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DEVOTED TO RATIONAL SPIRITUALISM AND PRACTICAL REFORM.

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Spiritual Philosophy.

For the Spiritual Age.

SPIRITUALISM OF SOCRATES AND PLATO.

In our previous article we showed the Spiritualism of Socrates to be something different from the interpretation of Prof. Felton, who cited the Athenian teacher as great, good and glorious, but not of us in the spiritual fold. It was seen, however, that the ancient sage believed in guardian angelic influences, interchangeably termed Demons or Gods. We proceed to see what was this phase of belief to the mind of Plato, the pupil of Athena's wisest son.

Plato received the religion of his day, of the different degrees of the tutelary gods. And though not sufficiently mediumistic to be cognizant, in his own person, of the special guardianship of a good and wise Demon, as was Socrates by a more open and interior light, yet Plato believed in the general government of souls, Demons, Gods, as of spirits of less or greater development. He says of God, that He is "the beginning, and end, and middle of all things, and him does Justice ever follow, the punisher of those who are deserters from the divine law; and close upon her attends, in a humble and orderly manner, he who would be happy; but he who is lifted up by high boasting, exalting himself through his riches or honors, or the fine form of his body, and having his soul inflamed with insolence, is left deserted by the deity."

Of Demons, he says that they "are of a more divine and excellent race than men;" and quotes "Hesiod as a wise person for asserting that the road to wickedness is smooth, and offers itself to be passed through without sweat—as being very short; but that

> Th' immortal gods have before virtue placed
> The sweat of labor, and the road is long
> And steep that to it leads. At first 'tis rough,
> But when you reach the top 'tis easy all,
> Although it was all difficult before."

Plato speaks of the "Demon of each person," but he gives us no insight into the outwrought objectivity of his own. He speaks "of Gods or Demons by whatever name they may be called," and thinks that he who does not learn and practice divine things, "will never become either a god, a demon, or a hero among men, competent to undertake seriously the care of mankind,"—thus showing that gradation of spheres, as outwrought in the soul, which possessed, as Plato believed, almost boundless capabilities of unfolding, and of rising in its glory in proportion to the beauty of its life. He speaks of "Soul as God and Goddess, that leads everything in heaven and on earth; that, since a soul, or souls, good in every virtue, are seen to be the causes of all these things, we will call them Gods."

Of the soul in its changes, he says, "it is borne along according to the order and law of fate," each one rising or falling, according to its character, on a plane of many degrees,—"the more unjust fall into the places below by the name of Hades," till changed to a higher estate by "mixing with divine virtue."

How this old Gentiledom shames the darkness of our dead churches, which scarcely have a twilight gleam of a life beyond the tomb—clinging to the resurrection of the dead body, which eludes their grasp through swift chemical mutations of vegetable and animal growth, as the course materialwise of all the earth.

It appears that ancient Gentile Spiritualism was not exempt from that lower phase of development, manifest in all ages, and in all religions, and known as sorcery, witchcraft, or incantation. Plato speaks of "sorceries, incantations, and the so-called bindings," which are supposed to have been the same as mesmeric operations, and used to enthrall the ignorant in base superstitions. These evil manifestations, Plato is as severe in condemning as the Jewish medium, Moses—even adjudging these workers of iniquity as worthy of death. It is only in the present day that the science or the philosophy of these things is understood by superior spiritual unfolding; yet how few, even in this age, are wiser than Plato—who, as we have seen, fully admitted the imponderable world, yet had no conception of the causative conditions that blended that world with this. He says, "Now these matters, and all relating to things of this kind, it is not easy to know how they exist in nature, nor if any one did know, to persuade others."

It is only the advanced Spiritualist who is able to lift the veil of all past religions, and to show the law and their mode of being. There is now more light, and

> "Even Gods must yield,—religions take their turn."

The soul being immortal, was itself considered a "God, and altogether superior to body," and, continues Plato—"that there is nothing but the soul which causes each of us to be in this life the very thing we are, and that the body, like an image, follows each of us: and that when we are dead, being in reality immortal, but called by the name of soul, we depart to other Gods, to render an account, as the law of our country asserts, full of confidence to the good, but very fearful to the bad."

Here ends all from Plato that is pertinent to spirit-intercourse, or to the Demon conscience of Socrates; but from Xenophon, another disciple, we have something more to say.

C. B. P.

For the Spiritual Age.

PROGRESS.

As the scroll of time unrolls from the bosom of eternity, new and startling truths are written in characters of living light on every page; *new* not in their nature or principles, but in their development to, and acceptance by, the human mind. From the great heart of humanity still goes forth the unceasing prayer, (the true aroma of spirit) for more light upon the principles which shall harmonize man with his brother—politically, socially and religiously; for more light upon the dimly recognized doctrine of his immortality, and the conditions of that future and fadeless realm. Will not that prayer be satisfactorily answered? Foregleams of that better land already fall aslant upon earth's weary, care-worn pilgrims, inspiring cheerfulness and hope, disrobing death of its terrors and the grave of its gloom.

The doctrine of spiritual intercourse, in its onward march, not only obeys but illustrates the great law of steady and unending progress, which you appropriately term a "common law of the Universe." Young America, not yet out of her teens, and still subject to some youthful antics, Old England with her hoary head and time-worn institutions, France with her versatility of genius and excessive etiquette, Germany with her love of philosophy and transcendental proclivities, Switzerland with her snow-capt hills and deathless love of freedom, Arabia with her drifting sands and wandering tribes, Italy with her love of pastoral life and roving minstrels, Norway and Sweden with their perpetual snows and rock-bound shores, China and Japan with their once ceaseless but now broken conservatism,—all tribes and nations now reach forth the hand and long to give the fraternal grasp to their distant brothers. The Harmonial Philosophy properly received and duly practised has a tendency to lessen these unhealthy antagonisms which have too long separated man from his brother.

Christ the father and founder of a new age, the age of philanthropy, and his early followers, did more to evangelize the world during the first three centuries of the Christian era than has been accomplished by that class of persons since. With the decay of what has been termed miraculous power, Christianity gradually lost its influence over the hearts and lives of the human race. Then followed that period which all historians have united to call the "Dark Ages." The pall of night shrouded the moral and intellectual powers of man, the true principles and spirit of the Great Teacher shone with but a dim and imperfect lustre, through the useless forms, unmeaning ceremonies and distracting doctrines, with which they vainly strove to keep up the credit of the church of their ancestors and of their adoption. For a long, long period the so-called religious teachers have been abroad at their own risk, having lost, or rather having never had, the proper credentials with which to give force to their mission. To supply this unfortunate defect, they wholesale and retail those dogmas which were bequeathed from the above named rude and darker age. Are not miracles again needed to convince man of the *simplicity* of the truth as it is in Jesus? That a supreme love of all truth and the practice of righteousness is the essence of true religion? Their surroundings however have been and still are somewhat unfortunate, inducing a greater love of *party* than of *truth*; the noble and elevating sentiment, "We ought to obey God rather than man" exerting apparently but a feeble influence. Whenever religious truths present greater evidence of their genuineness than those they are wont to give as *inferential doctrines* from the teachings of the Son of man, the former, in accordance with the laws of evidence and of mind, will supercede the latter.

Owing to the above fact a great *want* has long been felt—a large class of intelligent minds have not been met by the ministrations of the so-called sacred desk. Many, for the ostensible purpose of retaining their *caste*, give liberally of their substance to maintain a religion which they mentally reject. Their interior being not only requires additional evidence, but that too of a more sensuous and demonstrative kind.

And now, forsooth, while the inhabitants of the immortal realm have found means of freer, fuller and more general access to their earthly friends, some tauntingly ask, "are these Spiritualists *Christians*? Do they believe in the fundamental doctrines of the Bible?" We pity the ignorance and can forgive unasked, without a mental reservation, the bigotry which prompts the above and other questions of a similar nature. What the family connection is between this kind of religion and that which asked "can any good come out of Nazareth?" we will leave for others to decide. Others cry, "hold, you undermine our superstructure!" So far as your edifice is built of truth which has emanated from the Great Positive Mind, we cannot possibly harm either it or you. We behold from the plane of thought, which it is our good fortune to occupy, that all truth is not only one but harmonious. There can be no two truths antagonistic; none in geology in conflict with any in the Bible, none in the Harmonial Philosophy at war with either. There are about ten hundred millions of human beings on this little planet; nearly one-third accept the teachings of the Nazarene; About two-thirds of this one-third are claimed by the Roman and Greek churches, leaving from seventy to one hundred millions for the Protestant sects, whose names are legion, for they are many, who not only *protest* with great violence against the so-called mother church, but also against each other. Now I respectfully submit, whether these unrighteous antagonisms can be successfully neutralized without a *new revelation* or some better method of *interpretation* of the old? Is it not possible, yea highly probable that your heterogeneous systems are a compound of truth and error, good and evil, light and darkness, order and chaos, the latter in too many instances greatly preponderating.

If we do not greatly mistake the "signs of the times," the common people are determined to look into this matter anew. We are friendly to a full, free and impartial investigation of the whole premises.

> "Ye different sects who all declare,
> Lo, Christ is here! Lo, Christ is there!
> Your stronger proofs divinely give,
> And show us where the *Christians live*!
>
> Your claim, alas! you cannot prove,
> Ye lack the genuine mark of *love*!"

The theme is one of transcendent greatness, into which anciently "angels desired to look," and as the stream of time flows onward that interest becomes more intense and all-absorbing. Is it possible that we have obtained a hypothesis sufficient to explain all the remarkable Spiritual phenomena, which have existed among every tribe and nation on the face of the wide world? Can man's immortality be demonstrated to the senses of some, and to the satisfaction of all earnest enquirers after truth on this heavenly theme? If so, then we hold a most valuable key of knowledge, and our responsibility is proportionate to the position we occupy. Life, the life of the spirit, is a great and startling reality. The next life, so-called, is only a continuation, an outgrowth of the present. The impress of every good or bad act becomes indelible. Penitence can never fully erase a bad deed, for the laws of mind are inexorable. But while this fact is admitted, how cheering the thought, that there is an attractive force constantly drawing all towards the Source from which they sprang, and that this will continue while the wasteless ages of eternity roll on. If a person enters college in *advance*, one entering in the usual way can never reach the first, other conditions being equal. I will say then, with Socrates, if the soul be immortal it should be cultivated with the greatest dilligence and care, as the effects thereof may extend through all eternity.

FRANKLIN, N. H. J. ELLIOTT.

For the Spiritual Age.

HYMN OF PROGRESS.

[The following hymn was composed for a Christmas celebration in a New England village, and is now published for the first time.—ED. AGE.]

> Not in vain are all the ages
> With the blood of martyrs strewn,—
> Not in vain in history's pages
> Is their great endurance shown;
> For the light that led them onward,
> Shining clear from all the past,
> Still will guide our human vanguard,
> While humanity shall last.
>
> And, encased in scatheless armor,
> We can toil with hand and brain,
> And from every syren charmer
> Can our wandering feet restrain;
> While we listen to the chorus
> Pealing from their far-off homes,
> And their presence stealing o'er us,
> Round our darkened pathway comes.
>
> And we rise to purer manhood,
> Climb to higher planes of thought,
> Thinking how they in the van stood
> While their noble deeds they wrought.
> "Peace on earth and lasting blessing"
> Peals along the course of time,
> And with chorus still increasing
> Rolls the symphony sublime.

For the Spiritual Age.

CONTENT.

BY PROF. T. H. CHIVERS, M. D.

> There is a Bird of Paradise,
> Sits in Affliction's cage,
> And sings its heavenly melodies
> To man, from age to age.
>
> This Bird of Love is called CONTENT,—
> From Paradise was driven;
> And, in this land of banishment,
> Sings the sweet peace of Heaven.

VILLA ALLEGRA, Ga., April 10, 1856.

Life is what we make it. Let us call back images of joy and gladness, rather than those of grief and care. The latter may sometimes be our guests to sup and dine, but let them never be permitted to lodge with us.

For the Spiritual Age.

THE MEANING OF WINGS.

