

BANNER OF LIGHT.



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THE SUNDAY MORNING SERMONS OF REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER AND EDWIN H. CHAPIN are reported for us by the best Phonographers of New York, and published verbatim every week in this paper. FIFTH AND EIGHTH PAGES.—H. W. Beecher's Sermon. THIRD PAGE.—Rev. George F. Noyes's Discourse.

"BERTHA LEE," OR, MARRIAGE.

To the Memory of my Husband this tale is dedicated.

BY ANN E. PORTER, Author of "Dora Moore," "Country Neighbors," &c., &c.

Not many months ago, he to whose memory this sketch is dedicated, said to me, "Why not write out the history of your friend Bertha's life? It may lead some hearts to pause before they bind themselves for life to uncongenial companions." We had known much of Bertha's married life, and in our hours of confidential intercourse she had given me her history, as I now give it to my readers. But I little thought that the story which I commenced arranging from Bertha's journal and letters, while sitting at the winter's fireside, cheered by his presence and approbation, would be laid aside to walk with him through the dark valley, and watch, with breaking heart and tearful eyes, his passage over the river of death.

Alone and weary I resume the pen, working and waiting till he beckons to me, from "over the river," to join him.

CHAPTER I. THE WEDDING.

My wedding day! How vividly, at this moment, I recall it to mind! From early dawn there had been the bustle of preparation in the house for the ceremony of the evening, while in my own room, half-packed trunks, and the bridal paraphernalia, made confusion little congenial to reflection. This was well, for I did not wish to think, and I kept myself as busy as possible, that I might not have one moment of quiet or solitude. I dared not examine my own heart. Like one who had plunged into the depths of a dense forest, and now, bewildered and lost, was determined to travel on, I too would push forward, faster and faster. Right or wrong, I must proceed.

I was packing a box with gifts and home trifles, and thinking of a small antique server that had once belonged to my mother, and formed a part of her marriage outfit, but had, long since been banished to the garret, with many other articles which brought her too vividly to mind, (for the mementoes of a first love are never pleasing to a second wife,) I went to look it.

It was a large garret, and contained the collections of many years; but it was clean and orderly, for my second mother, like most New England housekeepers, never omitted certain periodical overhauls and scrubbing, in which the phrase, "from garret to cellar," was well understood by her domestics.

I did not find the server in the place where I had often seen it, and thinking it might be in an old chest under the eaves, I sat down upon a stool to investigate the contents. I tossed one side broken toys, old picture books, and almanacs of ancient date, and such relics as may be found in every garret—among the rest a tiny bureau, a child's toy, given to me when my first doll set up housekeeping. It had marks of hard service, was minus two legs, one drawer was gone, and the corners were sadly battered; but I took it up with care, and gazed at it tenderly, for the sight of it brought to mind those proud, happy days of childhood, when I furnished my first "baby house." The high post bedstead, with its white curtains, the round table, the little flatirons, the china tea-set, were all before me; but the bureau was the pride of my establishment. It was a New Year's gift from my father, and no bride, with the most gorgeous modern furniture for her drawing room, could be happier than his little daughter on that day. Shall I ever be as happy again? A long drawn sigh was the only response. I opened one of the remaining drawers. A little dingy roll of paper was all that it contained. I opened it, when a note, clumsily folded in the form of a small letter, fell upon the floor. My own name, printed with a pen, in stiff, awkward capitals, was upon the outside, "Miss Bertha Lee." The inside was printed, also, and ran as follows:

"My DEAREST BERTHA—I am sorry that I cannot go to your doll's tea-party this afternoon; but mamma says I must stay at home and learn my piece that I am to speak in school to-morrow—

"How doth the little busy bee."

But after I have spoken it to the teacher, I can go; so if Dollie will not feel too bad, I wish you would wait, for to-morrow is my birthday, and I should like very much to go and see you then, and show you my presents. I always have plenty of sugar-plums on that day, and I will bring them over for the table. I shall be six years old then—a whole year older than you; and I am a great deal stronger, too; so I mean to take care of you all the days of my life; and when we are big enough, we will keep house together, and you shall have a silver plate and a gold spoon, and Dollie shall have a new satin gown. Cousin Joe is here, and when I asked him if he would wait and take a letter to you, he said, 'Yes, yes, ay, ay, that I will.' How queer he is! I hope Dollie will wait.

Your best friend,

I read this little missive again and again; tears blinded my eyes, but I brushed them away, and read; then I folded it into my bosom, and let the waters flow. This did me good, and I found courage to kneel and pray—"Oh, God, give me strength to go on; help me to do my duty—to crush out all sin-

ful affection. May I perform faithfully the vows which I am about to take upon myself, and be a true wife unto death to him who claims my hand to-day!" Impious prayer! I see it now, looking backward through a long lapse of years. I was asking my Maker to aid me in disobeying the very laws of my nature. I was acting from a sense of duty; but it was a deed no more pleasing to Him who loveth mercy, and not sacrifice, than the penance of the Jesuit or the immolation of the Hindoo widow.

I buried the papers in my bosom, and sat with my head bowed upon my hand. The old garret seemed pleasant as the midday sun came softly in through the skylight overhead; but I was soon aroused by a voice, inquiring, "Where is Bertha? Pray, where can the child have gone? Strange that she is not ready to receive Mr. Gray! He came in the stage, some time since, and is asking for her."

Mr. Gray! The words seemed to chill my blood. I rose to my feet, but became suddenly faint, and could with difficulty stand. I will go, I said; but a power stronger than my will forbade. I lost consciousness, and fell to the floor. How long I had lain there, I cannot tell; but the first thing I remember, on coming to myself, was a rough hand chafing my arms, and a voice saying, "Yes, yes—ah, ah! she is dead—no, only sick—faint!" and then commenced again the vigorous rubbing. I opened my eyes, but I was bewildered, like one in a dream.

"Yes, yes—see, she is alive again!"

"Cousin Joe, where am I?"

"Yes, yes—ah, ah!" and from rubbing me, he fell to rubbing his own hands together. "You're up in the garret, Sis—can't you see? I came up to bring down an extra mattress, because the house is so full of company, and I found you just like dead upon the floor. Joe didn't call the folks, 'cause he guessed he could bring you back to life, if he rubbed hard enough. There, lie down upon this mattress, and Joe will put a pillow under your head."

"Joe, is anybody inquiring for me?"

"Yes, yes—ah, ah!—nobody at all, Sis—was awhile ago—gone now to a religious conference in the vestry!"

"Thank you, Joe; I will lie down—some cold water, if you please."

He ran down in his stocking-feet, and returned as noiselessly, bringing me some water, which I thought tasted bitter, but in my eagerness to drink, I took little heed of it. Ay, Joe! it was an opiate, and it gave me three blessed hours of sleep—sleep which, for many days and nights before, I had not known. When I opened my eyes, the light came, not from the skylight above, but from the little arched window in the west front. I roused myself, and went down to my own room. Some kind hand had finished the packing of my trunks; the wedding dress was carefully laid upon the bed, and freshly cut orange blossoms were in a vase of water on the dressing-table. The gloves, handkerchief, slippers, were all there, made ready by some careful hand. The clock struck five—three hours still before the ceremony!

A strange calm possessed me. I sat down, and opened a book. It was my favorite author, Jeremy Taylor, and, though I turned over the leaves at random, the following met my eye first:

"They that enter into a state of marriage cast a die of the greatest contingency, and yet of the greatest interest in the world, next to the last thrown for eternity. Life or death, felicity or a lasting sorrow, are in the power of marriage. A woman, indeed, ventures most, for she hath no sanctuary to retire to from an evil husband; she must dwell upon her sorrow, and she is more under it, because her torment hath a warrant of prerogative, and the woman may complain to God, as subjects do of tyrant princes; but otherwise she hath no appeal in the causes of unkindness."

I do not believe that this is a day of miracles, or that we are taught our duty, unless by the aid of reason we seek to know it. But God had heard my prayer, and was now teaching me consequences of my present course. The lesson was unheeded. At this moment my brother William opened the door.

"Oh, William, is it you? I was afraid you would not come at all. I have looked for you many days."

"But I'm here at last, sister. Could I consent to your marriage, and not see my new brother?"

"You have seen him!" and my eyes sought his earnestly.

"Yes; and the most I can say is, that he is tall, good-looking, and very grave in his manner. You can't expect such a scapegrace as myself to fall in love with a parson, but if you love him, and he is kind and good to you, I shall be satisfied. But I can't understand, Bertha, why you and Charles Herbert did not fulfill the promises of your childhood. By the way, he is in town, and will be at the wedding."

As he spoke, my step-mother entered. She seemed taller and stouter than usual, as she sailed into my room, dressed in her heavy grey silk and majestic turban, amid the folds of which gleamed a golden serpent with its ruby tongue.

"Do n't leave me with her!" I whispered to William.

"My dear, it is time the bride was dressing. I have come to aid you myself. Cousin Elsie has been waiting with great impatience to be admitted; but Joe said you had fallen asleep, and your father forbade your being disturbed. You have good nerves, to sleep at such a time, and you will now go through the ceremony bravely."

My hand was clasped in William's, and I was then trembling so with weakness that the support of his arm alone prevented me from falling.

"Will you open that drawer for me, Willie? The key turns very hard."

"I can do that for you," said my mother.

"I think not, ma," said William; "it is very hard; but it will yield after working awhile."

Soon Elsie appeared. "Come, haste to the wedding," said she, as she skipped in. "What a slow bride!"

"I was afraid the groomsman would have to wait for the blacksmith," said William, as the drawer flew open; but there it is, and all the flowery, gauzy, silky contents, without which a bride can no more be married, than a soldier march without music."

"There, now, away with you, Cousin Will, and be sure not to break your heart for any pretty, gauzy, silky piece of dry goods you find in the parlor this evening," and with that she took him by the shoulder and put him out of the room. But his face was peeping in a moment afterwards with the request, "Please, may I come in again once more before the ceremony?"

"Yes, yes," said Cousin Elsie, "if you will behave yourself!"

"By this time I was strong again. 'He shall see that my nerves are quiet,' I said to myself. 'Who can have given him this invitation to my wedding? Some one who chose not to consult me.'"

was soon dressed; under the careful eye of my mother, properly so, no doubt. My bridesmaids asserted that I looked "sweetly," and I returned the compliment. There were still a few minutes left. Cousin Elsie ran down stairs, and just after I heard William's step. He was coming for that promised last look. I needed it; that kind, appreciating glance of his pleasant face would do me good. I looked up and met—not my brother's eyes, but the clear, full, penetrating glance of Charles Herbert!

Were my nerves quiet now? Did I tremble? Did my heart grow cold with icy despair? Not at all. I had no sooner felt the pressure of his hand, and heard his voice, than I suddenly became calm—quiet as a summer lake.

William said that I might come with him, Bertha, and see you a moment before the ceremony. I did not arrive in town till this evening, or I would have called before. I am late with my little gift, but not too late, I hope. You will remember that when we were children, I promised that when I became a man I would bring you a gold watch from over the sea. Here is one that has a history, and thinking I might not have time to relate it, I have sketched it down. You will find it in the casket with the watch. But I must not detain you; the clock strikes—one kiss for the days of your childhood."

He was gone. I held the casket in my hands. I was quiet. There was neither fear nor chill. I was like a sick person suddenly restored to health. And then I remembered it was always so from childhood. If I were nervous and fretful, if my playthings were broken, my lessons not learned, or my frook torn, Charles always set things right when he came. I was never sick many hours while he lived near us, and the only illness of my childhood was after his removal from town.

My mother's voice aroused me. "Your fan, my dear; Mr. Gray is coming."

A great shadow suddenly fell on my heart's sunshine. Reader, be merciful; we never know the extent of our guilt when we commit a crime. If suffering can atone for sin, that hour's perjury has been washed away by years of humility and penance. My two bridesmaids stood at my side.

"Do n't they look beautifully, Mr. Gray?" said my mother.

"Yes, madam; but Bertha, I hope, is too much occupied with the solemnity of the occasion to think much of personal attire. You know St. Paul says that woman's best adorning is a meek and quiet spirit."

"Yes, yes—ah, ah," and Joe's queer face appeared at the door. "Mrs. Lee, Uncle James says the time is come."

Five minutes afterwards I was pronounced "Mrs. Gray" by the good clergyman who had baptized me in childhood, and who had held me to his bosom and hushed my grief when he found me weeping beside my mother's coffin.

I thought of that hour now, and how cold I felt in the darkened parlor, by the coffin. The same chill came over me now. I seemed turned to stone. And yet I knew that my heart beat, and my lips moved in response to the congratulations of my friends. I smiled, too, but a smile as cold as the ripple of water when a stone falls into its depths. There was a bright fire on the hearth, and during the evening I moved toward it; but, as far as I was concerned it was brightness, not warmth to me. I remember the lights grew dim, the hum of voices died away, and there was a low murmuring of "Good nights" and "Farewells," and the sound of carriages rolling from the door. I stood almost alone by the fire, when suddenly a hand was laid upon my shoulder, and a voice said, "You have done well, Bertha; your quiet dignity has pleased me; come and sit down in this easy chair—I know you are tired."

Now I knew I was not turned to stone, for I felt a repulsion which marble cannot feel. I moved away, turned from the room, and went down stairs to the kitchen. Joe was there in his seat by the fire.

"Cousin Joe, some water; some of that water you gave me in the garret."

"Yes, yes—ah, ah, Sis; you shall have it; but sit down here while I draw some cold and fresh from the well."

He soon brought me a glass filled with some hot spiced and sweet liquid.

"Yes, yes, drink it; the rooms were warm and crowded up stairs."

As she spoke, he took my feet, which were resting upon the blackened stove hearth, and held them in his hands, chafing them briskly. The satin slippers and silk stockings transmitted the grateful warmth rapidly, and I felt as if again restored to life. There was a step upon the stairs. I started, but Joe held my feet firmly.

"Eddie, dear, coming for his last good night kiss."

It was my youngest brother, the child of my father's second wife, a beautiful boy, his mother's idol and my own pet.

"Oh, sister, I cannot let you go away."

