

NICHOLS' MONTHLY.

JULY, 1855.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS.

THE reaction, from the failure of the social experiments of ten years ago, is nearly past. The desire for a better life than the isolation or discordance of civilization is stronger than ever, and we are now upon the verge of new and extensive enterprises. Some of these, present and prospective, it may be well to notice.

M. Considerant is still active, we believe, in organizing and pushing forward his Socialist emigration to Texas. This is simply an emigration, with no present Phalansterian or Communistic order; but looking to one as a future result of proximity and improved conditions. It is said that among other bodies of emigrants will be several hundred Swiss watchmakers. We are not well informed respecting the locality selected, but there are portions of North-western Texas more inviting, probably, to large bodies of emigrants, than almost any other portion of our national domain. This emigration is likely to prosper; but we see no reason to expect from it a speedy realization of any high order of Association.

The *Tribune*, which, with all its meannesses, is not destitute of social sympathies, publishes an account of M. Cabet's community, at Nauvoo, Illinois. It has increased to about four hundred members, working together upon the basis of an absolute equality, under the rule of the majority in general council. It seems to prosper, and a new domain has been selected in Iowa, which will be the seat of the community—Nauvoo being used for the present as a preparatory school. One of the most pleasing features of this community is the general cultivation of music, which has al-

ready given them a band of forty musicians, with large and efficient choirs of vocal performers. They have also scientific lectures, dramatic representations, a good library, and two newspapers, one in French, and the other in German.

An interesting letter from J. P. Davis, of West Union, Iowa, gives us an account of a movement toward the formation of a Spiritual-Socialist gathering, at some point yet to be determined upon. Mediums in different sections of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, &c., gave to groups of Spiritualists the plan of this movement, and pointed out what was thought a good location, near the north-west corner of Iowa, in the adjacent territory, and a party is now engaged in surveying the country, and fixing upon a suitable place. There can be little risk in a few hundred families taking up a township of fertile land, at Government prices, anywhere in that region. They can scarcely fail to better their condition; and at this day, and with the ideas of freedom, and a true life, accepted by nearly all Spiritualists, every advance will be to a higher social condition.

Our friends at Ceresco, Wisconsin, who have been endeavoring to form a union on the basis of Individual Sovereignty, have fallen under the ban of the neighboring moralists, and two of them have been prosecuted on the suspicion of living together without legal marriage. We are not acquainted with the laws of Illinois; but in New York, when a man and woman choose to pass as man and wife, they are held to be such, by the law, and the public. There are thousands of persons, in New York city, of every class, rich as well as poor, who live together as man and wife, where no legal ceremony has ever been performed. The law and the public presume marriage, in such cases—it is one, in fact, the whole public being witnesses.

We have never been the advocates of a disorderly licentiousness. It is contrary to a much higher law than any act of Legislature. But we hope our friends will not shrink from the vindication of Individual freedom. If you allow the mob to compel you to do right to day, it may compel you to do wrong to-morrow.

There is a droll matter in connection with this Ceresco business. A school teacher takes the trouble to publish an affidavit, to show that she has not introduced "Esoteric Anthropology" into her school. We know many wiser teachers who have so introduced it; and many thousands have been introduced into the best families in this country. Condemning such a book is no mark of intelligence and refinement.

Spiritualism everywhere tends to Socialism. Its first action is the sundering of old ties, the bursting of old bondages. Set free

from existing religious and conventional relations, people are drawn together, by the desire of more truthful ones. They are forming now little groups, and these groups will soon join in larger societies. A few may relapse, and settle back into the old forms of the church and the world, but a far greater number will push forward toward the New Life that is coming upon the earth, and of which this continent is the chosen theatre. All things, material and spiritual, now tend rapidly to this result. It cannot be delayed. We ask our friends to seek the clearest light, and the highest wisdom. Do not be drawn into hasty, ill-planned, and ill-founded schemes. See that the foundation of material prosperity is secure, and that there be also the elements of spiritual harmony.

In our next number we intend to give the personal and other requisites of a True Society, and to point out, as clearly as we can, what seems to us to be the duty of all progressive spirits, at this stage of human growth and development. There is a great work to be done. Blessed are those who shall be found worthy. Beginning with each individual as a vital center, our entire humanity shall be redeemed.

THE PROGRESSIVE UNION increases daily. It is the gathering of a noble band of spirits, true-hearted, heroic, and devoted, we hope and believe: men and women, too wise to be led blindly astray; but too good not to accept what comes to them, with the commendation and acceptance of their own best life.

We have given, in this number, the entire statement of the Principles and Organization of this Union, and ask for it the earnest attention of all our readers. Such as accept these principles, and are willing to enter into this organization, will forward their adhesion, and take such part in our work as may be consistent with their ideas of duty. The names and residences of all full members, comprised in "List No. 1," will be forwarded to each member as soon as his name is received. Other lists will be printed and forwarded, as fast as the increase of the society shall demand.

We recommend also a most attentive perusal and study of the Second Report of the Central Bureau. Day by day we are more deeply impressed with the wisdom and necessity of the Laws there given, and we believe that they will meet with the hearty and joyful acceptance of all who are worthy to become members of a Harmonic Society.

As soon as we have somewhat recovered from the dearth of the famine period through which we have struggled—as soon as our friends furnish us with the means of working, we shall spread this

Gospel, until our Union includes all who are qualified to become its members.

We daily receive the evidences, that there are great numbers, scattered over the country, who are now ready to unite cordially in our union; and that from these may be gathered a band of devoted workers, prepared to enter a harmonic society. We do not expect that all who affiliate in our Union, will become Harmonists. Many are bound to the life of civilization, in inextricable bonds; but these will give us sympathy and aid. We do not expect that all will be able to accept the Law of Progression in Harmony; but many can and do accept it. It has come into their hearts and lives. Others will see its beauty and use, though they may not feel called upon to live it. But it will be a very vital law in the central group or germ of the Harmonic Society. Roots may be cut off, and branches pruned away, but the germinal life must be kept from all evil.

To show the loving acceptance of the "Law," we copy a few sentences from the letter of one of our members, a lady in Illinois. She says, "My heart is overflowing with its fullness of love for all our society on the earth and in the heavens; and my whole spirit accepts, and appreciates the wisdom that dictated the 'Law.' I say amen to it. Let us all work 'to the line of the square,' that we may 'unlock the Treasures of Life.' I see nothing in this law, inconsistent with the most perfect individual freedom, for it is imposed on no one. He who finds in his heart to reject it, may still find his place without causing discord or marring harmony."

Some have supposed that the law given to us is inconsistent with our former teachings. The term Law is not used to signify an arbitrary enactment, but a mode of life, in accordance with a vital principle, which renders it a supreme attraction, and therefore consistent with the most perfect freedom.

We have demanded Freedom—the right to do right; never the right to do wrong. We have demanded further, the right to decide upon our own right; and that no one be compelled to live any but his own life. We demand now, the right of every one to obey this law, or whatever law he can accept as in harmony with his highest attractions. If Freedom has seemed to give people the power to do what you believe to be wrong; cannot you see its necessity also, to every right action? We must have freedom, to enable us to keep the holiest law of our spiritual nature.

We wish to impress upon our friends—those who have gone with us patiently and lovingly—our feeling that a brighter future is now opening to us; that the inward preparation for the outward reforms in social organization is going steadily forward

CHAPTER VI.

TELLING A FORTUNE

"HALLO, Min, surnamed the Dreamer!"—and Frederick Sherwood stood before the thoughtful one, as she sat in the folds of the red curtains, getting a glow of the afternoon sun, and the idea of heat from the rich red of the curtain. She was deep in the mysteries of Faust, shrinking away from Mephistophiles, and yet drawn onward, she knew not how or why. Just so life led her. She did not understand it; she shrank from it, as from a myth of concealed and terrible meaning; and yet she lived on, and in spite of all former apathy, life had begun to interest her. But here was an every-day actuality, in the form of Fred Sherwood, claiming a hearing. This was what he generally claimed, and seldom conceded.

"Now, Minnie, a sixpence for your thoughts. A penny for Carrie's would be as much as I would think of offering, but, somehow, you are a bit of a mystery, and I am a little curious, and willing to pay for my curiosity."

Minnie looked up, and dashed away a tear.

