GHOSTS THAT ARE GHOSTS.

A GODDESS OF FLOWERS SEEN BY MR. OLCOTT IN BOSTON.

The Most Astonishing Mediumship Yet—Flowers, Plants, Birds, and Butterflies brought to Mrs. Thayer's Guests—A Haunted House and a Banquet with the Ghosts.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir*: The Imperial University of St. Petersburg, prompted thereto by the strange experiences, during the past season, of two of its professors—Wagner, the great zoologist, and Boutlerow—with a French medium named Brédif, has decided to make a thoroughly scientific investigation of the physical phenomena called spiritual manifestations.

The Society of Experimentalists in the Physical Sciences, a body existing within the University, has assumed charge of this matter, and a sum of money is to be appropriated to meet the necessary expenses. The Hon. Alexandre Aksakow, Counsellor of State in the Imperial Chancellery, has accepted the duty of inviting famous mediums of various countries to present themselves before the commission and display their alleged psychical phenomena, under test conditions. This gentleman has done me the honor to request me to act, in conjunction with a Russian lady of great learning and high social position, now resident in this country, Madame H. P. Blavatsky by name, as his American representative, and recommend through him to the University such persons, of the class described, as we may think worthy of being asked to attend the coming seances in the Russian capital. With this object in view, I recently visited Boston, to witness the beautiful phenomena which were said to occur in the presence of Mrs. Mary Baker Thayer, of 12 Pembroke street; and, for the information of your readers, which is almost the same as to say the public, I shall now give a fair and impartial account of what I saw.

POINTS FOR INVESTIGATION.

It will be readily conceived that the circumstances of the case made me more than usually cautious in my observations and conclusions. It was necessary to become satisfied pretty thoroughly upon several points, for instance: 1. As to Mrs. Thayer's antecedents. 2. Her personal character. 3. The strength of her manifestations, and whether uniform or subject to periodicity. 5. The conditions indispensable to their occurrence, and especially whether they could only be produced in a certain house or room, of a peculiar magnetic, electric or other atmosphere, or whether they could be observed indifferently in any house or place whatsoever. 6. And as might be said, primarily, whether they were real phenomena, or only exhibitions of clamorous imposture.

It would be the height of folly for any one with a reputation at stake to send off to so distant a country and before such an inexorable tribunal, a medium who might prove dishonest, malicious, or even hysterical at the critical moment should arrive, in spite of all the precautions imposed on her. I addressed myself to my task, then, with as impartial a spirit as it was possible for any one to feel; knowing nothing of the medium beyond newspaper report, and caring absolutely nothing for the sakes of my reputation for the issues of my experiments. I shall doubtless give your readers the most intelligible and satisfactory idea of the results by taking up my points seriatim, and describing the evidence collected under each head.

First, as to her antecedents. I had not to search for to find acceptable witnesses to attestate her personal good character. Some ladies and gentlemen, as trustworthy as any in Boston and occupying as good social positions, certified to having known her for several years—some for nearly half a dozen years—and their sincerity, excellence as a medium, and integrity was unanimous. The lady in question, who lives on a fashionable square at the South End, had employed her as a dressmaker for ten years before she became a public medium, and having been an eye witness of every stage of her progress in this direction, unequivocally testified that a more transparently honest woman she never knew.

WHAT WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON SAYS.

Mr. William Lloyd Garrison had seen evidences of her rare power under test conditions, and had full confidence in her good faith. A partner in one of the most numerous publ houses of New England had shared Mr. Garrison's opportunities and arrived at the same conclusions. Mr. Charles Houghton, the well-known lawyer, and his wife joined with the others, and gave me the benefit of their seances, which alone would have convinced a skeptic that he was not dealing with a wilful impostor; and so I might proceed to catalogue a score of her well-wishers, whose names if appended to a certificate of bad character would effectually damn a person in the eyes of all Christendom, and whose testimony in her favor cannot be ignored.

But the strongest evidence that Mrs. Thayer could present to my scrutiny was her own bonny face. It is an open, frank face; marked with the lines of care, but wearing a shade of wariness, and indicating more of passivity than of force, of amiability than aggressiveness, but inviting confidence. She must have been a beauty once. Her head is of moderate size, oval, well arched in the crown, and the proportion of crown to base symmetrical. Her hair is dark chestnut; eyes blue, complexion fair, mouth pretty, nose straight, face oval, height five feet six inches, and, with increasing years and a sedentary life, she has grown stout enough to turn the scale at 180 pounds. Her ways are as soft—not masculine or strident, as are those of many of our modern pythonesses—and her manners are free from embarrassment or affectation. I have been particular as to these details, for these very details go a great way toward helping us to estimate the person we have to deal with.

A PAGE OF FAMILY HISTORY.

In all my investigations of spiritual mediums I have been carefully to inquire as to the credits of the psychical power; for a discussion with Dr. Charles Elam, in England, five years ago, and the subsequent reading of his work entitled "A Physician's Problems," made me very anxious to discover whether these temperamental peculiarities were transmissible from generation to generation, like the physical and moral qualities. In the case of the Eddys and Mrs. Compton, the greatest mediums I ever saw, this appeared to be the fact, and Mrs. Thayer presents no exception to the rule.

