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MARGARET LEONARD.

Written Expressly for the Banner of Light,
by Elvie Barker.

CHAPTER IV.

During the few weeks following, the little parlor was converted into a sewing-room, and amid the gauzy fabrics piled upon chairs and sofa, little Margaret's head bobbed about in a gleesome astonishment. Her grandmother remained, directing the preparing of her wardrobe, and even assisting with her own hands in the more difficult arts of trimming, etc. The pining and fitting, and constant demands for "Margaret," became very irksome to the child; and she would frequently hide, for hours together, in some unknown retreat, and there laugh in quiet at the search which she well knew was being made for her. Her father had at last won her reluctant consent to leave him, by promising many visits, and much confectionery, but nothing could open her heart toward her grandmother, whom she regarded as a deadly enemy to her happiness. She was to return with her, and the evening before her departure was full of incident to her. She made parting visits to the many friends, old and young, in the village—kissed them all good-by—and last (reserved as best), came her visit to her old friend Jim, and long and earnest was their conversation. Margaret emphatically expressed her preference for home, and the dislike which she cherished toward her grandmother, all of which Jim echoed with becoming vigor, enthusiastically screwing his old wrinkled face into the wriggle of very looks, warning her not to forget him up there in the big city, which was, of course, an impossibility to her young mind.

A restless night followed; and in the morning, accompanied by her father and grandmother, she left Willowdale for Boston, thence to Madame Stracham's fashionable "seminary for young ladies."

This school, like most boarding schools, abounded in fine arts, and young girls from whom the fresh, pure nature of girlhood had been polished off, until they had become "finished" into the nicest of nice young ladies, like a parcel of wax dolls, with French manners, French speech, French corsets, and only needing a foreign adventurer to induce them to become French ladies. The boarding school accomplishments of our present age are of little real value. Instead of fitting our girls for the great duties of life, they wholly unfit them for anything else than drawing-room small-talk and ball-room graces. Little do they learn of the realities of life, and still less are they prepared to encounter them. Yet, while the reign of fashion continues, parents will sacrifice their young daughters at fashionable boarding-schools, there to corrupt their morals by associating with vain, frivolous companions; and fire their young dreams of romantic love and bridal presents. But to return to my story.

Mrs. Clara Leonard was a woman of great pride, and one of the first leaders of the town. A cool, practical woman, possessing none of her son's warm-heartedness, she thought she was doing a great kindness when she undertook to point out and arrange for him the future of his child. This school was a famous one, and very select also. Many of her friends had placed their daughters here, and it must be just the place for Alfred's child. "Worldly minded as she was, she had no higher ambition than to see her granddaughter an elegant and accomplished young lady in society, where, with her rare beauty, she felt that she would be greatly admired.

The first few days at school passed as they always do, full of sadness and homesick longings, the giggling girls around affording little comfort to the tearful heart. How the kind faces at home come before the mind's eye; and the familiar places seem calling you back to them. All these thoughts came thronging into Margaret's mind, as she stood apart from the rest in the main hall of the school building, on the second morning after her arrival. The wistful expression of her countenance at length attracted the attention of one of the young ladies, a Miss Lancing, from New York, who approached her, and introducing herself, said, "I know you feel lonely, dear. I remember how I felt when I first came here. The girls were all laughing and talking around me until I felt like bursting into tears." And the tears did fill Margaret's eyes, as she pressed the young lady's hand, and replied,

"You are very kind, indeed, Miss Lancing. This is the first time I have ever been away from home without papa, and I do feel lonely and homesick. You are so good to come over here to me. Do you think I shall ever get acquainted with the others?"

"There, that is the way everybody feels. Here, girls," raising her voice, and addressing the merry group which she had just left, "every one of you, stop your selfish conversation, and come over here. This is Miss Margaret Leonard, young ladies, and she is here, a little girl among us, and we all remember our own first days here, so we must try and make her contented."

"Certainly," chimed the voices, and the child was soon at home among them.

Miss Lancing was a young lady of eighteen, eight years older than our little friend, and a marked character in the school. Of great personal beauty, dark and sparkling, added to her father's immense wealth, she was a queen among the scholars at Madame's, and happy indeed was the favored personage on which she bestowed her smiles. By her request, little Margaret was assigned to her room, and in the weeks that followed they became very much attached to each other.

Months passed, and the first vacation drew

near. Margaret had obtained permission of her father to invite Miss Lancing to spend the vacation with her at Willowdale, and the day of their departure was eagerly anticipated by both. Margaret had given her friend the most glowing description of her home and friends in her childish manner, and as Mr. Leonard had visited the seminary several times, Miss Lancing was delighted with the idea. We would not wish to do the young lady any injustice by secretly intimating to our reader that her very particular attentions to Margaret, or her winning ways, were in the least studied, nor that in accepting the invitation to visit the child's home, there mingled aught of a desire to produce a more than usually favorable effect upon the father. But let us wait.

The wished-for day arrived at last, and with happy hearts the young ladies took the train for Willowdale. A day's ride in the cars is ever a dull, dreary affair, and when one is eager to see home and friends, the time wears slowly away. But Margaret bestowed little thought upon the surroundings; her thoughts were "over the hills and far away," in the quiet cottage home.

"Here we are at last, Laura! there's papa, too, and the carriage; here we are, papa! Oh, I'm so glad," and with a loving kiss she greeted her happy parent. "And here's Laura, too, dear papa," "I am happy to meet you again, Miss Lancing, and trust you will enjoy your visit at our home, although there are no young gentlemen or ladies to be your companions."

"I need neither, sir," and the peculiar expression of her countenance was not lost upon Mr. Leonard.

They entered the carriage, and a few moments' drive brought them to their own door.

"Welcome to our home, Miss Lancing," said Mr. Leonard.

"Yes, Laura, welcome to my own dear home," echoed Margaret.

"Thank you, Mr. Leonard, and you also, darling little Margaret. I know I shall be happy here."

The tea-table awaited them, and after greeting the old housekeeper, they sat down. After tea, the girls were so much fatigued from their long, jolting ride in the cars, that they retired to their room to woo

"Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep."

The next morning Margaret rose early, and immediately after breakfast, leaving her father to entertain her friend, she went directly to the village, and in a short time had peeped in upon all her friends, eagerly welcomed by each. Old Jim's shop was shut, and at the sight of the barred door, Margaret's heart sank. Hastening home, her first inquiry was, "Where's Jim, papa?"

"Poor old Jim is sick, dear; and the doctor fears he will never recover."

"Oh, dear, I'm so sorry. I will surely go down and see him this very afternoon. Poor, dear old Jim!"

"Who is your daughter's friend, in whom she is so deeply interested, Mr. Leonard?" queried Laura.

"Old Jim, our village shoemaker—or, rather, James Hicks is his real name—an old man who used to tell her fairy stories when she was a little child, and she has never forgotten him," and at the almost imperceptible curl of Miss Lancing's lip, Mr. Leonard blushed for his child's uncouth taste.

A few hours later, we find our little friend wandering her way through the village, toward the little old house where dwelt old Jim and his wife. Knocking very softly on the door, which was opened by Mrs. Hicks, she paused for a moment before entering, and asked, "Is he very sick?"

Ere his wife could reply, the feeble voice from the occupant of the low, four-posted bedstead in the corner of the rude dwelling, said, "It is little Baby; tell her to come in."

"He wants you, dear."

And the child entered the door, walked straight to the bed, looked earnestly in the old man's face, saying, "I'm here, Jim!"

"God bless you, Baby. I've been laying here these long days thinking to myself, I shall never see my old eyes on her little sweet face again; but here you are. Oh, it is so good!"

"You mustn't talk so, Jim; you are going to get well again soon, and we will talk over old times once more."

The little faded gray eyes regarded Margaret mournfully for a moment, and then he replied, "Ay, little one, I am going to get well again soon, but it will be on the other side the bench. This poor old body is most worn out, dear, and it's no use patching up the sides nor pegging the sole on again; the leather is too far gone, and 'tain't worth repairing. The doctor's been a trying to put in a few stitches here and there, but they won't hold, and in a few days I shall step out of it and go where there's no wear-out to the stock. I'm ready to go; perhaps I'll see your mother, Baby. Is there any word ye'd like to send? If there is, tell old Jim, and he'll carry it to her himself; they'll let him pass if he tells 'em who sent him, I know," and the queer old creature waited for the child's answer.

Bursting into tears, she exclaimed, "Do n't, Jim, do n't, it makes my heart ache so. But perhaps you are right, after all; I do n't know. If you are really going, please find mamma and tell her that I am well, and that she must love you for my sake."

