

SPIRITUAL TELEGRAPH

DEVOTED TO THE ILLUSTRATION OF SPIRITUAL INTERCOURSE.

"THE AGITATION OF THOUGHT IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM."

PARTRIDGE AND BRITTAN, PUBLISHERS AND PROPRIETORS, NO. 300 BROADWAY—TERMS, TWO DOLLARS PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE; SINGLE COPIES, FIVE CENTS.

VOL. II.—NO. 52.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 1854.

WHOLE NO. 104.

The Principles of Nature.

THE DOCTRINE OF NECESSITY.

The doctrine of necessity teaches that every act is the necessary and inevitable result or effect of some producing cause; that choice can not take place without some motive sufficient to compel that choice; and therefore it is impossible for man to be morally free, which would imply that the will determines itself without any compelling motive. In other words, that no man, with the same moral constitution and acted upon by the very same motives, could have done any thing else than what he did do. Let us merely glance for a moment at a few of the results of this truth in addition to what we said in a former article.

Of course, accountability and responsibility can have no place in such a system.

Praise and blame are philosophical only as motives to influence the future, and not to reward or punish the past. The same is precisely true of all rewards and punishments as attached to all acts—they may be motives to influence the choice or will, and nothing more.

"Not enjoyment and not sorrow
Is our destined end or way,
But to live, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day."

No more pain should be attached to a wrong act than is sufficient to prevent its repetition in future. Any thing more is, of course, cruelty. Hence it is obvious that a punishment that can do no good to the offender is useless and itself a wrong. Hence the absurdity, also, of the eternity of hell apart from the goodness of the Creator. In fact, all punishment looks only forward and secures the progression of the sufferer, and never backward to the past, to be philosophical and just. It is never retributory, but always preventive.

Fear only serves to keep our wrong impulses locked up within us, and does not destroy them and make us essentially better. He is only good who is so from pure love of good without hope of reward or fear of punishment, who loves virtue merely for itself. Is he a good citizen who is only kept from stealing by the fear of the jail, or by the expectation of being praised or rewarded in some other way for not being a thief? Still that fear or expectation may serve to keep the rogue from displaying what, nevertheless, exists in his heart. It keeps down the externals, but does not remove the internal causes. So he who is good only because he fears a future day of retribution or expects a reward for it in some future heaven is no more a really good man than the first is a good citizen. He is only externally good, and if all restraint was withdrawn, and there was no future hell or heaven awaiting his acts, he would be externally just exactly what he is internally and really.

As Goethe says, "Here or nowhere is your America," so here or nowhere is our heaven or hell. If God can not be proved just in this world, it will be hard to prove him so in any future one. He must be just to all his creatures every moment or he is for that moment not just. It needs no future life to make amends for any injustice here. Who will dare to deny this? Therefore I plainly assert that he alone is a good man who is so from mere love of goodness, and who would be just the same if he saw no evidence of any future at all, either of happiness or misery; who sees that goodness, or a life of genuine love or charity to all, is the true law of his own happiness here and now, without any thought of the future. Here is a touchstone for real and false virtue.

But what is virtue and what is vice in a man all of whose actions are necessary results of preceding causes, and who could not have done differently? What is good and what is evil? Who are the righteous and who are sinners in such a system? I am afraid that old Phariseism, or the desire to be on better terms with God than our poor Publican neighbor is, who is quite evidently to us a sinner, and in no favor at all with him, can not by any possibility find a place to suit its merits anywhere in this system. We are all saints and all sinners. We deserve really no praise and no blame for being what we are made to be; for our poor Publican and sinner down in the gutter there, had he been born with our moral constitution, and been educated, circumstanced, and situated just as we have been, and acted upon by the same motives that have acted upon us, would have done and been just what we righteous ones have. He would have been a saint as we are. On the other hand, had we been born from his ancestry, and had our moral constitutions been molded and made what his is by his education, circumstances, and situation, and then had we been tempted as he has been, I am afraid we should be the shunned wretch our poor brother is. No! there is not much room for Pharisee or Publican, for saint or sinner, in this system. We are all merely brothers together of one common, impartial Father, and are just exactly what we are made to be, and no more and no less. We are all atoms in the great body of humanity, and while each atom has its sphere of use, its happiness and welfare is bound up indissolubly in the happiness and welfare of each and every other atom in