"Why, bless the child, it is crying. I shall have to tell your fortune. Come, cross my hand with silver, or shuffle the pack of cards I have in my pocket—hush, not so loud, or the old folks will get a hint of my cards—or turn a cup, Minnie, that's *your* sort. You don't know the cards, but all the women know cups. They are deep in their cups;" and he laughed lightly, and took the Faust, and looked mockingly in it, as he held it wrong end up.

"All the same to me, Minnie. German metaphysics, and Mephistophiles! I have a confused notion that they are synonymous. But I never meddle with things that I can't understand; there are enough that I know like a book—cards, horses, girls, schoolmasters—I am learned in such lore, and I am partially acquainted

with Jerry—but in telling your fortune I will be sure to keep clear of going by any information obtained from Jerry.”

Minnie trembled. She had a misgiving as regarded the half-witted serving man. He loved young Sherwood as a dog loves a capricious master. Mr. Ashton, the schoolmaster, was somehow involved in her misgiving. She could not tell how or why. She did not even know that her new interest in life was connected with the advent of this young gentleman in the village. She did not know that her slight acquaintance with him had touched her heart, as with a living coal from the altar of all Life. Oh, how little she knew of herself, and of the life that was, or was to be.

“Now, my child,” said Fred, with mock gravity, “you have been in leading strings to your honored sister, my respected bride elect, a long time. She had the care of your education, manners, morals, and so on. Now she consents to take charge of mine (a precious mess she will have of it, between you and me) but as a sort of offset in duties, I am going to take you under my wise and humane care. I begin with telling your fortune. You are in love.”

Minnie’s cheek burned with a deep flush, that spread over face, forehead, and neck.

“Yes; in love with that young city beau, Mr. Ashton. I have no doubt he is wise, though he can’t drive a horse, and can upset a sleigh, in a broad sweep, with just the ghost of a corner. ‘The course of true love never did run smooth.’ There are mysteries besides those in German metaphysics. You are a little one; Ashton is a larger. I want to find you both out, and with Jerry’s help, I may—pshaw! I am not a prudent magician; I ought to conceal the strings that move the puppets. I want to predict a sunny future for you, little one; but somehow my second sight is not of that sort. I wonder if anybody’s is? Don’t ghosts always appear to tell of some ill luck or other? some death or disaster? some confounded thing, that you would give your horse’s ears should not happen? I know it is so, and a shadow lies right across your sunshine, in my second sight, Minnie, and I believe, in my soul, it is this fellow, Ashton, that casts it. But I am sure I can’t make you believe it, till you go on far enough to come into the gloomiest

part of it. Poor little one," said he, smoothing her hair in the tenderest and most brotherly way—"poor little one! you are smoother and prettier than my black mare, Vixen. I wish you had a tithe of her spirit, and maybe you have. There's blood and metal, sometimes, where you don't expect it. Remember, Minnie, I'll stand your friend, when that fine golden sovereign that the Devil is going to give you, turns out to be ashes—an enchanted gift from the old Scratch always has to turn out worthless. You have heard of those things, little Miss Mystery, have'nt you?"

"What *do* you mean, Frederick?" said Minnie, at last, when she found herself able to say a word, in the ceaseless flow of his rattling talk.

"As if I had not been telling you for the last twenty minutes. I always tell what I mean; I am neither fable nor myth, but a plain man, at your service, who knows little of books, and a good deal of horses and men, with a kind heart under my vest, and a great desire to serve my poetical little sister, that is to be. Good bye, child—when you want me, you know where I keep myself;" and Fred was gone.

Minnie was plunged into a shoreless sea, before he came. She had begun to question her heart, and to rebel against her monotonous life. She had lived a little, for she had begun to love; but she had hardly dared acknowledge the facts of her existence to herself; indeed, she hardly dared take note of them.

She had dreamed of confiding in her friend Sarah, as of old, when she had nothing but hopes and dreams to tell. She had instinctively shrunk from unvailing her heart to one who had chosen her path, as Minnie felt, amongst dead forms, and killing sacrifices.

Sarah's letter determined her to "die and make no sign," rather than to speak to one who had condemned her unheard. The life she felt, but did not know, could never be frozen into decorous forms of duty, like her friend's. She had a living heart, full of love, and its aspiration—formless yet glorious, in good and beauty yet to be.

What a harp of wondrous power was that heart, if but the mas-

ter spirit could be found to strike its chords, and evoke its heavenly music !

A child of the light sat there in the sun, this cold, bright day, and held in her hand, and in her heart, the utterance of the Poet, Philosopher, and Euchaunter of Germany.

Frederick Sherwood's was a careless, but still kind hand to lay on that young head. How could such as he divine her spirit? He had not, and never could have the power to know the wise and loving depths of that young heart. But in his own careless and superficial, but kindly way, Fred loved Minnie, and wanted to be her brother, and her protector. There would have been much that was laughable in Fred's care, as in his character, had it not been too pitiable. For instance, he was sure that Minnie needed his wise protection, that she might not fall into the hands of "that heathen Ashton."

"Upon my soul," mused Fred, "that girl Minnie is no more fit to be trusted with herself, than a baby. She is so deucedly honest, that she can't lie, and so perverse and unchristian, that she must be posted up in all the heathen poets, and so sentimental that she will be likely to end in an elopement with Ashton, if they have money enough to pay the first toll on any road. Now Carrie is a woman to be trusted. Carries herself like that queen of the race course, Bill Brown's Juno—never frets at religion—goes to church like a Christian, cheats the *old uns* first rate and a half. Fine girl, that Carrie, and a knowing one. She'll manage me like a book, when she has me fairly bitted, and I'll take care of Minnie, and keep her out of trouble."

CHAPTER VII.

CHARLES ASHTON.

It is time to introduce Charles Ashton to our readers, and to give also some insight into the reason of young Sherwood's mysterious and oracular manner. In order to do this, we must first speak of Nelson Meadows, Minnie's eldest brother, who had lived for several years in New York.

It is difficult to tell the depths that are in human character—much more difficult truly and fully to daguerreotype a human soul, than many suppose. One act may be a key note to much of a character, and deficiency and radical unsoundness are more easily denoted than depths or comprehensiveness of goodness are discovered or recorded. Characters that are worth knowing, pass oftenest unknown. How are the unreflecting and the undeveloped to recognize and understand reflection and development that they have no part or lot in? No man, no woman, is ever known, unless through Love, and the wisdom that is born of it; though, it is true that great spirits have altars in many hearts, where they are but partially known. The altar that was inscribed "To the unknown God, whom ye ignorantly worship," is set up often in the world, and, to our praise be it spoken, that we worship, even if we worship ignorantly. It is good to be loved, instinctively and unknowingly, but O, how much better, how much worthier the holy life that the true-hearted forever seek, to be known and loved because of the knowledge!

Nelson Meadows was one of those pure spirits that the world of commerce cannot spoil. Not a great man; but a soul so appreciative that the wealth of other minds and hearts was, in a great measure his own—like the sunshine, the air, and the dew. He

loved poetry ; and yet a poem from his pen would have been a special miracle, that he and his friends would have regarded as an insanity. He loved, almost worshipped, eloquence ; and only the most hesitating utterance did a very partial justice to his thought and sentiment. A just and guileless man, he lived in the gifts of all the gifted. He was older than Frederick Sherwood ; still, as a boy, he had known him, and he remembered that Fred never went fishing, because he thought a hook a cruel thing in a fish's mouth. He never shot birds, for he said they were two-legged creatures, like himself, that he had no heart to hurt ; and as to bird's nesting, Fred said he had no fancy for broken bones, got by climbing trees, but that he had almost as lief break his bones, as the pretty blue and speckled eggs. Therefore, when Mr. Meadows learned that his eldest sister was to marry young Sherwood, he was very happy about it. And this brings us to young Ashton, who was from New York, and the *protege* of Meadows.

We have now come to a character that we should be very glad to have the owner describe, but as he is not here to do it, we must make the effort. We have heard much, during the last twenty-five years, of persons born before their time. Agitators and reformers, who ask for conditions that do not yet exist, are said to be born before their time. A man who asks freedom of locomotion in continental Europe, or the right of suffrage in Russia, or Austria ; or those married women in America, who ask the ownership of property that is theirs by acquisition or inheritance ; who ask, not to be freed from compulsory maternity, but that they may have a right to the children forced upon them by their "legal protectors," are all born before their time. But time moves, now, with a marvellous rapidity—a day, now, may be pregnant of as much as a thousand years of past laborious effort. Men and women who were born too soon, may take comfort—their hour is at hand. False rule, government by the despotism of one or many, are on trial at the bar of the individual conscience.

