[FOR THE WATCHMAN.]

YEARS OF YOUTH.

O, years of youth, return,—return,—return,—
Bring back the record you have borne on high.
With all the fervor of my heart I mourn
That you were all consumed in vanity.

If you had brought me pleasure, wealth or fame,
You had not seemed as water spilled on earth,
And had you rescued one sad soul from shame
I had not deemed you sold beneath your worth.

If you had comforted one dying hour,
Had lifted from one breast the load of care,
One scoffer brought to own the Gospel's power,
One reckless one to penitence and prayer,

One slighted heart-sick one to feel that he
Was not forgot of the great God above,
That yet his days would shine more cheerily,
And bid him cherish hope and seek for love,—

If I had set my mark upon your hours,
Each hour of all your number, what array
Of deeds and thoughts worthy human powers,
The record of my life would now display!

Full to repletion were you filled with schemes
For my own furtherance, and wealth, and joy;
The frequence and the dazzling of those dreams
Had power their own fulfilment to destroy.

But prayer or effort for another's weal,
Formed not of all my busy plans a part,
For High Heaven's glory no ennobling zeal,
Gave labor dignity, or purpose heart.

One who had once been rich, and great, and gay,
When poverty and bitter trouble came,
All that was mine, save what I gave away,
Is lost forever," did aloud exclaim.

If I, O years of youth, your days had given
To bless mankind, the purpose of my birth
To lead sad souls to peace and God and heaven,
I would not deem you *sold below your worth.*

SPRING HILL, August, 1875.

[FOR THE WATCHMAN.]

"WHY STAND YE HERE ALL THE DAY IDLE?"

Matthew 20:6.

BY MISS M. A. SEWELL.

"Why stand ye idle all the day?"
The hours are rushing swift away
Like streamers o'er a northern sky:
Time soon will come for you and I.

The morning is forever gone,—
Up, sluggard, haste,—the day'll be done!
Do some good deed,—cheer some sad heart
Ere thou and time forever part.

The evening shades will soon be here,
Then—all too late to bless or cheer,
Or kindly words to speak, or be
A friend to friendless poverty.

Soon shall that hand in death be cold
That closed, perchance, o'er needed gold,
That eye be glazed that looked with scorn
On the poor beggar's rags forlorn.

Those feet, by icy death detained,
Oft from the house of God refrained;
No more they'll haste to haunts of ill;
Head, hands, and feet will soon be still.

Then work while it is called *to-day*—
Do something—in God's strength essay
To aid thy brother in distress;
Thy sister kindly shield and bless.

Brother and sisters—all are here
Kindred in Adam—far and near;
Then bless, and blessed thou shalt be
In time and vast eternity.

Much did your Saviour do for you,
When on Mount Calvary he drew
For a lost world,—in agony
His dying breath, upon the tree.

Then haste your gratitude to tell,
Warn sinners of a fearful hell;
Speak of His love, who, when in death,
Prayed for them with his latest breath.

Backward no precious hour can roll
To you or me, once reached the goal:
Haste, then, e'er sounds the midnight cry.
"Up, idle souls, prepare to die!"

WITCHCRAFT OR SPIRITUALISM?

Mr. Henry S. Olcutt, of Boston, who appears to be a gentleman of culture, has been requested, on behalf of the Imperial University of St. Petersburg, to assist in making famous spiritualistic mediums in America who might be deemed worthy of being invited to Russia to attend seances to be held in St. Petersburg, where thorough scientific investigation of alleged spiritual phenomena will be made. Mr. Olcutt, in the course of his enquiry, attended seances given by Mrs. Mary Baker Thayer, 12 Pembroke St., Boston, and there witnessed phenomena which he has described in the New-York *Sun*. Below, we copy some particulars of what transpired at a number of these sittings. Mr. Olcutt, Mrs. Thayer and others ascribe the results to spiritualistic agency. Why might not Hermann, Anderson, Blitz and other "wizards" also claim the assistance of the spirits? Or, have spiritualistic mediums, so called, succeeded in accomplishing anything more extraordinary than hundreds of thousands of people have seen done by sleight of hand?

[From Letter of Henry M. Olcutt in the New York Sun.]

A BANQUET OF THE GHOSTS

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 bill of fare 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 chicken fricassee, 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. E. T. Stephenson locked the door and handed the key to 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 after the fashion of the orthodox circle. The gas was extinguished, and they sat in silence and darkness for some two minutes, when suddenly some solid object was heard to drop upon the table, and then a rattling noise, 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 undrawn. The bottle was identified by a private mark placed upon the label, and upon the 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 plates the tally was exact. But some of the 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 healths in social 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 spectre 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 pulled the slippers off one lady's feet and the boots off another's, and flung 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 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.