I pressed him to my heart; we had loved each other well, and it was hard to part. We wept together, and those tears did me good. I was human still—not turned to stone. Another step on the stairs. This time it was my mother.

"My dear, let me wait upon you to your room. Joe, cover up the fire, and go to bed. Eddie, come with me, and bid Mr. Gray good-night."

I followed her mechanically. The clock in the kitchen struck twelve as she spoke—my wedding day was ended.

CHAPTER II. THE PARSONAGE.

The stage coach was to call for us at nine o'clock in the morning. At seven the trunks were all strapped and in the hall, and breakfast was on the table, all by the direction of my energetic step-mother. Shortly afterwards Charles Herbert called. It was at my father's request, on some business matters. I had been up in Eddie's room, trying to console him for his grief at my departure by a promise that he should come and stay with us when we were settled in our new home. He had dried his tears, and now, hand in hand, his bright, round face full of smiles at the thought of helping me keep house, we entered the parlor. Herbert and my father were still talking. Mr. Gray had gone to make a call on a brother clergyman. Brother William had left town in an early stage. My father held a roll of bank bills in his hands, and said, as I entered:

"Here, my daughter, is a little spending money. A young wife is difficult in money matters, and fifty dollars will perhaps answer your purpose till you can learn the 'sesame' to your husband's purse."

"Give it to her in gold, uncle—that keeps better," said Herbert.

"Not a bad idea, Charlie; change if you can."

In a moment more my purse was filled with the bright coin.

"That looks well," said my father. "Put it in a safe place; minister's wives are not generally troubled with too much of such coin. This morning I have deposited one thousand dollars in good bank stock, in your husband's hands. This is all I can do for you, now, my daughter. When I die, my children will all share alike."

"Have you secured the thousand to her in her own name?" said Herbert. "It is well for a wife to have a little fund of her own, in case of misfortune to her husband."

"The deuce, Charles! I never thought of it! What a wise head you have on those young shoulders! But never mind; Gray might not like it. How would it suit you, my boy, in case you were in his place?"

A strange expression flitted over Herbert's face as my father spoke, but it passed quickly away.

"I had it done, sir, in the case of my wife; her property is secured to herself."

"Yes, yes—I understand now; you were always proud as Lucifer—would n't take a stiver with a wife—loved her for herself alone, I suppose."

Again that expression on Herbert's face. It was strange how calmly I stood there—so strong, and quiet now—when ten minutes before I had drenched two handkerchiefs with my tears, and wished I could die before set of sun.

Herbert did not speak, and my father continued: "Now Gray is none of your romantic, high flown fellows. He just thanked me for the money, said he would make good use of it, and put it carefully away in his pocket-book. He is a prudent fellow, with a little of the money getting spirit, which does not displease me. He said he had bought five shares in the Central Railroad. A good speculation, I fancy."

"Perhaps so," said Herbert, gravely.

"Mr. Herbert," I began, my voice trembling a little, but reassured as soon as he bent the full glance of his calm eyes upon me.

"Charles, if you please, Bertha."

"Charlie, then," I added, and the word seemed to loosen my tongue. I could now say what I wished, and went on to thank him for his present of last evening. "You disappeared so soon that I had no time to tell you that your gift supplied the only want I feel. I have never owned a watch before, and I feel now as if it would aid me in improving time."

"Why, as to that, Bertha, you were always a little busy body, and I should be sorry if the possession of a watch should lead you to take any more stitches; but there is a history connected with the gift which will interest you. Do not try to read it till you are settled in your new home, and need amusement on a rainy day."

While he spoke the coach came. My mother entered the room with a shawl on her arm and a basket in her hand.

"It is chilly this morning, my dear, and I laid out your thick shawl, thinking you might need it, and here is a little basket of cakes of my own baking—you have eaten nothing for two days, and will need a lunch before you get to Boston."

Mr. Herbert wrapped the shawl around me; I took the basket, but left it on the table in the hall. I did not forget, however, to put in my pocket a package of candies which Joe had bought as a parting present to me. The good fellow came with the rest to bid me "good-by." How droll he looked standing by the side of Charles Herbert! One was six feet high, with a noble head, crowned with rich masses of dark brown hair—a well-developed figure, erect, broad-chested—"every inch a man." Poor Joe looked just then like a wretched little pack mule beside a trained and equipped war-horse ready for battle. Joe's round, rusty apple face, his little head, almost bald, save a little thin yellowish hair—his bent figure, equipped in a thick gray jacket and a pair of trousers, "a world too wide for his shrunken shanks," formed a tout ensemble, ridiculous perhaps to those who did not know the good heart in the rough casket.

"And now, Sis, come and make us a visit soon. Joe will want to see you, and he will give you some cold, fresh drink when you are thirsty; you remember, remember, Sis," and he took my hand while the tears were on his cheek.

"Yes, Joe, I will return soon; but I want you to come and see me. Come with Eddie, and then he will not be homesick."

"Yes, yes, ah, ah; shall Joe come? Do you mean it?"

"Yes, I mean it and desire it, Joe."

"Yes, yes—ah, ah; Then Joe'll come—yes, he'll come; Joe promises."

"Your husband is waiting," said my father.

"My husband!" I shuddered involuntarily. "Yes, sir," I replied, and dropped my veil over my face.

Mr. Gray assisted me into the coach and took a seat at my side.

One rainy evening the coach stopped at a small white house in the village of Vernon, on the Connecticut river. Though dark it was not late, for as we passed through the Main street, we saw one or two family groups around the tea-table, and the sight was pleasant to my eyes and my heart. "This is the Parsonage," said my father, as the driver reined in his horses. We are a day earlier than I intended, but it will make no difference." He got out of the carriage and opened the house door. The lamps upon the coachman's box threw a few rays of light into a small entrance hall, but I could see no person save Mr. Gray, who now came and offered his hand to assist me in alighting.

"This way, driver," he said. "Bring the trunks in and place them by the side of the wall near the stairs. That will do. Your charge?"

"Five dollars, sir."

"That is exorbitant; can't you take less?"

"Regular fare, sir; charge you no more than others."

"Then you are an exception to the rule. I am imposed upon every day of my life, because of my profession."

"We treat folks all alike, sir, only now and then we give a lift to a poor woman with a baby," said the driver as he mounted the box, his rough face looking very good-natured, notwithstanding the rain dripped from his glazed cap and heavy pilot coat.

As the outer door closed, an inner one at the part of the entry furthest from the street opened, and an old woman, holding an iron candlestick with a very emulated tallow candle in it, made her appearance.

"Why, Mr. Gray, is it possible you are here? I am sartly growing deaf, or I should have heard the stage. Some of your people will be mighty disappointed for they were coming to-morrow night to give you a 'reception' as they call it."

"This is my wife, Mrs. Dennis," said Mr. Gray, as she turned the candle toward me.

"Good evening, good evening, Mrs. Gray, I bid you welcome to Vernon," and she extended to me a hand, hard and rough and large, but the grasp seemed sincere and hearty.

"Walk in, walk in. I am glad now that I kindled a little fire in the sitting-room stove, for you must be chilled and wet." I was so, and the chill was not all on the surface.

Mrs. Dennis drew a rocking chair to the fire, took my bonnet and shawl, and said kindly, "I will make you a cup of tea right away; it will do you good."

"Helen is at meeting, I suppose," said Mr. Gray.

"Yes, but she will be at home soon," Mrs. Dennis replied, as she held her candle up and peered at the mantel clock. "Deacon Abram always closes arly, because he has such a long ride home."

She lighted a lamp that stood near the clock, and then disappeared into an adjoining room, from which issued the sound of a crackling fire, which I thought would soon raise the tea kettle to a boiling heat.

"You are now at home, Bertha," said Mr. Gray. "but you will need a few days of rest. Helen will remain with us awhile, and I hope you will find it mutually agreeable. I think you have never seen her."

"No, but we have corresponded so long, that she seems to me like a dear friend."

Mrs. Dennis's cup of tea was on the table, and we were about sitting down to enjoy it, when Helen entered, and her round, rosy face looked earnestly at me from beneath a cottage straw bonnet. She did not wait for an introduction, but came toward me with all the eagerness of a happy child.

"My dear sister, Bertha! How glad I am you have come to night, for I can have you all to myself a little while. Now I have a sister! and she gave me another warm kiss. I returned the kiss, and my heart warmed at once toward her.

"Come, Helen, you are not used to be so demon-

attractive," said Mr. Gray; "our tea is waiting, and Bertha may prefer a cup of it to your kisses."

"Indeed, brother, I am demonstrative only when I cannot help it. I was demure as puss in the corner all last evening, as Aunt Paul can testify, when Deacon Abram called. I didn't say three words to him, though he brought you a nice roast for tomorrow's dinner. But, excuse me, I must welcome you back," and she glided up and kissed his cheek. I looked on with amazement. That was a familiarity which I should never dare to imitate.

"There, that will do, Helen," said Mr. Gray; now pour out tea for us."

I caught Helen two or three times as we sat at table, looking at me with those great, earnest eyes, as if she would know all that was in my heart. Our first impressions are often the most correct. I loved Helen Gray at first sight, and that love never flickered or grew dim. What would I not have given that night if her brother had possessed her power over me.

"You are tired," said she, as I seated myself on rising from table. "I will have your room ready for you in a few minutes."

"It is all ready," said Mrs. Dennis; "I opened the door to take off the chill this rainy evening."

"Then let me introduce you to your little domicile," and she threw the door wide open, displaying a room just large enough for a bed, one bureau, a small work table, and two or three chairs. It looked neatly with its white bed drapery and window curtain, and its carpet, with its tiny figures of mingled green and white. I entered; Helen followed and closed the door.

"There, sister, (how I love the word,) sit down in this easy chair, and let me help you undress. You are pale and weary, and I can guess how you feel, leaving all your friends to come and live among us half-civilized country people. And then this getting married, too. I do think a wedding is ten times more solemn than a funeral. I always weep when the ceremony is performed, for I think of the strength of the chain that is then forged. I think I'll never marry."

While she was talking, I had turned to the mirror, and was loosening my hair.

"What beautiful hair, Bertha. Let me brush it out for you."

As she came toward me, she caught sight of my face in the glass, and saw that the tears were falling fast.

"Oh, Bertha, darling, I ought not to talk so; I am Job's comforter, after all, as Aunt Paul says."

"Aunt Paul, did you say, Helen? Who do you mean?"

"Oh, Mrs. Dennis, as I suppose Brother Calvin called her, but everybody else calls her 'Aunt Paul,' partly because that was her husband's name, than whom no one could deserve such a cognomen less, and partly because she herself is more like St. Paul than any other church member we have. Many do not like her; I do. You noticed her great, high head, and her Gibraltar nose. Did you see, too, that she had not a bow, or a superfluous string or button about her, not even a cap to soften her harsh features, though she is seventy years old. I wish you could hear her exhort in meeting. She is the only woman in our church that exhorts, for brother thinks that women should learn in silence; but one might as well have attempted to stop General Jackson, when he made ready to receive the British at New Orleans, as to stop Aunt Paul when the spirit moves her to do battle with Satan's kingdom. She is an original, I assure you—none of your chicken-hearted Christians, with cant phrases on their tongues, and a poor practice in their lives, but a strong minded, whole hearted woman, who would walk through the fire without flinching, if it lay in the path of duty. I think you will like Aunt Paul, but I am not so sure that she will love you in return; indeed, I am afraid she will think you a weak little puss, for you do not look as if you could exhort in meeting, make speeches in a sewing society, or ask a blessing at a full table when your husband is gone."

I turned round inquiringly to Helen. "Is it expected that, as a minister's wife, I must do all these things?"

"Besure it is, sister Bertha, and many more like them. You must never dress meanly, and never too well, must be versed in theology, and understand household economy, have a smattering of medicine, so as to teach young mothers how to manage the whooping-cough and measles, must set a good table at small cost, must gossip with all the old women in the parish on flannel petticoats and herb tea, entertain your husband's clerical friends with the grave matters of church government, and the religious operations of the day, and—"

"Stop, stop, I pray you! I did not marry the parish, and if I can only do my duty at home, I shall exceed my own expectations."

"Well, well, darling, only don't look so solemn about it. To-morrow, remember, you belong to me. Now let me put on your nightcap. Is this the one, with the lace border? What a pretty pattern on the crown and front! A grapevine, with the fruit and tendrils. I'll copy it to-morrow, and have just such a one when—Stop—I'm not going to be married."

"Not to a parish, Helen."

Her merry laugh was sweet as chime of silver bells.

"Not I, indeed. But do not call me Helen. I am Nellie to you, henceforth. Do not try to read," seeing me open my Bible. "I'll handle those golden clasps daintily. Now lay your aching head upon your pillow, and I will read. Where shall it be?"

"In John's Gospel, Nellie."

"Here it is. Now lie still, and I will read you to sleep."

No opiate could be better than the low, sweet tones of her voice. I closed my eyes and tried to rest. She read till she thought I slept, and then glided silently from the room. From the depths of my heart rose a thanksgiving for this sister.

The reception evening was quite a brilliant affair in the village. The little parsonage was crowded, and as the bride was not expected to talk much herself, but patiently stand to receive congratulations, and answer the commonplace of the day, I got along very well. Mr. Gray was taciturn and sedate as usual. This he deemed necessary to the maintenance of his clerical dignity. Nellie was on the alert to shield me from the tedious gossip of the old, and the rude staring of the young. She engaged Aunt Paul to give the old ladies an account of the ravages of the yellow fever one season in New Orleans, when the old lady went down to nurse her son, who died of the disease. The young people she magnetized toward herself. I was left for a few minutes with a deaf deacon, who, fancying every one else afflicted

with his own infirmity, called out to me, in a loud voice:

"Well, I'm dreadful glad our minister has brought home a wife. He'll have somebody now to help him visit the parish. I s'pose some of the gals are awful disappointed; but then, according to Scripture, a minister can't have more than one wife, and I suppose he has a right to pick her up where he pleases. My mother sent her respects and a cheese, and hopes to see you soon at 'Scrabble.'"

