in a luminous cloud, and beckoning to some men standing in distance, they came forward with implements of labor and commenced erecting derricks, digging, drilling and bringing engines on to the ground. Standing aside, she heard a rumbling sound like distant thunder, and then saw water gushing up from the earth. This changed into a dark oily substance which finally became a column of oil bursting out with tremendous force. The whole vision was a striking prophetic description of the first Harmonial Well; the vein of which, when struck, streamed up full thirty feet above the summit of the derrick.



Meeting Miss R——, of Boston, Erie county, N. Y., about this time, she became semi-consciously entranced, and improvised a fine poem, in which she described the enterprise as conceived in spirit-life, depicted the progress of the work, the difficulties to be encountered, the faint-heartedness of certain mortals connected with the project because of delays, the bright array of immortals attending, a star of promise upon the medium's forehead, and the certainty of final success.

Mrs. W——, of Illinois, saw, Dec. 20, 1867, for him, the following vision :

"I see you standing at the foot of a steep and rugged mountain. The top is bathed in sunlight, and beyond stretches a beautiful plain far as the eye can reach. The ascent of this mountain seems difficult, and as you contemplate it, there's sadness depicted upon your countenance. You start on the perilous path, which in places is narrow. Thorns pierce your feet; but every wound inspires you with new strength. Hovering near you as guide and protector is a beautiful radiant being; in the distance are others clothed in raiment out-dazzling the sun. One-third the way up you encounter a formidable obstacle; an immense rock apparently imbedded in the earth; but hands and will-power hurl it down the mountain side to the base, and the way for a little time seems comparatively free from rocks, creeping things and poisonous vines.

"Again, you encounter difficulties; but your immortal teachers bathe your temples in baptismal influences; you press on. Men flock to you with tools and machinery. They smite the earth day after day. Liquid treasures are flowing under their feet. An angel waves a banner over you, and on it is inscribed a single word, 'Excelsior,' and just above it is a glittering crown.

"Calmly, firmly you pursue your way, these men following. Pointing to the earth, another rock rolls away, and from under the tread of those individuals accompanying you, there boil up petroleum treasures, and the rough places around are worn smooth with the pressure of human feet. A voice says, 'Just beyond, O faithful brother, is the topmost mountain peak, all tinted in crimson and gold; and to the right a broad and widening plain, burdened with flowers and ripening fruitage. Enter into your reward!'"

## WORK ON THE WELL COMMENCED.

Land having been previously leased of the owner, Wm. Porter. Mr. James was informed by his heavenly teachers the last of June, 1867, that the time had arrived for taking active measures to secure the funds necessary for sinking the first well. This was afterwards named by the spirits "Harmonial Well."

Friar Bacon, the original inventor of the telescope, dreamed mystic dreams and had visions. Socrates had an "attending demon" (spirit guide), and Grecian history informs us, that whenever he listened to the words of this unseen intelligence, he gained his suits, and was crowned with eminent success. Spirit voices said to our friend, who is both psychometric and clairaudient, touching the immediate future: "*Keep yourself as passive as possible; look well to your health and physical surroundings; maintain at all times an equal balance of your mental powers, and move in this matter precisely as we impress you.*" Accordingly, wherever he was inspired to go, broaching the subject of finances for the accomplishment of the project in view, he met with remarkable encouragement. So prompt financial responses from Spiritualists were unexpected. Never did he urge or persuade any one to embark in this enterprise, that to the hard materialistic outside world seemed so perilous and visionary, unless they felt a strong desire on their own part to invest. None but avowed Spiritualists, and such professed liberalists as manifested a desire to engage in philanthropic movements, became pecuniarily interested. Many, very many who were anxious to furnish funds by taking shares, he was moved or impressed to discourage in so doing. Tangled threads make unsound webs. Angels with eyes ever unsealed know the worthy—know who along in the shadow-crested future will rightly use material wealth.

The means at hand, derrick and engine-house erected, the workmen commenced in earnest on the 31st of August, 1867.

Prosperity attended the work. The accidents were few; and those foreshadowed by the dwellers on the other side the river of death. The subject of this brief history was fixed upon by these banded spirits as the head-center, or rather as the contral mediumistic magnet for the continuance and consummation of the enterprise; and Mr. Potter was appointed by the powers above, the business agent, who frequently counseling, was governed by the suggestions of this controlling circle. When a few hundred feet down, they said to him:

"You will not have to go to the depth you expect. There are obstacles, however, to encounter, that wisdom will not disclose at present. Hold on to your first petroleum supplies, as there will soon be an advance in the price of the article. Secure, soon as arrangements can be made, certain lands in ————— directions for future extensive operations. Keep your own counsels. When you strike the oil-strata in the first well, scores will apply to this medium for shares and interests. Others will seek to secure leases adjacent to his locations, and others still in different States will hold out strong inducements for him to go and locate oil-wells, coal-mines, and mineral territory."

Mr. Potter carefully noted these sayings and prophecies.

Such churchmen as think it unworthy of spirits to act as moving causes in pointing out oil deposits, when foreseeing that those made wealthy thereby will use their riches for the spiritual enlightenment, and amelioration of humanity, will turn to the following passages of "Sacred Scripture":

"At the same time spake the Lord by Isaiah, saying: go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot; and he did so, walking naked and barefoot."—*Isaiah*, xx : 2.

"And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded."—*Genesis*, xi : 5.

"And it came to pass that in the morning-watch, the Lord \* \* \* \* took off their (the Egyptians) chariot-wheels that they drave them heavily." \* \* \* \*—*Exodus*, xiv : 24, 25.

"And Gideon said unto God, if thou wilt save Israel by my hand; behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor, and if the dew be on

the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth besides, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by my hand.

"And it was so, for he rose up early on the morrow and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl-full of water."—*Judges*, vi: 31, 37, 38.

Now then, if the Lord, according to the scriptures, taught Ezekiel "bread-making"—commanded Isaiah to go barefoot and "naked"—came down to examine a "tower," that men had built—took off the Egyptians' "chariot-wheels," and wet Gideon's "sheep-fleece," it certainly should not be considered either undignified or unworthy of exalted spirits—our immortal brothers—to lead an enterprise that promises to scatter wide the seeds of truth and spiritual knowledge.

While the drill was penetrating the rock, while the work was favorably progressing, and spirits uttering prophetic words of cheer and success, sectarists and atheistic wiseacres treated the project and those engaged therein with derision, and newspaper paragraphists wrote either in a coarse, rude, or cavalier style, concerning the movement and the prospective consummation. The following are samples:

"For four years past, a party of Spiritualists in Chicago have been diligently boring a hole in the earth, on the western edge of the city, in quest of oil. A 'medium,' led by an invisible spirit, promised that by the exercise of much faith and a small augur, the well would spout oil; but the more the deluded borers bored, the less signs of oil they saw. A depth of 790 feet was reached—and there was a prodigious artesian well, with plenty of water, but no oil."—*Fredonia Censor*.

This appearing in the *Censor* of Jan. 1, 1868, contained, saying nothing of the ungentlemanly insinuation, a direct *misstatement*. Probably the editor penned it with eye trustingly turned towards the Atonement:

"Jesus died and paid it all,  
All the debt I owe."

The Titusville *Morning Herald*, speaking of oil companies and the sale of territories for petroleum purposes, referred several times to the Pleasantville "*spiritual well*"—such was the editorial phrase. Under date of Dec. 3, 1867, it said:

"The well near Pleasantville, owned by *Spiritualists*, will be completed during the next ten days. The medium who located the well sold several sixteenths at \$5,000 each."

The *Herald* of Dec. 6th contained the following correction from the pen of Mr. James:

"TITUSVILLE, Dec. 5th, 1867.

"*Editor Morning Herald:*

"Seeing a notice in your paper in reference to our well in Pleasantville, which reflects somewhat upon me, I wish to set the matter right.

"That the Harmonial Well was located by me, is true; that it belongs to Spiritualists, is also true; but that I have sold the sixteenths as high as \$5,000, making for myself a grand speculation, is *not* true. With the same good luck that has marked the progress of our work thus far, a few more days will show the truth or falsity of our prophecies.

"Very respectfully yours,

"ABRAHAM JAMES."

When village newspaper penny-a-liners write of Spiritualism, spiritual media, psychology and mental philosophy, they usually remind us of one of Byron's characters, who

"Saw with his own eyes the moon was round,  
Was also certain the world was square,  
Because he journeyed fifty miles, and found  
No sign that it was circular anywhere!"

Traveling in the autumn of 1867 eastward to Boston, Mr. James spared no pains to publish the *fact* to the world that spirits had controlled his organism to locate a petroleum well that would prove but the alphabet to further chapters of discovery and wealth. This he proclaimed personally to assembled thousands.

June 7th, he spoke of it to a large audience in Gowanda, N. Y.

