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The Spiritual Age.

DEVOTED TO RATIONAL SPIRITUALISM AND PRACTICAL REFORM.

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Spiritual Philosophy.

TENDENCIES OF SPIRITUALISM.

[From "Mesmerism, Spiritualism, Witchcraft and Miracles," by Allen Putnam.]

Is it wise and useful to investigate Spiritualism, and yield at all to its influences? Who shall answer such an inquiry? Nearly every man *will;* but who is best qualified to reply,—those who can speak from *experience;* or those who are, at most, but external observers? I, a receiver of Spiritualism, can assert that its effects upon the heads and hearts and lives of those who embrace it are, in the main, highly salutary, and and that most Spiritualists will and do confirm my declaration. You, a rejecter of it, may assert that this faith unbalances the mind, depraves the heart, and unfolds itself in immorality; and that your own observations, and the general observation of the community will sustain you in your position. If bare assertion be *all*, you and I may chase each other round and round in a circle forever, and yet make no real advance. But that is *not all*. The bases of the assertion are proper items for use in the discussion. In my case, it rests partly upon inward *experience;* in your case, upon your outward *observation of another*. My position is the best for getting at *positive knowledge* of what is asserted; and therefore (our characters for truth and veracity being alike, and predeliction on one side balancing prejudice on the other) the world will give more weight to my assertions than it can to yours. It does the like in other cases.

The mere outsider and looker-on at a Methodist camp-meeting may honestly conclude that such a gathering and its appendages, and also the faith which develops itself in the begetting and cherishing of such meetings, cannot fail to result in much debasement, indelicacy, and immorality. Perhaps all these evils are actually seen upon the surface and outside. The objector may hold a perfectly just and correct opinion; yet those *within*—the hearty believers, the true worshippers, the *genuine Methodists*—may not only believe, but *know*, that they themselves are made purer and more spiritually minded by their faith, and its peculiar outworkings at the camp-meetings. They see a different phase of Methodism from that at which the outsider looks. But who are the best judges of the true nature and influences of *genuine Methodism?* Most obviously, it is those who are *within the tent*, and receive it in its fullness and purity. The common sense of the world adopts this answer; and it will do the same eventually, in the case of Spiritualism.

Again, then, what are the *usual* and *legitimate* effects of Spiritualism? No one Spiritualist has any authority to speak for others. Coincidence of faith among Spiritualists, beyond a reception of the fact that the departed do communicate, is not required *by them*. Diversity of faith is expected, but unity of spirit is desired. There is no one leader, there is no band of leaders; and nothing of the kind is looked for, or admissible. The question can be answered here in behalf of one believer only. My experience has been considerable, and my observation not very limited nor careless. The following are a part of my conclusions:

1st, That a large proportion of those who call themselves Spiritualists believe that spirits come, just as they believe that two and two make four, that is, *intellectually*, and receive no moral influence at all directly from the faith itself. They believe it as they believe the facts of Astronomy, Geology, or the existence of a Polar Sea. Some require much and strong proof; while, with others, a little evidence is sufficient to produce an *intellectual* assent, and such assent makes them nominally Spiritualists. Such persons, however, remain *morally* such as they had become amid the influences of home, of the pulpit, the Sunday-school, the day-school and their associations with the world. Their new faith makes them marks for every observer, and their every act is often charged to the new faith; while really they are, in the main, only showing what they had grown to be in the midst of a nominally Christian community. *Outwardly* they may become subjects of new moral and social influences. Many of them assemble in circles, meet new associates, resort to a new kind of *entertainment or excitement*, and will, of course, feel new influences which may make them better, or may make them worse. On the whole, such influences are elevating, because there are very many pure and devout men and women among them, and meeting with them frequently, whose every look and word and act bespeaks the true philanthropist, and who feel that they can move among even "*publicans and sinners*" without contamination, but not without sowing good seed there. Common faith in spirit-presence gives the higher believers an opportunity to instruct the lower; and it is embraced even where circumstances are not congenial to refined taste. But germination and education are slow processes; and their results do not appear until after long-continued and patient waiting. The buried, as also the sprouting, seed is unseen; but the sower knows what and when he planted, and can predict the character of the future harvest better than another.

2d, There is a portion of the Spiritualists who take the words through *any* medium, from any spirit, as true, and receive advice thence as being sound, and (without "trying the spirits") give way to their advice,—some to good deeds, and some to indulgences and acts, which, in the opinion of our community, the moral teachings of Christianity forbid; and they do this under a belief, confirmed by spirit-declarations, that many things are sanctioned above which are condemned here. Some spirits *do* tempt to immorality. So do some *men*. My own observation gives the inference, that, in most cases where such temptations are successful, the yielding individuals have previously failed to conform, in heart and in *secret*, to the requirements of sound moral laws. *Congenial* spirits come, and their words find an inward response. The gospel, and public opinion, and the civil law, have perhaps restrained their hands in public heretofore, but have not tended to purify and strengthen the heart, nor restrain from *secret wickedness*. The evil has existed inwardly; and the only effect of Spiritualism there, is to make its receivers less careful to cloak their sins. As yet, how can the greater portion of Spiritualists be much else than nominal or real Christians *scrutinized?* A Christian community gave them their education, principles, and habits. Some, when stripped, appear worse, and others better, than before. A general stripping off and throwing aside the garments of hypocrisy might, and probably would, startle the world, and yet might in the end, be a public benefit. Some apparent evils do attend Spiritualism, as seen in a portion of its receivers; also some real ones, we apprehend, do occasionally result from perversion of it; and none lament this more, and none will pray and labor more earnestly for the uprooting of these evils, than the devout and hearty receivers of this faith. Belief that our most secret acts are or may be seen by finite intelligences is legitimately a worm which will gnaw at the roots of hypocrisy, and cause it to wither; and, as hypocrisy withers, the heart may seem worse than we deemed it, without, in fact, being changed at all. Should such effects flow copiously from Spiritualism, they would give the philanthropic a clearer insight into the quality and extent of man's depravity, and consequently make them more competent to prescribe and apply the best remedies, and that too, in the best way and most fitting time. This dark side may not be all *blackness*.

3d, The remainder,—and they are vastly more, proportionally and absolutely, than would have been needed to save Sodom,—the remainder believe with the *heart* as well as the head. They are, or are seeking to become, honest, earnest, true worshippers of God, and brothers among *all* who wear the human form. Some are wise and prudent: others are imprudent, having much more zeal than knowledge. Like the honest members of any religious sect or any political party, they exhibit a vast *variety* of character; yet it is to the character of this class as a whole, compared with the character they exhibited as a whole before they became Spiritualists, that the world looks to determine the usual and legitimate effects of Spiritualism, so far as time and circumstances have yet permitted those effects to be unfolded. The full effects, of course, cannot be seen until some future generation shall be subjected to its influences from the cradle up to ripe manhood.

What, then, are the changes, if any, which Spiritualism has thus far wrought in those who embrace it with the *heart?* Varied, no doubt, and yet prevailingly similar, according to my observation. *All*,—whether the Infidel, the orthodox Christian or the liberal Christian,—*all* exhibit a *tendency* to regard the Universal Father as *more fatherly towards all men*, Gentile as well as Jew, sinner as well as saint, Heathen as well as Christian,—a *tendency* to regard him as more fatherly and more impartial, both now and in all past ages, than their previous education had made him appear. Of course they incline to go to him more lovingly and freely, and begin to feel a greater nearness to him. Unwonted cheerfulness and kindliness spring up in the heart at his felt presence, and the felt presence of his charitable angels. Love to man as *man* begins to expand and deepen, and become more active. Believers become more liberal in thought, and charitable in heart. Partition-walls begin to crumble, so that sectarianism and creed become less and less a barrier of access and of kind regard to *man*, be he high or low, Protestant or Catholic, Christian or Heathen, good or bad. Generally, the feelings become liberalized; the judgments become charitable; the actions become freer, less conformed to custom and fashion, and, of course, often obnoxious to the world's censure. The hearty Spiritualist becomes less and less the slave of cramping society; asks less often and less earnestly, "What will the public say? what will the public think?" but does the things to which his impulses prompt, as a free child of his heavenly Father. Yet, loving that Father more than formerly, he changes into a nearer likeness to him; judges man on a broader and less partial basis; and becomes more calm, self-possessed, and forgiving, under insult, injury, and abuse. Thus, though he act out his impulses with more freedom, those impulses themselves incline to the more generous and forgiving, the less selfish and retaliatory.

The more polished the society is, the less formality there is in it.

For the Spiritual Age.

ASPIRATIONS.

BY G. S. B.

I.

When I behold the bitterness and strife
Of men embattled against glorious Truth,
Who, madly stifling their own natural ruth,
Choke the warm pulses of the better life
Back on the heart,—I turn, with sorrow rife,
To sweet-voiced Nature, whose perpetual youth
Is hope and promise,—and the flower that shows
Like love to all that in its circle grows,
Kindles the wish that I, too, were a flower,
To taste the sweetness of its wreathed love,
Like it to serve my God from hour to hour;
And even if crushed by careless steps above,
To yield the spoiler all my fragrant living
In the most odorous boon of a divine forgiving.

II.

To the clear waters of the stream I look,
And see them joyous as they overleap
All clogs that fall to dam them from the deep;
Then say I, O that I had been a brook,
That leaps forever from its pebbly nook,
That none from its predestined goal can keep,
So might I bless the vallies as I'd sweep
Still to one point, through many a devious crook.
I view the stars, and sigh to be a star,
That o'er the reach of human hate or fear
I might roll on, God-moved, with none to jar
The eternal music of my golden sphere.
There is no thing of God's I would not be
Rather than this clay-cramped and spirit-fettered Me!

III.

Then Faith awakes triumphant over ill,
Teaching the soul that in herself is power
To make her pure love odorous as a flower,
Though crushed, exhaling all its sweetness still,
While her whole life is crystal as the rill;
And the far stars that on our midnight shower
Their mystic light, undimmed though tempests lower,
Shall with less glory their serene arch fill
Than her divine thoughts, her all-spanning sphere;
And anthems nobler than, when earth was born,
Were rung from all the golden harps of morn,
May the high soul pour, jubilant and clear!
There is no thing of God's that I would be,
Other than this pure life He would create of me.

For the Spiritual Age.

SPIRIT-HEALING.—IS FAITH NECESSARY?

As Spiritualists, we entertain a few ideas in common, such as the immortality of the soul, spiritual communion, &c.; but, as is natural to expect, we have many subjects on the floor of investigation, with reference to which we entertain different opinions.

The necessity of *faith*, as a condition for the healing of diseased persons, is insisted upon by some, while others deny the need of any such thing—thus marking a difference between ancient and modern healing. It is not my intention to argue the case, but to state a few instances in my own practice which go to favor the last named position.

My oldest son, about twenty-two years of age, had been afflicted with sores in his ears from his infancy, which had resulted in the entire deafness of the left ear, and nearly the same of the right. While sitting at dinner, I found my right arm was becoming charged unusually high, with some fluid or force but did not know the object. I soon ascertained that the aim was at my son's ears. Not being a reliable healing medium, I did not expect much done, and my son was not a believer, nor did I apprise any one of what was going on. As soon as my arm was charged highly enough to suit the unseen operator, it rose and made one pass at the ear that was entirely deaf. In about half a minute my son started up suddenly, saying that there was a sharp noise in the ear, like that of a pistol-shot, and in less than one minute his hearing was perfectly good.

You will see that this case was not only without faith, either on the part of the medium or the subject, but almost in dead opposition to faith. I was then (it being nearly six years ago) more than now under certain orthodox influences. I was almost horror-stricken at the thought of being thus used, and begged not to be so employed again. What a fool I was to feel the aversion I did to such influences! But somehow, anything that looked like miracle seemed an intrusion upon Bible prerogatives or exclusive rights, and I prayed that such means might be employed as should not convey the idea of miracles. Of course my success was poorer, yet truly astonishing in some cases.