I was thinking what reply to make to my singular companion, when my eye encountered Helen's roguish face at a little distance from us. She was playing "Tivoli" with a trio of little juveniles, but I guessed by her looks that my deaf friend was Deacon Abram, and immediately my reserve thawed, and I determined, for the amusement of the thing, I would be as entertaining as possible; so I inquired all about Scrabble, and the fine farms which that little dell contained; and I made minute inquiries about his mother's health, even going so far as to give my father's receipt for a rheumatic compound. I was happy to be relieved, however, by an old lady with a very gay cap and an exceedingly large nose, who came briskly toward me.

"Mrs. Whitney—'Aunt Ruthy,' as we call her," said the deacon.

"Yes, yes, the young folks all call me 'Aunt,' and I am aunt to a great many of them, be sure. You see, most of the early settlers came from down below, close to Boston, and were all of them related. I am glad our minister went there for a wife. We ain't the most fashionable sort of folks, and do n't live in Boston style; but then there are a great many good people here—yes, some real good folks—do n't you think so, Abram?"

"Yes, ma'am, I do, and I've an idee Miss Gray will find it out."

"Indeed, I like Vernon very much—better than Boston."

"Now you do n't say so!" said Aunt Ruthy. "That beats me, arter living here forty year. I can't say but I'm happy enough, but it is nothing like Boston. I was very homesick when my old man brought me up here to live on a farm, and s'na'most cried my eyes out."

I thought her eyes must be water-proof, for they were dark and sparkling as a young girl's, though she was seventy years old. She talked abruptly and fast, and was overflowing with good humor.

"You must come and see me. I live at the foot of Mount Ararat, and my husband's name is Noah. Come and see us when you want to get away from the minister's house. You may ride horseback, pick berries and flowers in summer, and nuts in winter."

"But Noah's ark rested upon the top of the mountain, Mrs. Whitney."

"Yes, I know it; but he came down afterwards, and turned farmer, you know. They do say there are pieces of the ark on the top now, but I never went up to see. Perhaps you would like to go up. City folks think a great deal more of mountains than we do up here, and you can go way by the wood road on Dobbin's back. I've heard tell that the prospect was mighty nice up there."

I was quite interested in Aunt Ruthy, and determined to visit Mount Ararat; but as I was about making further inquiries, my husband came towards me with a large, portly gentleman, whom he introduced as Colonel James. He was slightly bald, his hair and whiskers well sprinkled with white, but his face full and ruddy with health, and his whole bearing that of a man who was turning from middle life into a green old age. Aunt Ruthy stepped a pace or two back, and looked displeased, and Deacon Abram eyed my husband with a strange look of mingled curiosity and sternness.

"I am happy to see you in Vernon, said the rubicund Colonel to me with a pleasant, fatherly look, as he shook me cordially by the hand. 'I am not a member of your husband's parish, and may be considered an intruder into the fold this evening; but being an old friend of your father, I could not deny myself the pleasure of welcoming you to our village.'"

"I think I have heard my father speak of you, sir, as 'my best friend, Captain John,' but I supposed that your residence was in Cuba."

"You are correct. I left Cuba this last summer, and am at present anchored in this beautiful village, only a stone's throw from the Parsonage, and I hope to see my friend's daughter often at the 'Saug Harbor' of an old sailor. I am glad to trace a resemblance to your mother in your face. You have her hair and eyes—the rest is Lee. Ah! Mrs. Gray, your mother was a noble woman, a dear sister to me. I had no sister of my own, and she supplied the place. I can now hear her pleasant voice saying, 'Remember, brother John, this is your home when you are on shore until you have a wife.' But I must not indulge in these pleasant reminiscences this evening. The members of your husband's parish have the first claim, and I yield precedence to them now, if you will promise to come and talk with the old sailor in his bachelor home."

I readily made that promise. Reader, wouldn't your heart warm toward the man who had kept your mother's memory green for twenty years?

I saw the Captain but once more that evening. A lady, who had an invalid husband and was leaving early that she might not be long absent from him, came to bid me good evening. "Madam," said the happy old bachelor to the delicate and care-worn lady, "my carriage is at your service; permit me to set you down at your door." She accepted the offer with a grateful smile.

The evening wore away at last, much less wearily than I feared, and we were gathered in the little sitting-room again—Mr. Gray, Aunt Paul, Nellie and myself.

"Now, Sis," said Nellie, "confess that you are tired, and that you consider the people of a country parish a rude and unamiable set?"

"I confess no such thing. There is more refinement and good breeding than I had hoped for; quite as much as in any miscellaneous gathering in a country parish."

"Oh, Bertha! your mantle of charity is too broad. Why, I heard no less than five ladies speculating upon the price of your silk dress, and one old woman told you she guessed you didn't understand housework, your hands were so small and white; one deacon asked you if you ever milked a cow, and another added that he hoped you would set an example of simplicity and plainness of dress, measuring with his eye, as he spoke, your rich lace bertha."

"But I have heard ruder things than these at a city party, Nellie, and I say sincerely that I am determined to make friends here, and I have made a commencement already, and struck up a sudden friendship with the youngest deacon."

"Oh, Bertha!" and Nellie held up her little plump hands imploringly—"take care, or you will be the

death of me, and my last words, 'Et tu Brute,' will mark your heart and enough."

"Helen, take the Bible and read," said Mr. Gray. "I thought you closed with prayer in the parlor, brother."

"It is no reason why we should omit our customary devotions."

When Aunt Paul and Nellie had retired, Mr. Gray remarked that he was sorry that I had met with our old family friend, the Captain.

"Indeed, Mr. Gray, what can you mean? I thought my father would be delighted, and it seemed very pleasant to meet with one who had known my mother."

"But he is not a member of our church, a mere man of the world I fear, and as such I do not wish you to meet him often."

"Do you know anything against his personal character, Mr. Gray? Isn't he a good citizen and a moral man?"

"I know nothing to the contrary; but he is always merry and light-hearted, as if he had no idea of the sin and suffering in the world. He holds peculiar religious views, too, I believe. You will not need to see him often."

CHAPTER III.

HOME DUTIES.

Mr. Gray was prominent among the churches of his State for the soundness of his theological creed, and the stern, thorough manner in which he advocated the peculiar doctrines of his sect in the pulpit.

"Ay, ay!" said Deacon Jacob, one Sunday evening, when he came to stay with us till the evening service, "your husband is sound to the backbone—there's no heresy in him. How he did enforce the doctrine of election to-day! I hope our Methodist friends who were present will see that they have a rotten plank in their creed. 'Whom he will, he hardeneth.' That's it—there's no resisting the doctrine. I suppose, Mrs. Gray, you understand these doctrines like a book, and can hold an argument on election and decrees with the Methodist preacher, any day."

"Indeed, Deacon Jacob, I have given little attention to them, having a fancy for the more practical part of the Bible."

"But there's no good practice without a sound creed; the Calvinistic doctrines alone can produce a good life."

I made no reply, but thought within myself that my life must be sadly deficient, because I always read the gospels instead of the epistles; and, having tried in vain to grasp the full meaning of Romans, had turned back again and again to the simple, loving teachings of Jesus. I was glad to be relieved from the conversation by Mr. Gray, who, coming in just then, took up the subject, and, with the deacon's aid, the poor Methodists were almost annihilated.

My husband, finding out my deficiency, required me to read, one hour a day, aloud to him, from "Hopkins's System of Divinity"; and the hour was generally prolonged by his comments as I read. He took this time after dinner, when, as he said, my domestic duties would not occupy my time. He would lie upon the lounge as I read, and make his observations, and question me upon the chapter.

"Aunt Paul" remained with us for some weeks, and with Helen's aid our household affairs moved on very smoothly. I noticed that while Mrs. Dennis refused all ornament in dress, even to an unnecessary bow or button, she had no scruples about butter, sugar, spices, &c., in her cooking, so that our table was admirably furnished. Mr. Gray was no ascetic in this matter, being, indeed, rather critical and fastidious, and I thought seemed to understand himself the mysteries of the kitchen; for when our kind parishioners sent us little luxuries, he would make remarks like the following: "It is strange that Mrs. Brown do n't know that too many cloves in a mince-pie is a great mistake; so strong a spice, if not used judiciously, overpowers the other seasoning—she always errs in this way!" So Mr. Smith has sent us some of his maple-sugar—burned as usual, I suppose; strange how careless they always are in this respect!" I ventured once mildly to suggest that we were very thankful for these gifts; for they showed a kind spirit in our friends.

"Yes," was his reply, "but people should remember that the Jewish law required the best and most perfect articles should be offered to the priests; but people are sadly deficient now in respect for the ministry." This argument puzzled me, and I was silent; but I always felt troubled when a friend brought some little offering, lest Mr. Gray would perceive a defect in it.

Aunt Paul took the matter very coolly. "Now, Mr. Gray, if you do n't like Mrs. Brown's mince pie, why do n't eat it; it's rich, anyhow, with so much fruit, and if there is a grain too much clove in it, I can eat it—just pass it to me! To be sure, there is a clove taste; but the poor Scotts, who never taste mince pie from January to December, might like it—suppose we send it to them."

There were no more criticisms on the pie.

Helen was absent one week, and I went into the kitchen and asked Aunt Paul if I should aid her.

"Why, yes, I'd be glad of some help, seeing it's baking and ironing day, too. I must make a loaf of election-cake—Mr. Gray always looks for that Tuesday—and then there's squash and apples-pies, besides wheat and rye-bread. I didn't know as you'd think of helping, so I got up early and went to ironing. 'Taint done your way, I suppose—at least, it is n't Helen's—but it's my way; for you know I'm principled against all outward adorning of our poor, frail bodies, and I make no exception in favor of ministers."

I glanced at the clothes-frame for an explanation; one side was filled with Mr. Gray's fine shirts, and I soon noticed that the bosoms and ribbands were not starched at all, only ironed as the rest of the garment.

"Why, Mrs. Dennis, do n't you believe in 'doing up shirts,' as we call it?"

"Not I, any more than I believe in bustles and breastpins, curls and bows—nothing but the outward adorning, which profiteth not."

"I am afraid Mr. Gray will not be satisfied, and that my duty will be just to go to work and starch them."

"We must all do our duty," she said, drily, as she broke some eggs, and went to beating them, with the addition of two or three cups of sugar.

I wondered in my own mind whether pampering the appetite was not as great a sin as adorning the body; but Aunt Paul was so sincere and earnest, that one felt obliged to enter into argument with her. There she stood, in the little pantry—tall, masculine in height, her gray hair parted plainly

and combed with two large hair-pins, and not even a comb allowed her gray dress made very high, its dark shadows unrolled by kerchief or collar; her spectacles on, and her head bent, peering constantly into the bowl, lest some stray speck or insect should covet a share of her sweets. Neatness was a cardinal virtue with her.

While she made her cakes and pies, I starched and ironed. I did not mean to insinuate any doubts to Aunt Paul as to the orthodoxy of her peculiar views, for she was so conscientious and firm in her belief, that she had won my respect; but when I saw her rolling the lard and butter in liberal quantities on her pastry, and putting citron and raisins, spices and cider to her mince pies, all with so much care, and with such a nice regard to proportion, and with a gravity worthy of a better cause, I could not help feeling a little perverse, or roguish, and I said:

"Why, Mrs. Dennis, do you really think it a sin for Mr. Gray to wear starched bosoms and gold studs?"

She turned and looked at me over her spectacles, her rolling-pin in her hand, as if to be sure that I was in earnest in my question; but seeing my gravity, and satisfied that I was really seeking information, replied:

"Mrs. Gray, has n't God condemned all outward adorning in his Holy Word? and are not our bodies poor, frail, dying things, made of dust, and that will turn to dust again? It is nothing but vanity and pride that leads us to put on jewels, and silk dresses and laces. I know a great many good people do it, but I think they fall into sin thereby."

"But did n't God make the flowers, and give them their brilliant hues, and the rich plumage of birds, and the golden wings of butterflies, and the rainbow's glorious tints, and the sunset clouds? Surely his hand painted these, and he must delight in beauty, or he would not thus have wrought."

"Ah—but, my child, none of these have immortal souls to care for."

"Then because we have a soul, must we be careless of the body?"

"The body is a poor, perishable thing, Mrs. Gray; but the soul lives forever, and if that is pure and holy, we shall be beautiful in God's sight, whether man admire or not."

"Granted; but I think God made the body as well the soul, and, as his work, we should prize and take care of it; and if he gives us beauty, we should thank him, and pray that the gift may make us love him more. For instance, mince pies are very bad for the body—they merely gratify the palate; those you are making there, with such quantities of lard and butter, and such heating spices, will only give dyspepsia and make us sickly, therefore I shall avoid them, just for the sake of this little body; for somehow or other I have a great attachment to it, and want to have it last as long as possible. The little beauty I have, I cherish with wonderful care; for instance, my hair is luxuriant, and I delight in dressing it, and thank God, whenever I do, that he has given it to me."

"But before many years its beauty will have passed away, Mrs. Gray—and it will be like mine, gray enough, as you see."

"Oh, but it will look well then, Mrs. Dennis. I know it will, for I like gray hair. I will wear a nice lace cap, and part my hair, that's silvered o'er with years, upon my forehead; and then how well it will look to my children and grandchildren! There's beauty in old age, Mrs. Dennis, if we would look for it—and there's beauty in death, too. I have never been more wonderfully impressed with the beauty of the human body, than when gazing upon it a few hours after death had with an artist's skill smoothed the furrows of care and the lines which disease had drawn, and won back again the expression of youth."

"But then, comes decay, corruption, dust."

"But not till the spirit has found another body. Mrs. Dennis, beautiful or ugly, according to its moral character."

"What do you say, Mrs. Gray?" said Aunt Paul, leaving the pantry, and coming toward the ironing table, with the expression of a soldier who had just caught the sound of the enemy's cannon.

"Why, that before the body has seen corruption here, the soul has taken a new and more perfect dwelling—in the words of Paul, 'is clothed upon with a glorious body, like our Saviour's.'"

"Not before the last great resurrection, when the trumpet shall sound, the dead be raised, and all nations come to judgment?"

"Yes, Mrs. Dennis, before that. At death, we enter at once into a new and higher state of existence, and are endowed with a more perfect organization."