the whole body. This expresses the true law of virtue and happiness. The actuating principle in every man, that moves him to every act whatsoever, is a desire and effort to be happy, which includes, also, the reverse, a desire and effort to escape misery. That is the moving power of all life and action. No one can by any possibility escape for a moment from its power. Upon it is built up by God each one's individuality. Upon it rests every action that ever took place. A true analysis of man would show that the only sure way in which this desire of happiness can be gratified is in promoting the welfare and happiness of every body else, just as the health of each atom in the physical body is bound up and only secured in the health and well-being of every other atom in the whole body, however remote and unconnected it may appear. It culminates in the great, essential law of Christianity, which sums up "all the law and the prophets," all the Scriptures, in the precept, "Love God in man." This is virtue, and God, and heaven, because it secures the greatest possible amount of happiness to the individual and to the community. This is virtue that fears no future hell and anticipates no future heaven as the effect of its action; for it is heaven now to make our brother happy, and it is hell now to be unjust and leave him in his need of us unhelped and uncared for! This is the effect attached by God to either course as a motive to our action to make us do right and avoid doing wrong.

All life is, then, an effort after happiness, and the various ways in which it is sought, as they are more or less in harmony with this Christ-principle of "love one another," from the lowest, most undeveloped Spirit up to the "rapt seraph" nearest God, are so many planes or degrees or spheres of happiness, so many heavens from lowest to highest. God made none for misery, but even the lowest to be as happy as its degree of development is capable of; for this desire to be happy he implants in every one, and makes it the actuating principle of every deed. The wretched miser you may not think happy, but he is happier in that miserable sphere than he would be with his present moral constitution in yours. In fact, it would be his hell to be obliged to give his needling brother the dollar which it is your heaven, your real luxury, to give. Every created thing occupies the very plane it is made to occupy, and enjoys as much happiness as it is capable of in that plane of development. Hence the miser, the drunkard, the debauchee, the bigot, the Pharisee, each and all, enjoy themselves with their present moral constitutions more in the spheres or heavens they occupy than they would in any other until that constitution becomes changed and more developed. But how inferior is the heaven of changing shillings into pounds to the heaven of changing tears into smiles! The desire of happiness is equally good in all; the mode in which it is sought makes all the difference. All are in their heaven, but what a difference in those heavens!

Virtue, then, in this system, is that course of action in each case that tends most to promote the universal good, or the general welfare, or the greatest happiness to the community. Vice is the opposite.

Let us see for a moment how the good and wise Ruler uses this motive-power in his creature, man, to secure his progress in good, which is the end of his creation. In the first place, he has implanted in the depths of every soul a conscience or moral sense by which he feels in his inmost heart that there is a right and a wrong in every action; also, that the right should be done and the wrong avoided. This moral sense distinguishes man from the mere animal. It is found in all human beings. But conscience does not teach in any given case what is right and what is wrong. This distinction must be noted. To teach us what is right and what is wrong reason is given us, and it is only by a true cultivation and unfolding of our wisdom or guiding faculties that we perceive more and more the proper relations between things, and thus have ever a more truthful standard of what is right. Conscience tells us to do what is right, and to avoid what is wrong. Reason tells us what is right and what is wrong; that right is, "love thy neighbor," or, "seek thy happiness in promoting the general happiness." If we obey and do what we think good and just and right, or what is most likely in our estimation to promote the general welfare, the kingdom of heaven springs up within us as an effect of our deed; our nature is developed, we are nearer perfection, and occupy a higher sphere, a happier heaven, than we did before. If we disobey the internal monitor, and seek our happiness by a course of action that reason tells us will not promote the general happiness, we are troubled and disturbed. The kingdom of hell is within us. Our nature is dwarfed, and we are further from perfection than before, and occupy a lower sphere or heaven than we did before. In the one case there is harmony between our conscience and reason, between the God within us and ourselves. This harmony is moral health, is happiness, is heaven. We are in the right road to progress, to perfection, to God. We are going upward. In the other case there is discord between our conscience and our reason; there is a strife to turn us right; there is jarring between the Divinity within and ourselves; the atom labors, not for the general happiness, but for itself alone, and so grows monstrous, and moral disease

occurs, to which God has attached in kindness and wisdom, as he has pain in physical disease, mental pain and misery and hell, if you please, and like the Word as the surest and kindest means to make us see and feel that something is as it should not be; that we are in the wrong path, and make us repent, reform, and do good, or labor for the general good.

Here let me say a word or two about good and evil, heaven and hell, happiness and misery, perfection and imperfection, righteous and sinner, health and disease, harmony and discord, and other such opposites.