These words were uttered in the simple faith of childhood. Oh, that little simple faith for which, in after years, we would gladly exchange wealth, position, all—just to regain the undoubting trust of earlier years. Talking thus in the old house, these two children of different childhoods—the one almost at the top of the ladder of life, receiving the other's message to carry over the river to her angel mother—who knows how many of the loved ones, unseen though seeing, were smiling at their quaint words?

CHAPTER V.

A few days passed, and one morning word came to the cottage that old Jim was dead. The funeral services were held in the little white church, and no sincerer tears were shed than flowed from Margaret's eyes. For many days the child moved about sad and quiet, but childhood's griefs are short-lived, and it soon wore away.

One evening, a few weeks after the funeral, as Mr. Leonard and Miss Lancing sat in the library with Margaret, the latter busily engaged with a book of drawings, Miss Lancing broke a long silence by saying:

"Mr. Leonard, your daughter tells me you are a Spiritualist. Pray do not think me rude that I say I am very much surprised to learn the fact."

"Why?"

"Because I have looked upon you as a man of great culture of thought and feeling; and with the unlimited advantages which I know you possess, I can with difficulty conceive how you can have imbibed so frail and foolish a doctrine."

"Allow me to ask you, my dear young lady, if you have ever investigated the spiritual phenomena?"

"No, indeed, sir! nothing would tempt me to do it. I attended a circle once, several years since, and I saw

"Blue spirits and white,
Red spirits and gray."

for days afterward. It makes me shudder even now to think of it."

Mr. Leonard's clear brown eye wandered over the face of the beautiful girl before him, and he seemed studying the beautifully chiseled features—"lively regular, daintily sweet"—ore he answered:

"You have only seen one instance; and I have noticed your peculiar nervous temperament during your visit here. You doubtless became very much excited, and did not look at the great principles and beautiful truths underlying all the crudenesses!"

There was a slight curl of her lip, as she replied, "I trust I am not entirely incapable of going below the surface, sir."

Mr. Leonard smiled amusedly as he said, "No, no, child, I was casting no such reflection upon you; but we are all too liable to judge by first impressions. Older heads than yours have done the same, yet a thorough, careful investigation cannot fail to confirm a belief. You say it is strange to you that I am a believer in Spiritualism. Once I would have said the same. For a long time I would hear nothing of the subject, and persistently scouted the idea of disembodied spirits returning to earth; but my wife became interested in it, and to please her I accompanied her to several lectures and circles, and became somewhat interested in the strange intelligences which even the most skeptical minds admit do exist, and began investigating the theory for myself. On my bookshelves you will find many works upon it by the best writers in our country; these, added to my own immediate experience and personal observation, have gradually led me from under the shadows and given me the happiest faith extant."

"Well, I see you are confirmed, but I must still say that I am very much astonished. The idea of our coming back here and meddling with earthly affairs is perfectly ridiculous to me!"

"Miss Laura, you believe in God?"

"Yes, sir."

"You believe that he has given us intelligence from his own great wisdom?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you believe in ties of affection stronger than death?"

"Yes, sir, of course I do! I should think I was really reciting my catechism!"

"You have assented to all this, my dear young lady. God is an all-wise being of Wisdom, and we are as little sparks of intelligence from a great central fire, immortal, as he is immortal. We have children and friends. Because we throw off the garment of mortality, we cannot annihilate the great chain of never-ending existence. We must live somewhere, above, below, it matters not, but our very instincts cry for a beyond—and with these truths and these affections do we lose sight of our friends when we step behind the veil? I will not discuss the theory with you, Miss Lancing, as it is not pleasant to you, but there is no power strong enough to make me doubt that the mother of my child knows her joys and sorrows, her little experiences, better than I myself do. Do you for a moment believe there is, in the world of glorious love and immortality, an insurmountable barrier placed between us and our friends in the form? Every instinct of the soul denies such an assertion. More than ten years have passed away since I sat by the bedside of my dying wife, and saw her close her eyes upon earth; but there has never been one moment since that hour that I have not felt as sure of her presence as though my mortal eyes beheld her in the flesh before me. The chords of affection existing between us and the immortal world are thrilled too often by unseen fingers to doubt their knowledge of home-matters."

"I have never given the matter much thought, sir. As my friends were all very much opposed to it, I very naturally drifted along in the same current. According to your own ideas you must derive a deal of comfort from the belief," but a shade of keen disappointment darkened her countenance as she spoke. Perhaps the thought of his wife's presence was not entirely congenial to her wishes; but whatever her thoughts were, she betrayed them by no sign or word.

As we have said before, Miss Lancing was very beautiful. Her exquisite form and graceful, little movements were always remarked by strangers. Mr. Leonard was a great worshiper of beauty, and his eye could not fail to be attracted by the young lady. His tastes were carefully studied by her, and her dress arranged as nearly as possible to suit them.

A few mornings after the conversation in the library, she arose earlier than usual, and, dressed in pure white, descended the broad staircase, donned her hat and went out into the garden, walking among the flowerbeds, inhaling the delicious odors from the daisy blossoms. Suddenly she heard a step upon the gravelled walk, and raising her eyes beheld a stranger—a young gentleman—who stood, hat in hand, regarding her with an expression of great surprise, mingled with admiration. His dress was faultless, and his whole bearing was that of innate gentility. A low, broad forehead, jutting out roof-like over a pair of small, intensely black eyes, around which (the brows, not the eyes) clustered thick, dark curls; and you see before you the young gentleman who stood gazing at Laura Lancing early on this pleasant morning.

"Do I address Mrs. or Miss Leonard?"

"How the blood came rushing in a hot tide over her face as she replied:

"Neither, sir; I am Miss Lancing, a guest of Mr. Leonard and his daughter. There is no Mrs. Leonard."

"Ah! beg a thousand pardons, Miss Lancing. I am Percy Manning. As I intend remaining here a few days, let us shake hands and hope to be cordial friends," and the black eyes twinkled as he offered his hand, which was cordially grasped by Miss Lancing.

"Do they know of your coming, Mr. Manning?"

"No, and I did not think of such a thing myself two days since. Mr. Leonard is a cousin of my mother's, and while at home spending a summer vacation, my mother spoke of a trip to Willowdale; and I came down 'cousining,' I suppose, as I have yet to make the acquaintance of my relatives for the first time, but am already rewarded for my trouble by meeting so pleasant a young lady as yourself."

There is no woman to whom flattery is not pleasing. Deny as stoutly as you may, young ladies, I know that down deep underneath all your indignation, there is a silent fluttering of your foolish hearts at every word of soft flattery which comes from the lips of the male sex. Laura Lancing was not devoid of this womanly nature. She instantly determined to make a conquest of this young gentleman.

The breakfast bell interrupted their conversation, and turning to Percy Manning, Miss Lancing said—

"Come in with me. It will be a delightful surprise to them. Wait here in the parlor a few moments, and I will return with Mr. Leonard."

As she left him and walked toward the library, where she knew she would find the master of the house, she thought, "How delightful it would be to be mistress of this beautiful home, and receive the visitors; and how strange that he should mistake me for Mrs. Leonard. They say that

"Coming events cast their shadows before."

Who knows what may happen yet?"

Entering the library, she approached the large chair where sat Mr. Leonard, and placed one hand over his eyes.

"Good-morning, dear. I've got you now," and seizing her around the waist he kissed her fondly.

"Miss Lancing! Beg your pardon; I had no idea that it was you. I thought it was my daughter. Pray forgive me," and a slight frown of displeasure momentarily darkened his brow, unnoticed, however, by Miss Lancing, who gaily replied:

"I did not expect such an affectionate greeting, I can assure you, nor did I intend stealing a march upon Margaret, but as I was under the necessity of receiving one of your guests this morning, I came to announce his presence in the parlor."

"My guest? Who?"

"His name is Percy Manning, and he also informs me that he is the son of your cousin, sir, but has never seen you."

"Oh, yes! Mary's child," and without further delay he proceeded to the parlor, where Mr. Manning sat, quietly surveying the pleasant room. At the entrance of Mr. Leonard he arose, and Miss Lancing quickly announced her close proximity by saying:

"This is Mr. Manning, Mr. Leonard. You see I have fulfilled my promise" (to the former) "and have brought this gentleman with me."

"I am very happy to receive you, Mr. Manning, more particularly from the fact that you are the child of my dearly-loved cousin Mary, whom I have not seen for many years. When did you arrive in town?"