"Well, now, I've one more question: does your husband know of this strange belief of yours?"

"I really cannot tell. I never conversed with him upon the subject—very probably he might differ from me."

"Differ from you! that he will; and he allows no departure from the creed of our church. He has already excommunicated some for believing that the resurrection is soon to take place, and this world be purified and made the dwelling place of the righteous. Now I advise you not to let him know your peculiar notions," and here Aunt Paul's voice took a lower key and a softer tone, and I fancied she looked more kindly at me.

"You would n't have me conceal anything from my husband, surely? That cannot be your idea of married life."

Mrs. Dennis had taken up her rolling pin and gone back to her pies, so that I could not see her face, but her voice had a peculiar intonation, as she said:

"I know some romantic young wives have such ideas; but I have seen families where a little concealment did no harm, and helped to keep the peace. There are few hearts that can bear to be laid open to the gaze of a fellow-being, and some husbands and wives who live very happily together, would find earth a hell, were the secret thoughts of their hearts exposed to each other. It is only when the inward fires burst forth that the volcanic mountain is dangerous; before that, there is greenness and beauty to the summit, but, after one explosion, there is ever after a blackened surface and a hard lava crust where vegetation rarely springs. If there are dangerous fires within, keep them pent up, covered deep, if possible."

There was something in the tone of the old lady's voice, and in her hard, dry manner, that made her words sink into my heart like lead. I had finished the shirts, and taken them to another room, where they would dry free from dust; I had worked very hard over them, and some young wives will sympathize with me in my anxiety as to the result of my first attempt. I thought I had succeeded, and was

quite proud of the pure, glossy linen, though I did not venture to exhibit them to Mrs. Dennis for her approbation. I hastened back to the kitchen, and was trying to complete the ironing as soon as Mrs. Dennis should be through with her pies and cake. I am sorry to say that I was very tired already, not being much accustomed to kitchen labor. My hands were stiff and blistered, but Aunt Paul told me that was not strange, and gave me some cream to heal them.

"Use this when you get through, and they will not trouble you long."

She had scarcely spoken the words, when Mr. Gray appeared with his newly ironed shirts upon his arm.

"My dear, said he, 'I see you do not understand the way I wish my shirts ironed; these bosoms are not stiff enough; I wear them much stiffer than most people; you can hardly get too much starch in them.'"

My courage began to fail.

"Shall you need them, to day?" I asked timidly. "Yes, I start for the Convention of Ministers to-morrow, and these shirts took me better than any others. I would like to pack them this afternoon."

I glanced at my poor hands, and went to making starch again, without a word on my tongue, but I am sure there were tears in my eyes. I worked over these shirts for three long hours, and then my poor little body was so weary that I threw myself upon the bed, and wondered if I should ever learn to do my whole duty as a minister's wife.

I have referred to my sleeping-room, which was very small, quite too small even for the writing table and desk which my father had given me for my special use. Mr. Gray therefore placed it in the study, remarking that ladies wrote so little, that I should probably find time enough when he was away for all my correspondence.

He never wished any one in the room when he was writing his sermons. Soon after he had placed the table in his study, I went to it to procure my father's last letter, and found the desk partly filled with sermon paper and manuscripts.

"I laid these papers there for safe keeping," said Mr. Gray, "and you may hang the key on that nail near the window."

I did so, and turned away with a feeling so new and strange, that I found it difficult to analyze it. I seemed no more to belong to myself; my identity was lost, and even my every day thoughts, which I had been in the habit of committing to paper, must be joint property with Mr. Gray.

Why should I object to this? I asked myself. Are not husband and wife one? The law declares them such, for I had read Blackstone's Commentaries, under the direction of a quaint old uncle of mine, who said that it would be a better class-book for school-girls than Day's Algebra, or Playfair's Euclid, both of which studies were required of my class. I had read and re-read the chapter entitled, "Pompeii Converted," and learned therefrom that when a woman married, she was dead in law; but at the time I read it I was a romantic young school-girl, full of a sweet fancy that it would be delightful thus to have one's very existence merged in some loftier soul, that love made such legal nonentity the highest bliss on earth.

Why not be satisfied, now that I was in that very position so much envied by unmarried women, so much approved by men? I was restless, and so much dissatisfied with myself for my discontent. "I tried to sew, but the tears fell on the linen wristbands I was stitching." I heard Mr. Gray's step on the stairs. He came down and walked into the street; but the door was no sooner closed behind him, than I went to the study, and took from my desk a package of letters and a little box, and ran like a trout child to the garret. It was the first time I had been in this part of the house, and was surprised to find it such a clean, comfortable place. In the gable end was a small window, from which I could see the distant hills, and, as it faced the west, I knew there would be a fine view of the sunset. I drew some of my packing boxes forward, laid a clean newspaper over one for a table cover, and finding an old broken back chair for a seat, I made myself comfortable. Charles Herbert's letters were before me; all the little relics of our childhood. I read the letters one by one, slowly, as one sips the richest blood of the vintage; and, as I read, I forgot the present, and lived only in that golden past. Time fled, and I was unconscious of its flight, roused only from my employment by the tea bell. I was startled, for Mr. Gray would surely ask, "How have you passed the afternoon, Bertha?" and what should I say?

TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.

Written for the Banner of Light.
MAN NOT A FREE AGENT.

BY D. W. HAMILTON.

This earth is but a circling round—
Fate rules the changing hour;
Man's onward step through life is led
By its resistless power.

But let no one of life complain,
For Justice has the helm—
This world is but the opening scene
To an eternal realm!

No night so dark but hath its morn—
No day without its night;
Then bravely dare the fated storm,
And work with all your might!

And you, whom fate hath smiled upon,
Be humble, oh, be kind,
To those who feel misfortune's ban—
For Justice is behind!

God may seem slow, but He is sure;
He's stern, but yet He's true—
He'll not destroy by circumstance,
Or save a "chosen few!"

So moves the world—now up, now down—
Fate smiles, then frowns again;
Our freedom 's like the troubled sea,
Or as the driven rain.

But this let all remember well,
That Principles ne'er change.
All plans and systems built on them
Fate cannot disarrange.

Let us be kind, nor look for much,
Where little has been given;
But aid each fainting brother on
To taste the joys of Heaven.

There is no passion so universal, or steals into the heart more imperceptibly, and covers itself with more disguise than pride; and yet, at the same time, there is not any single view of human nature under its present condition, which is not sufficient to extinguish in us all the secret seeds of pride, and, on the contrary, to sink the soul in the lowest state of humanity.

Nothing is more odious than the face which smiles abroad, but flashes fury amidst the caresses of a tender wife and children.

Written for the Banner of Light.
THE AGE OF HUMAN WISDOM.

BY GEORGE STARR.

First Part.

What poet has not sung of Liberty?

What human heart does not echo to the song?
The meek and lowly Jesus, who for us
The sword unwilling yielded to the sword;
But Man's proud spirit eloquently sang,
"God! give me Liberty, or give me death!"

All covet Freedom, but where are the Free?
Go ask the despot trampling on his throne;
Ask any child of toil by land or sea,
Or ask the soldier—nay, there is no spot
Where any find the boon, or seek it not.

Put not the question on a gale day,
When banners wave and rockets pierce the sky,
And cannons roar and human asses bray,
And laborers toll their hats, they know not why,
And women vocalize the poet's jest—
"Land of the free! home of the brave and blest!"

But when and where some sprig of martial law
Puts forth a mandate all unworthy Man,
And our bald eagle thrusts her iron claw
Into the soul of an American,
Spreading her wings o'er many an autocrat
Who for a scepter wields a "cane" or "cat;"

Then, when a boy that "is" enough of training
And longs for home, as no good boy would not,
Would use his legs, but for the vile, restraining
Fear that he'd soon be taken back and shot—
Ask the enlisted, if a son of Mars
Knows more of Liberty than of the stars.

Go to the men of toll, of sun-burnt brow
And callous hands, who make the nation's shoes,
Build rich men's palaces, and hold the plow,
And make the tools which all the artifice use,
And launch on every wave the argosies
That fill the lap of home with luxuries—

Go ask these workers if they are aware
That half their earnings feed the indigent;
If, at the sight of Nabob's better fare,
They have no envy, feel no discontent,
Nor think the host who always carves the meat
At his own table, with his guests should eat.

You will not ask the slave; you know his answer—
"Wicked! but don't do this! don't do this!"
But if I see not oblige to know I can't, sir,
I'd follow that bright star of berry night,
But O'Connell make do as 'buggin' here,
"Cause like as no sompuch do Lord 'il' hear."

And Mrs. Grinnell, infatigable thing,
On whose infant soul seems to date,
Calls her angel, weds her with a ring,
Gravely with her praise, but will not let her vote—
She thinks she is just, where she wants to be;
Four things you know she's anywise but free.

Once in an age, if some aspiring woman,
Archly on self-compassion bent,
Court Harvard's shades to win them presume on,
And be repulsed with—"Inexpedient," "f"
You should ask such a votary of knowledge
How they rule the world who do not go to college.

"The women rule the world!" (I wish they did;
Perhaps we might get used a little better.)
What irony! they only want to rild
Themselves of male misrule: that is its letter.
In fact, the world has never yet been ruled,
But all are much constrained and wronged and fooled.

For little recalls there are courts and jails,
While all the great ones have their will and way;
There is no money for a rogue that fails,
But loud applause for such as win the day.
We eulogize the guilty conqueror's name,
And give him all the glory despoils claim.

There is no civil power that's meant for good;
Few statesmen care a straw for Equity.
There is no human court of Rectitude,
But every judge regards precedence.
From Russia's sway to that of Uncle Sam,
All government is one infernal sham.

Part Second.

Thus far I wrote some dozen years ago,
And threw my pen and paper on the floor.
The Muse was mad—the subject made her so—
And let me in a doggerel verse, to pour
On Devilism, as seemed humanly,
A brimful brainful of profanity.

But since those days my anger has abated—
I find that wrong is partly accident;
I've learned to pity wherein once I hated,
And write Reform in place of Punishment.
I see the world in such a way is moving,
That, saint or sinner, none can help improving.

The autocrat is not a foe to Man;
The despot is a transient human need.
'T is better far to serve one monarch, than
From fear and hazard never to be freed.
And in such times as Ishmaelites are plenty,
We league with one to be secure from twenty.

But Man is like some other beasts of prey;
Though wild at first, he can at length be tamed;
And so when monarchy has served its day,
A nation grows of princely rule ashamed.
The king, if wise, will cut his scepter down—
If not, his subjects will take off his crown.

There's war in Europe; well, there should be war,
To break the rule of wrongful dynasties.
The people know not what they're fighting for,
Nor kings the issue of their policies.
But hear, is fukker than head is wise,
And mankind never stumbles but to rise.

War is an instrument of Liberty—
The pioneer of social righteousness.
It is the ax-man of Aristarchy.
That clears the way for nations to progress,
Till wrong is rectified war cannot cease;
It is the labor-throe of earth-born Peace.

Man is not wise; but when he shall become,
He'll find his neighbor's interest is his own.
A man of sense delights not to be maim,
And Beauty loves not to be let alone.
The fullest heart is one that gives the most.
A selfish mortal makes a meager ghost.

Freedom is natural life. None can be free
Till all shall know and love and live the Right.
It more depends on what each falls to be,
Than that for which aspiring nations fight.
'T is not the unreasoning vulgar cry:
'T is only found by such as will believe.

Evil is the foster-child of Ignorance.
The Age of Wrong will surely end with her.
Fools are growing wise, and there'll be no chance
For selfishness or hate when none shall err.
Then every man will be his fellow's friend,
And each his former errors will amend.

And fancy not Humanity is bound
Within the narrow scope of fleshly eyes.
This earthly life is but a single round
Of one long ladder reaching up the skies.
And in the world where none a fault can hide,
Remembered wrongs will all be rectified.

• These are colloquial names for certain savage weapons
of corporal punishment, which are said to be much employed
in the army and navy.

It is somewhat generally known that many years ago
HARRIOT K. LUX, M. D., of Boston, wishing to perfect her
professional skill at all pertinent means, proposed to buy a
little of the male science which seemed to be for sale at Har-
vard University, by offering the price of a seat in the Ana-
tomical Lecture Room; but that was politely informed that
the precepts of the College were never intended for
Woman, and that it would be quite "inexpedient" to let her
into the secrets of a self-seeking Faculty.

West Action, Mass.

Right is a dull weapon, unless skill and good
sense wield it.

Let us search ourselves in the first place, and af-
terward the world.

REV. GEO. F. NOYES
At Hope Chapel, New York, Sunday, June 8, 1853.

[A Discourse delivered before the "West Independent
Society."]

REPORTED FOR THE BANNER OF LIGHT.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF MYSTERY.

"For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to
face."—1 Cor. xiii, 12.

Among the classic fables of the old mythology, we
read of the three Gorgon sisters, whose hair was en-
twined with serpents, and whose eyes, once fixed upon
a man, turned him into stone. The dying head of Me-
dusa—one of the three—was set by Minerva upon her
shield, and the goddess was thus enabled to petrify her
opponents into subject matter.

This old Pagan fable has its parallel in our modern
theology. The anti-types of the three sisters—true
imitators of the old originals—will lead each and
ward over error, and strive to beat back the advancing
columns of Truth. They are the foes of theologic reform,
the arch-enemies of theologic reform. We call them
now-a-days Ignorance, Superstition, Mystery. They
do not, perhaps, petrify, but they transform. They
take a sound, healthy man, who, on other subjects,
speaks out boldly the truth he has in him, and who is
fully up with his age and its best thought in science
and reform; and the moment he enters the region of
theologic discussion, they hoodwink his vision, they
bridle his tongue, they handcuff him into subject matter.
And this is the work they have been doing throughout
the ages. You may talk with a man for hours, and
find him outspoken and full of common sense, willing
and glad to investigate in all other regions of inquiry;
but if you once venture on theologic discussion, you will
discover that he is timid, afraid to venture outside the
charmed circle of his particular system or creed. There
he is either ignorant or superstitious; he has either
taken no pains to investigate, or he is afraid of investigation.
He ceases to talk plain Anglo-Saxon. He is apt
to take refuge in cant theologic phrases, so that some-
times he seems to use language chiefly to conceal his
real thought.