There is no virtue or vice in any act whatever, merely in itself. Putting my hand into my neighbor's pocket is not wrong in itself, neither is it wrong to press my fingers together upon his purse there; neither is it sinful for me, then, to contract my muscles and withdraw my hand, and then to put it, with the purse in it, into my own pocket; neither is the wrong in the motive, for all motives, when traced back, ultimate in a "desire to be happy," which is certainly most legitimate and good. Where, then, is the wrong of stealing, or any other act? It is merely in this, that it tends, not to the happiness of my brother, or to the general welfare, but to the discomfort of society, and diminishes the general happiness. As I have said before, whatever tends to the health, comfort, harmony, and greatest happiness of society, is good and virtuous. That way is good, the other way is evil and wrong. But there can be no perfect good in society, or perfect evil, any more than there can ever be positively perfect good or perfectly evil individuals. We are ever, and must ever remain mixed, good and evil. As in nature there is nothing, however cold, but what has unknown degrees of heat in it—for you can find or imagine something much colder, and that first cold would then be warm, or even hot, when compared with the last; and as cold is thus only a lower degree of heat, and as heat alone is real, and positive, and existing—so vice or evil is only a lower degree of good; and none of God's creatures, no act, is absolutely evil but has unknown degrees of good in it. Ice is most surely a different thing in form from steam, but it differs not in essence, only in having less degrees of heat, and you can reduce the scalding, bursting vapor into the identical form of ice by withdrawing, little by little, some of its heat, and still you leave unknown quantities behind even in the rocky ice. Is it right to say, then, that the ice is positively cold? Would it not more accord with truth to say that it was only relatively cold? Can you not imagine ice of so much lower temperature, containing so much less heat (yet always some), that, then, compared with that still colder ice, the first should be warm? To make this analogy obvious to every mind, try the old experiment. Hold your hand for some minutes in water of the temperature of 40°; then suddenly put it into water heated to 80°. What does sensation say of this last degree of heat? It pronounces it decidedly warm. Hold the hand, then, some minutes in water heated to 130°, and then plunge the same hand into the same water that was before warm at 80°, and what does sensation say now? It pronounces it decidedly cold. Starting from any given degree upward, is heat; below, is cold. Heat alone is positive, for there is a positive source of heat; cold is only a lower degree or plane of heat, and is only relative. The sun radiates heat, and is the source of it, and thus heat positively exists. What radiates and is the source of cold, that it can also be positive and have a real existence? Science will be puzzled to find a positively cold substance differing in essence from one containing some heat. No! cold and hot substances differ only in more and less degrees of the same real, positive thing we call heat—a difference in quantity, not in essence. The same illustration might be made from light and darkness. Light is real and positive, and has an existence, but darkness is relative, negative, and has no real existence. They differ only in more and less; in quantity, not in quality or essence. Precisely thus is it with virtue and vice, good and evil, heaven and hell, happiness and misery, righteous and sinners. The first are all real, positive, and existing, because they are from God, who is the source of all things, and who is himself absolute good, and of course can only be cause of good, of virtue, of heaven, of happiness, of perfection, of righteousness, and of harmony. These alone have a real, positive existence. Vice, evil, hell, these are all negative and not positive, and have no real existence, for there is nothing to cause them unless there be an evil created as well as a good one. These can no more really have a positive existence than real, positive cold and darkness can exist from the causing sun. Vice is a lower degree of virtue—is virtue on a lower plane, just as cold is a lower degree of heat. Change the point of comparison, and the cold would become warm, or the warm cold, as we have seen. So with the unfolding and more expanded reason to teach us, that what it once pronounced right, or tending to the general happiness, it now pronounces wrong, or tending to the general suffering. What was once good and virtuous becomes now relatively evil and vicious. In a word, the candid mind confesses that there are and must be ever-increasing degrees of goodness from the very lowest of us up to those nearest God or perfection; and as the standard from which

we measure is what the ever-unfolding reason declares to be the best and surest means of promoting the general welfare, and as this is ever more and more elevated as our wisdom faculties are more and more unfolded, so what was once good, and virtue, and honor to us becomes relatively evil and hell. To the lowest Spirits all above them are better and happier just in proportion to their approximation to perfection or God. To the highest, all below them they have progressed through, and all these thus below them are relatively impure, imperfect, evil, and unhappy, just in proportion as they are farther and farther from God, from perfection. While, compared with Him who is ever infinitely above them, they deeply feel their own nothingness, whom we, in our ignorance, esteem perfect.