June 30th, to a fine congregation in Randolph, N. Y.

July 14th, in Taylor's Grove, Erie county, N. Y. -

July 28th, in the Rochester State Association of Spiritualists, the proceedings of which were reported and published in the *Banner of Light*.

September 4th, while in Cleveland, Ohio, attending the Fourth National Convention of Spiritualists, he published 10,000 circulars, distributing a portion of them there, and forwarded the remainder by mail to the most prominent Spiritualists of the country from Maine to California. The following embodies the gist of the circular :

"DEAR FRIENDS: I take pleasure in calling your attention to a few facts relative to the manner in which I have been used as an instrument of the spirit-world for demonstrating in a plain, substantial manner the power, intelligence and holy purposes of spirits to aid all sincere workers in the noble purpose of human elevation ; and to show, also, that the knowledge they obtained of art, science, geology, philosophy, etc., while on earth, is retained by them, and may be used in connection with what they have since learned, to benefit humanity.

"After many different revelations relative to the geological and mineralogical conditions of the earth, I was last year brought to engage in a special work, the interests of which were to be devoted to the propagation of the principles of Spiritualism. Riding with a friend in Venango County, Pa., I was violently influenced and controlled by a power outside myself. Forced from the buggy over the fence, and becoming entirely unconscious, I was moved some distance across the field, and made to stop upon a certain location, where my controlling influences said to those present, pointing towards the earth, 'here is an immense amount of petroleum oil.' Several months after another medium was brought to the identical spot. A few years ago the gentleman who owns the property—but does not believe in our philosophy—dreamed that he had a large flowing well of oil upon this lot, and when, upon seeing the location, he declares it to be the exact spot where he saw clearly in his vision the well pouring forth oil

so abundantly. Mediums all over the country have seen it prophetically in like manner. Since its location, \* \* \* the shares have been mostly taken by true Spiritualists.

"The well has been commenced, and is going down with all possible despatch; and we hope thus to prove again and again the power and intelligence of spirits. I do not, my friends, write this to advertise myself, but to have you *know* these facts, that you may bear testimony thereto, when the proper time comes.

"Yours, in true sympathy,

"A. JAMES.

"Box 34, Pleasantville, Venango Co., Pa."

Incidental impediments, such as storms, bitter frosts congealing the waters, the impairing of machinery fixtures, and the fastening of tools, partially impeded the work at different times. This disheartened a few individuals holding interests. They breathed their doubts and fears upon the passing winds. Angels caught their complaining refrains. No sound, no breath is lost. Each spoken word becomes a wandering minstrel, saddening or gladdening souls forever. The immortalized, aware of these doubts and half-uttered dissatisfactions, gave for the benefit of their faithful, trusting medium the following visions—stars truly of promise and encouragement. Mrs. H——, near Nashville, N. Y., entranced, said:

"I see you, as it were in the mid-heavens, and a group of persons below standing in a circle around a well, and apparently interested. I recognize some of the parties. Presently starting, they pass out singly, holding in their hands branches of evergreens. Those held by some I see withering, and as they pass out the withered branches are cast upon the ground. Some seem but partly withered; and other parties take them, saying in cheerful tones—'*They will live.*' The file moving around pass in at another door, or opening, and re-form the circle around the well. Though now complete, there is trouble in the working of the machinery. Master minds examine it. A light is now placed in my hand. Holding it above my head, and looking into the depths of the well, I see the cause of the difficulty.

A voice now says. there are unilluminated, unstable minds connected with this work that are stimulated alone with a desire for selfish gains —withered branches. They will become discouraged; and ere the projected work becomes a grand success, their interests will be taken by others, moved by the right motives and a broader philanthropy."

Brought unexpectedly into the society of Mrs. H——, of Buffalo, N. Y., January 10, 1868, she said :

"A voice as from the distance, sweet, low and lute-like, speaks, 'Sister, mark what you see \* \* \* \* I behold rising before me a mountain' upon the highest point of which is a flag waving, and thereon this motto: '*Victory or Death.*'

"I see you nearing the top of this mountain. A beautiful spirit form descends from heavenly heights above and greets you thus: '*Thou true and tried one, we welcome thee to our wisdom sphere.*' Claspng you by the hand he conducts you across a beautiful plain, where a large company of spirits approaching, greet you with smiles and joy-beaming countenances. I now hear music, and see a calm angelic being advancing and holding in the hands two wreaths, one of thorns, the other of laurel. This ministering angel addresses you thus: '*Brother of earth, while passing through the sphere of sympathy and the roughness inseparable from external life, thorns have lined your pathway; now wisdom crowns you with laurel. In the center of this laurel wreath is a fiery opal. Observe this opal, and remember that just in proportion as you are true to this sphere, will be the brilliancy of this star. There are seven spirits who will attend you from this sphere. The leading one is most brilliant. I think him very ancient, and of Asiatic origin. It seems to me no child of earth ever before had this class of spirits to direct and guide.*

"A great responsibility, my brother, rests upon you; be prayerful, be firm and watchful, that this band of immortal beings may be able to approach and guide you, for upon such guidance depends your success. You will leave the sympathetic sphere of external friends and friendships far behind, as you near the higher sphere of use. You are entering the vestibule of this temple now. The present shadow is but momentary. The full machinery will soon be in motion. That descent for those first artesian waters so pure and clear, was but the preparatory step. Oily substances will speedily be seen dashing up from these dark depths. This will be your first real success in the realm of use.



The second, relating to the mineral kingdom, will be greater, and conducted on a grander scale. The third, as the crowning act in the triune drama, will consist in the exploration of ruins, and the unearthing of ancient cities; reading and translating their works of wisdom. This will show there were high conditions of civilization, and golden eras mossy with time, ere Adam walked the banks of Eden rivers or cooled himself in the shadows of the tree of life. This will give you a name on earth immortal. Oh, could you see your mission, as I behold it, you would hardly credit your senses. Be calm and self-possessed; be gentle, even-minded and aspirational, for angels look on and admire.”

Meeting Emma H.———, in New York, she described in her own peculiar winning and classic style, a scene of transcending beauty and promise, relating to Mr. James. After temporary defeats, after struggle and discipline, she saw him emerging from a baptismal fountain of crystal waters.

The silvery mist-cloud hanging just above him, was spanned with a rainbow of rarest, richest hues; while the spray and scattering pearl-drops from the fountain, by a mystic law unknown to earth, became transformed to silken grasses and blooming roses under his feet. Passing a little distance, rising an eminence, and entering a garden fragrant with tropical flowers, wealth flowed to him from every quarter of the globe, and what seemed wonderfully strange, it all came originally up out from the earth, thus in no way depriving or lessening the stores and treasures of others. A moment more, and she saw this immense wealth crystalize into capital, and then, under supervision of angels, flow out, like refreshing showers and morning sunbeams, in the direction of charitable deeds, broad philanthropic aims, and holy purposes, tending to the strengthening of the pillars of truth and decorating the divine temple of the Spiritual Philosophy.

Several incidents referred to in the foregoing visions such as the “withered branches,” changing of “interests,” “momentary shadows,” the “cloud spanned with a rainbow,” etc., had direct reference to financial and mechanical matters connected with the well, before reaching the deeply hidden

petroleum streams. Others, more prophetic, reaching out into the future, are yet to be fulfilled.

Dec., 1867, we were engaged to address the Spiritualists of Buffalo, N. Y. Towards the last of the month Mr. James visited the city for a few days of relaxation and rest. At this time skeptics of the oil regions were blatant in the expression of their doubts. The weather was piercing cold. The tools down over 700 feet were fast, and had been since the 12th of the month. Such prospects would have dampened the courage of any man under ordinary circumstances. And yet, at the close of one of our lectures, Mr. James, invited, arose, and in manner dignified, in voice clear, full and eloquent, re-stated the oft reiterated facts concerning this clairvoyant oil-well location, and with a faith and a firmness that would have done honor to those old English martyrs, said, near the conclusion :

"I know that this great project will ultimate in complete success. My immortal teachers have never deceived me. Every prophecy breathed through my organization relating to this matter will be literally actualized, and the loudest babblers shall yet become dumb!"

Succeeding the evening lecture, and returning to the hospitable home of Mrs. Maynard, whose maternal soul keeps open doors for the entrance of all media, though the hour was late, his spirit guides, entrancing him, assured those present that they inspired the very positive remarks of the medium in the hall; that there is no occasion for the least anxiety; that the tools will be all free in a day or two; that the whole management, under the directing influences of higher powers, and that wisely considered, *all is right*. Leaving the following morning and spending Monday night at Laona, N. Y., Mrs. S——, of this place, saw in vision the spirit of a venerable Quaker. Drawing near, his vesture bright and shining, and countenance beaming in benignant smiles, he mildly said: "Say to thy friend James, all is well; thee will hear the good news early in the morning." And

according to the promise, about 8 o'clock the next morning, a dispatch was received from Mr. Potter, stating, "*the tools are out—the show fine!*"

Parting with Mr. James in Buffalo on Monday morning, extending the fraternal hand, he pleasantly remarked: "When they get those tools out, pierce that fourth sandstone I've seen, and strike oil, I shall write you; where will you be?"