Having gotten by that miserably foolish state of feeling, I have practised some as a healing medium for a few years past, and have seen some things done worthy of note. One instance I will mention:

There is living in our village an old gentleman by the name of Brown, who is a Spiritualist in belief, but not what is called a medium; and he knew as well as I that I was not to be depended on in the healing department. He was suffering much from a pain in the left side, and had been for some time. It might be accounted a chronic case. When at Mr. B.'s house, a conversation arose respecting a young physician, (Mr. Ballou,) who had left the place in his debt, gone to Kansas, and died, and who purported to be present in spirit. We were in a gleeful mood, and made several jocund remarks about spirits coming back and paying their debts, thus atoning for their sins, &c., in which the spirit seemed to participate with great interest and pleasure. It was finally proposed that he should heal Mr. Brown's side, and he signified his willingness to try. We did not, however, expect anything like a perfect cure, but hoped there might be a temporary relief. Feeling myself under a strong influence, I suffered my arm to make a few passes over and about the side. Since that time, which was one year ago last summer, he has felt no more of the pain in his side. He has been sick otherwise, but that trouble does not return.

Healing mediumship is considerably practised in our State, and instances of its beneficial effects are numerous. Actual demonstrations have backed up the natural philosophy the case involves, till doubt on the subject is all gone from my mind. Still the world seems shrouded in darkness and unbelief, and as would be natural in such case, men will resort to almost any subterfuge rather than admit the real truth in the case.

One of the most common queries I meet with is, whether the exercises or influences supposed to produce the cures might not be mere coincidences and not causes. It is true, we may not always know the real cause of effects experienced; but we have all the chance to know that others have as to the cause of cure; and we might as well doubt the efficacy of any remedy as of that which is used in spirit-healing, as it is called. The same query might with equal propriety be raised with reference to the cures effected by Jesus and his apostles.

Another query urged is, whether these so-called cures may not be the result of imagination. It is alleged in some cases, that the disease was of a nervous character, and the mere action of imagination served to start the circulation, and restore the patient, if restoration takes place. I have no doubt of the genuineness of the ancient receipt that "conceit will kill and conceit will cure." But how can this apply to the cases above-named? (and these are but two among thousands of like nature). *The imagination did not embrace the effect realized.*

But suppose we allow for a moment that health is restored in the way thus suggested. What follows? Why, of course, that every well-wisher to our race should encourage the process that results so favorably.

There are other cases where the result has been anticipated and realized, and still others anticipated and not realized—showing conclusively that the operating influence acts independently of belief. After all, it may be possible for some persons to be thrown into the same negative relation to the operating influence, without the aid of a conscious faith, that others are with it. In this light it will be admitted that faith or its equivalent is indispensible; as it is self-evident that the operating influence holds the positive relation to the patient. It is also understood that faith is a "humble, passive receiver."* If this be so, then the seeming difference between the two sides of the case fade away. Thus it is with most, if not all theological differences and disputes. Truths interblend, and when ignorance and sectarian interests cease to blind us, harmony will succeed; and this, to me, is the point to which our investigations should be directed.

HERSCHEL FOSTER.

MENDON, St. Joseph Co., Mich.

*We are accustomed to consider faith, in this use of the term, as equivalent to *receptivity*. Evidently the diseased body must be *receptive* to the influx of healing energy, else no effect can be produced. Receptivity of mind, or a state of desire, expectation, which may be termed *faith*, must certainly be more favorable than the opposite state of repulsion or opposition—though not essential in all cases.—ED.]

SAINTS AND THEIR BODIES.

The mediæval type of sanctity was a strong soul in a weak body; and it could be intensified either by strengthening the one or by further debilitating the other. The glory lay in contrast, not in combination. Yet, to do them justice, they conceded a strong and stately beauty to their female saints,—Catharine, Agnes, Agatha, Barbara, Cecilia, and the rest. It was reserved for the modern Pre-Raphaelites to attempt the combination of a maximum of saintliness with a minimum of pulmonary and digestive capacity.

But, indeed, from that day to this, the saints by spiritual laws have usually been sinners against physical laws, and the artists have merely followed the examples they found. Vasari records that Carotto's masterpiece of painting, "The Three Archangels," at Verona, was criticised because the limbs of the angels were too slender, and Carotto, true to his conventional standard, replied, "Then they will fly the better." Saints have been flying to heaven for the same reason ever since,—and have commonly flown very early.

Indeed, the earlier some such saints cast off their bodies the better, they make so little use of them. Chittagutta, the Buddhist saint, dwelt in a cave in Ceylon. His devout visitors one day remarked on the miraculous beauty of the legendary paintings, representing scenes from the life of Buddha, which adorned the walls. The holy man informed them, that, during his sixty years' residence in the cave, he had been too much absorbed in meditation to notice the existence of the paintings, but he would take their word for it. And in this non-intercourse with the visible world there has been an apostolical succession, from Chittagutta, down to the Andover divinity-student who refused to join his companions in their admiring gaze on that wonderful autumnal landscape which spreads itself before the Seminary Hill in October, but marched back into the Library ejaculating, "Lord, turn thou mine eyes from beholding vanity!"

It is to be reluctantly recorded, in fact, that the Protestant saints have not ordinarily had much to boast of, in physical stamina, as compared with the Roman Catholic. They have not got far beyond Plotinus. We not think it worth while to quote Calvin on this point, for he, as everybody knows, was an invalid for his whole lifetime. But we do take it hard that the jovial Luther, in the midst of his ale and skittles,, should have deliberately censured Juvenal's *mens sana in corpore sano*, as a pagan maxim!

If Saint Luther fails us, where are the advocates of the body to look for comfort? Nothing this side of ancient Greece, we fear, will afford adequate examples of the union of saintly souls and strong bodies. Pythagoras the sage we doubt not to have been identical with Pythagoras the inventor of pugilism, and he was, at any rate, (in the loving words of Bentley,) "a lusty proper man, and built as it were to make a good boxer." Cleanthes, whose sublime "Prayer" is, to our thinking, the highest strain left of early piety, was a boxer likewise. Plato was a famous wrestler, and Socrates was unequalled for his military endurance. Nor was one of these, like their puny follower Plotinus, too weak-sighted to revise his own manuscripts.

It would be tedious to analyze the causes of this modern deterioration of the saints. The fact is clear. There is in the community an impression that physical vigor and spiritual sanctity are incompatible. We know a young orthodox divine who lost his parish by swimming the Merrimac River, and another who was compelled to ask a dismissal in consequence of vanquishing his most influential parishioner in a game of tenpins; it seemed to the beaten party very unclerical. We further remember a match, in a certain sea-side bowling alley, in which two brothers, young divines, took part. The sides being made up, with the exception of these two players, it was necessary to find places for them also. The head of one side accordingly picked his man, on the presumption (as he afterwards confessed) that the best preacher would naturally be the worst bowler. The athletic capacity, he thought, would be in inverse ratio to the sanctity. We are happy to add, that in this case his hopes were signally disappointed. But it shows which way the popular impression lies.

* * * * *

One of the most potent causes of the ill-concealed alienation between the clergy and the people, in our community, is the supposed deficiency, on the part of the former, of a vigorous, manly life. It must be confessed that our saints suffer greatly from this moral and physical *anhæmia*, this bloodlessness, which separates them, more effectually than a cloister, from the strong life of the age. What satirists upon religion are those parents who say of their pallid, puny, sedentary, lifeless, joyless little offspring, "He is born for a minister," while the ruddy, the brave, and the strong are as promptly assigned to a secular career! Never yet did an ill-starred young saint waste his Saturday afternoons in preaching sermons in the garret to his deluded little sisters and their dolls, without living to repent it in maturity. These precocious little sentimentalists wither away like blanched potato-plants in a cellar; and then comes some vigorous youth from his out-door work or play, and grasps the rudder of the age, as he grasped the oar, the bat, or the plough-handle. We distrust the achievements of every saint without a body; and really have hopes of the Cambridge Divinity School, since hearing that it has organized a boat-club.

We speak especially of men, but the same principles apply to women. The triumphs of Rosa Bonheur and Harriet Hosmer grew out of a free and vigorous training, and they learned to delineate muscle by using it.

* * * * *

But so blinded, on these matters, is our accustomed mode of thought, that Mr. Beecher's recent lecture on the Laws of Nature has been met with strong objections from a portion of the religious press. These newspapers agree in asserting that admiration of physical strength belonged to the barbarous ages of the world. So it certainly did, and so much the better for those ages. They had that one merit at least; and so surely as an exclusively intellectual civilization ignored it, the arm of some robust barbarian prostrated that civilization at last. What Sismondi says of courage is pre-eminently true of that bodily vigor which it usually presupposes: that, although it is by no means the first of virtues, its loss is more fatal than that of all others. "Were it possible to unite the advantages of a perfect government with the cowardice of a whole people, those advantages would be utterly valueless, since they would be utterly without security."

Physical health is a necessary condition of all permanent success.—*Atlantic Monthly.*

The Spiritual Age.

Progress is the Common Law of the Universe.

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INQUIRIES ANSWERED.

UTILITY OF CIRCLES.

BRO. NEWTON:—Will you, or one of your associates, give your views on the utility of circles, and the best method of conducting them?
O. P.

This is a subject on which we are frequently questioned, and perhaps an answer at some length may not be inappropriate. The utility of circles depends obviously, like that of any other method or custom of association among human beings, greatly upon the ideas connected therewith, and the purposes sought to be attained by such association. If the purpose is a low and unworthy one, the results will be likely to correspond; if lofty and pure, benefits of the highest character may, in our opinion, be obtained.

The more common motives actuating those who form circles are doubtless, first, mere curiosity—a desire to obtain and to witness strange and startling marvels, with the pleasure of being able to astonish others by the recital of these; secondly, an affectionate yearning for tidings from the loved departed; and thirdly, an earnest desire for knowledge relative to the spiritual world, and the capabilities of its inhabitants. These all may be well enough in their degree and place; yet we do not consider them the highest ends to be sought, nor do they afford the most permanent grounds of interest. Curiosity in time becomes either satiated or disappointed,—affection's yearnings are ere long measurably gratified or else painfully tantalized,—and the intellect wearies at length in the attempt to systematize and rationalize the accumulating facts, theories and fancies which are often precipitated from the spiritual realm.

The higher motive which should inspire, guide, ennoble and chasten all efforts in this direction, as in every other, is *the desire for individual improvement*—for *personal* growth or development in wisdom, goodness, purity and spirituality—in all that makes man more manly, and woman more womanly—to the end that we may live true lives, in harmony with the angel-world, doing on earth the will of the Father as it is done in the higher spheres. Perhaps comparatively few are ready to engage in serious, earnest efforts for so high an end, but unless it is done, the highest utility of circle-meetings will not be realized.

Where any of the inferior motives we have mentioned prevail, there is usually a general fixing of attention on some one person who is expected to act as principal medium, and whose development alone is looked for, with an impatient anxiety for communications, or watching for remarkable displays of spirit-power. This concentration of anxious minds upon the medium tends often to defeat the end desired, as well as to prevent the individual advancement of the members of the circle; the sessions frequently end in dissatisfaction, if not disgust, and the circle is finally abandoned as profitless. On the contrary, where the nobler desire is uppermost, it will naturally lead to aspirations for individual advancement, to personal circumspection, to patience, perseverance, humility, receptivity, and to such methods of proceeding as cannot fail to draw around the little assemblage influences of the most elevating character, and obtain for them privileges most exalted—such, indeed, as the grovelling wonder-seeker has no conception of.

If the philosophy of the circle were better understood, its uses and abuses would be clearly perceived. We will venture a few suggestions on the subject:

Each man and woman may be considered as in some sense an electrical battery, constantly giving off emanations, as well as gathering from all surroundings. By bringing a number of these separate batteries together, a combined one of accumulated power is formed. By arranging them circularly, the magnetic current flows from one to another, around the circuit, in accordance with the familiar law of electric circulation. If the hands are joined, the currental flow is facilitated by this closer connection—being imparted through the right or positive hand, and received through the left or negative hand. This current is perceived by sensitive persons, producing sensations resembling those resulting from connection with a common electrical machine, except that they are milder and softer, indicating the action of a finer and more subtle fluid.

