

**Spiritual Philosophy.**

At a public meeting recently held in this city, it was stated that there were over three hundred thousand persons in our country who were influenced with the belief of holding communion with departed spirits, and of being influenced in their actions by them.—A second volume on the subject of spiritualism by Judge Edmonds, of this city, in conjunction with Dr. G. T. Dexter (it is published by Partridge & Brittan, 300 Broadway,) affords us a clue to form a philosophical idea of this new belief,

This spiritualism consists principally in believing that a power is given to disembodied spirits to use the minds and bodies of certain persons called *mediums*, for the purpose of holding conversations with them and others, who may form what are called "Spiritual Circles." These are certain persons of both sexes entertaining the same belief, who meet from time to time, and some one being in the proper state is made the vehicle of communing with the spirit world, and revealing to the rest of the circle a message or messages. The medium also sees into the spirit land, and beholds the doings of departed ghosts. Table-tippings, and the like of these things, we look upon as spirit-nonsense, but it is very evident that Judge Edmonds is a sincere man, and believes firmly in all that he has written. Sincerity, however, is no evidence of a thing being right, and a belief in what is foolish or erroneous is not entitled to respect simply because the believer is sincere. Judge Edmonds believes he has become something like the prophets and Apostles of old in receiving communications from spirits, and imparting such messages to his fellow men. He also believes that this spiritualism is intended to *conserve* and re-establish the *spirituality and religion of the race*—in short, that it is an improvement and addition to the revealed religion of the Bible. We believe we have here stated the matter fairly and clearly. Let us briefly test the question philosophically.

The spiritualists teach that man is a progressive being, and that spirits are continually progressing towards perfection. Granting this to be true (which is not a new belief,) we should find an evidence of this in the revelations received from those spirits, and if such evidence cannot be obtained, it must be concluded that spiritualism, when tested by its own touchstone, is found wanting. Well, there was old Sir Francis Bacon, whose *Novum Organum* was given to the world in 1620, and who died in 1626—229 years ago. It is acknowledged that he was one of the greatest men that ever lived, both as it respects genius and learning. He it seems has communicated several times with Judge Edmonds' circle, and his messages are given in this book. Instead of finding any progress in old Bacon, his messages betray a very common-place mind, a great want of knowledge, and sad retrogression; in short, not a Baconian mind at all, but one very like that of the medium through which he communicates. His language is very indifferent, and his ideas no less so. The first message in this book is from Bacon, and instead of discoursing in his old deep, clear, and philosophic way, we find him taken up with the domestic concerns of Judge Edmonds, accompanied with the following little bit of flattery: "I look at you and feel for you as a man, proud of you in the position you occupy, and striving to assist you in the efforts to accomplish what is before you." It is, no doubt, very condescending in Bacon's spirit to interest himself so much in the affairs of a New York Judge, but it is very evident that he has forgotten how to write the English language correctly, the last sentence especially.

Judge Edmonds describes the views which he was permitted, as a medium to have of the spirit land. He there saw houses, trees, flowers, hills, dales, streams, crops of wheat, fruit, and groups of spirits, asking one another "is the Judge's letter out." That was a letter he had published in one of our daily papers two years ago. Now, was this the spirit land he saw? If so, what are the

houses and crops of wheat for? We only need houses, to shelter, and food to sustain our bodies, but none for our spirits; they are immaterial. We humbly consider that, as spirits must be wiser than us, they cannot be so foolish as to build useless houses; we therefore conclude that Judge Edmonds' spiritual communications, and those of all other mediums, are only certain kinds of dreams. These mediums have worked themselves into the belief that their imaginings are realities.

In a communication from five spirits, Bacon, Swedenborg, &c., we find the following language:—"Of all the things that God has created, this world and its connections are the most material." Neither Bacon nor Swedenborg would ever have committed such a scientific blunder. Our system contains less matter than other systems, some of which embrace two, and more suns. This has been established by astronomers beyond the shadow of a scientific contradiction. We cannot but conclude, in view of these things, that mediums (spiritualists) are not exactly *compus mentus*, and that they mistake their own mental workings for communications from the spirit world. This we conceive to be the philosophy of this spiritual belief.

