

Broken Beams

from the

Summerland

By Many Authors.

Published by A. Gaston

In memory of her who for forty years was his
companion, counsellor and friend.

Compiled and Edited

by

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To Our Friends.

AS a player, however skillful, can bring forth but imperfect music from an ill-tuned instrument, so can the unseen forces bring but unsatisfactory results through inferior mediums. And as (in the first instance) the harmonies proclaim not only the skill of the performer but the quality of the instrument he plays, even so are the manifestations of psychic phenomena an index to the character and intelligence of the medium through whom they are obtained.

Thus do the communications which follow, speak the merit of the messengers through whom they were received, although they are not presented for the purpose of earning either praise or criticism, but rather for their preservation, that in years to come, should the light of our faith burn but dimly and counterfeit phenomena seem to strip from our treasured philosophy much of its dignity and lofty aim, we may turn with grateful hearts to this little book, and feel the same unquestioning confidence, the same fearlessness of purpose as that of our beloved kinsfolk through whose constant and conscientious effort these messages were received.

We do not expect they will speak the blessing to others, they do to us, but there is good in them for all. It is when we know our necessity that the heart cries out, and these messages (*enabling us to ever feel the nearness of our vanished loved ones*), have been a tonic to our lives. They have been like the grateful shade of a mighty tree on the heated plains. They have borne us through tempests of grief out into the great calm. And as they have done unto us, so may they do unto you—nourish and strengthen the comforting faith of Man's Immortality, and Eternal Progression!

H. N. C.

In Memoriam.

“Everyone according to the gift which bounteous Nature hath in him closed.”—Shakespeare.

NEARLY eighty-five years ago there dwelt, on a farm near Rushford, New York, one John Hammond, a bachelor of thirty summers—a most sedate age in those days of early marriages! When Eliza Butterfield, the staid and industrious young woman of fifteen years, (accomplished on the spinning-wheel and hand-loom, and in the feminine art of housekeeping) came to his hermitage to do for a meed, a bit of spinning, together they wove the matrimonial robe which they were destined to wear for fifty busy fleeting years.

There was no hint of race suicide in those days of large families, and John and Eliza reared ten children to honest industrious God-fearing manhood and womanhood. Of these a daughter, Thankful Caroline, began her earth-life on June fifth, 1836.

As if born to teach us how to bear life-long affliction courageously, she met her first foe to physical ease in the golden days of babyhood. Her father, during a business trip to a neighboring state, suffered from a severe attack of inflammation of the eyes, and on his return home, not realizing it was epidemic, failed to isolate himself from his family till his complete recovery. The unfortunate result was that every member from eldest to youngest suffered in turn. All recovered, however, save the infant Thankful. The frail blossom of babyhood was too fair and tender to throw off the blighting touch, and ever afterward her eyes, which should have been her faithful servants, clearest mirrors of her soul, were constant sources of pain and self-sacrifice to her. Her constant and characteristic

attitude in her maturer years—the attitude in which she is ever pictured in our memory—had its beginning in her childhood days when the little head with its brown silken tresses was pathetically bowed to shield her sensitive eyes from the garish light. Her play hours must ever be spent in shadowy places, in dim twilight corners.

With an unusual aptitude for learning and a hunger for study, she was unable as she grew older, to obey the necessarily cruel injunction to give absolute rest to her eyes, and in their moments of ease, she would steal up to her chamber, book in hand, creep softly under the bed—her favorite reading place—and with the treasured volume slipped under the valance out into the light, herself in darkness, she would happily read and study the hours away. Her favorite book was the great family Bible, its large print affording her friendly entertainment and instruction even when her sight was most imperfect.

Considering the degree of scholarship she attained (a degree much higher than was usual in those days) notwithstanding the obstacles in the way of her education one cannot help wondering to what heights she might have climbed under favorable conditions. As it was, she persevered in her studies and entered the high school. Being a natural mathematician and fond of that study, she passed from algebra to the higher mathematics, geometry and trigonometry, with surprising ease. She had, also, a broad knowledge of literature, her father being a man of letters and one to whom books and newspapers were a necessity whatever economies must be practiced.

Her great love for poetry was manifested even in her early childhood, by the pleasure she found in memorizing verses. Byron, Scott, Pope and Burns were her favorites; and in her latter days even after her martyrdom of suffering, she could still repeat much of the “Lady of the Lake,” Pope’s “Essay on Man” and page upon page of Byron, besides verses from the pens of many other poets.

IT was while the child Thankful was yet a little maid that that part of the country was electrified by the "Rochester Knockings."*

Excitement and curiosity ran high, and when the alleged spirits declared that the phenomena need not be confined to the Fox Sisters alone, there were few families in that vicinity who did not woo mediumship by holding weekly seances in darkened rooms, religiously awaiting results. It was so in the Hammond family, and after a time Ruth (an elder sister of Thankful's) and Lyman Sibley, the husband of another sister, (Mary) could, by sitting together, receive communications by means of "table-tipping."**

About this time the family removed to Pennsylvania, and interest in the singular phenomena smouldered somewhat owing both to the change of location, and to the fact of Lyman's and Mary's removal to another state; but it was again fanned into flame by the timely visit of a cousin, Lodencia Scott, (mother of the renowned Mrs. Cora L. V. Richmond) who was herself a medium. During her stay, the family, together with a few neighbors, organized a circle, and, after patient waiting, were rewarded by coming into touch with the invisible through the united mediumship of the young maid Thankful, and one Athelston Gaston, a youth who lived near by—a youth who had "come to scoff and remained to pray."

* NOTE.—"Rochester Knockings" was the name given the first published manifestations of the phenomena of modern Spiritualism, through the mediumship of the Fox sisters, at their home near Rochester, New York.

** NOTE.—It was a most laborious process. A small round stand with a plate under one of its three legs, would rythmically vibrate back and fourth while the alphabet was being repeated over and over again. As the desired letter was named the table foot would give three short successive taps on the plate beneath it, and pencil in hand, some one of the members of the circle jotted down each letter as it came. In this manner the messages contained in this little book were all received, save those of Sarah Wycoff.

“Rose of the Wilderness”* the guiding spirits named this circle of faithful souls, and letter by letter, were rapped out these beautiful messages of love, of faith, of charity, of lessons in noble living, of hope beyond the grave!

IT was about this time that the sweetest of influences came into their lives. In the family circles Thankful would become entranced, and after a few moments of silent waiting it seemed to them that some mysterious Force—a Force quite separate and distinct from herself—had taken possession of her, and was trying to address them through her physical organism. These efforts to speak proved unavailing, however, and were finally discontinued for some unknown reason,** but soon afterwards there unfolded before their wondering eyes, a most remarkable phase of this singular phenomena.

Wholly unconscious she was! How different her personality from that of her usual self! The serious-faced girl who habitually sat with bowed head, or soft cheek resting on her slender hand, when under this mysterious Influence held her head erect; her dim eyes met the light unflinchingly; her lips parted in a happy smile; and her whole face radiant with animation and gladness, the while her deft fingers formed with incredible swiftness a series of signs or symbols, which for a time, seemed to defy interpretation, and mock at the eager hearts of the little

* NOTE.—This name was peculiarly applicable, as the Hammond family was the only one within a radius of hundreds of miles who had any interest in Spiritualism or had openly continued its investigations despite the growing unpopularity of the new philosophy.

** NOTE.—They afterwards learned it was doubtless owing to the unfamiliarity of the controlling spirit, (Sarah Wycoff) with the organs of speech.

band of Seekers after Truth—Truth in whatever guise she came!

Happily someone suggested 'ere long, the possibility of these signs being letters of the deaf and dumb alphabet,* and oh! the delight then manifested by the young medium—silent after the manner of the mute.**

“Yes, yes, yes!” her head nodded repeatedly and emphatically; and she seemed overjoyed that at last they had guessed her meaning, and she would thus be enabled eventually to talk with them; to bring them comfort and good cheer. Letter by letter from A to Z she slowly and patiently taught the mystified family the significance of each and every symbol; but it was the young Athelston who became proficient in her voiceless language, and who could read her words with the same ease and rapidity with which she spelled them.

The first message received from this controlling spirit was by way of introduction. Her name, she told them, was Sarah Wycoff. In her earth-life she had been a deaf-mute; the daughter of a wealthy merchant in New York, that city having been her birthplace and home. Her's had been the stirring times of the Revolutionary War and birth of the young republic. And after but a fleeting glimpse of the beauty and mystery of earthly life and love, she had died in the glad sweet morning of her womanhood!

Her's was a beautiful Influence and a very marked one. She was intellectual, poetical and witty—above all she was healing balm! As the tide of the years rolled on, and sorrow came to the family group, and disheartenment and hardships, no consolation so sweet as Sarah's! No heart so heavy she could not lighten its burden! No soul athirst to whom she could not point the way to the waters

* The deaf and dumb alphabet was then practically unknown, except to those obliged to use it as a means of communication with others.

** NOTE.—For forty years she was thus controlled from time to time, yet never once, while under this influence did she make an articulate sound.

of Life! She was one of their greatest teachers, and her coming was ever greeted with enthusiasm, not only because her words were always especially adapted to their needs, but because her mode of communicating was more speedy and satisfactory, and far less fatiguing both to medium and members of the circle.

THE close union of these young mediums, Athelston and Thankful, in things spiritual, naturally led to a correspondingly close union in things temporal. He was young, untried in the world of commerce, and possessed nothing save a fair name, integrity of purpose, a stout heart, and ready willing hands. No hint of what the future held for him. No faintest shadow of the financial success and political honors which were to crown him in after years! Yet the young god, Cupid, was as blind (or as far-seeing) then as now, and the maid of his choice trustingly gave her life into his keeping, and together they builded their own home-nest—their humble Alabama!*

One child came to bless them,—a wee girl who brought with her, from out the vast Unknown, the precious gift of Parenthood, and silently laid it at their feet. For three short years was she given them in sacred trust; then the silent winged Messenger bore her spirit back to the Hand that gave. Oh that tiny, tiny form! Temple of their Baby-Alma's living soul! Shrine whereat they worshipped! What though it be taken from their clinging arms and placed in the lap of the royal mother—Earth? The priceless Gift she brought them, yet is theirs. It is fadeless, incorruptible, undying! Never can it be withdrawn; Throughout Eternity shall it be theirs!

It was to their knowledge of Spiritualism. born of

* Alabama: "Here we rest."

their own mediumship, they turned for consolation. They, together with their whole family connection, had at times borne both ridicule and ostracism* in its cause; but their reward was ever sure. It was Light to them in darker hours; smiling Hope in discouragement; Comfort in bereavement; and in the first bitter days of this, their greatest sorrow, it did not fail them. As the years glided by, Alma, their only beloved child, did not become to them a mere sacred memory—a bright star illumining the deep, deep Past!—but remained instead a sweet reality. Their souls, attuned to voices not heard by duller ears, received assurances of her continued existence; of her growth and development; were told from time to time of her interests and aspirations. They could often feel her presence too, and always, the mantle of her love enfolded them!

Soon after Alma's death Mr. and Mrs. Gaston turned their faces hopefully toward the West. He did his farm-work; she with the assistance of her mother, attended to her household affairs, and taught the district school. Yet ever during those work-laden years, far removed as they were from former ties, in the solitude of their prairie home, they faithfully set aside a night each week for solitary communion with loved ones in the realm of Spirit. How sadly was the family circle broken! Grandfather Hammond and three daughters Elizabeth, Ruth and Lucretia, were no longer of this world, and the remaining members of the family were widely scattered; all having married and settled in homes of their own.

* The phenomena of modern Spiritualism was at first received with interest and enthusiasm by the churches and their leaders as it was proof positive of immortality. In those days, however, the theology of the Evangelical churches was vastly different from that of today, and when this mysterious Force began to preach progression after death; that not faith alone could save, but good works as well; that Heaven and Hell were conditions, not localities; that Deity was an all-merciful all-forgiving Father, not a vengeful Being with the limitations and weaknesses of the children He had created; it was a philosophy, they were then unable to comprehend, and unwilling to receive. They forthwith ceased all investigations and denounced it from the pulpits. This was the beginning of a prejudice which has at times resulted in the persecution of mediums and ostracism of its adherents.

In time they drifted back to Pennsylvania where Mr. Gaston forsook farming and engaged in the lumber business; cautiously at first, but confidently later, when success crowned his every effort. After several changes of location they finally chose Meadville as their permanent home. He became mayor of that city and served two terms, a period covering four years, and was later elected to Congress.

For some time he had been interested in the Cassadaga Lake Free Association (the "Chautauqua" of the Spiritualists) the assembly grounds of which were located at Lily Dale, New York. After serving several years on the Board of Management, he was finally chosen as its Chief Executor—an office which he held for eighteen years. The Camp was then in its infancy, and under his wise and generous leadership, became the "flower" of all similar assemblies.

IN the meantime, Mrs. Gaston beloved and tenderly cared for in her beautiful home, was over-shadowed by the most terrible affliction. At the first indication of her trouble physicians whom she consulted were united in declaring a surgical operation necessary, as, under existing conditions sudden death was imminent; and at the longest, she could not hope to live more than five years. Their *invisible friends*, however, protested against the use of the knife, consequently Inclination strengthened by Faith decided them in their course.

For more than twenty years, to the amazement of the medical profession, to the amazement of all who knew her, this remarkable woman courageously battled for life, for health, yes, even for *pleasure!* Never acknowledging the existence of an alien growth which must one day conquer her indomitable will; always ignoring pain; ever replying

"I am well" to all inquiries; she sought diversion by means of much company; traveling with her husband or others; interested herself in sight seeing, so far as her sensitive eyes and limited sight would permit; and kept her whole physical condition secondary to her strong mentality, although the discomfort attendant upon this constantly increasing growth hampered her in walking, wearied her in sitting, and weighted heavily even her sleeping hours.

One day, while being driven to the home of her foster daughter in company with a niece who lived with her, she suffered a stroke of paralysis. After the first shock, she rallied, and bravely renewed her battle for life. For more than seven years she sat in her wheeled chair unable to so much as change her position unaided, yet she *seldom alluded to her pain or weariness*. With an indulgent husband, faithful attendants and kindred, and many sympathizing friends, there were none who could rescue her from the resistless current of Disease which was mercilessly bearing her away from their sight. During her last hours her suffering was excruciating; yet her marvellous silence in regard to her pain was broken only when her spirit was too near the Border-land to continue its control over her physical being; and then—ah then! it was not to us she cried aloud in her agony, but to those invisible to us who were awaiting her birth into that other life.*

On October fourth, nineteen hundred, three, as the first rays of dawn awoke a silent, sleeping world, her spirit freed from its pain-racked imprisonment, peacefully ascended to its long Home!

HELEN N. CONNOR.

* "I am ready, father; I want so to go! Why don't you take me?" were her last words.

*There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamed of in your philosophy.*

—Shakespeare.

MESSAGES FROM
JOHN AND ELIZA HAMMOND

AND THEIR CHILDREN

Nelson, Ruth, Libbie and Lucretia.

ALSO

THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF THEIR SON

BENTON

In passing from earth to spirit-life by accidental and
instantaneous death.

Borne on the viewless breath of Inspiration, we
come, laden with Love and Old-Time Remembrance,
to tell you of Life beyond the Shadows of Time!

DEATH had a bitter sting for me. It was leaving my family. All the burden falls on Gene. I want to send the boys some advice when I can. Tell Father I shall be here to meet him when he comes.

NELSON HAMMOND.

November twenty-second, eighteen hundred, sixty-four.

MY dear wife and children: I am ever mindful of the many loving thoughts and anxious desires you have all felt to hear from me since my release from my old body. I can give you no earthly advice that is worthy of much weight. I feel as much interest in your prosperity, as ever I did, but my mind is engrossed in my new-found life. I can give you but little satisfaction beyond protestations of eternal remembrance. Your father,

JOHN HAMMOND.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-seven.

MY dear children: Through the kind favor of higher intelligences, I am permitted to address you, and I sincerely hope we may all profit by these brief seasons of communion. I see no reason why you should not all be happy in the enjoyment of health and plenty in a rising country. Do the best your hands find to do, but at all events *do something*, and when employed rest content in

the noble and self-sustaining consciousness of an integrity of purpose.

Be on the alert for opportunities that will come in the course of time, and above all things, try to make your mother as comfortable and happy as is consistent, and your circumstances will permit, and surely you will have your reward. "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Leaving with you a father's blessing. I will withdraw for the present.

JOHN HAMMOND.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-seven.

DEAR Flora: I can give little but an echo across the dim chasm of years.

We are ever nearing the goal, where we may all meet as in the olden time; and when we again clasp welcoming hands, the night of separation and physical death will melt away like the memory of a troubled dream.

You have treasure here which will surprise you, in your child which has grown to womanhood unknown to you. It is good to have an angel-child in your flock; I was grateful for mine, when a lone stranger in the land of Spirit.

Now my children, *study and cultivate the spiritual*, that the change called "Death" may not surprise you, when it loosens the cord of physical life, and leaves you free for broader unfoldment.

I can give you no conclusive proof of my presence or identity. Only let my spirit whisper to yours, that *I am really,—*

Thy Father, as of Old,

NELSON HAMMOND.

De Alton is with me.

FORTH from the dismal void beyond the tomb there rises a tangible and eternal home, whose attributes are adaptation, knowledge and progress. An active, spiritual faith may fill up this rough outline with as much of light and beauty as their spiritual conceptions are capable of conceiving, and yet fall far short of the reality.

When will faith become actual knowledge? When death is lost in everlasting life; when mortality is cast off and immortality put on.

JOHN HAMMOND.

YES I will communicate, I will speak volumes to your listening spirit if I have the power. I will tell you of my happy home beyond the dark vale of mortality and the many things you want so much to know.