"Should we represent angels with wings?" is a question not difficult to settle, if we are clear as to our intention in the representation. If we mean to give portraits, or ideal portraits of the actual constitution of the superior Intelligences, we shall doubtless omit those graceful appendages, since nothing is more probable in nature, or positive in experience, than the fact that spirits do not possess wings, in their usual and normal condition; though nothing appears to preclude the idea that they may assume such a shape at pleasure, either by impressions on the mind of the beholder, or by actual extension of the spirit aura into the form of wings,—as they assume the dress and features of a former state, for definite purposes.

If, however, in giving expression, by Art, to spiritual ideas, not indeed as literal, we do, as artists have ever done, use symbols to convey thoughts which could not otherwise be expressed without words, we certainly should not sin against taste, nor against truth, to put wings to our swift messengers, more than he sins against both who uses verbal figures of speech.

The "winged lightning," the "winged winds," the "hand of God," the "eyes of faith," and ten thousand other expressions that give sensible forms and features to things purely impersonal, and to the unlimited Infinite, are pictures to the mind, as distinctly out of the sphere of fact and possibility, as wings on the shoulders of an angel. But let a man attempt to pluck his speech, and strip it of all imagery, and he will see in its bald, stiff deadness, how idle and absurd is the protest against symbolism in Art, which can never convey any idea not purely sensuous, without conventional forms.

It will be well to remember that angels were not in the habit of sitting for their portraits when the conventional form of them was adopted, and that artists had no intention to give us actual features of ministering spirits, but only to express certain complex ideas, which the simplicity of sculpture and painting could not express so clearly, if at all, without symbols.

Wings were given to the cherubs that covered the "Mercy Seat," to the angels in Ezekiel's vision, and to the lions of Daniel. By a figure often repeated, the Hebrew poets gave wings to the Supreme Being himself, and had it not been unlawful to attempt an image of Him, their artists would have undoubtedly represented him; for the description of the "vision of God" in Ezekiel, is but a *verbal* picture of the Assyrian Divinity, with the winged lions, winged bulls, and wheel within wheel, the sacred circle which was the symbol of eternity, as sculptured on the palace walls of Nineveh.

The Egyptians used a winged circle, or globe, for the Divine image, essentially the same as the winged heads in Hebrew sculptures, known as cherubim. The Egyptian figure bore the wings of the scarabee, or sharded beetle, to signify the doctrine of immortality, or the idea of the spiritual resurrection, because the beetle rose from his shroud, and the seeming death of his worm-state, to a winged new life. The same thought was expressed by the Greeks in their beautiful Psyche, the personified soul, by delicate butterfly-wings, and for the same reason. That man must be a very gross utilitarian who should think Psyche's wings absurd because she could not fly with them.

The Assyrians adorned their cherubic circle of the Divinity with the immortal wings and the tail of the dove, the symbol-bird of Mylita, the Assyrian Venus, as of the Greek and Roman Venus. By the circle which symbolized the Infinite, unending Cause, the Creator of the spheric universe; by the wings of the death-conqueror who rose from his tomb to give men assurance of immortality; and the plumes of the heavenly dove, symbol of renovating love, the deep-thoughted old Pagans of ancient Nineveh figured their triune God, and gave the captive Jews a palpable image, for the basis of their once inexplicable visions.

But wings have another and yet more popular significance, in Art as in language, and one which accounts for their use in portraying angels. They mean *fleetness*, and were used to designate a swift courier, or anything moving with rapidity. Mercury, the messenger, and errand runner of the Gods, had little wings on his heels, on his cap, and sometimes on his wand or caduceus. It is scarcely to be supposed that any human being imagined them for actual use, or intended that we should so receive them. Yet a similar misconception has made dragons and winged snakes from the symbols of the old faith, that put the wings of fleetness on that swift creature which had already become a symbol of the creative wisdom.

All language is crowded with this use of wings; and besides the inevitable tendency of a figure so well defined and universally understood, to be brought into art, with its popular significance, the sacred use of the wing symbol in Jewish representations of angelic beings, would be a warrant for its use in Christian art. To those who look on the Bible as the only light from that other world to which we are moving, it would not be strange if the symbol was confounded with fact, and those divinely directed casts and sculptures were considered as truthful transcripts and inspired portraits of heavenly beings. Certainly no believer in the inspiration of Moses could pronounce those representations of angels as "absurd," which were modeled under the direct superintendence of God.

To us, who recognize in them conventional figures older than all history, sacred or profane, founded on obvious relations between thought and symbol, they are far from shocking the taste, or damaging natural truth. We do not seek zoological history in the realm of symbols.

THE SPIRITUAL BODY.

[Extract from "The Human Soul: A Discourse by E. M. Wheelock." See notice inside.]

How beautifully exact is Paul's analogy between the growth of grain and the resurrection of the spirit of man. As the body of the seed drops off and perishes, while the germ within expands itself, and clothed in a new body, rises into new light and life; so when the natural body fails to perform its duties, it drops off from the soul, and the man rises in complete human form, into new life. But now take the old Jewish dogma of raising dead bodies out of the graves. What do we see? The seed decays, the germ goes off without any body, or form, for an indefinite and unknown number of ages, and then re-enters the old seed, which, by arbitrary miracle, is re-created to receive it! Did you ever hear of grain growing in that way? I trow not. Ah! This is not the immortality of the Bible, as revealed in the words of Christ, and set forth in the philosophy of Paul. This is one of the shreds of *Judaism*, marring the fair mantle of a higher faith. You will find no such phrases in Scripture as the "disembodied dead" or the "resurrection of the body."

Do not profane the holy thought of immortality by a supposed rebuilding of the rotten carcase of flesh and blood. Do not look forward to being a bodiless, half-man, shivering through the long ages, until you are dressed again in your *old suit of clothes*. Do not go with your cold and cruel creed, foul with burial smells, to the friend saddened by the loss of a fond and faithful heart, and dare to whisper such consolations there; do not go to the mother weeping over her lost little one, and weigh down her spirit by a still heavier woe.

How truly, and for all time, spake the Lord, "Ye do make the word of God of none effect through your *traditions*!" Yes, the traditions, the husks of traditions, void of the golden grain, which the very swine would refuse, and which are yet offered to the multitude to stay their spiritual famine! No wonder for the leanness of the old churches, no wonder that they shrink from investigation, and tremble at the faintest footfalls of science, and answer argument by proscribing inquiry, and calling bad names, and frightening nervous old ladies.

No wonder that the popular theology has well nigh become a *phrensy!* For it begins by fracturing the idea of God into three pieces, making of each piece a person, and of each person a God, so that thought and speech quarrel; while the lips speak of one, the minds thinks of three. And it ends by mistaking our *clothing* for *ourselves*, by changing the solid, human soul into a "kind of ether," with no "rest for its foot" until it re-assumes its mortal dust.

How grandly above this vague Jewish guessing which changes man into a ghost, and denies positive, personal human life to the soul, making it live nowhere, and nohow, till the "day of judgment," rise the teachings of Christ, telling us of the resurrection of the man, immediate on the death of the flesh; and the philosophy of Paul, setting forth that as the germ is within the seed, so within these material and temporary forms is found the SPIRITUAL BODY, already winged and plumed for flight!

These glorious truths; First, that the human soul is not a "breath," or a smoke-wreath, or an "ether," but a substantial, spiritual-body—a real, immortal *man*—clothed upon with matter for a temporary and especial end, that so it may be in and of a world of matter; and secondly, that when uncased by death, from its swaddling bands of flesh, it passes at once into the realms of spirit as a real human being, perfect in shape, feature, and personality, and as much a part of created nature as a flower or a bird; these glorious truths, I say, have never been without some kind of witness in the world. Job believed them. Socrates, believed them. "How shall we bury you?" said Crito to Socrates, before he drank the poison. "Just as you please," replied Socrates, "if you can only catch me." Socrates knew better than that he should be buried; he viewed death as an *open door*, through which he would pass into a higher life. Said he, "I am never tired of telling Crito that the body is not Socrates." And he advises those who believe that the soul is an essence, or an ether, "not to reside, after death, in any bleak, open land, or their souls will be run away with by the wind!" Excellent advice. It is high time such windy dogmas were blown out of human sight.

There can be no human life, in this life or any other, without a human body and form,—an organic structure. "Think, if you can, of earnest affection without the glance of the eye, or love of authority without the gesture of command, or eagerness without legs, or the repose of a being who has nothing to sit upon, or the intelligence of one without a brain, or his joy without a face, or his tenderness without a heart." And when you have thus amputated and thrown away every part of the human organism, *what is left*, answers to the popular definition of the soul,—it also answers to the popular definition of *nothing*.

The Spiritual Age.

Progress is the Common Law of the Universe.

A. E. NEWTON, S. B. BRITTAN, EDITORS.
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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1858.

THE BATTLE STILL RAGES!

The world is proverbially unappreciative and ungrateful. The world of anti-Spiritualism is no exception to this rule. The immense and self-sacrificing labors of the Cambridge Professor of Greek, during the past year,—put forth in abnormal orations, country lyceum lectures, Spiritualist meetings, the columns of the *Boston Courier*, and in a voluminous private correspondence,—to deliver mankind from the "stupendous delusion" of modern Spiritualism, seem to have fallen useless and unacknowledged. The *opponents* of the "monstrous infatuation," alike with its "*dupes*," appear to be quite unaware that "the delusion is passing away, the imposture becoming stale," and equally oblivious as to their indebtedness to the self-complacent Professor for so important a result.

Within a few days, our attention has been called to a series of the most vigorous assaults which have yet been made upon the advancing truth, by parties of the highest standing in the literary and theological world,—none of whom seem to have dreamed that their work had been rendered wholly superfluous by the achievements of the heroic and modest Grecian. We propose to notice the more noticeable of these attacks—having room, however, in the present article, for but a brief general characterization.

REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER.

First, in the N. Y. *Independent*, of the 4th inst., Rev. Henry Ward Beecher makes a trenchant assault upon the "Prophecies" of modern Spiritualism, called out by a recent statement of Judge Edmonds. His reverence indulges in a column and a half of that pungent sarcasm and sledge-hammer rhetoric of which he is one of the greatest living masters. It so happens, however, that the Judge's statement which provoked this display of clerical zeal for the exclusive credit of Scripture predictions, had no reference whatever to prophecies or anything prophetic. He merely affirmed, in substance, that some friends of Mr. Keyes, assistant engineer on board the steamer Ariel, received intelligence of the safety of that gentleman, through the agency of spirit-friends, some time in advance of news through mundane channels. There was neither *prediction* nor pretense of it, in the case—which fact leaves the reverend assailant in the ludicrous attitude of belaboring a man of straw!

REV. DR. PEABODY.

Secondly, the Portsmouth, N. H., *Journal*, of Feb. 6th, publishes a sermon delivered in that city the preceding Sabbath, by Rev. A. P. PEABODY, D. D. (a Unitarian Divine, of high standing) against spirit-intercourse. The Rev. Doctor begins by conceding an adequate scientific basis for the *probability* of spirit-communion, in these words:

"It is to me entirely conceivable and in analogy with known facts, that a human organism of peculiar impressibleness should, through this all-pervading medium [mental electricity], receive impressions without words, (and that even beyond and far beyond the limits of a consulting circle,) *and should thus be able to levy contributions on near and even on distant minds.*"

If so much be true, (as it undoubtedly is), how can spirit-intercourse be avoided or prevented?—unless it be held that disembodied minds are shut up in some far distant locality, and so thoroughly *insulated* that even mental electricity or *thought*, cannot pass the walls of their prison-house! Can an enlightened and liberal-minded divine entertain so degrading an idea of the spiritual state?

The Doctor proceeds to urge that, if real, there is "evil and danger in this intercourse;" but the arguments he produces are common-place and threadbare, characteristic of a timid conservatism, a weak reliance on traditional authority, and a narrow view of the bearings and relations of the whole subject. Vide the following sentences:

"If it had been God's design that we should attempt to open new avenues to the unseen world, if it were for our highest benefit that we should attempt them, I cannot but believe that he who came from God and heaven, would have opened them for us. Whether they are real or imaginary avenues, the silence of the Gospel with regard to them convinces me that God would have us leave them untried."

Is not the same "old-fogy" argument equally good against the mariner's compass, the ocean-steamship, the railroad, the telegraph, the newspaper, and all the appliances of modern science and art to the facilitation of intercourse and the extension of human knowledge? Should not the silence of the Gospel with regard to the discovery of America, and in relation to railroads, telegraphs, and newspapers convince us that "God would have us leave them untried?" When shall we see the end of such absurdities?