This auspicious beginning was followed up with natural assiduity, the casual visitor regularly installing himself 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 Celine rose falling at Mrs. Brigham's feet as she stood talking to Mrs. Thayer.

WHAT A PUBLIC SEANCE IS LIKE.

The first public séance 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 feet on her two feet, and to lay a hand upon her's, so that from one her part was impossible. We fell to singing, of course, as this seems necessary in nearly all spiritual circles, and the capabilities of the human ear were duly tested. The music had not lasted a minute when Mrs. Thayer expressed a conviction that we would scare all the spirits within twelve miles of the place, 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 with some great gushes of electricity that passed through her frame; her hands grew cold, her breathing 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 bare mahogany table, and a flower, cool to the touch, dropped upon my hand, there came a whiff of sweet odor around the board people exclaimed that something had been dropped before them or thrust into their hands.

A light was then demanded, and when the candle was lit a charming sight presented itself. The table was nearly covered with flowers and plants, all fresh and sparkling with dewdrops. Let me attempt to catalogue some of them. There was a branch of flowering almond, a calla lily, sprays of fern, two great leaves of palm, two Bonne Celine roses, a blush rose, two crimson roses, a number of double and single pinks, heliotrope, pansies, snow berry, a patch of growing moss, with dirt adhering to the roots, as though it had been just torn from its bed, and a wax begonia, with a potful of dirt attached, just as if emptied out of a pot a moment before and laid upon the table. This was in front of a lady, who informed the company that it was a perfect test for her, as her spirit sister had told her the day before that if she would come here she should receive this plant as a present from her, and she had come two hunred miles to make the experiment.

I made careful count of the various plants lying before us, and found they numbered 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 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 with some Boston medium, he received 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 merchants' circle, he would bring him a whole living heather plant from his 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 first thing that was dropped on the table was a full-grown heather, in bloom, with a clod of dirt on the roots, and three angle worms wriggling on the same!

Of course I examined the stalks of the plants and flowers at my first seance with attention, to see whether they had been cut off, broken, or torn. I noticed a very strange phenomenon. The stalks had been broken off—not short off, but with a thin ribbon of bark at one side—and around the fracture, in almost every case, was a little ring of black, as though, it appeared, an electrical current had effected some chemical action in the chlorophyl.

TEST SEANCE AT MR. HOUGHTON'S HOUSE.

Two evenings after this I met Mrs. Thayer at Mr. Houghton's house, and we had a private seance. There were present only Mr. and Mrs. Houghton, Mrs. Thayer, and myself. The sitting began in the library, but finished in the room adjoining. The gas was extinguished, and we joined hands. We waited long before any phenomenon occurred and the medium was ready to cry in her disappointment that just when it was most essential for her reputation that something should come, she was powerless. I confess that I shared no feeling for to my mind the best proof of real mediumship is often the failure of the phenomena to appear at the very time when the medium most desires them; tricksters suffer no misfortunes. Patient waiting, in this case at least was no loss; for just when we were ready to quit the room there came a patter upon the table, and immediately after the odors of flowers. We lit the gas, and there we found one blush rose, one Bonne Celine, two crimson rosebuds, and one white pink. The gas was turned out again, and after a while there came a louder sound, and upon relighting we found a long stalk of the Annunciation lily bearing ten buds upon it, which Mrs. Houghton subsequently verified as broken from one of her plants in the garden. This was the only flower of the evening that could have come from the place, for the worms had destroyed every rose bush, and the only white pink in bloom was found by us upon its bush after the seance.

THE FLORAL GIFTS OF ONE EVENING.

Mrs. Thayer's public circles are held each Wednesday and Sunday evening. The admission is one dollar, and usually from fifteen to twenty persons are in attendance. At the seance of July 11 the following articles were brought in, my catalogue having been made from left to right all around the table: One monthly rose, one ripe orange on its branch, one tea rose, one Bonne Celine rose, one sprig of sweet honeysuckle, one branch of cypress, one brown heather, two white and tarnation pinks, a stalk of three crimson rosebuds, one tea rose, a whole plant of parlor ivy thirty-seven inches long, with a potful of dirt attached to its roots, the whole weighing four pounds; a Scotch heather and a spray of sweet honeysuckle (both mentally demanded by the recipient, Mr. McMurtrie); a helitrope, several pansies, a Bonne Celine rose, asked for mentally by the recipient; a fern leaf (*Onychium aureum*), one white pink, one carnation, and one pansy; mignionette and oxalis, one pansy; two ferns (*Pellaa Vieidis* and *Adiantum hispidulum* of the East Indies), four tea roses, one carnation, one wax begonia, with dirt and all, just as lifted out of the pot; one crimson rose, a patch of short moss, with dirt; one fern, one honeysuckle, one calla lily, placed in my bosom, and a large bunch of smilax which dropped on my face from a height, as I had my head thrown back to relieve the tediousness of my position. All the flowers and plants were gemmed with dewdrops; all the stems were broken off, and showed the dark black rings around the fracture, and all the petals and leaves were cold to the touch instead of 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.