I have met and rendered timely aid to the dear friend whose fate was so much of a mystery. Were it for no other reason I could not regret my early departure from earth. I have also seen another, whose memory is dear to you and who does not forget.

I felt like one born into new life and beauty when I awoke that eventful day and found my identical self beyond the river; and without a lingering regret at my abrupt departure, I took up my new life* with a glad song of joy and thanksgiving.

Genie** is my entire charge. He is the same bright, happy child as his brief earth life always pictured. Here he is a reality, there he was a fleeting sunbeam. Here he is undying; there he was torn by physical pain. It is hard to be separated, but faith makes bright the future glorious meeting which awaits you all.

LIBBIE.

* Sarah once said Libbie was the happiest new-born Spirit she had ever seen. Libbie seemed never to have had a regret for her earth-life.

**Eugene, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Nichols.

WHEN the central sun, which lights the whole vast spiritual universe, shines directly over our circle, we all repair to the Mount of Instruction as it is called. It is many times larger than the earth. But I will not attempt to describe it, for you cannot imagine anything of its beauties. There we are met by many great, wise and good spirits, who, having progressed on far above us, return to teach and bring us gifts from their homes which we have never seen. They give us instruction in every department of nature or science as you call it.

We do not study from books, but we look at the revolution of God's infinite creation and they explain all they know of the cause and effect. For example, if one desires to study music, he soon learns that to understand harmony well, he must study all nature. So closely linked are all the laws of science, that we cannot learn one separate law without a knowledge of the whole.

When our guardians leave us, we go forth on various missions. Some, (and among these I am included) go down among lower spirits to teach them what has just been taught to us. We carry our gifts to show them, and in this way they, too, catch a glimpse of the purer spheres.

RUTH E. HAMMOND.

WE are here, (which means within speaking distance), and now for a speech!

I was with you positively in the past; I am with you comparatively for the present; and I hope to be with you superlatively in the future. (You know I am a "right smart" scholar, I have made so fine a beginning).

Now I will tell you about our good folks at home. Father is my father still, though not as you knew him last. Youth and age are harmoniously blended in his noble face. His hair is abundant and brown. He is our counsellor and

companion—all that you, who knew him on earth, might fancy and yet more.

Lucretia shows the advancement due to her earlier birth into spiritual life, though she is not so free as Ruth. Her child binds her to earth. Do not forget, for her sake, my brothers and sisters, the close tie of consanguinity.

LIBBIE.

HANNAH: Mother: I feel far away from earth and the scenes of my brief life upon it; yet near, supremely near to your spirits, and would fain send a faint echo across the dim chasm of years which intervenes between us. But when we meet over here, the pause will dispel, like darkness before the morning.

LUCRETIA.

Eighteen hundred, seventy-nine.

WILL you invite us to your Christmas feast? We can enter, unbidden guests, and take a snuff of the goodies and you dull fellows will never miss what we take, any more than you miss the honey from the flower, which the little bee has extracted. Would it not be a holiday indeed if we could meet and enjoy an interchange of memories and experiences, both earthly and spiritual? We shall all be present, an unbroken family of invisible spirits.

Then appreciate as you ought the presence of those who are still visible to your outward senses, for their forms are fleeting as the summer sunshine; and you weep afresh over the new void in the physical world, and prize the

parted blessing more forcibly when it can return no more.

LIBBIE.

Received the night before Christmas, eighteen hundred, seventy-one, at Adamsville, Pa.

THE old song charms me, the old love warms me and I come. No word is fitly spoken. The silence is unbroken, yet here I am, my own veritable self! While I see, you sit in shade, and I cannot rejoice meeting with you, as I would wish. Though near, yet are we separate.

The scenes which surround me are unknown to you and I can only speak to you intelligently of the past, which is not pleasant. You all remember enough of me, a moody, weary little being, with plenty of pride and ambition; with more force than strength. But the old page is turned; the new one is better. It is the old tale oft repeated. Physical inability rendered my earthly life a failure. Nothing remains of it but love and memory.

LIBBIE.

Eighteen hundred, seventy-nine.

DREARY, frozen, chilling, snow-clad Iowa! Poor lonely trio! Full well I know how to sympathize with you, for the memory of it is to me, a confused medley of chilblains, shivers, catastrophies, sloughs and hair-breadth escapes. But remember the glorious summer which will soon be before you, radiant in its luxuriance, its fresh and beautiful coloring. And soon, very soon, will your spirits rise on immortal pinions from the stormy scenes, of this ice-bound

earth to the bright Home above where no false romance awaits you, but a life of substantial progress. Love to all.

FATHER AND LIBBIE.*

Iowa.

MY dear, dear Son: I do come to you today. I know it is hard for you to understand how our life in spirit can be as real and tangible** as your life on earth.

It is not only as tangible but more so, as *here in spirit-life our every thought is reflected so that all others can perceive it as well as ourselves. Therefore we can hide nothing from each other.*

Yes, dear son, it is more tangible than earth life.

Your Affectionate Father,

JOHN HAMMOND.

WELL, I have come merely to fill your blank leaf with something blanker. My earthly ideas are all spirited away and my *non compos* mind makes poor steerage with no brains*** of its own to act upon. But we are all happy and contented over here, without any brains, and that is better than you are with them. Then look forward and prepare for the brainless state! If you know but little when you cross over here, you need not be surprised, for you do not

* John Hammond and daughter Elizabeth. Her messages are usually signed "Libbie"; sometimes "Lizzie."

** In reply to query by Luthan Hammond—"Is spirit-life as tangible and satisfactory as was your earth-life?"

*** One of the persons present at the seance had several days previous, in the privacy of her own home made some laughing conjectures as to how spirits were able to think—having no brains.

store up such a heavy stock of knowledge in your probationary state, even though endowed with the priceless gift of "brains."

LIBBIE.

Eighteen hundred, seventy-nine.

THE ponderous wheels of Old Father Time move slowly forward, and the Star of Hope and Faith shines broader and clearer, as I see you drawing nearer the divine reunion which awaits us. Believe on! for *faith is the surest anchor for the spirit* through the dark mental and physical sufferings of earthly life.

Poor Benton will soon return from his western pilgrimage, thoroughly disheartened;* and I need not tell you to heal and bless, for I know you will.....Now is your golden opportunity to exchange a little earthly treasure for a divine and everlasting happiness. Remember *the choicest blessings come from doing good to others* —to those less favored by birth-right.

I have already prolonged my letter beyond the proscribed limits. With much love, I am as ever

Your Husband and Father in Spirit,

JOHN HAMMOND.

March, eighteen hundred, eighty.

* For several successive seasons all of Benton's hard work on his western farm had been in vain. The crops were ruined once by drought, again by a killing frost, and yet again by grasshoppers. The above communication was received shortly before his return to Pennsylvania. Several months after his arrival he was killed by the falling limb of a tree.

MY Dear Family: I welcome you all—the in-coming and departing generations. I am with you still through all the varied scenes of life, with all a father's love and tenderness, free from earthly parents' anxiety, for I know all things are well with each and every one of you. Where once the light of faith was faintly shining on my earth-bound spirit, now I am blessed with the full sunlight of absolute knowledge. *Faith in the Supreme Power, that shapes even the minutest incidents of every individual life, should be the anchor of every human soul.* Then cultivate faith, and above all foster warm family relations and this will sweeten every bitter drop in the cup of human life.

I am not able to say a tithe of what I would wish. I would fill you to overflowing, with thanks for the divine beauties of immortal life, the ever increasing glory of mere individual existence!

A father's blessing,

JOHN HAMMOND.

June, eighteen hundred, eighty.

I TOOK my poor, broken, wounded boy in my arms and I will make him whole and will give him rest. "The pitcher that was broken* at the fountain" was but brittle potter's clay, and shall be exchanged for pure flexible, spiritual raiment, that neither time nor accident can sully. The cord that was loosed, was but the cord of flesh, but the golden cord of love and sympathy is not broken. It rises above the "wreck of matter and the crush of worlds." Be comforted by faith. Time rights every bitter affliction and unites every congenial spirit. More anon.

May peace brood over your mourning spirits and bind

* NOTE.—On the last morning of his earth-life Uncle Benton had read aloud to his family the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes.

like a kind, tender mother. I add my blessing and his.

JOHN HAMMOND.

July twenty-fourth, eighteen hundred, eighty.

THE waves of death are dark, but the light beyond is cheering. The arid, sultry field of physical labor is well exchanged for the softer radiance of this better life, as axe and saw are laid aside. Yet it would have taken many weary blows to have purchased for my family, what this one blow gave or will give them.* In this instance fate was kind. I now see they need a father's care more than any temporal blessing and my cries are for them whom fate has robbed of their birthright. I can say no more.

BENTON, (Through the help of others).

HE will see the light clearer and then see a Father's hand outstretched, even in the darkness, to each and all. Do not let grief engross you. By cheerful faith you may help and strengthen him.

JAMES REED.

July thirty-first.

* He alluded to his life insurance.

THE bitterness is past. The light of a new life warms and floods my whole being with sunshine and joy. Thank God the life of accidents is over.

BENTON.

August, eighteen hundred, eighty.

THE spiritual life—the first out-growth of earthly life, —is a sickly, slender twig hardly worth the name of Immortality, yet here we find Time, Space and Opportunity for enlargement of the inner-man as soon as we can draw away from the earthly troubles, that bind us to the dear ones left behind. I have been trying to look forward and around me. There is much that is pleasing and beautiful here, but my mind continually reverts to my family on earth. This is my one great sorrow. You are now my only medium of communication with any and all left behind.

Many thanks, and blessings infinite are due to you, my more than brother, for the kind feelings manifested toward my little family. That is the only way Love can reach me now.

Mother, I am not unmindful of your love, your grief nor your feeble state of health. I know it now better than I did before. We will all see the good of our trials, in the sweet bye and bye.

T. B. HAMMOND.

September, eighteen hundred, eighty.

THE light of spirit life is clearing away the dark mists of my earthly career, and I begin to see, with a spirit freed from the damp miasma of earthly misfortune. I am

happy in a clearer vision than my earth-life ever gave. I can rest my children in the provident arms of the infinite Spirit from whence they sprung, their Father from the beginning, while my fatherhood was but accidental,—momentary. I know that sometime, in the beautiful future, there will be a grand re-union, and my kind Parent will give me back my own jewels, reset in never-fading radiance and shining in immortal beauty.

BENTON.

October, eighteen hundred, eighty.

THE darkness of doubt is fast passing away from the minds of earth's children and the pure light of faith is filling earth's atmosphere with resignation, peace and love.

GOOD NIGHT.

YOU spoke of hearing from me. I respond with much joy in the assurance of kind regard breathed forth in that wish. I mean to give you a sketch of my peculiar exit from the body and entrance into spirit-life for I experienced some of Alvin Congdon's sensations.

A violent death, though not painful for the body, is very unpleasant for the inner man. But I forbear, for I am assured by no lesser personage than your father, that Arthur is needed at home.*

BENTON.

January seventeenth, eighteen hundred, eighty-one.

*NOTE.—Arthur (A. B. Gaston) hurriedly left for home. There he learned that his infant son had been taken ill during his absence.

"The soul, immortal substance to remain conscious of joy, and capable of pain."
—Prior.

Experience of T. B. Hammond

In Passing from Earth to Spirit-Life by Accidental and
Instantaneous Death.

A HASTY or violent death is neither physically nor spiritually beautiful, yet the divine gift of immortal life raises the spirit above the reach of the ugliest wreck which the elements of nature can invent.

"Feel the blow? He never knew what hurt him!" is oft repeated above the inanimate form thus bereft of spiritual life, and, *were the body all of the man*, this would probably be correct; but as the *real man dwelling in the body*, suddenly finds his physical habitation crumbling, he is painfully conscious of the mighty change. As the water from a fountain is suddenly shaken into a million tiny drops, and each individual drop reflects the same ray of light and multiplies it a myriad times, so was my spirit broken; and the terrible image of that death reflected in each minute particle of my being. Each drop of the brain, so to speak, represented a part of my spiritual life, in which the death was mirrored forth, as perfectly as a sun-beam in a drop of dew. Do you think now I knew what hurt me?

More again, I can speak no more on this theme to-night! Next time I will speak of life after I was gathered together; saved from darkness.

T. B. H.

January twenty-third, eighteen hundred, eighty-one.

(Continued.)

Continued.

“**K**ILLED! Collapsed! Struck out! Finished!” was the one thought that rang through the aisles of my shaken spirit, like many chimes from the knell of destiny. When confusion grew faint and yielded her scepter to the universal law of peace and order, another thought stole in and said: “Where am I? How did it all happen? Then for the first time in all my life I looked around with spiritual vision.

“What did you see?” you will say. Only my own body extended lifeless upon the ground, ragged, soiled and broken! For the moment I felt an infinite pity for the forsaken clod. “Poor wretch, you have been kicked down the last step, now rest, for you are free from the restless spirit that prompted all your misfortunes!”

I actually shed the first tears that fell over its fate, then closed my eyes to the sad picture. It was no longer any part of me and I looked upon it as some foreign substance. I had now no power of volition. I could not will to see or know anything. I tossed upon the restless sea of immortal consciousness without wish or thought for the future. All longing was for the fabled stream of Lethe, where I might sink and banish thought forever.

Suddenly a voice, strangely familiar, sounded low and sweet before me. The words were, “Blessed, thrice blessed is the heir of immortal life, for its joys are sure and steadfast.” Immediately I was a boy again, for it was Lucretia’s voice; and her face, calm and smiling, was before me.

“Look before you, not behind. Light is here. Father is here. Home is here. Reality is here. The fruition of every pure aspiration is found here and the solution of every human mystery. The beacon light is ahead, come forward!”

I LOOKED, I gazed bewildered through what seemed a long vista of wavering, glimmering objects. I distinctly saw light, warmth and a cheerful scene in the distance, but, trying to gather my weak spiritual powers into thought, I gasped: "I have lost my jewels! I cannot go that way for I left them! I must go back,—back into darkness and storm, for I left them uncared for. I did not love them enough when I was with them, and I must not leave them!" You see, the human was stronger than the spiritual within me; and with all my former obstinacy, I persisted in going in the wrong direction.

Now, do not imagine that I still remain unpersuaded to be a spirit instead of a mortal man, for stern facts are more stubborn than fiction. I would still like to be back, but I am across, *volens volens*, so I tip my hat, spell good night, step down and out.

March sixth, eighteen hundred, eighty-one.

Concluded.

AFTER many devious stumblings through the dark regions of doubt and despair, my storm-tossed spirit came out into the light or perception of a new scene. It was not belonging purely to either sphere, but a blending of the two, as death is the door upon the threshold of which my spirit still stood, no longer dwelling in the lower and repudiating the higher. I looked and saw, first a crowd of people. Conspicuous to my vision was my father, (*our* father) and all the rest of the dear departed friends assembled together. Need I say I was overwhelmed with joy and surprise? They all seemed so natural and yet so changed!

I was so exalted by this new view, that I forgot for the time to look back on the other side of the door. Per-

haps it would have been better had the door been closed, for I saw a sad knot of dear earthly faces, gathered around—what? An open grave! A polished box stood beside it, containing the former husband and father, the mortal arm paralyzed—the protector lost; buried from sight beneath the summer sky!

Look on this picture, then on that. Lo, the contrast, yet so closely allied! The grave is the dividing point, or rather, the *link connecting two shifting worlds, each reaching out in a long line of love and remembrance.*

T. B. HAMMOND.

YES, we are “far away” *yet very near!* Absent and then present in the space of a thought! Invisible, yet a real, tangible presence; dead yet alive, our existence is dual to you and our life a mystery. Aye, all life, either earthly or spiritual, is equally mysterious, and will be a lesson for eternal Time to unravel.

I am saddened by my children and their unsettled manner of life, but when the “heavens and earth are rolled together like a scroll,” and time itself is lost in the immeasurable firmament of Eternity, then, ah *then*, it will make no difference I suppose!

T. B. H.

THE scene which greets me here is a purely domestic one, of which I love to claim one happy unit; yet, can I justly claim anything earthly? Cut off by fate, I have nothing left but the ghostly ashes of a broken, desolate home to contemplate. Yet if the family must be scat-

tered, I trust, as in the present instance, they may become units in the circle where Fate drops them. After all this may prove a wise, good ordinance and why should they not be all right?

Young, happy-tempered, docile and affectionate, they must surely win a way. For proper unfoldment I will trust all to the fullness of time and to the infinite law of Love. . Eternal gratitude to you all.

From the broken spirit of

T. B. HAMMOND.

MY Dear Wife and Children: I remember you with invisible presence and immortal love and tenderness. Your circle looks lonely and broken tonight, yet each link removed there makes the chain longer across the opposite side. Death diminishes the list on one side only to add to the other, thus decreasing the attractions of the physical world in a two-fold ratio. All are well on this side. The glories of the spirit world are immeasurable, and the rich gift of immortal life from the Divine Author, a pearl of priceless value.

Benton is happy since he sees his family contented and in good condition. He says he is not partial to their childhood being passed in Sadsbury, yet thinks it preferable to continued shifting from place to place.

Live with the sunlight of a great inheritance bathing your aged temples, my dear wife, and let it lend dignity to your closing life, and peace and benignity to your ripening spirit. *Love and smile on all and the sunshine will be reflected back with redoubled radiance into your own spirit.* I give my loving benediction to you all. Good night.

JOHN HAMMOND.

MY Dear Little Maude: There is a balm in every affliction; a joy in every sorrow; a sweet drop in every bitter draught. I am glad to see you here tonight. You look beautiful to me, your fond father. My first born and pride! I surround you with my blessings. Always remember me. Try to do what you think I would approve as nearly as you can. Ralph is happy, for he is asleep. Remember his father to him.

Try always to be a kind, elder sister to each of the little ones, and you will find many treasures in the incoming life before you. I do not mean gold or silver, but *something which shines bright when all such dross is forgotten*. Now do you know what I mean?