She was born in the township of Concord, Maine, of rustic parentage, Dec. 11, 1836. Her mother was of Scotch descent, and her paternal grandmother, Mrs. Baker, came from England. Her mother was a seeress, a physical medium, and, among other mediumistic faculties, *had foretold her grandchildren the coming of her* invisible powers. One day in midwinter, when Mary was about ten years old, she and her two brothers, one older and the other younger than herself, were about to start for their school, when they came out of the house, weeping, and holding in her hand a freshly plucked blush rose, which she said was brought to her from heaven as a sure warning of the death of one of her playmates. The farm was in the heart of the Maine woods, the snow lay thick upon the ground, and there was not a flower pot in the house, nor a greenhouse within many miles, but the children saw nothing ominous in the fragrant flower, only thanking the angels for bringing them something so pretty. Mary recalls how they talked it over among themselves as they trudged through the snow that morning, and laughed at their mother's fears that at worst one of such a tough lot as they should die. But the first scholar they spoke to, youngest brother of all sickened and died before spring of a malignant fever.

She was always having these forewarnings—was this mother of theirs. Sometimes there would come a heavy knock upon the door, and no one there when they would look; sometimes the tread of invisible feet would be heard overhead; and before John died, as they were together one evening, there came a crash against the side of the house, as though some invisible Sandemonian had thrown a shovelful of coarse gravel with all his force. The mother did more. She saw the forms of dead relatives stalk through walls, partitions, and closed doors, and would talk to them in a way to make a superstitious skeptic's blood curdle.

FAIRY PLAYMATES.

And the children soon began to have their own experiences of the same sort. Elbin boys and girls used to come for several time together (as they were as real to them as unreal to all others) every day or two, and play with them hours together; and they were up to all sorts of pranks, hiding the playthings so cunningly, sometimes, that they would give them up for lost, and then suddenly bringing them back again; and often after the children were in bed, these mischievous creatures would carry off their clothes and put them up in the crotch of some neighboring tree. They had heard the old people talk about witches, and so, for want of a better name for them, they called their spirit playmates "the witches," and were careful not to offend them, but keep in favor by putting aside bits of their candy and cake, which were duly carried off, and the receipt acknowledged at the next meeting. Once Mary had a knotty example in arithmetic to do for the next day's recitation, and laid the slate aside in despair of working the problem, but in the morning she found it all done, and won the medal offered as a prize.

So things went on more or less incessantly, and gradually becoming more insignificant in character, until her marriage to Anson H. Thayer of South Braintree, Mass., which occurred in 1856. When her first child was three weeks old, the bed in which she lay was lifted clear of the floor, and the nurse, running in, saw it gently settle down again to its place. She began after a while to have her mother's experience as to portents, knowing, by various mystic signs, of impending deaths or other calamities. Before her husband's decease she saw a bright light shine in her room, and in its centre his face, which, as any of Mrs. Crowe's readers will admit, is considered to be a genuine forerunner of death.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

Left a widow, with two children to support, she had to take to dressmaking, and it was not so very long after this that the Boston lady above referred to (whom I am permitted to say is Mrs. Doctor Brigham, daughter of the famous missionary, "Father" Taylor) encountered her. In 1865 Mrs. Thayer was forewarned that in course of time she would have to pass through a dangerous sickness, during which "something very wonderful in the way of mediumship" would come to her. The prophecy came true in 1872, when she was prostrated down with gastric fever, and lay at the point of death. In her ravings she turned prophetess, announcing the great Boston fire, and timing in advance every visit of her physician to the very minute. Upon her recovery she went to live in the capacity of housekeeper with one Mme. Barker, an old lady who kept a dancing school in the chateau like mansion on Washington street, known as the Deacon House. (The Bostonians pronounce it Dee-Kahn.) This is a great, rambling structure, occupying a whole square of ground, which was built some thirty years ago by an impecunious son in law of the late Peter Parker, who liberally invested that gentleman's money in a residence fit for a Norman Seigneur. The fine house did not bring good luck, for Deacon died, his wife lost her reason, and the place was shut up for a time at ten years, becoming meanwhile, it seems, the roosting place of a troop of ghosts, who made its empty rooms ring with noises calculated to send the belated bypasser in panic to the other side of the street. It got such an ill name that when the family were ready to rent it no tenant could be found, until the valiant Mrs. Barker installed herself, and in due course received Mrs. Thayer as housekeeper, as before stated.

TERRIFYING PHENOMENA.