Charles Ashton was a character not so rare as at first may be imagined. He was too good for this world ; too natural and truth-

ful; too conscientiously rebellious against shams. Sham and formal piety; sham, effete, and embalmed science; sham moralism, and a sham literature and poetry—all were contrary to his conscience.

His father put him in college. He was to learn Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Divinity. His father was a clergyman, after the strictest sect a Pharisee, and he wished his black mantle to rest on his son, when he should go up to receive his reward. What a valuable and respectable inheritance it would be. The youth loved his mother. She was a gentle, tasteful woman, full of genuine beauty and goodness. Why should he not be an embodied answer to her prayers, and become a Rev., or a D.D.? If it depended on learning, Charles knew that he could do it, for he could learn the dictionary straight through from A to Izzard. If sermons were to be written, if they were only to be good stories, (what a mercy if they were!) why then the week would teem with far too large a fruitage for the Sunday's service. The boy went to college, gladly, hopefully. What letters he wrote to his mother!—reams of compositions and college exercises. At first, his father was pleased with the industrious attention, but poetry soon very frightfully preponderated, in his father's opinion. There was innate evidence, too, of an intimate acquaintance with that pure and blessed infidel, Shelley, and that glorious liberal, Byron; and it was evident that the wicked wit, the rustic beauty and witchery of Burns, and the beaming love-charm of Moore were not wanting in attractiveness to the young student.

The elder Mr. Ashton was alarmed. It was clear that his son was being seduced from the plain way of orthodox divinity into bye and forbidden, though flowery paths. He wrote him an earnest, affectionate, and most Christian letter. He recommended him to read again and again Pilgrim's Progress, Baxter's Saint's Rest, The Call to the Unconverted, by the same author, The Whole Duty of Man, Thomas a Kempis, and, at the close of the list, modestly alluded to a published volume of his own sermons.

"My son," said he, "saturate your soul with the truths of sacred learning, and beware of the *ignis fatuus* lights of a profane,

poetical literature, which dazzles and blinds, and ultimately destroys. Shun Shelley as you would one with the mark of Cain upon him—the wretched atheist, who was without God in the world, who was steeped to the lips in blasphemy, and whose death was a special judgment from the Most High. Byron is the Lucifer of poetry, as Bulwer is among novelists. Of Burns, I need only say that he is low and profane. Of Moore, no Gospel minister can think or speak fittingly. It is best to ignore him and his productions—to erase him from the mind entirely.

“I make no terms with the sinful crew of authors, to whom you are evidently giving your precious time. I not only ask, but I command you, in future, to confine your readings to works of piety and morality, and the college classics. You have not been always a dutiful son, but away from your home, where our watchful care cannot shield, I shall ask and expect implicit obedience. It is your only chance for happiness and usefulness; I therefore speak with authority, because the end will fully justify the means. I do not wish you to compose or send home any more poetry; confine yourself to studies more fitting to the sacred calling in which you are to engage, when you shall be qualified for the high trust.

“I am your affectionate father,

ELIHU ASHTON.”

“Letters from friends!” Magic words, everywhere! Who hath not felt the heart flutter, like a caged bird, and then again, full, even to bursting, it has seemed to stop, hushed into a mute, and terrible, or joyful anticipation? Who has not laid by the precious love-packet, saying, but not in word, or in thought, “It is joy enough that I have it—that I can keep it near me, its seal unbroken—its words unread—as the poet bathes his soul in the yet uncreated beauty that flows in upon him from Heaven, and out of which will come many-hued charms, and many-voiced glories.”

Not long is the love-packet thus preserved; not long do we ever sit in the ineffable sweetness of a love-silence, that eldest born of God! Soon we break the seal, and read, and live in a lower happiness, but one more congenial to our life in clay.

Young Ashton took his letter from home with an oppressive joy.

The gentle beauty of his mother shone in upon his heart, and the manly sternness of his father, which he had always *hoped* had great good in it, rose up before him. His mother's seal had pressed the wax, and he pressed it to his lips; rich, red, loving, manly lips were Charles Ashton's.

"My mother! my sweet mother!" thrilled through his life, as he hid the letter for a quiet time to read it.

Now if Frederick Sherwood had received such an epistle, in his college days, he would have exclaimed, in the classic flash of the set of "fast fellows" that he affected, "Now, here's a go."

In justice to Fred, be it said, he had never had any such well-meant inflictions, as Mr. Ashton's letter to his son. Fred's father had died of intemperance when his boy was too young to know him, or his faults. His mother had watched him, but she had never watched over him.

Young Ashton went to his room. He had the good luck to find his chum gone out. This was a great relief. No one to look on, and guess at the emotions which might pass like storm clouds, or linger like loving sunshine in his heart. He read through his father's letter, and bit his lip till the blood started. His eyes became brimful, and then overflowed, and the eloquent flush mantled over forehead and cheeks. "My father!" said he; "my God! is he my father?"

A page of gentle pleading followed, from his mother, written in her most delicate and womanly hand. She begged him, in all things, to obey the wishes of his father.

"He is wise, my dearest Charles," said she. "I do not doubt that he has kept me from great sorrow, by persuading me to give up my profane love of the poets. Ah, my son, the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. I was beginning to live over again all my early tastes and imaginings, in your letters. It was very wrong; and your father has come, like a ministering angel, to avert evil from us, my darling child. Let us be thankful to the Providence that has given him to us to watch over us. I am sure, my darling, you will, in all things, yield to the wishes of your father."

“That is what you have always done, mother, dear,” said Charles; you have submitted yourself to be an echo of all his harsh utterances, instead of making your own dear blessed music.”

Long the young man mused, and the fire burned in his heart—a fire that was quenchless, for it was lighted from the altar flame of genius. The doom of all tyrannies is decreed, when men begin to muse upon them, as such; to say, in their most living life, “this is a wrong, an injustice.” Like the tiny spring that begins the Nile, or the Father of Waters, it may seem that one tyrant might drink every drop, and yet remain athirst, but it is only a seeming. Drop by drop, the water is added, at first; a little more and a little more mingles, and a mighty flood rolls along the land, and bears floating homes upon its bosom. So of the growth of thought. Truth gathers slowly; at first, drop by drop is added to the living draught, that only the few seem privileged to drink. But the rains descend, the floods fall, and “many waters” becomes the only fitting synonym of the mighty truth that is bearing man onward to his destiny.

Charles Ashton determined to make an appeal to his father; to fearlessly show his own opinion of the maligned poets. He sat calmly down to his task. He was no fitful enthusiast, earnest to-day, and careless to-morrow. When his judgment was convinced, then his heart and conscience gave him an unconquerable purpose and perseverance.

It is but just that we should give his answer to his father's letter, as it elucidates his character; and, besides, we have given a large extract from the father's epistolary mandate.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHARLES ASHTON'S LETTER.

“MY DEAR FATHER :—I can do no justice to my heart or my understanding, without replying to your letter—your libel on my best and dearest friends, the poets. Pardon me if I seem disrespectful, I only mean to be honest.

“You ignore Moore. About him we will have no contest. The bloom on the peach, the delicate hues of the flowers, the love light in the eye of a beautiful being, may be of no worth to you. I can only lament your want of power to appreciate.

“The trumpet-toned dirge, beautiful and glorious, as it is sorrowful, of the ‘Harp that hung in Tara’s Halls,’ may be mere noise to you. The loving charm of a thought like that in the following verse may not be for you :—

‘O, if no other boon were given
To keep our hearts from wrong and stain,
Who would not try to win a Heaven,
Where all we love shall live again?’

Such a Heaven, and such motives to win it, are far in advance, in my view, of a sulphurous, flaming Hell, driving men to seek escape from torment they could not deserve, to a Heaven which is a purchased immunity from sin and its punishment.

“But I leave Moore, and his ‘perilous universalism.’ I confess that he is a sunbeam from Heaven across my way, but I can spare him. To live truly, even a hard and rugged life, is first. The charm of life comes after this. But I will not, can not spare Shelley. He is the Prophet Poet—the glorious hater of all human wrong, with a comprehensive and most analytic sight to see it; to detect it when most hidden from the common gaze; when closed under

the hatches of a false religious sentiment, of decorous custom, and of all human selfishness.