Good bye.

T. B. HAMMOND.

February, eighteen hundred, eighty-one.

TO Maude: Tell Maude her father bids her to think of the future, not of the past. Let the memory of her parents, as they once were, be sacred, not bitter. I add my blessing, but I do not wish to speak to her often for fear of clouding her young life. My love is constantly around her. Good night and good bye. From her father.

T. B. HAMMOND.

I AM with you tonight, and see my children grown toward manhood's and womanhood's estate, and apparently doing well. I feel inexpressibly grateful that their life-lines have fallen as kindly for them as possible under the circumstances. Had I been spared I might have done much

yet we are all pupils under the supreme laws of life—Experience and God's great Universe,—and I have had my influence over the sphere of thought which has ordered their early lives.

T. B. HAMMOND.

September, eighteen hundred, ninety-three.

YES Sophia,* we are still one. And shall not the heart respond to the head, and shall the head live without the vital current which flows from the heart? Can a body be builded without a spirit? The spirit must have a world, or continued life in this world. And I, Nelson, am waiting for my dear friend and companion to believe, receive, and recognize. I have time. I can wait.

HORATIO NELSON HAMMOND.

TO Grandmother: Our home is waiting, be patient and hopeful and cheerful, like one just waiting for the first through train to bear one safely home. When the silent Messenger calls to bring you up higher, I shall be just beyond, and our meeting will be more joyful than our earthly life ever conceived or dreamed of.

Strive to make the sunset of life beautiful, lovable and holy, in view of the glorious dawning of life immortal.

JOHN HAMMOND.

Eighteen hundred, seventy-eight.

* NOTE.—To Sophia, his wife, who was not a believer in Spiritualism.

WE are united—your father and mother! No intervening years divide; no gray hairs mar; no grave yawns between. All that is past! The bitterness that is ever found in the last drops of poor suffering human life has been tasted, and the bitter portion changed, in the twinkling of an eye, to a scene of glory, shining with the effulgence of the second (or spiritual) birth.

With memory strengthened, and youth renewed, we meet at will and mutual desire. Our earth-lives are past. The scroll is sealed by the angel of physical dissolution; and our love, sympathy and memory still remain with you; to which we add our immortal blessing.

Your affectionate father,

JOHN HAMMOND.

June eighteenth, eighteen hundred, eighty-two.

DEAR Children: I cannot say much, only *I am across at last and find life here, without the body, a reality.* No longer a doubt or mystery about it. All is plain to me now; and I am glad to be relieved of the weak, worn old body, and glad the rest of you are rid of it too.

I always tried to do the best I could and make no trouble, and now I give you all my best wishes and will try to help you when your turn comes to suffer and to die. It is a hard ordeal to pass, but it is quickly lost when fairly over. We are happy together, you know all that!

Your mother,

ELIZA HAMMOND.

June twenty-eighth, eighteen hundred, eighty-two.

DEATH is only a change from the old life to a better, fuller life. It is true, children. I did use to doubt. Now I know you are all in the doubting stage. Never mind! you will know in time. Benton is here, but does not come to communicate. Says he does not know what is best for you. I remember you all my children.

ELIZA HAMMOND.

February eleventh, eighteen hundred, eighty-three.

THESE words and words, and no deeds, do not suit me. I always liked deeds better than professions, but when you go crosswise of two worlds you cannot carry anything back but professions and protestations of yourself, about yourself, and your surroundings. That is why I do not like to communicate often. It does not seem to pay you for your time and trouble.

I used to get so tired. I do not tire now. I speak to tell Sally and the children that I remember them, but I can only speak words of cheer; I cannot do as I once did. I must leave that for the rest of you. Benton, father, and the girls all send love across from our sunny home to you,—pale, weary sojourners on the slippery receding shores of Time!

ELIZA HAMMOND.

I CANNOT say much. I remember you all with much love, and thank you all for your kindness to me in sickness and old age. Father is with me. He seems as perfectly natural to me as if we had never been parted a day, only he seems more as he did when he was younger.

The children are more changed to me than father is. One thing I have found out, young folks change faster here than older ones. I like the change from that life to this. I had everything to gain and nothing to lose but pain and distress; and I could do nothing for any of you. My earthly work is done, I guess, for I cannot do much at this stand-tipping.

ELIZA HAMMOND.

I AM with you often; not so much as formerly, yet have by no means forgotten my friends on earth; and I welcome with ever-increasing pleasure each one as he comes across. As the band diminishes there, I see it increase here; and soon expect to see the Reaper bring you all in, ripe and sound; for Time has planted many furrows in your brow, and gray hairs multiply, giving many proofs of the ingathering which shall come with that "happy day," that glorious awakening to a fuller, purer life.

JOHN HAMMOND.

I DO not come on "the wings of the morning," but on the darker shades of the night. It is a question whether I yet belong to the "angel band" the old song proclaims. I know nothing about "the arms of God" yet, or any of the "Heavenly host," that "angels" are supposed to understand, but I remember and love the old time-worn

melody, that my feeble voice once joined in, striving to call down the "good angels."

Well, you all know my identity! I am thrice glad to meet you here. Many, many of the dear ones are here if you could but see with a spiritual vision. They are "faces you do not see" yet you shall see us "more." Faith and myself join in the assurance. I might tell you who is here, but will leave it for faith to complete, as Thelston is tired.

"Brother rest. Labor, be at rest. Grief, let not thy voice be heard." Pain is the expression of inharmony of body or mind.

Query: If you cannot give us the names will you tell us how many of our friends are present?

Answer: Will I number the stars or commence at the third foot of this wavering stand and count upwards the links of a never ending chain that leads upward, nobody knows where? Take Sarah, Ephraim and me for the lower link, the link that swings the foot. Rest again.

LIBBIE.

HOW are you old, old women? I hardly knew your faces, they are so "winkled and wunkled."* I have not a gray hair! What *makes* you so old? Are you cross? Or care worn? Well, when I have a chance I will help smooth them all out! And "Little Addie" is spirited away* I think. She has inherited her father's physical. Love and remembrance to all.

RUTH E. HAMMOND.

* NOTE.—She quotes her brother, Benton (T. B. Hammond) who in his childhood greatly feared an old gentleman, because he was so "winkled and wunkled."

** "Little Addie" had grown to middleaged womanhood.

FROM the flower-crowned heights of the Better Land we come, to breathe soft words of love and remembrance. You are all changed since I lived and was in your midst; yet in spirit you are the same,—unchangeable! So am I. Time, death and birth into spiritual life can work no rapid change in the individual spirit. Time brings gradual unfoldment, yet the indwelling identity is forever the same, unchanged and unchangeable.

You knew me as “sister Ruth,” and though the name fell with the external body that gave it birth, yet I am essentially the same in spirit, with all the memories of the old life still clustering around me; and when I come back among you, the old name falls naturally from my unchanged spirit, though so long divested of the outer garment that bore that honored title. I have never walked among literal “palm trees,” yet, oh dear! What have I done? Or rather what have I *not* done? Everything, yes everything; and alas! nothing that I can tell in the English language. That is why I cannot write letters to you. I remember my native tongue, but I no longer love it; it cramps me back to my old original self too much and I never was bookish. It’s like trying to wear a pair of baby shoes.

Now I know you are glad, happy to excuse me, and let me seek my proper element, for I am your loving sister Ruth and that love never cramps me, although the letters do. Did you not want to hear from me this time? We cannot all write with the same pen at once. I really believe the last arrivals have crowded me out. You know I always would go anywhere “without an invitation.”

RUTH.

Eighteen hundred, eighty-two.

WE are always with you, ever faithful, ever sure, although you do abuse (?) us sometimes. Yet our weapons are spiritual and must prevail over the puny arm of flesh. Give us time, for time alone must destroy the body while it strengthens the spirit.

Don't think you can put us down, for if the earth should be "melted with fervent heat" and the firmament of starry suns be "rolled together" like a scorched newspaper, still we will live on unquenched. Don't you dare to doubt us because you live in a perishable city, for we dwell in a "city not made by hands, eternal in the Heavens." "Ears have ye, yet hear not." We are "born again." "They that are born of the spirit are spirit."

LIBBIE.

WE come, an invisible presence, drawn by this little concourse of earthly friends. A band of fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, children, friends and lost companions, each bearing an offering of love and good will for some loved one left behind in the shadow of time. You never think toward us, or yearn for us in vain. We always respond, be the number ever so little. We measure the earnest desire, the holy aspiration, the pure love and faith. All else to us is dross.

We can only utilize the power we control; only make use of such implements as are within our reach.

JOHN HAMMOND.

January twenty-fifth, eighteen hundred, eighty-five.

MY Dear Children: Again we come from the highlands of our second life to clasp hands with you across the boundary of spiritual and material life.

What may I do? I would strengthen your faith, touch your waning earthly love with a spark from the altar of eternal Love and make your life glow with that divinity which is your birth-right.

I am your father still, though suns, centuries and worlds should intervene.

JOHN HAMMOND.

June twenty-sixth, eighteen hundred, eighty-seven.

*Immortality o'er sweeps
All pains, all tears, all time, all fears—and peals
Like the eternal thunders of the deep
Into my ears this Truth—Thou liv's't for ever!*
—Byron.

MESSAGES FROM
EDMUND AND PHYLINDA GASTON

AND THEIR CHILDREN

Imogene and Ephraim

ALSO

THE EXPERIENCE OF EPHRAIM

In passing from earth to spirit-life.

We Come Not From Ethereal Homes.

We come not from ethereal homes
Which fancy shapeless rears;
But from the near unfading domes
In wisdom's shining spheres.

We come not from the silent mound
Beneath the marble urn;
But with immortal being crowned,
From realms of light return.

We come not at the trumpet note,
Nor deep toned organ's high refrain,
But near the loving soul we float
Drawn by attractions golden chain.

We come not 'neath the stately spire,
Where earth taught clergy on the page
O'er which they labor to confer
New life to truths grown dull with age.

But inspirations child we seek
And whisper truths unknown before,
And kindle up the glowing cheek
With sparks from wisdom's untaught lore.

IMOGENE GASTON.

HERE is a deep unfathomed fountain of inspiration within every soul, whose pure and effulgent waters attract and reflect the divine rays of Truth and Wisdom and will, ultimately, flood the spirit in a halo of holy light.

IMOGENE.

LOVE and good will toward all men sweeten every bitter drop in the cup of human life. Cheerfulness promotes health, spiritually and physically. Smiles are the sunlight of Heaven. Heaven is not a place but a condition. It may be here as well as elsewhere. If not within your own souls it is not anywhere.

Query: Do not the surroundings have an influence upon the spirit?

Answer: In some degree, but the soul (or spirit) is the centre of all conditions, just as each sun forms the centre of its own solar system and gives light and coloring to the planets that revolve around it.

IMOGENE.

“CHARITY suffereth long and is kind.” By this is meant that broad, universal Love which looks with pitying eye o’er all the unhappy passions of inharmonious man. Remembering then how much suffering must be

borne before the wrong is overcome, strive to subdue all rebellious feelings.

I. G.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-three.

WE are here, happy, joyful to greet you home again, yet we do not forget to pity each sorrow and strive to soothe each separate sadness. There is a balm for all human weakness. The world is bright and beautiful. Jewels of love and kindness are scattered all around you. If you will open your spirits to the benign influence, all may be well with each and all of you

I. G.

ON the happy festal days when you meet in the social circle to enjoy the dear intercourse of kindred, remember there is another invisible circle hovering around rejoicing in your every joy, and sorrowing over every cloud that darkens your spiritual horizon. That band is composed of the dear departed ones. A father, a mother, a daughter and sisters would unite on this holy day to greet you with a renewal of love, thus drawing you nearer the realm of spirit, where we may all be united—an unbroken family in the beautiful home above!

IMOGENE.

THERE is no period of time when the spirit of man is so inaccessible to spiritual influx, as during the first bitterness of grief at the loss (by death) of a dearly

loved friend. The spirit seems to sink, stultified for a season, within a gloomy void, where its own divine character in sacred, silent communion with the indwelling God of the universe, is forced to seek consolation from its own interior Being. It finally emerges from the darkness of sorrow, purified and resigned; thus fully prepared to receive intelligence from the higher world.

Thus, my friends, would I bring you joyful tidings in the morning which succeeds the night of darkness, from the dear spirit* so recently released from the shores of Time. She is as happy a new-born spirit as ever I knew. Many of her little foibles sprang from a weak physical condition from which she is now entirely released. She has no regrets for her departure. Simply says had she been warned of the change that occurred, she would have visited you all. You will soon hear from her personally. Good night.

IMOGENE.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-seven.

†
MY Dear Friends: The pleasures of the spirit are subtle and fill the entire being. In man's transitory life, easily thrown off the balance, a false word, thought, or idea, often mars the spirit's harmony. I would fain give you a precious pearl from the store-house of wisdom; but I can only point them out. It is for you to sow and garner and reap the reward of your own labor and diligence.

Do not get discouraged and faint by the wayside. The journey of life is often toilsome, but it is only through mortal life that the crown of immortality is attained—that boon to which all nature is aspiring. There is a rich

* Libbie Hammond, who died very suddenly of heart failure.

reward for the lowliest laborer and the most ignorant, if honest, in the bright scenes of immortal life. I speak of what I know by actual experience. "Straight is the gate and narrow the way, that leads to eternal life" and all mankind must walk therein.

Live more for the spiritual and less for the external and future generations will reward you.

IMOGENE.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-eight.

BELIEVE on! we will help you in every season of trial. We strive to strengthen the bonds of fraternal affection, that, united, you may assist and save each other. Not from universal ruin, but simply from many of the little, petty ills that destroy so much of human happiness.

Heaven is not a haven of rest. Neither is it a place fitted up for pure spirits. It is simply a *condition of harmonious love; of perfect trust in the Supreme Power* that governs the universe; and a well grounded Principle that is entirely impervious to every artifice with which temptation may seek to stain the spotless robe of the spirit. This condition may be attained as well on earth as in spirit-life. Strive for it, it is more precious than are earthly treasures. Yours in love.

IMOGENE.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-eight.

THE shifting scenes of time and circumstance bring me here again, to speak in behalf of your whilom little daughter* now grown to full and complete stature—a tall,

* Alma, only daughter of Hon. and Mrs. A. Gaston.

fair maiden with yellow curly hair, that winter winds or summer sun has never deepened to a darker shade. She sees many other bright-eyed maidens around you and is attracted here much by their songs and merry laughter and wishes very much to be one among you. At least she wants to be remembered. May her memory be a living, unfailing source of peace and joy to your trusting, believing souls; and make you tender and kind to the young and undeveloped around you. She retains only the color of the eyes; the fair, unsullied complexion and tint of hair. All else is changed. You would scarcely know her, unless aided by spiritual perception, which will certainly be yours, when released from the physical.

IMOGENE.

THE happy meeting of friends long separated is a pure and fitting emblem of that higher and holier reunion of kindred spirits in the eternal home. Knowledge is the key that unlocks the human soul and fills it with the genial light of a warm and living faith. Then know that I, Ephraim H. Gaston, still live and enjoy a real individualized existence, entirely distinct from all earthly form. *I can*, and do visit and love you; still join in the family gathering with even more than my former interest; although unseen and unheard by your outward senses, yet my presence is tangible and felt by you all.

EPHRAIM H. GASTON.

May, eighteen hundred, sixty-seven.

DEAR Brother: I am anxious to impart some thoughts to you and through your means, to the rest of the dear loved ones on earth. I feel and appreciate your great desire to hear from me and will respond as far as lies in my power, but I find this is more difficult than I anticipated. There are few mediums pure and unselfish enough to be reliable messengers for intercommunion; but thanks to the kind Father of Light, there are a few noble ones. And is not their work a glorious one?

Do you desire to know how I feel and am employed? I am much happier and better satisfied than when I lived on earth. I felt a void for some time because I missed my home society; but now I am employed in improving. I feel serene in the knowledge that we shall all be united soon, if we keep our affections warm and bright. Love is the only bond between spirit and spirit. All others are mortal and perish with the body; this alone is deathless.

I realized the whole process of dying as I had ever desired to do. It was without spiritual suffering, and the old body was so worn out by previous pain, that it gave way without a struggle.

When I found myself actually free and looking down silently upon my now deserted body, and saw my dear friends sorrowing so tenderly around it, oh, how I longed to speak to them, that they might know I was still so near! But while I had reached the much desired haven of repose, I found I could no longer speak to, or even be seen by those dearest to me. It seemed so strangely unnatural to be so close to them, and yet be wholly powerless and unable to communicate with them. There, before me, lay the silent form through which I had so lately spoken and acted considering it a part of myself almost. For a mo-

ment I felt a strong desire to return to it, with all its pains, for the sake of speaking to those I loved.

“This is the bitterness of death; Take me away, I cannot bear the scene!” I cried. In a moment the familiar room with its loved occupants had vanished and, for the first time, I realized the presence of spiritual beings like myself. One near me I knew immediately to be Aunt Lucinda by her resemblance to mother. I felt comforted by her presence, she seemed so good and loving. Then Grandmother Gaston met me with such a smile of welcome that I seemed a child again, so fresh did the memory of my early days come back to me in her dear face.

Many others also came to welcome me. Among them our spirit sister, Imogene.

At last a bright, intelligent spirit, whom I felt at once to be a superior being, came forward and said: “Is there no one else you desire to see?” Then I thought of Alma, and there she stood sure enough, looking so natural, her head leaning on her little hand and a shy smile on her face. She was looking at me from the corner of her eyes, just as she used to do. She is a beautiful child and I could but wish that I had such a one to meet me here.