Bad as things were before, they now became ten times worse. The spirits would open locked and bolted doors and slam them, carry articles along corridors and from one locked room to another, and the dead Deacon and other uncanny prowlers would once in a while show themselves. But the plucky women stood it like veterans, and soon Mrs. Thayer's new mediumship asserted itself. Mrs. Brigham and other friends would drop in, and they would improvise "circles" about a table and get all sorts of startling physical manifestations, such as the floating of the table in the air, the lifting of Mrs. Thayer, chair and all, upon the table, the bringing of coats and hats from the hall tree into the room, and I have actually been told by two eye witnesses that the medium herself was whisked away in a moment, and immediately was heard knocking *outside* the locked door and calling for admittance. This is tough, but wait until I have finished!

Dr. Garrison was a visitor at this period, and from his lips, as well as from those of Mrs. Brigham, and the merchant previously alluded to who, I am sorry to say, has not the courage to tell what he has seen, and I let those who don't like it please themselves), I received the particulars which follow as to a

BANQUET OF THE GHOSTS,

which occurred in the month of October, 1872, in this Boston Otranto.

One evening by preconcert a supper was spread in the dining room for twelve persons. The table cloth was chosen by the spirits themselves, and there was as brave an array of linen, glass, silver, and china as though the ghostly banqueters had not passed out of the sphere of finger bowls and damask napkins. There was a cunningly fashioned cheese, with rice, bread, an assortment of cakes, grapes, and other fruit, candy, and a bottle of wine. A memorandum was taken by Mrs. Brigham of the number of each article, and after a last glance at the table the mortals retired. Mr. B. T. Stephenson locked the door and fastened it with a screw, and Mr. Wm. Lloyd Garrison, and the spectres were left to themselves.

The company numbered eighteen ladies and gentlemen, and by desire of the spirits they retired to another room fifty feet from the dining room, locking two doors behind them, and assembled about another table in the centre of the orthodox circle. The gas was extinguished, and they sat in silence and darkness for some two minutes, when suddenly some spirit object was heard to drop upon the tinplate which had been placed for use, as it pelting or at small, hard missiles were being scattered about. A light was called by the raps, and then the astonished sitters discovered before them the veritable bottle of wine they had left in the dining room, with part of the wine gone and the cork drawn. The bottle was handsomely ornamented, and had been placed upon the table, and upon its cork remained the dust which they had not brushed off. Scattered about were pieces of broken candy and sugar plums, one leg of the chicken, and portions of the cake and fruit, while in the bosom of a lady's dress had been deftly thrust a wine glass. Returning to the dining room, they found by actual count that when they added the articles brought to them to those remaining in the dishes and upon the sideboard, the number was exact. No wine—perhaps a third of the bottle—had disappeared, and in every glass was a heel tap that seemed to indicate that the jolly elves, or bacchantes rather, had pledged their mutual health after the fashion.

They then placed the bottle again upon the table and seated themselves about the board, pushing their chairs about a foot or two back from the same, and joining hands after putting out the gas. By the glimmer of the fire in the stove they saw spectral hands detached from any body, flitting hither and thither over the surface of the table, taking things out of the dishes and putting them upon the plates, and occasionally tossing a candy, cake, or fruit into some lady's lap. Then they saw pulled the slippers of one lady's feet and the boots of another's, and fling them against the door; and finally wound up the banquet, as many another of mortal kind has concluded, by dragging the cloth off the table and tumbling the crockery in a mess on the floor.

A CHARMING MEDIUMSHIP.

But these manifestations, although twice repeated, were less to be accredited to Mrs. Thayer's mediumship than the surcharged atmosphere of this haunted house. Her mediumship is far more attractive than this; the spirits bring her flowers, fruits, and birds, of all sorts and kinds. Its beginning was apparently unpremeditated, and occurred in this wise: One evening Mrs. Baker, Mrs. Thayer, and a visiting gentleman sat around a table reading an account from an English Journal of the flower phenomena of Miss Nicholl (now Mrs. Guppy) of London; whereupon the visitor remarked how pleasant it would be if they, too, could have flowers brought to them. Mrs. Thayer assented, saying that she had had a passionate love for flowers since she was a child. They agreed to try if the spirits would not gratify them, so the gas was turned off, and presently they smelt the perfume of a flower. Joyfully they lit the gas, and there lay a full-blown tuberose, which I take to be a very curious choice of avant-courier to the multitude of flowers which have since made their appearance, for it typifies voluptuousness, according to the authorities. But stop! Perhaps I am hasty, since it is of Oriental origin, and so in that sense fitly indicates the source from which we get not only all our Spiritualism and much of our Black Magic, but pretty nearly everything else we know or are ever likely to discover. One of Moore's prettiest verses says:

> The tuberose, with her silvery light,
> That in the gardens of Malay
> Is called the "Night-blowing Queen" of the night,"
> So like a bride, &c., &c.

However, we are after facts, so I will not dip into poetry, although the pudding is better for an occasional plum.

This auspicious beginning was followed up with natural assiduity, the casual visitor regularly taking a seat herself as a member of the impromptu circle. One evening he asked the spirits to bring him one pink for each child he had in the other world, and straightway three were dropped on the table, each stem varying in length from the others, to express, as it was said, the relative ages of the children. The next phase was the dropping of flowers in the daytime, a lovely Bonne Céline rose falling at Mrs. Brigham's feet as she stood talking to Mrs. Thayer.