"Next month I am to lecture in Philadelphia."

"Very well—you'll hear from me."

Days, weary days of thought and mental labor passed, and surely the expected letter came charged with a magnetic thrill of joy and triumph. The drill had probed the vein, the tubing had been adjusted, and the petroleum was flowing, pouring in great force and in large quantities! The sensation produced by this strike was perfectly indescribable. A good portion of Pleasantville and of the immediate vicinity poured forth their inhabitants to witness the gushing proceeds from the "spiritual well" in this upland territory, heretofore tabooed by oil men. Mr. John D. Farwell, a most upright estimable man who had the direct management of putting down this Harmonial Well, estimated, that, on the first day of its flowing, a thousand individuals visited the locality, some from curiosity or a listless drifting propensity, and others with an eye to the ulterior object of future speculations. Reporters noticed it handsomely in the Chicago and New York papers. The Titusville *Morning Herald* and other periodicals in Western Pennsylvania mentioned the result in terms of marked gratification, though necessitated to connect the enterprise with clairvoyance and Spiritualism.

Upon credibly hearing, the following was written for the Western Department of the *Banner of Light*, under this caption:

"A. JAMES' HARMONIAL WELL A SUCCESS—PROPHECY FULFILLED,  
AND SPIRITUALISM FURTHER VINDICATED.

"The faintest spirit 'raps' from immortal guests are exceedingly precious, because echoes of conscious existence from the dwellers of

the Better Land. Trance, the outer consciousness, partially or completely suspended, the mental operations spiritually toned by magnetic influx, and the soul rapt in visions of ecstasy—inspiration, with the whole organism sensitized, and the brain-faculties stimulated and illuminated, enabling poets to conceive images of beauty, and speakers, angel-attended, to speak with tongues of fire—these, all these phases of mediumship with their modifications have convinced millions of immortality and a present heavenly ministry. But they pale into twilight, in the estimation of the more inductive and business-like masses, before the clairvoyant and mediumistic powers of Mr. Abraham James, so frequently exemplified in locating mineral beds, tracing subterranean water-courses, such as the great Artesian well of Chicago, and just recently in the discovery and successful issue of ‘Harmonial Oil-Well, No. 1,’ in Pleasantville, Pa., pouring out from depths some eight hundred feet, from sixty to one hundred barrels of oil each twenty-four hours. In ages ago, on Horeb, a legendary rock was smitten by a mediumistic hand, and fresh waters streamed out a full supply for those journeying towards the promised land. In the living present, Mr. James, piercing and smiting rocky strata, brings up not only gurgling waters, clear as crystal, but rivulets of oil, to illumine our dwellings and lubricate our machinery. It is needless to repeat the history of the discovery. The subject-matter of the same has been published and re-published to the world for more than a year past. No evasion nor sophistry can step behind the recorded evidences. The friends accompanying this medium, when locating the well, were informed by the controlling band of immortal intelligences, that the location was one that would produce a vast amount of petroleum; and they suggested, *insisted* even, that the share-interests be taken by true and genuine Spiritualists; for the time had come when such should be helped, that they might help elevate and spiritualize God’s dear humanity. Various plans, they said, had been canvassed in higher spheres of existence. Vast systems had been matured; for wisdom-spirits saw the necessity of better conditions for their media; more pleasant and harmonious surroundings, and better financial support, thus relieving them of anxious, harassing cares.

#### THE FAITH AND THE PROPHECY.

“Immediately after the spiritual manifestation of locating the well, Mr. James announced the fact everywhere in his travels, both in private

and upon public rostrums in presence of thousands. At the National Convention of Spiritualists held in Cleveland, he put in circulation 10,000 circulars specifying how, when, where he located the well, and that the company was then boring for the treasure. At the close of one of our lectures in Buffalo, December, he came forward and made a full statement of his clairvoyance and spirit control in locating this well, closing in these emphatic words: "*I know it will prove a GRAND SUCCESS. My spirit band has never falsified to me. We shall find the treasure, and it will again vindicate the truth of SPIRITUALISM.*" We never saw a man cherishing greater faith in the wisdom, watch-care and guidance of ministering angels. It greatly pleased us. Blessed are the men of faith and trust. There is a faith-realm ever stretching beyond the actual present. Faith coupled with will-force is almost infinitely potent. Speaking figuratively, there is such a thing as a 'thousand ton faith'—faith in one's own destiny like Napoleon—faith in one's consecration to a great work like Joan d'Arc. This kind of faith is *power*, and constitutes the stuff of which martyrs are made. Thousands through the country can testify to this, having known of the clairvoyance connected with, and the prophecies made, concerning this well, long previous to the development.

#### THE SHAREHOLDERS.

"The shares taken with scarcely an exception by spiritualists, the work progressed for weeks and months with great promise; suggestions being frequently received from spirits formerly interested in mechanical and geological investigations. At the least break in the machinery, or accident of any kind, however, certain faint hearts would fearfully palpitate; for some Spiritualists are so constituted that they need a new and powerful *test* every twenty-fours to keep their flickering lamp of knowledge alive to the blissful truth of spirit-communion.

"A few other professed spiritualists threw out sly insinuations of 'shrewd management,' and 'speculation,' thus not merely traducing character, but in a most ungentlemanly manner seeking to undermine the influence and depreciate the spiritual gifts of this noble and faithful brother. Covert and open falsifiers, as well as brawling slanderers, are not all hived in the serried ranks of sectarians. There's not an eminent Spiritualist in the field but that has suffered more or less from prowling villifiers. Compensation, however,—that fixed law of God,—convicts and sends them one by one, Judas-like, to their 'own place.'

The work heaven devised went on.

The purpose opened. These spirits evidently understood their business. Privileged in Buffalo, we conversed with them several hours through the superior organization of their medium in his unconscious trance-state; and saying nothing of the deep rich musical intonations of one of the band, a very ancient, Brahminical seer, we were charmed with their scope of thought, and scientific knowledge. They told us the purposed design, the number and peculiarity of the rocky strata; how near workmen were to the oil, and about when it would be reached. The sequel proved them correct. These controlling intelligences are the spirits, (some of them) of an ancient race, that inhabited this country many thousand years ago—the same, perhaps, that opened the copper mines along the northern chain of lakes, and the lead mines on the Mississippi river, leaving behind unmistakable evidences of art, science, and manufactures.

“ THE SPIRIT PROMISES VERIFIED.

“ Though several letters lie before us, some exceedingly enthusiastic we prefer to let the *Pleasantville Morning Herald*, of February 1st, tell the story in brief:

“ ‘ This morning, soon after breakfast, news spread like wildfire among the staid denizens of this pleasant village, that a *new* well had just commenced producing oil. With many others, we repaired to the scene, where, indeed, the so-called *spiritual* well, in the south part of the borough, was *astonishing* the throng with its production of oil. On inquiry, I learned the oil was first produced from the well about nine o’clock this morning, and near noon, when we saw it, was more than fulfilling the expectations of its immediate friends. It is claimed that this well was spiritually located by a celebrated “medium,” Mr. James.

“ ‘ We were informed by Mr. Farwell, of the firm of Farwell & Potter, who has put down the well, that its depth is eight hundred and thirty-five feet, that the last and fourth sand rock was eighteen feet thick, of which fifteen feet was white sand, and the last three feet was coarse and dark colored. While many of the more enthusiastic place a very high estimate upon its prospective yield, we think it prudent to say, having witnessed the Nettleton wells here in their beginning, (and now producing in their third year) that it will give a daily product of fifteen barrels of oil and may be more. With this well as an additional fact, there is no longer a doubt that this locality is, and is to be in future, *permanent producing oil territory*.

"The following is from a correspondent of the *Buffalo Express* :

"Knowing that many of the readers of the *Express* have read or heard of the location of an oil well, called the "Harmonial" or "Spiritual Well," at Pleasantville, Pennsylvania, through the mediumship of Abraham James, I take pleasure in announcing to them and the public generally, that all the predictions and prophesies given concerning its development and final great success, have been fully verified, and that this well is now as much of a reality and wonder as it has seemed a fallacy or humbug in the minds of skeptics religiously frowning upon the work up to the time of its completion. Saturday, February 1st, when having gone down some eight hundred and thirty-five feet, oil was "struck," and flowed at the rate of one hundred barrels per day, with a constant increase up to the last accounts, when promises were given of still greater increase. The "Harmonial Well" is on the farm of William Porter, in the borough of Pleasantville, and was located by Mr. A. James, October 1867, under spirit control, and while passing, for the first time, through that section of the country.