It was a number of days, nearly a week, before I was permitted, or even desired to visit the scenes of my home life, the parting had indeed been so painful. I felt I had passed the boundary where I could no longer associate with them; and the thought of seeing them in sorrow, without the power of speaking, was dreadful. I derived much comfort and strength when I first visited Arthur and was able to draw nearer to him than to the others. Not that I loved him more, but the view he took of my death coincided more with mine and there is spiritual harmony between us. Then, too, he felt my death to be good, rather than evil. My spirit derived strength from him and I felt comforted and happy within his influence.

When at last I visited my dear wife and mother—those two so closely united to my affections—I felt a real glow of tender emotion. When I saw their spirits clothed in the

shining light of resignation, and yet their love as pure and deep as before, I felt a glow of love and joy in their presence which I cannot describe. Gustie, not even death can separate us, so long as you remain true to my love and memory. I am with you much and derive much comfort, guarding your foot-steps. I know of your sorrow and loneliness, and sympathize earnestly with you, but brighter days will dawn for you even while on earth. Will you remember me in joy the same as in sorrow? Our love is now the only tie which binds us, and let us keep it pure, unsullied and enduring.

Dear father and mother, I know you will remain unchanged. Though you love your other children ever so dearly, they will not occupy my place in your affections; and I am glad it is so. Trust me, I shall not forget to give you a warm return; and when you are done with the scenes of earth, I will meet you with joy, beyond the Valley of Death.

EPHRAIM.

July, eighteen hundred, sixty-four.

FATHER, Mother, Arthur, Grover and all: I am here, just across the narrow way. So near that my impalpable touch may rest upon your unconscious brows; happy in your presence yet not without alloy, for you see me not.

I have been learning many of those coveted lessons in wisdom, which my brief, broken, earthly life denied me. The spirit here revels in an infinite variety of means of improvement,—all he or she is capable of enjoying. You must know I am delighted with such a life. It exceeds my wildest flights of fancy.

Aunt Lucinda is one of my dearest friends and teach-

ers of the Christian virtues, of which she is a shining example. Good night.

EPHRAIM.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-nine.

LIFE has been called a vapor. I would say Physical Life is indeed a dark vapor swept away vanquished by Death, leaving the real life free and untrammelled. Death is not entirely like the infolding of a door to an interior compartment. To me it was more like the exit from a miserable, rayless old tenement into the free pure air of a fair spring morning, yet strange to say, I longed for a time to return to it, shattered as it was, for the sake of those I loved.

Time and broader Light however have purified my earthly loves, and freed me from all the shackles of the world, where my body was born, suffered and died without my volition or consent. All that is worthy in me, and in my love, lives purified—immortalized! The rest is swept away with the vapor.

Now do you believe this is Ephriam? If so, it is well. If not it is no matter. I have but made a beginning, yet it must be my ending for this time. Immortal love to all.

EPHRAIM.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-nine.

I LOVE to communicate, yet what can I say that will profit you, beyond words of love and remembrance? You know such words grow stale and pointless. I have

seen Alvin,* he is not yet quite reconciled to the change. He clings to earthly things but will soon be O. K.*

Arthur, I am nearer and more dependent upon you for strength and comfort, than any other earthly friend. Don't become entirely absorbed in business or family affections and fail your spirit brother, thus losing your influence in the upper world. Influence is what man strives for, you know.

EPHRAIM.

Eighteen hundred, seventy.

I AM here brother, still rejoicing in your joys, and sorrowing in your sorrows, unless enabled by a broader faith to see real good in a seeming evil. All wrong is right, not understood. The spiritual view is not a material one. The mind when free to act untrammelled, will work itself clear of all impurities. Be not absorbed in any temporal pursuit or pleasure. *Strive at all times to follow your highest conceptions of Duty and Right* and you will finally rise above all the shafts of malice and the clouds of Material Sense.

Welcome good mother. Good night

EPHRAIM GASTON.

Eighteen hundred, seventy-eight

MY Brothers: As one I loved you. Love and appreciate each other while you may. Counsel and strengthen one another for the conflict. Life should be

* Alvin Congdon, whose letters appear later.

** Ephraim was a telegrapher. O. K. meaning "all right," is a term used by operators.

something more than a mere pleasant holiday, or a feverish grasping after worldly emolument. It should be the birth-place of noble, unselfish aspirations and struggle for spiritual growth.

EPHRAIM.

Eighteen hundred, seventy-nine.

I AM glad you seek me brother Arthur. It helps to make me stronger to associate with my earthly friends. I may be more advanced spiritually than you are, yet you are attaining a strength, by your physical life, that my short, blighted earth life can never hope to bring. Strength and wisdom combined form powerful concomitant levers for pushing us upward and onward. So you see I am not so much ahead as you thought. If I can give you spiritual knowledge you may give back strength of character by longer contact and battling with the forces of the physical world.

E. H. G.

THE river rolls rapidly onward toward the sea and the swift current of your earthly lives will soon bring you all with me into the free, open expanse of spirit life.

I await you still. Though I do not hover around my earthly idols so much as formerly, yet I love to visit and mark the progress of my old-time companions and early loves, none more earnest and steadfast than those formed in boyhood days. And I love to watch you pass the milestones that bear you nearer home to Heaven and me.

I see father and mother much and often.

E. H. G.

MY children, I am here. A mother's presence still! Though the form I used to wear is yours, (or mine), no longer, yet I am among you. Love one another as when you were my little children playing around my knee. Live worthily. Deal justly and kindly by each and all. Be pleasant and friendly to all your neighbors. Try to be happy yourselves and you will be sure to impart happiness to others.

If I can never manifest my presence satisfactorily during your natural life, it is a consolation that I may meet you all at the dawning of spiritual life, just as I met you all at the birth of physical life, with love and tenderness. That is all.

My language was broken and imperfect. I meant that my spirit was with you often, though my body is gone.

Your mother,

PHYLINDA GASTON.

Eighteen hundred, seventy-eight.

DEAR Friends and Children: I am glad to meet so many of you here. I hope you may be very happy together, and create a friendly, genial, gentle influence, that will invite and attract many of each side of life.

Aunt Eliza, I see and sympathize with you often and much. Do you ever think of "Linda?" I was the most fortunate in not having to wait the summons so long as you. I am pleased that father has gone to see Schuyler. It will do them both good. Tell him to go and see Eunice some time.

I will not fatigue you longer with my little nothings. If I could read to you a clear title of my spirit-self, you would find unbounded love and good wishes for all my

friends, children, grandchildren dear, and my kind old companion more than all others.

Yours,

PHYLINDA GASTON.

Eighteen hundred, seventy-nine.

YES, I am with you all and bless you with a mother's blessing. But my words are few; my words are weak; and incredulity is strong. False sophistry weaves its web of doubt and unbelief around nearly all I would reach. What can I do but watch and wait for the uplifting of the veil, thin though it is, and breathe a silent blessing?

Your living, loving mother,

PHYLINDA GASTON.

Eighteen hundred, eighty.

THE shady side of life is past and all is clear and plain to me now. As I was satisfied with you there so am I better satisfied now—more full of joy here with all my old-time friends. I want to give you all the evidence I am able to cheer you along for we are together—your mother and I—parents to you all.

EDMUND W. GASTON.

January, eighteen hundred, eighty-one.

ARTHUR: Father wanted to tell you that "Donnie" knew him—had not forgotten him, and was glad to see him. That alone almost made him glad to be here

instead of there. He says Donnie is prettier now than ever. Father and mother both love him so much;—and I too, as much as a childless man is capable of loving. I still call myself a “man.” All honor to so proud a title!

Your brother,

EPHRAIM.

January thirtieth, eighteen hundred, eighty-one.

THELSTON: We come to give you a little word of greeting, your father and I. Our home is now here, and our interest in life and its changes centers here in our new and broader sphere; yet we shall never forget the little nest of boys and the one girl we left in the life behind us—left to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of their first estate, then to join us in this higher, holier life, the glory of which is beyond comparison in earthly scenes or human language. So you see that while earth is fair to you, it is dark and uncomely to us, and love alone can attract us back over the thorny surface. Yet we do visit you all often, I assure you, and love and care for you still.

Lovingly your spirit parents,

PHYLINDA AND EDMUND GASTON.

Eighteen hundred, eighty-one.

DEAR Children and Friends: I cannot speak in flowing sentences, but I am “mother” still and if my love and best wishes could bring the coveted blessing, the incoming year would shower upon you all, the choicest treasures of health and happiness!

PHYLINDA GASTON.

MY Daughter, My Children: I cannot express to you how happy we are to see you all together again. It will do you all good to meet on the journey of mortal life and renew your childish affections. Be united as children even when your hair is white with age. Try to unite the simple love and faith of a child with the wisdom of riper years. Be harmonious and loving; live faithful and true, and, when you are done with time, you may meet death in peace, and be happy in the light of Eternity.

Your loving mother,

PHYLINDA GASTON.

WE come—a shining band from the approaching borders of the spirit land.

We do not change except as all “good folks” should change—and that is from good to better. (Now your mother smiles and says “They will think we are growing self-satisfied!”)

I do feel well satisfied with this side of life. When an old man wakes and finds himself suddenly made over—young again—he has good cause for praise. Don’t you think so?

Love and kind remembrance for all.

EDMUND AND PHYLINDA.

(We are hardly old enough to be “father” and “mother” to such old fellows as you are!)

January twenty-ninth, eighteen hundred, eighty-two.

THE light of a beautiful faith, founded on a knowledge of continued, unbroken life beyond the dark Valley, gilds even the most painful scenes of earth life with a

golden halo of hope and praise. As the brown earth contains within its dark, clammy mold, the promise of the ever varying verdure of spring, so the crude, barren spiritual *seance* bears the germ of humanity's highest hope made a living, certain reality; the mingling of the upper and lower life in one.

Do not be discouraged for we are with you alway, and never tire. Our presence is unseen, our joy hidden from the physical sense, yet are our spirits filled with joy and love unspeakable. Fathers and mothers are here, sisters, brothers and children, all smiling a happy welcome on some loved, earthly face. Why do you not meet oftener?

I have not much to induce me to return to your muddy sphere. It is no longer a home to me, even in name, since my worthy progenitors have passed into the skies. I am

EPHRAIM.

CHILDREN, Friends and Neighbors: This would indeed be a happy and glorious meeting if we could be seen as we see; if you could know us as we know you; but this is not according to nature's design and we must all submit.

I am glad to see so many of you together, but I have such dear friends with me where I am and feel such sweet pleasure in their society, that I have cut loose from the old, earthly bonds, and wait for you here, but do not follow you around over your human pathway. When I was human I trod the earthly path; now I am spirit, I have thrown off the shackles as unfit for further use.

Query: Can you not go to the Banner of Light free circle and communicate?

Answer. I do not desire it and could not probably if I tried. Imagine a greater crowd than could cover this whole earth, if they had bodily presence, and you can

form only a faint idea of the throng that gathers around a public medium.

E. W. G.

THE immortal world, (or the life which is yet to come to you), is filled with never-fading beauty. Then look forward to the incoming glory, rather than backward to lost hope and departed blessings. It is the nature of material pleasures to fade and grow pale as youth gives way to middle life, yet there should be a divine transfiguration in the real man; and as the material wanes the spiritual should continually brighten, until old age brings forth the new-born spirit into the light of a perfect spiritual existence.

This is from an identity known to you all as Ephraim. My earth life has almost faded, swallowed up as a past childhood, or state of imbecility. My love fraternal, and filial affection alone remain undimmed.

Ask Arthur if he remembers a conversation we had one Sunday in the house in the hollow on a then absorbing topic? What thinks he now of it? He is not sorry now that he heeded my counsel. I will say no more. He will know to what I refer.

(This last proved an excellent personal test to A. B. Gaston.)

BORNE on the electric chain of thought and desire, I am here to communicate to you; I whom you knew so recently as Ephraim in the flesh, now no longer Ephraim in the flesh, but Ephraim in spirit still. Since Arthur so earnestly desires it, I will say a few words to him.

Yes, Arthur, I was present when you were writing, as I always am when you are thinking of me and spiritually desire my presence, and I have derived much comfort and strength from visiting you; I can come into close communion with you when you are alone and unoccupied with worldly pursuits, but your surroundings are repellant to my nature, hence I visit you rarely unless alone. The hours of physical rest are more favorable to spirit communion than the others, and spiritual communications are given much more freely at night than during the day.

I am gradually shaking off the weakness and taint which clung to my inner man from its long association with physical disease. I feel happy and free, and think I am destined to a full realization of my highest aspirations for knowledge and all its attendant blessings. You are all dearer to me than ever, yet I am growing strong and self-reliant, and, with this development, the world and my former life recede to give place to the new and more beautiful life, which is dawning upon me.

EPHRAIM.

BROTHERS, when I see you striving along the path of middle life, moderately successful in its fruition, I feel something akin to sadness that I have lost the experience of a full, ripe earth life. *Appreciate it!* When I look back over my attainments I feel they are not so full as yours may be. The advantage is not all with the early death.

E. H. G.

Eighteen hundred, eighty.

HUMAN life begins with one single sentiment which is *self-love*. From this root we see many branches in later life, such as parental, fraternal, conjugal and paternal love, all springing from self, and more or less selfish in their nature. Human or earthly life in the maximum, scarce rises even to pure fraternal love; yet all the selfish loves must germinate, flourish and die, before the individualized spirit can bring forth an immortal, Universal Love, which must at last culminate in Love Divine.

The lesson designed is this: *Strive at least to cultivate fraternal love, else all spiritual instruction and communion were in vain and without fruit.*

Fraternally yours in spirit, once in flesh.

E. H. G.

Eighteen hundred, eighty.

I AM afar, yet near enough to see, love and remember. "What signifies a few days, years or ages, that circle away," as the old Reader says, "to an immortal state forever limitless?" Does not that thought tire your weaker, mortal part,—make your brain reel with its weight?

It is not wonderful that the mind of man often ignores the infinite and endless existence, especially when depending entirely upon reason, *for no human brain can grapple and conquer by reason alone. Faith, spiritual perception and love must aid in the work, or the mind becomes skeptical.*

E. H. G.

Eighteen hundred, eighty-one.

I COME. Am here to meet the expressed wish of one still very dear to me.

I am the same tonight yet greatly changed from that other night when my weak, worn spirit was released from the sick, dying body and I left you all behind to try new scenes in an untried life beyond the physical. The intervening years have brought changes to you all, yet more to me outside, than to you within the mortal. I have dropped many of my youthful foibles and replaced them with something better, I trust, yet every pure sentiment I then felt and understood, still lives with me bright and imperishable. *All of love that was purely spiritual*, is treasured as a part of my spirit's best possessions. All else perishes with the body, as *death refines, purifies the spirit*.

Blessed is that spirit who has a good stock on hand, when the Messenger comes to assort the bundle! I have said little, yet much.

EPHRAIM.

Eighteen hundred, eighty-one.

SUFFERING while in earth-life is nothing to the freed spirit. Its memory only is recalled like the dim outlines of a troubled dream. Yet *if the moral qualities of the spirit are enhanced by its influence*, it remains with us here a rich inheritance, a glorious reward that time and death can never destroy.

Let this lesson be with you to comfort and sustain you during the dark hours of physical suffering that must come to all.

E. H. G.

Eighteen hundred, eighty-two.

THELSTON, I am here,—not with the old-time pipe exactly but the “pipe of peace” and remembrance puffing around you with hearty good-will!

What are you all about here in Meadville? Are you becoming rich, and puffing pride from your pipes? Poor Atlantic! It seems like a deserted country when I look at it now. No more.

EDMUND W. GASTON.

November eighteenth, eighteen hundred, eighty-three.

*“Nor stony tower, nor walls of beaten brass,
Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron,
Can be retentive to the strength of Spirit.”*

—Shakespeare.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF

ALVIN CONGDON

In his Passing from Earth to Spirit-Life by Accident.

ALSO

MESSAGES FROM HIS BROTHER AND SISTER

Levi and Cordelia.

ALL hail, my friends, whom the meanderings of an earthly pilgrimage have brought again together.

Do you still see the Star of Faith and Hope brightly gleaming through the mists and clouds, which ever attend the unfolding of the immaterial spirit from the material form? The cloud and the storm, are as necessary conditions for the germinating grain, as the genial atmosphere and the warm sunshine.

Apply this grand law of nature to every mental storm which arises over your spiritual horizon.

CORDELIA.

Eighteen hundred, fifty-nine.

PHYSICAL suffering and earthly trials will soon be over, then will your spirit rise where the narrowness of worldly ambition will be lost in a nobler field of labor, and a clearer view of the best interest and happiness of the soul. All the grasping covetousness with which man is perplexed, when viewed here, appears like the fretting of a child for a gilded toy.

LEVI CONGDON.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-three.

MY Friends: Though I am just across the river, I am very glad to bid you good cheer and that is all I am able to do. When I pass beyond all troubles in the valley, I will give you my experience. Be faithful to your belief.

ALVIN CONGDON.

January, eighteen hundred, seventy.

“Spirits with easy intercourse pass to and fro.”—Milton.

The Experience of Alvin Congdon

MY Dear Friends: I am with you in spirit, as near as when my bodily presence formed one of the mystic circle in the past. I purpose giving you a simple sketch of my first impressions after crossing the dark river of death.

The first sensation I experienced was a rapid and whirling motion in utter darkness and awful silence. The din of a railway depot was thus, in the twinkling of an eye as it were, exchanged for the dark valley and shadow of death.

When the vibrations ceased and I became quiet again, I saw a faint light; and soon a form appeared in the dim twilight that now surrounded me and, taking me by the hand, said in a clear voice: “Come up higher, my brother, into the light and sunshine of the new life that is just dawning upon you.”

“Cordelia!” I said, for I knew her instinctively, without thinking of anything strange or unearthly connected with the vision. “Where am I? What has happened?” I asked. “When shall I continue my journey? Where is the train and when does it start?” and many more incoherent questions.