And this timidity in theologic investigation is not
the sole quality of this sect or that sect, but infects
somehow every branch of the great Christian Church.
Men, well informed in other matters are often very ig-
norant of theologic. If they have any theologic doubts,
they do not dare to express them. They will not think
honestly, they will not talk honestly, on religious mat-
ters. They evade inquiry, they keep each other at
arms' length, and thus they do not deal fairly with
each other, with the truth, with their own souls. And
the result is, that theologic religion is a mystery, and
the world is full of vigorous thought and action in matters
of political and social reform; but modern religion is
timid, formal, because men are afraid to inquire and
to speak out the result of their inquiries. In other
sciences they are always eager for more light, but in
the science of theologic they seem as if they were
timid and afraid to know too much. And surely while
such timidity exists, there is no hope of theologic ad-
vance, no prospect of bringing back the simplicity of
Christianity. The first thing to be done is to dethrone
these three sisters—Ignorance, Superstition, Mystery—
who still sit, like the misshapen idols which brood over
the Pagan temples of the East, enthroned in our
Christian church of the West. And the first thing to be
done is to dethrone them. It can never be the ear of
the people while they are thus ridden down by these
spirits of doubt and dread. It is to be hoped that the
day may yet come when men will begin really to think,
to ask with longing and eager souls, what is the truth?
and thus flinging off forever the spell of ignorance, will
cease to tremble before these old superstitions, and
stand erect, as free children of the living God; will be
no longer frightened from theologic discussion by the
so frequent cry of mystery. Only when that good time
of free, manly thought comes, can we hope for that
full investigation on which all progress depends.

Of Mystery, the last named of the fatal three, we are
to speak to-day. It is astonishing how potent is this
spell in checking all free theologic discussion. It is
the head of Medusa upon the shield of Minerva, and it
is held up before the people, or thrust into the face of
an eager questioner, sure, in nine cases out of ten, to
check any further questioning, and to turn him for the
time into stone. Behind this shield modern theologic
error always retreats when the contest is hottest, and
the danger of overthrow most imminent; and neither
the eager inquiries of those who crave outspoken
answer to their honest doubts, nor all the ingenuity of
an opponent, can get further satisfaction. No matter
how unfounded the theory, no matter how contradictory
and unreasonable the statement, the people are
called upon to accept this plea and be silent. Alas!
that so many are so superstitious, or so indifferent, that
they accept it only too easily! Alas! that it is the
same old story of superstitious ignorance in America
as it is in olden times when the Greeks listened to the
mysterious oracles of the Delphic Apollo, or as in that
still older age, when the statue of Memnon awoke with
its mysterious utterances the sleeping Nile, and all the
people knelt down in adoration and worship. We feel
that there is no enemy to free and fair discussion like
this, for it is sure to meet us just as soon as we ap-
proach the inner evidences and bearings of any theologic
question. In the words of the present venerable
President of Harvard University, "And yet, how much
effect this cry of mystery, awful mystery, has had in
inducing men to suppose that they believed, merely
because they were afraid to inquire. After the advo-
cates of error have been driven from every other pos-
ition, they have always been able to turn round on their
pursuers and raise the cry of mystery, and thus, with
the aid of the strongest minds have been daunted, and with-
drawn their objections as presumptions and irrelevant,
and acquiesced in absurdities and superstitions which
they had again and again refuted. In following back
the history of our religion, we are reminded, at almost
every step, of the inscription on the forehead of the
woman of the apocalypse, who prefigured the abuses
and corruptions of the church—Mystery! Babylon,
the Great—the mother of harlots and abominations of
the earth!"

Strong language, this, but it is nevertheless true.
For not only have the weaknesses, the blemishes, the
contradictions of ancient Paganism and modern error
been thus hidden under the cloak of mystery; but the
very power of investigation is taken away, when once
this Gorgon head is turned toward the people. In
vain even in friendly argument, in vain after this
plea is made, can we hope to get from our brother any
candid avowals, any outspoken utterances. It is like
the dark liquid ejected by the pursued and frightened
cuttle-fish, which obscures and muddies the water, so
that the cunning fish easily escapes from his baffled en-
emy.

It is clear, then, that with the plea of mystery, the
discussion is necessarily ended. There is no further
appeal to be made to those God-given promptings
which are the triers and indicators of truth in every
human soul. There is no longer opportunity to sub-
mit a theory to God's justice and love, for it is with-
drawn from the sphere of investigation into the sphere
of mystery. And thus ends most theologic discussions,
as well as every theory which sounds in your ears very
much like blasphemy against God; you see its weakness
and self-contradiction; you pour your logical battle-
axe to crush it, hoping thus to deliver your brother's
creed-bound soul from the phantom of superstition
which haunts him, when he suddenly raises the cry of
mystery, and retreats behind the veil. And the greater
the mystery, the more he hugs it to his bosom, for
superstition teaches her votary that the more he de-
bases his reason, the greater is his religious merit. You
will get nothing from him but obscurity after this, and
you may as well retreat at once, leaving your van-
quished opponent in nominal possession of the field.

It is well, therefore, to know what this plea of mys-
tery, so constantly used to silence argument and cover
weakness, is really worth. It stands in the way of all dis-
cussion; it has been the potent weapon of superstition
throughout the ages. It has been the plea of the medi-
cine-man of the American aborigines, of the augurs of
ancient Rome, of the Brahmins of Hindostan, of the
priestly caste in ancient Egypt, of superstition and dog-
matic assumption everywhere. Nay, so arrogant is this
plea, that the man who ventures to doubt whether this
is a sufficient argument to support manifest contradic-
tion and error, is oft stigmatized as wanting in faith
and reverence, as unduly exalting the human reason,
as puffing up with a false and wicked pride. He is
told, in fine, that he claims to know too much, that he
does not appreciate or admit the fact of mystery.

Now if there is one truth which liberal thinkers,
in their pioneer movements toward the goal of infinite
truth, have well learned and clearly set forth, it is
that man is compassed about with mystery, in which
he lives and moves and has his being. We are
beginning to have a true philosophy of ignorance, to
find out, after all, how little we do really know. The
higher our standpoint, the broader and more extended
the horizon of the unknown which opens around us.
We ask the man of science to tell us the mystery of the
sunlight, how the seed-corn germinates; how the flow-
ers grow; we ask the moral philosopher to explain
why to one home comes so much misery, to another
home so much peace; why sorrow seems to follow
the footsteps of one man, while the brow of another
is ever wreathed in smiles; why the man is doomed
to the fetters and lash of slavery, while that man is
made his master. But the man of science and the

philosopher make us no satisfactory reply. Has any
man yet lived who could unfold the beautiful mystery
which lies hidden in the growth of the grain? Are we
able to put our ears to the ground and hear the little
seedling tell the story of its decay and death, and joy,
and resurrection, but the eternally abiding light, and
eternity, and electricity, but the most earnest devotee of
science will tell you that the essence of these things
elements he knows absolutely nothing. Is not the
birth of a man a mystery and a miracle? Has the eye
of eager affection, as it gazes with the quick-light-
edness of grief into the face of the dying loved one,
ever yet witnessed the flight of the freed soul toward
the upper country? Truly is there no highway or by-
way of life but has its sphynx, perpetually asking
questions, hard to solve as those put by the sphynx of
olden time in the highways of ancient Greece? The
world is full of riddles hard to read. Today we
meet pale-veighed grief, to-morrow bright-eyed joy; here
present at the marriage feast, there at the grave of the
early dead, everywhere forced to admit that we are en-
veloped in a mystery from the cradle to the grave.

Furthermore, we recognize with warm appreciation
the importance of every attempt to pierce the veil and
reveal to us the mysteries beyond. Standing in the
little space of known phenomena, we gladly hail
any theorist who strives with honest purpose to bridge
the gulf between the seen and the unseen, the known
and the unknown. We feel that Augustine, and John
Calvin, and Jonathan Edwards, mistaken as have been
the results of their labors, were honest theologians,
actuated by a legitimate and proper spirit. We have
no word to speak against them or their followers, but
against the system they inaugurated. We complain
not that they strove to explore the infinite mystery,
but that they claim to have the exclusive patent right
of theologic discovery. We complain not that they strove
to bridge the gulf between the known and the un-
known, but that they claim to have the only bridge
which can ever be built across it, and that this bridge
is so poorly constructed and has so unsafe a founda-
tion, we claim not that they admit too much of mys-
tery, but too little of mystery; that they deny to mystery
its proper sphere, and degrade it from its true position.

It is well to notice this distinction. Suppose, then,
a Calvinist and a Liberal to stand together upon the
borders of the gulf which separates the known from
the unknown, peering into the mysteries of the spiri-
tual universe. The Calvinist (Jonathan Edwards, for
instance) says: "My brother, if you want to cross this
gulf, if you desire safe passage through the realm of
spiritual mystery, if you wish, for example, to see just
how, and when, and why, God saves his children from
the effects of sin, here is the only true chart, and yon-
der is the only safe bridge. We call it the autocratic
plan of salvation. Only over that bridge may you enter
the region of mystery and find there satisfactory solu-
tion. Reject it at your peril." But the Liberal, (James
Martineau, for example,) replies: "I don't like your
chart, my brother, for it is confused and contradictory.
I don't like that bridge which you call the plan of
salvation, for its arches rest on assumptions which
shock all my ideas of God's justice and mercy. I am
content with my own simple views on these great sub-
jects; indeed, I very much doubt whether God ever
intended to make known with such mathematical pre-
cision all the details of his future treatment of his chil-
dren. Trust to your bridge of theologic dogma, if you
will; my own soul will rather soar above it, upon the
wings of trusting faith, than cling to it; I know
enough to teach my present duty, and I know
enough to believe in the future, I am sure that the good
God will make all things clear to me in his own good
time."

Which of these two most plainly acknowledges the
great fact of mystery?
And so of many other theories which pretend to
solve all the mysteries of the universe. We decline to
accept them, for they are unsupported by evidence—they
are false on their very face. We have our own views
upon these great themes; but as we feel that we
have probably not exhausted the truth, we have not crys-
tallized these views into fixed creed or dogma. We do
not reject their acceptance indispensable to salvation.
We reject in the belief that God does not reveal all
truth to us here, but will continually instruct us in the
great Hereafter of spiritual progress. We admit that
some of the old mysteries which puzzled the early phi-
losophers are mysteries to us also; that some things
are yet to be learned; and we would wait patiently for
more light. We are free to acknowledge that the
finite cannot comprehend the infinite, and to bow
down with faith and trust before the inscrutable secrets
of God.

Before the inscrutable secrets of God, we say; but not
before all the absurd and inscrutable doctrines with
which man undertakes to solve them. Into God's
great realm of mystery we look with reverence and awe;
but when man's little mysteries are presented to us,
then we claim the right to examine and criticize them
fully and freely. When the Buddhist priest, for in-
stance, tells me that his idol can work a miracle, he
sure that I will examine it, inside and out, for hidden
spring and clockwork, before I will believe his pretence
of the mysterious and supernatural. So when a theo-
logian offers me a system with which he claims to solve
the spiritual secrets of the universe, then I have a right
to try it, as by fire, before I accept its claims. On no
plea of the mysterious has he a right to demand my as-
sent to the theory he has invented, and thus shield it
from deserved attack and overthrow. He must not pre-
tend to clear up the great mystery of God by giving me
a series or system of little mysteries invented by man. If
we must have mystery, it is a joy to be assured that
amid the seeming darkness is God's infinite truth. I
am not so sure of finding that truth in the creeds and
systems man has manufactured. In the one sphere, I
am free to investigate, I am thrilled and gladdened by
the conscious possession of a free soul; amid the confu-
sions and perplexities of the other, I feel caged,
cribbed, confined, unable to use my wings.

That we may clearly understand the distinction be-
tween the true and the false offices of mystery, let us
take an illustration or two.
The mathematician tells us, for example, how mysteri-
ous before us lies the yet unexplored region of numeri-
cal combination and analysis. Of course, I admit it.
But if he then asks me, upon that admission, to believe
that a part is greater than the whole, that one and one
make three, that a crooked line is the shortest distance
between two points, I decline, because these proposi-
tions contradict themselves on their very face. If he
tells me it is a great mystery, but I must accept it, I
tell him it is impossible, for God made my faculties so
that they cannot accept any such contradictory state-
ments.

So when the theologian tells me how impossible it
is fully to comprehend the nature of God, how impos-
sible for my finite mind fully to grasp infinite proportions,
I admit it, for this my soul teaches me every day. But
when he undertakes to solve this great mystery by his
little mystery of the Trinity, telling me that there are
three Gods, and yet one God, three persons, and yet
one person, I am compelled to deny it. He may cry out
mystery, mystery, but I cannot accept his theory, for it
is contradicted by itself, it is plainly untrue upon its
face. I am sure no such contradiction as this exists in
the Infinitesimal Unseen. I prefer the sublime, original mys-
tery of God, to this artificial mystery, invented by man.
I will have nothing which interferes with the simplicity
of the Christian idea, which marks the all-embracing
idea of God as my Father. I do not feel called upon to
introduce any mathematics, especially incorrect mathe-
matics, into heaven.

Again: when the theologian tells me how inscrutable
is the fact of moral evil, how little we know with cer-
tainty of the future solution of this momentous problem,
I admit it. But when he attempts to solve it by what
he calls his authentic plan of salvation, I refuse to ac-
cept his solution, because it seems to me to lead to
every idea of the justice and love of our heavenly Father,
to every dictate of his higher nature, to every utterance
of God's past and present revelations. If he exclaims,
"It is a mystery, an awful mystery," I tell him that I
infinitely prefer the original mystery which enfolded the
spirit-world with its protecting wings, to his poor at-
tempts at a solution. He may cling to his own little
mystery, if he will; but for me, I will follow no will-o'-
the-wisp like this through the unseen gateway into the
mysterious beyond.