"Last evening, sir; and as I am an habitually early riser, I came out here just as Aurora was rising in all her proud attire," and found a morning discipline among the roses in your garden, whom I mistook for a young Mrs. Leonard or daughter."

There was a slight degree of impatience in Mr. Leonard's voice as he replied:

"I have no wife on earth, sir, and my only daughter is a child of ten years."

The quick, intuitive nature of Percy Manning felt the shadow, and immediately turned the current by remarking: "I had no thought of coming here, but our quiet country home was very dull after my long stay in the city, and mother proposed a trip down here as a bearer of her affectionate regards and desire to see you."

"You need make no apologies for your visit, my dear young friend; I am heartily glad to see you, both on my own account and that of my daughter and her friend here, who must have found the company of an old man like me extremely dull."

Here the second ringing of the breakfast bell interrupted them, and the host arose from his chair, introducing Margaret to her cousin, as she entered the room, and led the way to the dining-room. The addition of the young gentleman to their table-group was a source of great pleasure to both the young ladies. Never did Margaret

look purer or lovelier than on this morning, seated beside her father, with her bright curls unconfined, like a wreath of sunshine around her fair brow, her fresh, pure complexion, set off by the clear purity of her white dress. Mr. Manning's eyes were often wandering toward the child, as toward some sweet picture, and even Miss Lancing could not suppress her admiration of the beautiful girl.

After breakfast Mr. Leonard retired to the library, excusing himself on account of important business, and Percy and the girls were left to mutual entertainment.

"Are these your paintings?" asked Percy of his young cousin, as he stood before a group of finely executed pictures in the parlor.

"No, sir, they are poor dear mamma's. I have not taken much pains with drawing yet, although papa is very anxious that I should begin soon. I prize these very highly, because my mamma did them."

"They are very beautiful indeed. I have heard my mother speak oftentimes of your mamma, and am so happy to know her daughter. I shall love you very much, little cousin."

"Thank you, sir—or cousin Percy, I will call you. I have no own cousin—is n't it strange?"

"Quite; but I'll be your own cousin, and brother too, little one."

The child laughed, and the three were soon chatting gaily. Meanwhile Mr. Leonard had finished his letter-writing, and reentered the parlor. Seating himself near the south window, he addressed Percy.

"You have chosen a very delightful season of the year to travel in the country, Mr. Manning. The month of September is particularly pleasant, and our excursion season is at its height. Really, Margaret, you must form a little party and take an excursion in the new steamer over the lake. Capt. Rowe is very anxious to receive the patronage of the public, and with your cousin here to escort you, you can have a very pleasant trip."

"Oh! that will be splendid! And we'll go, won't we?"

"Certainly we will, little cousin, if Miss Lancing is disposed."

"It will give me the greatest pleasure to do so; but will you not accompany us, Mr. Leonard?"

"I had not thought of it, but if my company is desirable, I will see. I am very busy at present, however, and you must pardon any lack of attention on my part; I shall throw my responsibilities in that direction upon my young friend here, who will be better fitted to entertain young ladies like you."

"Oh, what a man you are!" exclaimed Laura. "One would really think you were a gray-headed old man, to hear you talk!"

The day wore away in pleasant conversation, and in the evening they all met in the parlor again. Miss Lancing sat in a low sewing chair, her smooth black hair wound in a satiny coil around her head; her dress of bright green silk displaying by contrast the clear dark beauty of her complexion. Little Margaret sat on the sofa beside her cousin, dressed as usual in pure white, while her father sat lost in reverie near the piano. A silence of several moments was broken by Percy, who addressed Miss Lancing:

"It would give me great pleasure to hear some music. Allow me to open the piano for you."

"Oh, yes, Laura! do play and sing for us. You know you have refused me ever since you came here. Now you will, won't you?" echoed Margaret.

"I can scarcely refuse so earnest an invitation without being rude, I suppose," said Laura, as she seated herself at the instrument.

Running her fingers lightly over the keys she played a brilliant prelude, with the clear precision of touch which is only acquired by persevering practice. Drops of melody seemed to trickle from her fingers as they flew, bird-like, over the white keys. This prelude gradually softened, mellowing away until "the plashing waves like music fell," and then a storm at sea. How the billows roared, and the booming of heaven's artillery came resounding through the piano. Striking a full chord she commenced that thrilling song, "Man the Life-Boat." A more thoroughly trained or flexible and powerful voice than that of Laura Lancing's, was very rarely heard. The silvery sweetness with which she caroled the soft, sweet passages, then with a burst of grand melody she filled the room with the intensity of the words, "Man the life-boat! man the life-boat!" the cry almost a shriek—for human aid, seeming to rise from the waves!

Her listeners sat spellbound, and Mr. Leonard fairly saw the struggling forms in the stormy sea. At the close of the song he exclaimed:

"Why, Miss Lancing, I did not dream of your rare talent. You have a finely cultivated voice, and must sing often after this."

"I never heard so sweet a voice. You are beyond my appreciation," said Percy, while Margaret gave her friend an affectionate kiss.

"And now will my little girl sing a song for her father?" queried Mr. Leonard, in a fond tone.

"Yes, papa; but after Laura's beautiful singing my poor little songs will sound miserable."

"Your childish voice is always sweet to me, dear. Please sing some quiet ballad."

The young girl seated herself at the piano, and in a sweet, pathetic voice sang "Rock me to sleep, mother." The tears stood in her father's eyes as she concluded, and with a loving kiss upon her brow he bade them all "good-night" and retired. Margaret soon left the room, and Laura rose to go, when Percy exclaimed:

"Please do not leave yet, Miss Lancing, (or Laura, if you will allow me the familiar use of your name.) Just sit here by this window and see how beautifully the moon shines down through that network of leaves. I am a worshiper of evening; the sweet stillness is no delightful."

"Are you, indeed? Then our tastes are similar. I always enjoy it very much."

"I am glad," answered Percy. "When looking

out upon the silent world I always feel like repeating Longfellow's sublime poem, commencing:

"The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of night."
"Really, Mr. Manning, you are quite poetical. I have often thought, by Byron, that
There is a dangerous silence in that hour,
A stillness which leaves room for the full soul
To speak all itself, without the power
Of calling wholly back its self-control."

but have ever loved the tender moonlight. It seems to be the poetry of night. But it is high time that my night-poetry was turned into dreams, and I must bid you good-night."

"Good-night, Laura," and he dashed his black eyes full upon her as he uttered the two words. "How delightful he is!" thought she, as she went up the stairs. "But Mr. Leonard is so noble."

Al. Laura! foolish Laura!

CHAPTER VI.

A few days from this time the previously mentioned excursion was decided upon, and Mr. Leonard had kindly consented to be one of the party. At an early morning hour they left home, and rode to the landing. The ride was a delightful one. The fresh, dewy dews from tree and shrub, the cool morning breeze wafted across the dewy plains fanned their faces, and as they neared the wharf the lake burst upon their gaze like a beautiful surprise, a sheet of silver purity. The beautiful little steamer "Isabelle" came steaming down the lake, and in a short time they were all cozily seated on the deck. The shores of this lake were fringed with graceful birches, whose long, little branches, waved a morning greeting to them as they passed, and everything seemed to work together for good.

After a sail of an hour or more, they arrived at their destination, where they disembarked, and entered a small boat, which the two gentlemen were to row through a narrow stream, branching out from the lake into a small cove of wonderful beauty, on whose bank stood a fine hotel, where the party were to dine. The day passed in unalloyed pleasure. Miss Lansing sketched the beautiful scenery with her skillful hand, while the gentlemen fished, and little Margaret gathered a quantity of beautiful pebbles from the beach. The beautiful twilight came at last, and after a short delay—caused by the tardiness of the steamer—they were homeward bound. The party seated themselves in the bow of the boat, beneath the stars and stripes, and Miss Lansing sang in her rich, mellow voice—with the beautifully blending tenor, so clear and full, of Percy Manning—the sweet song, "Mourning strange"—to borrow Keats's expression—"Travelling," their voices ringing out over the placid waters, eliciting echoes from the shores.