Besides, how can this reverend divine be ignorant of so patent a fact as that Jesus *did* "open for us" the avenues of spirit-intercourse, both by instruction and by example. He himself conversed with Moses and Elias, then centuries deceased, inviting his most intimate disciples to the interview; he was often visited and strengthened by angels (spirits); and he promised to be in the midst of, and to manifest himself to his disciples whenever two or three of them should meet together in his name; and he repeatedly showed himself after his own decease and communicated with his friends, and assured them that they and their successors should be sharers of the privileges he had attained. In what more complete or effectual way could he have opened for us the avenues to communion with the ascended? But enough for this singularly weak performance.

HARPER'S MAGAZINE.

Thirdly, the editor of *Harper's Magazine* while indulging (in the February number) in some for the most part just and valuable observations on "Mental and Moral Pauperism," exhibiting in a true light the evils of those prevalent systems of training which fail to make men think and act for themselves,—illustrates *his own* "mental and moral pauperism" by referring to "the monstrous delusion" of Spiritualism, and repeating (without credit) Prof. Felton's worn-out fiction that

"Whatever view may be taken of the assumed facts of Spiritualism, it is certain that they have not been *observed* by their believers. If the faculty of observation had been fairly exercised, the worst effects of Spiritualism would not have occurred, namely, its effects in pauperising the mind—in making it close shut to the most obvious truth, and wide open to the most ridiculous error—skeptical in the wrong direction and believing in the wrong direction, and leaning for spiritual support on a nonsensical materialism whose tendency is to corrupt as well as to befool."

Had *Harper's* editor taken pains to think and investigate for himself on this matter, and made the acquaintance of some of those *paupers* and *fools* he so affects to despise—instead of accepting the unreliable testimony of the immoderate Grecian—we think he would have seen the palpable non-relevancy of his citation. If Spiritualism does not tend to produce independent *thinkers* and severely rigid *observers*, we should be pleased to know what will; and if they are not to be found among its advocates, we would like to be informed where to look for them.

THE NEW ENGLANDER.

The fifth assault to which we have alluded comes through the pages of *The New Englander*, a ponderous Quarterly devoted to the exposition and defense of New Haven Theology. The writer begins by admitting the reality of at least some of the alleged phenomena of Spiritualism—declines undertaking to account for them, on the ground that he is "not bound" to do it,—thinks "judges, lawyers, physicians and clergymen," are incompetent to investigate it, and that their *incompetency* is in the ratio of their *eminence* in their several professions,—turns it over to the exclusive attention of the "natural and mental philosopher," who must expect to "give years" to its study, "for no good will come of superficial dabbling in it, only evil," (let the hasty Cambridge savans notethe rebuke!)—and solemnly urges all impatient people to "await" the dictum of the great unknown (probably unborn) expounder. In the mean time, this pleader for delay of judgment very modestly and consistently proceeds to submit *his own* verdict on the matter, in some half-dozen labored propositions which he claims are "so many complete and independent arguments against the truth of Spiritualism"! From which we are compelled to conclude that this "judgmentizer" is, by his own showing, either a superficial dabbler in what he does not understand, or a very "Daniel come to judgment." An examination of his six "arguments" leaves us not at all in doubt which of these he is. But we have not room here to recite them. Suffice it to say that he manufactures for Spiritualism a theology which few if any of its adherents will accept—imputes to it a logic which every rational Spiritualist will repudiate—and ascribes to it an influence and tendency which their constant experience contradicts. Of course, he thus finds it an easy matter to pronounce against its claims. But what signifies such a decision?

THE WESTMINSTER REVIEW.

The last but not least onslaught which we shall now chronicle, is a raking broadside from the stately *Westminster Review*. Upwards of twenty pages in the January number of this monarch of criticism are devoted to "Spirits and Spirit-Rapping." The writer shows somewhat extensive reading, little philosophy and less candor. In professing to give a summary of the "facts" of Spiritualism, he carefully passes over those characteristics of the phenomena which afford clear proof of spirit-agency, seizing upon such features as can be most readily turned to ridicule, reciting even these with a tone of undisguised incredulity, and dwelling largely upon the alleged "fanaticisms" of believers. These last, from the "Mary Newell" hoax to the "Mountain Cove Movement," and the birth of a "Motive Force" that "would not move to any purpose," at Lynn Tower, are elaborately set forth. Great weight is also accorded to the numerous but contradictory and oft-exploded "exposures" and "scientific explanations" which have been given, from the toe-cracking of Dr. Potts and C. C. Burr to the "unconscious muscular action" of Prof. Faraday, and the *peroneus longus* theory started by the Buffalo doctors and confirmed by Dr. Scheff. Strangely enough, however, the extraordinary services of the *Boston Courier* are wholly ignored, and the invincible force of "the Feltonian rhetoric" is not so much as hinted at!

The reviewer is moreover pleased to regard Prof. Hare as the accredited teacher of the *theology* of Spiritualism, which he chooses to designate by the novel and euphonious term of "Hareanism." The venerable Emeritus Professor of Chemistry is classed with Swedenborg as "an amiable lunatic," and his doctrines are pronounced "horrible, blasphemous and diabolic." In fact, the only cause suggested by our philosophic reviewer, for the whole wide-spread Spiritualistic movement which now agitates all Christendom, is "an epedemic malady," a "madness," a "strange disease," whose symptoms are "fraud, jugglery, actual insanity, excited vanity, and a morbid love of the marvellous." Such is the sage solution of the profound *Westminster Review!*

Allowing the noise and smoke of this terrific cannonade from "Old Ironsides" to clear away, we do not see that Spiritualism has suffered the least damage. The reviewer's guns were loaded with only blank cartridges, and smoke and noise alone are consequent of the explosion. Ridicule is not argument; incredulity disproves nothing. The simple and overwhelming facts of Spiritualism remain undisturbed, and the theological truths it has illustrated are no less true than before.

Nay, more,—the reviewer plainly intimates a conviction on his own part "that the miracles of the Bible rest on no stronger foundation than those of Spiritualism;" he significantly confesses that "if to be originated under mean or ridiculous circumstances be the fundamental requisite of a revelation, Swedenborgianism as well as Spiritualism is stamped with the true mintmark;" and he states that "the chief interest" of the "epidemic" consists in the evidence which it affords of a wide-spread tendency in the United States towards the establishment of some new religious faith. He furthermore protests against the mistake of supposing that the matter has ceased to occupy attention in England. He declares—

"The fact is very much otherwise. Our readers would be astonished were we to lay before them the names of several of those who are unflinching believers in it, or are devoting themselves to the study or reproduction of its marvels. Not only does it survive, but survives with all the charm and all the stimulating attractiveness of a secret science. Until the public mind in England shall be prepared to receive it, or until the evidence can be put in a shape to enforce general conviction, the present policy is to nurse it in quiet and enlarge the circle of influence by a system of noiseless extension. Whether this policy will be successful remains to be seen, but there can be no doubt that, should ever the time arrive for a revival of the movement, the persons at its head would be men and women whose intellectual qualifications are known to the public, and who possess its confidence and esteem."

Enough! This assurance has a thousand-fold more weight than all the sneers ever uttered. For these quiet and intelligent investigators *know* in what they believe, while the critics merely deny or ridicule what they do not comprehend.

Spiritualists may well take fresh courage (if they need it) from all these assaults. Whenever and wherever the Goliaths of anti-Spiritualism can be induced to take the field and display their weapons, their utter clumsiness and impotency become at once manifest. A single pebble of truth, well chosen, and directed by even a stripling-hand—a single fact from the thousand which are transpiring throughout Christendom—is sufficient to lay them prone and helpless, when nothing remains but to decapitate them with their own trusted swords!

A. E. N.

A Short Sermon.

SUBJECT:—THE MORALS OF THE PRESS.

TEXT.—"The opinions which he [an editor] proposes, if in the management of a journal of any reputation, are read by tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands. If he be himself intelligent and actuated by honest motives, he is thus able to check error, to confirm good principle, and to give modest truth that countenance and support which she absolutely needs, that she may not be outfaced by brazen falsehood, always on the watch to take her at disadvantage.

"It is obvious, therefore, that the public itself has the very highest interest to make and to keep the press pure. Venal and frivolous newspapers we know there are, conducted without discretion, without purpose, without principle. But the public ought to understand its own good well enough to frown with indignation upon that sort of journalism, which by its false conduct introduces, under the pretence of diffusing information, moral disease and rottenness into the very mind and heart of the community."—*Boston Courier, 15th inst.*

COMMENTARY.—The *Boston Courier*, some weeks since, copied at length, and with especial satisfaction, the gross and filthy scandals of the *Springfield Republican*, about "naked circles" and nude communities, thus doing what it could to introduce "rottenness into the very heart and mind of the community;" and in a later issue the same paper put forth the "brazen falsehood" that

"The *Spiritual Age* does not hesitate to defend the shocking custom of naked spiritual circles."

PRACTICAL APPLICATION.—The public should "frown with indignation upon that sort of journalism."

The Discussion at Hartford.

The *Hartford Times* thus states the arrangements for the forthcoming discussion in that city, in which one of the editors of this paper is to take a part:

A PHILOSOPHICO-RELIGIOUS DISCUSSION.—We are informed that the preliminaries have been arranged for a discussion, in this city, of the following questions, viz:

1st. Do the spirits of departed human beings continue to manifest their presence, power, and intelligence, to those who still remain on earth and in the corporeal state?

2d. Can the so-called spiritual phenomena of different ages and countries be rationally accounted for without admitting the agency of departed human beings in their production?

The parties to the discussion, we are told, are Dr. D. D. Hanson, of Hartford, and Prof. S. B. Brittan, of New York; the discussion to take place in Touro Hall, on or about the 25th instant. Prof. Brittan to take the affirmative, and Dr. Hanson the negative of the first of these propositions, and *vice versa* on the second. We learn that the discussion will be conducted according to the rules and under the forms of parliamentary usage, and in a thoroughly gentlemanly and appropriate manner. Dr. Hanson is one of our well-known and respected citizens, and will doubtless acquit himself with credit. Prof. Brittan is an able and accomplished speaker, of marked controversial talent."

The Fruits.

The *Springfield Republican* quotes from the *Banner of Light* a statement to the effect that "an orthodox deacon, from the western part of the State, whose head is white from between sixty and seventy years of service, and who is somewhat high in authority in the State as well as in the Church," was detected in some acts of impropriety in a circle to which he was invited in Boston; as a consequence of which he had speedy leave of absence. The *Republican* asks:

"What is there in the constitution or operation of these circles that produces such fruit, even upon the venerable and grey-headed?"

This case was evidently the "fruit," not of the "constitution" of the circle, but of the *Republican's* filthy calumnies. The lecherous old deacon, from the *western* precincts (where that paper is authority,) had doubtless swallowed the "naked circle" myth, and supposed himself to be among people of his own stripe. We call upon that journal to correct the false impression it has given, and send no more such "customers" this way.

By the way, the *Republican* still fails to produce any proof of its slanders; but, instead, perpetrates a new outrage against truth and decency in charging us with "a covert defence of the nakedness" we have denied to exist. (This probably is the foundation of the *Courier's* "brazen falsehood" elsewhere alluded to.) It makes a miserable show of substantiating this new untruth, by quoting from our columns part of a paragraph relating to Michael Angelo. If the editor had not sense enough to perceive the real bearing of that article—that it was leveled against the immodest fastidiousness of some people, and not an "argument" for nudity—it is but another proof that he deserves to be honored as the great artist honored Biagio.

A. E. N.

A SPECIMEN OF ART.—At the recent levee in Chapman Hall, a beautiful crayon drawing, designed and executed by Miss Adelaide R. Sawyer, was exhibited. It was a fancy portraiture entitled "INSPIRATION." The eyes are closed and the countenance bears the rapt expression of one entranced. The attitude and mein bespeak one listening with reverence, serenity and love to that voice whose tone is the streaming light pouring into the soul through angelic ministration from the Divine Source. It is a work of rare merit; and we hope to see its skillful designer properly encouraged to pursue her art.

This drawing was disposed of by lot at the levee—Mr. D. Wilder, Jr., becoming the fortunate possessor. We understand that Mr. W. has consented to leave it on exhibition a few days at Miss Munson's rooms, No. 3 Winter St.