The truthful mind thus clearly sees that evil is not positive evil, but a relatively lower good, or what it pronounced good, when on a lower plane of development; that all hells are not positive hells, but relatively lower heavens, or heavens for those on a lower plane of development; that imperfection is not positive imperfection, but only perfection upon a relatively lower plane, just as certainly and necessarily as it admits that there is and can be no such thing in existence as positive, essential cold and darkness, while there is a sun to radiate heat and light; but that these are only relatively cold and darkness, when compared with some higher degree of heat and light. Heat and light exist; cold and darkness do not, for they can not. So good and happiness exist, but evil and misery do not and can not, except relatively. When real, positive, essential evil can be demonstrated, a real, positive cold substance will be found without a particle of heat in it, and not before. Heat, light, good, and happiness differ from cold, darkness, evil, and misery, not in essence, but in degree or plane. Is not this now evident to all? for if there be essential, real cold and darkness, what sun radiates that from which they derive their being and substance? and if there be essential evil and misery, from what God do they flow forth, and whence do they derive their being, and substance, and quality? In fine, all opposites are by their very nature relative, and differ only by one having more and the other having less of any given essence or quality; and the one can be converted into the other by the mere increase and diminution of that quality or essence. They mutually relate to an arbitrary, variable line or standard, and as that standard retrogrades or advances, the one becomes the other. I have not space to illustrate this, but I think it obvious already to most who will take a little time and care to reflect upon it.

In conclusion, I most positively assert, without fear of successful contradiction, that it is utterly impossible and absurd to compare or contrast any two things as opposites except there be a quality or essence common to each opposite. It is only by this common essence, by this identity of quality, that there can possibly be any relation between two opposites. Who has the folly to deny this? Who, then, will deny that good and evil can only be opposites—can only be related, compared, and contrasted by the essence or quality common to both, and which differ only in degree, not of discretion, but of more and less of this common nature, essence, and quality?

We are all atoms of the great body of humanity, and like the material atoms in the physical body, we each have our affinities to atoms most like to ourselves, and have our planes or spheres of use and enjoyment in this great body, which we can by no means escape occupying and fulfilling. We have been predestined, and made by infinite love, wisdom, and power, just what we are; and all that we shall ever be is equally predestined and sure; and that is, to progress upward and onward forever. The stone may be impelled for a few moments away from its center of attraction—the earth—but the great mass is ever acting upon it in its misdirection, and ultimately it brings it to rest upon its bosom. So man may appear for a time impelled away from God, away from his true path of progression and development; but as sure as God is good, and the only source of power, so sure is the wanderer to be turned in his misdirection, and to begin to move in the right direction upward and onward, and to continue thus ever accelerating in progression and expansion of all faculties and powers eternally; for he can never reach God, who is still ever infinitely above the most advanced. As each atom has also many spheres of use to its neighbor, to each organ, and to the whole system, so we each have many spheres of use. We have parents, and we must ever strive to be angels or messengers of God's love to them. We must labor to promote their welfare. We have children, and to them we must be the mediums of the Father's love and wisdom. We are husbands and wives, we are brothers and sisters, and relatives; and what fields of use and happiness we have here! We are neighbors, fellow-townsmen, countrymen, and we must seek our happiness in doing good as neighbor and citizen. We are judges, teachers, physicians, legislators, farmers, mechanics, merchants; and in all these relations to our fellow-men what spheres of usefulness, what opportunities of blessing our father-land, and promoting the general happiness and welfare, we are placed in. Finally, we are all, from highest to lowest, from best to worst, from most learned to most ignorant, from the most abounding in all

things to the most destitute of all things, equally the children of our Father in heaven. We are all common brothers bound up in the same glorious destiny, and linked inexorably together in weal or woe. Thus we must secure our own happiness by doing all the good we can to every other brother-man; for he can not suffer without our feeling the pain. It is in this way, and by this motive-power, that God effects ever-advancing improvement in individuals, in society, in nations, and in the world. The typhus fever is generated in the crowded, neglected, scorned lanes of our cities, and spreads up by degrees into the marble palaces, and there makes the wrongdoer feel the effect of his neglect of his poor brother. By the misconstruction of society, thieves, murderers, adulterers, misers, and all forms of evil, are generated and caused, and the wrong is repaid to society, to the neglect of his brother, by murder, theft, and all crime! All forms of evils in society, festering ulcers upon the body of humanity, are so many warning symptoms that there is something wrong in the conditions of that society, some lurking disease in its constitution, to force attention to the fact, to excite investigation into the causes that are producing these evils, and to force their eradication, just as physical pain compels the sufferer to find out what is producing his discomfort, and then his love of happiness compels him to remove these causes and to obey his nature's kind laws more faithfully. This will suffice to show how God, by these very evils that afflict society and humanity, is most surely and efficiently working to secure their gradual improvement and happiness. I close by cordially commending these fundamental truths to the earnest thought and practical application of all.

CHARLES H. CRAIG.

GEORGETOWN, D. C., April 2, 1854.

REALITIES OF SPIRIT-LIFE.

MESSRS. EDITORS:

In communing with my Spirit friends, I am in the habit of sometimes reading from Swedenborg, and other inspired writers, such passages as I do not understand, and asking from them an explanation.