My brother, have no regrets; Leave the Past, turn to the Light! Do not mourn, that you have thus suddenly been called from the immaterial and fleeting life, to real abiding existence—that the fading garment of mortality has been torn off by accident, only to be exchanged for the shining robe of immortality. Come forward to the light of your new home!”

Much more she said that I cannot tell you, but I could not understand her. I fancied she was asking me to choose

between earth and spirit-life. So I told her "no," that when I had accomplished my journey and finished my earthly work, I would come gladly, but I must now go back."

Accordingly we parted company, and I sought the train and silently took my seat in the car. Everything appeared strangely unnatural. I looked upon everything with a new interest, for I saw the interior as distinctly as the exterior. No one noticed me, and I justly concluded that I was not seen by any one. I could not understand my clairvoyant sight or my invisible presence. I felt sure I was myself, unchanged, although others did not seem disposed to recognize the fact. After the conductor had passed me without question, I spoke to my nearest fellow-passenger in regard to the matter and saw, to my astonishment, that my conversation was entirely unheeded! I was bewildered and unhappy and made no more attempts to talk with anyone.

Suddenly I was in Vineland! I scarcely know how. Yet surely the place looked familiar enough to be no deception. I flew through the streets, met some of my old friends and shouted forth my welcome, but they neither looked at, nor spoke to me. I went to my old boarding-place and entered unbidden; bolts and locks opened for me, as for Peter and John of ancient time. I now exerted every known means in my power to manifest my presence, but without avail. Occasionally their thoughts rested upon me for a moment, then some passing event would erase the impression. I know not how long a time I spent there. It did not occur to me to measure time, my mind was so perplexed; I only know I felt miserably unhappy. The visit was not what I had expected.

All at once I felt there was trouble at home and immediately formed a resolution to start back at once.

"Yes," I thought, "they will be glad to see me come home so soon; it will be a pleasant surprise for Myra and mother; probably they are mourning my absence now."

There was comfort in this assurance and I sped on,

feeling instinctively that I no longer needed the aid of railroads to carry me homeward. I floated on through space, I know not how, propelled by some invisible power, but I was satisfied, for I felt conscious that I was homeward bound. A faint light surrounded me. Suddenly I heard the sound of weeping and knew that I was there.

“Mother! Myra!” I cried, but the voice of wailing alone replied.

A spiritual blindness for a time enveloped everything in darkness and I prayed earnestly for light. Remember, the light of the sun was now of no avail to me. But light came at last and I cannot describe how I was startled, when I saw the image of myself,—my body—lying before me, stark and lifeless! Then and there, was I born into spiritual existence and full and complete consciousness. How much of my previous experience was a reality, I cannot determine, but what will follow I do surely know. All the events, thoughts, and motives of my past life, came thronging upon my now fully awakened spirit. I found myself in possession of a perfect memory of everything in connection with my earthly life, even to the minutest particular. With the old shell, perished the power of forgetting. I could have repeated my whole life-history without a break. I was an unseen, silent witness to that funeral; sitting in close and sympathetic connection with my dear ones, yet entirely unowned and unobserved by all; and I went to see my broken clay companion laid beneath the surface of its parent-earth.

I come now to a radical change in my spiritual experience. After the burial I did not return with my mourning family. I felt I needed a change. Looking upward for divine aid, I again saw Cordelia and many other spirit friends above and around me.

“Cordelia,” I said, “I have finished. I come to be guided to the light of my new home.”

Now language falters, for how can I describe a purely spiritual scene to unborn spirits? Ephraim was among the throng who met me on the borders of the spirit world.

Overjoyed was I to meet his shining face, and warmly did he welcome me. I felt all unworthy of spiritual being and spiritual society; and seeing this, they told me my *presence proved my worthiness*, since, in this world of reality, *there is no seeming*. It is entirely impossible for any one to reach a position which they are not qualified to fill.

Time with you, Eternity with me, rolls on, and I am satisfied, *happy even*, in the change. I now view the accident of my physical death as a wisely ordered event resulting in my spiritual good. The old body was nearly worn out and could have been of no more assistance to the development of the spirit; hence it was but an incumbrance.

In conclusion I will say: *If you would have a pleasant spiritual awakening; if you hope for peaceful visions in the hour of physical dissolution, your life on earth must be prudent and wise. Do not be forgetful of the destiny which awaits you, nor neglect your higher nature for sordid selfish pursuits.*

Tell the dear ones all this, and more. I visit, guard and love them, even more than when on earth.

Farewell,

ALVIN.

September, eighteen hundred, seventy.

ALL hail, my friends! There is beauty on both sides of life. Beauty there, for the fair body and well balanced brain, but beauty here for *every* eye to see and a path of progress for each individual spirit. None are exempt. The lowest and vilest will at last grow upward toward the Source of all knowledge and love.

ALVIN.

Eighteen hundred, eighty.

TIME has made many changes since I met with you some twenty years ago in the past, yet we are individually the same men and women now as then. Nature has robed and unrobed your spirits in new flesh garments since that time.—And mine? Well, I hope mine have changed, too, for the better. Time has written some marks of improvement upon my imperishable garments. I am Alvin. I dwell in the “Summer Land” in a home of my own, with many joys, such as I enjoyed among you all, only very much better, higher, purer, and above all, more enduring.

I think of you more frequently than you think of me. The difference is, I am in a world where spirit is paramount. You still live where matter wears the chief glory of existence.

ALVIN.

Eighteen hundred, eighty-one.

*Then let us fill this little interval, this pause
of life, with all the virtues we can crowd
into it..*

—Addison.

MESSAGES FROM
SARAH WYKOFF

By means of the Deaf and Dumb Alphabet.

QUERY: What and where is Heaven?

Reply: Heaven is where the spirit's best and highest affections centre. Yours may be in one locality, mine in another.

Let petty annoyances pass by you, as the idle wind, without thought or care. Persevere, be valiant in well doing, and the victor's laurels will spangle your new spiritual raiment with richest tracery of silver chastity, and golden lines of Duty well done.

To Addie from one who loves her well.

SARAH.

October, eighteen hundred, eighty-five.

A Thought Suggested by the Song: "Far Away."

WHEN our bodies die and our spirits are freed, we leave a magnetic chain or cord behind in every spirit who truly loves us wound fast around that staple by which we may ever return. And just so long as you keep this love pure and strong, we cannot be "far away."

If, however, you let the staple rust, decay and fall, then, oh then, the link is lost and we "soar away" indeed!

Moral. If you desire us keep the staple both bright and strong.

SARAH.

October, eighteen hundred, eighty-five.

WE always add to the *top* of our houses. We never build round the sides, or on the ground, but always *up*. We grow higher and higher like the boy's bean-stalk, till we get out of sight. This is the best way I can draw comparisons. With *us*, it is *growth* and *development*. Your buildings represent *money*, but in the spirit world, our buildings represent *mind-wealth*; and those who have only a small stock of mind-material, must be satisfied with a small house. A very small one indeed, represents the brain-culture of many a man who goes out of a large, beautiful "stone-front" there on earth, but as he grows in goodness, and in spirituality, he may enlarge it just as you enlarge by your larger stock of money. With us it must be *real worth*—money has no longer any value.

SARAH WYCOFF.

AN angel child* draws near, very near. He has fresh roses in his hand. He lives in the Summer-land where flowers bloom perpetually. See, he smiles, puts out his little hand and says, in baby language, "Papa sees me now." And truly we believe papa does see, in spirit and in truth, though no material-form greets the physical eye. Such meetings will keep alive his remembrance and love as nothing else could. He is beautiful and happy and learns rapidly.

It is nice to have jewels on earth and it is well to have one jewel beyond price set in the kingdom above to keep us in mind that there is a life beyond.

SARAH TO ARTHUR.

November fourth, eighteen hundred, eighty.

* Donald, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur B. Gaston. He is the child referred to in one of Ephraim Gaston's messages as "Donnie."

A Flower from the Sunny Side.

To Nellie.*

I saw your Father's garden, dear,
'Twas living green. While here and there
A flower upon its margin grew,
Of varied form and brilliant hue.

"Give Nell," said he, "a hollyhock,
I raised them from the same old stock
That round our smoke-house used to bloom,
Within our earthly garden home."

With scarlet leaves and golden cup,
Where sweet perfume comes welling up,
They stand in rows, on slender stalks,
And beautify your father's walks.

Go forth to some fair sunny spot
Upon the ground that holds your cot,
And plant his favorite flower there,
And guard the germ with tender care.

And when the stalks are filled with bloom,
And lade the air with rich perfume,
The flowers of love and faith shall fill
Your soul with sweeter fragrance still.

FATHER AND SARAH.

May tenth, eighteen hundred, eighty-one.

* "Sarah" assumed control of the medium one evening when she was alone with a sister (Mrs. Hannah Nichols), and her two daughters, the younger of which, Nellie, then a small child, had not been well enough to attend a children's party to which she had been invited. Sarah came, taught Nellie the symbols, and turned her disappointment into real pleasure by giving her the above message.

Couldst thou but soar on Faith's broad wing
 To yon bright spheres above;
 All passions base behind you fling,
 And robe yourselves in love;
 Then would celestial muse divine
 Thy pen's dull point inspire,
 Breathe heavenly truths in every line,
 Touched with seraphic fire.

SARAH.

A Wreath.

A wreath of flowers I bring to thee,
 Faith, Hope and Love and Charity
 Compose this garland rare.
 Around thy soul do thou entwine,
 And let it with thy thoughts combine
 This heavenly crown so fair!

The scarlet buds of Faith ne'er fade;
 Alike in sunshine and in shade
 Its petals will expand.
 The soul, with its pure fragrance fraught,
 Looks o'er the ills of life as naught
 But heralders of blessings, brought
 Forth by the Father's hand.

The golden flower of Hope reveals
 A mellow tinted light, which steals
 All sadness from the soul.
 All prospects dark are hid from view,
 Or covered with a roseate hue
 Which fills the soul with life anew,
 Its powers to unfold.

But ah! the blossoms of pure Love
 Spread o'er the wide expanse above
 That marks the Spirit-Home.
 To nature's emblem ever true,
 I dress the flowers of Love in blue,
 Or paint them in the glorious hue
 Which fills the heavenly dome.

When e'er its petals are unfurled,
 When e'er it spreads o'er all the world
 No room is left for strife.
 Stern war, in its pure fragrance dies,
 Oppression from its presence flies,
 Forgot the orphan's tears and sighs
 And all with joy is rife.

Next, Charity with spotless leaves,
 The gratitude of earth receives,
 Where e're its buds unite.
 O'er all men's faults it draws a veil,
 And only tells the pleasant tale
 Of virtue's deeds and love revealed,
 Upon its blossoms white.

These priceless ornaments entwine,
 And let them with thy being join
 And bloom forever fresh.
 Within the garden of the mind,
 Let their united beauties shine.
 Faith, Hope, Love, Charity, combined
 To draw forth all thy powers divine,
 Thy soul shall ever bless.

SARAH.

*The spirit of man which God inspired,
Cannot perish with this corporal clod.*

—Milton.

LITTLE SERMONS
BY
JAMES REED.

MY Dear Young Friends: Faith without works is dead. Strive to let the light of a pure faith shine forth in every word and work, that all around you may feel the influence of your manifold spiritual instructions! In domestic life you mean well, have true principles, but you are weak and easily thrown off your balance by the petty annoyances of every day life.

It is not the most important steps in life that most try a man's unwavering integrity and virtue, but the daily and hourly battling with the little adverse duties of the moment, when the spirit has grown weak and weary; when the guiding lights within the watch-towers of reason and conscience have been clouded by worldly selfishness and cares. In the former trials, the real man calls forth all the latent powers to aid him in the issue. In the latter, he is oft-times unguarded and becomes the victim of blind impulse, fancy or passions base. Guard against these pigmy, yet mighty evils, my children.

No more at present.

JAMES REED.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-seven.

ARE you not all messengers of the spirit? If you but strive to hear and heed the inward voice of the spiritual intuitions, its promptings will become more and more palpable to the interior senses without any gold or other earthly treasure. All physical nature is full of an invisible life-giving element, without which your bodies cannot live. You do not see it, yet it must be with you or

you perish physically. Even so the spirit must be sustained by invisible forces. By this means, if properly cultivated and understood, all may receive absolute knowledge without money and without price. The white-winged messengers are anxiously waiting and watching, in every household, for the first dawning of that recognition of their invisible power, which is so necessary to every human individualized existence, although unseen or unknown.

THERE is a purpose shown forth in all created things, —some beneficent design for the being created; and when you have attained the supreme heights of perfect bliss, then, and not until then, should you begin to imagine that you have reached the ultimatum of life, and are ready to take the declining plane and slide back towards the dark waters of Forgetfulness.

Your worldly Materialists are going to take a few journeys up the mountain-side of life, and when they are ready to take passage up the higher slope, in a lighter conveyance, they imagine they are going to fall asleep for ever more. Truly we think this more dark than the old Redemption plan, as any waking is better than Eternal Sleep.

Well, we have tired you out, little scribe. Many thanks.

J. R.

BE not cast down. When the spirit of truth and sincerity is with you, who can be against you? Indifference is the stupor of the too worldly mind. We think

it has the same effect upon the spirit, that alcohol has upon the body. May light from the spirit-world fill your home with peace and love; visitants more precious than mere earth can bestow.

Eighteen hundred, seventy-eight.

YOUR strains breathe first of faith, hope, reunion in the bright beyond, then of prayer and reverence for the Divine Author of our being; and again of the joy and bliss of inter-communion of the spheres. Spiritualism is the beacon light which renders faith something more than a poetical myth; hope and union and love a living reality. We cannot speak and command and call forth light from darkness. The "still small voice" of the spirit must speak with power, only to those whose souls are attuned to the heavenly harmony.

Eighteen hundred, seventy-nine.

AS the fitful gleams of sunlight on a gusty November day, indicate the flood of light beyond the clouds; so the dim rays of spiritual unfoldment just as surely herald forth a warmer, clearer glow, that shall come streaming over every individualized spirit, quickening each and all with a power to raise the dark mantle of ignorance and error that all may be purified by a heavenly baptism of light,—more light!

YES, truly, earthly joys and sorrows are but faint types of the living reality which greets us in the realm of mind. Then stand fearless amidst the wreck and havoc of war, steadfast in an unyielding faith in immortal life. *Be only fearful of wrong doing.*

Eighteen hundred, sixty-three.

MY friends, do not think we have deserted you. We do not wish to give lessons in the rudiments always, but desire you to *rise into the broader and clearer light of interior perception.*

Where there is a deep yearning for spiritual light, the soul-faculties gradually become developed within the sunlight of a truthful mind, and the spirit is surrounded with a halo of heavenly knowledge.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-three.

WHEN the aspirations of a new-born spirit rise above the baser passions, it draws the spirit upward into clearer light than earth affords to any, save a few fine organizations whose spiritual perceptions pierce through all the stormy earth-clouds of passion. But those who are ruled by the lower faculties hover among their kindred vices, and are no better off, except that they are more easily reached and influenced by their wiser guardians.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-three.

WHEN the blighting frost of worldly ambition is baffled by the stern principles of rectitude and duty, the spirit grows inflexible and cold—though just and exacting; but when subdued by divine Love, perpetual sunshine irradiates every kindly deed, and the spirit grows beautiful and graceful as well as strong and firm.

Cultivate a spirit of love as well as a spirit of justice. Love, Justice and Wisdom combined, form the perfect man.

You possess more of justice than love, hence I call your attention to the latter.

THERE is an Eternal Principle of Immortality within man's divine nature which can never be erased however low he may sink in the scale of physical development.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-four.

AS the yellow splendor of the moon fills the night with many fleeting phantoms, so does the twilight of spirit-communion, people the untaught mind with weird, mysterious fancies. Yet, as the glories of the incoming day sweep away all the unreal shadows of the night, so will the light of the incoming life clear away all doubts and fears and seeming discrepancies in the spiritual realm. Keep the lamp of faith forever trimmed and burning.

Your mother, brother and hosts of friends send you greeting from across the River.

WE are with you, more in trials than in sunshine. You have our deepest sympathy, our holiest, tenderest influences, when tried by secret sorrow or subject to any peculiar affliction. Each soul knows its own bitterness and to this we would fain administer a healing balm that should dispel all dark clouds from the spirit and make it radiant with the perpetual bloom of cheerfulness and love.

Good night, and may pure spirits seek kindred attributes in each one of you; aye and not search in vain!

MY Dear Protege: I am still mindful of you, though you are now a man in the strife and turmoil of a business life and I stand on the invisible side, therefore in the background of physical life.

Never forget, however, that I am assuredly with you, and often aid you too, in thoughts, ideas and suggestions; and though you do not realize me, yet would you miss me, as you miss the air or the sunshine which you do not see.

Then never doubt me again.

J. R.

THE infinite possibilities of the Future rise clear and bright within the broad domain of the spirit. Life has a beauty and serenity here, that earth-life seldom realizes. The "wages of sin are pain and death, but the gift of God is Eternal Life.

Do not then strive to "sell your birthright for a mess of pottage."

THE fair, pure temple of the spirit is indestructible both from within and from without. Do not seek to war against Nature's laws with puny arms of flesh, for she must surely vanquish.

Yours in spirit,

J. R.

THE dark chasm is bridged. Light is fast dawning upon the minds of earth's children. The old religious fables are giving way before rational knowledge of the incoming life; and we, its representatives, are bringing to those we leave behind, as much of absolute intelligence from our side as it is possible for us to give and for you to understand. Though the knowledge is only partial, and mingled with much imperfection, it is rapidly dispelling the night of superstition. When morning comes after darkness, man cannot but see his old phantoms fade and disappear before the light!

You may say—"There is no life beyond the physical death; there is no God; there is nothing which is not purely material." Then comes the soft gentle influence of departed loved ones, speaking the familiar language so fondly remembered, and you *know you feel that they still live and love you as of old.*

Eighteen hundred, eighty-one.