The clear light fell softly over the waves, as they rose and fell, with gently plashing voices, bringing back to Mr. Leonard's mind other boat-rides long years ago. The musical song of the waters on such a night is like a weird spell, which invokes memories long buried beneath the gathered dust of years. Dreamful memories fit across the mind unasked and unconsciously appearing. Fancies like those of yore come like speech, beguiling the tired heart from care. How our sorrows, like soft, plaintive music from an Eolian harp, come sounding through the half-closed passages of the heart, and array themselves in sadness before the door of the soul. It is these experiences that make men good, that make them pure, and it is on these occasions that the "still small voice" whispers. In the whirl and din of life, how, think you, dear reader, the angels can make their whispers heard? It is silent moments that fit us for the immortal world and communion with angels. Ruskin says, in his late volume of essays, "God is not in the earthquake nor in the fire. They are but the blunt and low faculties of our nature, which can only be addressed through lamplight and lightning. It is in the quiet and subdued passages of unobtrusive majesty, the deep, the calm and the perpetual; things which the angels work out for us daily, yet vary eternally." It is in these moments that we can see the pages of our soul which fit us for good deeds among our fellowmen.

Percy and Laura sat conversing in low tones beneath the "red, white and blue." Margaret's curly head leaned over the railing of the deck, watching the heaving bubbles on the moonlit surface of the lake. The boat glided along noiselessly, the soft swaying of the trees adding to the "memories wild" which hung dreamily around Mr. Leonard, as he walked to and fro, with his hands folded behind him.

"Papa! oh!" A quick splash, the shrill shriek ringing out across the waves, and echo answered, "P-a-a," in a softer tone. Margaret had fallen overboard.

Quicker than thought Percy tore his coat from his arms, and with a quick shout, "Down with a boat; now," he sprang into the lake after her. Miss Lansing fell into the most violent hysterics, but as no one had time to attend to them she soon recovered.

Mr. Leonard seemed petrified in agony. The boat-hands soon lowered a small boat, at the sight of which the stricken parent burst forth in groans which rent the heart of every man, and nothing could dissuade him from entering the boat.

It was two or three seconds—an eternity to the waiting ones—after Percy manfully leaped from the boat, ere Margaret's form arose to the surface. Slowly the white dress came wavering through the clear lucid waters. Ugh! how ghastly was the sight to the eyes of her father, as he sat with eyes fixed upon the spot. Up she came, her dress clinging close to her limp form; her long curls laying around her neck in golden sympathy, but her little face—oh! so white. Reader, did you ever see a form as it was taken from the water, with the sun's rays glittering on the wet face? If so, you are fitted to understand the child's appearance. The brave fellow threw his left arm under her, and with no time to ascertain her condition, struck out manfully for the boat with the other.

"He's got her! he's got her!" rang through the air as he came. At the speed with which the steamer was moving, she had gone some distance from the girl's fall ere they could slacken the speed sufficiently to lower the boat, and the men pulled with superhuman strength to reach them.

Not a word was uttered. Every lip was compressed, and every eye fixed upon the swimmer. The mute whiteness of the parent's face told of suffering too deep for speech. She was his all. Oh! heaven grant she may not be dead! The swimmer soon reached the boat, and Mr. Leonard reached out his arms for his child, and drew her into the boat, while the men assisted Percy, who was nearly exhausted, to clamber over the side. The deathlike appearance of Margaret as she lay in her father's arms was terrible to behold.

It took but a few moments to reach the steamer, and the captain tenderly lifted the unconscious

child from the arms of Mr. Leonard. The tears streamed down his weather-browned cheeks as he laid her, face downward, upon the table in the cabin, and used every means within his power to restore life and warmth in the still, cold body, while the father stood in all grief-stricken persons do—more especially men—in dumb despair.

In a short time the water oozed from her lips, and then came those awful sensations of returning to life after drowning—the agonized breaths and choking gasps, one after another, and the blue eyes unclosed upon the joyfully frantic father. It is impossible for our pen to describe the emotions of Mr. Leonard. The tears rolled down his cheeks, and his heart was filled with speechless thanksgiving. Clinging close to his heart, he bore her to a sofa in the cabin, and pillowing her head upon his breast, held her in his arms until they reached the wharf.

Margaret was too much exhausted to walk, and the strong arms of her father bore her like an infant to the carriage which awaited them. Meanwhile, her friend Percy had obtained a suit of clothes from one of the boatmen, and being in every way too large for his slight figure, he presented a most ridiculous appearance. Miss Lansing had so far recovered her nervous equilibrium as to support Margaret in the carriage, and a sudden joy was felt by the entire party as they rode to Willowdale as fast as possible. The alarm of Mrs. Brown, on beholding her young mistress, was very great; but her tears flowed, partly from joy and more from grief, when she learned the particulars. She soon prepared her and placed Margaret in her bed, then made a bowl of warm gruel which she urged the child to drink, while Mr. Leonard brought forward a hot mixture of gin and water, to prevent her from taking cold. The poor girl's teeth chattered *tatt-tatt-tatt* on the cup as she drank the drink, and Mrs. Brown drew the blankets close around her shivering form.

Percy had changed his sailor-suit for one better adapted to his form, and now presented himself at the door to learn the condition of the "drowned girl." Mr. Leonard gave him permission to enter, and as he approached the bedside, Margaret's blue eyes turned a look of thanksgiving toward him, while she put her lips up for a kiss. His black eyes filled with tears as he kissed her pale lips, and expressed his pleasure at seeing her no worse.

"Oh, Mr. Leonard, if she had been drowned!" and he shuddered as he uttered the words.

"I feel, my dear boy, the great debt of gratitude that I must ever owe you for the preservation of my child; but if the heartfelt thanks of a father who prizes his child beyond everything on earth, even life itself, and the offer of anything which I can ever bestow, is the least acknowledgment, you know they are yours."

"You owe me nothing, sir. It was what I would have done for any one; but the ties of blood nerved my arm to stronger motion, I think."

The next morning, Margaret was in a high fever. The shock upon her delicate constitution was too great, and her flushed cheeks and burning brow told too surely of the fever fires raging within. The physician was sent for immediately, who shook his head gravely as he pronounced the symptoms very bad. The patient, he said, was of that peculiar nervous organization that could not endure such a shock without producing serious results.

All day long the fever raged, and ere night came on her incoherent wanderings too surely indicated the severity of the illness.

The next morning, Dr. Matthews pronounced it a brain fever, and ordered the strictest quiet to be preserved throughout the house. In Mr. Leonard's all-absorbing anxiety for his child, he scarcely remembered his guests, and they were thus left dependent upon each other for entertainment. Percy, dear, noble Percy, was appropriated by Miss Lansing in a manner which he did not enjoy. Finding her arts all lost upon Mr. Leonard, she had determined to conquer Mr. Manning's heart ere she returned to Boston, and if persistent endeavor and the use of every art known to her would have accomplished her design, surely no woman could have had a more devoted lover. He was studiously polite toward her, and no lack of attention was in the smallest particular noticeable, yet she often complained of loneliness, and would ask Percy if he did not think the sick-room very dull and tiresome.

"Dull and tiresome, Laura?" would be his answer—"dull and tiresome, when a sweet, pure life like Margaret's lies between the worlds? There is nothing that I would not do for that dear girl. Poor child! she suffers so much," and a reproachful look always accompanied these answers.

The days lengthened into weeks, and still they watched the suffering girl growing weaker and weaker, her life-tide ebbing and flowing, until they felt that they must give her up. But "while there's life there's hope."

[To be concluded in our next.]

Greenfield, Mass.

Mrs. Nellie J. Temple Brigham has been lecturing most of the time for three months past in Greenfield, Mass. Her addresses have been the wonder and delight of many of our people, who have never before heard anything of Spiritualism except from its enemies. Mrs. Brigham has spoken from subjects given her after arriving at the hall, and improvised poems from the same subjects. She is well adapted to go as a pioneer into the dark places where our philosophy is unknown. Pleasing in person, gentle and unassuming in manners, unostentatious in dress, overflowing with kind and sweet charity, her personal character wins the good will of all. And the eminent discretion, culture and Christian charity of the spirit association controlling her peculiarly fit her to be an apostle to the people. Much good seed has been sown here concerning the theology and philosophy of the new faith, and could it be followed by some public circles by a text medium of good moral character and superior mediumistic powers, there might soon be an organization here. The liberal people are, however, to be instructed in the matter of Bible inspiration by the Rev. J. F. Moore, a growing Unitarian pastor of a progressive church in this place; and no doubt many of the advanced ideas so eloquently given by Mrs. Brigham will be fully met by the broad and radical views from the Unitarian pulpit the coming fall.

Mrs. Brigham will soon leave her many warm friends and admirers in this place for other fields of labor. In October she is to speak in Milford, N. H. In November, in New York City—Everett Rooms. In December, in Philadelphia, and in Washington, D. C., in March. We hesitate not to say that she is one of the most eloquent and successful speakers now in the field of reform.

Dr. H. B. Storer is to address us the first Sabbath in October.