This flow of currents, or mutual impartation and reception of magnetic life-forces, of course tends towards an *equilibrium*,—as when a number of vessels of water are connected by tubes, the fluid seeks a common level. If, in addition, all minds are turned in one direction, by some common, tranquilizing exercise, such as singing, oral prayer, reading, or silent aspiration, a condition of *likeness*, *harmony*, and *receptivity* is induced, greater than most persons are apt to attain when alone,—which condition is especially favorable to the reception of spiritual influence. This influx or influence is always ready to be imparted, according to our conditions to receive.

The same general principles are recognized in all religious meetings, praying circles, and the like. How often are "the brethren and sisters" urged not to isolate themselves in the church-conference or the prayer-meeting, but to gather near each other, and to sing, that they may "get their hearts warm," and receive "the blessing of the spirit." The influx of spiritual magnetism from beings more refined and exalted than ourselves (whether they be in or out of the physical body), is doubtless always a "blessing" to us—though the purer and the higher the source with which we can come into immediate *rapport*, the better, of course. The action of this influx upon us is to promote our individual spiritual growth or unfolding, in the same way and by the same law that the light and heat of the sun promote the growth and unfolding of the plant and the flower. It is, in fact, the "Holy Spirit" (the divine magnetism) which all Christians invoke, and which, in the degree that it is purely received, enlightens, regenerates, and eventually leads into all truth. Most religionists, to be sure, claim that they receive "the spirit" immediately from God; but the irrational and contradictory dogmas which they receive with it, the fanaticisms and ungodly animosities with which it often inspires them, plainly evince that it comes to them from beings but little if any wiser than themselves.

If these suggestions as to the philosophy of circles are correct, it is plain that when properly conducted their tendency is strongly to fraternize and harmonize minds, by producing a magnetic or electric equilibrium, and to induce a condition of increased receptivity and susceptibility to elevating influences.

It is also evident that the presence of persons who are strongly positive, who are disturbed in mind, over-anxious, suspicious, or unfriendly to each other, must more or less interrupt and frustrate the objects of a circle. So also it is evidently undesirable that persons who are wide apart as regards spiritual refinement and moral character should mingle in the same circle. In the equalizing process before described, the low and gross may be elevated, it is true; but the refined and sensitive are liable at the same time, in certain stages of development, to become charged with impure and gross magnetisms, which often occasion great annoyance, if not suffering and disease, and retard their advancement. Mediums, until they reach a condition of *positiveness* to evil and grossness, are probably far oftener injured by the impure and unhealthful magnetisms of persons in the body, than by the influence of spirits disembodied. The filthy-minded and the grossly sensual should never be taken within the intimate relations of a regularly constituted circle—unless the positive element of purity so predominates therein as to overcome and repel their impurities, and thus quickly elevate them to a higher condition. Probably persons of this class are seldom attracted to circles where the atmosphere is properly elevated. The world must learn that purity and elevation of purpose are indispensable requisites to the enjoyment of exalted spiritual privileges. Were we a medium, or specially sensitive to spiritual influences, we should positively refuse to sit in any very close relations with persons whose systems are saturated with tobacco, pickled in alcohol, or polluted by a gross diet and by disorderly habits in general. As it is, we long since learned to avoid all sympathetic blending in this way with the frivolous and the sensual, as conducive neither to physical health nor to spiritual progress.

These remarks apply mainly, of course, to circles instituted for the purpose of holding regular and continuous sessions—though the general principles indicated are also applicable in degree to transient or chance gatherings.

Our views of the best method of conducting circles may be gathered substantially from the foregoing. There is nothing mysterious or strange about the matter, when a few simple principles are understood. But perhaps some more specific directions on the subject may be useful to many, and such we will endeavor to give in a future article.

MAGNETISM OF SPIRITS.

BRO. NEWTON:—Please afford me the benefit of your opinion upon the following question, as I do not remember of ever hearing it elucidated: "Do spirits, on entering the spirit-world, carry with them the gross magnetism which may have pervaded their earthly bodies?"

The spiritual body, as we apprehend it, is an electrical or magnetic body—that is, composed of those subtle elements which in some of their forms are termed electricity and magnetism; and when this spiritual body is withdrawn from the physical, it must be composed mainly of the same identical particles as before. If these were in part gross and unhealthful, they are so still, until in the process of advancement, (or restoration to health,) the grosser particles are thrown off, and their place supplied by purer. This process is doubtless analogous to the changes which constantly take place in the physical body, and may be more or less rapid, according to the aspirations of the individual, and the kind of society to which he or she gravitates in the spirit-life. Sensitive mediums usually if not always feel the effects of the diseased magnetisms of spirits who have recently passed from the body (when death has been the result of disease); and we do not doubt that surviving friends may be made victims to the diseases of the departed, who hover lovingly over them, in ignorance of this law of magnetic impartation. We have heard of cases in which consumption and other diseases have been immediately arrested, apparently as the result of an intelligent and rational appeal to the recently departed one, to withdraw the deleterious influence thus unwittingly thrown upon the sufferer. A. E. N.

A LYING SPIRIT IN GOTHAM.

That there are unprincipled persons in all ranks and professions, is a fact that we have no disposition to controvert; and the evidence before us sufficiently indicates that the *press* is not likely to constitute an honorable exception. Among the papers that *sport* with all subjects, even with the reputations of their superiors and the most sacred convictions of thousands, is "*Porter's Spirit of the Times*," a late number of which contains a foul and libelous attack on Mediums. As *a class* they are boldly condemned as "creatures who practice a blasphemous art," "a new set of criminals,"—"infinitely the most dangerous criminals in the community," and "for the most part, women of abandoned character." The writer speaks of "Clairvoyance and Mesmerism" as "*recent impostures*," and thus exposes his ignorance of what is well known by men of respectable intelligence in every civilized nation on earth. A few lessons from a native American savage or any Indian snake-charmer, might have saved this New York editor from so sad an exposure of himself, and helped him to conceal, at least from ordinary observers, his incorrigible stupidity and shameful ignorance. The following brief extract will suffice to indicate the malicious character of "the communication" from "*Porter's Spirit*:"

"If the mischiefs of this latter imposition ["Spirit Rapping"] had no broader scope than the indulgence of innocent vagaries by weak-minded people among their own acquaintances, in private circles, it would not deserve to be made the culminating point for our conclusions; but unfortunately, it has been found to more handily adapt itself to the villanies of such harpies as feed upon the diseases of the human mind than any other deception. Indeed, it has created a new set of criminals, and a new crime, which calls loudly, not only for the indignant condemnation of society, but for the strenuous interposition of the law. The creatures who practice this blasphemous art are, for the most part, women of abandoned character, who, having exhausted the natural charms which sustained them in a wanton livelihood, fall to the practice of those purely artificial spells which appeal entirely to the imagination and the fears."

This is a characteristic specimen of one of the vilest *manifestations* of the unblushing depravity of a portion of the Press, that has come under our notice for some time, and it proves that *Porter's Spirit* is a deceptive and lying one, that should be exorcised by the first man who has the gift of "casting out devils." For the credit of the American press, "*Porter's Spirit*" should be subjected to decent restraints and a wholesome discipline, that it may be led to abandon its filli-bustering expeditions into the realm of sacred realities where it is never at home. And this purports to be the "*Spirit of the Times*"! "The times" were old when such a spirit reigned on earth; but it seems that the spirit itself still lives,, and "*lifting up its eyes, being in torment*," it madly raves and ejects the venom from its forked tongue, indiscriminately, at the inhabitants of the under world and those who sit "together in heavenly places." S. B. B.

THE "TIMES" DOWN AT THE HEEL.

It has most severely taxed our credulity to believe that the Editor of a widely-circulated journal in this city can be oblivious of the fact that "mysterious rappings" have of late years occurred in all parts of the country and in Europe, for which no cause—within the unaided capacity of physical forces and the operations of the human mind in the flesh—has as yet been discovered. Yet such is the astounding fact as will appear from the following extract from an editorial article that appeared in the New York *Daily Times* of the 15th ultimo:

"The heel and toe exercises of the Spiritualists is always performed under the cover of petticoats. No pantalooned creature ever attempted it. The spirits select their mediums with discretion. Their preference is for women exclusively; and for this partiality to the sex they have their reasons. Whether it will survive the era of long dresses we do not certainly know, though we have our opinion."

Where has the editor been that his education has been so sadly neglected? It is now some years since the Buffalo doctors, who invented the ridiculous toe-snapping theory, and C. C. Burr, who, for the democratic sum of twelve cents, gave practical illustrations through his own nether extremities, were openly ridiculed not only by sensible people everywhere, but by almost every profane jester in the ranks of the opposition. Yet after all, and at this late day, the Editor of the *Times* adopts and defends the foolish assumption, giving to the authors of the "theory and practice" the sustaining consolations of his ardent sympathy and amazing wisdom,—which must be very precious and soothing after the ordeal which caused the boys in the streets to laugh them to scorn.

The *Times* has our permission to talk loudly and loosely about "shallow impostures." If it serves no other purpose, it may at least divert public suspicion—which might otherwise fasten on itself—and assist to cover up its own mournful weakness and hopeless imbecility. Publish the fact that *the Daily Times still believes that all the "mysterious rappings are made by delicate heels and toes;* that no rapping medium ever wore pantaloons; let ladies who read that paper remember that the ungallant scribe boldly insists that *their skirts cover the "stupendous fraud."* Gentlemen who patronize the *Times*—who have wives, sisters, daughters and lady-friends among the media—should make a note of the fact that *the Editor of the aforesaid paper openly stigmatizes them as impostors and includes them in the category of "Brigham Young's deluded followers."*

Now, if there is a single man in our city who knows no better than this, he should not so severely tax our power to conceive of dramatic possibilities, as this Editor does by *casting himself* in the popular farce of SETTING UP FOR A PUBLIC TEACHER! If, on the other hand, the party referred to really *does* know better, he is himself an unscrupulous impostor, who deserves at once to be rebuked and abandoned by every man and woman who either regards the truth, respects private character, or the purest feelings and the deepest convictions of humanity. S. B. B.

"THE WANDERING PILGRIM."

REV. JAMES WEBB, otherwise known, from Maine to Mexico, as the "Wandering Pilgrim," having—we are credibly informed—travelled and preached in no less than twenty-one States of the Union, has of late experienced a new conversion—*is "born again."* Mr. Webb, who was formerly a noted revivalist and baptized multitudes of followers, seems to recognize in the spiritual awakening of to-day the powers that doubtless belonged to the vital and spiritual Christianity of the primitive church. Our venerable friend writes us from San Juan, Monterey County, Cal., accompanying his private letter with a communication for the AGE, which the crowded state of our columns will not permit us to insert at length. Our correspondent seems to be inspired with a serene and grateful joy, as was the ancient Simeon, who, having waited patiently for the consolation of Israel, was at length permitted to receive the infant Jesus to his arms. His joy springs up from the divine fountain within, which the angels, who watch over each "Wandering Pilgrim," have unsealed in his soul, and it finds expression in the unstudied language of the Pilgrim's heart. The growing skepticism of the times—owing to the fact that our progress has been in the direction of all physical science and the acquisition of material goods—has not shaken his convictions of the Divine presence and providence; while many years and every wind of life have served but to fan the fires of his devotion. His triumphant happiness is now beyond all expression, and with a pious enthusiasm he exhorts us to constancy in faith and in every good work, both as means of present usefulness and grounds of immortal hope and joy in the life to come. S. B. B.

Prof. Grimes in the Field.