THE ugliest forms of life are beautiful, and all is Life! *There is no death—only change in Life.*

THE light of the pure sweet morning dawns clear and bright, after the night of darkness and storm! Thus the black pall of grief and despair is gradually lifted and dispelled, by the unfolding and rising of the fair sunlight of Faith and Immortal Love, that looks above the changes of death and time, to that blessed reunion in the real undying Life—the life of the higher spheres.

The voice of the husband and father rings out cheery words of love and remembrance, in the clear calm morning, after the night of grief is past, so be comforted and *hope on, work on, trust on* to the end.

Your guardian and friend,

JAMES REED.

THE spirit hosts come pouring in, each one verifying the old primeval truth of immortal kinship!

There are three fathers present, and each seeks an earth-born son, thus proving that earthly ties live beyond the flesh that gave them birth. Spirit speaks to kindred spirit; and the spirit of man knows, *feels* itself to be immortal, undying, unchanging in its eternal individuality. But its body companion is formed of opaque matter, and is often blind to the light of the spirit. The material body is invisible to me as a spiritual being. My spiritual body is invisible to you as a material substance, yet my spirit is cognizant of yours, and *vice versa*.

The spirit of the patriarch father and new-found son clasp hands and seek together the earthly son and brother. The younger spirit-father flies to meet his favorite son, here present. The absent brother obeys the call of kinship, and comes forward to join the invisible throng. Sisters are here, and the newly united parents; all showing that love paternal, and love fraternal are not lost or vanquished by physical dissolution.

THE love that is wafted to you from the spiritual spheres is something, which although you cannot see, taste or handle is yet rich with the glow of Hope and Promise for human progress. Hope that the mystery of life and its many changes may be unfolded and made clear through spiritual knowledge; and Promise that doubt and darkness may be succeeded by the pure light of a rational faith.

Yet as the myriad voices of physical nature are silent before the man who loves only sensual pleasures, so is the "still small voice" of the spirit hushed before the mind entirely engrossed in worldly pursuits and aims.

J. R.

February eighteenth, eighteen hundred, eighty-three.

WE welcome you all in the name of your spirit friends who are anxious to waft back a thought of recognition, from the, to you, invisible world. Yet we are real, palpable presences, and claim our share of your love and remembrance. We will speak further when you meet again. Have our added blessing.

A familiar spirit,—when on earth James Reed by name—speaks for the others.

Some of the new friends may speak when they get acquainted with our methods. One, a tall lady, wishes to do so when she can.

THOUGH the dark waves of disease and death have destroyed my mortal body yet my freed spirit still lives and I return triumphant in my new found life. I

now have demonstrated that pain and dissolution can only kill the body, that the soul lives on after, loves, remembers and may return and see all our dear earthly friends.

Death has lifted every former care and cloud from my now glorified spirit and I am willing, happy, to wait for the blissful reunion which the fullness of time must surely bring to us all. I will not fully identify myself, my good kind friend knows who I am.

From the tall lady who recently passed over.

J. R.

February fourth, eighteen hundred, eighty-three.

BE not desponding my young friends. The clouds will all disperse and the mental horizon of your spirit grow clear as a spotless mirror, on which may be shadowed forth the uses of every trial.

Let your faith buoy you up through the cares of life.

MY Dear Protege: Be of good cheer and keep a strong hold of the firm anchor of faith and hope; and if the storm rages, the troubled waters cannot quite overcome.

Soon your storm-tossed craft will be anchored within a peaceful haven, whose fair, sunny margin touches the fertile valleys of the Summer land, the home of purity, peace and progress. Yours fraternally,

J. R.

THERE are many beautiful and exalted truths hid beneath these crude manifestations.

If you have patience and perseverance to delve through the bitter crust of darkness and inharmony, you will be rewarded with the pure light of interior wisdom.

DO not be disheartened. Try to open a channel that the tides of love and wisdom which roll o'er the vast ocean of spirituality may flow into your spirit.

If you were fitting a passage to some foreign country, you could not expect to complete it immediately. Then *be willing to labor in the cause of Truth*; and when angels are with you, never despair of success!

YOU know we still live, and ever surround you with continued love and remembrance, so let silent Faith fill the hour with inspiration, sweet and holy.

Be not so entirely engrossed in physical wants and temporary necessities, but let your spirit rise in divine attraction toward its real eternal Home.

Yours,

JAMES REED.

(In behalf of many waiting friends).

YOUR dear congenial friends who have passed to spirit-life, clasp hands with you across the stormy gulf of Physical Dissolution Cherish their memory and love!

The purer light of a new spiritual era is advancing

over the whole universe of intelligent beings, and your little home enjoys a share of its coming brightness. *Then strive to rise above the petty ills of time that you may receive a richer draught of spiritual knowledge which will abide with the immortal man forever.*

A GAIN and again have we given you messages of love, encouragement, reproof, warning and counsel. Why reiterate?

Let unfoldment come from within, rather than from without.

JAMES REED.

*“How must a spirit late escaped from earth
The truth of things new blazing in its eye,
Look back astonished on the ways of men
Whose life’s whole drift is to forget their graves.”*
—Young.

EXPERIENCE OF
L. W. VAUGHN

On his awakening in Spirit-Life after having been killed
in the war.

1863.

FRIEND Hammond: I see you have not forgotten me. I have had a sore time but am not sorry to be in spirit-life.

“Doc.”

Query: Can I do anything for your children?

Answer: I require nothing of you Friend Hammond,* save a continuance of your friendship.

December ninth, eighteen hundred, sixty-three.

FRIEND Hammond: When you look into a deep dark pit or well, what makes you think it has a bottom?

“Doc.”

December sixteenth, eighteen hundred, sixty-three.

* On his return to Pennsylvania from a Western state where he had made the acquaintance of Mr. Vaughn, Mr. Hammond had lost all trace of his friend. Therefore, it was a most convincing test when, through the mediumship of persons to whom he was wholly unknown, Mr. Vaughn related the manner of his death; when it occurred and where; and later investigation proved the details to be correct. It had been Mr. Vaughn's habit to address him as "Friend Hammond" in speaking to him.

Experience of L. W. Vaughn.

FRIEND Hammond: The first knowledge I had of existence, after I was shot, I found myself in silence and darkness, devoid of even a memory of the past. I knew not what I was, nor where I was. I seemed to be the only living thing in a universe of darkness; but after a long sojourn in the field of silence, recollection gradually came to the rescue and gave me something to meditate upon which, though bad enough, was better than nothing to think about. I prayed, oh! how earnestly, for light and the power of motion; prayed that I might know whether I was among friends or foes; for I did not yet know I was beyond the reach of rebel warfare!

Gradually objects around me became visible, and I found myself surrounded by beings still more miserable, many of them, than I. The mute agony, pictured on the countenance of some, was unutterable; while others looked calm and peaceful. I soon noticed some beings of a higher order fitting around, striving to alleviate the sufferers.

“Oh!” thought I, “They are angels come to wait upon the dying! But they do not look like dying men, I see no wounds. My wound is gone! What means it? Where am I? Am I myself?”

As these questions swept through my mind, I saw a form standing before me. I looked at it inquiringly. She raised her hand and directed me, by motion, to look away from my surroundings, upward into the realms of light. Then as she placed her arm around me, I felt a new strength imparted to me and soon realized a desire to go with her from this dungeon. No sooner had I felt this wish, than we began to rise into clearer atmosphere, and nature’s universe smiled upon us, in the light of truth

and intuition. Beauty surrounded us and happiness filled all my being. No blood marks were visible, throughout the limitless realms of spirit existence! No strife or discord marred the harmony of the scene!

There my guide drew her supporting arm from around me and said:

“Can you attune your soul to the scenes of peace and love, or will you still dwell in the spirit of warfare, strife, hatred and misery? *These passions must be forever overcome, before you can drink from the fount of wisdom, peace and love.*”

For the first time the consciousness that I was living in the world of spirits came over me. The emotions that surged through my spirit, no language of mine can describe. All my earthly life rose before me, clear and distinct. Not a word, a look, a thought or an incident was forgotten.

When looked upon by the light of truth, how disgusting did the sins, follies and passions of my earthly life appear. I sorrowed over a mis-spent life mostly, but when a noble deed passed in review, how lovingly would memory cling to it, anxiously wishing that the bright spot might spread over the darker portion. Vain hope! It only made the surrounding gloom more apparent.

As the friends and acquaintances of my earthly life passed quickly before me, all the scales of externalism dropped from my eyes and I saw, internally, every motive that formed the basis of their friendship or aversion for me. Many false garbs grieved my spirit vision, but, when you, Friend Hammond, came along, I was shocked with no hollow pretense of unfelt friendship.

This is why I came back to you. I found I had thrown away many real blessings and accepted many sugar-coated lies. Of all mankind, the hypocrite, honored and respected, looks the worst, in the light of truth. His whole life is a lie, with now and then a crack where the real man peeks out, in spite of the painted coat of falsehood.

Continued.

WHEN I had travelled over the scenes of my earthly life, I viewed the lonely spot where my old body had been left to mingle in the dust with the remains of friend and foe, in the bosom of one common Mother. I found that about two months had elapsed since I had been severed from the lump of earth I once called myself. It was as hard for me to realize that the decaying substance before me, had ever formed a part of myself, as it used to be to believe I could live away from it. Then questions began to arise in my mind, in regard to my past experience in that dark, silent place, and I looked for my guide. No sooner did I desire her presence than she was with me, like an angel of light, ready to give me instruction. I spoke to her, as you might ask your mother, of the forgotten scenes of early childhood.

“I was in no dungeon,” she told me; “The elements of light, love, wisdom and truth, surrounded me then as now. My mental condition had caused the darkness—my spiritual perceptions being too weak to behold the objects around me. Place is nothing in spirit-life, but condition, capacity, makes its own surroundings. The light of God’s Truth, shines everywhere, but the spiritually blind cannot perceive it *until their faculties are quickened, by the desire to arise from the dark conditions.*”

“Well” said I at length, “where am I to find a place in this unbounded land of the spirit?”

“Your place,” she replied, “is where your aspirations, endowments and attractions draw you. I have helped to open your perceptions to a faint knowledge of the beauties of harmony, love and wisdom. If you desire to be a **resident** of the realms of Peace, you must bring your whole soul into harmony with the scenes I have shown you, then will you possess nature’s password and countersign to advance. No armed warriors will ever arise to

bar your ingress to any of nature's unlimited dominions, save the spiritual foes of Progress,—ignorance and inharmony. You have the power within you by which you may vanquish these, if you will use them. I leave you now to follow your own attractions. I shall be with you again to instruct you, if you desire it." She disappeared in an instant.

When left to myself, a feeling of sad loneliness pervaded my spirit. All the past elevation of mind I had enjoyed seemed to desert me, and I longed for earth and the friends and jovial companions I had left behind.

"War is better than the quiet here!" I thought; and with the thought was drawn back to earth where I wandered from place to place, but found no satisfaction anywhere. I could not approach my wife. A gulf seemed to spread its wide jaws between us. I could see that she mourned my loss but I had not served to turn her mind away from the world. I shed many bitter burning thoughts (I will not say tears) over my dear children left, as they were, in a selfish world with no protecting arm to shield them from the follies of life.

I FOLLOWED the army for a long time, but found no peace nor pleasure in the element which surrounded me there. Yet I could not get away from the attractions that held me. It is an awful feeling, to be within the surging elements of passion, hatred and strife, where all is active fighting and feel its influence upon you, yet have nothing to do, and I finally cried for my guide to take me away or to help me to take part in the combat I saw around me.

"Are you so weak and inefficient that you see no good work you can do, in the midst of human suffering

and soul misery? Such a scene should call forth your sympathy and exertion for the distressed. Here you stand, praying for something to do, with the most heavenly work around you—loving deeds of mercy.”

I felt rather than heard this rebuke, and a feeling of shame swept over me when I found myself in the presence of that pure being to whom I had been calling for help.

“Come,” she said, with a sorrowful smile of sympathy and encouragement, “let us go together and strive to alleviate the suffering of some soul more unhappy than you are.”

Then we mingled among the spirits of the dying, and the tales of woe, crime and misery I there read, in the light of my wiser counsellor, beggared all description, and seemed to mock at and swallow up all my lighter sorrows, just as the light of the sun absorbs all the lesser lights. I soon found, that by the help of my guide, I could impart a soothing influence to many of my brother soldiers, who were dying on the bloody field, as I had done before them. In doing this I felt more real happiness than I had ever known before. My views of humanity enlarged, while looking on these dying men. I saw, when divested of all sordid interests, that all mankind are much better than a worldly view would present. There is not so much difference between the high and the low as we are apt to think, from our external view.

Since I see these things, my perceptions have been quickened, and I have found plenty of employment in elevating my own misguided spirit, and in helping my fellow soldiers. My beautiful counsellor still extends her protecting power to me, whenever I need her aid and am in a proper state to receive her instruction. I can go among my former associates and return at will, for a stronger attraction now draws me above, in the pure adoration I now feel for her, who helped me out of the pit of ignorance and crime.

Concluded.

BUT little more remains to be told. I can give you no idea of my life, because I can find no written language wherein to express it. I progress more than when on earth, because I am drawn more away from the temptations of passion, and have a more extensive field for gaining knowledge. There are, too, myriads of wise, kind spirits, ready to give me any desired instruction. Here kindness and wisdom go hand in hand. All are taught without money and without price; without aught save the spiritual injunction, "Go and do thou likewise."

My employment is mostly among the soldiers. I visit my children often and try to exert a good influence over them, but I am so weak and they are surrounded by such a worldly element, that it is not much I can do for them. When I first learned of this mode of corresponding with the world I felt anxious to try to do something for my boy. I saw you retire to a quiet country life and followed, hoping to find some means of making my presence known, and, by the assistance of my dearest friend. I have been able to give this imperfect account of spiritual experience.

All I have to say in conclusion is, that I hope "you may so live," that when you pass through the last great change, which is no change, your sensations may all be pleasant.

From your reformed friend,

L. W. VAUGHN.

January sixteenth, eighteen hundred, sixty-three.

*“Death only this mysterious truth unfolds,
The mighty soul how small a body holds!”*
—Dryden.

Miscellaneous.

MY Dear Children: Though time has woven your once bright locks with threads of silver, and children's children fill your hearts with new love, in spirit, you are my children still, and I am with you in every trial.

grieve not too bitterly over wrongs, for temporal trials are fleeting and transitory when viewed in the light of Eternity, where Truth is ever uppermost and Justice is ever done. Sorrow is only a stepping-stone to future light and progress.

A father's blessing is all I can leave with you.

OLIVER BUTTERFIELD.

Eighteen hundred, seventy-seven.

GRIEF is itself a medicine and bestowed to improve the fortitude that bears the load.

We are here my daughter—your mother and I.—Luman—Yes and Cynthia too, who feels an interest equal to any one of us. She says she loves you for the care, grief and anxiety you have suffered for her and hers; and as for me, did not my pity and tenderness draw me to your presence, I should never approach earth, so tired am I of all its gloomy influence.

I have cheering words for you believe me. * * *
Therefore, be comforted.

We are with you. "Who are they against you?"

Love and memory across the so-called "Silent River."

OLIVER BUTTERFIELD.

Thanksgiving, eighteen hundred, eighty-six.

MY Dear Daughter Lydia: A long separation has intervened since a father's words of love have been borne to your listening, patient spirit, yet that parent has ever been as near, as tangible and as undying in his love and remembrance, as the kind mother whose bodily presence has been your strength and support, through the vicissitudes of these many earthly years; and the power that moves this inanimate wood, speaks forth your father's thoughts as clearly as did ever the familiar tones so well remembered in the past.

Well do I recollect the despairing kindness: the wealth of love lavished upon me by the dear little group as they gathered around me during those mournful days,—that trying ordeal of pain and suffering that marked the closing scenes of my earthly pilgrimage, and the extinction of physical existence. Though the parting was bitter for us all, yet was the re-union with those gone before sweet; and the freedom from all earthly sin and anguish was supreme bliss. Still I know that God is good and He “doeth all things well.”

I am glad to say this to you, and I could follow up the mystic rap with thought after thought, with blessing added to blessing, but it cannot be, for I am forced to say good night and good bye, though only for a little season.

Your loving father,

ISSAC HAMMOND.

MY Daughter: I can say but little tonight. Do not be troubled for the future. Do each day what your hands find to do, according to your strength; and be content.

When I view your beautiful life, and well-ordered spirit, crowned with purity and knowledge, I feel and

know there can be nothing but good in store for such as you.

May a father's blessing rest upon you always like a benediction; and make all dark paths brighten for your weary feet.

ISAAC HAMMOND.

DILIGENT research is the beginning of wisdom. We have given you many lessons, have you learned them well? Do you love your brother man better for these instructions?

When drawing nigh to spirit friends, do not draw away from the many loving hearts pulsating in the life which surrounds you. As you love those beneath you, even so may you hope to be assisted by those above you.

We will not dwell longer on this. Do what good you can healing and each striving will bring an increase of power for good.

ANON.

NO, the dear departed are not forgotten by earth's children. They cannot make them dead in their affections, thus carrying a living proof of immortality within their own souls.

Then cherish the memory of the departed loved ones, for the remembrance of a father, a mother, a brother, a child or sister in the spirit home, will serve to brighten and purify your lives.

ANON.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-nine.

MOTHER: I am here to give you a letter spelled out by this a b c. I should have liked to stay with you, to help you; I was neither ready nor willing to leave you but I find life here, good, and I will prepare a place for you, and be ready to meet you, when you come; not paper and paint as I did there in our house, but some thing far better!

You wanted me at home with you and after I returned I was taken away by that dreadful accident. I did not suffer much; was only bewildered; and rose from the water unhurt.