ORDAINED AT LAST.—On Tuesday (2d inst.,) Mr. A. S. Nickerson was ordained as an Evangelist at North Woburn. A large council was convened, and among the number some of the old council which once refused to ordain him. Dr. Stone, of of Park Street Church, Boston preached a very impressive sermon. The examination and all the exercises passed off in a very satsifactory manner.

Thus the liberal or progressive party carries the day; and and the heterodoxy of one "council" is accepted as orthodoxy by another. An edifying illustration of the value of ecclesiastical authority!

Mr. BRITTAN lectured at Chicago on Sunday, Jan. 31st., in the Metropolitan Hall, to an audience of about one thousand persons. This hall, which is the largest and best in the city, has been rented by the Spiritualists for one year; and it is their intention to maintain regular Sunday lectures by the ablest speakers.

At our last advices (Feb. 2) Mr. B. was at Kankakee City, Ill., where he had given two lectures to crowds of anxious inquirers. His contributions for this week's paper have failed to come to hand at the hour of going to press.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

MESMERISM, SPIRITUALISM, WITCHCRAFT AND MIRACLE: A brief treatise, showing that Mesmerism is a key which will unlock many chambers of Mystery. By ALLEN PUTNAM, author of "Spirit-Works," and "Natty, a Spirit." Boston: Bela Marsh, 14 Bromfield St. (74 pages, 8 vo.)

The purpose of this brief treatise, as summed up by the author, is to show that

"Mesmerism, Spiritualism, Witchcraft, Miracles, all belong to one family, all have a common root, and are developed by the same laws. The *spirits of men* perform these wonders; and all of them do it, and have ever done it, by substantially the same processes. When these spirits are embodied, we call their work mesmeric, or a result of animal or human magnetism: when the spirits are disembodied we call their operations Spiritualism. Living men, and dead ones too, are mesmerizers. If this can be made apparent, the world's wonders are at once and easily traceable to competent authors; and the world is favored with a glimpse of a universal law which has not heretofore been duly recognized."

In order to make this appear, Mr. Putnam begins with some of the common and generally admitted phenomena of mesmerism, and proceeds to narrate facts of his own observation which, step by step, lead unavoidably to the region of Spiritualism, or to the demonstration of disembodied spiritual agency. Having done this, he reviews the history of the Salem Witchcraft, producing, from the testimonies of Cotton Mather and others, evidence clearly indicative that the "bewitched" persons of that day were neither more nor less than mediums, and their strange doings were simply the effects of spirit-agency, in some cases proceeding from Indian spirits. He next proceeds to show that the same law applies to the so-called "miracles" of the Bible, and affords a clear and rational explanation of the mysteries and the inspiration of that book—alleging, as we believe, most truthfully that

"The Bible will hereafter find its truest friends, its only *invincible* defenders, among those who shall guard it within the walls of Spiritualism, and read it there in the light of *heavenly inspiration*."

The facts presented by Mr. Putnam are well chosen. If not always severely logical in his *mode* of statement, yet in *substance* he is strictly so. And we do not see how any sane mind can avoid his main conclusions,—except it be by a point-blank denial of his testimony. This, we think, no sane mind acquainted with the man will attempt. We quote the following as a sample:

"Taking my seat, one bright summer afternoon, at one end of a medium's table, with her at its side on my right, she commenced to speak, and I to write, a communication from one of my near relatives. While we were thus busied, my eye happened to see that a vacant chair, at the end of the table opposite to me, was sliding or moving on the floor. Looking under the table, I saw that the chair was at least a yard from any part of the medium, and also from myself; and we were the only persons in the room. The chair kept on moving. The room was light, very light; my view was perfectly distinct; and there, before me, the chair continued its movings.

"The late Robert G. Shaw and myself had several times met in that room; and I had learned, that, while living, he had said, that if it were possible for him, after death, to come to that place, he would; and also that he would try to move a chair instead of a table. Remembering this, I said, 'How do you do, Mr. Shaw?' Instantly the chair brought up its front legs at least four or five inches, and then struck firmly back upon the floor three times. 'I am happy to meet you, Mr. Shaw.' And three times again the chair gave its emphatic tips. 'Is Spiritualism true?' Three tips again. 'Will it be injurious to the world?' One tip. By this time the chair had changed its position, so that one of its legs came near a leg of the table. I next asked, 'Do you, Mr. Shaw, advise me to go on with my investigation of this subject?' The chair now poised itself upon a single leg, and, by a swing or sideway motion, brought another leg forcibly against the leg of the table three times. Then, while waiting my next question, it held itself still on a single leg; and, as successive questions were put, it did, by one swing or by three, give negative and affirmative answers. In that position it held on until ten or twelve questions had been answered,—till I had put all the questions that occurred to me, which could well be answered by a simple yes or no. When I ceased to question, the chair bowed itself slowly and gently over to the floor, without falling, and thus bade me good-by. All this occurred in broad daylight, and extended through more than five minutes of time. It was as fairly and as accurately seen by me as any object and motion ever were or ever can be. With my own eyes I *saw all that*, if I ever saw anything. If I see the paper on which I am now writing, then I saw such motions of that chair. There was no mistake. The medium did not move it; and I did not. Some invisible, intelligent power seemed to be there, and to do it. This statement is carefully made; and, so long as I continue to hold God and truth to be more worthy of reverence than man and public opinion, my pen and my tongue will maintain its substantial correctness. * *

"What did those strange movements of the dumb chair teach? *Dumb*, can I call it? No; oh! no; because it gave forth more instructive and commanding eloquence than the tongue of any man could have uttered. It spake as never man spake. The chair was instinct with life, intelligence and power, there in my very presence. I could no more doubt the action of mind in and through that chair, than I can in and through your body or mine, when our lips give utterance to thoughts. A moving and guiding mind was there: the motions *proved* that. It was not the medium's mind, nor mine: whose then, but Mr. Shaw's?" * * *

"Neither magnetism, electricity, nor odyle, could be made to give or to generate a *mind* in the chair; yet its motions proved that *mind was there. Common sense* demands the admission of this.'

In the concluding portions of the pamphlet, the author presents some interesting suggestions as to the instrumentalities by which disembodied spirits operate—the reasons why they manifest themselves so much more frequently and clearly now than in the past—and presents the results of his own observations and experiences as to the moral and religious tendencies of spirit-communion. His testimony under the latter head is characterized by moderation, and by a just discrimination. He distinguishes properly between evils which are almost the common heritage of humanity, and effects which are justly attributable to Spiritualism; and urges that whatever perversions may be made of its glorious truths, its *general* tendencies cannot be otherwise than toward higher truth, charity, freedom and purity. This part of the pamphlet we especially commend to the attention of those who have manifested so much anxiety for the "integrity of man and the purity of woman."

Altogether this treatise will prove one of the most effective utterances in favor of the Spiritualistic idea that has been given to the public.

THE HUMAN SOUL: A Discourse by Edwin M. Wheelock, at Dover, N. H. "There is a spiritual body." Dover: George W. Wadleigh, Printer. 17 pages.

The author of this Discourse is a young but talented clergyman of the Unitarian order, and a recent graduate of Cambridge Divinity School. When he entered upon the ministry, something more than a year since, he held the opinion that all the facts of Spiritualism were attributable to "odylic force" and mundane agencies, somewhat after the Mahan-ic theory. We recollect that, in the latter part of last winter, he advocated this view in a lyceum lecture, which we took occasion to criticise at the time. Since then, we are glad to learn he has got clear of this fog, and is now a firm and hearty believer in the fact of spirit-communion.

The present discourse has relation, not to the question of spirit-intercourse, but to the nature and time of the "resurrection," the character and qualities of the "spiritual body," and the method of its co-existence with the natural body in the present life. From the New Testament the author deduces clearly the identical view on these subjects which is held by modern Spiritualists, though he does not mention this coincidence. His arguments are presented with vivacity and clearness, and tell with great force against the dreamy and materialistic notions so prevalent in the religious community. A brief extract upon our first page will give some idea of the preacher's style and quality. We trust the pamphlet, which is printed in a cheap form, will be widely circulated.

Correspondence.

Milford, Mass.—Spiritualism a Free Gospel.

BRO. NEWTON:—I have long observed with pleasure the impartial manner in which you have conducted your journal, though I have not obeyed the impressions I have at different times received to communicate to its columns. Few are the periodicals in the range of my acquaintance which are freer from acrimony, sectarianism, or partisanship. You have chosen a divine method of reform. You abuse nobody. You recognize *all*,—from Catholics to Atheists,—as having a right to be beneath the broad, enlightening and energizing sunlight of the New Philosophy and the New Religion. If you continue in that direction, you will do much to lead men out of the Age of Antagonism, and enable them to plant their feet firmly on the threshold of the Age of Harmony.

In unison with the same liberal method of "doing good," I am privileged to inform you that a movement is being made in this vicinity to establish regular Spiritualistic meetings, which are to be conducted on the freest and most rational principles. The movers in the enterprise have long felt that the *mercenary phase* of Spiritualism was becoming almost its worst phase—most derogatory to its true and holy mission to mankind. In obedience to this feeling they have secured the "Old Brick Church" in Milford for the ensuing year, for the purpose of holding meetings on Sundays. They propose to "overturn the tables of the money-changers," to the extent that the CAUSE, and not MAMMON, shall be made Number One. Whoever comes from abroad to lecture or preach the word of Spiritualism in *this* building ought to be willing to trust as much in the humanity of his hearers for recompense, as they are expected to trust, beforehand, in his or her ability to teach or communicate wisdom.

Three meetings have already been held. The first was opened with a useful and instructive address, given by Adin Ballou, to a large and deeply interested audience. On Sunday last, Gibson Smith, of South Shaftsbury, Vt., a healing medium, visited us, and gave a discourse on "Spiritual Gifts." In respect to its style, and simplicity of thought, it reminded one of the unostentatious days of the apostles. Mr. Smith is one of those who have positively refused to set a price upon their spirit-utterances, and who advertise themselves mainly as their works *follow* them. Yet he is one of those few—perhaps I ought to say *many*—whose disinterested labors in healing and speaking the word, should be made known above many more noisy but less genuine apostles of the New Dispensation. He has given three or four lectures in this region, and has now gone "on his way rejoicing" in that inward peace which comes ever to those who trust in and *obey* their highest intuitions. Hail, ye spiritual teachers of like humanity! "Come over and help us," and see if our humanity will not respond to yours:

"Be noble! and the nobleness that lies
In other men, *sleeping*, but never *dead*,
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own."

I am fully convinced that there is *occasion* for such a practical protest. This mercenary incubus on the cause is *felt* by thousands who are not quite prepared, as yet, *to put an end to it*. Of course it could not flourish an hour, if these thousands who compose the more reflecting circles of Spiritualists, would simply *act* their convictions. The evil does not live without nourishment. Has not the hour come to promote a more beneficent and humanitary ministration? Is it not painful that Spiritualism is yet so untrue to its divine origin, and humane and equalizing uses, that mere mountebanks and worldlings, who enter the field for private ends, can pass, in some quarters, as the genuine teachers and heralds of light, and no man says, unqualifiedly, that this is *not* Spiritualism? Let it now be said, and let it be *acted*, henceforth, without apology.

I am not so unphilosophical, however, as not to know that even this phase of Spiritualism has its providential uses; nor am I so unwise as not to perceive that wisdom would not put it down by mere controversy or personal crimination. The truth involved is too great and too free. Mere *combat* with evil is not progress, but only action and re-action. It may be wise to demolish, but it is wiser to build—to transcend. The general law of nature is, as I believe, that systems and customs, like men, should die a natural death, and that they usually will, if persistently *let alone* by the living. Hence, I call on all men and women who are prepared for the step, to set up a *counter light*,—that almost indescribable light,—that absolute, free, unadulterated gospel of Spiritualism,—that unbought and unsold angelic ministration, which transcends all private interests,—that most interior and most equalizing humanitary light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, without money and without price. But this is too great, or too radical a truth to be received—some will say—above all to be *practised* in this rudimental state, without starving.