“Shelley was a man, so pure and true, that the light of Heaven shone through him as through a diamond.

“You call him Atheist. Who would not rather live Godless, through time and eternity, than to believe in such a God as men have made for themselves?

“It is true that Shelley describes your God, my father, as ‘a vengeful and Almighty Fiend.’ He renders your theology in terrible words, and true as terrible. He says of God and Moses:

‘These were Jehovah’s words:

From an eternity of Idleness, I, God, awoke;
 In seven days’ toil made earth
 From nothing; rested, and created man;
 I placed him in a Paradise, and there
 Planted the tree of evil, so that he
 Might eat and perish, and my soul procure
 Wherewith to sate its malice, and to turn,
 Even like a heartless conqueror of the earth,
 All misery to my fame. The race of men
 Chosen to my honor, with impunity
 May sate the lusts I planted in their heart.
 Here I command thee hence, to lead them on,
 Until, with hardened feet their conquering troops
 Wade on the promised soil, through woman’s blood,
 And make my name be dreaded through the land.’

“Awful and blasphemous as this may seem, is it not the God, and the ‘Holy’ Scriptures which you preach?

“According to your own creed which you expound from Sabbath to Sabbath, is not God the author of all souls? And has He not bound them, by inflexible decree, to sin and suffer eternally? Look at the facts of your theology. Who made the Hell of the Bible, and the sinners that are to be eternally tormented in its flames? in its lake which burns with fire and brimstone? Who, I ask, but the ‘Almighty Fiend, and vengeful as Almighty,’ which you call God, the Omnipotent?

“Omnipotent! Do you know what this word means? Does it not mean Almighty, all-powerful for good, as well as for evil? Is

an omnipotent Being obliged to make a burning Hell, and to create and devote his own offspring to its deathless maw of flame?

“Is it wonderful that the pure heart and Godlike intellect of Shelley should wish to blot out a name so dishonored by the creeds of ignorant and vindictive men, as the name of God is and has been? Is it strange that he should address the Divine Being, the Father of all, by other names? Hear him.

‘Spirit of Nature!

The pure diffusion of thy essence throbs

Alike in every human heart;

Thou aye erectest there

Thy throne of power unappealable.

* * * * *

Thine the tribunal, which surpasseth

The show of human justice,

As God surpasseth man.’

“Are these the thoughts and words of an atheist? I do not expect you to read Shelley, or to do him any justice, or to excuse any intemperance of his feeling, or his expression. But my soul would eat itself as a canker, if I did not speak of him as one of the purest and clearest-seeing of all God’s prophets.

“To judge justly of this man, we must be sufficiently emancipated from prejudice to be capable of justice. When he wrote the poem for which he was made an outlaw, and finally driven into banishment from his native land, he was not far from eighteen years of age. I do not adduce this fact as an excuse for his errors of thought or action, but I rather bring it forward as a reason for the true heroism and clear sight of truths which abound in this poem. His life was young, strong, and innocent—so little corrupted by the falsehoods and expedencies of the world, that he saw truth, and dared to speak it.

“This young man, who has been presented to the world as an incarnation of crime, and false doctrines, was gentle, loving, truthful, temperate to asceticism. Water was his only drink; fruits and farinacea his only food. In a note to Queen Mab, the poem which has stamped him, in the eyes of Christians, with an indelible curse, we find this language:

“ ‘Crime is madness—madness is disease. Whenever the cause of disease shall be discovered, the root from which all vice and misery, which have so long overshadowed the world, will lie bare to the axe—all the exertions of man, from that moment, may be considered as tending to the clear profit of his species. No sane mind, in a sane body, resolves upon a real crime. It is a man of violent passions, of blood, and hot eyes, and swollen veins, that alone can grasp the knife of murder.

“ ‘Should ever a physician be born with the genius of a Locke, I am persuaded he might trace all bodily and mental derangements to our unnatural habits, as clearly as that philosopher has traced knowledge to sensation. What prolific sources of disease are not those mineral and vegetable poisons, that have been introduced for its extirpation? How many thousands have become murderers and robbers, bigots and domestic tyrants, dissolute and abandoned adventurers, from the use of fermented liquors, who, had they slaked their thirst only with pure water, would have lived to diffuse the happiness of their own unperverted feelings! How many groundless opinions, and absurd institutions have received a general sanction from the sottishness, and the intemperance of individuals! Who will assert that had the population of Paris satisfied their hunger at the ever-furnished table of vegetable nature, they would have lent their brutal suffrage to the proscriptive list of Robespierre? Could a set of men whose passions were not perverted by unnatural stimuli, look with coolness upon an *auto de fe*? Is it to be believed that a being of gentle feelings, rising from his meal of roots, would take delight in sports of blood? Was Nero a man of temperate life? * * * *

“ ‘The desire of tyranny could scarcely be excited in the individual, the power to tyrannize would certainly not be delegated, by a society neither frenzied by inebriation, nor rendered impotent and irrational by disease.’

“ ‘It may be useless, and even worse, for me to quote from one who is to me ‘the mild, yet high apostle.’ His greatest fault seems to have been his excess of faith. He believed that man could be suddenly redeemed, and he acted upon his faith. He

cast his pearls before swine, who were obliged to turn and rend him. More I will not say of Shelley. Less I could not have said, and retain my own self-respect.

"I may be urged into intemperance of expression, at times, against wrong, and in favor of Truth, and Truth-seers. But I shall have no greater sin of my own choosing than this.

"You shall see me a just and true man, my father; one who has a right to claim something at the hand of a just God, beside everlasting burnings. But I must reflect that according to your creed, my merit, or demerit is nothing in the face of the Eternal Decrees, that predestine some to shame and sorrow, and some to joy and glory. Good deeds, you say, are filthy rags—Faith is all, and that too fails to do any good, if you are not of the elect.

"I am continually asking myself, if my father believes the absurdities he preaches. If you do, where did I get my common-sense, and my ceaseless protest against them? If you preach lies for money, where did I get my moral nature, and my abhorrence of fraud and wrong?

"I have made this letter so long, that I shall consider the claims of Byron and Burns in my next, and perhaps speak of Bulwer—though I think I shall retain this letter to send with my next, lest you should refuse to read that, after taking time to consider. It is only just that you should read my letters, for I have read yours with many tears; and with a heart full of love to you, I plead for the Truth, which is dearer to me than Life.

"O my father! my father!

"Yours ever,

CHARLES ASHTON.

"P. S.—I have concluded to spare you all further remarks on the Poets. Your thoughts are not my thoughts, your loves are not mine. It is useless to repine at Fate. I regret nothing that I have written in this letter, but I see it will be useless to you. It is worthful to me that I have done a duty. C. A."

CHAPTER III.

DIGGING FOR MONEY.

FOR the benefit of those who may be instructed by the experiences of others, I desire to give a perfectly frank statement of the facts connected with my initiation into the mysteries of Spiritualism, even where such facts may give no favorable impression of my wisdom. I do not claim to be wise—only to be honest; and, as far as my memory serves, I shall give all important, and what many will doubtless think, unimportant particulars.

Soon after the fact of my being a Medium had become known, in the neighborhood where I resided, I was urged to visit a house which had the reputation of being "haunted." There are such houses, it is well known, in all sections of this country, and I believe in all civilized regions; where strange noises are heard, or lights seen, or shadowy ghosts display themselves. There are probably dozens of such houses, even in the crowded city of New York, the inmates of which have seen or heard terrible things.

Interested in what seemed to me a mission, to be an interpreter to men of the revelations of the Spirit Life, I complied with the request to visit this house; and on my arrival, I placed my hands upon a barrel, which happened to be there, in the same manner that I commonly place them upon a table "in circle."

The barrel commenced to move about, with great violence; sounds were heard, as if large stones were thrown about, in various directions; and, to the great consternation of those present, lights appeared, without apparent cause. But, in spite of these alarming manifestations, I persevered in the attempt to get some intelligible communication. I soon received one, purporting to come from the spirit of a little girl, who said she had been murdered, in

this house, thirty years before, by being starved to death. She said further, that we must dig under a certain tree, which was indicated, and that at three and a half feet from the surface we should find a pot of money, amounting to ten thousand dollars. This statement ought to have thrown discredit on the whole story. But to most minds, money has a peculiar charm. The persons assembled were very much excited, and wished to proceed at once to the interesting investigation ; but before operations for securing the money were commenced, the sounds and movements in the house became of such a frightful character, as to entirely overcome my courage, and I jumped from the window, while the rest of the party made a precipitate retreat in various directions.