I lately referred, in conversation, to the assertion made by Swedenborg, that angels [the term angel means only an inhabitant of the spirit-spheres] could read in our spiritual bodies a complete history of our whole natural lives, and that, too, with more minuteness than we ourselves could have recorded the events at the time of their occurrence.

This, I was told, was literally true of all our errors, both physical and mental, but no good deeds were ever recorded.

I asked if there was any thing in our lives here which corresponded to this record, and was answered, Yes; and the question was then asked, How do you grow old? I answered, By the natural decay of my physical system. What do you mean by the natural decay of your physical system?

Finding myself likely to be cornered by this mode of explanation, I asked the Spirit to define to me the correspondence between my growing old, and the history of all my errors, both physical and mental, as recorded in the spiritual body.

The Spirit replied, Every physical error of your life destroys or paralyzes one or more of the many millions of animal fibers which constitute your nervous system, the nervous fibers becoming dormant or inactive destroy your physical vigor, and reduce you, sometimes even in youth, to what you call old age.

If your animal economy could be restored to a perfect condition you would present none of the marks or appearance of old age in your outward form, neither would you feel any loss of animal strength or activity.

Now there is such an exact resemblance between our animal and spiritual bodies, that whatever injury is done to the former is equally an injury to the latter; not only so, but every mental error is equally destructive to the economy of mental sensation; hence, when you leave the form you carry along with you the effect of every mental and physical error, which amounts to a violation of any law of your organic or mental structure ever committed while you remain in the animal sphere.

These defects are not only visible to the observing Spirits, but you yourself can see them whenever you are disposed to make the examination.

I can not now make you comprehend how it is that the history of every error of your life is thus made legible by injuries inflicted upon your spiritual body, but you may be able to comprehend this before you leave the form.

I then asked if we were ever to be restored to a perfect condition? Yes. By what agency? By your own personal exertions. I then requested the Spirit to explain how we could restore ourselves by our own personal exertions, and received the following answer:

When our Spirits leave the animal form we still remain, to all our senses, as much human beings as we were before the separation, that is, we possess and exercise all our senses the same as we did while connected with the animal life; yet

SPIRITUAL TELEGRAPH.

S. B. BRITTON, EDITOR.

"Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 1854.

PRESENTATION OF THE MEMORIAL.

Many of our readers have already learned, through the Congressional reports published in the secular journals, that the Spiritualist's Memorial, signed by ex-Senator Tallmadge, and 13,000 American citizens, from every respectable profession and walk of life, was presented to the United States Senate on Monday last week, by Hon. James Shields.

It is proper to observe that very little effort was made to procure the names attached to the memorial. No persons were employed to canvass for that purpose, and it may be truly said that the 13,000, with comparatively few exceptions, signed the paper without solicitation. It is the opinion of many intelligent observers that the memorial represents, in some important particulars, the convictions and desires of more than 1,000,000 of the American people!

The friends of Gen. Shields will regret that he thought proper to ridicule the claims of the memorialists, and to treat a subject which deeply concerns them, and the human race at large, with undisguised mockery. But it is not for this that we are disposed to censure him. Any man who is wanting in the personal dignity and the clear understanding which a rational religion and a profound philosophy naturally confer, may do this if he has the inclination, and is willing to abide the world's final judgment of his character.

SPEECH OF HON. JAMES SHIELDS, OF ILLINOIS.

Some three or four weeks since ex-Governor Tallmadge, in behalf of the petitioners, and the great body of Spiritualists, had a personal interview with Gen. Shields, and learned from that gentleman's own lips that he would very cheerfully submit the memorial, and offer a motion for its reference to a select committee.

I beg leave to present to the Senate a petition with some 15,000 names appended to it, upon a very singular and novel subject. The petitioners represent that certain physical and mental phenomena of mysterious import have become so prevalent in this country and Europe as to engross a large share of public attention.

First. Of an occult force, which is exhibited in sliding, raising, arresting, holding, suspending, and otherwise disturbing ponderable bodies, apparently in direct opposition to the acknowledged laws of matter and transcending the accredited powers of the human mind.

Secondly. Lights of different degrees of intensity appear in dark rooms where chemical action or phosphorescent illumination can not be developed, and where there are no means of generating electricity or of producing combustion.

Thirdly. A variety of sounds, frequent in occurrence and diversified in character, and of singular significance and import, consisting of mysterious rapping, indicating the presence of invisible intelligence. Sounds are often heard like these produced by the prosecutor of mechanical operations, like the hoarse murmurs of the winds and waves mingled with the harsh, creaking noise of the masts and rigging of a ship laboring in a sea.

Fourthly. All the functions of the human body and mind are influenced in what appear to be certain abnormal states of the system by causes not yet adequately understood or accounted for. The occult force or invisible power frequently interrupts the normal operation of the faculties, suspending sensation and voluntary motion of the body to a deathlike coldness and rigidity, and diseases hitherto considered incurable have been entirely eradicated by this mysterious agency.