O ye of little faith! Ye who say, "We must live!" as if every true Spiritualist does not know that we *cannot help* living if we would,—that the soul cannot die. Ah! the *real* question is not whether we shall live,—that is settled without our thought,—but *whether we shall live* NOBLY! The important issue before us, as Spiritualists, is not whether we can endure this *free* gospel, but whether we can longer endure this *mercenary* gospel! The query is—are our eyes yet open?—or, are we even now so superficial and devoid of wisdom, that a little truth, if it but glitter through a golden panoply, can pass with us as *the* gospel of Spiritualism?

What has been the history of human progress in all times? Was there ever a genuine teacher or prophet, reaching high into the heavens and receiving wisdom for coming eras, who bartered *that* wisdom for lucre? Did *he* receive a stipulated salary for his seership? "Freely he received," did he not? "freely give?" "But," says the doubter, "we don't receive freely; we labor and expend effort." But do you labor for the *pay?* If not, then are you, also, under the gospel of freedom. If you do, will you then be just, and pay the angels for *their* services before you ask pay of others? You do not pay them; yet they do not go unrewarded; and are you quite certain that you would not be rewarded sufficiently, if you would refuse to estimate your teachings in money? Have you no confidence in the supremacy of your spiritual nature in the triumph of a free over a hireling gospel,—right over wrong,—humanity over mammon,—truth over error? Has not every *spiritual* dispensation opened with a *free* gospel? Did Jesus or his disciples receive salaries? Can any man suppose it without belittling them? *I* do not think them to have been infallible, or that the wisest man will consent to do just what they did on their authority; for the *absolute* is above us all—both rudimentals and celestials—and *that* is what we are to reach unto. But I think that it was the descent of a great light, which led them spontaneously to illustrate a free gospel,—a light uncommon with men, but common with angels; and not *till* it was perverted, and the Free Fountain from whence it emanated was closed, did their successors introduce the priesthood, with its beggarly dispensation of salaries and honorary titles. The Reverends, and the D. D.'s, and the Chief Bishops, with their large and stipulated revenues, came *after* inspiration had ceased; and not till these titles and emoluments came to be seriously questioned did *inspiration* again return on the ample and magnificent plane of Modern Spiritualism.

When freedom ceases, inspiration ceases also; then conventionalism comes in with its Trinity—Mammon, Popularity and Sensuality—to reap the fruits of what other men have sown, and give them glory,—such a glory as Trinity Church gives to Jesus in the manger! Inspiration knows not private interests, but speaks most eminently from a universal platform—level to all—the plane of equality on which all men stand in the sight of wisdom-angels. Let it be affirmed that the present age is no exception to this condition of equality. If Spiritualists wholly ignore a free gospel—though they will not—they, too, will have heard and said their last inspired word. Happily the opening of these modern gospels was free. No charges were then made at the door of the spirit-world. It would have been a sacrilege—a violation of that immortal friendship which had returned to greet earth's children with the extended hand of love; and not to introduce a brilliant dispensation, whose truths should necessarily sell for more in market than the Old Theology.

But no man or woman should understand me to ignore the material necessities of mediums, or the fact that their hearers are as much invited to illustrate the free gospel as they, and to bear *their* part of the burden. Only let it be understood that there are *spiritual* necessities—and none greater than the necessity of a free gospel of Spiritualism.

Hopedale, Feb. 6, 1858. B. J. Butts.

Letter from Mary F. Davis.

Aurora, Ill., Feb. 4th, 1858.

Friend Brittan:—When the New Year came over the ocean of the past, freighted with good gifts from our Father's hand, how glad were we to welcome among its golden treasures another number of "The Spiritual Age." Many throughout this broad, free, progressive West had regretted its suspension, and were very happy to see its return, especially since the earnest devotion and acknowledged talent of Brother Newton were to be united with your own in sustaining the publication. It is to be hoped that all who love Reform throughout our country will be willing to aid pecuniarily in giving a permanent basis to your praiseworthy enterprise.

Since I wrote you last, we have visited numerous places throughout this region and lectured to many thousands of people, who seemed eager to hear tidings of the New Dispensation. In Aurora, St. Charles, Waukegan, Rockford, Freeport, Belvidere, Alton, Bloomington, Peru, Mendota, and other places in Illinois, we have found warm friends and earnest advocates of the Harmonial Philosophy.

In Wisconsin we gave discourses in Beloit, Janesville, Palmyra, Milwaukie, Fond-du-Lac. Columbus, Racine, &c., &c., and everywhere we were greeted by *some* who were savingly interested in Spiritualism and Human Progress. Outside of our ranks we have heard of bitter opposition to our teachings; but, like a castle amid mountain fastnesses, has our beautiful Philosophy girt us round about, so that no storm of falsehood and calumny could reach our spirits. 'Tis consoling to know that Humanity will advance out of ignorance and suffering,—that wrong and oppression, want and misery will gradually vanish from the world in spite of Church and State and all their complicated and malicious opposition to Reforms and Reformers.

Recently Mr. Davis and myself, accompanied by Mr. G. B. Stebbins, of Rochester, N. Y., who has long been a radical reformer, and Mrs. L. H. Brown, of Chicago, who enriches all our meetings by her soul-inspiring music, made a visit of two weeks' duration to St. Louis, Mo. There we found a large circle of genuine progressive souls, who cordially gave us the right hand of fellowship. Mr. Davis has many readers and warm personal friends in that city; and all his lectures were listened to with the most respectful attention by very large and constantly increasing audiences. Mrs. Frances D. Gage and her worthy husband gave us the hospitalities of their beautiful home during our sojourn in that vast Emporium of the West. Mrs. Gage is well known in literary circles, and her name has long graced the annals of Reform.

On the 14th of March we are to commence a series of teachings in Chicago of some eight days' continuance. After that we visit Galesburgh and a few other places in Illinois, then return toward the rising sun. More anon. Mary F. Davis.

Warwick, Mass.

Bro. Newton:—A brief history of Spiritualism in Warwick for a few weeks past, may interest your readers. I must in the outset inform you that we have an ex-Cambridge Professor as a resident in our village, and he considers it his duty to do what he can to annihilate Spiritualism; so, while the subscriber was absent on his recent tour in New Hampshire, he gave a lecture before the Lyceum on "Fanaticism," followed by another on "Skepticism," by a learned divine of our place,—the principal object of both being, as I have been informed, to overthrow the doctrine of spirit-intercourse, or at least to make the believers therein appear ridiculously small.

In order to obtain a complete triumph and exterminate the fanatics, it was announced from the sacred desk that on Tuesday evening, Feb. 2d, Prof. Goldsbury would deliver before the Lyceum a lecture on "Wizards," followed by the discussion of the following question: "Is there any valid proof that disembodied spirits have anything to do with the so-called spirit-rappings?" The question was proposed, announced, and all the preliminaries were settled by the opponents of the Spiritual Philosophy, without so much as advising with any believer in spirit-communion, to my knowledge.

At the appointed time the Unitarian vestry was crowded almost to suffocation, to see the deluded ones fairly "used up," as the story ran for a few days previously. The learning, the respectability and the Christianity of the place had come out in battle array, in order to rout a small company of carpenters and fishermen, and make them beat a final retreat. Your humble correspondent was the only one of that large assembly who chose to advocate the affirmative, while several took sides with the negative, and in a gentlemanly way said what they pleased without interruption. They were aided by the learned Professor, who sneeringly threw out some common-place remarks; and after considerable puffing and bluffing, with other things which would hardly be tolerated among candid people, the assembly were called upon to decide who had won the field. It was, however, moved and carried unanimously, to dispense with a decision. Since that time quite an excitement has prevailed on the subject, and more interest is felt in the matter than ever before. The people are evidently of opinion that the negative came off second best, and they desire to hear something further on the subject. Yours for the Truth, in freedom and love,

Hervey Barber.

Attica, Indiana.

That industrious laborer, Warren Chase, writes from this place, under date of Feb. 5th 1858:

This Attica is one of the pleasantly located towns of the Wabash, on an elevated bank of that river, twenty miles below Lafayette, and where the Toledo and St. Louis Railroad crosses the river. It has near three thousand inhabitants, mostly Americans, is generally healthy, has plenty of wood and water, and both good; is surrounded by an excellent district of country; is an old settlement, and has many of the conveniences of eastern villages with larger history. Its growth has been steady, but sure. It is one of those quiet towns which does not attract the multitude of speculators and fortune-seekers who annually migrate to the West; but it is one of the best villages in the West for eastern families to seek and make a home,—those who wish, by industry, economy and good habits to "live and let live." A respectable portion of the inhabitants are Spiritualists, and of the right kind, intelligent, moral and devoted. I have seldom had a course of lectures attended by a more honest, earnest and intellectual audience than are following me through my present course here. Mr. Brittan, Mr. Wadsworth, Mrs. Tuttle, and several other speakers have visited the place, and can bear me testimony to the character of the people here. They are already inquiring for other speakers and teachers of the Harmonial Philosophy, and to those who have capacity and disposition to do them good, it is a loud call; to visionary fanatics and absurd speculators on theories without facts and demonstration, it is *no* call. To the gold-seeker it is no call. Although they are able and willing to pay the laborer well for his services, yet those who seek golden reward had better go to the land of gold and the mine of the earth and dig it. The good, the pure and the true will find here a richer reward in the homes and hearts of the families than any banks or mines ever afforded them.

The churches here have been trying for several weeks, by continued meetings, to *revive*,—which I believe means to *re-live*,—but their success and prospects are extremely weak, since the better portion of the citizens are already converted to a better religion than the sects afford, and are already *alive* and likely to live,—not in the *hope* of immortality, but in the *knowledge* of a more glorious spirit-life to succeed this. In our philosophy, this is one of the sunny spots of the West.

Warren Chase.

Wayne Station, Ill.

A correspondent speaks enthusiastically of the recent labors of A. J. Davis and lady, with Mr. Stebbins, at this place, remarking that Mr. D.'s lecture was "the best ever spoken in the Universalist Church." He states that the people of St. Charles and vicinity are waking up to Spiritualism and adds:

A good, enterprising speaker on Spiritualism will find this a good field to work in, and permanent, with generous friends to encourage him. Let them come. Dr. Mayhew is to speak at the Court House at Geneva on Thursday and Friday evenings of this week; also Mr. Munde will shortly be here. The cause of truth and progress will soon be on a good footing in this section, if a few more such advocates visit our town. More anon. O. J. Mullen.

H. P. Fairfield's Movements.

Troy, N. H., Feb. 8, 1857.

Bro. Newton:—I have been spending a few days in this cold, hilly country. I came here by the request of our good Bro. Adams, who is wide-awake in the cause of reform. Last Saturday evening I lectured in the Tavern Hall, all the churches being closed against us. However, the old ball-room was filled to overflowing, and the people listened with marked attention to the words of the spirit. I think a good work is begun in Troy.

I received an invitation from the good people of Marlboro', N. H., to lecture there on Sunday, Feb. 7. I accepted the invitation, and spoke there yesterday in the Universalist Church, to a very large and attentive audience. The cause is new here; the people have not been in the habit of reading their Bibles, I should think.

I am now on my way to Montague, Mass., where I speak on Sunday, the 14th. I speak also in North Brookfield, Sunday the 21st, and in the city of Lowell the 28th of Feb. Will you please to give notice, and oblige. H. P. Fairfield.

Boston and Vicinity.

The Melodeon Meetings.

On Sunday last the desk at the Melodeon was occupied by Mr. F. L. Wadsworth, of Portland, Me., who spoke under inspirational influence. The subject of the afternoon lecture was the "Philosophy of Man's Spiritual Growth." The pervading idea was this: All growth is a natural process. There is a nutritive principle or life element infused through all existing things; and all things, spiritual and natural, furnish their quota toward man's sustenance. A subtle aroma is sent forth from all surroundings, which, unconsciously to ourselves it may be, feeds and unfolds our nature. Of spiritual sustenance the supply is always equal to the intelligent demand;—so the revelations given to any nation or people always guage the development of that people in intelligence. As all things thus go to feed man, he should study to place himself in just conditions toward the exterior and interior worlds, that the influx may be perfect, and thus the man be brought harmoniously forward in his growth.

The evening discourse was on "Life's Realities." The speaker, starting with the great First Cause as the first reality of the universe, proceeded to treat of the realities proceeding from this. After establishing the reality of man's existence upon the earth,—of his mind, his thoughs and his attributes,—he went on to show the actuality of the existence of man with these same attributes after the decay of the material form. Arguments were adduced from the Bible and from the constitutional nature of things in confirmation of this truth. Men were urged to investigate the laws of life; and it was pertinently said, we need not fear that we shall lose the real by investigation. The farther we search into natural or spiritual things, the more real shall we find them to be.