Mrs. Alcinda Wilhelm gave us two powerful lectures in August. She made us a flying visit while on her way to Oswego.

H. A. BUDDINGTON.

Greenfield, Sept. 26, 1868.

Children's Department.

BY MRS. LOVE M. WHILS.

Address, No. 16 West 24th street, New York City.

"We think not that we daily see
About our hearts, angels that are to be,
Or may be if they will, and we prepare
Their souls and ours to meet in happy air."
(Lionel Lincoln.)

UNCLE SILVER'S SUMMER.

"Here is where I find the water-cresses in the spring," said Mr. Silver; "you can hardly think with what pleasure I gather them. After our long winter they seem full of the best part of the earth, the air and the sun. They have a crispness as if they were sharp little things that stole their way up spite of the snow and frost, and then they have a pungent taste that makes one think of the summer, and their delicate blossoms belong to the spring. The whole year lives in the cresses; and they seem to come purposely to tell us what a good year it is, with some special blessing for every season."

"But, Uncle Silver," said Solomon, "I never think any such things when I see the cresses in the market. I only wonder if they are fresh or wilted, and how much they cost."

"That is because you never see them growing. They are only luxuries for your table, to you in the city, and so they are to Mrs. Silver, who only sees them in her pan after they are gathered; but to those of us who know all about them, and the places where they live, they are like pleasant messengers that come to bring us tidings of things we want to know about. But I brought you down to show you the nest of a bird that I love next to the robin. There it is in that cluster of vines; you can bring it here and will see just how he built it. It is the nest of the brown thrasher."

"See," said Solomon, who had taken it from the bushes; "it is built first of small sticks, then it has a layer of dried leaves, and then little threads of something."

"No," said Mr. Silver, "those are fibrous roots with which he always lines his nest. He always chooses a low place among bushes on which to build."

"I should think I'd like the high tree a great deal better," said Esther, "then he could see what was going on, and be rocked in the branches."

"Some men like to build their houses in the valley," said Mr. Silver, "and some on the hills, and the birds are fortunately not all of one mind. This brown thrasher, or *Turdus Rufus*, seeks lowly places, though he has a lofty spirit."

"Did you say he was called *Turdus*? that is the robin's name, I remember," said Solomon.

"Yes, the robin was *Turdus Migratorius*, and the thrasher is *Turdus Rufus*; they both belong to the thrush family, and each have special qualities to commend them. He is called the French mocking-bird, from his sweet, liquid notes, that seem to be an imitation of the songs of several birds; but they are not, for his notes are his own. Tell us, little, what you think he says when you hear him in the spring."

"The boys told me, or I should not have thought that he was speaking words, but afterwards I could always hear them plainly—'Plow, plow, plow—furrow, furrow, furrow—plant, plant, plant—scratch it up, scratch it up.'"

"Yes, that is the interpretation that the farmer gives to his note, and perhaps that is the reason that the bird has a bad reputation. There is a great deal in a name, and in a song, too. Some farmers are foolish enough to believe this bird does a great deal of mischief in pulling up his corn, but I have watched him carefully, and I know he does ten times as much good as harm. He eats a great many grubs, that would destroy more corn than he and a dozen companions would pull up."

There is one miserable kind of dirt-colored grub, with a black head, that he is particularly fond of, and that is the most mischievous little insect we have. I am rejoiced for every thrasher I hear in the spring; not only for his sweet music, but for the good he will do. Mrs. Silver says I would plant a field of corn purposely to feed the birds; and so I would if they would not come without. If you have never heard the thrasher, I don't think I can give you any idea of his clear ringing song; I have often heard it half a mile away, when I have been up early on a still morning. It seems as if Nature could not do too much for us during the month of May. It is then our cherry trees are all in bloom, and the woods are sweet with the opening buds, and it is then that this welcome visitor gives us his sweetest notes of song."

"I heard one once in a cage," said Linnie; "a gentleman showed it to me. It had brown feathers, a real fashionable brown, not dark and ugly, but a little reddish, with a little white and black on his wings. I remember all about it, because of the funny story the man told me about it."

"Tell us what it was," said Uncle Silver.

"He said he brought it up from a little bird and tamed it himself. He would let it out of the cage sometimes, when it would dust itself all over with dry sand, then fix up its feathers, and then go to catching insects. If he caught a wasp he would break off its wings and then lay it down, and examine it to see if it had a sting, and then he would squeeze it to press out the poison before he would swallow it."

"That's a big story, Cousin Linnie," said Solomon.

"There is no doubt it is true, for they are wise birds," said Mr. Silver. "I knew a man who had one, and he used often to give it crusts of bread to eat. He was very fond of them, but if the crusts were too hard for his throat he would carry them to his water-cup and throw them in, and when they were sufficiently soft to please him he would take them out and swallow them. Does it not seem as if the bird could reason somewhat as a man does, when he soaks his hard crust in his coffee? I have a story to tell you that comes out of this nest very much as the song of the bird out of his brown throat, if only I could give it as much sweetness."

"Oh, you can," said Linnie; "I have been waiting and waiting for one, and looking into your eyes to see it coming."

"How do you see the story in my eyes, my little Linnet?"

"It looks like a smile first, then like light, and when your eyes begin to twinkle, then I know there is a story."

"Stories are like light, for they come out of the bright places in my heart."

"Let me see; it was spring cleaning, I remember, when one day I came down here for a little quilt, for Mrs. Silver has a terrible time in May, getting the house all out of order to get it in again. It's beautiful when it's all over, but the doing takes pretty much all a man's patience. But, you see, it is a fortunate thing that one's home is not just like paradise; for if it was, why how should we know anything about the birds and flowers. I tell you what it is, children, we all of us have about as many blessings as we can well manage."

I remember I was thinking that as I came down here to forget my plowing and Mrs. Silver's cleaning for a couple of hours, and I sat down hereabouts and watched a bird that was thinking of building in that thorn bush. I sat so still, and the place seemed so much like heaven, that I became a little dreamy, perhaps I fell asleep, but I was roused by a light step coming along the path just above me. I looked up and saw a little girl that lived over the hill, in a little rude shanty, for her father was a miserable wretch, who spent all his money at the tavern and left his family to suffer.

Tinny was a wise little thing, for trouble and sorrow are sometimes great schoolmasters, and she looked at me very much as a woman might have done.

"Mr. Silver," said she, sitting down beside me, "I've been out hunting fairies, and there are none; it's all a lie."

Tinny's mother was a Scotch woman, and had taught her all she knew; and her head was full of knights and princes and fairies, and she liked much better to rove in the woods, and imagine all sorts of adventures, than to go to school or to learn to work.

"How do you know there are no fairies," said I; "are you a great deal wiser than all the people that ever lived?"

"Because I went with my offering to them, and I've just been to look, and nobody has touched it. I carried the first Lily of the Woods, and the first Columbine, and the first strawberry blossom. I hunted all over for them, and I'm sure they were the first, and no fairies came to take them; I put them right on the moss, just as Sir Penfold did when he wanted the amber for his bride, and the fairies brought it to him."

"And what do you want, Tinny, for your offering?"

"I want to love to work, and to go to school. Everybody calls me lazy, and cooly, and all sorts of names, and I'm tired of it."

She said this with a discouraged tone, and looked off into the woods, as if she was thinking out some great mental problem.

"So you want a want, Tinny?"

"I don't want to be called all sorts of names, and I would like to earn me a new gown. But I must go now."

And she rose quietly and walked off as she had come. I had enough to think of after her visit. Here was a little one that had learned the great secret of all reformation: she wanted the desire to do right, but she did not know how to get it. She knew more than most men who labor to make the world better, for she had learned what would change all her life. It being cleaning day, I did not think it best to consult Mrs. Silver as to what could be done, so I went over the hill to find about the best woman the world ever knew, Mrs. Sylvia Somers.

As I was going I came upon the little shrine that Tinny had made. There lay her flowers, still fresh in their sheltered nook. My heart cried, spite of all I could do. I picked up the flowers and put them in the button-hole to my coat, and in their place I dropped some silver shrapnel. I thought that at least Tinny should preserve a little faith in some sort of watchful love that cared for her miserable life.

When I told Aunt Sylvia the story, she sat down, folded her hands placidly, and said, "Something must be done." Then I went away, for there was no use of talking with her, her thinking was worth all our planning.

I extended my walk for an hour into the glory of the woods, till I grew so full of wonder at the beauty of the world, that I felt as if I wanted to kneel down and praise God. As I went back I stopped in my former seat. A brown thrasher came out of the thicket of bushes there, and sang a melody that was better than my praise could have been, and my heart joined with it, and sent its offering up to the serene heights of heaven.