From these illustrations, it may be clearly seen what
we consider the true as distinguished from the false uses
of the great fact of mystery. Because we are striving
to penetrate into the realm of mystery, it surely is no
reason why we should accept the mysterious theory to
help us. Indeed, the greater the mystery, the clearer
should be the theologic telescope with which we seek
to explore it.

Moreover, we draw broad and deep the distinction
between a qualified knowledge, and a contradictory or
unreasonable theory. A mystery is something partly
hidden from us; a contradiction is something entirely
seen to be false. If, for example, a lecturer upon ani-
mal magnetism attempted to solve its admitted mys-
teries by stating, 1st, that it resulted from animal elec-
tricity; and 2d, that it originates only from mineral
decomposition, we should not allow the original mys-
tery to protect from attack his manifest contradiction.
You cannot solve a mystery by a contradiction, or a
falsity. You cannot pierce the infinite darkness with
an opaque or opaque lens.

Our chief objection, then, to some of the modern
theologic systems, is not that they are mysterious, but
that they are contradictory; not that we do not un-
derstand them, but that we understand them too well,
to accept them as any guide through the great mystery

which surrounds us. We admit our own ignorance, we
gaze longingly into the hidden depths, but we infinitely
prefer the sense of mystery to the little rushlight
they offer us. For this rushlight only makes the dark-
ness still more dark, or sends pale distorted shadows of
diminutive theologic dogma into the deep profound. We
do not need the phantom shapes of doctrine to trouble
us, for we feel that God is there, ready to enlighten us
in his own good time. Indeed, in our higher moments,
when we gaze with the eye of truth faith up into
the deep concave above us, we may always see the stars.
And how significant are the true uses and offices of
mystery! Never does mountain-height look so sublime
as when half-hidden in the mist, we see its summit
dimly reflected against the deep blue of heaven. Even
so the mystery with which the good God has veiled his
infinite perfections, excites and elevates our aspira-
tions, ennobles and strengthens us by the very effort
to pierce the veil and grasp the unseen things beyond.
A God whom we could perfectly comprehend would not
be for us the Infinite Father whom we can now worship
and adore. Where would be the demand for, or the
exercise of faith, if we knew everything? If we could see
just how he saved us from the tendency to sin? For
just how he came from the seen, but the unseen, is con-
tained and patient of mystery; it waits trustfully for
more light.

And how elevating the thought that out of the bo-
som of infinite mystery ever will come to us new truth,
if we will but patiently struggle on. Founding our-
selves upon the simple truths of Christianity, unfeared
by any creed or exclusive system; be it ours,
with God's help, to guide us, to seek patiently for new
truth. Not in vain, be assured, not in vain, are the
many earnest thinkers of our century struggling for
more light. Holding our peculiar views subject to any
change required by advancing truth, it is ours to criti-
cise old systems, and out of the hidden things of the
universe to gather, here and there, a truth which shall
bring humanity into closer harmony with the Father.
As the narrow bottom of the light and darkness opens
wider and wider before us, we shall become still more
patient of mystery—still more careful in our efforts to
map out the unseen things of God. A man down in
the deep valley of superstition and ignorance, hemmed
in by the barriers of creed and dogma, soon thinks he
has gauged the secrets of the universe, for his vision
is limited and partial. But when he is really up on the
mountain-top, and gazes around upon the infinite un-
known, the sense of the mysterious descends upon his
awe-inspired soul, and he feels like kneeling in humble
confession of ignorance, rather than attempting to
sketch out a full and complete chart of the mysteries
of God.

We are pioneers, thank God; and must accept the
privileges and responsibilities of pioneer life. We are
here to welcome new truth, to clear from what quarter it
may come. We are here to attack old superstitions—to root
out old opinions. We are bidden to move onward,
forever on. God is never without a witness in our
hearts of our own personal duties and responsibilities,
and the higher we ascend the mount of vision, the
more shall we know of his infinite plans and purposes.
Now we must be content to know in part, and to under-
stand in part; now we must be content "to see through
a glass darkly;" but then, when we have begun our
higher flight, "then we shall see face to face." And if
such joy comes from our imperfect vision of truth here,
what gladness shall be ours as we walk with clearer
insight the streets of the eternal city! Ever through
the ages to come shall new beams of light, from the
eternal sun, gladden our pathway—ever new heights
overlooking the hidden things of to-day, shall be gained
by our ascending footsteps. If we are true to the
light God has given us, true followers of God's present
revelations of truth and duty—into the great mystery
of the future, into the silent land, shall we move with
unwavering tread, for around us shall be our Father's
all-embracing arms, and within us the deep perennial
joy of his eternal love.

ODDS AND ENDS.

BY AN ODD FELLOW.

As we stretch our minds back to the ages long
since past, and consult history for all we know or
believe of men who lived thousands of years ago, we
instinctively ask ourselves if such men as Xerxes,
Alexander, Homer and Virgil, were very like the
worried statesmen and poets who live at the present
day? These worthies have been dead so long, that
it seems difficult to realize that they ever did really
live and breathe as mortals do now, or that they
took the same views of things that we do now. Our
general knowledge of the progressive tendencies in
society, and the ages that have lapsed since Homer
and Virgil lived, seems to make so great a chasm
between us and the ancients, that it becomes a mat-
ter of doubt as to what they said or did. And hence
it is, perhaps, that we are so often charmed by pas-
sages in the ancient writings which strike us as
being so perfectly natural, so very like what we
know to be true now; and hence we are pleased
when we find that precisely the same views of things
occurred to others who lived and wrote thousands of
years ago. Here, for instance, is Homer's descrip-
tion of an orator. How often, while listening to the
mellow periods of Wendell Phillips, have I been re-
minded of these apt lines of this father of poetry:—

"When Astrea's son harangued the listening train,
Just was his sense, and his expression plain;
His words accented, yet full without a fault,
He spoke no more than just the things he ought.
But when Ulysses rose, in thought profound,
His modest eyes fixed upon the ground,
As one who spoke the sense he meant to stand,
Not raised his head, nor stretched his sceptered hand;
But when he speaks, what eloquence flows,
Soft as the fleeces of descending snows,
The copious accents fall, with easy art,
Melling their foam, and sink into the heart;
Wondering we hear, and fixed in deep surprise,
Our ears refute the censures of our eyes."

On reading the minute descriptions which Homer
gives of common things, we admire the justness of
his conceptions, and marvel that one who lived so
long ago should have been able to describe with such
living fidelity to nature.

Bear in mind what superstitious notions prevailed
anciently among all nations in respect to comets,
while reading Homer's description of one of these
strange visitors:—

"As the red comet, from Saturnus sent,
To fright the nations with a dire portent,
A fatal sign to armies on the plain,
Or trembling sailors on the wintry main
With sweeping glories glide along the air,
And shake the sparks from its blazing hair."

Here is a passage, from which we may learn what
views Homer entertained of "Wordy War":—

"Long in the field of words we may contend,
Reproach is infinite, and knows no end,
Arm'd, or with truth or falsehood, right or wrong;
So volatile a weapon is the tongue,
Wounded, we wound, and neither side can fall,
For every man has strength to raise the wall.
Women alone, when in the streets they jar,
Perhaps excel us in this worldly war.
Like us they stand, encompassed with the crowd,
And vent their anger impotent and loud."

In such thoughts as these does Homer address us,
even when diluted into English; the original, as
every scholar knows, possesses a terseness—an apt-
ness—of which no translation could possibly give a
perfectly correct expression.

And here follow some examples from Virgil, the
prince of Roman poets. In his description of Har-
vest Storms, he says:—

"That men, by signs, unerring, might behold
The rains and lights, and with that wail the cold;
The Sire of Nature fixed his rules on high,
Bade us the changes of the moon decide;
By what prognostics winds are known to fall,
And swains, with watchful heed, their cattle stall.
When winds blow strong, the sea's surface swells
In weltering foam; still crash the mountain deluge,
Shores echo deep the beat of distant floods,
And low, hollow sound runs murmuring through the woods."

In Virgil's Eclogues there are numerous beautiful
passages, descriptive of rustic life and scenery.
Thus, when Meliboeus is made acquainted with the
happy life of Tityrus, he says:—

"Lo! I, thus harassed, drive my kids before;
This grassy pasture lend, for twice the bore
Among the hazels on the stony rock,
And lo! this, ah, the hope of all my flock!"

This on my mind was dull, you withered oak,
Touched by the lightning, its fragrant smoke;
And the raven croaked from hollow tree,
But lo! my Tityrus, say, what God was he?"

Thus, dear BANNER, I give you a taste of my Odds
and Ends, and if I perceive their flavor to be agree-
able to you and your readers, you shall have some
more anon.
Boston, July 8, 1853.

Written for the Banner of Light.

LIFE.

right of the medium, seized his hand, and wrote the following, signing it with the initials of her earth name:

"My dear friend, I am here, and able to converse with you. I have taken great delight in responding to your call, and feel thankful that you still retain a memory of her who has passed from your sight, but who still feels a deep interest in your welfare, and who is constantly doing all that a spirit can do to benefit you."

I returned to my home, convinced that to withhold belief after such evidence as these, was to be the greatest neglect and an ingratitude to my Creator that ever trod the earth. The chain of evidence was complete—from the plectro tests, rapping, writing, personal influence—no deception manifested; but, to my feelings and mind, proof, given with increasing earnestness, to carry conviction to the heart. I received several kind communications from this spirit, and a pledge that the mystic hour can alone establish, now nearly five years ago; and it was, I think, the last I received from her during my investigations as an inquirer into Spiritualism.

"I am ever near you, my dear friend, trying at all times to influence your ways. I love to commune with you. I will ever do all I can to increase your happiness on earth, and will be one of the first to greet your loved spirit."

I thus became convinced that truth was connected with the spiritualist theory, and I adopted the faith according to the modifications of my mind. Reflection had convinced me that as no two atoms on earth were alike, or two human beings, it was impossible for me to adopt fully the views of others. I must have a standard of my own; and this could only be acquired by prayer: man could not impart it. And the necessity and beauty of this is apparent. Were two atoms, or individuals, alike, there would not be that perfect, endro union with the Creator that does exist. Each work having its own independent, connecting link, existing in the highest form of the Divine embodiment, Jesus Christ, and he in the Father, thus his purity. The union of the Father is perfect, and the teachings of the Saviour clear: "None can come unto me, unless my Father bring him." Thus does the Divine Creator dwell in all his works.

The searcher after truth, as recorded in the Bible, is beset with many difficulties, from the ambiguity of many passages, and the inability, or disinclination, on the part of the clergy, to explain and remove, with patience, the increasing doubts of the young inquirer. They manifest surprise that any such question their interpretations, instead of demonstrating the reasons for their conclusion. The Church says so, and so, and that is law. We want the Bible so arranged that the reader may at once observe those books or portions closed by the Church as historical, literal and allegorical, so that we may learn for ourselves the application of this mysterious volume, and so remove the divisions of ideas that form the opposition forces among church members.

I observed that Judge Edmunds, in his works, places more reliance upon the communications received from his wife than any other spirit; and this is the evident result of the conviction arising from the personal influence being recognizable. The aim of every person must, from their distinctive powers, be different, and like unto the perfume of a rose, no one can imitate it; for they would have to imitate the Creator's works, in all their minute formations—a power beyond the capacity of any spirit. Therefore, this aura, or personal influence, proof is, in my opinion—the only true evidence you have of spirit identity. Names are assumed every hour by spirits wishing to obtain a hearing; but ask for a proof of the personal influence, and the truth or falsehood is established. The spirit takes with it all distinguishing quality, or power; the body is nothing but an instrument necessary for the earth-sphere. Whether it is destined to rise again, and become united, more than either man, or angels, or spirits, can state. The Eternal alone knows for what purpose he has formed his works, and their inhabitants; and of this hour knoweth no man, nor the angels, nor son, but the Father only. I consequently regard as idle speculation and useless employment of time, the theories professing to explain eternally. Spirits know of their existence, and man of his; and all communications from one to the other can only be a description of their respective conditions, surrounding influences, and admonitions valuable to aid us on our earthly path. Beyond this is presumption.

I will conclude this letter with the following vision and its application, received about this period: I thought I was walking upon a highway, in a singular, bleak, barren country. On my left, as far as the eye could reach, seemed nothing but fields of molten metal cooling after the effects of fire. I had a person with me, whose face I could not distinctly make out. On the path ahead the rays reflected from the bright silver light, so well known to those who are favored with visions. It is indescribable in its beauty and effect. My companion requested me to look behind me, when it seemed as if I had come from a city, upon which this silver light was shining with wonderful splendor, while its reflection was only on the path I trod. He directed my examination to where I stood, and at my feet, and in advance, I beheld various rough-looking stones, whose interior possessed the purity of a diamond, and reflected light from within. My unacquainted organ was excited, and I remarked, "These stones must be diamonds; I will gather some." I stopped for that purpose, and I thought I heard a suppressed laugh from my guide. I found I could not detach one from the ground; they seemed imbedded. I said to him, "They are fast secured—commented in: I will leave them alone." When he immediately remarked, very impressively, "You do well; for they are all numbered, and are required in their order." I started, at these words; for my dream, its vision, and number, rushed vividly upon my recollection. I looked eagerly to him for an explanation; but his form became less distinct, and he motioned me onward.

I proceeded in silence, until we came to a barrier of rows of seeming melted iron, native iron, with its purple color, when I exclaimed, "What a wonderful exhibition, or proof, of the influence of fire!" He motioned me on, when I immediately passed quickly over the barrier, and I exclaimed, "I do not require you to aid any further; I know where I am." A road lay before me, running by the side of a clear, pure stream, or river, upon which this silver light was shining. I turned to my right to ascend the river banks; but, in turning, I observed that the river soon ended in a water-fall, down a fearful dark chasm, over which held suspended thick black clouds. I trembled at the fall, and hastened upon the beautiful path leading to a field of ripe, luxurious-looking grain, with a house in the distance, a little in advance. I saw two men fishing, when I proceeded to join in their occupation, and they kindly received me.

The task of giving you all that portion of my experiences that produced the strongest impression upon me, is now finished. My future letters will be a descriptive history of my own development as a medium, its fearful experiences, admonitions, and my withdrawing from its exercise. A Spiritualist I am, and must ever be; but I take no active part in it, for reasons that will be explained.