Mr. Wadsworth is quite youthful in appearance, and naturally modest and unassuming in manner. When speaking, there seems to be an elevation and lighting up of his whole nature. His eloquence is chaste and impressive, at times warming into fervor and sublimity. His manner of receiving impressions (while in the full possession of his normal faculties,) is like that of Mr. Ambler; but in his oratory he differs from the latter, being not so florid in style nor so theatrical in action. His gesture and enunciation are more subdued, but not less appropriate and effective.

From statements made by Mr. W. to the audience at the close of the evening lecture, we learn that he was brought up on a farm until the age of fourteen, when he entered a tailoring establishment as shop-boy, and afterwards learned the trade, which he followed until April last, when he was sent forth by a superior power to labor in the disenthraliment of the race from spiritual bondage. Thus it will be seen that whatever excellence he possesses is not due to the ordinary mode of training in the schools; and we are assured that he never bestows the least study to the subjects on which he is to speak, being often as ignorant as his audience as to what is to be his theme until it is announced from his own lips.

We speak confidently in saying that Mr. Wadsworth is destined to accomplish much good in the cause he has espoused.

Conference at Spiritualists' Reading Room,

Thursday Evening, Feb. 10th.

Mr. Duncklee in the Chair. The question of the bearings of Spiritualism and Phrenology on Education, was resumed. Remarks were offered by Messrs. Duncklee, Williams, Monroe, Hobart, Thayer, Blanchard, Edson, Newcomb and others. The main drift of argument went to show that Spiritualism was making known the power of the love-principle in training the young, and that its tendency is also to individualize each growing mind and make it cognizant of its own powers and responsibilities. Our limits forbid an extended report. The same subject is continued for discussion this week.

Levee in Charlestown.—The Spiritualists of Charlestown held a levee at Washington Hall on Wednesday evening of last week, the proceeds of which, we understand, were applied to benevolent purposes. A goodly company assembled, and an agreeable entertainment, in the way of singing, speaking and dancing, made the evening pass right merrily.

The Sunday Meetings at 14 Bromfield St., are continued with their usual interest and good attendance. Bro. Goddard spoke on Sunday afternoon, with his accustomed fervor and practicalness, and Mr. Robinson, a trance-speaker from New York, addressed the evening circle.

New York and Vicinity.

Conference at 18 Fourth Avenue.

Tuesday Evening, Feb. 9th.

Mr. Levy related the following interesting fact: A young man, of Jewish family, who had been very skeptical in regard to Spiritualism, had recently had his attention arrested and his interest very much excited by an occurrence which he could not account for. His family formerly resided in Montreal, Canada, where his mother died. They then moved to Brooklyn, where, some years subsequently, his father died. Recently, in a very unexpected manner, the spirit of the mother communicated through a medium in Brooklyn that she wished the bones of her husband removed to Montreal, where her own remains had been interred. She was informed that it was impossible to comply with her request, on account of the expense; but chiefly because interments within the city of Montreal were now forbidden. The spirit, however, would not be satisfied, but insisted that it could and must be done. The young man then wrote to friends in Montreal, and through their agency obtained permission from the city authorities to make the desired interment. He then wrote to some relations in California, informing them of the entire affair, and requesting pecuniary aid in accomplishing the proposed object. In eight days after this letter had been sent, the young man received a letter from those very relations in California, informing him that the spirit of his mother had recently requested them, through a medium there, to co-operate with him in the removal of his father's remains to Canada.

Mr. Queru presented a communication, purporting to have come from the spirit of Daniel Lecomte, Magnetizer, on the subject of Somnambulism, of which the following is the substance: Somnambulism is described as being a "peculiar state of the human body of which clairvoyance is the consequence." * * * "All who are gifted with the faculty of 'second sight' partake more or less of the somnambulic condition." * * * "The absolute somnambulic state which occurs during natural sleep, arises from a numbness or slumber of that particular part of the organism which, when dead, renders the soul entirely independent of the body." * * * "The ultra Spiritualists maintain that in the somnambulic state the soul does not receive its perceptions except through the agency of spirits. In this they are entirely mistaken." * * * "The phenomena of the natural somnambulic state can also be produced by magnetism, or the action of the vital fluid projected by a powerful will." The importance of the study of animal magnetism is then urged upon Spiritualists, because Spiritualism and magnetism are but different departments of the same science, each being indispensable to the other. The practical effect of ignoring the facts of animal magnetism, and attributing all psychical phenomena to to the agency of disembodied spirits, is represented as being in the highest degree baneful to society; degrading man to the level of the brute, and taking away all sense of personal responsibility.

Dr. Gray accords with the views expressed in the above communication, and adds: There are lighter shades of somnambulism, independently of natural sleep and magnetic influence, occurring spontaneously. Reverie, "brown study," "the power" and the "ecstasy" of religious excitement are examples. We all enter more or less into the trance state when meditating. The mesmeric and the spontaneous or spiritual trance states are identical and convertible the one into the other. This shows the importance of not placing authoritative reliance upon communications through trance mediums, for the communication is as likely to proceed from minds in the form in mesmeric rapport with the medium, as from spirits. The assertions of trance mediums as to the source of their inspiration, are no more reliable than those of other people. The experiments of mesmerism abundantly prove that thought may be unconsciously transferred from one mind to another, in the form. Reliance upon trance mediumship made the ancients talk with the various divinities of their time, as the modern Christians do with the saints of the calendar. Ignorance of these important facts in mesmerism and Spiritualism is the source of all religious delusions.

Mr. Partridge denies that there is any evidence of the communication presented by Mr. Queru being spiritual. He thinks it is only the reflection of Mr. Queru's own mind. At the same time he contends that all that is claimed by mesmerism and clairvoyance belongs to the domain of Spiritualism.

Mr. Queru says there is the same evidence of the communication presented by him being spiritual that there is of any communication coming through a trance medium. It was unexpected, unsolicited, and, in some respects, contrary to his own opinions.

Dr. Hallock holds all mediums, from Moses down to the present time, acccountable according to the rule deducible from the practice of Jesus. He must have an objective representation in nature—a parable—of the truth sought to be inculcated, or he could not accept it. He cannot accept teachings in relation to the spiritual world which are contrary to the known laws of nature. Mesmerism affords abundant proof of Spiritualism. The utterances of the trance state, however, must be subjected to the most rigid analysis, and must be demonstrated before they can be accepted.

Mr. Coles says it is undoubtedly true that the minds of persons in the body can affect spiritual communications. He knows it to be true in relation to clairvoyance, and recites two incidents in his own experience showing the importance of perfect passivity. About five years since he was extremely desirous of finding a certain man, but did not know how to accomplish it. While his mind was occupied by various schemes for finding the person, he happened to hear of a clairvoyant. He was not at that time a believer in clairvoyance, and all he knew about it was simply the fact of its pretensions. He thought the visit to the clairvoyant might at least afford some amusement, if not the desired information. He went. The clairvoyant described very minutely the person sought, and the house he was in at that moment, and the way to reach it. He followed the direction of the clairvoyant and found the man he was looking for, precisely as described.

On a subsequent occasion he lost his pocket-book, containing a large amount of money. He looked in every place about his house and store, but could not find it, and could form no theory of its loss, except by the agency of an Irish woman who had spoken to him a short time before he discovered his loss. This woman had probably seen the wallet protruding from his pocket, and had taken it—a suspicion which was confirmed by his remembering that as the woman left him she had one hand under her apron. She, however, was an utter stranger, and he knew not how or where to find her. He bethought himself of the clairvoyant. Full of this theory of his loss, he repaired to the shrine of the mysterious oracle. His suspicions were confirmed. The personal appearance of the woman was accurately described, and her residence pointed out. The clairvoyant, however, declared that, although she could see the woman distinctly, she could not see the money. She told Mr. C. that he could recover it by visiting the woman in the disguise of a pedlar. He returned home resolved to follow her directions, when he was informed that his pocket-book had been found precisely where he himself, in a fit of mental abstraction, had left it. These facts are types of spiritual communication. In the first instance his mind was perfectly passive; in the second it was prepossessed by a convicion so strong that the clairvoyant was not only unable to see the truth, but was made to utter untruth.

At Dodworth's Academy on Sunday morning last, Mr. Silas Jones, a venerable old gentleman, formerly a Swedenborgian clergyman, delivered an excedingly useful homily on "The Proper Employment of Time." Spiritualists, above all other classes of persons, were represented as possessing peculiar advantages in knowing how to use Time with reference to their prospects and position in the next life. All are earnestly urged to live up to the highest ideal of the Christian life—a life of *uses*—as a sure method of securing not only temporal but eternal well-being. The discourse abounded in practical good sense, to those who were sufficiently negative to perceive it, though somewhat clothed in the technicalities of the old theology.

Mrs. Eliza W. Farnham occupied the desk at Dodworth's on Sunday evening. The subject of her lecture was "The Laws of Matter and of Spirit in Determining the Conditions of Life." It would be impossible in the brief space allotted to us, to do anything like justice to the large-minded views taken, in this profoundly philosophical discourse, of the evils incident to our present social organization and their remedy. The extremes of civilized life were most graphically portrayed under the names of St. Giles and St. James; while the High Priests of Nature who shall instruct and harmonize the two are to come from the development of the middle class. The discourse occupied over an hour in the delivery and was listened to with the most profound attention.

Mrs. E. J. French lectured to a large audience at Clinton Hall, Brooklyn, and at Lamartine Hall, in this city, last Sunday afternoon and evening. At this former place the subject of the discourse was determined by an anonymous letter clandestinely thrown into the ante-room a few moments previous to her taking the stand. The superscription of the letter requested that the question within be stated and answered without opening the envelope. At the conclusion of the lecture the envelope was opened, in the presence of the audience, by a gentleman who avowed himself skeptical as to the result, and it was found that Mrs. F. had stated, literally, the question contained within. The lecture, which was an answer to the question, was unanimously confessed to be in the highest degree appropriate and beautiful.

"The New York Times" of last Monday, in a miserable fling at Spiritualism, asserts that spirit-rapping is confined exclusively to women; and doubts if the "delusion" will survive the era of long dresses. That any intelligent man in his senses possesses the effrontery to write thus upon a subject of which he shows himself to be wholly ignorant, is far more monstrous and incredible than any of the pretensions of Spiritualism that we have ever heard of.

Rev. J. S. Loveland, an earnest and eloquent apostle of Spiritualism, will commence a series of discourses at Dodworth's Academy on Sunday next.

W. S. Courtney, Esq.—From a card in our advertising columns, our readers will learn that this able advocate of the Spiritual Philosophy has re-established himself in his profession as a counsellor at law. Those who have familiarized themselves with his writings will need no additional assurance that such as have occasion to consult him in this capacity will find a faithful, profound and conscientious adviser. We are assured also that his business partner, R. K. Payne, Esq., is a gentleman of no mean ability and of extensive practise as a lawyer.

It may not be known to many that friend Courtney, as a consequence of his devotion to Spiritnalism, has been subjected to severe pecuniary sacrifices. While it is a matter of great regret that his services could not have been retained in connection with the Spiritual Press, we trust that his present undertaking will prove more justly remunerative. As one branch of his business, he proposes to furnish written opinions to clients at a distance who may apply by letter.

It is with pleasure, we add, that Mr. C. will continue to occasionally employ his gifted pen in behalf of the columns of the Age; and we donbt not he will also be glad to comply with invitations to speak on Spiritualism, so far as the business of his profession will allow.

Miss Laura Keene has dramatized Charles Reade's novel of White Lies. Every one who has read the book, must have observed how the idea of spiritual insight obtains room in quarters where it is not readily acknowledged. Josephine Bonaparte's intuitions really amount to medium power. Her visions of the return of Dujardin, on which her faith in him rested so strongly after every probability of his return had failed, could not be more finely drawn were the book written by an avowed Spiritualist.

Spiritual Phenomena.

A Clear Case of Spirit-Vision.

Mr. Newton:—Dear Sir—I send you the following as the result of an hour's sitting for the so-called spirit manifestations, with Mrs. T. H. Peabody, of Boston, and if you think it will add anything to the spread of light or the cause of truth, it is at your service.