When all was quiet again and I had begun my dreaming, I heard again the light steps of Tinny, but there was a joyousness in them not there before.

"How lucky I went again, Mr. Silver. See, they took the flowers and left this," and as she showed it, she glanced at my button-hole. Her hand dropped, and the silver fell to the ground.

"There are no fairies, after all," she said sadly, "and I shall never want to work and study, or do anything but run away."

I was troubled to know what to do, and I was vexed with myself for letting her see the flowers, for if she had not, she would never have known that I put the shrapnel there; but I summoned all my wit to tell me what to do.

"Tinny," said I, "there is something a great deal more powerful than all the fairies that ever were imagined, and it keeps you and cares for you, and will give you all you desire. It is the dear Father's love in heaven. And it is that love in your heart that makes you know that you ought to wish to do right."

"Nobody loves me much, only mother, and she is so sorry she can't but little. I want a glad love."

"Look at that brown thrasher," said I. "Hush, it will sing. Did you ever hear a gladder song? Who do you suppose cares for it, and fills it so full of joy that it breaks forth into such sweet singing?"

"Dunno," whispered Tinny.

"It is that same Father in heaven that cares for you, and that puts it into your heart to want to be good."

"He don't speak to me," said Tinny.

"He speaks through all good and beautiful things. There is not a bird or a flower but tells us of his love. And he is always speaking in the hearts of little children."

"Are you sure he speaks in mine?" said Tinny.

"Just as sure as I can be," said I. "He tells you to be a dear good girl, and to love to do the right. He speaks when you have no wild, willful thoughts, and comes nearest to you when you are thinking good thoughts. His love looks out of your eyes when you are gentle, and is heard in your voice when you are happy, and it speaks to you in every kind word you hear."

"Is it speaking now, Mr. Silver, in your voice?" said Tinny.

"I hope so, for it is the way that we should always seek to find that Father, by doing good to some one. But here comes kind Aunt Sylvia; perhaps she may bring us some more kind messages from that Father."

Aunt Sylvia greeted Tinny with the greatest ease and gentleness, and said she was just going over the hill to ask her mother to let her go and live with her a week, to help her plant her flower seeds, and take care of the little violets and the tulips.

"In your best garden? would you let me go there?" said Tinny.

"There is just where I want you, if you love the flowers well enough. No one can help the flowers that does not love them."

"Oh, I love them," said Tinny. "I'll run home and ask mother if I may go. You don't want me to work, do you?"

"You shall do just what you like to do best."

Tinny was over the hill in a moment, her brown dress fluttering, with its torn breadths, not unlike the spread wing of the brown thrasher.

Tinny went home with Mrs. Somers, and first worked with her in the garden, but she soon showed great capacity for all kinds of work, and went about it with such zeal that she surprised everyone. Before a year had passed Mrs. Somers had adopted her as her own, for her mother had followed her husband into some other industry, choosing his wretched life to her own shapeliness and her child's love.

The next spring after I first met Tinny, I was walking again not far from the same spot, when I came across Tinny looking for water-cresses. She looked so blithe and her voice was so gay, that I remembered in a moment the year before, and what I had said. I wanted to know whether she remembered it.

"Let's see," said I, "it's about a year since we heard the brown thrasher singing here. Do you remember it?"

"Guess I do, because it was when I first went to plant Aunt Sylvia's seeds; and when I dropped, dropped them in, I thought how the music came dropping, dropping in here, (and she put her hand across her breast), and then how the sunshine kept dropping down here, (and she put her hand on her head), and then the shine out of your eyes, just like the sunshine. I told Aunt Sylvia about it, and she said she guessed they were the seeds of the good Father's love, and that by the time the little seeds had grown up and blossomed, the seeds of love would be blooming in my heart. She said that she would water them with her kindness, and I must keep the weeds of naughtiness out. So I kept thinking about it and trying, and now I feel as if I had a garden in me."

"Oh what a lesson was in that child's words. A garden of the Lord in her heart! Children, don't forget it, for, like Tinny, you too have gardens to be watered and tended, and there are weeds to be plucked out with careful hand."

"It's easy enough remembering the story," said Linnie, "but I don't believe it's as easy to make the seeds grow."

"That's the hard part, to be sure," said Mr. Silver, "or rather we make it hard. But I think goodness and love ought to be as natural as the singing of the birds and the growing of the flowers. When one gets the wish to do right, that is about all that is necessary. Tinny was right—she asked for the desire to be good. But I hear Mrs. Silver's horn, which means we must hurry home to dinner."

Spiritualism in Oswego, N. Y.

Subject of the Editors of the Banner of Light—As the subject of organization is a prominent one among the Spiritualists of the country, and as there are various forms adopted (perhaps no two alike) in the different local associations, I have taken the liberty to send you our plan, or the one accepted by the Spiritualists of this city and vicinity. The great difficulty has been to get an arrangement under which all can act without subscribing to stated articles of belief or creeds. We think we have accomplished it; at any rate, our people have no hesitancy in subscribing to this statement of purposes, and we hope for permanency and the maintenance of regular speakers. There can be no doubt but harmonious organization forms a bond of union, which enables localities to act with more energy of purpose in the presentation to the public of the philosophy of Spiritualism, so here is our programme of association:

Articles of Organization of the First Society of Spiritualists of Oswego, adopted August 17th, 1868.

Whereas names are heretofore afflicted with the force of an association for the transaction of business, the object of which is to carry forward the so-called spiritual work, which are designed expressly for the good and welfare of mankind, in enabling us to attain to a higher condition, in the unfolding of our social, mental and spiritual faculties; therefore we do associate ourselves under the name of the "First Society of Spiritualists of Oswego," allowing perfect freedom of thought and expression to all, believing it to be right that each and every person should live in the full enjoyment of their own opinions according to the dictates of their conscience, we therefore ignore all creeds, dogmas, and arbitrary rules by which one may be bound.

The officers of this association shall consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and three Trustees, one of the latter to be chosen from each of the city of Oswego and towns of Oswego and Berlin, who shall hold their office for one year, or until their successors shall be appointed. Meetings for the transaction of business shall be held each month, at such time and place as may be designated. All funds of the Society shall be raised by voluntary contributions. Any member can at any time withdraw his or her name of membership upon application to the Secretary, and shall be considered a member until such application is made. The Society, on a two-thirds vote of the members present, at a regular meeting, is empowered to accept such laws as may be deemed necessary for its interest and government, notice having been given at a previous regular meeting to that effect.

The officers of the Society are as follows:

John Austin, President.

Mrs. C. B. Richmond, Vice President.

James H. Smith, Secretary.

H. K. Davis, Treasurer.

J. L. Pool, Trustee for the city of Oswego.

A. Kingsbury, Trustee for the town of Berlin.

Leroy Burt, Trustee for the town of Oswego.

The Children's Progressive Lyceum is partially under the supervision of the Society, yet acting independently, so far as the election of its officers and the management of its affairs are concerned.

For several weeks past Bro. C. B. Lynn and Mrs. A. Wilhelm, M. D., have been our speakers, and have given the very best of satisfaction. The cause of Spiritualism has no more earnest or eloquent advocates, and wherever they may lecture, the people will be benefited by their ministrations.

During September and October, the Society are to have E. S. Wheeler, a brilliant and most noble worker for the religion of Spiritualism.

Our audiences are good, generally four to six hundred people, and altogether we are in a prosperous condition.

A movement is already made toward obtaining a commodious and beautiful hall, that shall be under our own exclusive control, and I think, within a year such results will be attained. This, together with united action, is what every body of Spiritualists should have to ensure permanency to their cause. May such be the object of Spiritualists everywhere, is the wish of your friends.

J. L. Pool.

Oswego, N. Y., Sept. 5th, 1868.

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The World's Crisis and Church Decline.

The editor of the *World's Crisis* says in his issue of the 21st that that number closes the present volume, and he is very desirous that his friends (who are to "go up" in a month or two) should pay for the next year. And as a clincher to his appeal he says: "We hope to be able to make our paper more interesting the coming year than ever before." And this fanatical speech calls us "infidel"! Why, his editor and speaker are making more infidels every day than the "Christian" world has the remotest idea of. Thinking people always gravitate to common sense whenever a certain bigoted class of religionists attempt to force credulity down their throats. And yet the *Crisis* is continually harping upon this one theme. It says: "The infidelity of these days is truly alarming. That it is rapidly increasing there is no room to doubt, and we see nothing arising to check it." Again, the Editor says that Spiritualism is the cause of all these disastrous conditions "the church" finds itself in today. The Editor is simply mistaken. He has not kept pace with the times. The churches having become a valley of dry bones, (see Leviticus) how could they be resuscitated? Men and women possessing spiritual natures, yearning for something more substantial, something more spiritual than the hollow Sabbath moratoriums enacted in the fashionable churches, and Spiritualism has come to gladden their hearts and teach them the truth of the "life-eternal."