SHOWERS OF FLOWERS.

The flowers now began to come more numerously, until finally they fell in perfect showers, albeit it was the dead of winter, and the medium was too poor to purchase them from greenhouses out of her wage of $4 or $5 per week, even if she were so minded. Mrs. Brigham tells me that probably not less than $400 or $500 worth were brought in this way that season, and not a cent was charged any visitor for the seances. Besides flowers of every imaginable variety, some very rare and expensive, and many unfamiliar to all but the most learned botanists, living canary birds, doves, butterflies, birds from the wild woods, goldfish, a toad, lumps of Quincy granite, and pebbles of different kinds were dropped in their presence, and one evening a unique addition was made to their collection in the shape of a smoking cap, which the unseen carriers brought from the house of Mr. Emerson, 16 Chester square.

Of course this sort of thing could not go on long without creating a great talk, and the poor woman was finally obliged to give up all other employment for that of a public medium. So she began with weekly circles, which were changed to semi-weekly ones, and so have continued to the present time. This brings us to a peculiarity of our third point, viz.: Whether the manifestations are subject to periodicity, which from my personal observation I can answer in the negative. The testimony of all the hundred persons with whom I have talked about these seances confirms my own conclusion that the phenomena occur at one time as well as another, except that the presence of certain persons seems to destroy the conditions most effectually. Prof. Wagner remarks upon the same circumstance in his highly interesting and scientific report of the Brédif seances of last winter, a translation of which has recently been published in the *Spiritual Scientist*, of Boston; Prof. Tyndall sneeringly alludes to it in his letter to the London Dialectical Society; and a very well-known Professor of Philology in an English university who has given great attention to the subject writes me, in a letter just received, that he has known of the phenomena of a most promising circle being completely stopped by the mere entrance into the house, not even in the room, of a person antagonistic to the experiments, and that Crookes had told him that Florence Cook had been spoiled for a seance by merely brushing against the people she encountered in a stroll down Regent street. The fact is that our conceited scientists do not yet know the A, B, C of psychology, and if we desire knowledge we must dig it out for ourselves; they are too busy with their bugs and tadpoles to give attention to so trifling a subject as the psychical powers of man.

STRIKING TESTS FOR COL. OLCOTT.

As to our fifth point, there can be no room for doubt. Mrs. Thayer's phenomena occur equally well in all houses and even out of doors. In a proper state of the atmosphere, and in the presence of favoring conditions as to the persons present, she can often receive into her hand, thrust out of the window of an upper room, flowers and birds, and I have had both brought to me, in daylight and gaslight, in the elegant house of Mr. Charles Houghton, in West Roxbury, where both she and I were guests, and where fraud or collusion was impossible. By daylight I sat with her in the dining room, behind a simple curtain of black glazed muslin, hung across a corner, and while I held both her hands, a fragrant crimson rose was dropped in my lap; by the bright light of the hall chandelier, as she sat upon the stairs, and I stood within two feet of her, realizing to her that most vivid passage in chapter vii. of "Zanoni," where Glyndon encounters the Dweller of the Threshold, a young canary suddenly sprang from my head and flew toward the closed door, where I caught him, and I have him now. As to the rose, I must remark that it was uncrumpled, freshly plucked, and its petals glistened with dewdrops; while as to the canary, that it was *apparently* one of a young brood from the cage of a friend in Philadelphia, brought by the invisibles in compliance with my secret request, and since identified by the lady as the bird which suddenly disappeared from the cage some days previously.

A SEANCE IN BLACK'S PHOTOGRAPH GALLERY.

I have also talked with Mr. Black, the well-known Boston photographer, about a seance held in his gallery one evening, at which some fifty persons were present, and at which many flowers were brought; and with an editor who met Mrs. Thayer at the house of a brother journalist, where flowers, birds, and gold fish were brought by the invisibles, and the medium and her chair were lifted up, as he held her hands, and placed upon the table.

When the canary was brought to me we were alone. My reading was interrupted by an ejaculation from her, and upon looking at her face I saw it turn deathly pale; her eyes closed; she raised her two hands as if to grasp something over my head, and at the instant and before they could reach the spot, the bird flew away, as previously described. The palms of her hands were turned toward me, and I saw them from the commencement of the movement until they dropped in her lap, so that I can positively testify that no mortal hand touched the bird until he lay panting and fluttering within my grasp.

WHAT A PUBLIC SEANCE IS LIKE.