Having myself never witnessed any of the so-called spiritual manifestations, save the rappings and tippings at home, and feeling a desire to observe some of the higher phases of the phenomena, and being in Boston, I thought I would try and find one of those mediums who, I was told, spoke in an unconscious or trance state. But being a stranger in Boston, and not knowing where to go, I called on Dr. Gardner, of the Fountain House. He very politely directed me to Mrs. Peabody, then at 54 Hudson street [*now* No. 1 Avon Place], and finding the lady at home, I was soon seated. In about five minutes she went to sleep, as I thought; but shortly she began to talk, and said—"I see a spirit; it is a lady, and I should think about thirty years old. She seems very near to you; she is some relative or very near friend. Ah! I see now,—it is your wife; and she says she wants to talk with you."

Question—Does she say she is my wife?

"Yes."

I then asked, and she gave a perfect description as regards size, complexion, color of hair, eyes, &c., of my wife, deceased twenty-two years before. I felt satisfied either that she did see her, or that she had been reading my mind; for a more correct delineation I could not have given myself.

She then awoke, as I called it, but was soon again in the abnormal state. This time she said, "I see the spirit of an old lady, and she seems to be a friend of yours; yes, and very near. I should think it was your mother."

Question—Will you tell me how she looks?—that is, give me a description of her?

She said, "She is about middling height, and very poor,—so much so that she almost looks frightful. Her hands are crooked, and her wrists look as though they were broken."

This was not a description of my mother,—it was nothing like her, nor any one that I then thought of; and I told her she was mistaken about its being my mother. She then returned to her normal state, and on my saying that the spirit she had been describing was not my mother, she said, "I will look again." She did so, and the result was no more favorable. I still said, It is not my mother. She insisted "it must be, for she lays her hand on your head, and calls you son." I replied "I can't help that; it's a mistake." Here let me say, my faith in Spiritualism, which had been a little strengthened by the description the medium had given of my wife, received quite a shock. But there was one thing I could not reconcile,—that was, if she had read my mind to give so correct a description of my wife, why could she not also read it in the latter case? Was it because the image of my former companion was more strongly impressed on my mind that she could better read it? At any rate, what little faith I had in Spiritualism was a good deal shaken.

On my return home, the next day, think of my surprise when, on entering my place of business, one of our men said to me, "Your mother-in-law, of B——, is dead; funeral this afternoon at one o'clock." I did not before so much as know she was sick. I had heard that she was a little unwell, but nothing very serious. But now the truth flashed on my mind; this was the spirit who had spoken to me the evening before through Mrs. P. She had given me a perfect description of my mother-in-law; but I positively affirm that I never once thought of her while sitting with Mrs. Peabody. On my family returning from the funeral, they each confirmed what Mrs. P. had said in regard to her appearance.

Now, the question I would ask of the wise ones is, what had my mind to do with or in this affair? or the mind of the medium? There was no one else in the room.

Yours for More Light, T. G. Russell.

Andover, Mass., Jan. 27, 1858.

A Singular Test.

A few evenings since, I was visiting at the house of a friend, when it was proposed to have a sitting for spirit-manifestations, as a young lady present had never seen anything of the kind. We seated ourselves (four in number) around the table in the usual way. After sitting a few minutes, the table was moved by some invisible power, and upon calling the alphabet a name was spelled out, which purported to be that of the young lady's father. No one present but the lady herself had ever seen the father, or knew his given name or his occupation. Then followed the "tipping" out of his age, the disease which caused his death, with many other things. I then asked the spirit to tell us his occupation. The table was tipped, and by the alphabet it was spelled out, "Cover the lamp." The lamp was then removed to a nook in one corner of the room, leaving the table in the shade. All was still for nearly two minutes, then from under the table proceeded a sound like the sound of a blacksmith's hammer striking the anvil, followed by a flash of sparks similar to those thrown from heated iron, and flying each way from the table, probably four feet distant. The young lady sprang up from her seat, declaring it to be none other than her father's spirit. J. P. B.

Alton, N. H., Dec. 10, 1857.

Astonishing Case of Spiritual Cure.

Mr. Rufus Elmer, of Springfield, well known in this community, and unquestionable authority in matters of fact, gives the following remarkable statement in the *Republican*:

"A case has just come to my knowledge of the son of a wealthy farmer in Ellington, Ct., who for some two years and a-half has been afflicted with a strange disease, manifesting itself in numerous fits. The best physicians in the neighborhood have all failed to relieve the patient, and have frankly acknowledged that they did not know the cause of his sufferings. The parents, who were not Spiritualists, ventured to consult a man in Hartford by the name of Reed, who professed that his hand was moved by some power other than his own to describe diseases by writing. The intelligence—whatever it was—asserted that among other difficulties, which I omit for the sake of brevity, his stomach contained a *black lizard five inches long*, with light spots on its back, which could be removed if the patient would take the following prescription, viz: a table-spoonful of spirits of turpentine, a half-pint of strong tea made of black cherries, a certain spider's webs and injections of strong tobacco juice! Strange to say the prescription was taken, which resulted in dislodging the horrid reptile, which was exactly as had been described! I have the facts from the mother of the young man, who gave the prescription, and from the patient himself, both of whom declare the circumstances were such as not to admit of any possible deception. I have just seen them both, and also the reptile, which lived five minutes after it was driven from its comfortable quarters. I make no comments other than to ask, if the intelligence which wrought the above wonder was not what it claimed to be, what was it? Echo answers what?"

Spiritual Premonition.—A lady resident of Brooklyn came over to New York a few days since with the intention of spending the afternoon and night with some friends. During the afternoon, in the midst of an animated conversation, the lady was suddenly impressed with the idea that she must go home, that something had happened to her child. So strong was this impression that her friends could not prevail upon her to stay. When she reached home, her husband and the family were much surprised, for they knew it was not her intention to return until the next day; and when she found that nothing had happened, she felt vexed and really angry that she had, as she supposed, been made the subject of a trick by some spirit or spirits, and thus deprived of the pleasure she had anticipated from her visit with her friends. Within half an hour, however, she heard a scream, and rushing into an adjoining room, found the clothing of one of the two little boys who were playing together, on fire, and the other little fellow trying to put out the fire with his apron. The servant girl had gone to the basement for coal, and her husband had just gone up stairs, and but for her close proximity to the children, one or both would most probably have been severely if not fatally injured.

H. B. Storer, of Connecticut, spoke at Lowell on the last Sabbath, and will lecture again at the same place on Sunday next. On Sunday, Feb. 28th, he will probably lecture at Taunton, after which he is to be employed on a circuit in Connecticut with Mrs. C. M. Tuttle.

Mr. F. L. Wadsworth left this city on the 15th inst., for the West. His address, until further notice, will be Dayton, Ohio.

THE SPIRITUAL AGE.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 20, 1858.

PERSONAL AND SPECIAL.

The subscriber continues to receive calls to lecture on Spiritualism. He is prepared to present the subject in its Phenomenal, Biblical and Philosophical aspects; also, to discuss its claims to public favor, with any honorable disputant. John Hobart.

References—Dr. H. F. Gardner and A. E. Newton.

The undersigned is prepared to devote a small portion of his time to lecturing on "Spiritualism." His object is to present an impartial and careful statement of the facts and arguments on the subject, as they now stand,—with especial reference to the Cambridge investigations.

For further information as to his method of treating the subject, he would refer to those who have heard his lectures in Portland, Portsmouth, Montreal, and elsewhere. T. W. Higginson, Worcester, Mass.

George Stearns, author of "The Mistake of Christendom," will answer calls, in any direction, to lecture on the various Impositions of Ecclesiastical Authority, as well as on the Rational Evidence of Life after Death, and Prospective Happiness therein. Address, until further notice, West Acton, Mass.

Letters Received.—L. J. Pardee, J. L. Cambridge, P. Teare, C. B. Peckham, I. S. Gwynne, G. B. Dutton, W. G. Dennison, E. Hazeltine, F. L. Wadsworth, H. Crossman, E. O. P., O. Perry, H. D. Sanford, P. Chapin, M. Wright, M. A. Whittier, C. A. Bisbee, W. Chase, T. H. Chivers, G. Leavens, O. H. Wellington, P. Fletcher, G. S. Andrew, I. Wilkins, O. Hubbard, C. Brigham, G. W. Eaton, A. Bushnell, H. Albertson, O. J. Mullen, W. G. Heyer, A. Parris, R. W. Wilson, W. W. Smith, W. G., L. Carter, J. D. Benton, W. Bassett, W. W. Smith, H. Snow, A. M. Stagman, R. Tillotson, J. Ball, W. H. Bussell, T. J. Gardner, J. Allen, J. J. Hammett, M. P. Tupper, A. N. Sherman, H. Hurd, E. B. Leavenworth, A Subscriber, H. Barber, H. Hazelton, B. F. C., T. Middleton, G. S. Bullen, M. Washburn, N. W. Green, L. Clark, Jr., A. Foster.

MEETINGS IN BOSTON AND VICINITY.

Sunday Meetings—Mrs. M. S. Townsend, of Vermont, trance speaker, will speak at the Melodeon on Sunday next, at 3 and 7 1-2 o'clock, P. M.

Spiritualist Meetings will be held at No. 14 Bromfield St., every Sunday afternoon. Admission free. A Circle for medium development and spiritual manifestations will be held every Sunday morning and evening at the same place. Admission 5 cents.

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Interesting Miscellany.

For the Spiritual Age

"THE WILDFIRE CLUB."

A TALE FOUNDED ON FACT.

BY EZRA.

In one of the remotest districts of the north of England, in the wildest parts of the border hill and glen country, there arose, about half a century ago, a sect of religionists, of a strange, gloomy and somewhat fanatical character. Their numbers were few, and their tenets so stern and uninviting, that they seldom made converts, and gradually disappeared from their accustomed haunts of meeting, dissolving into the mystery from which they sprang. They seemed to arise like phantoms, into a short and ghostly existence; and even so would their very memory have passed away, had they hot been rescued from oblivion by the aristocratic rank and influential station of their founder, a man whose name is now the bar sinister in the heraldry of a noble and important family of England's proud aristocracy.

With no veneration for the rank of these high and mighty of the land, but with very considerable respect for their feelings, we shall style this sect (named after their founder,) the "Merlinites," and the hero of my story himself, Mr. Reuben Merlin. They professed adhesion to no existent form of religious opinion, no respect for creed, sect, worship, or church. Their whole system of belief consisted in faith in the immortality of the soul,—a stern, exact, and uncompromising view of future rewards and punishments for *every act, word and thought* of every human being; together with implicit belief in the ability of the spirit (under conditions not yet understood by man) to manifest itself after death, in the appearance it had assumed on earth. It will readily be understood that the *second* article of this creed was not very likely to recommend itself to popular practice; while the third was still more an unpalatable dose to the materiality of the nineteenth century; hence it followed that with the absence of the exciting motives which led to its foundation, the sect itself languished and died out, leaving only the few fragmentary facts which belong to the personal history of Reuben Merlin, as the superinducing cause of its origin.

I do not propose to give any detailed account of the mode in which I became acquainted with the following circumstances; to do so would draw aside the veil which sensitive feeling has hung around the dark portrait of an erring ancestor. Let it suffice that the main points of the history are too true to justify me in associating them with those who are now living to verify them.

It is more than half a century since a band of men, self-styled "*gentlemen*," (deriving a right to the title by birth, education, wealth and standing, but forfeiting all claim to the character by the most lawless depravity and organized licentiousness,) assumed a cognomen strongly resembling that of "*The Wildfire Club*," heated to an extent which would not render its *actual* appellation altogether polite or reverential. As a mere compromise, therefore, with the decencies of life, although outraging the strict rules of orthography, we shall say that a set of remarkably lively gentlemen, with strong tendencies to wine, women, and wickedness, banded themselves together for the better and stronger performance of outrageous license and midnight lawlessness, under the title of "The Wildfire Club." To scour the streets of villages, and even cities, insulting shrinking womanhood, playing off cowardly and often most fatal hoaxes on humble labor, decent trade and helpless old age—to terrify children and feeble women, defraud tradesmen and servants—were among the least of these noble and aristocratic performances.