Why are the churches declining? Let us illustrate. A designing man has only to "join the church" to successfully accomplish any purpose he has in view—even to participating in "financial irregularities"—as the "respectable" *Daily Advertiser* would say—to the tune of \$500,000, or so, leaving the directors of the bank swindled to settle with their creditors as best they may. All such and many other sorts of swindling having been perpetrated under the cloak of church membership, is it at all strange or singular that "the church" should under such circumstances decline, and that something far better should take its place?

Yes, Mr. *Crisis*, "Spiritualists are becoming more and more outspoken" in behalf of justice, humanity and liberalism. "The church" has too long trampled under foot the rights of man; and Spiritualism comes, a beacon-light, to guide him on the way that leads to truth and wisdom. "Onward! ever onward!" is its motto. The downtrodden peoples of earth have been and are calling for more light and less oppression; and the angel-hosts are responding to their call, illuminating the minds of men and women, preparatory to the inauguration of the New Dispensation, when the poor forsaken ones of earth shall know suffering no more; but all will unite in one grand brotherhood, whose highest ambition shall be to do good.

The Faith Spreading.

A reporter for the *Louisville (Ky.) Democrat*, writing up his local observations in Jeffersonville, in that State, says as follows in reference to the spread and growth of Spiritualism thereabouts. His words are full of encouragement for believers in other parts of the country:

"Notwithstanding the detection of frauds, practiced upon the people by the many so-called 'mediums' throughout the country, and the derision with which the idea is mentioned everywhere, we have in this city and vicinity no less than five hundred persons who are firm believers in Spiritualism; and they are to be found among the most intelligent and respectable of the community. Many are the marvelous wonders said to have been performed at the 'sittings.' Night after night the different circles meet, and we have heard that as high as fifty persons at a time have been turned away from some houses, being unable to find room within. Long written communications, proposed to have come from departed spirits, have been received, and they from persons unknown to the mediums, and of a character impossible for any to understand except those addressed. Skeptics have been invited to attend these 'sittings,' and went joking and laughing at the 'patent humbug,' only to return, some confirmed Spiritualists, others, that it is the workings of the evil one, and still others, that it is no human agency, but something they are unable to comprehend. We will relate one example, just to show some of the workings of Spiritualism. You, a total stranger, may visit in daylight the house of the medium; a slate is handed you, which you wipe clean of any marks; you place the slate and pencil in a little table drawer; you lock the drawer; a little girl, unable to read or write, places her hand upon the top of the table; you hear the pencil writing upon the slate; the pencil drops; you are told that a communication awaits you; you unlock the drawer; you take out the slate; it is written over on both sides; you recognize the handwriting of a departed friend; the communication relates to matters known only to yourself and you have something to 'smoke in your pipe' for a lifetime. What is it? every one asks. That's the question to be solved. Hundreds of our best citizens can testify to examples similar to the above. As for our part, we don't like to get up a correspondence with the dead; we have enough trouble with the living, and it absorbs all of our time to keep even with them. If it be the workings of the devil, we are satisfied to hold no communication with his satanic majesty, there being a sufficient quantity of that kind of material here for all practical purposes. If it be 'what is it?' why then there are many whose brains and time exceed ours, and they may develop the matter and we will abide by their decision. But one thing we are satisfied of, and that is that our people are excited over the subject, and that the agency of the mediums is sincere and no humbug."

Pulpit Earnestness.

Under the above heading we find the following in the *Christian Register*. It seems to us to be a very singular admission for a Unitarian paper to make:

"An infirm clergyman, in whose pulpit a string of unsuccessful candidates had been roiled off, said to me in explanation of their universal failure, 'Why, sir, they were not earnest enough even to seem sincere,' and in a Western city, where the congregation have been seven months trying in vain for a minister, the trouble with most of their preachers was what Garrison charged against the bishop, that he uttered as if he did not believe a word of it."

No wonder Spiritualism is gaining ground so rapidly everywhere, and that credulity is diminishing in numbers. Men now think deeper and act freer on religious subjects than ever before; hence the best minds leave the church and embrace Spiritualism. This probably accounts for the poor stock of clergymen now remaining in the Unitarian fold.

Now Ready.

The fifth edition of the work entitled "The Life-Line of the Lone One, or Autobiography of the World's Child," a very interesting book of over three hundred pages, well bound. As everybody knows the author, we omit his name here. It is evident that the volume is fully appreciated, otherwise a fifth edition would not have been called for. Published and for sale by Wm. White & Co., 125 Washington street, Boston, and sold at their Branch Office, 54 Broadway, New York.

THE SPIRIT MESSAGE DEPARTMENT of the *Banner of Light* this week is replete with interest. Every reader should turn his attention to the sixth page.

The Massachusetts State Spiritual Association.

It is an old and sagacious maxim that "what-ever is worth doing at all is worth doing well," and it is equally in consonance with common sense to affirm that the amount of energy expended and means employed in accomplishing any purpose, should be in proportion to the intrinsic importance of the work to be done. The Spiritualists of Massachusetts were the first to lead off in the great work of organizing State efforts for the purpose of promulgating the facts and philosophy of Spiritualism among the masses of the people. Other States have followed the example thus presented, and are now severally active in perfecting their methods of operation, and overcoming the difficulties incident to all new enterprises.

Without making invidious comparisons, it may, perhaps, be admitted that the State of Michigan, in consonance with the Western style of rushing things, and the indomitable spirit of enterprise that characterizes our friends in that section, has gone in advance of all the other States in the amount of funds raised, the number of missionaries employed, Lyceums organized and localities visited. We rejoice in their success, and hope that every State will "go and do likewise."

But we are in this article desirous of speaking particularly of Massachusetts, and do not propose to admit for a moment that this good old Commonwealth, with more Spiritualists, in proportion to her population, than any other State, and first to inaugurate a State Spiritual Society, as she has always been foremost in advocating and organizing efforts in behalf of human freedom and progress, will long consent to be rated second in any of those features which constitute the means, the methods, or the result of organic action. But to this end there must be a great awakening among the Spiritualists of Massachusetts. The selfishness and sloth incident to our common humanity, and which is the great obstacle in the highway of human progress, must be shaken off, and, vitalized by the breath of this New Dispensation, with firm purpose to advance in a positive manner upon the ignorance and superstition that everywhere prevail upon this subject, we must all pledge our personal influence, such as is ever streaming forth from positive convictions and sincere love for the truth—as well as the funds that are at our disposal, in behalf of the great work.

The work which the State Society proposes to accomplish is two-fold. First and generally, to send their missionaries into localities where no local societies exist, and where public lectures have not been heard, to deliver such lectures, thereby introducing the subject of Spiritualism to the attention of the people. There are many places where the subject is only known through the misrepresentation and ridicule of the pulpit and the press, and where a fair statement of its claims upon intelligent investigation, would be not only a novelty, but a welcome boon to those who literally sit "in the valley of the shadow of death."

In other places a few scattered Spiritualists timidly hold opinions that they hardly dare express to others, and therefore know nothing of the "liberty of the spirit" or the mighty power for good which they are stilling within them. The rallying of such weak brethren and sisters together, giving voice, hearty and free, to their conviction by a public lecturer, will give them courage, and, in many cases, induce them to form a neighborhood circle or meeting for Sunday talk or reading upon the subject, that shall prove the nucleus of an organized society, by-and-by, capable of sustaining a Children's Lyceum and public meetings. And then there is the Lyceum work itself, a progressive institution, never intended to be confined to the children alone, but beginning with them, caring for their education, offering every facility for their physical and mental development, unbiased and unrestrained by the cramping follies of false theological ideas or false social habits and fashions, constantly improving in its methods, as experience and intuition develop wisdom, and including the parents as well as children, old as well as young. The Lyceum is in its infancy—its eyes are just open—it has hardly stretched its limbs enough to indicate the power that it possesses, or even to hint at the symmetry and beauty of its ideal character.

These Children's Progressive Lyceums are to be instituted where the elements are ready and favorable conditions exist, and the State Missionaries must assist in that work. Bro. Carpenter, whose great soul is full of enthusiasm in behalf of the children, has already done much in this direction, and would have done more, if the people had seconded his appeal and been ready themselves to work.