The petitioners proceed to state that two opinions prevail with respect to the origin of these phenomena: one ascribes them to the power and the intelligence of departed Spirits operating upon the elements which pervade all material forms; the other rejects this conclusion, and contends that all

these results may be accounted for in a rational and satisfactory manner.

The memorialists, while thus disagreeing as to the cause, concur in the opinion as to the occurrence of the alleged phenomena, and in view of their origin, nature, and bearing upon the interests of mankind, demand for them a patient, rigid, scientific investigation, and request the appointment of a scientific commission for that purpose.

I have now given a faithful synopsis of this petition, which, however unappreciated in itself, has been prepared with singular ability, presenting the subject with great delicacy and moderation. I make it a rule to present any petition to the Senate which is respectful in its terms, but having discharged this duty, I may be permitted to say that the prevalence of this delusion at this age of the world, among any considerable portion of our citizens, must originate, in my opinion, in a defective system of education, or in a partial derangement of the mental faculties, produced by a diseased condition of the physical organization.

I can not, therefore, believe that it prevails to the extent indicated in this petition. Different ages of the world have had their peculiar delusions. Alchemy occupied the attention of eminent men for several centuries; but there was something sublime in alchemy, the philosopher's stone, or the transmutation of base metals into gold, the elixir vitae, or "water of life," which would preserve youth and beauty, and prevent old age, decay, and death, were blessings which poor humanity ardently desired, and which alchemy sought to discover by perseverance and industry.

Roger Bacon, one of the greatest alchemists and greatest men of the thirteenth century, while searching for the philosopher's stone, discovered the telescope, burning glasses, and gunpowder. The prosecution of that delusion led, therefore, to a number of useful discoveries. In the sixteenth century flourished Cornelius Agrippa, alchemist, astrologer, and magician, one of the greatest professors of hermetic philosophy that ever lived. He had all the Spirits of the air and demons of the earth under his command. Pallas Jovius says that the devil, in the shape of a large black dog, attended Agrippa wherever he went.

Mr. WELLES—What does the Senator propose to do with the petition? Mr. PETTIT—Let it be referred to the three thousand clergymen. [Laughter.]

Mr. WELLES—I suggest that it be referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations. [Laughter.]

Mr. SHIELDS—I am willing to agree to the reference. Mr. WELLES—It may be that we may have to enter into foreign relations with these Spirits. [Laughter.] If so, it is a proper subject for the consideration of that committee.

Mr. SHIELDS—This is an important subject, and should not be sneered away in this manner. [Laughter.] I was willing to agree to the motion of the Senator from California, but I do not wish to send the petition to the Committee on Foreign Relations unless the Chairman of that Committee is perfectly satisfied that he can do the subject justice.

Mr. MASON—I really think that it has been made manifest by the honorable Senator who has presented the petition that he has gone further into the subject than any of us, and that his capacity to elucidate it is greater than that of any other Senator. I would therefore suggest to him that it should either go to a Select Committee on his motion, or be referred to the Committee on Military Affairs, of which he is Chairman.

Mr. SHIELDS—This is an important subject, and should not be sneered away in this manner. [Laughter.] I was willing to agree to the motion of the Senator from California, but I do not wish to send the petition to the Committee on Foreign Relations unless the Chairman of that Committee is perfectly satisfied that he can do the subject justice.

Mr. MASON—I move that the petition lie upon the table. Agreed to. In his attack on the claims of Spiritualism, Mr. Shields omits citing any recent examples of supposed spiritual agency, and finds the illustrations best suited to his purpose within the shadows of the middle ages.

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The report of Mr. Shields' speech and the succeeding observations by the other Senators appeared in the *Intelligencer* of the 18th inst., and called forth the following

LETTER FROM EX-SENATOR TALLMADGE.

MESSES. GALES AND SEATON:

My attention has been attracted to the proceedings of the Senate, published in the *Intelligencer* of this morning, on the presentation of a memorial by Gen. Shields, signed by myself and 13,000 citizens of the United States, on the subject of "Spiritual Manifestations." The memorialists ask Congress to appoint a scientific commission to investigate these extraordinary phenomena.

When I first spoke to Gen. Shields about presenting this memorial to the Senate, he treated it with great courtesy, and expressed his willingness to move its reference to a Select Committee. Without expressing any opinion in favor of the spiritual theory, he agreed with me that, whether spiritual or philosophical, it was worthy of investigation.

The General is pleased to characterize these manifestations as a "delusion." Now, I do not pretend to any extraordinary power to understand a subject more than other men whose position in life would indicate a talent equal, if not superior, to my own.