"Many prophesies and visions relating to the success of this well have been repeatedly given through various mediums throughout the country, and it is Mr. James' intention to embody them all in a full 'History of the Well,' to publish for distribution; and all persons desirous of knowing more concerning its location, development, etc., can send their name and Postoffice address to Mr. James, at Pleasantville, Pa., and he will be pleased to send them the History when published. Vindications of Mediums and Spiritualism are daily called for by the Press and Pulpit throughout the land, and I would suggest to all thus anxious for the proofs of the truth of spirit manifestations, etc., that they make a note of all such achievements of spirit power and intelligence until they are convinced that "there are more things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamed of in their philosophy," when they will probably find themselves the wiser for their search after truth, and that his Santanic Majesty is not as black as painted."

#### THE PROSPECT AND THE PURPOSE.

"With these fresh proofs of clairvoyance and spirit-power, Mr. James, holding leases of some of the best located lands in the territory, will proceed at once, soon as companies can be organized and shares or interests disposed of, to put down other wells. And be it said to his praise, he purposes, (and with him to *purpose*, having the means, is to



accomplish, for his integrity stands unquestioned) in accordance with a pledge to his heavenly influences, to devote most of the proceeds of these gigantic undertakings to the INTERESTS OF SPIRITUALISM; the erection of halls; sustaining genuine media, and putting into the field more lectures upon the Spiritual Philosophy. Heaven, and the angels who there dwell attired in spotless white, cannot fail of smiling upon such practical purposes for the elucidation and disseminating of truth. Having once walked this or other earths in weakness, their sympathies flow out towards all movements looking towards the spiritual progress of their mortal brothers. Right here, we feel to write this—those Spiritualists who have drank from the fountain of eternal life, and feasted upon living manna from heaven, and there are many such—those Spiritualists who have been helped to financial independence through the pre-science and aid of spirits, should remember that to whom “much is given,” of such much is required, and that the very angels that have power to *gather*, have power to *scatter*. In Christ's time, the tree that bore no fruit was “hewn down and cast into the fire.” Every dollar miserly held by an individual will spiritually dwarf the possessor, and lower his position in the many-mansioned house of the Father. Oh! how impressive the words of Jesus—“Hardly shall a rich man enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.”

## PRESTO—THE CHANGE!

“To-day abhorred; to morrow adored,  
 So round and round we run,  
 And ever the truth comes uppermost,  
 And ever is justice done.”

Yesterday, just previous to this successful oil strike, conservative sectarists passing along the highway would wag their saintly balanced heads, and pointing in derision exclaim, “*there's James' spiritual well—another edition of the humbug!*” But to-day, the “greenback” oil-basin tapped—wealth bubbling up—the crowd gazing in admiration, and lo! it is “Mr. James, and his *Harmonial Well!*” The previously incredulous and most piously inclined, now lift their hats



politely, and considering present success and future prospects, congratulate "*our distinguished friend, Mr. James, and his remarkable gift of second sight!*" Down upon this American toadyism—this sickly slaverling shoddyism, because of fancied or real financial possessions. Conscious of the divine nature—the angelic germ in every mortal being, no man more heartily deprecates fawning sycophancy than Abraham James.

It seems a part of the divine method, that from the most seemingly minute causes the mightiest results follow. Arkwright calmly watched the cogs in a wheel, the principles of a new mechanical law flashed upon his mind. Newton, lying beneath a tree laden with mellowing fruit, beheld an apple fall to the earth, and the law of gravitation came a guest to his soul, clear as sunlight. Franklin, with key, kite and string, called summering fluids from aerial heights, and threw a wonderful fact into the face of all the past ages. So James, clarivoyant-eyed and spirit-inspired, thrust a penny under the sod, and to-day millions come gushing up to illumine distant cities, and spiritually enlighten human minds. Few attend the birth of genius. All newly-conceived truths are cradled in mangers. No age appreciates the martyr souls that take advanced positions. What was Franklin's kite to a Hottentot? Newton's apple and soap-bubble to a New Zealander? What were Andrew Jackson Davis' "Divine Revelations" to the herds that grazed upon a thousand hills, and what Abraham James' clarivoyant discoveries and enunciations of the same, to slow, sordid Rip Van Winkles of western Pennsylvania and New York?

"Men saw the thorns on Jesus' brow,  
But angels saw the roses."

When "Harmonial Well No. 1" was developed, Pleasantville was a little, quiet country village, handsomely located, socially behind the spirit of the age, and, religiously considered, very conservative. It may have numbered 300

inhabitants, orderly as a Quaker meeting, with one hotel, weekly gladdened, perhaps, by the face of a solitary wayfarer. Now, seven months later, it has all the appearance, all the stir, thrift and enterprise of a California city. Thirty and forty stages from Titusville, six miles distant, empty their passengers into the streets each day. The sidewalks, in the gray of evening, are literally lined, and lodgings are obtained with difficulty. Lands have risen from a hundred and two hundred dollars per acre, to two thousand and two thousand five hundred. Many that previously plodded along the humbler walks of life are rejoicing in large acquisitions, while others see their way clear to a competency. Standing upon the belfry of the Baptist Church, there may be counted over a hundred and fifty derricks; new buildings of various descriptions are springing up in every direction as by magic, and the sounding of hammers and the snorting of engines constitute the music that echoes along hill and vale.

The special correspondent of the *New York Tribune*, under date of August 1st and 3d, writes thus:

"Pleasantville was supposed to be outside the oil 'belt.' The developments which have within a few months given it so wide a fame, were made by Mr. Abraham James, a well-known spiritual medium, who claims to have a peculiar power of detecting subterranean currents. Some years ago he declares that the spirits had revealed to him the existence of oil just on the outskirts of Chicago. A company of believers was formed to bore for it, and at the depth of 715 feet they struck—not oil, but water. The result was rather a disappointment, of course, in a pecuniary point of view; but to make up for that it gives Chicago one of the most remarkable artesian wells in the country, which yielded 200,000 gallons of water a day. \* \* \* \* \*

"With Mr. James's latest vaticinations there is certainly no fault to be found. He lives at Pleasantville, in a neat, white, old-fashioned farm house, with a broad green sward before the gate—a pretty place, such as it is rare to see in these dirty regions. 'It is about two years,' he told me, 'since I made this discovery. I was driving through the village in a buggy with a friend, when suddenly, as I came to that field

yonder, a irresistible impulse caused me to stop. Then a power outside myself seemed to lift me up, as if in its arms, and take me out of the wagon, and carry me to the fence. I know that I got over the fence, under the influence of this uncontrollable power, but what happened after that I cannot say. They tell me, however, that while I was in the trance state I ran violently about the field" (others say that he was seen revolving like a wheel, heels over head, but possibly this is an exaggeration), 'and when I regained consciousness I found myself on the spot where the well now is. I never was surer of anything in my life than of the existence of oil in that place, but I had no means to sink a well, and it was more than a year before I could induce anybody to help me. We got to work at last, however, and on the first of February this year, we struck oil.'

"Such is Mr. James's story. The business is all a lottery, say the operators, and if you get a prize it is only your luck. Don't you suppose a hundred other men have been just as certain as Mr. James that oil would be found in a particular spot, and have tried it and failed? We hear of the ten big strikes, but we don't hear of the thousand failures. The Harmonial Well No. 1, as Mr. James's venture was called, produced at first 45 or 50 barrels a day, rose after a while to 100, and has now fallen to 80 or 90. Of course he secured all the land he could in the neighborhood, and put down his drills again. His second well (Harmonial No. 2) yields 100 barrels a day, and a third, not yet finished, gives 60 or 70. He is sinking ten more, and he has leased twenty-two to other persons. Over a space of a mile or more the derricks are reared as thick as masts in a harbor. There are now some fifteen wells in operation just about Pleasantville village, and as many more near by, and between 100 and 150 are now drilling.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Owners are parceling out their fields in quarter acre leases; and the excitement approaches close to that of former years when Pithole and Oleopolis were in their glory. At the one little tavern there is never a bed to be had, and charge fifty cents a night to lay you out on the floor. Every house is per force a boarding house and many of the workmen can find no shelter but a pile of shavings in some shed or unfinished building. The neat little white houses which composed the place before the rush set in this summer were scattered along the roads at wide intervals, in the pretty New England style, and now great rows of pasteboard shanties and large frame tenements are strung between

them, making a curious mixture of new and old. The people from Pithole and other dead towns are tearing down their houses and rushing off with them to Pleasantville. I left a hotel and theatre on the road from Pithole, and many other buildings were coming, some of them having been moved once or twice before. It would be more convenient to build the houses on wheels, as I believe folks do in Chicago.

"When all the world set out for Pleasantville, the first thing the villagers did was to put up a calaboose. They tell me it never had but one prisoner.