We learn that this able pioneer of Spiritualism has been actively engaged in public labors in the central and western portions of Massachusetts during the winter. To be sure, he tells the people that he is "exposing" Spiritualism, and is wont to indulge in some hard language and a deal of harmless ridicule at the expense of its advocates. Nevertheless, so far as we learn, he does quite as much to introduce the truth as almost any lecturer on the other side we know of. The *Barre Gazette* says of his doings in that place:

"He manufactured mediums by scores—out of *good, honest, reliable materials* and told the audience' how it was '*did*'—and when he had got them all right, the phenomena claimed to be produced by Spiritualism were exhibited."

Of course, when thinking people become once convinced that Prof. G. can "manufacture mediums out of good, honest, reliable materials," and through them produce certain phenomena, they will readily conclude that *disembodied spirits can do the same things;* and they only need to afford the latter a suitable opportunity, when they will have the fact demonstrated to their entire satisfaction. Go on, then, Bro. Grimes, break up the hard crust of skepticism, and the truth will spring up abundantly in your track, though you mean not so!

"THE PROGRESSIVE FRIEND," is the title of a new weekly publication, devoted to Spiritualism and other Reforms, just commenced at Elgin, Ill., by E. J. FARNUM and R. O. OLD. It begins small, (about 13 by 18 inches in superficial dimensions) and has therefore the more room to illustrate its "progressive" tendencies. The contents of the first two numbers are made up with discrimination and taste; and we trust the unpretending little sheet will prove a useful auxiliary in promoting the cause of Spiritual truth in the great West.

APPLICATIONS FOR EXCHANGE.—We receive numbers of requests for exchange with local newspapers which are of no value to us. We will exchange with any publisher who will remit us one-half of our subscription price.

The Discussion at Hartford, between S. B. Brittan and Dr. Hanson, is expected to commence on Wednesday evening of this week.

THE PRESS OF BOSTON AND VICINITY.

The *Christian Freeman* is discussing Spiritualism, or rather what it calls the "doctrines of the Spiritualistic sect." Bro. Cobb at the outset endorses the main propositions of our faith, as follows:

"We believe that our departed friends live, and that they are not required to go millions of leagues off to pass into the spiritual sphere. We know, from ample and diversified mesmeric, psychological and clairvoyant experiments, that mind can communicate with and impress mind, without the medium of the voice, in this physical state; and there is nothing unphilosophical in the idea that the minds of our resurrectioned friends, in a more perfect organization, may impress our minds in this sphere. We believe in spiritual communion, properly so-called, a communion between this and the spirit-world, with religiously cultivated minds, by meditation and spiritual impression; and that, on rare occasions, and especially to the dying, and most frequently to dying children, the spirit-land is opened to the vision, and angel friends are manifested to their view, before they quite leave the mortal shores. In all this there is something beautiful, and, as we think, beautifully true."

Accepting thus much, Bro. C. is a Spiritualist, whatever else he may believe or disbelieve. He, however, feels called upon to protest against certain doctrines which he attributes to the "new sect;" but falls into several important errors, which we beg leave to point out.

1st. He chooses to represent Spiritualists as a "sect," having something like a defined and generally accepted system of religious doctrines. This is incorrect. Agreeing in the one fact of realized spirit-communion, their views of the details of theology and philosophy are as various as are those of other people. Individuals among them announce their individual views on numerous topics; but these bind no one else.

2d. He represents Spiritualists as a class, or the "new sect," as believing certain doctrines on the "authority of mesmeric circles and trance or somnambulic speaking." This is also erroneous. No intelligent or rational Spiritualist does this. Nothing is more constantly insisted upon among them than that each individual should exercise his own best judgment, and accept nothing which does not commend itself thereto.

3d. He says that the "new sect" "sets the spirits of men, even in the spirit-world, at work doing evil, lying, tormenting, and mischief-making, from the mere innate love of evil and wrong," that is, from "a choice of wrong for the sake of the wrong," or an intense and all-pervading depravity. We doubt if even an individual Spiritualist can be found who holds such a view, while many even accord with himself on that point. We know of none who do not recognize all finite spirits as the offspring of God, and by virtue of their parentage partakers in degree of the Divine and incorruptible nature.

We trust Bro. Cobb will set himself right on these points, else we fear his proposed discussion of Spiritualism will be of little profit to those whom he desires to instruct.

He lays down, furthermore, the doctrine, if we rightly understand him, that all moral evil in man pertains to his *physical* nature, not at all to his *spirit*—the inference from which is, that when the physical body drops off, the spirit emerges pure, holy and eternally happy, and hence there are and can be no "evil spirits," in any sense. He indeed has "sentiments so fixed on this point," that he pronounces the apostolical "anathema" on any body, even "an angel from heaven," who teaches anything to the contrary! Of course, it will be of little use to argue the point with one so unalterably "fixed" as Bro. C. claims to be in this sectarian dogma; and we therefore leave the subject for the present, with the single remark that, in our view, the doctrine above stated accords with neither "fact, reason, experience, observation," nor even "apostolic authority." This we give as our private opinion, not as a "doctrine of the Spiritualistic sect."

The *Boston Evening Gazette* says of Mr. Putnam's recent pamphlet, on Mesmerism, Spiritualism, etc:

"The book is the clearest and most satisfactory of any we have yet seen upon the side of Spiritualism. Mr. Putnam's worth as a man claims for his work the attention which the work of a medium would not command with the public, and hence it will be extensively read. It will be received by thousands as a clear explanation of the wonders that have so long perplexed the world. The light it throws upon witchcraft illuminates that dark subject and redeems the actors therein from a great deal of the reproach that has so long rested upon them."

The *Practical Christian* has this language relative to the same work:

"We earnestly recommend this pamphlet to all Spiritualists and honest inquirers on the general subject. If any of our friends wish to lend or give away anything of the kind to thinking inquirers or skeptics, this is just the work for such uses. It is very seldom we can so unqualifiedly endorse an author's entire production as we can this. It is one after our own heart and understanding."

The *Boston Courier* honors the same pamphlet with what may be considered a "first-rate notice," under the characteristically elegant head of "The Last Gasp of Necromancy." It affirms that

"Mr. Putnam is an honest, and, on most subjects, an intelligent man. He is an educated man. Formerly he filled the pulpit of a Christian Society with ability. He is extensively known, both in professional circles and in social life, as a true-hearted gentleman, and one who, in ordinary affairs, would not do a wrong action nor speak an untrue word to save his life."

After thus endorsing his veracity, the *Courier* gives the benefit of its circulation to some of the most cogent facts put forth by Mr. P., which must surely go far towards proving the truth of Spiritualism to any rational person who believes Mr. P. honest. True, the *Courier* repeats, with a strange consistency, its stale Feltonianisms about "remorseless jugglers," "stultifying and demoralizing infatuation," "disgusting and foolish falsehoods," "measureless credulity," etc., etc.; but the public has learned what value to attach to these rhetorical flourishes. It makes one announcement which Spiritualists will regret to see; it proposes to "finish the discussion of the whole subject" in a few more papers. We trust this intention will be reconsidered, as Spiritualism can hardly dispense with its valuable aid at present.

The *Courier* has not yet had the manliness to disabuse its readers of the foul calumny about "naked circles;" nor even the honor to retract the "brazen falsehood" respecting this paper to which we have twice called its attention in our columns, and once by letter; but, instead, adds to its sins against truth by putting forth a new series of personal accusations as false as the others. Are its editors trying to illustrate the meaning of the Feltonian phrases, "conscious liars," and "illimitable lying"? They doubtless tell the truth for once when they say:

"The Father of Lies seems to be at present in the ascendant among us, and his myrmidons are constantly on the watch, to turn the best intentions and inoffensive expressions into something that shall pervert truth and serve the evil purposes of their master."—*Courier, March* 1.

(The word "us," probably should have been italicised.) The office of that journal has recently been the scene of a small rebellion, or "strike," which resulted in a general discharge of its former employees. Whether it originated in a refusal on their part longer to serve the "Father of Lies," we are not informed; but it would be hardly a matter of surprise were even the types and (imposing) "stones to cry out" against some of the enormities perpetrated in its columns.

DASHINGS OF SPRAY

FROM THE "ATLANTIC."

A sterling "make-up" is presented in the March number of the *Atlantic Monthly*. History, Biography, Poetry, Criticism, Light Literature, Politics and Reform furnish their quota, so that all tastes may be pleased. The philosophic thinker and friend of progress will find many suggestive thoughts scattered through its pages. The extract on our first page, though but a small slice from a large loaf, yet gives a taste of its quality. We would gladly have copied the article in full had space admitted, we so much like to see straight-forward common sense applied to these religious questions.

Let us turn over the leaves of the Magazine and catch a salient paragraph here and there. The "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" is constantly saying good things. Hear him. One would think he was describing in his queer way the sensations of an impressible medium. And is he not, when he talks thus of

THE POET'S INSPIRATION?

A Lyric conception—my friend, the Poet, said—hits me like a bullet in the forehead. I have often had the blood drop from my cheeks when it struck, and felt that I turned as white as death. Then comes a creeping as of centipedes running down the spine,—then a gasp and a great jump of the heart,—then a sudden flush and a beating in the vessels of the head,—then a long sigh,—and the poem is written.

It is an impromptu, I suppose, then, if you write it so suddenly,—I replied.

No,—said he,—far from it. I said written, but I did not say *copied*. Every such poem has a soul and a body, and it is the body of it, or the copy, that men read and publishers pay for. The soul of it is born in an instant in the poet's soul. It comes to him a thought, tangled in the meshes of a few sweet words,—words that have loved each other from the cradle of the language, but have never been wedded until now. Whether it will ever fully embody itself in a bridal train of a dozen stanzas or not is uncertain; but it exists potentially from the instant that the poet turns pale with it. It is enough to stun and scare anybody, to have a hot thought come crashing into his brain, and ploughing up those parallel ruts where the wagon trains of common ideas were jogging along in their regular sequences of association. No wonder the ancients made the poetical impulse wholly external. Goddess,—Muse,—divine afflatus,—something outside always. *I* never wrote any verses worth reading. I can't. I am too stupid. If I ever copied any that were worth reading, I was only a medium.

And he proceeds in a fine philosophic vein in saying that

A genuine poem is capable of absorbing an indefinite amount of the essence of our own humanity,—its tenderness, its heroism, its regrets, its aspirations, so as to be gradually stained through with a divine secondary color derived from ourselves. So you see it must take time to bring the sentiment of a poem into harmony with our nature, by staining ourselves through every thought and image our being can penetrate.

Well worth thinking of is that. The idea is somewhat elaborated in the Table-talk, to which we refer the reader, where he will find, besides, the following

QUAINT ILLUSTRATION.

Did you never, in walking in the fields, come across a large flat stone, which had lain, nobody knows how long, just where you found it, with the grass forming a little hedge, as it were, all round it, close to its edges,—and have you not, in obedience to a kind of feeling that told you it had been lying there long enough, insinuated your stick or your foot or your fingers under its edge and turned it over as a housewife turns a cake, when she says to herself, "It's done brown enough by this time"? What an odd revelation, and what an unforeseen and unpleasant surprise to a small community, the very existence of which you had not suspected, until the sudden dismay and scattering among its members produced by your turning the old stone over! Blades of grass flattened down, colorless, matted together, as if they had been bleached and ironed; hideous crawling creatures, some of them coleopterous or horny-shelled,—turtle-bugs one wants to call them; some of them softer, but cunningly spread out and compressed like Lepine watches; (Nature never loses a crack or a crevice, mind you, or a joint in a tavern bedstead, but she always has one of her flat-pattern live timekeepers to slide into it;) black, glossy crickets, with their long filaments sticking out like the whips of four-horse stage-coaches; motionless, slug-like creatures, larvæ, perhaps, more horrible in their pulpy stillness than even in the infernal wriggle of maturity! But no sooner is the stone turned and the wholesome light of day let upon this compressed and blinded community of creeping things, than all of them that enjoy the luxury of legs—and some of them have a good many—rush round wildly, butting each other and everything in their way, and end in a general stampede for underground retreats from the region poisoned by sunshine. *Next year* you will find the grass growing tall and green where the stone lay; the ground-bird builds her nest where the beetle had his hole; the dandelion and the buttercup are growing there, and the broad fans of insect-angels open and shut over their golden disks, as the rhythmic waves of blissful consciousness pulsate through their glorified being.