But, frightened as we had been at the manifestations in the haunted house, we did not forget the story of the murdered girl. Immediately, and with great energy, we began to dig under the tree. At the depth of two feet we came to water, but, nothing daunted, we dug away, until nearly two o'clock in the morning, having, meantime, been encouraged to perseverance by another communication.

We explored all around beneath the tree, to the required depth, but no money ! So intense had become the excitement of our acquisitiveness by this time, that, forgetting our recent fright, we resolved to return to the haunted house for further directions. But as we approached the scene of our recent terrors, not even the hope of finding the pot of gold, could induce us to enter the house at this late hour. We then thought of a neighboring school-house, and concluded to use that for our consultation.

Arrived there, I laid my hand upon a globe, to obtain the movements, when a communication, spelled out by the alphabet, told us to dig one foot deeper. With lightened hearts we returned to our labor, but day dawned without bringing any reward ; and we gave up the task, wearied with our exertions and mortified at our discomfiture.

Whether the others received any compensation for this night's work, I do not know ; but to me it has proved of great importance, and has probably saved me from becoming the victim of

more serious deceptions. Its objects have since been explained to me ; and I have in several instances been made the instrument of similar deceptive communications, which have appeared to have been adapted to some condition of the inquirer.

False information is sometimes given, and that of a most startling character. Thus, a skeptical young man, full of notions of collusion, or deception of some kind, and believing that he had science enough to detect and expose the imposture, came to my room, with several of his friends ; and one of the first messages received purported to be from his father, whom he had left a day or two before, in health, hundreds of miles distant, announcing that he was dead ; had died one hour before, of cholera, with such particulars as seemed to prove the identity of the communicating spirit.

The young man was an entire stranger to me—it was evident to him that I could have no interest, if he could imagine me to have the power, to impose upon him a story which another day would prove false, and yet he saw that if true, no mortal could have communicated the fact ; while, if false, there was still needed an intelligent cause for such a phenomenon. The story was false ; its object was afterwards explained—and the effect was to make a stronger impression, perhaps, than any truthful communication whatever.

These deceptions, though not very frequent in my experience, have yet happened often enough to put me on my guard. As every visitor may bring or summon spirits of his own order, I have learned to be simply the passive medium of all communications, trusting to my guardian spirits to protect me from harm to myself, and from being made the instrument of mischief to others.

Why spirits, who very evidently possess superior conditions for obtaining intelligence, do not enter more into the worldly affairs of men, is a question that perplexes our philosophers. They would have them tell us where to find or how to make money ; engage them to bring foreign news in advance of the steamers ; and invent machinery to enable capital to prey on industry. The spirits have thus far, apparently, declined to enter, to any considerable extent, on such speculations. How much influence spiritual impressions

and monitions may have, in such matters, it is difficult to decide. Many persons believe themselves to be guided by such impressions ; others have appeared to receive important advice and suggestions, in business affairs, by spiritual communications ; while others have been led a wild goose chase, as in the haunted house and the pot of money.

Is it strange that those who seek spiritual communications in a selfish and mercenary spirit, should be disappointed ? Is it likely that good spirits will aid men in business speculations, which are often little better than schemes to rob others and enrich themselves ? Spirits, it is thought, might reveal to us principles and facts in science ; aid us in important inventions ; or discover to us sources of hidden wealth. We do not know how much they have already done and are doing in this way—how much of genius in literature, science, art, or invention is due to their inspirations ; nor can we doubt that wisdom will come to men from the higher spheres, just as fast as they are prepared for its influx, by a true life ; and we may expect, also, that spiritual riches will be accompanied by their material correspondences.

There are few Spiritualists who have not received similar lessons of caution, not to be misled into errors and follies by such manifestations. We are taught that all the evils, mistakes, and sufferings of life, are for our good ; why, then, may not even friendly and truthful spirits sometimes give us such lessons ?

At the same time, I have observed that the truly honest and sincere, are always protected from any real harm by these manifestations. In the case of "money diggers," there is always a morbid excitement of acquisitiveness, amounting to covetousness or greed of gain ; and it is proverbial, that suddenly and easily acquired wealth is seldom a benefit to its possessors.

CHAPTER IV

MY DEVELOPMENT AS A MEDIUM.

Soon after the events related in the last chapter, my business called me to the city of New York ; where, in obedience to spiritual directions, I passed my evenings, for about three months, in sitting in a circle with two mediums. This was for the purpose of development, as it is called ; a gradual and unconscious fitting of the spiritual element of the individual, to become the medium of impressions, or the instrument of spiritual action.

How this process is accomplished it may not be easy to explain, but many analogies in physics and chemistry will occur to the scientific reader. The blade of a knife, brought into contact with a magnet, becomes magnetic. Proximity or contact conduces often to similarity of condition. We know too many facts respecting the subtle, and powerful influence of what is called animal magnetism, to doubt that qualities of being, and mode of action may be communicated. There is a popular and well founded idea that good and bad associations influence us, independently of any ideas acquired by ordinary means. The mere presence of a bad man is an evil—the good diffuse around them an aroma of goodness, as the flowers diffuse their odors. My life came imperceptibly into a more regular, orderly, and harmonious condition, and more regularly and habitually susceptible of spiritual influx.

When I had become developed into a consciousness of this medial character, and some confidence in my mission, an apparent accident gave me an opportunity of offering some testimony to the public. Passing a hall, at the corner of Lispenard street and Broadway, I saw a transparency at the entrance, announcing "Spiritual Manifestations," and was impressed to enter. I obeyed

the monition. Confusion reigned. The audience assembled, dissatisfied with the manifestations that had been exhibited, jeered and mocked aloud. Never did the subject of Spiritualism seem so dear to me, as then. I was moved to offer my own services as a medium, assured that the manifestations of spirit force and intelligence through me, would dispel all doubt.

Accordingly, I went to the proprietor of the room and offered my services, which were readily accepted. I seated myself at the table, and it moved, and the questions of those near it were freely, rapidly, and satisfactorily answered. Order was immediately restored, and those who had mocked, now watched the questionings and responses with a deep and excited interest. I continued to sit for these manifestations for several weeks, without remuneration, and also gave much time to private circles elsewhere.

It was during the anxiety on my part to understand more clearly than I then did the modes and purposes of spirit communication, that I visited the distinguished medium, Mrs. Brown. I know not how many times I went there—perhaps it might have been twenty—but invariably nothing satisfactory was given to me, while others were surprised and gratified. I received nothing more than “not now,” or “some other time,” to all my inquiries. This was exceedingly perplexing to me, and cost me in time and money much more than I could afford. Yet I persevered—for the investigation of truth, when once commenced, is not easily relinquished. Finally, one evening, at Mrs. Brown’s, I received a communication by the alphabet, in these words :

“My son, thou hast not played thy part well. When thy minister and brethren smote thee on the right cheek, and set a mark on thy forehead, thou shouldst have bared thy bosom also, and permitted them to know that an honest man feareth not death.

“GEORGE FOX.”

This astonished me ; but as I was not the son of any person by the name of Fox, I was not satisfied, and felt some discontent, inquiring who it was. To which the reply came, as follows :

“John, be candid, and accept a word from thy friend, for there

is a new song about to be put in thy mouth, whose echoes will vibrate sweetly through the souls of men."

Directions were then given me to sit for the purpose of developing myself as a medium, and the communicator asserted that he would be a father, brother, friend, everything to me, that I might desire. This was done to make me easy with respect to those sacrifices which every Spiritualist is called to make in these days, for the truth—when for its sake relatives must be held inferior in importance to those grand relations of truth and love which bind man to his Creator. The communicating spirit subsequently was ascertained to be George Fox, the celebrated Quaker; and through many trials I have had wise counsel from him, and he has proved, indeed, to be all that could be desired, and even more to me than he promised. In the many difficulties which are liable to occur at public circles, I have seldom failed to receive his assistance, and he usually enables me to disarm very powerful sceptics.