But if it be a "delusion," then the greater necessity of investigating it and showing it to be such. I have as great an interest in ascertaining that fact as any other man. If it be "spiritual," there is much less necessity for its investigation, because its march will be onward, and no human power can resist it.

I hope, therefore, that the "lame and impotent conclusion" to which the Senate arrived, of laying the memorial on the table may be reconsidered, and that it may receive that consideration which its importance demands.

Respectfully, yours, N. P. TALLMADGE.

WASHINGTON, April 18, 1854.

On the day following Gen. Shields responded briefly as follows:

SENATOR SHIELDS IN SELF-VINDICATION.

WASHINGTON, April 19, 1854.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER: Gentlemen—Hon. N. P. Tallmadge, in his letter in your paper of today, does me injustice, which I presume is unintentional. When he requested me to present his petition, I assured him in a few words that I was no believer in "the spiritual theory," and, in addition, that I could not see upon what principle it could be either referred to or considered by a Select Committee.

Second Letter from Mr. Tallmadge.

The note of Gen. Shields in the *Intelligencer* of this morning requires a few remarks from me. He assumes that there was a misunderstanding on my part as to his willingness to move the reference of the memorial to a select committee. Let your readers judge of this from the circumstances in the case.

The primary object was to have the memorial presented by a Senator who would move a select committee, and who, of course, would be chairman of it, and, by the very motion, would signify his willingness to take charge of it. The subject was peculiarly one for a select committee, because there was no standing committee to which it could be appropriately referred.

It was on the suggestion of this Senator that I called on Gen. Shields. Impressed with the importance and the necessity of a select committee, can it be for one moment presumed that I could misunderstand the honorable gentleman, and leave the memorial in his charge, when I knew the great object I had in view could not be accomplished!

Why, a Senator of any experience would, I should suppose, have no doubt or difficulty on that subject. The gentleman, as the proceedings of the Senate show, was willing to have it referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations; and if it was proper to refer it to a standing committee, was it not equally proper to refer it to a select committee?

as the proceedings of the Senate show, was willing to have it referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations; and if it was proper to refer it to a standing committee, was it not equally proper to refer it to a select committee? When I say equally proper, I mean so far as a mere reference and a consideration of the subject were concerned. What are the objects of a select committee? They are two. First, where the subject, although appropriate to a standing committee, is of that magnitude and importance to require the more deliberate and thorough investigation of a select committee, which is burdened with no other reference, and in the constitution of which the talent of the body best suited to the investigation may be combined; secondly, where the subject is not appropriate to a standing committee, but is peculiarly appropriate to a select committee.

The clear understanding, therefore, on my part, was that Gen. Shields would present the memorial and move its reference to a select committee. How could I understand it otherwise when that was the very object of the application to him? Any other conclusion would make me stultify myself. Nothing can be an unprejudiced mind in this view of the case come to any other conclusion.

But, again, if the honorable gentleman did not intend to move the select committee, why did he not indicate that intention in a manner that could not be misunderstood? He knew perfectly well, or ought to have known, that the select committee was the great object I had in view; and can he suppose that I would have placed the memorial in his hands if I could have imagined that it was to receive the treatment it did? Most assuredly not.

I hope, therefore, that the "lame and impotent conclusion" to which the Senate arrived, of laying the memorial on the table may be reconsidered, and that it may receive that consideration which its importance demands.

The result will show whether the attempted ridicule will do them or react on himself. I will only add that there are names on that memorial which do not shrink in comparison with any member of the honorable Senate—names that have adorned the Bar, the Bench, and the Senate Chamber, and of the hardy sons of toil, whose brawny hands and sinewy arms have been thus fashioned by the industrial perseverance of life; names the representatives of two millions of believers in the United States; names of those "who know their rights and, knowing, dare maintain" them.

CONCLUDING REMARKS BY THE EDITOR. The letters of our honorable friend are wisely conceived and admirably expressed. They will be the means of calling general attention to the subject, while the profane and vulgar spirit of the opposition will be rebuked, and the vindicated. The serious tone and civil severity of Mr. Tallmadge are peculiarly adapted to correct the bad habits of titled ignorance and arrogance, and will impose a salutary restraint precisely where it is most needed.

Another they continue to run their devoted heads against, in spite of their best friends. Those who have reputations brains stand a chance to lose what they have by this experiment, as they are sure to find an immovable rock where they only look for yielding and impalpable vapors.

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every sense is very much intensified; we see more clearly; we feel more acutely; our desires are stronger, and our passions less controllable.

A proper exercise of all our appetites and passions is as essential to our happiness here as it is to yours there, and we soon perceive the necessity of reducing them to the order and requirements of nature.