I doubt whether fear of the new jail has as much to do with millennial state of things as the facts that the old residents have thus far succeeded in keeping groggeries and gambling shops away, and that new comers were too busy digging to amuse themselves with fights. There are few loafers in the population, and few speculators. Leases are not taken as they used to be, to be sold again at a premium, and the days are passed when a man could travel through the oil regions with no more capital than a few blank agreements and a handful of revenue stamps, and make a fortune buying and selling "refusals" of land. Lessees are now legitimate operators, and the population of places such as Pleasantville and Shamburg is composed of them and their employees, with shop keepers, and visitors interested in distant oil companies.

"On the 1st of August, the Pleasantville wells were discharging 1,250 barrels a day, while Shamburg yielded 2,250. Yet people are leaving Shamburg in considerable numbers and going over to Pleasantville, taking their houses with them.

"It is a curious fact, that Pleasantville, where all the excitement of the oil region now centers, the first good well was discovered by a Spiritualist who professes to have been guided by the spirits. Whether he was or not, nobody seems to care, but the whole country is rushing to the spot. The success of the borings at Pleasantville has not been so splendid as at some other places, but there has been *absolutely no failure*; every well has produced, and all but two have yielded handsomely. People talk of nothing else, and every conveyance going in that direction carries crowds of eager operators. "G. R. G. H."

The reporter of the *Herald*, says:

"In the immediate vicinity of Pleasantville, are located two of the celebrated Harmonial Wells, number one and number three. They

are each producing about one hundred barrels of oil every twenty-four hours, and steadily increasing. They are on the tract known as the Porter Farm. No. 2 is on the Armstrong Farm, three quarters of a mile south of Pleasantville, and is also producing about one hundred barrels per day. The principal owner in these three wells is Mr. A. James, the clairvoyant, who located them and intends putting down ten more within a very short time on the Porter, Armstrong and other farms near Pleasantville."

The *Titusville Herald* in its "Petroleum Report" for the month ending July, says :

"The number of drilling wells is steadily increasing. On August 1st, the total reached 327, being an increase of 28 from the same date last month, and of 70 from the first of June. About one-half of these wells are situated in the districts of Pleasantville and Upper Cherry Run. Of these, between twenty-five and forty will be completed within the next thirty days, and probably, as many more within the next sixty or seventy days. In all parts of the region large numbers of leases have been given, and operations have been commenced on many of them.

"The demand for territory lying adjacent to the producing districts, ("such as Pleasantville, located by A. James, the clairvoyant"), and at considerable distances from them, has been unusually large, and a greater area has changed hands than during the previous three months. In the vicinity of Pleasantville and West Pithole Creek, tracts have been sold at from \$300 to \$6,000 per acre, while in other parts of the region, sales have been made at from \$100 to 1,000 per acre.

"The price of petroleum was more steady during July than during the previous month, and the quotations have varied but from twenty-five to fifty cents. At the opening there was moderate activity at from \$5.20 to \$5.30 at points along the Creek, and \$5.85 at Oil City. Toward the close of the second week there was a decline, and on the 20th, quotations were given at \$4.85 to \$5.00 along the Creek, and \$5.40 at Oil City. During the last week there some activity, and the prices appreciated, closing at \$5.50 at Oil City, and at \$5.00 along the Creek. About twenty thousand barrels of tanked petroleum changed hands during the month."

Every well that Mr. James has located in this vicinity, whether for himself or others, has proved a complete triumph. So oracular have become his hints, suggestions and movements, that whenever he leases or makes a new purchase, others rush wildly forward, buying or leasing near him as possible. Outwardly these people profess to have no faith in Spiritualism, or that phase of it known as clairvoyance; but their deeds tell a different story. "By their fruits ye shall know them," said Jesus.

### BUSINESS REPUTATION.

An "honest man; the noblest work of God." These words, plenary with inspiration, will live when the Nilotic Pyramids have crumbled to their primal dust. Character is what a man essentially *is*. Innate, divine, no power on earth can make or unmake it. Reputation is what the world thinks individuals are. Newspapers and newsmongers may affect this for a little season. It is well to have a good reputation, providing it can be attained and retained without sacrificing principle. Companies, firms, men pass either at, above or below par. Relative to honor and strict integrity concerning all business transactions, no man sustains a higher reputation than Abraham James. It's a common saying 'mong those dealing with him extensively: "his word is as *good* as his *paper*." Others have remarked that he was "morbidly conscientious."

He has little patience with weak, selfish dispositions, nor can he endure indirectness and double-dealing of any kind. A profound student of human nature, straightforward and frank in all things himself, he admires these qualities in others. Modest and inclined to quietness, nothing annoys him more than parade, personal vanity and hollow pretension. The needle is not more faithful to the pole than he to friends. Enemies—(who with enterprise and

sterling worth has them not?)—he takes great pleasure in “letting alone;” because certain that compensation and spiritual growth will compel them in due time to “cast down the pieces of silver at his feet.” One of the most striking peculiarities of his nature is a fixed, undeviating truthfulness. His sympathy tender; his liberality boundless; his charities wide as a common humanity, he seeks to know and do the will of the angel-world.

### PURPOSES IN SPIRIT-LIFE.

The spirit-world is the world of causes; this of effects. All great inventions first conceived and born in the heavens, are inflowed by the law of influx to sensitive minds, and then outwrought into forms on earth. The more spiritual of the spirit-world plan all the grand, far-reaching philanthropic schemes for the right education and redemption of the races. To advance and accomplish their purposes, a power—a fulcrum must be used whose basic foundation should rest upon the material. In childhood, the body is first. Chaff precedes the ripened wheat. Clothe, then school the orphan. Feed the vagrant, then moralize to him. Spirits have long seen the importance of making their teachings practical. To do this on a large scale, wealth in unselfish hands—extensive finances as elements of power, are indispensable. Petroleum from Pennsylvania, coal from the prairies, and mineral from the mountains, would, *will*, to a good degree, furnish these means. Mr. James was a chosen instrument. Funds have already been placed in his possession by spirit-guidance; millions more may yet flow into his hands, to be applied in erecting, renting and beautifying halls, organizing, supporting and providing libraries for Childrens' Progressive Lyceums; sustaining able and faithful lecturers; putting new ones with tongues of flame into the field; encouraging all genuine media, and spreading generally through wisest methods the principles of this true and beautiful philosophy.



Looking unto the "rock divine" whence his means were hewn, he will be guided by the heavenly powers in disposing of them. It would hardly be expected of human nature to reward these first who had continually opposed or thrown obstacles in the way of his success. What the angels may do is another matter.

## USES OF PETROLEUM.

In the wonderful laboratory of Nature, formative processes are in continual operation. These will go on forever. Law infinite and active, elementary substances are ever forming new combinations of matter. The chemist in resolving a form of substance into its primal elements, is simply approximating the mysterious processes of the Eternal, who is ever disorganizing and reconstructing—ever educating and moulding into outward being new compounds and higher organizations. The law is from gases to liquids, liquids to solids, and solids to crystalizations. Petroleum is now in process of formation from gaseous elements generated in those heated subterranean regions of the earth. As the necessities of our age require, Nature—prolific mother—evolves new substances.

Though this "rock oil" was used in the East thousands of years since in limited quantities, it remained for the earnest, intelligent men of this generation to develop it in large quantities, comprehend its matchless virtues, its great variety of uses, and apply it to the physical and mental benefit of the race.

In *Silliman's Journal*, July, 1866, there is an article on petroleum, by Prof. E. B. Andrews, of Ohio, from which we extract the following: "Of the origin of petroleum there are different opinions. All agree, however, that it must ultimately be traced to vegetable, or animal substances, the primary combinations of hydrogen and carbonic being the product of vital force.



"It is the opinion of Dr. J. S. Newberry and others, that petroleum, in its present form, is the product of a slow distillation of bituminous strata."

That eminent scholar, Mr. Wall, says :

"All the oil that I have ever seen, except very insignificant quantities in isolated cavities in fossiliferous limestones, has evidently strayed far from its place of origin. It is seldom, indeed, that we find any oil in juxtaposition with bituminous strata of any kind. It is more often found in fissures in sand-rocks, rocks in which no oil could ever have been generated; for whatever organic matter they might have contained was too much exposed to atmospheric oxygen to admit of the possibility of any bituminization. It is not only impossible that the oil could have originated in these sand rocks, or in the arenaceous shales which underlie them in western Pennsylvania, but it is most probable that the oil ascended from the still lower rocks, in the form of vapor, which condensed in the superior cavities. In other words, the oil which, according to the theory, was formed far below in the original bituminization of organic matter, must have undergone a process of distillation.