Up to this time, I had never made any charge for my services, and was much averse to doing so, fearing the imputation of mercenary motives, when my only conscious desires were to seek and find the great truths of immortality, and to aid others in their investigations. But, besides giving all my leisure time, business hours were often trespassed upon; and I felt the necessity of giving more attention to the requirements of my family. I finally compromised, by devoting all my time to my medial office, leaving those who might be benefitted to make me such contribution or compensation as they thought proper.

This plan was, at that time, a total failure. I persisted, until I found that those who wished to attribute to me unworthy motives were never at a loss to do so; while candid and well-meaning people were often thoughtless of justice, and seemed quite unconscious of the fact that I could not give them my time without an equivalent. While some would not hesitate to occupy hours of my time, without a thought of remuneration, acting as if they had done me a favor by consenting to investigate a subject, which, it seemed to me, ought to be of quite as much interest to them as to me, oth-

ers did not hesitate to say that a man must be insane, who would sacrifice his time, as I was doing.

On consideration, and consultation with my guardian spirits, I therefore resolved to use such discretion as the circumstances demanded: to fix upon a moderate price for those who came to public circles, and a fair compensation for time spent in private ones; and in this way I was able to support my family, and to defray the cost of keeping open a room, in a central, and therefore expensive locality, for public use. But at no time, even when giving ten or twelve hours a day to public or private circles, was this compensation considerable. I was anxious to give every visitor the utmost latitude of investigation, and to have them fully satisfied with the result. With awkward questionings, and needless repetitions, and trivialities, much time was consumed; and the methods, adapted to the condition of inquirers, were slow. Still, every day and hour gave convincing tests, to all who had the candor or discernment to perceive them, of the reality of the GREAT FACT, that *spirits exist, and can, and do communicate with men.*

In this work I have needed great patience; and it has been given to me according to my needs. My own experience has made me sympathize with those who are untrusting and slow of belief; for it was a full year before I could believe that they were really spirits, who caused the manifestations of which I was the medium; and it was another year before I was satisfied that they were good spirits, and not evil. But in process of time, and by multiplied evidences, my first doubt was removed; and I have come to confide in the benevolence of my guardians, who have been so patient and long-suffering with me, that I may well be charitable to the weakness and incredulity of others.

CHAPTER V.

TEST MANIFESTATIONS.

I have been called a Test Medium, because my work has been almost exclusively that of giving persons their first convincing evidences of the immortal truths of spirit life and intercourse—a humble mission, but one which seems to be the basis of development, and the first step in spiritual progress. Before people can accept of the wisdom ready to flow into the minds of men from the spirit world, they must believe that spirits exist. And when their existence is tacitly admitted, as men admit the dogmas of religious creeds, without any vital and practical faith, their power to communicate with men in the form must be demonstrated.

I will therefore give, at this stage of my narrative, some account of the nature and character of the tests, of which I have been the medium to thousands of believers—a statement of facts, which can be verified, if there were need, by “a cloud of witnesses.” Facts of a similar character have now become so common, that they are no longer denied by any intelligent person. Those who do not believe that they are the result of spirit agency, resort to various hypotheses, which, upon examination, only complicate the difficulty.

Of these hypotheses, there are two principal ones, which may properly be here adverted to.

The one insisted upon by orthodox theologians is that they are diabolic, or the work of Satan or the devil. This is an admission of spiritual agency, but the assertion that it is in all cases an evil spirit—the devil or devils.

“Try the spirits.” If all who come to us are bad, why should we try them? “By their fruits shall ye know them.” If heavenly

wisdom, divine consolations, holy love, and admonitions to live a pure and heavenly life, can come from Satan; if good can come of the personification of evil, then may spiritual communications be Satanic, and these "airs from heaven" be "blasts from hell." To my humble apprehension, the only thing diabolic about them is such a suggestion as this.

The other theory is that these manifestations are produced by an involuntary and unconscious exercise of some latent power in the medium, by which he produces rappings, crashing noises, the movement of furniture, and the whole class of physical manifestations, as well as the phenomena of intelligent responses, communications, identification of deceased persons, and the thousand elements which enter into all classes of spiritual communications.

The credulity which can believe in the existence of such a latent and unconscious power is marvelous. I have no conception of the power, or of the capacity to believe in its existence. The latent and unconscious power must be uniformly depraved into a shocking dishonesty, for in no case has it ever admitted its own existence, or attributed to itself the wonders it has wrought. Of the thousands of mediums possessing this supposed power or intelligent force, there is no one who has ever owned it in themselves, or charged deception in this respect upon others. The uniform testimony of the acting and intelligent force is that it is spiritual. May we not admit that it knows, quite as well as we do, whether it resides unconsciously in the back of the medium's brain?

But I will proceed to the facts. Among the first which I particularly observed and noted as memorable, was one of so convincing a character as not readily to be explained by any of the theories which have been brought forward to prove the mundane or Satanic origin of these interesting phenomena. A stranger called on me one evening, and taking his seat, before he had asked any questions, the alphabet was called for by the customary sign, and the annexed sentence was given, the stranger being addressed by his name:

"John, your mother is well and happy. It will be necessary

for you to go to Boston. To prove that I am the spirit of Julia, I give you a test."

Here two questions which the gentleman had in his pocket, and which had been prepared to test the spirits with, were spelled out, as may be imagined, much to his astonishment. The gentleman then asked if his mother was not sick. To this question he could obtain no reply. Indeed, he could get no direction, except to proceed to Boston. As his business could afford him a proper motive for his departure, he went the next day; and when he arrived in Boston, he found that his mother was not sick, and was happy—for she had passed into the spirit world on the very day that he had sought this communication.

In a few days the same gentleman came a second time to my rooms, and before he told me anything, received the annexed communication, in reply to the mental inquiry if his family were all well:

"No, your child is ill, and will not recover."

On receiving this, he inquired how long the child would be ill. The reply was "six days." In the sequel, it appeared that the child had been taken ill on that same day, and at the end of the sixth day it passed into the spirit world.

I now remember another case of an interesting character. Mr. H., a gentleman of New Orleans, who had never seen me prior to his visit, called. At his first interview with spirits, which took place at my table, a spirit, purporting to be that of his wife, communicated, and addressed him by a familiar nick-name, saying, "E. and H., our children, have been taken by you to the Museum. It is nearly out. You had better go for them." She stated that she was always with him, and that she was happy that he was investigating this subject.

At another time, a gentleman called, and inquired if a certain spirit who had never communicated with him, would do him that favor. My hand was violently seized, and wrote—

"My dear husband, brother, friend, all—I have not forgotten you, though death, as you term it, has divided us. I am ever with you, and will ever guide and watch over you, and will be one of the first to receive you as a spirit.

M. E. C."

I hesitated about reading it, though positive that this was done by a power foreign to my own volition. However, knowing that I was not responsible for the result, I read it aloud. The gentleman was thunderstruck. The whole name, of which the initials only are given above, was signed to the communication ; and, on inquiry, it was found that this gentleman had been engaged to be married, that the day was appointed, but that the earthly dissolution interrupted the event. Hence, the peculiar manner in which this gentleman had been saluted. Dr. Gray, the celebrated homeopathist, was present at this time.

These were some of my earliest experiences in the field of spiritual communications ; but though they were exceedingly satisfactory, I did not deem that my part of the work had been perfect. Nothing valuable can be obtained except by labor ; and I obeyed my spiritual directors, by complying with their request that I would sit for development. Accordingly, every evening, from six to seven o'clock, I sat alone to receive such influences as might be conveyed to my mind and physical constitution. Nothing occurred for two or three sittings. I had no manifestations, but soon after, peculiar sensations accompanied these solitary sessions. In the progress of them, I was often touched by invisible tangibilities, and obtained a number of responses, which encouraged me to proceed with the work in which I was willing to be engaged, provided I received satisfactory assurances that I could be as useful to society in this new vocation as in any other that I might have the ability to pursue.

For Nichols' Monthly.

A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE.

BY MRS. E. M. GUTHRIE.