The first public seance I attended was at her house, on the evening of July 4, and the company numbered seventeen persons, twelve ladies and five gentlemen. An extension dining table with the leaves in ran diagonally from corner to corner of the back parlor, which communicated by folding doors with the adjoining room. Mrs. Thayer seated herself at the centre of the table with her back to the mantel, and the rest of us were placed in such an order that so far as possible persons of the two sexes alternated. The doors of the two rooms opening into the passage had previously been locked, and I placed the keys in my pocket; the windows were fastened down and the blinds closed. The single candle was then extinguished, and we were left in profound darkness. My station was next to the medium at her left hand, and Mrs. Houghton sat at her other side. I was permitted to place my foot on her two feet, and to lay a hand upon her lap, so that fraud on her part was impossible. A lively singing tune to the tune seems necessary in nearly all spiritual circles, and the capabilities of the human ear were fully tested. The music was so bad at times that Mrs. Thayer expressed a conviction that we would scare all the spirits within twenty miles away; which gentle hint produced a sensible effect in moderating the volume and improving the quality of the sound. After a time I felt the medium growing uneasy, as though she were struggling against some great gushes of electricity that passed through her frame; her breathing became labored, she sighed and emitted suppressed groans, and her whole system seemed in labor. Presently I heard a patter of leaves and then a dull thud, as if a clod of earth had fallen upon the floor at the feet of the medium, and I felt a piece of the orthodox circle. The gas was extinguished, and they sat in silence and darkness for some two minutes, when suddenly some soft object was heard to drop upon the tinplate which had been placed for use, as if pebbles or other small, hard substances were being scattered about. A light was called by the raps, and then the astonished sitters discovered before them the veritable bottle of wine they had left in the dining room, with part of the wine gone and the cork drawn. The bottle was handsomely ornamented, and had been placed upon the table, and upon its cork remained the dust which they had not brushed off. Scattered about were pieces of broken candy and sugar plums, one leg of the chicken, portions of the cake and fruit, while in the bosom of a lady's dress had been deftly thrust a wine glass. Returning to the dining room, they found by actual count that when they added the articles brought to them to those remaining in the dishes and upon the sideboard, the number was exact. No wine—perhaps a third of the bottle—had disappeared, and in every glass was a heel tap that seemed to indicate that the jolly elves, or bacchantes rather, had pledged their mutual health after the fashion.

I made careful count of the various plants lying upon us, and found them to number eighty-two. Considering the bulk that such a collection would make, and the facts that the flowers were fresh, uncrumpled, and the petals covered with dew, it appears conclusive that neither Mrs. Thayer nor any possible confederate could have brought them into the room. But I received from a gentleman whose acquaintance I was fortunate enough to make, either this evening or upon a subsequent one, proof of Mrs. Thayer's good faith which is very satisfactory.

A HEATHER FROM THE GRAMPIAN HILLS.

The gentleman is Mr. McMurtrie, a civil engineer by profession, and brother-in-law of one of our most eminent astronomers. He has latterly been looking into the spiritual phenomena and experimenting in various ways, with caution and intelligence. One day, in a private seance, he asked the question whether he could get a communication from the alleged spirit of a relative who died in Scotland, of which country he was a native. The spirit told him that if he would go to the flower medium's circle, he would bring him a wee sprig of heather from the native mountains. It happened that Mrs. Thayer was to hold a seance at a private house, with a picked company of ladies and gentlemen; so, keeping his own counsel, Mr. McMurtrie obtained permission to make one of the party. The flowers were brought, and showed the faint black rings around the fractures, and all the petals and leaves were cold to the touch instead of being warmish, as they would if they had been long gathered and kept about the person of some one. When I add that on this occasion, as upon every other, the doors were carefully locked, the window shutters fastened, and the premises searched, the improbability of trickery will be apparent.

You know that I generally make thorough work of my spiritualistic investigations, and it will be inferred that in coming to conclusions favorable to Mrs. Thayer's mediumship I was not hasty. It would, however, be unprofitable to your readers for me to describe in detail all the seances, public and private, I held with her during the five weeks of summer vacation I devoted to this case; one almost suffices for all. It is the most charming phase of mediumship I have ever seen, and, unlike every other, has no disagreeable side. To sit in a sealed room and be rained upon by fragrant flowers, brought none know whence, by unknown and invisible hands, is to enjoy a rare pleasure. Charming the "circle" surely is,

> Where opening roses breathing sweets diffuse,
> And soft carnations shower their balmy dews;
> Where lilies smile in virgin robes of white,
> The thin undress of superficial light,
> And varied tulips show so dazzling gay,
> Blushing in bright varieties of day.

Not only the flowers of the garden, the field, and the greenhouse, and exotic plants are brought to Mrs. Thayer's guests, but also flowers and shrubs which grow only in swamps, leaves of forest trees, branches of native and foreign fruit trees, bearing their juicy spoils, bunches of grapes, and sometimes, to the confusion of vulgar doubters, onions, cucumbers, and other vegetables they satirically call for. A fat butcher—one of your clever ones who are "not to be fooled by spectres"—actually had a four-pound string of his own sausages flung around his neck, and his best coat, as an eye-witness told me, was finely beameared.

I must add a few paragraphs from my note book before closing, and at the same time express regret that the circumscription of space forces the exclusion of many facts of equal interest.

PRESENTS FROM THE GREAT JOHN KING.