Now the carrying on of this great work requires a large amount of money, but no more than can be easily raised, if Spiritualists will give according to their means and according to their professed love for the teaching and revelation of Spiritualism. If Spiritualism has done you good, reader, try to estimate if you can how much good it has done you. Dollars and cents cannot express it, but they can express something of the benevolence of your nature in desiring to have others share the blessing you have received, and materially aid in carrying it to them. We need for expenditure in this State, in carrying on the missionary work, every dollar that can be spared, after your contributions for local purposes. It is as much the "work of an angel" to send the truths of Spiritualism by the mouths of these laborers, and sustained by your contributions, as though you came flying through the heavens, disembodied of the material form, and communicated directly through any medium that you might control. The work is one, whether performed by spirits in the body or out of the body—directly or by proxy—by tongue, or pen, or dollars—and everywhere and by all means, it is the work of liberating the mind from the dogmas of false traditions and popular superstitions. It is the work of revealing man's nature unto himself—that he may realize the divinity that stirs within him, and the methods of progress by which that divinity shall rule and reign in his every emotion and thought and deed.

Spiritualists of Massachusetts, when called upon by these our missionaries, greet them cordially, welcome them heartily, contribute to them abundantly, and aid them fervently by word and work. So shall we constitute a united body of believers not only; but of workers also—before whose banded efforts the "flying host of popular ignorance shall strike their tents, and silently flee away."

All contributions to the State fund may be sent to the President, William White, Esq., of the *Banner of Light*, or to George A. Bacon, Secretary, Boston, who will acknowledge the receipt.

H. B. STORER.

Since the establishment of the New York Inebriate Asylum thirty-nine clergymen have been admitted.

Congress will assemble on the 21st instant.

The Singing Medium.

Of late, as well as years ago, we heard through various channels, predictions that the world was to see and be blessed with certain novel and more beautiful phases of spirit control than any which had yet been witnessed by men. It seems that some of these predictions are being verified in various parts of the country. In Washington, through Frankie Gummell, in Pennsylvania, through Abraham James, in Massachusetts, through Dr. Pierce, and numerous others in different sections of our land. But in all our experience, extending through a dozen years, have we seldom met with such extraordinary manifestations—appealing at once and in the most direct manner, to the higher qualities of our nature, to the aesthetic, the imaginative and creative faculties—than through the marvelous mediumship of the "greatest male soprano living," as he is fittingly designated—Mr. Jesse B. H. Shepard, of St. Louis.

Possessing a highly sensitive, nervous, yet healthy and harmonious organization—impressionable, clairvoyant, clairaudient, &c., he is the only instrument as yet sufficiently and properly developed to be controlled to the extent he is, and in so peculiar, delicate and intricate a manner. Born in 1818, this article bears the date of his twentieth birthday. Though thus young in years, he is exceedingly rich in spiritualistic experiences. Tall and straight of form, full, dark eyes and hair, good phenological developments, strikingly handsome in features and face—his whole appearance and manner indicate and impress every observer with the fact that his is a strange and unusually gifted organism. And his versatile powers, though yet comparatively in their infancy, more than redeem the promises of a favorable organization.

Bred an Episcopalian and subsequently joining the Catholic Church, he has graduated through both of these religious schools. Forced, by a power outside of and superior to himself, to sever all connection with family, relatives and friends, he has been led forth with neither scrip nor purse to pursue his wandering way through the world. As in the past, his career in the future is destined to be yet more eventful. He wears the insignia of a universal medium, having run through the various grades of mediumship in considerably less than two short years—still retaining many of the higher phases, in addition to one which the present generation will probably never see equalled; his shoulder blades, arms, hands and fingers being controlled by the masters of instrumental music, while simultaneously his vocal organs are used by the most cultivated and sweetest female singers, who, while dwelling in the form, ever thrilled with delight the consciousness of men. His voice, a pure soprano, is clear and sweet and of marvelous compass, equaling the highest point attained by Jenny Lind, Parepa Rosa, or any other living Prima Donna. His education is not of the schools—of these he knows little or nothing—but is the result of spirit impartation. By virtue of misunderstood conditions, he was always incapacitated for ordinary business or practical employment of any kind.

Without previous knowledge of music, he practiced on the piano, under spirit direction, for about one year, when his vocal powers were suddenly revealed—now some five months since. Obedient the monition, he presented himself before Prof. Kleiber, teacher of music for thirty years, master of several instruments, and leader of the choir of the church of St. Xavier, St. Louis, who, after examining and testing his efforts, confessed to his having the most wonderful voice which he ever heard. Immediately after this, under Prof. K.'s leadership, Mr. Shepard sang for the first time, and alone, an Ave Maria in Latin, to a congregation of over twelve hundred; and on the following Sunday sang in the same place an Ode to St. Cecilia, in German, by Handel, neither of the languages of which, nor the music, did he know anything about. On both of these occasions he was the only one who was permitted to sing a solo—a compliment of the first order, the choir, organist and organ being the best in the city. After these introductory successes, which cannot be paralleled, he visited Memphis, Louisville, New Albany, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Buffalo, Saratoga and Boston, everywhere singing in private circles, to the wonder and intense gratification of all who listen. His style of music is of the highest operatic order—artistic and classical. Up to the present time he has sung and played over eighteen hundred original pieces. At each séance he usually sings and performs ten or twelve pieces.

The purpose of his inspirers appears to be, for a certain time yet, that he shall more particularly confine his performances to the spiritualistic public, before whom, in circles, of from twenty to thirty, at the residences of our private citizens, he is ready to make engagements. Hereafter, and in due time, he will doubtless be called by a voice and with an authority he cannot resist, to appear before their royal highnesses, the waiting public.

Let all who can avail themselves of the present opportunity to hear this wonder among wonders, and witness this latest and most beautiful phase of spirit manifestation—an instrumental performance said to be superior to Blind Tom, accompanied with a voice which has no equal.

Boston, September 18th, 1868.

G. A. B.

Select Class for Youth.

We are much pleased to learn that Prof. Howe has opened a "select class" at his rooms for the youth of the city, who may be disposed to take advantage of his very easy, rapid and superior system of teaching. His desire had been to confine himself altogether to the education of adults, but at the earnest solicitation of several respectable citizens, he has thrown his *Class Room* open to a limited number of the youth of both sexes; not only for a grammatical education, but for a thorough course of English instruction, including Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, Grammar, Composition, Elocution, Natural Philosophy and Mathematics. The hours for these junior classes will be from 9 A. M. to 12 M. Terms: \$2.00 per week.

As the Professor has had thirty-one years' experience in teaching, and imparts instruction on advanced and scientific principles, without the hateful and useless drudgery of tasking, so interrupting to home comfort and trying to parents and guardians, those who have the health and happiness of their offspring at heart, should without hesitation place their sons and daughters under the Professor's charge. He can furnish the best city and foreign testimonials and references. Adults will receive instruction in Grammar on the Professor's "Seven Hour System," at all other hours of the day. Class Room, Hall 38, entrance, either 3 Tremont Row, or 12 Howard street.

English Publications.

The *London Spiritual Magazine and Human Nature*, for September, have been received at this office. See price in another column. Both these monthlies are very interesting, and should be especially in the hands of every American Spiritualist; and those who are not Spiritualists would find profit in the reading.

Earthquakes, Inundation and Famine.

To the Editors of the *Banner of Light*:

Since my last letter to you, many and very awful events have taken place in Peru. Ten of the principal cities and seaports south of Callao and many small towns and villages have been destroyed, their edifices leveled to the ground by a terrific earthquake, which happened at 5 o'clock P. M. the 13th of this month, and lasted at the lowest calculation about five minutes. In Lima we only felt its fall; therefore the motion was very soft, and somewhat similar to that of a boat floating on the waves in a calm sea, but yet sufficient to fill with terror the heart of every human being.

I have seen crowds of people kneeling in streets and squares, imploring with voices full of emotion and fight the mercy of the Almighty. Many persons, myself amongst them, were seized with a sensation somewhat resembling sea-sickness. The door bells were ringing of themselves, which served as indicators, thus enabling us to judge the force of the earth's convulsions.

the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are under 15 years of age is expected to increase by 1.5 billion (United Nations, 1994). The United Nations also predicts that the number of people aged 65 and older will increase by 1 billion in the next 20 years (United Nations, 1994). The United Nations predicts that the number of people aged 65 and older will increase by 1 billion in the next 20 years (United Nations, 1994).