—The young fellow whom they call John saw fit to say, in his very familiar way,—at which I do not chose to take offence, but which I sometimes think it necessary to repress,—that I was coming it rather strong on the butterflies.

No, I replied; there is meaning in each of those images,—the butterfly as well as the others. The stone is ancient error. The grass is human nature borne down and bleached of all its color by it. The shapes that are found beneath are the crafty beings that thrive in darkness, and the weaker organisms kept helpless by it. He who turns the stone over is whosoever puts the staff of truth to the old lying incubus, no matter whether he do it with a serious face or a laughing one. The next year stands for the coming time. Then shall the nature which had lain blanched and broken rise in its full stature and native hues in the sunshine. Then shall God's minstrels build their nests in the hearts of a new-born humanity. Then shall beauty—Divinity taking outlines and color—light upon the souls of men as the butterfly, image of the beatified spirit rising from the dust, soars from the shell that held a poor grub, which would never have found wings, had not the stone been lifted.

You never need think you can turn over any old falsehood without a terrible squirming and scattering of the horrid little population that dwells under it.

A deal of truth in that, and capitally presented. But let us turn to another page. The author of "The Grindwell Governing Machine" has evidently been in Paris, and seen the Nephew of "My Uncle" pull the ropes. His story is doubtless intended as a burlesque on imperial tyranny. Though calculated for that latitude, it has many clever hits which would apply not a thousand miles from home. Would you not like to read a few words and learn

THE OBJECT OF THE MACHINE?

"For many years Grandville has been famous for a great machine, of a very curious construction, which is said to regulate the movements of the whole city, and almost to convert men, women and children into cranks, wheels, and pinions. * * A machine that proposes to think and act for the whole people, and which is rigidly opposed to the peoples' thinking and acting for themselves. * * The rules of the Grindwell machine allow no one to do his own grinding unless his mill-wheel is turned by the central governing power. * * A regular programme prescribes what he shall believe and say and do; and any departure from this order is considered a violation of the laws, or at least a reprehensible invasion of the time-honored customs of the city."

We opine there are those who would gladly see such an apparatus in operation in this country, especially as it has a department for "overruling the thoughts and consciences of the people." In case of its introduction, good old Massachusetts, always prolific in genius, could furnish, both within her eastern and her western precincts, men eminently qualified to superintend its operations—provided this feature were not copied from the original machine:

"The respectable editors of daily papers go about somewhat as the dogs do in August, with muzzles on their mouths."

"Child-Life by the Ganges" occupies several pages of the Magazine. Many curious and interesting statements concerning India are given. Here is a sample:

A CHILD POSSESSED.

"At Hurdwar, in the great fair, among jugglers and tumblers, horse-tamers and snake-charmers, fakirs and pilgrims, I saw a small boy possessed of a devil,—an authentic devil, as of yore, meet for miraculous driving-out. In the midst of dire din, heathenish and horrible,—dissonant jangle of zogees' bells, brain-rending blasts from Brahmins' shells, strepent howling of opium-drunk devotees, delirious pounding of tom-toms, brazen clangor of gongs,—a child of seven years, that might, unpossessed, have been beautiful, sat under the shed of a sort of curiosity-shop, among bangles and armlets, mouth-pieces for pipes, leaden idols, and Brahminical cords, and made infernal faces,—his mouth foaming epileptically, his hair dishevelled and matted with sudden sweat, his eyes blood-shot, his whole aspect diabolic. And on the ground before the miserable lad were set dishes of rice mixed with blood, carcasses of rams and cocks, handfuls of red flowers, and ragged locks of human hair, wherewith the more miserable people sought to appease the fell *bhuta* that had set up his throne in that fair soul. *Sach bat?* It was even so. And as the possessed made spasmy fists with his feet, clinching his toes strangely, and grinned, with his chin between his knees, I solemnly wished for the presence of One who might cry with the voice of authority, as erst in the land of the Gadarenes, "Come out of the lad, thou unclean spirit!"

Scarcely better have these matters been understood in civilized than in heathen countries. But we doubt not the time is approaching when the writer of the above will realize his wish. A light is dawning which will ere long make this matter of "possession" as well understood as any other in pscychological science.

Correspondence.

Discussion in Milford, N. H.

BRO. NEWTON:—Having understood that there was to be a discussion in the place above-named, between Rev. Mr. Anderson, Pastor of the Calvinist Baptist Church of that village, and Rev. J. Hobart of your city, I arranged to be present. The occasion of the discussion, as I was informed, was an attack on Spiritualism, by the first-named gentleman, in his own pulpit. The attack is said to have been entirely unprovoked; unless a purpose on the part of the Spiritualists of that locality to think and act for themselves was understoood to be a provocation. Feeling that injustice had been done the cause of Spiritualism by the assumptions, false issues, and slanderous imputations contained in the discourse, a committee of Spiritualists waited on the Rev. gentleman and solicited a copy of the same for publication. This he declined to furnish, but expressed a willingness to repeat the sermon, at such time and place as should be agreed upon by the parties, and await a reply from any one who might be selected to make it.

Mr. Hobart having accepted an invitation to perform that service, the combatants joined issue in the Town Hall on Friday Evening (Feb. 19th) in the presence of a large and intensely interested audience.

As Mr. H. was then to answer Mr. A.'s written sermon, of course the last-named gentleman took the initiative. Greatly to the annoyance of the audience, however, he kept the floor from 7 to 9 o'clock; a breach of courtesy the more keenly felt, from the assurances previously given, that he should occupy but little more than one hour. Notwithstanding the unfairness thus manifested, however, Mr. H., nothing daunted by the discourtesy shown him, assailed his positions with a vigor and determination that told upon his antagonist with tremendous effect.

I will briefly indicate the course of argument pursued by the disputants.

In the discourse in question, Mr. A. assumed that the different forms of divination spoken of in the Scriptures, are identical with modern Spiritualism, without venturing an opinion as to their *reality*. He then assumed the Scriptures to be an infallible guide in all matters of faith and practice, copiously quoting their denunciations against the ancient styles of Necromancy.

He next undertoook to show that the *doctrines* of Spiritualism are antagonistic to the Bible; enumerating under the head of *doctrines*, the belief of some Spiritualists, that the reputed miracles of the Scriptures—as the immaculate conception and the literal resurrection of Christ—are not adequately attested, and the opinion of others, that Inspiration and the power to heal the sick by the laying on of hands as fully characterize the present as they did any former age.

He then took up the Harmonial philosophy of A. J. Davis, dwelling upon the same at great length, characterizing it as a system of Fatality and Atheism, and as destructive in its tendency to sound morality and true religious culture. There was no lack of bitterness and denunciation. Indeed, in the estimation of your reporter, he aspired more to vent his spleen against Spiritualism by severity of remark, than to disprove its reality by sober and logical argument.

Mr. H., on rising to reply, briefly stated that, in regard to the Ancient necromancies, the weight of learned opinion seemed to be that they were little else than a tissue of well-executed impostures. However this might be, there was no occasion of dispute with the gentleman on the other side, since he had ventured no opinion of his own. He then raised the question, *What is Spiritualism?* stating that nearly all the gentleman had said was impertinent, having no necessary connection with Spiritualism proper. Spiritualism in general was said to be that in which all Spiritualists *agree*, and which is held by them as a *peculiarity;* namely, a belief in the *simple fact* that spirits, disembodied, in their ministrations to the inhabitants of this earth, *sometimes make themselves known*. This is the *point* of *intellectual unity* among Spiritualists, and the *only* one; and this distinguishes them from all other bodies of men. Here lies their peculiarity. Outside of this, belief is almost as diversified as the persons represented by the generic term *Spiritualism* are numerous. How ridiculous, then, to talk about the *doctrines* of Spiritualism! How illogical to hold persons, who believe the *fact* above distinguished as the bond of unity between us, responsible for what others may think and do! As well might the Rev. gentleman himself be held responsible for all the crudities, the fanaticisms and the immoralities of those coming under the common designation of *Christianity*. See how widely these differ from each other; yet, if the gentleman's reasoning is to be received, Christianity itself is to be held accountable for these differences! The aggressor in the debate was severely pressed by his antagonist at this point, and conclusively shown that all his talk about the *doctrines* of Spiritualism was a mere waste of words.

Mr. Hobart then raised the question, *Is Spiritualism true?* By reference to the Scriptures it was made evident that it existed in the ancient times, and that its various forms and conditions corresponded to those current in our day. Of course, notice was taken of the phenomena now so common among us, and a spiritualistic origin was shown to be the only hypothesis on which they could rationally be explained.

At the conclusion of Mr. H.'s argument, Mr. Anderson rejoined in a few remarks, and endeavored to show, by a reference to the *Hebrew* Scriptures, that some texts quoted had not been allowed their legitimate meaning. Mr. H. reminded him of the assumption of his sermon, that the Scriptures are inspired, and therefore infallible, and thought it very strange that he should take the liberty to mutilate the text of this infallible guide in the presence of the very audience having heard his previous statement. To get rid of a present embarrassment, therefore, he seemed willing to create a greater one for the future, and hence declared that the *inspiration* did not pertain to the commonly received *English* version, but to the *original!* This was turned upon him with scathing effect.

Thus ended the discussion for the first evening. On Monday evening following it was resumed in the same place, before a large and attentive congregation. Mr. Hobart proposed to his opponent that each should speak but twenty minutes at a time, thus allowing fair play. This being agreed to, and Mr. A. complaining that the positions in his sermon had not been noticed sufficiently in detail, Mr. H. assured him of a disposition to accommodate him in that matter to his heart's content. The debate lasted about three hours. Mr. H., on this occasion, "carried the war into Africa." He gave no quarter to arrogant assumptions. He overhauled the different Christian denominations, tracing out the wickedness which has been practised under the profession of Christianity from the days of the Apostles until now; and showed, that according to the principles of the gentleman's sermon, Christianity and all Christians are to be held responsible for the whole! The pressure was utterly overwhelming! The assailant made several attempts to escape the consequences of his own logic, but without effect. As a last resort, he endeavored to divert attention from his embarrassment by dropping the *general* issue made in his sermon, and demanding of Mr. H. what *he* thought of the immaculate conception and resurrection of Christ! Mr. H. reminded him that his sermon attacked Spiritualism *in general* and not any *individual* type of it; and as he (Mr. A.) was desirous of having the positions of the *sermon* answered, he was not to be called off from that labor by a mere ruse on his part, to save his own credit. Mr. Hobart assured his opponent that if he desired to discuss the particular beliefs of *individuals*, he presumed he could be accommodated at any time proper to such a purpose.

This was the dying struggle on the part of the Rev. caluminator. Driven from every position as he had been, he informed the audience that he had nothing further to say. Mr. H. then followed with a few caustic remarks, and in conclusion challenged him to meet him in public debate on the following questions: 1, Are the Scriptures in common use among us plenarily inspired? 2, Are disembodied spirits employed to minister to the inhabitants of this earth? 3, Have they the power ever to make *themselves known* in these ministrations, and is it probable *they ever do so?* The challenge was declined, and thus the controversy closed.

The Spiritualists of Milford seem to be of good courage and gaining ground every day. REPORTER.

Spiritualism in Western Pennsylvania.

NEW BRIGHTON, Pa., Feb. 20, 1858.

FRIENDS NEWTON AND BRITTAN:—Spiritualism has been the theme of considerable discussion in our village and vicinity for the last few weeks. D. L. Eaton, Editor of the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, in his lecture on education at the opening of the New Brighton Union School, made quite a vigorous assault upon the subject. His weapons were, (as usual in such cases,) scurrility, ridicule, and misrepresentation; and these he handled with some skill. What better, under the circumstances, could he do? Men do not descend to ribaldry, sneering and abuse, when they have any thing better to offer—when philosophy and truth are on their side. If Spiritualism is based in truth, then nothing but *error* can be arrayed against it. Hence its advocates who are satisfied of its impregnable foundations, have nothing to fear.