On the evening of July 7 a select party of ladies and gentlemen sat with Mrs. Thayer around the table in Mr. Houghton's dining room. There were rappings and poundings for a while, and then there came a sharp crash upon the mahogany which induced us to light the chandelier at once. We found before us two stones half as large as one's fist, and a common iron-bladed table knife of a most quaint shape. The point of the blade was half as wide again as the rest, a semi-circular protuberance being made at the back, as though it were intended for a person to eat his food, peas and all, mostly with the knife. My benign and distinguished spirit friend, Sir Henry Morgan, alias John King, whose wonderful performances for me in Philadelphia are detailed at length in my book, "People from the Other World," informed us that he had brought this curious implement from No Man's Land, and the next morning it as mysteriously disappeared from the place where I had laid it before retiring.

On the afternoon in the course of a drive I visited Forest Hills Cemetery, and passing through the green houses my attention was struck by a curious plant with long, narrow leaves striped with white and pale green, the white preponderating. It was the *Dracena Regina*. With my blue pencil I marked upon one of the leaves the cabalistic sign of the interlaced triangles, commonly called "Solomon's Seal," and requested the spirits to bring it to me at the circle on the following evening. I purposely sat at Mrs. Thayer's right upon this occasion, and held her hands, when suddenly I felt something cool and moist drop upon my hand, and when the candle was lit *found it to be my market knife*. I went to the green house again, and found that the leaf selected by me had actually been broken off.

At the seance of July 21 there were brought to me (as alleged by some Oriental spirits who claim to be interested in my recent readings of the Occultist authors) a bud of the Egyptian lotus and a branch of that most curious of plants, the Cocoanut Palm Tree, or the branch-let tobe berry, which was discovered by Milne, at Wanderer Bay, Solomon's Island, during the voyage of H. M. S. Herald.

MRS. THAYER RAGGED.

My last evening with Mrs. Thayer was a test seance, specially arranged for me by the courtesy of Mrs. Brigham, who feels a deep interest in the Brédif affair, and is determined that I should not leave Boston with a single doubt as to the genuineness of Mrs. Thayer's mediumship. The seance was in Mrs. Thayer's parlor, and there were present Mrs. Brigham, Mr. G. P. Reed, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Houghton, Mr. W. G. Train, Mr. Mitchell (the best clairvoyant I have ever met), Mrs. Thayer, and myself—eight in all. Every person present allowed himself and herself to be searched for concealed flowers or birds, and I put Mrs. Thayer into a bag, made for me, of muslin, sewing, with a single seam and a draw-string at the mouth. It had not been in Mrs. Thayer's hands, and the seam was carefully examined just before she stepped into the bag. I drew the string tightly about her neck, and tied and fastened it beside her in such a way that it was impossible for her to tamper with the knots. In fact, I had to cut them, after the seance, to release the medium from duress. I took the additional precaution of searching Mrs. Thayer's person for hidden flowers, and then I hung a sheet in the room, so that the combined and spent $1,200,000. A similar plan was followed by the Gowanus Canal, Fourth avenue, and other commissions.

THE EAST RIVER BRIDGE.

But turn to the bridge over the East river. It was begun in 1869, and the City only appropriated $3,000,000 toward its construction. The appropriation was met by the issue of bonds. The interest already lost on the bridge investment is well nigh $1,000,000, and providing it is completed in two years, at a total cost of $15,000,000, the interest lost will amount to over $4,000,000. The last Legislature appropriated $9,000,000 additional for the bridge, of which $6,000,000 is to be paid by Brooklyn and $3,000,000 by New York. Three million dollars per annum is to be extended from the Brooklyn treasury for $2,000,000 from this city annually until it is completed. When this will be no one pretends to say. The first estimate was $5,000,000; then it was raised to $7,000,000; and now it is indefinitely stated that it will cost $20,000,000. The interest account is already $300,000 per annum, for two-thirds of which Brooklyn issues her bonds.

These are some of the beauties of the borrowing system. It is equally well illustrated in the case of

PROSPECT PARK.

An examination of the laws of 1860 shows that the Park act of that year restricted the cost of Prospect Park to an amount the interest on which should not exceed $30,000 (or $430,000) for the whole purchase money. The Park Commissioner called in by the Commissioners in 1861, made careful estimates and detailed surveys and plans which received their endorsement. His plan regarded the east side as the principal feature of the Park, and placed the whole cost at $500,000. In 1861 another act was passed providing that no plans should be adopted by the Commissioners if the entire expense exceeded $500,000. Coming down to January, 1865, Mr. Stranahan and his associates reported that awards amounting to $1,387,600 had been made for the land taken, which comprised 320 acres. They intimated at the same time that they should make application to the Legislature to take "two or three acres" more. In 1866 no less than 224 acres were added to the Park, its boundary being carried out from Fifth to Ninth avenue; and at the close of 1867 the Commissioners claimed to have completed 57 acres out of the 60 at a cost of over $1,100,000. In 1868 the Commissioners obtained authority from the Legislature to issue Park bonds to the amount of $750,000, and were authorized to issue $2,000,000 more, and the total of the indebtedness they have created for Park improvements, park ways, &c., is over $10,000,000.