I am about to visit Europe for a few weeks, and must of necessity postpone this important part of the "Experiences of an Investigator."

New York, July, 1850.

Good and Evil.

I rejoice to see so much written on this subject, and to hear so much said. Agitation of thought, skepticism and criticism are signs and beginnings of knowledge and wisdom—not the fear of the Lord, as has often been said. When I see an article on good and evil, or either of them, I first look at the name of the author, to see whose spectacles I am to read through; for I find a much greater difference in this than in the apparent size of the moon seen through different pupils, and even that varies from the size of a cart wheel to a tea saucer.

Not only do nations have different standards of good and evil, and all religious, moral, social and political societies, but individuals in the same society often differ as widely as societies. What is good and what is evil, are questions which no God's Word revelation, nor no scientific demonstration has ever answered; therefore every speculative and theorizing mind answers for itself, or for as many others as will accept the answer, instead of thinking out answers for themselves. This is the basis of such societies as have organizations to carry out what they call good, and to resist what they call evil. Weeds are evils in the garden and cornfield, and the farmer labors to get them out, that his cabbages and melons may have the soil and sunshine; but the same God law grows weeds as well as cabbages and corn, and, without the interference of man, rather more abundant. Is God the cause of this evil? or is it not an evil? Does God have good use, or any use for the weeds? Does man do better with his cabbages and corn? One he makes into sour kraut, and cold slaug, and the other mainly into whiskey and pork—and God works up his weeds into odor for the air and manure for the soil, or gives them to the animals for food, &c. I am unable to detect the evil there by any standard.

Suppose I extend my view of good and evil through a corn crop. The State of Ohio raises annually seven times as much maize as she consumes for bread; four-fifths of her crop are manufactured into pork and whiskey, both of which, to me,

are evil; I have no use for them; I find myself better and my family better without them, than others can be by and with them—better, because more healthy and happy, and as that is desirable and agreeable to all, I call it good. Now look at the man sweating off the last days of summer, trying to kill God's weeds, and harvest the corn for the hogs and distillery, the products of which are to poison the bodies and pollute the morals of the people. And yet many people call all this good, and my very thoughts evil, and some of them would try to prove it by Divine revelation, or by nature. Because God had concealed alcohol in corn, and let wine live on earth, therefore it is right and good to eat and drink them. I would propose that we take the corn for bread, and meat both, and let God furnish other drink from the earth and sky, and let the hogs feed themselves, or let God feed them, if He wants to raise them, and save the four-fifths of maize crop for the poor human beings, or for famine.

But some will ask, Is not pork food? Yes—about thirty per cent. of nutriment can be extracted from it by the chemical apparatus of the human system; the rest will be ejected, except the pus of scrofulous sores, which will drag through the system, and much of it lodge somewhere more than one night.

From maize nearly seventy per cent. of food will be extracted without pus, and four hundred weight of corn meal, well fed, will make one hundred weight of pork, with the scrofula thrown in. Here we have the loss and gain footed up: four hundred, at seventy per cent., manufactured into one hundred, at thirty per cent. neat—no, not neat, for there never was anything neat about swine, dead or alive.

But many say, people make money by raising corn and feeding it to swine, or manufacturing it into whiskey; but it is easy to see, by the figures and effects, that humanity is greatly the loser by the change of corn into pork or whiskey. In the whiskey, the food is all lost to the race and a greater evil still is substituted for corn than in the swine; but to me both are evils, because they are losses to man of labor, health, happiness and purity. If God wants me to drink whiskey, I will wait till he distills it; and if he wants me to eat pork, I will wait till he fattens it; but if he allows me to select my food and drink, I will try to select and use that which will contribute most to my health and happiness, and call it good; and that which injures me, and all others who use it, I will call evil; and while I will not feed hogs, nor drink whiskey, nor call them good, I will not call my brother or sister evil, or wicked, who, having been differently educated and trained, and inherited a different organization, sees differently, and suffers badly in consequence. I would pity and correct, if I could, and ask the aid of science and experience to show that rum and whiskey, &c., tend to bring out wrangling and strife—and pork, to scrofula, leanness and vulgarity. I would invite people to choose the road in life to happiness, harmony and heaven.

One other weed requires notice, which God sows and raises as he does the docks, mullens and thistles, but of which he would not find as prolific a crop usually at harvest, probably because it is not as useful in his economy. I mean tobacco, of course—the weed which man has taken so much pains to cultivate and make into merchandise—not for food, or drink, or clothing, but simply to soil his dwellings, pollute his body, impair his health, decrease his happiness, and greatly injure his posterity. But he did not know it was evil—does not now, nor will he, till he learns of science and experience, both of which will teach him this. Then to each it will be an evil, as it is to me, and all will cease to use and to raise it, and save the labor and the suffering and misery it produces. As we learn those lessons, and put them in practice, we grow wise and happy together. The tobacco plant, to me, is not evil, nor is the thistle, or dock, or hantane, or nightshade; but when they crowd the corn or cabbage, which I want for food, I will pull them up, as I have no use for them, and have for the others; and as God has given me permission to raise my food, or poison, on his earth, I will use it, and he may sow his tobacco, &c., where he pleases, and pull up my cabbages, if they are in his way, seeing we are tenants in common here now.

Thus I judge of good and evil, but only for myself. I will not condemn my neighbor; I am not his judge, but I am my own. To me, that which injures me is evil, and knowing I will not cultivate or use it, as I live for and seek happiness, and not misery. If my neighbor prefers to be drunk, I am sorry, and pity him; I feel sure he is not as happy as he would be, and I will tell him so. I will not raise corn, and make it into whiskey for him to get into misery by. If my neighbor smokes, and snuffs, and chews, until his breath is so offensive, I cannot sit or stand near him, and his poor wife and children are suffering from its poisonous and polluting effects even more than himself. I will pity, and tell him of the cause; but I will not blame nor condemn him as evil or wicked, because he has suffered from the use of that which, to me, is evil, and made others suffer—even little children, often not more ignorant, if more innocent, than the parent.

Of this I speak from experience, for I smoked the weed fifteen years, to my sorrow, and to the suffering of myself and others, but not to my shame, for I quit forever as soon as I knew its evil effects, and began at once to eradicate its effects in my family, and trust I have succeeded in keeping it out of the bodies and gardens of my children for life. If making money would justify persons in raising tobacco or corn for the distillery and hoggery, then the same reasoning would justify raising or stealing negroes for market, or making dies for bogus coin, or plates for counterfeit notes, etc. To me both and all are evil; to another, none of them are; to another, it is good to make whiskey and raise tobacco, but an awful crime to raise negroes to sell. How we differ! In the physical world good and evil are not in things, but the use we make of them. The fire, governed by the cook, fits our dinner; used by an incendiary, it destroys our dwelling. The razor shaves the beard in one hand, and cuts the throat in another. To me, both uses are bad; to another, one is good; and to another, both are good; and so on. Calomel kills one person, cures another, and cripples a third for life. To me its use is generally bad, and its effects evil in the human body. To another its use is an indispensable good, and he deems it the greatest blessing in the catalogue of medicines. The bite of a gnat or sting of a bee are evils to us; but it would be entering a complaint against God to call these insects evil. Probably He has a use for them different from ours.

I was greatly pleased, when a boy, at the sentence in Pope—

"God, cries proud man, 'all things made for my use.'
"See man for mine," cries a pampered goose."

I cannot see all things evil which I have no use for, or the use of which would injure me. But I can see the evil in the use of that which injures me, and others, and I will not use it or encourage others to do so. I am not sure that God could spare tobacco, rattlesnakes and musquitoes, but I can. As far as I learn the laws of life, and health, and purity, and happiness, I will observe them; but with my scientific knowledge and experience both, no person can convince me that the use of tobacco is good, or that its use is not evil, or that God or nature ever designed it for human use, any more than they did docks and toothpicks. Some time I will carry my measure into morals and religion, etc.

Rome, N. Y., August 5, 1850.

Obsession.

Messrs. Editors—I read an article in your issue of July 23d upon this subject, which seems to overlook some very essential points having a direct bearing upon it. The tendency of which, I fear, will be to frighten some of the more timid ones from partaking of the overflowing fountain of Divine wisdom, through the agency of spirit intercourse, who otherwise would—especially the quotation from Mr. Joel Tiffany's Monthly.

It is pretty generally admitted of the spirit world, what we see exemplified in every-day life, that there are different grades or planes of intellectuality; and it is equally true, though perhaps not so generally admitted, that those of the higher planes invariably have power to control those of the lower ones, when brought in contact.

It is evident that we cannot at present draw a line of demarcation between the thoughts originating in our own minds and those emanating from the invisible world, so intimately interwoven do they appear to be (from the experience of bona fide mediums), which indicates an impossibility for us to entirely prevent a partial influx of thoughts from spirit friends; but, as a rule, mankind can successfully resist spirit influences; and, not become mediums, if they choose to, although an exception may perhaps occur in persons who, from an organization rendering a peculiar fitness for some particular work, are impelled to act as such. But Mother Nature—ever bountiful in her works—steps in here, and prevents confusion, by providing each individual with a GUARDIAN SPIRIT, or ANGEL, whose office it is to watch over and act for his or her spiritual welfare; and no spirit of a lower sphere or plane can operate upon or control any individual, except by the consent of the guardian spirit. Taking this view of the matter, no person need resist spirit influence from fear of obsession, unless satisfied that their guardian spirit is of a lower

plane than themselves, or that they are passing from a lower to a higher plane, and are still partially under control of their guardian spirit of the lower plane.

I understand that Mr. Tiffany is an "impossible medium," which will, perhaps, account for the ultra position he has taken upon this subject in connection with entrancement; but because he and other well educated and happily organized individuals have become first-class mediums, without being entranced or going through a particular course of development, it does not necessarily follow that every one can, or that those who do, are of an inferior class. In fact, I am satisfied that some of our best mediums are those who have passed through a longer or shorter period of entrancement as mediums, and who could not have been properly developed in any other manner.

The above is respectfully submitted for the consideration of your intelligent readers.

De Kalb, Ill., Aug. 1st, 1850.

What is Carbon?—No. 3.

In further proof of the theory that carbon is a compound, composed of oxygen, nitrogen and hydrogen, I ask attention to some phenomena of nature.

Common seedling quince trees have been inoculated with grafts from a superior apple, pear, and quince tree, and the limb originating from each graft-bud is found to be kindred thereto in the character of its wood, and of the fruit grown thereon, while each and all of the limbs are alike dependent on the trunk and roots of the seedling for their connection with the soil and its contributions to sustain and promote their physical growth and reproductive energy. It is said that all the seeds of the apple, pear, and superior quince, grown on such grafted tree, will, in reproduction, only and alike yield an inferior quince tree, kindred in condition to the seedling tree so grafted. Whether experiment has fully demonstrated the truth of this I do not know; but experience shows there is analogous phenomena in the uncertainty attending the products from the seed of grafted fruits. The nursery man knows that the seed stones of his superior plums or peaches, in reproduction, will, in many cases, yield very inferior varieties. If we can but clearly apprehend why the wood of such limbs so differ, as well as the fruits grown thereon, we may therein find a key to the economy governing in vegetable reproduction, and thus learn why the seed stones of grafted fruits are so unreliable for perpetuating their varieties and conditions, while we may also better realize the rationale of the premises involved, to wit, that carbon is a compound.

The present theory of agricultural chemistry, as taught by Liebig and kindred savans, is, that the air is the appointed depository whence nature draws her supplies of carbon for the physical growth of plants, and that respiration is the mode by which plants obtain the same. Experiments carefully made in France, are said to have clearly demonstrated that the growing of a tree from a germ seed to maturity, does not involve any loss in the volume or weight of the soil used therefor. This fully sustains the theory of Liebig, while it seems also to prove that earth's contributions to promote physical growth, do not embrace therein any material elements or substances, such as carbon.

Science has not, that I know of, claimed there are varieties of carbon that would explain the difference in the wood of these several limbs, or that, on analysis, there is found any difference in the carbonic acid resulting from decomposition. The inference, therefore, is, that there is either a difference in the constituents of these differing limbs—whatever those constituents may be—or that if the same, they are in different proportions combined. Whether this latter alternative is reconcilable with "the law of chemical equivalents," I will leave to the savans to decide. But in either case, I have yet to learn from science what are the several elements other than carbon derived from air, if there are any such.

On the authority of these teachings, I conclude, that the material substance composing the wood and fruit—whether consisting of one or more elements—is otherwise derived than from the soil, which is thus unaffected in volume or weight by growing plants therein, and know no other source of supply therefor than air and water to suggest.

What, then, does soil contribute to induce, sustain and perfect the physical growth of plants?

My answer to this will define what I suppose to be the economy producing the wood and fruit referred to, and explain the why of the difference thereof. It will be conceded that each bud, when used for grafting, is pervaded by an inherent life, constituting it of a distinct and definite variety or species kindred to its immediate parentage; also, that each bud originates an organized limb in harmony with the law of like begets like and kindred with itself; that the fruit grown thereon is alike kindred thereto. From these facts I infer that the life principle of the bud is the operating power, causing the unfolding organization of the limb, and procuring and organizing the atomic matter constituting the same and the fruit grown thereon. We must and do ascribe the physical growth to life only, as the acting, operating power governing the same. As like begets like is conceded to be a principle in nature's economy, we should expect all the wood and fruit to be alike, if we referred such growth to the life-principle of the grafted tree; but if we refer it to the life-principle of the bud, then we must expect just such results as above enumerated. Hence, I assume that distinct and special life entities can and do associate and combine in one organism, without thereby losing their respective individuality; that each can and does therein individually exert its own inherent aspirations and power to execute the same.