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, cucumbers, and other vegetables they satirically call for. A fat butcher—one of your clever ones who are "not to be fooled by sperrits"—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 besmeared.

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 importance.

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 Occulist authors) a bud of the Egyptian lotus and a branch of that most curious of plants, the *Chebocaba Platycladu*, or flat branched lode berry, which was discovered by Milne, at Wanderer Bay, Solomon's Island, during the voyage of H. M. S. *Herald*.

MRS. THAYER BAGGED.

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 her protegé, and was determined that I should not leave Boston with a single doubt as to the genuineness of 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 mosquito netting, 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 behind 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 dress before bagging her, as a stupid lie was in circulation to the effect that she wore a rubber bag in which to carry flowers and keep them moist. The light was put out at 8.25. We sat ten minutes, relighted the candle, found nothing, although the medium had given the usual signs of the passage of the force through her system, in groans, shudders, and involuntary muscular movements.

FLOWERS, BIRDS, PEACHES, AND PEBBLES.

The light was extinguished again, and after the lapse of another ten minutes relighted. This time there were flowers. There were four beautiful rosebuds; one Bonne Celine for Mrs. Brigham, whose favorite it is; two from (*Paris fabellata* of Africa, and *Audantum cuneatum* of Brazil), and one wax plant with a flower upon it. As the match was struck a little bird of the size of the common English sparrow fell off the table and was caught and secured. Encouraged by this success, we darkened the room again, and almost instantly the medium exclaimed that "they" had put a pebble in her mouth. We lit up, and found her, sure enough, holding a small, flat, smooth, white pebble in her mouth, which she could not have put there herself. We extinguished the candle again, and sat for some time without any results. Mrs. Thayer had been quite ill that day, and said early in the evening that she wished the spirits would bring her some peaches. Suddenly we heard some hard substance drop on the table, and then there came a great flutter of wings, a rush as of something through the air, and, a light being had instantly, there lay before Mrs. Thayer eight ripe peaches, and near the ceiling of the room flew a milky-white fantailed pigeon. This was enough for one evening—we had had flowers, fruit, birds, and a mineral brought, so with expressions of mutual satisfaction, we congratulated the medium and took our leave.

(Published by Request.)

SLAIN.

Here in this leafy place,
Quiet he lies,
Cold with his sightless face
Turned to the skies;
'Tis but another dead;
All you can say is said.

Carry his body hence—
Kings must have slaves;
Kings climb to eminence
Over men's graves;
So this man's eye is dim—
Throw the earth over him.

What was the white you touched
There at his side?
Paper his hand had clutched
Tight, ere he died—
Message, or wish, may be—
Smooth the folds out and see.

Hardly the worst of us
Here could have smiled!
Only the tremulous
Words of a child—
Prattle that had for stops
Just a few ruddy drops.

Look! she is sad to miss,
Morning and night,
His—her dead father's—kiss;
Twice to be bright,
Good to Mamma, and sweet,
That is all,—" Marguerite."

Ah, if beside the dead
Slumbered the pain;
Ah, if the hearts that bled
Slept with the slain!
If the grief died, too, no!
Death will not have it so.

THE IMPRESSIVE HOTEL CLERK.

The hotel clerk I venerate in the abstract, but I am rather afraid to approach him in the concrete. My experience is that when he does not snub you he patronizes you, and I'd about as lieve be killed one way as another. Where moral character and that sort of thing tells, I feel particularly at home, but where a man is judged only by his clothes, confidence fails me, and I am backward about coming forward.

"Can I have a room?" I modestly ask, after registering my name.

Clerk looks at me a moment, takes in the general unostentatiousness of my apparel at a glance, turns away and attends to the swells who get credit of being worth a dollar, and finally, after a long delay, he condescends to inquire, "What do you want?"

"Can I have a room?" I meekly repeat.

"No!" he says, and he turns away and begins to write in a book.

"Can I have a room?" I ask, when he comes back.

"No!" he says, and he turns to a pile of letters and begins to sort them.

"Can I have a room?" I say, when he comes back.

"No!" he says, and he begins to whistle and look out of the window