Some weeks subsequent to the lecture of Mr. Eaton, an individual styling himself Prof. Clark, made his appearance here and gave a public exhibition of electrical experiments, and among others, *explained* how spiritual rapping and other spiritual phenomena were performed! In buffoonery, misrepresentation, and falsehood, he entirely outstripped the Pittsburgh Editor.

The following question recently came up for discussion in the New Brighton Literary Society: "Is there sufficient evidence to establish the fact that spirits communicate with mortals?" There was considerable fluttering among the opposition at the introduction of the question. Rev. Eusebius Hoag and myself sustained the affirmative—G. Appleton, formerly a member of the Legislature of this state, the negative. After the first rejoinder to the negative, it was moved by one of the *sensitive* ones, that the discussion close, which was carried by a small majority.

My venerable friend Mr. Hoag and myself have just concluded the discussion of a similar question, contin uing in all about three days at intervals of a week, which was held in a school house a few miles distant. Our opponents were Elder Niblock, Deacon Waterson, Dr. Young, and Joseph Brittan, members of the Presbyterian, Seceder and Covenanter churches. It was really interesting to see how they flailed away in the dark—striking at things which had no existence. The popular gossip, and the secular and sectarian press had been the channel of their information on the subject. And, *could* there be any more *unreliable?*

We have reason to believe that *some* good has been done—that the seed did not all fall on stony ground. Two or three individuals among the more intelligent admitted that they had been misinformed on the subject, and that henceforth they were with us in the search for spiritual light and truth. Fraternally yours, MILO A. TOWNSEND.

Don't Investigate.

The following, from the lady of an "orthodox" clergyman, breathes the true spirit. Would there were more such independent souls—though, doubtless, their ecclesiastical standing is in no little peril:

MR. EDITOR:—Ever since you favored us with your paper, we have been met on all sides with the cry of "Don't investigate. Don't spend your time in reading such nonsense!" We sometimes ask the question, "Do you know anything about Spiritualism?" and in numerous instances have met the reply, "No, and I wish to know nothing of it. 'Tis all a humbug." "How do you know 'tis a humbug?" we ask. Then comes the very scientific answer, "Because I do."

"Don't investigate that error," says another. I know 'tis all a lie." "Have nothing to do with it; 'tis all the work of the devil," says a third. "Look out, Topaz; don't dip in there, you'll get your head turned," says a fourth. "You'll become an infidel next," says a fifth, "if you continue to read everything that comes along." "Better stick to the old landmarks," says a sixth.

Now, Mr. Editor, in view of all these opposing influences, we have come to the deliberate determination that *we shall investigate* just so far and so long as opportunity shall be offered us. We are sincerely honest in this thing, having no other desire than to come to the knowledge of the truth; being also resolved to embrace and advocate that truth just so soon as we shall receive evidence of it.

We believe, also, that it is the duty of every Christian to soberly, earnestly and prayerfully investigate the subject of modern Spiritualism. If it is an error, surely they should be able to meet it, and to show its fallacy; if it be truth, they should believe it. We hold that Christians and all men, everywhere, are bound to believe *all* truth—bound to live in accordance with the great law of love. These are the sentiments which we daily strive to impress upon the minds under our training; and, while we continue to sustain the responsible relation of teachers to the young, God grant we may never be less liberal in our views. TOPAZ.

Boston and Vicinity.

Meeting at 14 Bromfield Street,

SUNDAY, Feb. 28.

BRO. D. F. GODDARD, on Sunday afternoon, spoke in exposition of the Adam and the Christ of Scripture. These were considered representatively, as types of two different states of the affections. The first is ignorant, innocent Humanity, yet selfish; "the natural man," seeking, at first, unwisely, afterward more and more shrewdly, its own exclusive good. The second is redeemed Humanity—another discreet degree of the affections, where *self* is not put before the mind's eye; but God, the Whole, the All-in-all, is the object of the affections. Thus, losing the life of individual, isolated and antagonistic self, one finds life in the Universal self.

It is the characteristic of Bro. Goddard's efforts in these meetings to translate the truths of "old theology," especially, the vital ones of "Christ," "regeneration," and "faith," into a larger and more philosophic formulary. The Head and Heart are the complements of each other. Individuality and unity; reason and intuition; fearless, yet reverent science, philosophy and metaphysics, with deepest and most interior experimental religion—all may and should co-exist. "Nothing is good or fair alone."

Conference at Spiritualists' Reading Room,

THURSDAY EVENING, Feb. 25th.

There was a very full attendance at the Conference this evening, and the time was fully occupied by various speakers. In looking over our notes, however, we find no striking ideas which have not been already advanced in one form or another. We deem repetition here unnecessary. The question proposed for consideration at the next meeting, is this:

"Admitting Spiritualism to be true, how should its receivers treat sects and sectarians?"

The LADIES "HARMONIAL BAND" will meet on Friday afternoon, March 5th, at the house of Mrs. Nash, No. 7 Phipps Place.

MRS. COAN IN BOSTON.—Mrs. A. L. Coan is to give public opportunity for demonstration of spirit-intelligence at the Melodeon on Sunday evening next.

Miss MARTHA E. BROWN, a girl of seventeen years, will occupy the platform as trance-speaker at the Melodeon on Sunday afternoon next.

The Melodeon Meetings.

Mr. H. B. STORER, from Connecticut, a trance-speaker, occupied the desk on Sunday last. The topic of discourse in the afternoon was The Love of Adventure and its Uses.

The love of travel, exploration, investigation, was declared to be inherent in man; and if inherent, it must continue in man's future life. It constitutes one element in the anticipations of all respecting the spirit-life, that it will afford increased opportunities and facilities for exploring the boundless fields in which Deity has displayed His wisdom, power and love. Being inherent and universal, this love of adventure and investigation is in itself right, whether exercised in respect to the material world or the spiritual; for God has no secrets which he is not ready to unfold just as rapidly as man becomes qualified to understand and use them.

There have been rumors among men of the existence of a spirit-world, as there were in Europe before the days of Columbus relative to the existence of a New World at the West; but those engrossed in material pursuits have given them little heed. An old chart or record has been in existence, said to have been produced by some ancient navigators; it has been consulted by many, and its statements repeated in our pulpits; but its antiquity and uncertainty have caused it to have very little practical effect upon men's minds, while its indefiniteness has brought large numbers into a state of uncertainty as to whether there really is any such other world. Men had been taught that for long centuries no navigator across the unknown sea had come back to testify as to the truth of this chart; and hence, while some confided in it, others, from their mental constitutions, were unable to become satisfied.

But recently, numbers who had embarked upon this uncertain voyage, had been enabled to return. They have found difficulties in their way—have been obliged to come often in poor, shattered, "condemned" craft, and in such strange guise that they could hardly make known their identity. But they had been obliged to charter such vessels as they found afloat on these seas, and to do the best they could to afford the evidence which was sought. If the learned, the rich, the pious, refuse to let spirits come through their instrumentality, they must take the ignorant, the poor, the publicans and sinners.

The principles and conditions involved in investigations relative to the spiritual world were elucidated at some length, and in an interesting manner. In conclusion all were counselled to visit the new world themselves—that is, to become spiritualized by pure living, that thus their spiritual perceptions might be opened, and the beauties of the inner world revealed.

The invisible speaker declined giving his name, though requested so to do, alleging that the world had been influenced too much by great names already; but dropped some remarks in reference to his own experience as an explorer "in icy regions," and his recent removal from earth, which led many of the audience to believe they had listened to no other than ELISHA KENT KANE!

EVENING.

Topic—"What shall I do to be saved?"

This question was treated in a manner somewhat different from the usual one. Salvation was defined as—not a rescue from the horrors of an imaginary burning gulf—but a rising out of all evil states, ignorance, miseries, and inharmonies. The need must be felt before aid could come. The great physician of the soul is God; application should be made directly to him, and there are instrumentalities, both visible and invisible, by which aid may be sent.

The world is full of quacks and quackery, spiritual as well as physical. The infallible rule by which the quack may be known is his insisting that the cure depends on something *outside* of yourself—on swallowing some potion, or giving heed to some arbitrary formula, ceremony or prescription which he can give. The true physician knows that the recuperative energy resides *within*, and that specifics are of no avail except as they tend to arouse and energize this inherent recuperative principle, and to open conductors for the admission of the Divine energy that it may permeate and quicken the dormant powers within. This is the great law of salvation, physical and spiritual, and if men attempt to improve upon it they will surely fail. None can be saved by trusting in authority, nor by excitement, but by coming into harmony; and there can be no harmony without purity. Hence let those who desire to be saved become pure in their aspirations and affections, and the divine energy and illumination will flow down to them.

At the close of the discourse a number of questions were propounded, and very satisfactorily answered.

Mr. Storer has never before spoken in this city, but we are inclined, from these specimens, to regard him as one of the most effective speakers of his class. He is possessed of a good voice (though it might be improved by cultivation), and an interesting delivery,—the thoughts enunciated are of an elevated cast, and generally presented with great clearness and force, and with a tolerable degree of grammatical accuracy. We much regret that our limits do not allow of a more extended report.

SURPRISES.—A very agreeable surprise party came off last Saturday evening at the residence of Dr. Newcomb, 2 Suffolk Place. The party was composed of ladies and gentlemen, intimate friends of the Dr., who, after a little time given to social converse, music and the interchange of sentiment, spread the tables with the delicacies each had brought, and which were speedily disposed of. The occasion was one of harmonious enjoyment, and the company dispersed at an advanced hour of the evening, leaving behind them some very substantial tokens of their visit, and their best wishes for the Dr.'s future prosperity and happiness.

A young lady medium, in the west part of the city, who has given her services without price for a long time, as an instrument of physical demonstrations, was, we learn, "surprised" in a similar agreeable way, on Thursday evening of last week. Among those participating were several members of the legislature.

New York and Vicinity.

Conference at 18 Fourth Avenue.

TUESDAY EVENING, Feb. 23d.

"Is it the mission of Spiritualism to establish a system of Divine order on the earth?" was the question proposed for discussion.

Mr. PARTRIDGE answers the question in the affirmative. Spiritualism addresses itself to the reason and the affections, giving to these the largest possible liberty, and releases man from the thraldom of every species of arbitrary authority. Individualism and freedom will inevitably result in the establishment of divine order.

Dr. GRAY says if by "a system of divine order on earth," is to be understood an organization in which the decrees of one or more are authorized to limit and regulate the spiritual development of its members by defining what may be received by them from the spiritual world, and what must be rejected as untrue or heretical, then he must answer the question negatively. Spiritual intercourse tends to render men willing to hear, without prohibition, either tacit or spoken, the impressions, conclusions and opinions of others, and after that to expect and demand as of right the same thing for themselves. Whenever there is a complete recognition of the right of each to utter his own highest thought,—when we can become entirely negative, for the time, to the utterances of others, then shall we have the true church of humanity on the earth; a divine order of harmony between the earth and the heavens.

Mr. BEESON did not speak with special reference to the question before the meeting, but made a most earnest appeal to Spiritualists in behalf of the American Indians. Spiritualism recognizes the universal brotherhood of man. The poor Indians who are generally looked upon as outcasts and heathen, belong to the church of the Spiritualists. They have spiritual manifestations of various kinds amongst them, and they could be more readily approached and civilized by Spiritualists than by any other class of persons. They never pray to the "Great Spirit," because they do not believe that his purposes can be altered; but they act continually, in all the relations in life, upon a belief in the intervention of guardian spirits. They regard all their misfortunes as the results of violated laws.