It would be too sickening to recount the list of outrages which were committed under the sanction of fashion and the designation of "eccentricity, high spirit, good fellowship, gentleman-like style, and, above all, the effervescence of *noble blood*." "That in the captain 's but a choleric word, which in the soldier is rank blasphemy;" and so broken hearts and blighted names, ruined fortunes and desolated homesteads, broken bones and burnt farms, hideous excess and degrading language,—all that can sink the *low* man beneath the level of the beast, or elevate him to the gibbet, in the *high life sphere* of Mr. Reuben Merlin, is so exceedingly funny and worthy of imitation, that our young nobility of to-day take to it as naturally as the inherited prerogatives of rank, genius, learning and statesmanship, by which they become hereditary legislators. Look to it, Young America! and if you would not be left behind in the race of fashionable vice, read the legends of "The Wildfire Club' by way of theory, and hurry off to the gaming-tables and drinking saloons, by way of practice.

One of the most orthodox practices of this choice crew, was to celebrate the birth of the New Year by a solemn wedding with one of their number, the bride being of necessity under twenty years old, fair as a blossom, virtuous, and *unwilling*,—the latter clause rendering it, of course, absolute, that she should be abstracted from her home. The meetings of the society were held at different members' houses, once a week, and in accordance with this practice the party were assembled one Christmas night at the bachelor residence of Reuben Merlin. The wine and wassail had done their work; with inflamed visages and voices hoarse with wine and riot, these "*images of their Maker*" began eagerly to discuss the prospect they had of good sport for the ensuing New Year. The lot had fallen to Rufus Rushton to be the bridegroom for the ensuing year, and loudly vociferous were the inquiries showered upon him as to whether he had selected a "*victim*" for the sacrifice. If this word read harshly to moralists in the nineteenth century, let them look abroad in our cities and towns; let them behold the thousands, ay, millions of fair flowers who yearly fall a sacrifice to the vanity, passion, indifference and depravity of such men as "The Wildfire Club,"—young creatures, just blooming into early womanhood, ensnared like the unconscious bird by the fowlers of life, in nets baited with a ribbon, a jewel, a bit of finery, a home for a starving father, bread for a dying brother. Is it not pitiful to see thousands of bright gems, which would form an immortal coronet round the brow of an honest man who knew how to win and wear its lustre, hourly bartered for the perishing goods of earth,—sacrificed to the Molochs of man's basest passions, then to be trampled under the foot of the despoiler, because his own hand has dissipated its fragrance? The memoirs of "The Wildfire Club" are *true!* If they seem strange, look around you, and confess they fall short of our own modern experiences.

To the clamorous demand for information touching the Bride elect of the New Year's orgie, Rufus Rushton maintained a contemptuous silence. He was a young man of noble family, with the stamp of high intellect and towering genius on his brow, but the iron of early dissipation had passed its hot fingers across that warm cheek; and the once lofty inspiration of a crushed soul, looked out from the wreck himself had made, like the light which shone through Milton's "Archangel Ruined," only to show how the temple of his young life had been sacked, the flame upon the altar quenched forever.

"Tell us her name, where she lives, who she is to be. If you expect us to help you, you must uncover your game, Master Rufus!" shouted the revelers in noisy chorus.

"I neither ask nor require your help, gentlemen," coolly replied the rake; "my conquests are my *own*, and I generally fight my battles single handed. The rules of our magnanimous order require the presentation of a fair bride; that she should be young is only natural, considering that most of our society are considerably lacking in the element of youth themselves—that she should be *unwilling* is doubtless a type that we begin the year in a spirit worthy the illustrous name we bear. Fear not, gentlemen. Madame Rushton shall not disgrace the scene of her most honorable initiation"—

"By Heaven, he is chafing us!" cried the fierce founder of the club, Reuben Merlin; "but we will know who the dame is, and that without crossing swords either, Master Rufus," he added more mildly, as he noted the dangerous flash of the young man's eye; then rising he whispered to one of the grooms in attendance, and continued—"We will have rare sport, too, Wildfire; we have here an old blind beggar, the most notable prophet that ever figured, out of Genesis. He goes about telling fortunes, and, by the mass! sees more of the future without any eyes, than any of us could with treble spectacles."

"You mean blind Sandy, don't you?" replied one of the club. "Now by all the Saints, we'd better have the Prince of mischief, old Beelzebub, amongst us at once; for this malicious old gospel shop does nothing but bring down abuse upon choice spirits like us; and will send the Wildfires to their master, if we let him spin our woof."

"No matter!" cried the master of the house; "who cares whether it be to-day or to-morrow, since go we must—as well make short work of it, and go when an extra warm fire will be acceptable. But here he comes." As he spoke, a tall old man, very thin, bent and meagre, entered the room, leaning on a stick, and feebly groping his way forward with that peculiar instinctive care, which bespeaks "total eclipse" of the glorious luminary of the body sight. His dress was very poor, evincing the most abject condition of poverty, yet its extreme cleanliness and the multitude of neat patches it bore as loudly proclaimed the care of love and gentle tendance. A few thin white hairs combed smoothly back, fell on his shoulders in wavy silver lines, leaving displayed in all its noble proportions a majestic brow and aquiline features which had borne the stamp of singularly intellectual beauty. A little shaggy cur dog almost as threadbare in jacket, and quite as humble as his master, led him forward by a string, while a little basket hung by way of collar at his neck, bespoke the calling of the blind beggar.

"Come here, old Sandy!" cried the rough master, "and give us a touch of your conjuring craft. We want to know what you see hereabouts of consequence to this noble company in particular, and therefore to the whole church and state of Great Britain in general."

"What do I *see?* Noble sir!" meekly responded the beggar, wistfully raising his sightless orbs towards the speaker, "alas, I *see* no sun, no moon, no stars!—all is dark, dark forever!"

"Here, can ye see that, old Simeon?" chuckled one of the company, holding up a shilling before the beggar, who mechanically reached out his hand to take it, while the other winking to the rest, jerked it away, remarking, "The old trader is no such fool after all—feeling is as good believing as seeing, any day—"

"You shall have half a crown, and all the bones the hounds can't pick," interrupted the master, "if you, Sandy (the arrantest cheat in all the North Riding) can tell us the name of Rufus Rushton's new leman."

The young man thus unceremoniously alluded to, moved restlessly in his seat, but kept silence, while the helpless mendicant knowing by former bitter experience, the ruthless natures of his tormentors, turned deprecatingly from one to the other, while they reiterated taunting offers, and dangerous threats, in the hope of inducing him to exercise a gift for which he was highly famed, namely, that of "second sight." In vain the poor creature declared the visions which occasionally unclosed his prophetic lips were far beyond his *own* or any *human* control; the fierce revellers became the more determined as their victim manifested his impotency to gratify them. At length Rufus Rushton, speaking for the first time, contemptuously advised them to send the imposter away. "For," added he, "he has never yet been known to prophecy aught but evil, and that's the only reason why what he says comes true."

It seemed as if the sound of Rushton's voice had broken the spell which opened the floodgates of inspiration to the seer's darkened vision; for interrupting the angry retort which Mr. Merlin was commencing to the last speaker, he drew himself up to the full of his remarkable height, elevated his ruined head like the towering crest of a mighty eagle, and in a voice whose deep sonorous tones swept like a word of power through the high vaulted hall, and fell in accents of magic potency on each awe-struck listener, he began thus:

"Again I see the light of God's own blessed sun. Again I see the crisp white frost and snow shining in light on thousand glittering sparks, o'er field and forest, woodland, hill and glen; I see its radiant beams reflected too, in diamond panes in yonder castle tower; it is a brave old ruin, lofty once, and grand. Kings and knights and dames of high renown have held their court and wassail in its bowers; and though the fluttering ivy crowns its walls, and bats and owls hold kingdom in its courts, the atmosphere of royalty and pride lingers around its moss-grown, crumbling stones."

"'Tis my poor old barn he sees," whispered Rufus to his next neighbor. "The picture is graphic enough."

"I see," continued the seer, "the night veil drawing close. What banks of clouds are mustering in the sky! Ah me! the darkness gathers thickly on; and now the gloom is deeper, far more dense than nature's night has ever known before;—it stifles me! it takes away my breath! There is no moon to break this hideous night! 'tis darkness all impenetrable, black! and oh what sounds break on my startled ear! Hark! heed ye not the deep-mouthed thunder's boom? crashing elements have broken loose, and wildly howl the rushing requiem winds! See there! the forked lightnings' dreadful glare whirls madly o'er the murky forest's lords; the parting giants wail their own death-song, and felled beneath the stroke, lie blackened, dead!

"And now we stand within the castle walls. Let the loud tempest roar, the thunder crash, the livid lightning speed its awful flight! There's bonny work within that ancient fane! There's mirth, and revelry, and wassail loud,—a dainty wedding, too, is forward now, and only waits the coming of the bride.

"List to the tolling of the castle-bell! It booms the death of night and of the year! Slowly and sad the midnight hour proclaims another year is dead—another born; and woe are they who see its mournful birth! But stay! who are the revelers? Wait, I'll count. For every hour that tolls I see a face, bearing some well-known name; one more there is—the thirteenth man—and he stands off alone. An altar there is raised,—a gibbering ape, in gown and cassock, takes the place of priest. An open book and wedding-ring he holds, and all stand ready waiting for the bride. She comes! she comes! Room for the wretched dove, with broken pinion, ruffled plumes and soiled! Behold her dragged along by vassal hands, to play her part enforced, in this foul scene! Oh God, why beats my heart—my feeble knees, why do they bend and totter 'neath my weight? My eye-balls are on fire! Oh, how they burn! I'm blind again! I'm blind! Ah me! all's dark! Oh God! in mercy, one short moment more suspend the doom, and let me see her face!

"It may not be; the night has fallen indeed; the curtain's drawn; the pageant is played out. Yet once again—what means that mighty rush, sounding like foaming torrents in mine ear! Hark! what a shriek!—a cry of human woe! 'tis raised by fourteen drowning mortals' cries! They sink! they sink! Oh, save them if you can! Thirteen most guilty souls are perishing, but that poor maid, that sinless victim, save!—oh, snatch her from the dreadful rushing tide! In vain, in vain! Engulphed beneath the flood, the victim and destroyers all are still! The castle clock tolls one; the New Year's born, and but one form is there to greet its birth. A royal crown he wears, a pale steed rides,—his robe a shroud, his throne, the silent grave!"

As the beggar ceased, and, apparently exhausted with the prophetic paroxysm, crouched down beside his little dog, the indignant wrath of his listeners vented itself in threats and execrations against the prophet of evil. His promised reward was brutally denied him, and he himself thrust out of doors to the mercy of a storm, little less pitiless than that which he had been describing.

As the fawning domestics, in servile imitation of their betters, kicked the poor little cur limping and howling after his master, the beggar cheerily bid his little companion "come on and never heed them; for, surely, Jack," said he, accustomed to address the four-footed partner of his toils as a friend and confidant, "they who kick the helpless and crush the fallen rob themselves of the only sure light by which we can grope our way to heaven—the guidance of Him who is eyes unto the blind, feet unto the lame, and the strength of all those who put their trust in Him. Come along, Jack; hold up your head and carry your basket straight; God's good angels go along with us, and we'll yet have some pennies to carry home to Margaret. Oh, Margaret! oh my child! may the bright ones who light thy father's darkened way, hover around thy sinless footsteps, and leave me lonely and desolate so that thou may'st be sheltered from the world's bitter storms!"

The father's prayer, (wrung from the agony of a heart already shrinking beneath the shadow of the impending storm) was heard and granted, though like all God's ways, in that deep mystery which man in vain seeks to penetrate.

"I will show you how to cheat the wizard and his prophecy of evil," cried Reuben Merlin, long after the beggar had been expelled from the door. "All assemble *here* on New Year's eve; come by the road, and avoid the river. Do not even cross the ford above Brooke's Mill. *Don't go near Rufus'. old shanty, above all things;* and do you, Rushton, bring your bride along, with help, or without, as it pleases yourself; only swear, one and all, on New Year's eve, one hour before midnight, to be in this very place, and we'll set defiance to flood and fire, though old Sandy, old Ocean, and Beelzebub himself were thundering at our gates. Do you swear?"

"*We swear, living or dead, we, fourteen members of 'The Wildfire Club,' will meet in this place at half-past eleven o'clock December 31st*, 17—."

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