If we assume that all life, however manifested in nature, is the same in origin and essence, then it follows that the difference exhibited by these several life entities in their aspirations and action thereon, may and must be ascribed to special conditions of developed being and special organization, as individualized entities. Hence we find the innumerable varieties of genera and species in organic life, and the observance of the economy of like begets like in the phenomena of reproduction. If, then, the life principle of each limb is the acting power, procuring and assimilating the atomic matter constituting the physical, and procures the same from air and water alone, as suggested, it follows that both of these compounds must be decomposed, that it can appropriate and use such and so much of the elements or constituents thereof, as it has affinity for, and expel or reject the residue. This would indicate that the difference in the results thereof must occur either from a difference of the elements, or in the proportions of the same elements thus assimilated, or we must find some other substances, elements or properties from the soil derived, to explain the fact of the wood and fruits being different. Whether we can find such, will be best tested by carefully inquiring and learning what soil does contribute, and this I will try to demonstrate in my next.

"PHILADELPHIA."

Spiritualists' Excursion from Providence, R. I.

DEAR BANNER—Agreeably to announcement through your columns, the Spiritualists of Providence, with their friends at home and abroad, made their excursion, Aug. 2d, "down the river," to the beautiful Grove of Portsmouth. This is situated upon the most northern section of the island of Rhode Island, which lays in Narragansett Bay, at the distance of about 20 or 23 miles from the city, and upon which is also the famed watering place of Newport, at its southern extremity. The island is 7 or 8 miles in length, with a naturally diversified scenery of grove and meadow, hill and plain, stream and rivulet, and which renders it quite a romantic locality, and the purity and freshness (if the expression is a proper one) of the breeze from the bay and ocean, with advantages of sea-bathing, makes it attractive to strangers, as a summer resort, from East, West, North and South.

The "Canoeists," Capt. Allen, the largest and staunchest of our excursion boats, was crowded to its utmost capacity with about 250 bodies, and as for the spirits, they were "legion," and gallantly ploughed its way toward its southern destination, bearing its freight of living, loving human hearts safely to its moorings at the Grove, where all possible preparations for them had been made by Mr. Cole, the proprietor. It was not expected that the turnout would have been so general, and therefore the "bake" was not as extensive as it otherwise would have been, but visitors were hopped to the fullest extent possible. When I speak of "the bake," I suppose that many of your readers may not be conversant with the term. I mean a regular old-fashioned Rhode Island Clam bake and Chowder. That is what suits the appetites of the denizens of Little "Rhoda." The State is small, to be sure, but there are some good eaters, at least, here. All the excuse I have is, that we must eat to live, and we all, this way, have a great propensity for the latter. A week ago I was at Nahant, in company with an Excursion from here, and must say that the most dry watering-place on our river or bay, is a thing to that comfortable place, whose only redeeming fact, is the hotel, which abounds with every luxury of the season. But the grounds will not compare at all. Come to us, oh ye Boston Excursionists, and drink your fill of our ocean scenery, and our air full of our bivalves!

Our boat-load was lessened at "Rocky Point," by about a thousand, which was fully made up to us, after our arrival, by two other steamers, ten sail-boats, a sloop-load, and about

100 carriages, as our friends from Taunton, Fall River, and the country around, gathered with us, happy to come as brethren, and enjoy with us the festivities of the occasion.

After our dinner of clam, chowder, &c., we repaired to a section of the grove, where, beneath the blue vault of heaven, and the clustering branches of the greenwood, with the velvet turf beneath our feet, the ration warfare before us and genial feeling within our hearts, we listened to the spirit-voices, through the organisms of Brothers H. B. Storor, of New Haven, and Robinson of Fall River—Sisters Macomber of Olneyville, R. I., and Amanda Spence of New York, who has been our speaker for the month, and has won a high place in our hearts, by her vigorous and discriminating logic, her strong woman-sympathy, her steady battling for the right, and above all, her naturalness in the presentation of original ideas. We shall welcome her return to us in September or January, as she may decide. After this, which was appropriately interspersed with selections from the Psalms of Life, by the choir, the audience separated, seeming to be highly satisfied with the remarks. I would be pleased to give a condensed report of these, but want of space forbids.

It is a beautiful scene, when hill, and grove, and plain, are peopled with a company united in heart, and such we beheld there. Everything passed off pleasantly, and it is believed by many, that it is not possible for any one society here to bring together so goodly a number of really well-disposed persons upon a similar excursion. There seemed to be a half-dozen, or so, who went to turn our happiness into ridicule; and I heard a gentleman, who was annoyed by their loud conversation during their speaking even after remonstrance, remark, "Calvinistic ignorance!" But they soon left us, ashamed of their own intentions. We started for the city at 4-2 o'clock, and arrived safely at a little past 6. The day was emblematic to me of the rise and progress of Spiritualism and all true reforms. The morn was cloudy and rather lowering, but persecution from the elements did not deter us, and keeping on our course, though a few rain-drops fell, they soon sparkled as gems in the bright rays of the glorious sun, that burst forth upon us, bathing us in its living light.

It is very much wished by many around us, that we have another in September, and if so, there will be more present than at this time, and we hope to greet many of our friends from Boston and vicinity, as well as Willimantic and the country there. A sufficient notice will be given, and arrangements made by the friends to run trains to connect with the boats.

Thine fraternally, LITA H. BARNEY.

Providence, R. I., Aug. 8th, 1850.

A Chapter on Tobacco.

THE MISUSE OF TOBACCO.

Messrs. Editors—In perusing an article in your issue of July 30th, entitled "The Use of Tobacco," a few thoughts occurred to my mind, which I will endeavor to clothe in words and send you for publication, more particularly as there is a tendency in some writers to confuse ideas and lead the majority of readers to conclusions which even they (the writers) did not intend. The difficulty in this case, I apprehend, is in mistaking the condition of, or our relation to, a law, for the law itself. This mistake will be apparent when he says "The appetite for tobacco is natural," and then asks, "What makes men use tobacco?" A desire to do so. What makes the desire? Nature. Now, although the writer may mean that the desire is the natural result of the state or condition in which the user of it may be, (which it is,) yet the reader is apt to infer that the state or condition was a legitimate result of the law of appetite itself, which it is not. This will be still more clear from one of his own illustrations.

He compares the love of tobacco to the love of church worship and ceremony, and says that, "although acquired, still is natural." Now this proves my position. What are the facts? Religion being a natural faculty of the human soul, and forever aspiring after the good and the true, man being born with this faculty, in a world where certain forms and ceremonies are taught as religion, this natural faculty seeks expression in those forms, whatever they may be—whether Buddhism, Mahometan, Pagan, or Christian. So in like manner the love of happiness and enjoyment is natural to the human mind. Man, finding himself in a world where certain ingredients are used as stimulants, to sooth care, drive away pain, and transport it to the seventh heaven of felicity—this faculty also seeks expression in whatever forms are in use, in the respective localities he inhabits, whether that be arrack or whiskey, opium or tobacco. Now it is plain that it is the religious faculty which is natural, not the form it takes; that it is the love of enjoyment which is natural, not the modes in which it seeks that enjoyment. In both cases they may be, and are more or less, in discord, or in false relations to a harmonious and immutable law.

If this is a just view of Nature, does it not leave an erroneous impression to say that there is not an "inclination" or desire in the human breast but what is caused by Nature, therefore good, therefore ought to be gratified—for he says it will all work for good in the end. Very true. I also believe all things will work for good results, but not in continuing in false relations to natural law, but in coming into harmonious relations with all the laws of our being, physical and spiritual. For instance, if upon putting my finger in the fire, instead of letting the feeling of pain warn me against a repetition of the false relation to the good and unchangeable law of heat, I should thrust my hand and arm into it, what work out my highest physical development? I trow not. So it will be found equally true in all the departments of being; the good is in the avoidance, not in the continuance, of the false relation.

Again; the love of the opposite sex is a legitimate result of a natural law; but who will say that a inclination and modes in which that faculty seeks expression are equally natural and legitimate? Query—Was the inclination of Lot's daughters, which ultimately in incest, a legitimate result of, or a false relation to, a good law? Evidently the latter. It may be the writer means the same; but, if so, his language is at least ambiguous. He says nature made tobacco, and nature made the inclination. Ergo: man may do as his inclinations lead, for both are equally natural, and consequently good. Let us see where this logic would lead us. Nature made iron, and a legitimate use of that iron is to be formed into a knife. Would it be equally legitimate for me to plunge that knife into my brother's bosom, and then say nature gave me the inclination? I think not. But he says distinctly, "Nature makes us smoke, chew, and snuff," etc. Now this is most certainly a transformation of a very old idea into a new form. The first excuse we read of, for disobedience (mythical, though it be), was, "The serpent beguiled me and I did eat;" and the second was, "The woman that thou gavest me, persuaded me, and I did eat." And from that day up to modern times all the trouble was divided between the old Devil and poor Mother Eve. But it seems a new way of shifting responsibility is discovered, viz, laying all upon the shoulders of Dame Nature. May not a better solution be found in the truth that all the laws of nature are wise and good, and that though all our appetites, passions and faculties are equally good, and given for good and legitimate uses, yet man has the power to bring those naturally good appetites, passions, etc., into harmony, or discord with those good laws, so that man has, through ignorance of those laws, actually come to be more or less in false relations to them; and, instead of saying, "There is no use in talking about it," because men will follow their inclinations," there is all the more need of talk, and action, too.

We need more light to dispel the darkness of ignorance, for we assured that the great majority of tobacco-users (and I speak from experience) are ignorant of its results. Be assured, also, when the knowledge comes, all men do not follow their inclinations or passions. What is wanted then, is to exercise our reason just as fast as we get "more light," and adjust our inclinations to the immutable laws of our being, never forgetting that we are forever, "Subjects to law, but King in conditions."

X. WALTER.

Davenport, Iowa, August 2, 1850.

REVIEW OF A. B. CHILD'S ARTICLE ON TOBACCO.

Dr. Child's article in the BANNER of July 30, upon tobacco, calls out for "light, more light." I agree with him that the appetite for tobacco is natural; but it is no more so than every other gross and groveling habit that poor ignorant man has taken upon himself.

As man rises from the low form of human existence through the increase of knowledge, and learns by his own experience, and from the teachings of his fellow man gone before, he catches the higher joys and gratification, and leaves the lower and beastly pleasures, and is ever thankful for the exchange. He is thankful for any means whatever that has brought the higher wisdom within his reach.

And further; I agree "that whatever is, is right;" that is, the past, taken as a whole, has been as good as it could possibly be, "and has been all right." But the great future belongs to Dr. Child, himself, and every son and daughter that knows the difference between joy and sorrow, happiness and misery, love and hate, or high, moral, intellectual and spiritual life, from gross, animal, beastly passions and habits. With this lore for humanity, I am not willing that the

present and future should wallow in the gross sensuality of the past, seeking low animal indulgences. My own happiness is dependent, in a great degree, upon the moral and intellectual standard of my neighbors. The purity, honesty and intelligence of a neighborhood adds happiness to a whole State.

Dr. Child's passivity in reference to the family of man consuming one thousand million dollars' worth of tobacco annually, is based upon the ground that the appetite is the effect of a natural cause, and, therefore, is natural, and nature is always right. I agree with him in part; but where he has no wish to lessen its present use, and see this great waste of time and property spent in carrying higher life to this ignorant world, I widely differ from him.

Is not the appetite for rum and opium as natural as the appetite for tobacco? And are not all kinds and manifestations of diseases as much the effect of a natural cause, as the appetite for tobacco? Filthiness and low vulgarity are the same.

Now has he no wish to be instrumental in changing all who may be afflicted with disease, and beastly sensuality? Can he say by these that "Nature is ever replete with wisdom and power; and to Nature's God I feel no opposition;" and the use of tobacco being the effect of a natural cause, it needs no words spoken in its favor, and words spoken against it effect no good?

If the use of tobacco can be so thoroughly "let alone" for man's best good and future progression, why not every other physical and mental weakness that flesh is heir to? Why over write or speak another word? "Nature's God is replete with wisdom and power to do her own work," independent of man, in due time. This seems to be his logic, if I can understand him.

NATHANIEL RANDALL.

St. Johnsbury, Vt., July 31, 1850.

STEPHEN YOUNG, POPULAR BRIDON, N. Y.—"I was much interested in Dr. Child's article on the use of tobacco, published in the BANNER, of the 30th ult. It contains one point which appears to me erroneous. He says—'Nature is replete with wisdom and power, and to nature and nature's God I feel no opposition;' and the use of tobacco being the natural effect of a natural cause, it needs no words spoken in its favor, and words spoken against it effect no good." And in another place—'Nature makes man chew, smoke and snuff, and it would be foolish to try to put down what nature puts up.' Now I would ask whether it is not just as much a part of nature's programme for some to speak against the use of tobacco, as it is for others to chew, smoke and snuff? And whether the use of the word 'wood' is to be endless? And if not, then whether speaking, writing, and reasoning on the subject is not one of the principal natural means of enlightening mankind as to its deleterious effects, and thus leading to its final rejection as a means of stimulation? Many have abandoned its use in consequence of hearing its qualities and effects pointed out—and many more have been prevented from forming the habit by the same means. And, although the salvific god today exercises almost omnipotent sway over his votaries—requiring the pouring out of 'frequent libations'—yet I have the most implicit faith that the march of intellect and refinement will ultimately work his complete and final fall. And to speak—to 'the agitation of thought'—may be principally due to the glorious consummation."

One Man's Reasons for believing in Spiritualism.

O. S. FOSTER, HANNOVER, KY.—"In renewing my subscription for your paper, I take the opportunity to present to offer a brief statement of my early experience in Spiritualism.

In 1853 a lady medium from Ohio came to our village and made a brief sojourn. To gratify an idle curiosity I called to see her, and for the first time heard the raps. They were very distinct—made on the table, floor of the room, and inside of the doors of a warbore. When made in the last mentioned place, I heard and felt them very distinctly against my ear. I made many inquiries, and they were all readily answered. Finally, I inquired if

1—I appeal to you to heed the commandment
 2— and when Christ says, "Thou shalt love the Lord
 3— God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul,
 4— and all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and
 5— thy neighbor as thyself," take these words. "They are
 6— the constitution of your life. Bind them about the heart
 7— your memory—live in their sacred presence; let them
 8— use your soul with their hidden meaning; and
 9— being in love, as its very child and ward, at last
 10— will rise into that sphere where love shall be
 11— desired, purified and perpetual!

J. T. GILMAN PIKE,
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