Mr. ALLEN's conviction is that Spiritualism is destined to establish a true church on the earth. Something more, however, than a merely negative or receptive state is requisite. Spiritualism calls into action all our faculties. We must give as well as receive;—*will* and *do*. The spiritual, intellectual and social departments of our nature must be simultaneously and harmoniously developed. A divine church, a divine commonwealth, and a divine college will be established through Spiritualism; thus constituting the grand church of humanity. The institutions of the past have aided in developing the world to its present condition. They have, however, nearly fulfilled their mission. The entire social system is shaking upon its foundations. Everything around us indicates the rapid decadence of all the old institutions and the establishment of a diviner order.

Mr. COLES judges of the future by the past. Nations, institutions and individuals, as well as the earth, have their winters, spring-times and harvests. The breaking up of the rivers in the spring may cause floods and great destruction, but the summer is sure to follow. The long and dreary winter of the church is about being dispelled by the light and warmth of a living Spiritualism. The dissolution of the icy bonds may be attended by great commotion and disaster to institutions and individuals, but the peaceful and fruitful summer will follow and the result will be, as in all past times, the establishment of a diviner order of things.

Mrs. DORMAN, the clairvoyant physician continues at Dr. Wellington's, corner of University Place and Twelfth Street, where she may be consulted by those who are in search of lost health, in the absence of which all other earthly treasures are worthless. Of late we have had opportunities to witness the results of Mrs. Dorman's treatment, and they have been such as to warrant our cordial endorsement of her claims to public attention and confidence. Mr. and Mrs. Dorman will remove to Newark, N. J., in a few days, and will be located at No. 361 Broad Street. They will carry with them our cordial wishes for their continued success.

LECTURE AT THE MECHANIC'S INSTITUTE, 18 Fourth Avenue, opposite Cooper's building, on Wednesday evening, March 3. Mr. G. C. STUART of Newark, will deliver a lecture on the Astronomical origin of the Bible, at the above room. To commence at 7 o'clock. Admittance free.

R. P. AMBLER will commence, on the first Sunday in March, a series of lectures at Troy, N. Y., where he will remain through the month.

Compend of Facts.

Communication of Names.

EDITORS OF THE AGE:—While I was passing through Washington street, Boston, Feb. 18th, the thought came to me, "If my spirit friends are about me, will they not give me their names?" I called on Mr. J. V. Mansfield, No. 3 Winter street, and asked for a sitting, which was granted me. I then wrote, out of Mr. M.'s presence, the names of my father's and mother's families, folded the paper so that it was impossible for myself or the medium to see the names, and then, without a word as to my wishes, I placed the same before him. Immediately, and without any opportunity to learn the contents by any ordinary method, he commenced writing, and the names of both families were written out, and in the order in which I had arranged them. Below are the names:

Joseph Chase, (father); Abigail Chase, (mother); Joseph Chase, Jr., (brother); Ithamar Hall, (father); Buelah Hall, (mother); Benj. Hall, (son); Joseph Hall, (son); Harriet Hall, (sister); Sybil Chase, (wife). Respectfully your friend,

LOWELL, Mass. HERVEY CHASE.

Representation of a Vessel at Sea.

MESSRS. EDITORS OF THE AGE:—At a sitting held at my house on the evening of Jan. 16th last, among the phenomena produced was the following, which was considered remarkable by us, and which I will give for your consideration:

A spirit purporting to be the brother of my wife, (who has frequently been with us, representing that he was lost overboard at sea in 1837), took control of a medium present and wrote that if we would sit back from the table allowing only our fingers to touch it, he would try and identify himself to us. We did so, and immediately the table began to tip on one end and then pitch forward with a rocking motion, very like a vessel at sea. At the same time, the lashing of waves, creaking of timbers, rattling of shrouds, were distinctly heard by all present, and continued several minutes. At a subsequent sitting, a similar manifestation was given, in the presence of a dozen persons, all of whom are ready to corroborate this statement. For progress,

ALTON, N. H. J. P. BOODEY.

Eighteen Months Without Food.

The Sandy Hill Herald gives the following account of the case of Mrs. Hayes, of Day, Warren County, N. J. The statement that a certain medium in Boston went forty days without eating, meets with great incredulity from a class of persons who may not perhaps doubt this story, its subject not being a Spiritualist:

"Mrs. Hayes is not dead, but remains in the same condition in which she has been for many months past.

"Incredulous as it may seem, there is little, if any doubt, that this woman has lived for more than eighteen months without eating or drinking. We have not alluded to the case before, for the reason of its apparent incredibility; but scientific gentlemen, together with hundreds of others, after the closest scrutiny, have become convinced that there is no deception practised, and that the woman actually subsists without food or water. In order to test the matter, a gentleman took the woman to his residence, and parties watched her day and night for one month, who say that she neither ate nor drank during that time, and that on food being introduced in the room, concealed in the pockets of disinterested persons, the woman would immediately go into horrible convulsions. The same effect was produced by persons taking tobacco, or any kind of ardent spirits where she was.

"The woman is reduced to a perfect skeleton, so much so, that by placing the hand upon the abdomen the back-bone can be distinctly felt.

"We are aware that there are instances on record something akin to, this, which turned out to be frauds; but if this is deception, it has been so adroitly practised, that every one who has examined it has been duped. Besides, there is no motive for the deception; and it is quite incredible that any person would suffer to the extent that this woman has, for the sole purpose of playing upon the credulity of the public.

"Viewed in any light, the subject is worthy the attention of the scientific and curious.

"Since the above was written Mrs. Hayes has expired. After her death her body was opened, and a snake five feet long and half an inch thick was taken from the stomach! It was alive when removed, but died soon after."

A Spiritual Anecdote.

A few evenings since, as a private circle of Spiritualists in this city were receiving communications from the other world from a little child, recently deceased, the Old South rang for nine o'clock. The spirit hereupon ceased to communicate; but after repeated solicitations, it finally came back, and in infantile language said:—

"There is a good deal of difference now than when I was on the earth. Then my dear mamma used to tell me little children should be seen and not heard—now little children must be heard and not seen."

PERSONAL AND SPECIAL.

A. GASTON, Evansburg, (no State indicated) writes the New York Editor that just before the suspension of the paper in October last, he forwarded *one dollar*, as a six months' subscription to the AGE. We have examined the books with care, but find no evidence of the receipt of any such letter, and must therefore conclude that it did not come to hand.

THE PORTRAIT PAINTING MEDIUM.—We are requested by Mrs. Rogers, of Cardington, O., to say that her husband, Mr. E. Rogers, the painting medium, is now travelling in the West, and will not return home for several weeks. A number of letters are waiting his attention on his return; but it will require some time for him to attend to all, as he never executes more than one or two portraits a day. It is his intention to visit several places from which he has received letters, as soon as his engagements will permit.

ANOTHER LECTURER.—Mr. N. FRANK WHITE, said to be one of the best mediums in the country, has consented to take the field as a lecturer. He is used as a writing and rapping medium. Those wishing his services can address him at Beloit, Wis.

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.

MISS SARAH A. MAGOUN, Trance Speaking Medium, will answer calls for speaking on the Sabbath, or at any other time. Address her at East Cambridge, Mass.

THE SPIRITUAL AGE.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK, MARCH 6, 1858.

LETTERS RECEIVED.—S. T. Sherman, P. N. Rockwood, C. Putnam, W. Twichell, J. P. Boodey 2, N. S. Greenleaf, H. Chase, D. T. Averill, H. Allen, H. Stagg, J. Hopper, E. C. Galusha, L. J. Fuller, J. W. Maulding, C. Peabody, J. B. Chandler, G. Stearns, S. J. McFarland, S. J. Morton, J. Hamersley, L. Smith, V. Chase, E. Hardinge, B. J. Butts, T. S. Merrill, F. L. Wadsworth, O. J. Mullen, M. A. Townsend, L. S. Gilliam, C. Brigham, J. McPherson, W. Koch, A. E. Noble, C. B. Peckham, B. F. Clark, L. B. White, L. P. Summers, O. C. Birge, L. Hyde, L. P. Brague, J. Puffer, L. L., D. M. Parsell, J. Scott & Co., W. M. Bacon, H. B. Hoadley, R. P. Ambler, J. W. Smith, J. Bean, J. York, J. M. Lord, P. Watkins, J. McFarlen, E. P. Bullan, T. Phelps, Thatcher & Welling, R. Parker, M. S. P., S. Bates, J. C. Bull, A. Green, H. P. Fairfield, J. M. Sterling.

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.

MEETINGS IN BOSTON AND VICINITY.

SUNDAY MEETINGS—Miss M. E. BROWN, trance-speaker, aged seventeen years, will speak at the MELODEON on Sunday next, at 3 o'clock, P. M. In the evening, at 7 1-2 o'clock, Mrs. A. L. COAN will give opportunity for public test manifestations from spirits.

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.

WEEKLY CONFERENCE MEETING, every Thursday evening, at No. 14 Bromfield street, commencing at 7 1-2 o'clock.

MEETINGS IN CHELSEA, on Sundays, morning and evening, at GUILD HALL, corner of Bellingham and Hawthorne streets. D. F. GODDARD, regular speaker. Seats free.

CHARLESTOWN.—Meetings in Evening Star Hall, 69 Main St., every Sunday forenoon, afternoon and evening. The forenoons will be occupied by circles; the afternoons devoted to the free discussion of questions pertaining to Spiritualism, and the evenings to speaking by LORING MOODY. Hours of meeting 10 A. M., 2 1-2 and 7 P. M.

IN CAMBRIDGEPORT.—Meetings at Washington Hall, Main street, every Sunday afternoon and evening, at 3 and 7 o'clock.

IN QUINCY.—Meetings in Mariposa Hall every Sunday.

SALEM.—Meetings at Lyceum Hall every Sunday afternoon and evening at 2 1-2 and 7 o'clock. The best Lecturers and Trance Speakers engaged.

MEDIUMS IN BOSTON.

J. V. MANSFIELD, Medium for answering Sealed Letters, may be addressed at No. 3 Winter street, Boston (over G. Turnbull & Co.'s dry goods store).

TERMS—Mr. M. devotes his whole time to this business, and charges a fee of $1 and four postage stamps to pay return postage, for his efforts to obtain an *answer*, but does not guarantee an answer for this sum.

Persons who wish a guarantee will receive an answer to their letters, or the letter and money will be returned in *thirty days from its reception*. Charge for guarantee, $3.

No letters will receive attention unless accompanied with the proper fee.

Mr. Mansfield will receive visitors at his office on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Persons are requested not to call on other days. 39 tf

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Interesting Miscellany.

For the Spiritual Age.

"THE WILDFIRE CLUB."

A TALE FOUNDED ON FACT.

BY EZRA.

CONCLUDED.

Roused in an instant from his singular state of abstraction, his first impulse was to rush from the room, in order to ascertain the cause of the fearful outcry. It was so heart-rending, it seemed to combine so many voices, and to express such a world of woe, that it would have compelled a far less excitable temperament than Merlin's into instant inquiry. On entering the gallery which led to the apartment he had just quitted, he found all the domestics crowding on towards the room of meeting, all startled by the terrible cry, and all impressed with the belief that it issued from the club-room. As Merlin advanced towards the terrified group, his steward preceded them, exclaiming in tones of deep interest,

"Good God! sir, what has happened? We feared you were all murdered. Has any harm come to Mr. Rushton? We heard his voice above the rest."

"Mr. Rushton!" stammered Merlin; "I heard no voice in *particular*, only I thought that all the fiends in torment must have been let loose, to give forth that hideous cry. Go, some of you, and search the Abbey through. I will join you as soon as I have spoken to my friends."

So saying, he returned to the apartments devoted to the club, to ascertain what effect the disturbance had upon them. He returned to find the lights extinguished, and, by the broad glare of the flashing lightning, to perceive that the room was entirely deserted by its late tenants. Bridegroom, bride, revellers, all were gone! and he stood in the vast apartment solitary and alone!