I SEE them coming in their might,
 With trophies from the battle-field,
 Those veterans in the war of right,
 With Truth their weapon, Faith their shield.
 I see the sad dark lines of woe
 That stretched so far along the plains,
 Fade, as the moonlight shadows go,
 When sunrise in its glory reigns.
 I see the SLAVE arise a MAN,
 And sink his fetters in the sea ;
 And in dim distance now I scan
 The mass of sad humanity,
 Rising like dead men from their graves,
 In one harmonious brotherhood ;
 For peacefully above them waves
 The tree of knowledge, pure and good.
 And lo ! I see highways of thought,
 Linking the earth unto the skies—
 A vital path by lightnings wrought,
 On which our prayers and wishes rise :
 I see the earth, this " vale of tears,"
 Transformed into a blest abode,
 And sighs, and sorrows, groans, and fears,
 All buried 'neath the blooming sod.

Hark ! Now I hear a joyous sound,
 Like that which roused creation's birth—
 And winds, and skies, and stars resound
 The anthem swelling from the earth.
 Beings all glorious walk the sod,
 With souls devout and hearts unstained
 They rear the image of their God,
 And dwell in PARADISE REGAINED.

THE PROGRESSIVE UNION.

SECOND REPORT OF THE CENTRAL BUREAU

THE selection of a monthly magazine (NICHOLS' MONTHLY,) as the Organ of this society, and a medium of periodical communication with all its members, gives us the opportunity of making frequent reports of its progress, in principles and operations.

The first printed list of the affiliated members of the Union, is now in the hands of every *full* member. It will be seen that we are widely scattered over the country, in little groups, and single individuals. We have not had the means of giving desirable publicity to the fact of this organization. But the seed is sown, and it must germinate and grow by its own inherent vitality. Every member, who is truly a member of this body, will aid in its increase. Here is something to work in, and labor for. Let it be the duty and happiness of each one to seek out among his friends and acquaintances, those who may be ready for a move forward, toward the realization of a Harmonic Society. Let each one feel that he is a center, which may radiate the light of intelligence and the warmth of love.

The Babel of discordant experiments in which we have lived, and labored, and suffered, must be resolved into the Harmony of a true and heavenly life. The Life of the Heavens could not come down to us, until we were prepared to receive it. The transition from discord to harmony; from the robberies and oppressions of civilization, is through the phase of Individual Sovereignty; because there must be individuality before there can be harmony.

MR. WARREN was the medium of this Gospel. His mission has been to sever, to divide, to take men out of false relations; to teach the laws of individual liberty and equity. His maxims are all true, for the time and the transition. The old Bastille was to be torn down; its bricks and stones separated, and cleared of the adhering mortar, before they could be fit to take their place in the edifice of Freedom.

"Individual Sovereignty" is a true principle; but it is entirely

consistent with the most beautiful social harmony, and can only be realized in a harmonic society.

"The Sovereignty of the Individual to be maintained at his own cost," is the law of severance and isolation. It is the protest against, and escape from, galling despotisms. But, socially, we cannot be free at our own cost. "We are all members one of another." Isolation is not freedom. No one can bear his own cost; yet the rule is good for the conditions to which it is adapted. In the Freedom of Harmony each one's Individual Sovereignty is his own gain, and the gain and good of all.

So "Cost the Limit of Price," and the principle of equity in trade, is good for the transition out of the prevailing system of universal robbery: but in the Harmonic Life, to which we tend, and which is our eternal destiny, this will not be the law, but all will give according to their capacities, and take according to their needs, of all goods, spiritual and material. Those who can give most will be most glorious; those who can receive most will enjoy most happiness.

This radiation of love, and all its goods, from material riches, to spiritual blessings, will be like the radiation of heat by physical bodies. Everything in nature radiates, according to what it has, and receives as it needs, with a tendency to equilibrium; while the sun pours down his treasures on all.

As the blood circulates freely in a healthy human body, carrying needed goods to every organ; so in a healthy society there will be a free circulation of loving life, which shall enliven, invigorate, beautify and bless, in all things, from inmost to outmost.

In such a society, the health of each member would be sustained by the loving magnetism of those with whom he was grouped. Each one would seek the good of all; and all would contribute to the happiness of each.

We have not overrated the importance of freedom from all bonds, spiritual and material, as the absolute condition of entering upon the Life of Harmony. There is a loving communism, entirely consistent with equity and freedom. Freedom is its condition, for it a true organism, all action is spontaneous and from attraction. Equity or equilibrium is its law, in all transactions, from the exchange of material goods, to the communion of spiritual delights.

We who are truly prepared for a Harmonic Society, unite in groups of individuals. All who can accept of the Laws given to us from the Heavenly Unity, which we are to re-present in the earth; which now, in the fullness of time, is ready to be given to humanity; all who, in good faith, and with an earnest zeal, are ready to devote their lives to the realization of a Harmonic Life,

will group around the centers to which they may feel drawn, in the formation of Harmonic Homes. These homes, the residences of families, not naturally and discordantly, but truly and spiritually related, will be more or less pure and perfect, as the individuals composing them work to the square, by the laws which have been given us from our pattern society, made of loving groups in the Harmony of the Heavens.

Let these homes, in order, in purity, in riches, and beauty, be worthy of angel guests, who may come and dwell with us, making earth a new Eden, and each life a song of praise.

No disorderly person; no selfish egotist; no sensual self-seeker; no unclean thing can enter upon a heavenly life here or hereafter. Heaven is not a place, but a condition. Its joys are for the true and the good.

We give the following Principles and Laws as they were given to us. They purport to emanate from a society of Heavenly Intelligences, living in the Harmony of the Spirit Life. In giving them to those who are prepared to receive them, we do simply as we are commanded; but we act none the less in full accordance with our Individual volition. We accept these Principles, Analogies, and Laws cheerfully and joyfully. They bring no sacrifice, but so accord with our inmost sense of right and wisdom, that we could not reject them. All who can so accept them, are ready to find their places in a Harmonic Life, and are worthy of the name of Harmonists.

THE HARMONIC SOCIETY.

A true human society is an organized being, like the organized beings of the vegetable and animal kingdoms. All living things are made up of living parts, and these, of living atoms. In each atom is a presiding spirit or force, which is elective by its attractions and repulsions. When atoms have formed a part or organ of a body, there is then formed of the united spirits or forces of these atoms, the spirit or soul of the organ, by which it performs its function and maintains its relation to all other organs.

In the same way the united organs form the entire organism of tree or man, and the grand unity of organic forces, or spirits, forms the Human Organization, spiritual and material.

The tree grows from its microscopic and almost infinitesimal germ, by the addition of atoms, as they are required, and by the law of harmonious nutritive attraction. The first organs formed are those most needed—those which are perfective and progenitive are last brought to maturity. The same law rules in the animal

world. The human body is built up, atom by atom, and organ by organ. In the formation of a human society, there must be the same process. The societies that men have tried to form by discordant aggregations—by the mere bringing together of individuals, without order or harmony, have produced, either lifeless effigies of society, or monsters which are the types of artificial societies, and true analogues of civilization.

The Harmonic Society, like the tree, or animal, must be the result of a healthy growth, more or less rapid, according to the supply of the nutritive elements—that is, of the individuals proper to enter into such a growth. It must begin with the germ, whose vitality must be the result of the unity of the masculine and feminine principles. From this union, and in harmony with it, will come the attraction of other individuals, who will surround the united germ, and form the first group of the new being, the nucleus of heart and brain; and the needs of these organs will be the attraction, and force, which will gradually form the whole social body, which must be complete, and contain in itself all parts and organs.

There must be, first of all, complete unity in the germinating forces. The first additions must be elective, and they are presided over by the feminine principle. It must be this which selects. The heart must be formed before the brain, then the brain, or nerve power, oversees the formation of the locomotive organs, and the apparatus of sensation and volition; the heart-life, or spirit, controls the internal or nutritive functions and organs, and the harmonious society is formed by their harmonious action.

In a society, in its early formation, matter not yet needed, is a hindrance to growth. Nature protects with great care, secrecy, darkness—with impenetrable shells, or hidden wombs, the germs of organic beings. So the processes of maturity, are not to be performed in the germinal or infantile stages. There must be growth, and full formation in the tree, before flowers and fruitage. The Human Body must be formed, and matured, before the faculties of Amativeness and Philoprogenitiveness can be normally active.

In a society also, there must be a certain maturity, before the functions of love and maternity are in order. When the tree is grown, deep rooted, and with spreading branches, it will cover itself with blossoms.

The love of the germinal society, is the attraction and union of individuals in loving groups, which must unite to form the harmonic body. This union is to be loving—a blending of souls; a tuning and harmonization; but not the reckless and untimely gra-

tification of a life not yet in order, but exhaustive, and tending to poverty and discordance.