Do not mourn, for I visit you every day. I should be so happy if you could know this! You will believe it won't you mother? Have faith in my love, and we will wait with smiling faces and serene spirits until we meet again where accidents can come no more.

I am your son,

HARVEY WIER.

Eighteen hundred, eighty-four.

WHEN I drifted out, I saw and recognized Annis first. She came to me where I lay.

I wanted to speak and comfort you all, but I could not. I wanted to tell you how much easier it was to live without the body; that I was delighted with the change; that the only bitterness was parting from you all. What I could not tell you then, I tell you now.

A. G. NICHOLS.

Eighteen hundred, eighty-one.

ADALINE, how are you and the family?
 We are waiting—watching 'round the borders of life to see how you are all coming on. We do not watch *all* the time, mind you! for we wander away through the soft light of the Better land, where never ending variety fills us with perpetual gladness, that never grows old nor cold. We hunt in the valley for the "straight and narrow path" which leads on to the hill-tops beyond; and whether we find it or not we are all right anywhere; at home everywhere: always in touch with the best things of life! (Now do not envy us for we will "save some for you.")

At times we take the other trail, come back to you here and look through the crust of matter. Struggling on, tired, restless, vain, you make me think of little gold-fish in a glass globe gilded with your fine clothes; always trying to get out; never quiet; never satisfied; forever wanting to do something else; possess something more!

Well, never mind! The globe will fill up in time, and you will find an opening at the top through which you may swim out. There you will find me, your father, in the vast ocean beyond the neck of the "globe,"—your present nursing-bottle!

Good night.

ASA G. NICHOLS.

October twenty-fifth, eighteen hundred, eighty-five.

WE will meet where the valley is so narrow, that we may clasp hands across the fearful chasm and find it after all only a little ditch, that the foot may span dry-shod.

Good night all. Just think of me.

ASA G. NICHOLS.

WE are ever faithful ever sure!

Though rugged storms on the hill-tops of Time may mark your earth-life with rifts and wrecks, yet faith is steadfast, and immortal individual existence a substantial reality!

Awaiting you here on the borders, are your parents, children and sisters. *Let your record be stainless and without reproach* that the meeting may be a joyous one when you join us here.

ANON.

November fourth, eighteen hundred, eighty-five.

WE have no topic. Suggest one. I am Ouina.

Query: How are our friends in spirit-life employed?

Not raising potatoes and beans, but growing some plants so very much neglected in your world that indeed, I doubt whether many of earth's children would know the genuine growth from the spurious. They are known as Honor, Charity, Truth, Justice, Knowledge, Virtue and many similar plants that must be cultivated before we can become far advanced in the Path of Progress.

Query: Do they study the sciences?

Yes. Science is the soul of all things, both animate, and inanimate.

Query: Can you give us a character-poem?

Who wants one? I can give but one, my medium is not well.

October, eighteen hundred, eighty.

The Pearl of Greatest Price.

(*Character-poem.*)

The spirit, through those dark orbs glancing,
 A weary, restless longing seems to show.
 The mirth and wit upon its surface dancing,
 Hide deeper waves of thought than in the sunlight glow.

Flashes of truth and tenderness come stealing
 From 'neath the lighter foam of earth-taught lore,
 The purity and strength of womanhood revealing.
 (A richer, rarer gem than fills a monarch's earthly
 store!)

Fair pearl of purity! all colors glinting,
 Each shade reflecting, yet retaining none.
 Within thy polished bosom, rainbows freshly tinting,
 Yet changing oft, forever white alone.

“The Pearl of greatest price” thy name shall be,
 Emblem of womanly purity.

OUINA.

To Addie N. Lauer.

THE vast cornucopia of the spirit-world hangs over you like a silver crescent, ready to baptize you with a beneficent power;—the symbol of faith and patient waiting.

You shall surely be rewarded. We do not know just the form it may assume. It falls like the gentle dew, and

here springs a rose, there a violet, and yonder a lily, according to the nature of the plant developed, each perfect after its kind. Even so it is with human blossoms.

To one who understands.

ANON.

WE are few, yet many. A host, in individual spirit-life, may throb in each minute atom of space that your little dwelling encloses. How closely are we allied to you,—how near and yet how far away! So near, we may fan your brow and cheek with our invisible presence; yet so far, that only the death of the physical may bring us completely and fully to know and enjoy each other.

ANON.

I AM charmed, entranced! The spirit of music and poesy floats into our harmonized presence, borne on the invisible wings of those old, time-honored songs.

We have no test, but simply words of love and greeting for the strange friends. They must seek well and diligently, for pearls are rare and dross is abundant.

LIBBIE.

MOVE on fearlessly sister mine. Life is very pleasant if you cull but the roses and muffle the thorns. If they sting, hide the wound until it is healed again.

LIBBIE.

WE are once more with you to teach you to live a life of usefulness and purity and progression while in this lower sphere; to look forward with material hope and pleasure to a higher, holier existence. Will you receive and follow our divine instructions? Let us give you the elements of a pure life.

Keep the body clean and clothed in fitting raiment, for purity cannot dwell in impurity.

Take food to sustain the body and not to clog the spirit.

Avoid unworthy thoughts at all times. While reclining on your couch in the hours of darkness, the spirit, if elevated, rises and mingles with superior beings.

ANON.

BE united in steadfast principles of virtue and integrity. Union is strength. The cord of many strands is the stronger.

WHEN the fleeting pleasures of time and sense are exchanged for the more abiding joys that spring from a mind which has overcome all evil propensities by following the path of duty—a path which leads into the fair sunny fields of purity,—then will every temptation resisted be an unfading beauty to the spirit forever; and each fall alas! leave its ineradicable image on the immortal spirit. *Strive to harmonize the mind, that temporal and eternal interests may clasp hands in the daily routine of life.*

We will try next time to give you something more personal. Truth is always impersonal.

May good angels guard you to peace and happiness.
Good night,

ANON.

Eighteen hundred, seventy-nine.

FAITH may not become absolute knowledge until we pass from the portal of physical life and enter the realm of the spirit. Then faith will be lost in the light of a perfect unfoldment of the spirit.

We would not promise to bring conviction to one who has no inward light, for their unfoldment has not yet come. Such must await the divine transfiguration. It will surely come.

ANON.

YES we come,—an invisible host from the *to you, unseen world.*

The rain does not soil our garments, nor the wild wind chill our flexible spiritual body. We bend supremely near each waiting longing spirit, and are unspeakably happy to meet you all a little nearer home!

LIBBIE.

The Silver Lake.

(Character-poem given to Archie E. Gaston.)

The crags and steeps rise far above
 The lakelet's sandy bed;
 A faithful semblance of their strength
 Upon its waves is spread.

When raging storms with angry breath
 Beat o'er its granite walls,
 And, toppling from some rocky point
 A broken fragment falls;

Within its clear, unruffled breast
 A splash, then all serene!
 The eddying rings in waves roll out,
 Then smooth, and hide the scene.

The liquid mirror of the lake
 An image of thy spirit proves,
 It's pale, pure depths reflecting back
 All that it sees and knows and loves.

When high beyond thy youthful ken
 The elements of life wage war,
 Only faint ripples now and then
 Disturb thy thoughts borne from afar.

The "Silver Lake" thy name shall be,
 Emblem of youthful purity.

OUINA.

October, eighteen hundred, eighty.

EARTH life is but the stepping stone to a better, holier state. The birthplace of an eternal, individual, progressive existence, where the spirit in its unceasing evolution shall forever enjoy the sunlight of perfect knowledge, purity and love.

AS the giant oak springs from the infant plant with three small leaves, so do the broad truths of spiritual communion spring from three tiny raps.

D. D.

May, eighteen hundred, eighty-three.

THE spirit land is beautiful and bright. No fear, no doubt enters its clear and boundless expanse. All is love, peace and progress.

The birth of the spirit is sometimes through physical suffering and mental darkness, yet the rising of the sun is so glorious, that the night of physical pain is soon lost in the splendor of the morning. God is our kind Father, and Christ is our elder Brother. This is true Christian faith.

E. A. BRISCOE.

WE are with you. What will you have?
Why consolation?

Are you sick, weary, discouraged and far from Home?

If sick in body take little pills. If sick in spirit take equal parts of faith and hope. If weary and discouraged, —wait! Rest, until the spirit is strengthened and renewed by the inherent powers of immortal life, ever remembering that you have an Eternity of time before you, and *nature never hurries at her work.*

Imitate her example; and Home may appear afar off, when really your tired feet may be treading its very threshold and the latchet just be rising, drawn by some gentle kindly hand within, ready to give you familiar greeting.

January first, eighteen hundred, eighty-eight.

FREEDOM from passional discord is conducive to spiritual attainments. Thus the secluded hermit enjoys pleasures, and plucks many rare gifts from the overhanging boughs of inspirational knowledge, upon which his heaven-directed senses are fixed. Yet he does not reach that high standard of moral excellence, universal benevolence and manly independence, which crowns the spirit after a life spent in worldly pursuits, i. e., *if the moral and spiritual have acted well their part in the drama of his life.*

R. VAN RENSAELLER.

FRRIENDS, I give you welcome! I am so happy to remind you of her you called "Lodency."

Yes, I can preach better sermons than of old. The earth is good and so is all life outside this little planet.

I am glad, sister, you keep up good cheer, for clouds be they ever so dark and threatening, a breath of fresh east wind will sweep them away, and lo! the sun is still shining and all nature is clothed and bathed in light and renewed life; and all is Love everywhere throughout God's infinite universe.

I wish this might be continued longer, but time and circumstance—earth's tyrants—forbid.

LODENCIA SCOTT.

Eighteen hundred, eighty-six.

WE are here,—an unbroken chain of spiritual affinity over which time and death have no power; still loving, remembering, and aiding with even more than a former interest.

* * *

I AM so glad to have you all together where I may say a word to you; for like all others, I love to be remembered and sought.

You will never seek me in vain; for my memory—my love for you all, is as undying as my existence!

“PHEME” MCARTHUR.

To Mary.

There is never a night but there follows a morning;
 Never a darkness, the light won't destroy.
 There seldom comes joy but there first is a warning,
 Yet the warning itself may not be a joy.

There's never a day but has its tomorrow,
 Seldom a victory gained without strife.
 There's hardly a life that's not shadowed by sorrow,
 Yet the shades of the night show the joys of the life.

LYMAN SIBLEY.

Eighteen hundred, ninety-one.

WE are near, very near you tonight. Our love and sympathy encircle each and every one of you, yet we are devoid of test conditions and can only appeal to your simple, trusting faith. We love the faith of a noble spirit better than any flour, rope-tying or any of the usual phenomena attending physical manifestations.

When spirit becomes cognizant of spirit, the physical is no longer necessary. This is the true spirit communion.

It only remains for the exceptional few to demonstrate spiritual truth to the physical senses.

ANON.

MY Dear Children: During the hours of nature's long repose we love to hover near our earth-bound friends and find them willing to receive words of love and

remembrance from those who have passed on before; from those whose earthly faces are seen no more among men.

What do we desire to impress most forcibly upon your minds by our message? Simply this: *That earthly life is not the primary object of man's existence.*

Weak man! Though nature sounds this truth by a myriad of audible voices, he forgets, and struggles on to reach the pinnacle of worldly ambition; when lo! he falls into a new life and wakes surprised, aghast, and unprepared for the spiritual being that Nature and her hand-maiden (Death) have been vainly striving to make him remember.

My friends, when physical Death overtakes you, let him not surprise you, but meet him as a welcome messenger from mother Nature, bearing the summons for a higher and better position in the Father's beautiful mansion of Immortality.

C. RUSSELL.

PERMIT me to say that I, Wm. Newton, am present. I do not know that you will acknowledge or remember me, but that makes no difference to me,—nor to you perhaps.

We are an unbroken family across the line. Not in Heaven, for I am not there yet, nor do I want to be there nearly so badly as I want to be back on earth to redeem some of our mistakes.

WM. NEWTON.

BELIEVE on! we will help you in every season of trial. We strive to strengthen the bonds of fraternal affection, that, united, you may assist and save each other.

Not from universal ruin, but simply from many of the little, petty ills that destroy so much of human happiness.

Heaven is not a haven of rest. Neither is it a place fitted up for pure spirits. *It is simply a condition of harmonious love; of perfect trust in the Supreme Power that governs the universe; and a well-grounded Principle that is entirely impervious to every artifice with which temptation may seek to stain the spotless robe of the spirit.*

This condition may be attained as well on earth as in spirit-life. Strive for it; it is more precious than are earthly treasures.

Yours in love,

ANON.

WE are near, yet without theme, topic or question; an informal meeting without leader on either side. Each waits for another. We from our side, look down through the dark waves of materiality and see a half dozen faces looking up toward us with a vague, mute appeal to learn something, yet asking nothing definite:—the hardest of wishes to satisfy.

The Spirit World! How many have attempted to describe it, yet how dim are the pictures presented, and who can describe the infinite, illimitable home of the immortal spirit of man? Yet it seems possible for me to give you an intelligent account of the little portion of it that I see and inhabit.

First, it is filled with natural objects in which the spirit delights. We have birds, flowers, and even beasts if we love them. Although we do not need them to bear us or our burdens, if we love them around us, we may cultivate them. The higher we advance the less we see of them.

More again, you are weary. Meet at regular intervals, have a leader and definite expressed wishes, and you can have more satisfactory instructions. Good night and good wishes.

FROM A HOST OF SPIRIT FRIENDS.

WE are not lost, nor forgetful of your faithful attendance on us for spiritual light and knowledge.

Like the parent-bird, we would fain leave you to try to soar aloft, unaided except by your own intuitive perception; as the tutor who tires of precept and leaves his pupil to profit by practice.

*'Tis not the whole of life to live
Nor all of death to die.*

—James Montgomery.

Mosaics.

NEVER let your pleasures rise above the calm, quiet joys which reason and spirituality sanction; then shall your sorrows never fall below the influence and control of these unerring and immortal guides.

CHAS. BARTON.

THE light of the spheres shines forever clear and steadfast. Strive to rise above the shadows of time and sense. *Keep your thoughts pure and your lives will be true.*

EPHRAIM H. GASTON.

FOLLOW the light of inspiration. It will lead you through the shadows of darkness and doubt, into the fair, sunny clime of progressive knowledge.

EPHRAIM H. GASTON.

DEFORMITY and darkness of spirit breed contempt for the real Truth, and pride in the false; but light generates life in the cold silent germ; and life breathes of future Hope and Progress.

IMOGENE GASTON.

Eighteen hundred, seventy-nine.

LET the holy emanations of divine spiritual love ever beam from your countenances, filling the whole vast area of your influence with the perpetual sunshine of universal love.

JAMES REED.

ARE you sad, weary, discouraged? Live on, trust on, hope on, and above all *believe on*, in the unfailing Source of Goodness and Power! If the duties of life seem small and irksome, keep them well burnished with the genuine sheen of fraternal love and benevolence.

Do not repulse any who wish to join you.

JAMES REED.

LET *love, faith and good will toward all*, lighten and smooth the rough descending pathway to the boundary and final outlet of physical death.

JOHN HAMMOND.

BE ever tranquil. Let the passing moments bear you onward peacefully, until the ruffled stream of physical life sweeps onward, through the narrow passes of Time, into the unlimited Sea of Eternity: into the unspotted glory of the higher life!

JOHN HAMMOND.

LIFE is a mystery which only eternal duration may slowly unroll before our vision.

Death is only an accident of Life—a change from one key to another, in the un-ending rythm of Progression.

EPHRAIM H. GASTON.

THAT life is successful, which stands for Honor, Truth, and Justice through every ordeal of time and chance.

The Wheel of Fortune does not register the success of a life; it only marks the life-rate of worldly emoluments which perish with the shell. The real man is often dwarfed by such success.

JAMES REED.

EVER remember there is more light than darkness; more good than evil; more love than hate; more joy than sorrow; more health than sickness; and ultimately, all Discord becomes Harmony; and Good is evolved out of every condition of life.

JOHN HAMMOND.

NEVER become lost in a whirlwind of doubt and darkness. Seek the pure sunlight of faith, that you may discern the substance of things hoped for, thus adding knowledge to faith.

JOHN HAMMOND.

November eighteenth, eighteen hundred, eighty-three.

BE not dead in faith, but let your light shine clear and bright before all men, that all may know the manner of faith which sustains you.

Do not smuggle Spiritual Truth as something to blush for.

ANON.

WE may ever draw near, yet it is not always wise to write by this tedious means of conveying a few broken thoughts. The end and aim of our brief sentences was long since accomplished—the proof given. We can only give a repetition.

We want you to *pass on to something higher*. The spirit-world is full of untold treasures ready for the pure, receptive nature who listens with understanding to the “*still small voice*” of the spirit, which speaks to every human soul, and may be heard. The receptive faculties of man are fast learning to follow the light of intuition; it is permeating and diffusing a new light into all departments of earth-life—social, religious and scientific; all feel the life of its revivifying influence.

Our unacknowledged power is the moving motor of progress. We love to be acknowledged, yet the great truths of immortal Life do not suffer, even though the Messengers are unrecognized and forgotten.

KNOWLEDGE makes us sure and steadfast over the route, in the darkest hours of a rayless night, but a pure faith is better for it lights up with a soft, silvery

radiance, the unknown paths equally with the known. While Knowledge must be limited, Faith o'er sweeps the entire limitless universe. Knowledge cannot guide you over an unknown path, for you must first pass over, before you know the way. But faith's sweet light may forestall actual knowledge.

What is faith? It is an inherent faculty of the immortal spirit of man. The higher the development of the spirit, the purer and more enlightened is the faith.

ANON.

Eighteen hundred, seventy-nine.

LIGHT and darkness, chaos and order, growth and decay, devastation and restoration are sent forth as twin sisters by the overruling forces from mother Nature's vast arcana.

All inharmony will be adjusted. All seeming evil will finally give place to higher conditions and the one only evil, ignorance, will be exorcised. Truth and harmony must prevail.