"In favor of the other theory, that petroleum, as now generally found, is the product of a distillation of bituminous shales, etc., as suggested by Dr. Newberry and others, the following arguments may be urged : 1. Oil may be artificially produced by distilling such shales and other bituminous materials. 2. The phenomena of oil and gas exhibited in our oil fields greatly resemble those observed in the distillation of oil from bituminous materials. 3. It is believed that some petroleum has been actually produced in the earth by distillation. 4. There is an abundance of oil-making material in the earth. 5. A comparatively low temperature is believed to be adequate to set free the oil vapors. 6. By this theory there might be produced an almost indefinite quantity of petroleum, since bituminous strata are found widely distributed. Finally, the agency which would volatilize the liquid bitumen, or petroleum formed by direct bituminization, and bring it up and distribute it through the present oil horizons, would certainly be adequate to distil the bituminous shales, etc., and bring up the oil to the same elevation."

Within a few years the uses and application of petroleum have grown into public favor rapidly. It forms a new remedial agent in *Materia Medica*, in a great variety of forms,

and is also used in the manufacturing arts. Evidently all its chemical compounds, and its practical adaptation to the progress of the age, have not yet been developed.

At no very distant time it will doubtless be used as heating material in domestic purposes; serve as a foundation for the elimination of gas for cities, and fuel for the propelling of railway engines, ocean steamers, etc. The *Boston Bulletin* of a recent date, publishes a scientific article upon this subject from which we subjoin the following extracts :

“During the last twenty years, as steamers have constantly increased in number, and have been steadily taking the place of sailing vessels on coastwise and short voyages, and to a great extent for the transportation of passengers and freight to and from Europe, most earnest efforts have been made by engineers and other scientific men, to discover the best method of economizing fuel. For this purpose, propellers are superseding side-wheel steamers, and the merits of all kinds of boilers have been tested and discussed.

“Last fall Col. Henry R. Foote, of Tennessee, who commanded a Union regiment in the late war, patented an invention for burning petroleum in steam boilers, upon which he has been at work some two years, and on which he has spent many thousand dollars.

“Col. Foote associated with him Mr. J. H. Winsor, of Pennsylvania, and they came to Boston, and set up a locomotive boiler in a little building on Chardon street, and for several months ran an engine with this new fire. During this time they made the acquaintance of Allen B. Stillman, Esq., of this city, who is well known as having energy and determination, which rarely fail to accomplish whatever he undertakes, and he became a joint owner with them in the invention, and has entire charge of all the business arrangements of the concern. He called the attention of the Navy Department to the subject, and forwarded certificates from Alban C. Stimers, of New York, a well known engineer of high standing ; of George B. N. Tower, late Chief Engineer U. S.N., and Chief of Marine Engineering Staff at Charleston, and of unquestioned ability ; of Capt. Anderson of the Cunard steamer *Africa*, and of Gov. Andrew, Prof. Rogers, and several engineers who had examined the fire on Chardon street.

“Mr. Isherwood at once ordered a board of three chief engineers to examine the apparatus. They did so and reported most favorably, and

recommended that it be at once placed on board some steamer in the Navy.

"If this fire succeeds, as we believe it must, it will enable ships to steam from sixty to one hundred days, and visit ports in all parts of the world from which they are now excluded, while the direct gain will be immense. For instance, the Cunard steamers take 1,200 tons of coal on every passage and burn about 1,000. Now two hundred tons of petroleum costing about the same as coal, will do the work better, saving one thousand tons of freight. This at eighteen dollars a ton would amount to thirty-six thousand dollars on each trip, and in the eight trips made in a year to nearly three hundred thousand dollars, to which must be added the extra expense of wages and food of coal heavers, wear of machinery and journals by coal dust, wharf room for coal, &c. The enormous saving which this method makes in freighting vessels is a consideration of the first importance and must cause its immediate introduction into nearly all steamers as soon as its utility becomes generally known. It is equally applicable to locomotives, an important desideratum in localities where wood and coal are scarce, as for illustration upon the new Pacific Railroad, which, when completed, would require fuel trains in constant operation to keep wood and coal stations supplied; while with this invention, the tender of a locomotive can carry a sufficient supply for three to five hundred mile.

"There is another advantage of which we cannot now speak at length. On board the Palos, during the trials which used anthracite, the highest number of revolutions they were able to give the propeller, with all the coal they could burn, was less than forty, while on a preliminary trial with Col. Foote's apparatus, she easily gave over fifty revolutions for several hours, and fully held her steam, thus showing that with this fire a boat can run from two to four knots faster than she can with coal or wood, and as the heat is equally distributed along the crown sheet and through the flues, but little if any 'foaming' is caused. This must shorten the distance to Europe about two days, and a steamer's time from St. Louis or Cincinnati, to New Orleans and back, from three to six days, and save all wooding up along the route. We predict that the first line on the Mississippi which adopts this fire, will do the largest business, and as oil can be floated down Oil Creek, the Allegheny and the Ohio, it will be cheap in the West, and soon all steamers there will use it.

"Our first question on the Palos was, 'Is it safe?' But after examining the apparatus, we were fully convinced that, when properly

managed, there is no more danger than from coal. The oil is to be carried in double iron tanks, the outer space of an inch or so filled with water, and stowed in separate iron compartments in remote parts of the ship, and having small pipes carrying overboard any gases which may rise, while the oil itself is carried to the fires by a half-inch pipe. It seems almost impossible that an accident should occur except through gross carelessness. Mr. Stimers, who, in a written report to Mr. Allen, says, 'Col. Foote's process is the most philosophically correct one for burning any fuel I have ever known to be tried in a steam boiler,' adds, 'I can see no difficulty in carrying petroleum safely in steamers. The only thing to be done is to stow it properly. I cannot see that more care need be employed for petroleum than for coal, but it must be of a different kind.'

"The working of this invention has been examined by many eminent and practical men, who have endorsed it in the strongest manner; indeed, the whole operation is so remarkably simple and free from complication, as to require but little explanation; and the spectacle which presents itself, of the great furnaces of a steam vessel in full blast, and driving the engines at their full speed, with only two men sitting quietly on camp-stools in a clean fire-room, in comparative leisure, and increasing or diminishing heat by simply turning a faucet, with no coal, cinders, ashes, or rubbish about them, is such an unusual one to those who have been accustomed to the dust, noise and confusion of coal passers and firemen, the continual opening of furnace doors, and consequent deadening of fires, the exhaustive labor and number of men employed, that one sees at once, in this invention, an enormous stride in Steam Navigation."

While we appreciate the medicinal and mechanical uses of petroleum as the basis of national prosperity, they pale into insignificance compared with the Spiritual effulgence, thence arising to mould society in a more beautiful character, as is proposed by the spirits controlling Mr. James. If their benevolent prayers succeed, as every thing now propitiously indicates, hospitals will be erected for the sick, schools established to promote intellectual and moral culture, Spiritual literature diffused, a National Industrial College endowed under the supervision of Spiritualists, for the education of both sexes in harmony with the God-given principles of

social equality. How enobling the enterprise! How worthy of our hasty espousal! May it prosper under the heavenly guardianship which thus far has wisely and successfully directed our brother in his magnificent discoveries, is the prayer of multitudes.

As an exhibit of the confidence reposed in friend James and his well-trying band of Spirits, the following may serve as an illustration:

"TITUSVILLE. PA., Feb. 6, 1868.

"We, the undersigned, owners in Harmonial Well No.1, recognizing and acknowledging the wisdom and truthfulness of the band of Spirits controlling Bro. Abraham James, in the work of developing oil, and believing them to be the proper intelligences in the direction and advancement of this enterprise, do hereby agree and appoint Mr. Abraham James (their medium) as our sole agent to transact all business pertaining thereto; to receive all moneys; to sell the oil, and employ such measures as may seem to him best for our mutual interest, in storing, selling, etc., at such times and in such quantities as will embrace the interests of all connected with the enterprise.

"Witness our hands and seals:

"ALBERTUS A. STRAIGHT, "FRANCIS LEACH.

"CHILTON WOOD, "MAY M. TAYLOR,

"WILLIAM L. BALDWIN, "PHEBE M. VARNEY,

"DUMPHREY SMITH, "SYLVESTER A. BLAKELEY,

"SARAH BOYCE, "E. C. HUBBARD,

"W. B. HAWLEY, and others."

## THE LAW OF PROPHECY.

"'Tis the the sunset of life gives the mystical lore,  
And coming events cast their shadows before."

The learned Kitto informs us that the "Hebrew word for prophet is NABI, which comes from a word signifying to *boil forth* as a fountain." Prof. Stuart defines it to *pour forth*, or *pour out*, that is, to utter one's internal excitement or inspiration; to exhibit oneself as excited or inspired." These indications of prevision stream all adown the ages, from

Miriam's song of emancipation to John's celestial revelations; from Arjuna of India to Friar Bacon the philosopher. These, with other inspired persons of different races, the external senses partially suspended, had their spiritual natures so opened they saw spirits and angels. "King Saul appears to have been entranced a day and a night, when the Spirit of God—his spirit-guide—was upon him." "Ezekiel, when beholding his visions, fell upon his face and was helpless, Daniel was more than once 'in a deep sleep with his face toward the ground;' and John lay as dead at the feet of the 'Shining One' who unsealed to his sight the view of the gorgeous visions of the Apocalypse."