A DEBT OF $43,000,000.

The city's indebtedness, on January 1, 1875, was about $41,860,000, not counting several million dollars of local assessments thrown upon the city at large by an act of the last Legislature. As strange as it may appear, the city's statement of 1874 showed a decrease of debt during that year, after election. But at the close of 1873, it was over $37,400,000, and it is known that bonds were issued in 1874 amounting to over $3,000,000, though some which had become due were at the same time paid. The debt at the close of 1874, according to Comptroller Schroeder's report, may be had in this country.

HENRY S. OLCOTT.

HANGING OVER THE FALLS.

Recovering the Body of James Grogan, the Paterson Weaver.

George Garrabrant's plan for recovering the body of the man which was hanging suspended by the head over the Passaic falls, was successfully accomplished on Monday evening. On the two beams which reached across the chasm were spiked heavy planks, and Garrabrant over this bridge reached the body. He tried in vain to lift it with a huge pair of tongs. Then he managed to tie a rope to one ankle. With a lever one of the beams was moved, the body was released and in hung dangling by the rope. The planks had to be removed before the body could reach the shore.

It was the body of James Grogan. His clothing was torn in shreds, and the fragments of his pants, vest and shirt were twisted around his head and neck. His watch had been torn from its chain, and of a cigar case in his pocket only half remained. The body was not bruised much, but there were bad cuts in the face, which was black and much swollen.

Yesterday James Grogan was buried under the auspices of the Weavers' Association and the Albion Cricket Club, of which he was a member. While his friends were following the body to the grave, a messenger told the Coroner that another body had been found. Peter and John J. Hopper and Charles Van Blarcom saw it floating in an eddy near the Hawthorne toll gate. It was identified as that of Henry Martin. The face was bruised and swollen almost beyond recognition. Martin has a brother, Jack Martin, in California, who, his friends say, is the champion one hundred yard runner of the world. He has also an uncle in St. Louis, to whom a telegram was sent on Monday. The Weavers' Association have men on the river constantly searching for the body of Joseph Horton.

The Wealth of Boston.

BOSTON, Aug. 17.—The assessment of Boston, just completed, fixes the total valuation of real and personal property at $793,767,300.

Contents of the Weekly Sun.

THE WEEKLY SUN published this morning contains the following:

A Check for $100,000—Sale of the Northern Pacific Railroad—Tilden's Prospects—Speeches and Receptions; The Rochefort Cassagnac Duel—A Great Cry, but no Wool; Wooden Pavement Jobs in Washington—How the Ring has Improved the Federal Capital; Beecher Among the Mountains—The Big Tent Project; Jay Gould's Tall Tower—Not Founded by Horace Greeley; Saratoga Correspondence—What Eli Perkins has to Say about Pronunciation; Christine—The Story of Love; Tilden's Paralytic Stroke; Robbers in the Indian Service—Mr. Welsh on the Indian Ring; Spinner and Bristow; Crooked Whiskey—Bristow, Grant, &c.; The Virginius Massacre—How Spain was Let Off by our Secretary of State; The Hostile Sioux—The Utah Indians in Arms; The Five-Twenty Bonds; The Lake Pleasant Ghost—A Astounding Speech from the Disembodied Spirit of Abraham Lincoln; Swindling the Marines—New Developments of Fraud at Washington; Grant and the Third Term—Speech of Dan Voorhees; The Case of Col. Baker—The Trial in Full—Verdict of the Jury and Sentence of the Court; New things in Woman's Dress—Trials and Vagaries of the Latest Fashions; A Modern Miracle; Drawn over a Cataract—Terrible Fate of Three Foolhardy Men; The Niagara Falls Horror; Arrival of Moody and Sankey; A Colored Camp Meeting; Little Shot at a Church; Humors of an Old Race Horse; The Latest Telegraphic News; Ladies' Department; Notes on Science and Industry; Many Columns of Editorial Articles and Agricultural Matter; Stories—Three Feathers, a Novel by William Black, Chap. XXXIV., and The Mistress of the Raven, Chap. I.; Financial Intelligence, and Markets.

THE WEEKLY SUN contains a complete epitome of the news of the week from all parts of the United States and the American continent. Copies in wrappers ready for mailing to the old country may be had at the desk of our publication office. Price four cents. For sale by all news dealers in city and country.

To reduce stock, we will make till Sept. 1, a great reduction in prices of furniture and carpets. B. M. Cowperthwait & Co., 155 Chatham street. Weekly and monthly payments taken.—*Adv.*

BANKRUPTCY OR REFORM.

ALARMING INCREASE OF BROOKLYN'S INDEBTEDNESS.

From $6,000,000 to $43,000,000 within Fifteen Years—The System of Plunder Beginning with the Special Commissioners.