Upon our arrival here our friends immediately instruct us into the mode of restoring the paralyzed and dormant fibers of our bodies. This is done by making various manipulations and passes upon different parts of our bodies, as I have already informed you, the effect of which is to restore the perfect circulation of the nervous fluid; for upon this depends the healthful condition of the body.

The Spirit who enters the Spirit-world at three-score years and ten, presents, in his spirit-life, all the appearance of age which characterized him in the animal life. As the fibers of his body are restored to a healthful condition, by the free and uninterrupted circulation of the nervous fluid, the marks of old age disappear; and when the process of renovation is completed, the spiritual body presents the appearance of perfect health and manhood, corresponding to the age of twenty-five in the animal sphere.

The above comprises a portion of the information which I have received upon this subject. I have proposed numerous questions, to which answers have been received confirmatory of what is written above, but accompanied with the assurance, that it falls very far short of conveying to my mind a just conception of Spirit-life and progress.

N. SAWYER.

THE SPIRITS AT FOND DU LAC.

The following letter would have appeared before, but it was mislaid and forgotten. It is not without interest now.

MESSES. PARTRIDGE AND BRITTON: Gentlemen—I have been an attentive reader of the TELEGRAPH since the commencement of the second volume, and have read much that is both pleasing and instructive.

We, here in the West, have been making some progress toward the development of "mediums" and the spread of our "glorious religion" among the masses, free-thinkers, etc., for as yet the advocates and followers of the "old orthodox theology" stand aloof, and look down with scorn and pity upon him who dares to think for himself.

But a short time since I attended a circle known here as the "Lodge Circle," the mediums were a lady of good intelligence, amiable disposition, and undoubted veracity, well known in this vicinity, who speaks and writes under the influence, and is considered a good "medium"; also a rapping "medium" of ordinary interest, but a truthful, industrious, and hard-working man, and the best rapping medium we have here.

On the evening in question there were present upward of twenty persons, some of whom, I was informed, had never seen any manifestations whatever. After some writing, singing, rapping, etc., the "Spirits were asked if they would produce "music!" the answer was, "We will try," and for the circle to keep quiet. After waiting some eight or ten minutes, we heard the sound (what some, who had heard it before, called a horn) of what appeared to me to resemble the sound of the whistle of a locomotive; a great way off; the sound itself, when I first heard it, appeared to be over a mile from the house. It came nearer and nearer, and but very little louder, until, as it were, it entered the room, when the sound changed to that of several instruments being played together—the rapping signifying that singing was required.

A short time since, a young man, a lawyer of this city, of finished education, and talent far above mediocrity, became somewhat suddenly developed as a speaking and writing medium, and when he shall have become fully developed, you may look for communications from this direction that will be equal to any received through the best media in the country. Of late, when influenced, he takes the floor, and with eyes closed, and gestures of the most accomplished elocutionist and orator, will speak from fifteen to twenty minutes at a time, and sometimes three and four times during the evening. The burning eloquence that falls from his lips would make a deep impression upon the public mind if they could hear him, but for the present the "Spirits do not permit any visitors being introduced into the circle. The "Spirits" that usually influence him, are Henry Clay, William Pitt, George Fox, and others of considerable note when living.

The Universalist minister of this place takes those passages from the Scriptures relating to Spiritualism, of old, for his texts, and preaches good spiritual sermons. When the Bible can be made to see that the Scriptures are filled with Spiritualism, then, and not till then, can those who have wrapped themselves in sectarianism be reached, or the veil drawn from their eyes so that they may see things in their true light.

If the facts herein related should be deemed worthy of a place in your paper, I will, in my next, give an account of the "Spirit-lights" and the visits of the "undeveloped Spirits" which have been made in the Stock-bridge settlement; also an account of the interesting "medium" who, under the control of the Spirit of an Italian actor, sings *impromptu* most beautifully; also some of her visions, which, if given entire, you will find fully equal to any that are given by Judge Edmonds in "Spiritualism."

Yours, in the faith, S. B. BRITTON.

SENTELES PARRISHON—The Belfast Journal (a Maine paper), says that a portion of the Penobscot river, a short distance above Prospect Ferry, where the river widens to the breadth of a mile, a great commotion was discovered in the water several months since, so that the surface was much disturbed, and stones and earth seemed to be thrown up from the bottom. This upholding still continues at intervals, and experiments show that at least an acre of the river bed has sunk from a depth of seven to a depth of fourteen fathoms. A sulphuric gas is emitted from the water during its periods of commotion, and it is said that two distinct shocks of an earthquake have occurred since the commencement of the phenomena. These disturbances are undoubtedly of volcanic origin, though the phenomenon is very remarkable for this region.