Infinite Spirit is infinite causation; finite spirit in man is finite causation. Just so far as this finite causation comes in relation with causes outside and independent of himself, is he able to read the future. Exalted spirits standing upon the plane of causes, and, seeing with unsealed vision certain operative forces, are enabled to determine the legitimate effects thence derived. Prophecy, therefore, is just as natural as cause and effect. Angels, spirits, men, possess the power of prevision just in the ratio of exaltation in wisdom.

Roger Bacon, usually termed Friar Bacon, was one of the most eminent of the English philosophers, now in Spirit-life about six hundred years. Having passed through the universities of Europe, he took the Doctor's degree, and entered the Order of Franciscan Monks. Studying the sciences, he became liberal. The clergy prohibited his lectures, and confined the circulation of his writings to the walls of the convent. Finally a council of Sanfranciscans condemned his books and sent him to prison. He was specially gifted with the power to discern future events, being highly mediumistic. Some of his remarkable prophecies, uttered six hundred years ago, relating to modern inventions were strikingly practical, as the following testifies:

"Bridges, unsupported by arches, will be made to span the foaming current. Man shall descend to the bottom of the ocean, safely breathing, and treading with firm step on the golden sands, never

brightened by the light of day. Call but the sacred powers of Sol and Luna into action, and behold a single steersman sitting at the helm, guiding the vessel, which divides the waves with greater rapidity than if she had been filled with a crew of mariners toiling at the oars; and the loaded chariot no longer encumbered by the panting steeds, shall dart on its course with resistless force and rapidity. Let the simple elements do the labor; bind the eternal forces and yoke them to the same plow."

That excellent writer, S. B. Brittan, says that "these prophecies of Bacon embrace the Suspension Bridge, the Diving Bell, Steam Navigation, the Railroad, and the Steam Plow, in the same chain of events, all of which are among the accomplished realities of-day."

Upon the same principle that Friar Bacon uttered those prophecies, Abraham James, under Spirit-illumination, was enabled to foresee and announce the discovery and development of this oil territory, and the beneficent results that already have been and are yet to be gleaned as harvests of material and spiritual wealth. It is proper here to state that this distinguished scientist and philosopher—Friar Bacon—is one of the attending spirits in Mr. James' circle; to him are we largely indebted for this brilliant achievement. In the coming years when the earth is more refined and the races more spiritualized, prophecies will become an every day experience in the practical of life.

"Descend, O Prophetic Spirit that inspireth  
The human soul of universal earth,  
Foreshadowing golden things to come."

## HOW HE LOCATES WELLS.

A nice line of distinction must be drawn and maintained between spirit dictation and clairvoyance, whether dependent or independent. Mr. James, though wonderfully endowed with the gift of *clear seeing*, ever awards to his inspiring spirits the honor that is justly their due. With becoming



modesty, wholly forgetful of self, as an instrument in their hands, he puts them in the foreground of every pictured purpose.

All organizations, all worlds, all molecular atoms, even, have their appropriate atmospheres. This is true of angels, men, animals, insects, forests, flowers, rocky stratas, mineral beds, as well as those oil veins that glide like rills under limestone fissures and among the sand-beds under our feet.

These atmospheres, or ethereal essences and aromas, are invisible to the mere material eye, but none the less real in their substantial nature. The aural sphere surrounding and exhaled from the rose is what delights the olfactory nerves of sensation. Human atmospheric emanations differ in nature and hue—some are healthful; others are unhealthful, producing deleterious effects. An individual infectiously diseased is not permitted to walk the streets because the poisonous and pestilential emanations from his body endanger the health of the community. Musk will remain in an apartment for years; particle impinging upon and affecting adjoining particle. The hound follows the devious windings of the wild deer from the aural exhalations left in its track.

Consciously intuitive and sensitive persons spiritually sense the magnetic atmospheres that others continually shed; hence their likes and dislikes. Electro-magnetic radiations from mortals, minerals or oils, possess all the properties of the organizations and constituents whence they proceed. As the fountain, so the stream.

Spirits, casting clear eyes at individuals, read them at a glance by the electric surroundings, which envelope them as clouds; dull and hazy, silvery or golden, according to the quality of the inner life.

From those petroleum veins and basins in Pennsylvania, are currental or flame-like corruscations, corresponding somewhat with incense from plants and flowers, which media readily sense by virtue of the magnetic correlation existing between elements organized in themselves, and affiliative principles and elements in the objective world.



The human organism, epitome of the material universe, thus having within itself positive magnets adapted to all planes of being, instinctively feels outward for, and affinizes with *its own*, the same as a steel magnet finds the needle and attracts it to itself.

Mr. James, entranced and sensitized by his spirit circle, goes forth in this psychometrical condition into fields and forests, and is then directed along those oil courses, and, reaching a point where they converge, he is enveloped in their etherial exhalations or oleaginous atmospheres which touch the delicate magnet corresponding in himself, and thus unmistakably determines the right location for the sinking of a well in quest of the hidden treasure.

Appropos to the method of discovering oil, is the following communication from F. Larkin, Esq., Randolph, N. Y., published in that ably conducted, yet commonly denominated "Infidel sheet," the Boston *Investigator*, Nov. 1, 1867.

"A few weeks ago we had a visit from Abraham James, who spoke in our town several times. I had an introduction to him, and invited him as a guest to my house, which he readily accepted. This Mr. James is the medium that has rendered himself so famous in locating the great artesian well at Chicago, oil in new locations, and valuable metals that lay hid away in the earth.

"He claims, I believe, to be a medium (in his search for hidden treasures) for the spirits of an ancient people that inhabited this country thousands of years ago.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I felt curious to test his mediumistic power in that direction, so I invited him to accompany me to the lead regions of that river. He went in company with a Mr. H. G. Wilson, of No. 17 State street, Boston, who happened to be in this locality at the time. Our first move after crossing the river, was to pass up a small stream something a mile, in a dark forest of primitive growth. Mr. James, at the time being in feeble health and much exhausted, sat down to rest. After remaining in that position for perhaps thirty minutes, he became strangely affected: closed his eyes, and started off in a new direction on a line as straight as could be run with the most accurate compass. The great amount

of fallen timber that lay scattered over the ground seemed to offer no impediment to his progress, for he went over it with remarkable ease. After continuing for about three-fourths of a mile, he came to a hill whose summit is elevated some two hundred feet from the base. He ascended the hill with great rapidity until he came to about midway, where he made a final halt.

"Now the strange part of the story is as follows: He stopped directly in the midst of an ancient excavation of considerable extent, so well defined that no person familiar with the works of the race of human beings whose spirits claim to direct him, could question its genuineness for a moment.

"That he was never in that section of the country before, is an unquestionable fact. That he walked some three-fourths of a mile on a tangent line in a dark forest with his eyes tightly closed, (passing every obstruction with wonderful ease,) is also true; and notwithstanding the party that accompanied him were far his superiors in physical endurance, and were nearly exhausted when we arrived at the excavation, he showed no symptoms of fatigue, but appeared wonderfully invigorated, is also true.

"Before closing, I will say, I never regarded myself a Spiritualist, but have looked upon all such phenomena as unworthy of serious notice. That the Spiritualists are far in advance of the old Orthodox theology, is true. They have done more than any other class of religionists towards elevating the minds of men and women above those dark and paralyzing creeds that have ever been in the way of human progress, is also true.

"I have always regarded it my duty to investigate every new truth that presents itself, to swap away the assumptions of yesterday for a truth of to-day, and so on. But I must say what I have above related puzzles me much. But there was no fraud connected with it, is certain.

"Perhaps my Spiritual friends can give some light on this, to me, strange affair. I can hardly see departed spirits connected with it yet, but there are, no doubt, 'more things in Heaven and earth than I have dreamed of in my philosophy.'

"Yours truly,

"F. LARKIN."

It was our privilege, while in the oil region, to see our friend locate one of these Harmonial Wells. He had complained during the day of a heavy magnetic pressure weigh-

ing upon his brain. It was evidently the prelude to an unconscious trance. Such being our impression, we suggested a walk. The sun was tipping with gold the western hill-tops, and the grey of twilight was gathering in slowly from the east. The hour seemed hallowed with a sacred stillness, when we started for the hills adjoining the oil wells. Standing a few moments by a tank and conversing on the medicinal properties ascribed to the gas arising therefrom, Mr. James suddenly became dreamy; then his eyes lighting up with more than their ordinary brilliancy, he conversed eloquently of their origin, and constant formation of oil products in the earth. A few moments more, his eyes closing, he was seized by an Indian control and rushed for the forests. It was impossible to keep pace with him. Soon he returned, still entranced, and conducted us to the location. Using the Indian vernacular, attended with violent gesticulations, he traced with his finger the oil veins where they focalized, and there thrust his cane into the earth. Messrs. Potter and Farwell marked the spot where, doubtless, ere this, the oil is pouring forth its treasured wealth.