To summon the servants to procure lights, and search the Abbey in every direction, was the work of the first hours of the New Year. And when it finally dawned in the cold grey of a desolate and still stormy day, it found the perplexed inhabitants wholly at a loss to comprehend the mystery of the preceding night. The steward, who was deepest of all the domestics in the confidence of his master, testified to having lighted up the hall with his own hands,—to having heard the footsteps of eleven persons passing up the secret stairs which led to the hall from the only door of entrance from without,—to hearing some others sounding on the steps with an apparent effort to drag or carry up some heavy body,—to hearing these last persons lock the door of entrance and pass into the hall. The custom of locking the door always devolved upon the thirteenth member, and the number which had preceded him was always ascertained by a reference to a score on the wall where every member as he entered was required to chalk a cross.

If Merlin could have conceived the appearance of his guests to have been but a mere conception of his fancy, the evidence of the steward touching the lighting of the hall, the disturbance of the chairs,—which were removed from their formal position, scattered, and some overturned, as if a number of persons had been suddenly removed from them,—the fact that the door of entrance which his own hand had unlocked at eleven o'clock, was now found locked, but above all, the appearance of thirteen crosses in chalk, recently made in the accustomed place, all bore testimony to the presence of some one, or something beyond the capacity of the inhabitants of the Abbey to deny or yet account for. Still the mystery remained insoluble, and still the absence of the blind beggar and his various messengers aided to redouble the perplexity of Merlin. At length, late in the afternoon of the 1st of January, he resolved to go himself in quest of some of the "Wildfires," in order if possible to clear up the strange doubts which the whole affair was involved in. Just as he was setting off with the intention of making his way to the house of Rufus Rushton, he encountered one of his missing messengers.

The man appeared before him jaded and travel-soiled, alleging as the reason of his long delay, that the floods had risen in such force in every part of the country, that whole villages had been swept away, and that he himself, after much peril, had only escaped with his life. He bore, however, a missive from Rushton, evidently written the morning of the 31st of December, which ran as follows:

"Brother Wildfire (greeting):—I cannot in all allegiance comply with your request. "The Wildfires" are here, assembled at my poor mansion of Luciferean reputation, and the floods are rising so rapidly on all sides, that I may not, without giving the old Prophet (may the fiends confound, and the saints disown him!) a chance of realizing his fell prediction, venture forth by boat, horse, or wagon. We, in our solemn council of Pandemonium, therefore, have concluded to invite you to be the victim of the altar, and by exposing your precious life to the risk of drowning, in order to come hither to us—save thirteen lives in tact and only sacrifice one to the vengeance of the sorcerer. Thus, we trust his wrath will be appeased, and if you die, which in all likehood you will not, (a more *exalted* fate evidently looming before so notorious a Wildfire as Reuben Merlin,) let us conclude with Scripture, that it is better one member should perish than that the whole body be cast into the *waters*."

This facetious epistle was signed by one of the members of the club, *for* Rufus Rushton, who, on his own part, added a few brief lines to the effect that, as the "Wildfires" were assembled at his house, to aid him in a *certain important matter*, and the rising of the waters had rendered the country almost impassable for the coach which would be necessary to convey a *bridal* party—it was desirable that Merlin should take horse and join the club on the appointed night at his, (Rushton's) house.

"Ride, ride for your lives! Mount, Gabriel, Thomas and Martin. Mount all, and follow me!" shouted the master of the Abbey, as he read these letters, and himself dashed forward on his perilous road. Through brake and fence, over moss and morass—through torrent and river, across fords now swelled to cataracts, dashed the headlong rider. At length the swelling floods entirely destroying the landmarks which had once guided his way, compelled him to halt, and partly by offers of large rewards, and partly by desperate threats, he succeeded in urging some fishermen whom he made many circuits to find, to embark with him in a boat and make an effort to reach by sea the dwelling of Rufus Rushton. It was a large, solitary mansion, situated on the sea-shore and surrounded by a tract of flat, marshy land.

For the rest of that weary day, and all through the long succeeding night did the rowers ply their oars, and still when morning dawned and the exhausted mariners refused any longer to advance, Reuben Merlin gazed over a trackless waste of waters.

"A few minntes longer, my men, only a few minutes longer!" cried the eager master, "and we must reach the spot. See there! By heavens! there is the identical castle rock, the lighthouse and giant's cradle, which show we are *at the very spot!* But in the the name of God where is the castle, and what has become of the 'Rushton Arms,' the fields, rocks and hedges? I see nothing but waters! Can the sea have swept over the land, or are we the subjects of a hideous phantasmagoria?"

"Yonder is all that we shall ever see of the castle on this earth," replied one of the boatmen, pointing as he spoke, to some few feet of battlemented buildings just appearing above the surface of the water, not many rods from where they lay; "and we are now sailing *above* the castle, the hotel, fields, rocks and hedges, which you ask for; whether those you came to seek are *beneath* or *above* us, just now, God alone can tell. But they say that just at midnight, between the death of of the old year, and the birth of the new, the villagers up there on Solway Crags, heard the shriek of a number of drowning souls. The sound was very awful, and rung out for miles over the sea. We heard it off away there in our shanties, and it came like a cry from the bottomless pit of Scripture. Might it not have been the death wail of Master Ruston's New Year's night party?"

"Doubtless!" murmured the horror-struck Merlin; "and yet *living or dead*, they kept their word, and *did* meet in that room December 31, 17—, at midnight!"

Many weeks after this occurrence, the waters subsided sufficiently for the magistrates to institute a search for the bodies of those who perished in the terrible floods of that memorable New Year's night. The castle had disappeared forever. The influx of the sea, combining with that of the swelling tides of the land floods, rolled in peaceful tides over the dwelling of Rufus Rushton, and sang the funeral requiem over every soul that his roof harbored that fatal night.

But two bodies were ever recovered. The one was an old silver-haired man, whose tattered garments were supposed to bear testimony to the ideality of Blind Sandy, the beggar. The fact that the body was found *with one hand cut off*, evidently dissevered by a blow, proved that other causes of death had run riot in that terrible house on the fatal 31st. Clasped tightly to his breast, and still encircled in the arms of the dead, was a female, clothed in white garments; but the sullen waters which had formed her winding sheet had laved away every trace of what might have been once fair and lovely, and left no proofs, beyond surmise, that it was Margaret, the beautiful fairy of the glen, whom few had seen except in passing or stolen glances, around whom busy tongues had enwreathed legends of mystery and ideality, from the fame of her beauty, the fact of her strange seclusion, and, above all, her relationship to the dreaded prophet, Blind Sandy.

Many years after these events Mr. Merlin re-appeared in the neighborhood from foreign lands, where he had been wandering in pursuit of the lore which old India, ruined Egypt and philosophic Germany alone could give him. The records of "The Wildfire Club," almost its very memory, had passed away in the depths of the fearful floods which had engulphed all its members but this one, and in him, the stern and gloomy ascetic—the scholar of strange systems and unknown lands—none would have ever recognized its founder.

All the wild tales which had grown up out of the fantastic doings of this association, and especially their awful exit from the scene of their orgies, soon came to be revived in the person of Reuben Merlin, when it was found that he actually set to work to establish a kind of order, or sect, one of whose chief points of doctrine was a firm belief in the existence of the soul after death, and *the possibility of its return to earth.*

The Merlinites, as his followers were termed, did not gain many converts; and, as has been before stated, with Reuben Merlin's decease they died out altogether; yet though their doctrines, and the impelling causes which brought the sect into being, are no more remembered, the old abbey was long the theme of ghostly legends and general terror, especially on the last night of the old year, when it was said the galleries and hall were brilliantly illuminated by no mortal hands, while a revel was held by thirteen shadowy forms, who had bound themselves, *living or dead*, to assemble at midnight, at that place, on the last night of every year, till the ages of a mysterious penance for unatoned sin should have passed away.

There may not be one truly earnest or self-possessed mind who puts faith in the legend of the doomed revellers' assemblage on this night, and yet there are few who could be found bold enough to stand by the old postern gate at midnight on the 31st of December, to listen to the eleven footsteps ascending the stairs, and the two shuffling forward as if sustaining a heavy weight, while the last sound of all, say those "*whose fathers have heard these sounds*," was the grating of the closing lock,—few, we say, are found, bold enough to test the truth of these legends on the night in question; yet there are many who, to this day declare, that in the hour which stands like the gate of the tomb, between the earth of the old year and the heaven of the new, there is ever heard, far and wide, over sea and land, through hamlet and town, a wild shriek,—long, shrill, heart-rending, like the cry of many perishing souls parting in the sudden disruption of strong, vigorous life, but seared and fearful consciences. The mariner far out at sea shivers with a chill keener than the biting blast as he hears the awful cry, while the fisherman mutters a prayer, little children crouch beneath their mothers' aprons, and all pious men and women send up a fervent aspiration for peace to the unresting souls of The Wildfire Club.

THE END.

Remarkable Prophecy.

The following remarkable prediction was made by Friar Bacon, who was born in the year 1214, some 640 years ago. "Here," says a certain writer, "is poetry and philosophy wound together, forming a wondrous chain of prophecy:"

"Bridges, unsupported by arches, will be made to span the foaming current. Man shall descend to the bottom of the ocean, safely breathing, and treading with firm step on the golden sands never brightened by the light of day. Call but the secret powers of Sol and Luna into action, and behold a single steersman sitting at the helm guiding the vessel, which divides the waves with greater rapidity than if she had been filled with a crew of mariners toiling at the oars; and the loaded chariot, no longer encumbered by the panting steeds, shall dart on its course with resistless force and rapidity. Let the simple elements do the labor; bind the eternal elements, and yoke them to the same plough."

No great thing ever did become popular at once. The fact of its becoming popular at once shows that it is not worth much.

Hard words are like hailstones, which, if melted, would fertilize the tender plants they batter down.

It betokens as great a soul to be capable of owning a fault, as to be incapable of committing it.—*Lord Kaimes.*

PRAYER.

Prayer is a constant source of invigoration to self-discipline—not the thoughtless praying which is a thing of custom; but that which is sincere, intense, watchful. Let a man ask himself whether he really would have the thing he prays for; let him think, while he is praying for a spirit of forgiveness, whether even at that moment he is disposed to give up the luxury of anger. If not, what a horrible mockery it is! To think that a man can find nothing better to do, in the presence of his Creator, than telling off so many words; alone with his God, and repeating his task like a child, longing to get rid of it, and indifferent to its meaning.

THE PRESENT DUTY.

Ah, why against thyself sad warfare wage,
Writing such bitter things on memory's page?
And why does all the future seem to thee
So clad in hues of dark despondency?
Let no discouragement thy soul o'erpower,
But do the duty of the present hour.

'Tis waste of time to mourn o'er wasted years,
So that thine eyes are blinded by thy tears;
If sorrow's night darken the light of day
How canst thou ever see "the narrow way?"
And if discouragement thy soul o'erpower,
How fares the duty of the present hour?

Be wise, then, and improve the fleeting *now*,
No more this palsying grief and fear allow;
The past, with all its vanity, is gone,
The present, with its hope, is all thine own;
And oh, thou'lt find full many a hidden flower
Whilst true to duties of the present hour.

TO AN ANGEL MOTHER.

* * * * Lean,
Oh, spirit glorified and washed from sin,
Yet still our mother, lean, at twilight's hour
Of reverie, across the starry bars,
And send a blessing down to those that wait
With aching hearts, to take it as it comes.
And as the dew on fading flowers, as light
To those that sit in darkness, or as hope
To those whose feet for years have trod the wilds
Of dark despair, or as sweet liberty
To inmates of a prison, or as life
To those whose lips were well nigh sealed
In death, it will revive our fainting hearts,
And quicken us to walk with holy awe
And humbleness beneath the chastening rod;
And through the fire of our affection, we
Shall come, as did the Jewish three of old,
Made better by the trial.

TRUE REST.

Rest is not quitting
The busy career;
Rest is the fitting
Of self to its sphere.

'Tis the brook's motion,
Clear without strife,
Fleeing to ocean
After its life.

'Tis loving and serving
The highest and best!
'Tis onward, unswerving,
And that is true rest.

GOETHE.

PROSPECTUS.

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