Very truly yours,

“A spirit meek and lowly,
Blessed with affection holy.”

NAME ME BY MY WORDS.

Eighteen hundred, eighty-one.

AS you walk down the shores of Time, the dark waters of Death recede; the opposite shore grows nearer and fairer, and each messenger that is sent to bear some dearly

loved one across in the spiritual bark, seems to diminish the faint dividing line; to lessen and narrow and smooth down the dark waves that lie between.

When led by a pure, rational faith, the passage is so narrow and the waters so placid, that you may step from shore to shore, without even dipping your feet into the so-called stream of Death.

ANON.

Eighteen hundred, seventy-three.

BE earnest but not over zealous for the truth. "The fire of straw, soon kindled, makes a flash, and is gone, leaving no heat behind; but the deep burning heat of the anthracite sends forth a silent glow which fills your parlors with the bloom of summer." Thus it is with an earnest, consistent life. Though quiet and unobtrusive, its influence is above all censure.

"*Example is better than precept.*" We have given you "line upon line and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little." *Who is to give that nobler lesson of example?*

ANON.

Eighteen hundred, seventy-three.

WHEN a mighty nation embraces a spirit of oppression at its birth, the death struggle with liberty must surely come, however happy and prosperous it may be for a season. Thus it is, with the spirit who fosters bad propensities; a spiritual warfare is going on, until the wrong is vanquished and harmony is restored.

ANON.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-three.

GRINDING poverty dwarfs the spirit, while boundless wealth pampers pride and folly. Strive to gain a competence but do not sigh for riches.

DARK as the shadows of life may seem, they are but fitful moving clouds after all! Beyond and above them, the warm genial sun is forever shining, and the birds of Paradise are forever singing their glad songs of joy and praise!

Attune your spirits to the heavenly harmony of universal "Love and Good Will to all men;" and if you chance to stand beneath a fleeting shadow, do not forget the flood of sunshine beyond, which gilds each passing pall of blackness with a lining so golden, that when the mantle is turned, your startled vision will scarce withstand the gorgeous coloring.

Have patience and await the divine transformation. It is surely coming.

ANON.

CULTIVATE your spiritual being and though the tyrannous discipline of relentless war surround you like a dark spirit of evil, yet your souls may rise on the wings of truth and love, into the clear sunshine of perpetual harmony and peace.

This is one lesson. Study, learn, treasure, practice it.

ANON.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-three.

BE not despondent. Time with progressive march is bearing you forward into the pure, fair regions of absolute Life immortal. Its messengers continually whisper to your waiting spirit of its incoming glory..

If the messengers sometimes fail you, can you not rest in peace on the faith and trust of long and rich experience? *We do not wish to speak through wood, but more directly—spirit to kindred-spirit.*

ANON.

AS the brown earth contains within its dark clammy mould, the promise of the ever-varying verdure of Spring, so the crude barren spiritual seance bears the germ of humanity's highest hope made a living reality—the mingling of the upper and lower world in one!

Eighteen hundred, eighty-five.

WHAT shall we say? Speak and we obey if we can. Shall we tell you of the home you love?

The home of the spirit has *just as much of beauty and symmetry as the indwelling spirit is able to perceive;* on more. The habitation is adorned with just *what the occupant can make;* no more. There is no over-reaching here. Every member of society has *its own* only. None may borrow or steal. How poor, how naked are some born into spirit-life! But when the immortal spirit is thrown upon its own resources, it soon rallies its latent powers and clothes itself with honor and glory.

All hail to the power of the indwelling spirit of Man!

ANON.

Eighteen hundred, eighty-three.

BE not desponding my young friends. The clouds will all disperse and the mental horizon of your spirit grow clear as a spotless mirror, on which may be shadowed forth the uses of every trial.

Let your faith buoy you up through the cares of life.

JAMES REED.

WE come. We bring many good gifts; chiefest among which are the treasures of Love and Good Will that roll in for all, from the near borders of the Spirit shore.

ANON.

THE light of a beautiful faith founded on a knowledge of continued unbroken life beyond the dark valley, gilds even the most painful scenes of earth-life with the golden halo of Hope and Promise.

EPHRAIM GASTON.

Easter, eighteen hundred, eighty-three.

*When Nature ceases, thou shalt still remain.
Nor second chaos bound thy endless reign;
Fate's tyrant laws, thy happier lot shall brave;
Baffle destruction, and elude the grave.*

—Tickell.

THE LESSONS OF SPIRITUALITY

AND

OTHER LITTLE SERMONS.

BY

CHARLES BARTON.

BEAR the Cross of Truth firmly and unwaveringly through dark morasses, and shadows of ignorance. Push back the sorrowing billows of despair and passion. Do not let them roll above you, freezing the spirit and locking up all the fountains of life.

The spirit is indestructible. Do you not receive daily the holiest assurances of the eternal individuality of the divine soul?

Eighteen hundred, fifty-nine.

GO on with your investigation; be earnest in your desire for truth; let no motives foreign to this holy object steal among your little number, and success will ultimately crown your efforts.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-three.

STRIVE to live a pure, harmonious and progressive life, that you may *be daily, hourly in spiritual communion, without the intervention of wooden furniture.*

Eighteen hundred, sixty-three.

THE gleanings of spiritual life glimmer but faintly amid earth's contending elements. But when the fire of adversity has purified your nation, and the loving spirit of forgiveness and peace again hovers around it, imparting more real majesty than its bold defiant eagle, then we hope to pour down a flood of heavenly light and knowledge upon an emancipated people.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-five.

NEVER let your pleasures rise above the calm, quiet joys which reason and spirituality can sanction. Then shall your sorrows never fall below the influence and control of these unerring and immortal guides.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-five.

YOU are all faithful and deserve better manifestations than we are able to produce. Yet it is good for you to meet anywhere and think towards the life beyond. The change will not shock you, if you study upon its many phases.

As no two persons are precisely the same, so no two spirits experience like sensations in the hour of physical dissolution. Those who have lived a noble, useful life here, are ripe for usefulness and happiness beyond and you should strive to live for this end. *It is the only meed worth winning in the race of life, for it is an eternal prize.*

Eighteen hundred, eighty-one.

THE starry firmament is peopled by an unnumbered host of living, thinking individualized beings, that serve to fill infinite space with intelligence and thought.

You cannot then direct thought or question upward into space, that every echo from your mind does not touch myriad intelligences, each one bringing back an answer redolent, with truth and love. Every zephyr that fans your cheeks has a thousand answers to your questioning spirit.

Learn to read aright the lessons of the spirit.

August, eighteen hundred, eighty-five.

The Lessons of Spirituality.

THE lessons of spirituality are designed to impart a deep and abiding hope, a firm and unfaltering trust in man's immortality; a more extensive view of the principles of universal brotherhood; greater knowledge of the ascending path of progress; a more exalted conception of the Infinite Father; more rational ideas of future rewards and punishments; and a general knowledge of the immutable and unchangeable laws of nature, which embrace all science, philosophy and art,—the principles of which, spiritual beings desire to elucidate to the mind of man.

The channel is often weak and broken, and but a faint glimmer of the flood of struggling beams beyond, pierces the gloom, but as the first dim ray which lights the dark eastern horizon, speaks of day's sure approach, so do these stray beams herald forth, with unerring voice, the rising of a glorious spiritual luminary, which shall fill the soul of man with renovating warmth and beauty.

But why prophesy of the future when the present lies before us, whereon to mould figures of living love and wisdom? Because, when the airy pinions of hope, carry the soul to flowery scenes beyond, the present catches the inspiration and the scroll is impressed with more light and graceful characters.

Now let us look back and review the principles before enumerated. A belief in the immortality of the soul has been prevalent in the human race since the beginning of the earth's diurnal course around the center of light; an intuition, vague and devoid of wisdom, filled with dark spectral doubts, hideous devils and revengeful gods. But, as the spiritual sun rises and the light of progression grows clear, these phantoms disappear. The shadow of

an angry God, however, still darkens the pathway of earth's inhabitants.

In the vast concourse of physical nature, every law by which it is governed proves clearly to the philosophical mind the indestructibility of matter, hence its immortality. The reasoning mind of man arises, asserts its superior claims and says: "Is the inanimate substance, which knows nor feels nothing and has no beauty nor life save as I move it, or breathe into it,—this poor clay—to enjoy the divine gift of immortality, and its ruler to be lost in the whirlpool of oblivion?" No! my instinct, my intuition, my spirituality have ever said, "Thou art immortal;" and now my reason joins in the common chorus, "Child of immortality thou shalt live for ever!"

When man, in his relations with his brother man, is governed by the divine principles of universal brotherhood, he has a more exalted standard of human excellence than even the golden rule can impart, for this, oftentimes, asks more sacrifice of him than he would require of his brother. The law of mutual dependence is a beautiful provision of prolific Mother Nature, for cementing the interests of mankind in one vast common cause. If any selfish individual strives to detach himself from the common stock of humanity, he finds he is but one link in the endless chain of universal brotherhood, dependent, not only on all the higher members, but just as much on all the lower ones in this indivisible body of it.

When you behold the vicious, the ignorant, the degraded around you, do not spurn them from your presence, but remember, in the economy of nature *that they are not only dependent on you for light and strength to come up higher, but you, too, must make of them a stepping stone for your future ascension.* Do not seek companionship among the low and vile, but do not bar them from the light of your better example. Ever be their friend and counsellor in word and deed, then shall the perpetual sunlight of universal love finally diffuse a warmth and radiance through their undeveloped souls; and the germ

of divine thought and feeling will burst the icy barrier of darkness and frost that has enveloped them, and sparkle in the firmament of immortal being.

The law of progress is the fundamental principle of physical nature. The infant develops into the man of strength and agility. The thread-like shoot, which the eye can scarcely discern and the careless foot might trample on, becomes the majestic forest tree which the elements contend against for centuries in vain. The bud is transformed into the flower, the flower becomes fruit, the fruit yields seed after its kind, which in its turn multiplies many fold. Thus the whole mighty material structure, including worlds, suns, and solar systems, is progressively unfolding from lower forms of development up to the higher.

When the material form has reached the summit of its interior strength and power, it stands, for a season, a monument to the creative power of nature. Then the spirit, which permeates and sustains it, gradually unclasps from its embrace and the inert matter is carried wherever the attraction of gravity is the strongest.

You might ask, "Where is the progression, since the material elements have all fallen back to their original condition?"

I reply: It is the *spirit* that reared them, that *reaped the benefit of their production*; that is seeking some higher form, by which to continue its own unfoldment. It is the spirit only, which fills all time and space, ever striving to individualize itself; the spirit only, that continues to live and progress, through all the changes of physical nature and of all her works!

Man possesses the only individualized spirit of the external world. In him the crude spirit of nature and the divine spirit of Wisdom meet, clasp hands and unite the temporal and eternal, in one common march, along the highway of Progression.

The Father of the Universe, that mighty omnipresent and all-pervading Power, which fills all space with life, light, love and wisdom! What can we, the created, know

of the Creator? Nothing but His manifestations through His works. We see His wonderful goodness in adapting all His creatures to their own peculiar condition and we love this divine attribute. We see His perfect wisdom and we adore. His infinite Love is dimly reflected in our own soul, by the mirror of our own imperfect love and this we worship. His unlimited power is displayed to us, and we fear and revere Him as the Author and Controller of our destiny. Thus we are led to fear, love and worship one unseen Supreme Being—of whom we know nothing, save that He is called God.

I have told only the oft repeated lesson of God's obscurity and immensity. The question now arises, "Is there a personal God? or is this indwelling Life and Power, but the divine elements of nature? Is nature the God, or only the outspoken language of Deity?"

These are grave questions and require God to solve them.

I am only a pilgrim on the highway of Progression. but, having advanced a little farther than yourselves, can say that I have seen no more of God here, than while on earth, save as my perceptions have grown clearer; and I can better appreciate the Father in His works as I increase more and more in spiritual knowledge. Since He fills all space He must be every where alike; yet He is individualized or He is nothing.

Hence my reason bids me believe in an individual God.

CHAS. BARTON.

Eighteen hundred, sixty-four.

SPIRIT-COMMUNION is the influx of faith and knowledge of a higher life, from the disembodied spirit to the spirit still clothed with earthly form; not the mere moving of inert matter or the little sayings thus imparted. Yet are we glad to meet you with a thought even in this imperfect way. What can we add to increase your love, faith and good will to your brother man,—to make you wiser, better, happier? I know no recipe for perfect bliss, except perfect labor and growth.

Will it help you in the stern duties of physical life to know that hosts of spirit friends attend you through every bitter trial, surrounding you with love and sympathy like a wall, to protect you from the sins of selfishness and passion?

Many friends are here. Though the veil is thin to our spiritual vision, to the physical eye, it is dark and impenetrable. How shall we rend it in twain,—how?

Your spirit friends send greeting. Good night.

QUERY. Are dark circles better than light for developing mediumship?

Answer. When all the members are pure and honest, darkness is a better condition than light.

WE respond. The invisible messengers of the spirit,—a host—attend you, all yearning for love left behind!

We would fain bring faith to the unbelieving; hope to the despairing; love to the mourning; and, above all,

knowledge and truth to the whole world, but we cannot. The cardinal virtues are of slow growth and must be cultivated long and diligently ere they can blossom and bear fruit in the spirit of man. Gold or jewels cannot purchase them, neither can they come to man simply for asking, but are the sure reward of continual culture.

The spirit-life is a continuation of earth-life, not merely the opening and closing of a door. It is putting off the worn-out robe of mortality and putting on the light, pure, yet imperishable garment of the spirit. This change of raiment forestalls a still greater change in the individual spirit itself, a change in all the habits, purposes and associations of life. The aims and pursuits must all meet with a radical and entire change.

Happy is that spirit who does not love too well the enjoyment of the flesh, for such pleasures cannot enter the realm of the spirit. Truly are we changed in the twinkling of an eye.

Are you tired of us? We could continue *ad infinitum*.

CHAS. BARTON.

OCT 11 1905

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

—*Ecclesiastes I-IX.*

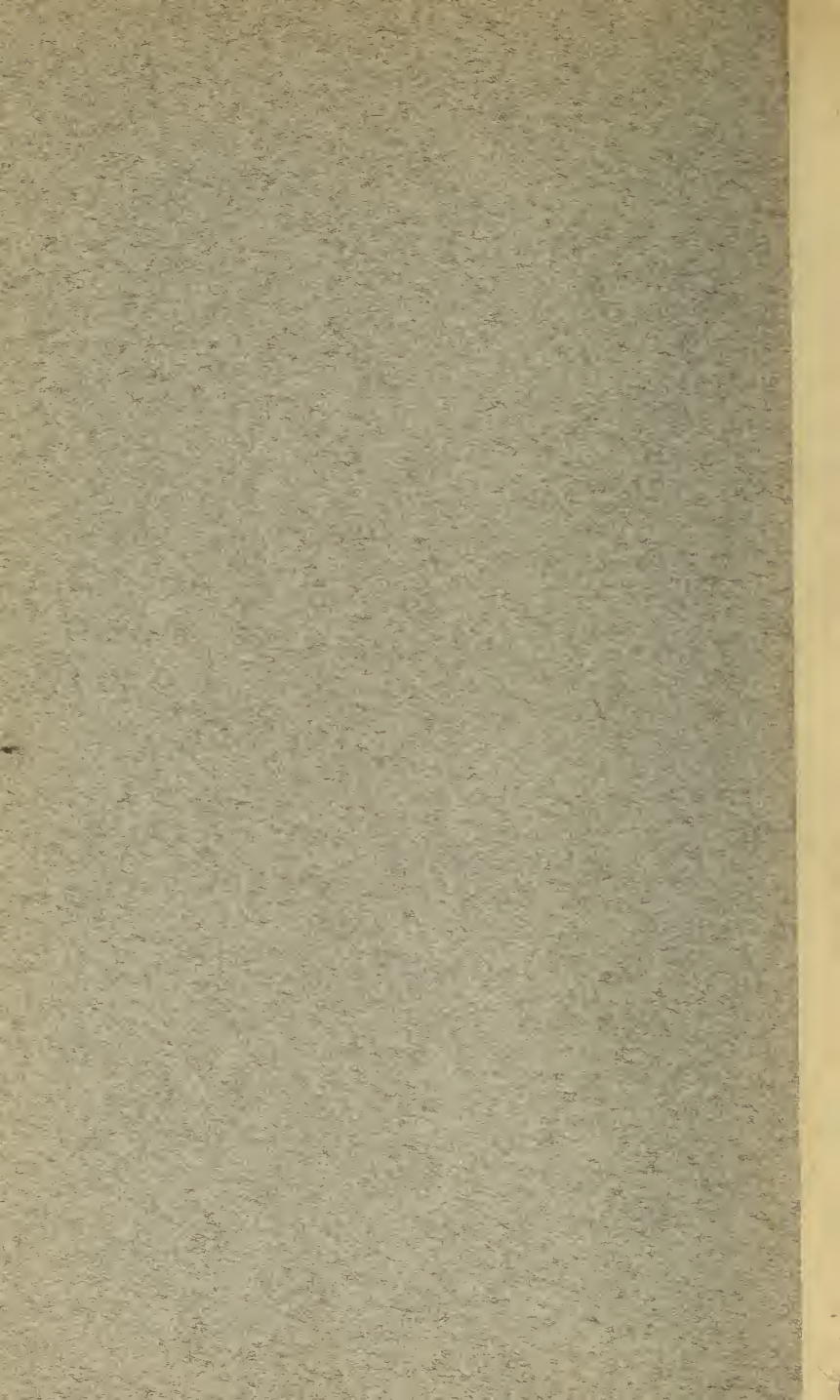
We give you a cordial hand-shake across the mystic line which, like the girdle-belt of the earth, exists only in conditions, not in space.

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