### PLEA FOR MEDIA.

Not apologizing the least for imposture, not defending a speculative spirit that seeks to monopolize the divine forces of angel ministry, and always in the experiment blasts every spiritual undertaking it espouses, but, "with malice toward none, and charity toward all," we enter a brief plea in behalf of our suffering and faithful mediums. They are harps touched by angel fingers, sensitive instruments psychologically affected by every passing breath, yet the chosen mediators between this and the spirit realms of existence; and through whom we derive all our objective knowledge of immortality. They are often non-appreciated because not understood; called unstable, because the negative subjects of

influences visible and invisible; considered whimsical, because sympathetically affected by others' conditions.

Many a poor medium has been *pressed* unconsciously and unintentionally to assist the spirits, when conditions produced by repellant batteries were unfavorable. Mercilessly by churchal society—reputed as having a most contemptible profession, the same as religious fashionables said of Jesus—"a seditious! a wine-bibber! a gluttonous man!"—many a chosen one, unable any longer to support the dead weight heaped upon the soul in a moment of despair, has by over-anxiety or unassuageable sorrow, cut the delicate telegraphing that connects with the divine, and sunk back bleeding and fainting in spiritual darkness. Who shall accurately describe what agonies the mediums have suffered? what persecutions endured? what injustice experienced? The heart, all sore, exposed to friendless society, is compelled to hide its grief. Their crowns are wreaths of thorns! Their crucifixions are on Golgothas of enmity! They suffer all this, endure all this, conscious at the same time of a holy ministry guarding and directing them; and looking *up there*, through tearful eyes, they do see rainbows of hope yet to come!

Oh, yes, ye weary, abused, persecuted and villified brothers and sisters, there *are* rainbows for you forming already in the dark clouds. Ye *are* defended and protected by the faithful of earth and heaven. Ye *are* loved and appreciated, and your falsifiers will yet call you their saviors. "Ye shall reap if ye faint not." There is a brighter day dawning! Persevere! be firm in the right! defend justice at all hazard! stand up in the dignity and glory of moral independence! develope your powers unto full-orbed stature! Ye shall find treasure in the earth's depths, in forests, seas, and mountains—treasure in human hearts—treasure in the Summer Land!

## SYNOPSIS OF SPIRITUALISM.

The seers of Ancient India had their circular porticoes for the reception of heavenly messages; the Greeks derived inspirations from forest retreats and the clear waters of Castalian springs; the Roman Senators enriched their wisdom by consulting Sibylline oracles; the Priestesses of Adelphi and Dodona gave impressional responses to inquiring minds; Jewish High Priests evoked revelations from the Urim and Thummim; Jesus conversed with the ascended and glorified Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration; John with an ancient prophet—a “fellow servant”—upon the lone isle of Patmos. These were phases of ancient Spiritualism, God has not changed. His laws, immutable, cannot change. Therefore, under similar conditions, what *was* of the past, *is* to-day. The *living present* is the interpreter of all history. Thus modern Spiritualism corroborates the ancient, and the ancient holds out to us the rusted key that helps unlock the seeming mysteries of the age. Spiritualism does not meet candid investigators as the church met Copernicus, Galileo, Friar Bacon and others. She constructs no iron creeds; she erects no martyr stakes; she builds no cold prison houses for men of genius; she dictates no line of thought, nor weaves thorn-crowns for souls that search for God in nature; she padlocks no human lips, but bids the reformer speak out all truth, and strike all falsehood dumb. Conscious of the moral necessity of destruction, her work is constructive for a world-wide religion that shall be philosophic, a philosophy that shall be Spiritual, and for a science that shall be truthful, unitary and holy. Spiritualism, the pulverizer of creeds, the liberalizing power of the 19th century, takes Science by the hand, and bids her go forth clad in her golden robes as the vanguard of human progress, leading up holy mountains to the living temple of truth quarried from bars of celestial sunlight.

At the Fifth National Convention of Spiritualists, held in Rochester, N. Y., just twenty years subsequent to the first mystic "raps" occurring near this city, the following resolutions and "Declaration of Principles" were unanimously adopted as a general expression of what Spiritualists teach:

*"Resolved, That the rights of minorities are in no wise compromised by the action of majorities, and therefore all resolutions of this Convention embodying declarations of principles or purposes are to be interpreted as the responsible opinions of those only who vote in the affirmative.*

#### DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.

*"Resolved, That Spiritualism teaches:*

"1. That man has a spiritual nature as well as a corporeal; in other words, that the real man is a spirit, which spirit has an organized form, composed of sublimated material, with parts and organs corresponding to those of the corporeal body.

"2. That man, as a spirit, is immortal. Being found to survive that change called physical death, it may be reasonably supposed that he will survive all future vicissitudes.

"3. That there is a spiritual world, or state, with its substantial realities, objective as well as subjective.

"4. That the process of physical death in no way essentially transforms the mental constitution or the mental character of those who experience it, else it would destroy their identity.

"5. That happiness or suffering in the spiritual state, as in this, depends not on arbitrary decree of harmonization, or of personal conformity to universal and divine law.

"6. Hence that the experiences and attainments of this life lay the foundation on which the next commences.

"7. That since growth (in some degree) is the law of the human being in the present life, and since the process called death is in fact but a birth into another condition of life, retaining all the advantages gained in the experiences of this life, it may be inferred that growth, development, expansion or progression is the endless destiny of the human spirit.

"8. That the spiritual world is not far off, but near, around, or interblended with our present state of existence; and hence that we are constantly under the cognizance of spiritual beings.

" 9. That as individuals are passing from the earthly to the spiritual state in all stages of mental and moral growth, that state includes all grades of character from the lowest to the highest.

" 10. That as heaven and hell, or happiness and misery, depend on internal states rather than on external surroundings, there are as many gradations of each as there are shades of character—each one gravitating to his own place by natural law of affinity. They may be divided into seven general degrees of spheres; but these must admit of indefinite diversifications, or 'many mansions' corresponding to diversified individual characters—each individual being as happy as his character will allow him to be.

" 11. That communications from the spirit-world, whether by mental impression, inspiration, or any other mode of transmission, are not necessarily infallible truth, but on the contrary partake unavoidably of the imperfections of the minds from which they emanate and of the channels through which they come, and are, moreover, liable to misinterpretation by those to whom they are addressed.

" 12. Hence, that no inspired communication, in this or any age (whatever claims may be or have been set up as to its source,) is authoritative any further than it expresses truth to the individual consciousness—which last is the final standard to which all inspired or spiritual teachings must be brought for judgment.

" 13. That inspiration, or the influx of ideas and promptings from the spiritual realm, is not a miracle of a past age, but a perpetual fact, the ceaseless method of the divine economy for human elevation,

" 14. That all angelic and all demoniac beings which have manifested themselves or interposed in human affairs in the past, were simply disembodied human spirits, in different grades of advancement.

" 15. That all authentic miracles (so called) in the past, such as the raising of the apparently dead, the healing of the sick, by the laying on of hands or other simple means, unharmed contact with poisons, the movement of physical objects, without visible instrumentality, etc., etc., have been produced in harmony with universal laws, and hence may be repeated at any time under suitable conditions.

" 16. That the causes of all phenomena—the sources of all life, intelligence and love—are to be sought in the internal, the spiritual realm, not in the external or material.

" 17. That the chain of causation leads inevitably upward or inward to an infinite spirit, who is not only a *forming principle* (wisdom) but an *affectional source* (love)—thus sustaining the dual, *parental* relations

of father and mother to all finite intelligences who, of course are all brethren.

"18. That man, as the offspring of this infinite parent, is his highest representative on this plane of being—the perfect man being the most complete embodiment of the 'Father's fulness' which we can contemplate; and that each man is or has, by virtue of this parentage, in his inmost a germ of divinity—an incorruptible portion of the divine essence which is ever prompting to the right, and which in time will free itself from all imperfections incident to the rudimental or earthly conditions, and will triumph over all evil.

"19. That all evil is disharmony, greater or less, with this inmost or divine principle; and, hence, whatever prompts and aids man to bring his more external nature into subjection to and harmony with his interiors—whether it be called 'Christianity,' 'Spiritualism,' or the 'Harmonial Philosophy,' whether it recognize the 'Holy Ghost,' the Bible, or a present spiritual and celestial influx, is a 'means of salvation' from evil."



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