**Workings of the New Steamboat Law.**

When this law was enacted in 1852, we asserted that as it conferred great power on the Inspectors, and unless good and true men were appointed to such offices, it would be a dead letter on the statute books; while on the other hand, if good men were appointed, it would be the means of effecting a total revolution in steamboat navigation, as it related to safety, and the prevention of what used to be termed *accidents*—explosions and wholesale murders. It gives us great pleasure to inform our readers that the law has operated well since it went into force, thus showing that good and faithful men have been appointed to execute its provisions. The Inspectors are very strict respecting the character of engineers and pilots. They revoke licenses, and suspend them promptly upon positive proof of bad conduct or negligence. On the 21st of September, 1853, the local Inspectors at Cincinnati, O.,—Thomas J. Haldeman, and W. W. Guthrie—revoked the pilot license of T. S. Hamilton, for intemperance. On the 30th of November, 1854, he again applied for a license, and was refused, when he took an appeal from their decision to the Supervising Inspector, Benj. Crawford, who has confirmed the decision of the local Inspectors. His decision closes with the following noble and just sentiments:—

"The evidence is conclusive as to Hamilton's intemperance at the time alluded to, viz., September, 1853; and that there has been no reformation by him since that time is freely acknowledged both by words and conduct. The only point he seems to contend for, is, that he does not drink spirituous liquors while on duty as pilot; but it is clearly proven by the above testimony, that such is not always the case; and that he has at times departed even from his own standard of right, which every man addicted to intemperate habits is liable to do. I am clearly of the opinion, however, that habitual intemperance, even when off duty, or while waiting in port for a berth or some chance steamer, unfits a man to perform properly, with due regard to the safety of life, the duties required of him as pilot or engineer of such steam vessels. Therefore I could not, by giving a license, endorse any such persons to the public, as being 'skillful, trustworthy, and faithful' officers, such men as it was contemplated by the framers of the law, should fill these responsible places."

This pilot was skillful and of long experience, and only for intemperance, was a most capable officer.

The same local Inspectors suspended the license of Robert Davis, pilot, on the 3rd ult., for thirty days, because he left the steamboat *Forest Rose*, suddenly, at Wheeling, Va., at night, on the 23rd Jan., without notice, and refused to pilot her down to Cincinnati. Capt. James Timms employed

Davis to steer the steamer *Forest Rose* at \$300 per month. Nothing was said as to when his services should end, only that if the boat made but one trip, Davis should be paid for that trip at the rate of \$225 to Pittsburg and back. At Wheeling, on the 23rd Jan., just as Capt. Timms was ready to leave, and had rung the bell, one of the clerks informed the Captain that Davis had gone home, as the boat was not going out that night. Capt. Timms then sent for him, and he came on board, but refused to pilot the boat down. The Captain remonstrated, remarking it was bad treatment to leave without notice, as he did not know where to find another pilot at that time of night; that the ice was forming fast, and he was extremely anxious to go. Davis still refused, and the Captain was detained two hours in finding other pilots.

The following is the decision of Inspectors Haldeman and Guthrie:—

"This case was brought to our notice by the pilot first bringing a charge against Capt. Timms for employing, and James Withers for serving, as a pilot on the *Forest Rose*, not having the proper licenses so to act; and in return, Capt. Timms prefers the charge annexed against the pilot, Robert Davis, for misconduct.

The charge is not denied by Davis that he left the boat under all the circumstances as related by the Captain and the clerk, but contends that he had a perfect right to quit whenever he pleased, and that Wheeling was a port of entry, where pilots could be got.

As a general thing, we have no disposition to interfere with the private quarrels of officers and masters, but where a licensed pilot so conducts himself, as Robert Davis did—quitting the boat at Wheeling, without notice, at a time of night that rendered it doubtful if others could be procured, and at such a time when the ice was forming, so as to render it doubtful, with such detention, if the boat could not get away. Besides, having passengers aboard, causing them serious detention. It is then a clear case of misconduct, arising from "inattention to the duties of his station," and as such amenable. We therefore suspend the license of Robt. Davis, who was licensed at Wheeling, Va., for thirty days from this date."