The Brooklyn *Argus* to-day will contain a history of the financial affairs of Brooklyn for the past fifteen years. It shows from the official records that on the 1st of January, 1860, Brooklyn had a population of 266,000, and a debt of $6,100,000, or $23 per capita. At the beginning of the present year the debt was about $42,000,000 and the population less than 500,000—$80 per capita, an increased indebtedness resting upon every man, woman, and child in the community of 250 per cent. In 1860 the assessed valuation of the city's real and personal estate was $100,000,000; it was placed by the State Assessors in October, 1874, at $198,061,350; and during those fifteen years the taxes annually levied have increased from $1,300,000 in 1860 to about $8,000,000 in 1875, exclusive of water rates amounting to $1,000,000, of local assessments amounting to over $1,000,000, and of a debt incurred for current expenditures of about $3,000,000, making a total of $13,000,000 per annum. In other words, while the taxable property has about doubled in value, and the population not quite doubled in number, the annual taxes, if properly levied, have increased 900 per cent.

THE BEGINNING OF A SYSTEM OF PROFLIGACY.

The Water Board was reorganized in 1869 under the name of the Permanent Board of Water and Sewerage Commissioners. At the break which has been pretty general in speculative values, the regular demand has been very good from the trade and for export, but there is a disposition to effect some reduction of stocks of hog products, which are comparatively large, especially at the West. Beef and beef hams are nuisettled and nominal. To-day pork was lower; sales on the spot 100 bbls. new mess, at $21.50; and for future delivery 1,500 bbls. at $21.15 for August, $21.25@$21.30 for September, and $21.25@$21.30 for October. Beef steady. Bacon quiet; sales 50 hds. city long clear at 12½c. Cut meats quiet. Lard was lower; sales on the spot 375 tcs. at 13 15-16@14c. for Western contract grade, and 13¾c. for prime city; and for future delivery 2,250 tcs. prime Western at 13 7-16@13 15-16c. for September, and 13 15-16c. for October. Dressed hogs firmer at 10¾@10½c. We quote Pork, ⅌ bbl., new mess, $21.50; extra prime, $19.25; prime mess, $19.50. Beef—Plain mess, $7@$9; extra mess, $10@$11; prime mess, ⅌ tc., $15@$16; India mess, $18@$20; beef hams, ⅌ bbl., $16@$21; hams, pickled, ⅌ lb., 13½c.; shoulders, pickled, 10½c.; bellies, 12½@13½c. Lard—Steam rendered, 14c.; prime city, 13¾c.; new Western, 13¾c. Bacon—Long clear, 12c.; short do., 12c. Smoked hams, 15@15½c.; smoked shoulders, 12c. Dressed hogs, 10½@10¾c.

GRAIN—There has been a great decline in wheat, corn and oats, full wing the return of clear weather at the West and the consequent subsidence of speculation. Rail freight rates have also caused a large falling off in the export demand for wheat, which, in the west firm, with a moderate demand; sales 94,000 bush. at $1.25@$1.27 for No. 1 Milwaukee; spring; $1.14 for No. 1 Minnesota spring; $1.10@$1.20 for No. 2 Milwaukee; $1.48, in store, for amber Michigan; $1.28 for soft No. 2 Chicago; and $1.35@$1.36 for No. 2 Milwaukee. Corn firmer and active; sales 145,000 bush. at 65c@78c. for steamer mixed; 79½@80c. for sail do.; 81@81½c. for high mixed to yellow. Oats active; sales 200,000 bush. at 40½c. for Western and Chicago for October delivery at 50c.; mixed No. 2 Chicago at 45c.; in store, and 46@46½c. afloat; 46c. for white State, on the track, and 64c. for fair white Ohio on the track. Rye—Fair demand; sales 9,000 bush. at 81c. for State and $1.08. Barley—Six-rowed State, September delivery, offered at $1.15, and $1.10 the best bid; Barley malt quiet; sales 3,000 bush. at $1.45@$1.50 for four and six-rowed, and $1.60@$1.65, cash, for Canada.

GROCERIES—Rather quiet but continued firm and in demand, the sales footing up 7,200 hogs within the annexed range. Mid grades of sugar are firmer. Molasses is wanted steadily, with a sale of 225 hhds. Porto Rico at 37c. Rice was steady and in fair demand. Raw sugars were firmer, with a sale of 1,000 hhds. Cuba, 7 Dutch standard, 500 boxes at 8c@8¼c. for Cuba muscovado, and 8¾c. for Cuba clayed. Refined was in some demand and steady, with a sale of 1,000 bbls. at 10¾c. for granulated, 10½c. for 20s, and 10c. 12½c. for 22s. Rice—Rangoons are firmer at 6¼@6½c. in gold. In bond, and 6¼@6½c. currency, duty paid; Domestic, 6¼@6¾c. Molasses—Cuba muscovado, 32@35c.; Cuba clayed, 37@38c.; Cuba centrifugal, 45@50c.; New Orleans, new crop, 60@72c. Sugars—Fair to good refining Cuba, 7¾@8¼