

tent himself until he has struck another with it, and the two, thus stricken, forthwith join their forces to secure a third victim to the all-important striking idea; whereupon follows the society. The old saying, "Two are a company; three a crowd," needs revision, so as to read, "Two are a company; three an association." Of the thousand and one organizations of this character which our age has seen, one, with careful nursing, perchance survives—it may be thrives; the thousand die to fertilize the soil in which its roots gather nourishment.

The American Psychological Society has an idea. Its idea is that the "field of spiritualistic phenomena" ought to be investigated. It proposes to investigate it. For the privilege of participating in this investigation there is a charge of five dollars per annum. Whether a careful prospecting has warranted the conviction that the returns of the investment will compensate those who have become partners in the enterprise, or whether it is a purely speculative enterprise, we have no knowledge. We fear there may be some disappointments, and that the stock will not be long in dropping below par. Still, as this is a distinctively scientific movement, and as the controlling desire seems to be to get at the truth of the matter concerning spiritualism (if spiritualism may be said to be interested in matter), in the interests of humanity we suppose we should wish it success. We trust no witch of Endor may disturb it in its operations with her exhibitions of resurrective genius, and that no subterranean visitant may set atremble or tilt the table on which the accomplished secretary and treasurer seeks to pen his spirited report, or empty his money-drawer of that which, it is to be supposed, is of little significance or service in the spirit realm.

It is but a matter of justice to state that membership in the organization by no means commits one to an acceptance of the doctrines of spiritualism, or even suggests a leaning toward them. The

movement is "distinctively scientific." We will watch with interest the progress of its investigations.

### The Southern Negro Problem.

IN the July number of the *HOMILETIC* appears an editorial on an article by Rev. S. J. Barrows in the *Atlantic*, touching a subject entitled "*The Financial Bondage of the Southern Negro*," in both of which grave injustice is done. We take it that inasmuch as the *HOMILETIC* is a religious journal and speaks out against wrong-doing generally, its columns are open to just and temperate defence.

It cannot be truthfully said that any people are in bondage under the following conditions:

1. When they enjoy full liberty (a) to choose their own trade, vocation or profession, and (b) to pursue their chosen calling *when, where* and *as* they please.
2. When, having chosen to be farmers, they are perfectly free (a) to purchase a farm of twenty-five or thirty acres "*at from five to seven dollars an acre*," or (b) to rent land from whom they choose.
3. When, having decided to rent, they may do so on either of the following plans: (a) they may furnish their own stock and supplies; (b) they may furnish either their stock or their supplies; (c) they may furnish neither stock nor supplies.
4. When they can pay rent either (a) at so much in cash, or (b) at so many pounds of cotton, or (c) at such a portion of the crop.

*These conditions are enjoyed by the negroes.* To deny it is simply folly. The reader may inquire how came Mr. Barrows to write such an article, if our statement be true? Without assigning any place to the common enmity toward us in the South, or to the woful misinformation that goes North about us, we reply, the explanation is not far to seek. Some negroes go to all the professions, and a goodly number to farming. Of these some buy farms, some rent farms. Of the last group, some rent and furnish nothing. As a group they are the most worthless. Land-owners have to furnish them farms, stock, and supplies from January to January, both for themselves and their families. Now many of this class live off the land-owner from January 1 to April 1, and then leave, having a three-months' supply as a clear gain. Here is where the trouble arises and this the class of negroes with whom it exists. If the land-owners risk this plan, they have to do it on the common principle underlying the credit system, with the most unreliable portion of the negro race as debtors. Under the credit system, the paying portion always pay for their own goods and the goods of the other portion who do not pay. The evil is in the system. The crime is that of the absconding debtor. The creditor must save himself or refuse to credit. If he should do the latter, great suf-