**THE BLESSINGS OF THE NEW LAW.**—We all remember how that the Ohio and Mississippi rivers used to run red every week with the blood of slaughtered victims. Now all this is changed, and since the new law has gone into force, our western steamboats have become as safe as those on the North River. The new law of 1852 was very unpopular among western steamboat owners, some engineers and pilots, when it was enacted, and meetings were held in various places, and petitions presented to Congress to have it suspended, but Congress was firm, and the law went into effect on January, 1853. The *Pittsburg Morning Post* has obtained tables from the Steamboat Inspectors of the ports of Cincinnati, Wheeling, and Pittsburg, for two years from January 1, 1853, to January 1, 1855. These three ports form three local districts, but are embraced in one supervising district. In the Pittsburg district no accident has occurred to any passenger steamboat by which life has been lost, or injury sustained. In the Wheeling district one steamboat was lost by collision, by which one of the crew lost his life. No other accident occurred, and no other passenger was injured. In the Cincinnati district no passenger has been injured, nor any lives lost by the unskillfulness or misconduct of any pilot or engineer licensed by that Board of Inspectors. The steamboat *Forrester* was burned while lying at New Richmond, Nov. 13th, 1854, by which three of the crew lost their lives, but the fire was accidental, and occurred in the middle of the night when all were asleep. In all this supervising district not a single passenger's life has been lost in two years. This is certainly a most wonderful and pleasing revolution respecting the safety of life on our western waters. Our heart is filled with pleasurable emotions in contemplating the good effects of the New Steamboat Law, and we feel that we are

already amply paid for pointing out its necessity, and asking its enactment. To all our Steamboat Inspectors we have a few words to say just upon the opening of spring navigation. Be careful and not relax a single effort; be rather more strict this year than you have been before, so that we may have as good a report of you for the next as we have of you for the past year. Many have said to us, "oh yes, this will do for a little while, but the inspectors will soon become careless, and things will gravitate gradually to their old condition!" Let such anticipations fall blasted to the ground. You have executed the law with honor to yourselves for two years,—you can do so for fifty.

**Incrustations and the Furd Water of Boilers.**

Your correspondent, O. M., says, in the *Sci. Am.* of the 27th ult., that he has tried green white oak wood, and found it useful in detaching scales and incrustations from his boilers. I have had some experience in this thing, having used red oak wood in lengths of six feet and split to the size of large fence rails, the rough bark taken off; it was put in on Sunday and taken out the next Sunday (very much decayed,) and found to take off scales admirably. But after using it a few weeks we found our boilers leaking badly, and I think it injured the iron and rivets—we discontinued it, but had to get new boilers in a few months, although they had not been in use over eighteen months. I have no doubt but tannic acid is the active principle in disengaging the scale, and I think it acts on the iron also.

O. M.'s small cubes no doubt boiled into shreds, and were discharged with the water in the boilers, and it is rather singular they did not choke up some of his connection or supply pipes.

The best thing to remove scales is to put a good man in each boiler with proper scrapers and a free will to use them, and the best thing I have seen tried to prevent lime from settling in boilers is to boil your supply water with escape steam, and then run it off into a large tub, and let it cool down to 160° to 180° Fah., and supply your boilers out of that tub, putting the supply pipe in eighteen inches above the bottom of the tub, and clean out the tub every two weeks; the bottom of the tub will be found to have a foot or more of loose flocculent lime in it in a floating state.

Potatoes are worse than useless, as they sometimes settle over the fire and prevent the water from getting to the iron, and thus cause it to burn.

Oil is used by some, but is still worse, as it penetrates the joints and is followed by the water and steam, and causes the boilers to leak. JOHN GILL.

Patriot, Ind., Feb., 1855.

**The Use of Snails.**

**MESSENGERS EDITORS.**—You ask on page 178, Vol. 10, who uses snails, and what do they do with them? In the Provinces of France where the vine is cultivated, snails of large size abound. They are gathered by the peasants, put in small pens for a few days, salt water thrown on them, to cause them to discharge whatever their stomachs may contain—then boiled, taken out of the shell, and eaten with a sauce; they are considered a luxury by the vine dressers.

Cataract on the eye is cured by applying a drop of clear water taken from the live snail, by piercing what might be termed the tail of the snail shell with a pin. This application has the effect of eating off the substance that grows over the sight of the eye; a relative of mine was thus cured; the sight was totally eclipsed of one eye; by applying this water two or three times a day, for some time, say two or three months, the sight was restored, and remained good. This was prescribed by a physician as a last resort. M. 572 Third Avenue, N. Y., Feb. 19, 1855.

A fine new steamship named the *City of Baltimore*, was lately launched in Glasgow, Scotland, for the Liverpool and Philadelphia Steamship Co. It is 2200 tons burden, and is to be the consort of the *City of Manchester*.