LAW OF PROGRESSION IN HARMONY.

THE LAW OF SEXUAL RELATION.

Material union is only to be had when the Integral Wisdom of the Harmony demands a child.

The Wisdom of the Harmony is always consistent with the most entire Individual Freedom.

In the Law of Progress in Harmony slight exceptions must come; *but the first workers must work to the line of the square.*

[Preserve and give these Laws with more care and joy than gems, or fine gold—than all earthly riches.]

LAW OF PROGRESS IN PASSIONAL HARMONY.

Give from all Faculties to all Faculties.

(If any make objection that you do not give amatively, without the culminating act of the passion, his life is too natural for our uses, and he must be given up to himself, and the movement of Experiment.)

We thus exclude from you and us the Natural Good, which is Spiritual Evil.

We give you the Law of Progression, which shall ensure you peace and plenty.

O Friends! the Golden Key is now in your hands. Unlock the Treasures of Life.

We pour not into bottomless vessels. We cannot help you spiritually by influx, for waste, which selfish, partial and inharmonic gratification is. Infinite Individualities, with their Infinite Unities or Generalities, are provided for in the Infinite Law of Progression.

Each Harmony, in divisibility and unity, has Law according to all requirements. We give the Law for Harmonists, not for Experimentalists. Do not mistake us or yourselves. We offer you the conditions of wealth in all things, from inmost to outmost.

Our and your attraction, which will be identical, when this wealth is attained, will determine all its uses.

You are Harmonists. This is your world designation. You are now distinguished from the Experimentalists. You have no battle to fight; but simply to keep your stand-point, and let the Heavens flow into your spirits, and the heavenly of earth come to you by

the law of likeness. You will do well to accept our names for you, and for the Individualists, falsely so called; for no one is an Individual, who is not fitted for Harmony; consequently Harmonists are the only Individuals; nevertheless, stones are not a building, though they are fitted for it.

Given in Circle, June 18, 1855.

Those of our readers who have arrived at a state of spiritual perception, will not fail to recognize the source from whence these Laws have emanated. They are not to be imposed on any—they are not to be accepted by any, with whose most sacred life they are not in harmony. Those who have access to reliable mediums, of a simply passive character, or who are in habitual intercourse with intelligent spirits, may do well to consult with their spirit friends; but those who can accept will do so—while those who cannot accept and live this life, must—wait.

Friends, and Brethren in Humanity! We perform our duty in giving as we receive of the Heavenly Wisdom. Step by step we have done our work, with an unfaltering trust, led and upheld by powers, not always unseen, nor often unfelt.

See now, what duty you have to do; and see that you do it.

The Pamphlet, containing the Principles, Objects, and Organization of the Progressive Union, will be sent to any person wishing to give them examination, on receipt of a stamp, with the address, by the Secretary. A package of eight ounces, a dozen or more, sent, pre-paid, for twenty-five cents. The reports may also be had in separate tracts, for a wider circulation.

Members of the Union, who have a true devotion to its principles and objects, will labor industriously to bring them to the knowledge of all persons, likely to be of value in such an organization. It is expected that every member of the Union will have access to NICHOLS' MONTHLY, and will endeavor to increase its circulation. It is hoped, also, that every reader of the MONTHLY may become an active member of the Progressive Union, and participate in the Social Harmony it seeks to inaugurate.

J. L. Nichols

NEW YORK, July, 1855.

THE LAW OF DIVORCE.

[We copy the following article from *Diogenes*, an English paper, the rival of *Punch*, but more bold and radical in its opinions. In the next ten years, we may expect to see social questions thoroughly discussed in that country.]

THAT the laws respecting divorce demand a speedy reconstruction, few who know much of the various grades of English society will venture to deny. The ceremony of marriage, says Goethe, "is the blessing of Heaven to the blessing of earth." And in the majority of cases we believe the philosopher to be right; but it is the duty of our law-makers to legislate for all; and that law which places divorce within the grasp of the rich, and removes it beyond even the hope of the poor, is both unjust and cruel, and is, moreover, dangerous to the community at large in its mischievous results.

We have most of us read the story of Stephen Blackpool—the story of a hard-working, right-minded man, chained for life to a degraded being, whose presence pollutes his home, whose drunken waste brings famine to his threshold, and whose companionship, if endured, would go far to destroy his mind—and all this because the mole-eyed legislators have the audacity to refuse what, above all other things, the people have a right to demand, viz., to be placed, in this one matter at least, upon an equality with the rich, and, upon showing sufficient cause, receive a liberation—from otherwise a life of misery—in the shape of a cheap divorce. But we need not refer our readers to the pages of Mr. Charles Dickens for an instance; besides, there are many of the "unco gude" who would scout an example taken from a work of fiction. We will refer them to the daily reports of the police-courts—to the thousand-and-one tragedies of real life which crowd the columns of our newspapers—and there they will find how easy it is for an ill-assorted pair to light the fires of hell on the domestic hearth, and how eyes, once soft as moonlight, can blaze and sparkle with lightning as deadly as that which shatters the tree and sears the bosom of the earth.

It is by no means an uncommon thing for zealous clergymen to send round among the poor, and offer upon a certain day to unite,

free of expense, such couples as shall present themselves. Often more than a hundred have been married in this manner in a single day. "We do it," say the clergymen, "in order to induce those who have been before living in shame, to take the blessed title of husband and wife." Now there is no one, we assert, who has been in the habit of reading these papers, who will accuse the Ragged Philosopher of having in any one instance penned a line in defense of an immorality—yet in the case just quoted we do not hesitate to declare that the remedy is worse than the disease. Hasty marriages are at all times bad—and these with the temptation, "free of expense," worst of all. The slatternly drab becomes an "honest woman;" she feels her position to be no longer in jeopardy; passions before under some sort of restraint, now burst forth; she stands upon her marriage certificate, and claims as a right the power to ruin her husband. The hasty marriage—free of expense—is found, when too late, to have been purchased at the cost of the happiness of a life—and the man flies to the gin-shop, and finds the shortest road to the workhouse or the jail. This reasoning will alike hold good with both man and woman; and for either, when once they have entered into the hasty contract which binds them for life, the law allows of no escape. We will illustrate what we mean in a case reported a short time back in the newspapers. A man—if an incurable drunkard can deserve the title—was brought before the sitting magistrate for ill-using his wife. He had been punished for the same offense several times before; and upon the last occasion the magistrate, finding the wife to be sober and industrious, had not only relieved her by sending the brutal husband to prison, but had given her money to purchase a mangle, by which she might obtain bread for her children. For three months she had bravely done this, and her eyes had brightened to see something like comfort in her home. When the time of punishment expired, the man returns—she could not shut her door against him—they were too tightly handcuffed for that—and the legal locksmith, who alone could undo the clasp, was far beyond her reach—her property was the man's by right of the wedding ring—so he entered upon it and disposed of it immediately. The comfortable home became a sty fit for a brute to wallow in; all went—the "bread winner" last of all—during the woman's absence the mangle had disappeared. She questions; the ruffian answers by blows. He goes to prison; she to the workhouse; and all this because divorce is denied to those who most need it—is made impossible to those to whom a wicked partner is bodily and mental ruin; to those who have no clubs, no balls, no opera, no families to rush to that they may escape the

"curse" of home; to those who have but one resource—one opening by which they can find oblivion—the yawning portals of the Palace of Gin, where man and woman drown their troubles in draughts of fiery drink. There is no release from this terrible bondage, except one—when the hasty hand of despair is raised against the household fiend; and Society, with uplifted hands, comments upon the depravity of the poor, and their shocking propensity to crime.

The magistrates have recommended from the bench that the law of Divorce shall have a thorough revision, and no longer be made a question of money; but upon *a proper case being shown*, be as easily obtained as the marriage certificate, nor man or woman for one unlucky mistake be compelled to drag out a miserable and hopeless existence, till the grave gives the release which the law denies.

"Few people," said one of the sitting magistrates, commenting upon the many dreadful examples that had come under his notice—"few people would venture to assert that such marriages had the sanction of heaven, could they witness their unhappy effects on earth." Society is aghast at the man's want of religion. Is he an atheist? Would he trifle with Holy Writ? Has he not read that "those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder," and the horror of society is so genuine, that she pales through the rouge upon her cheeks.

Sir, or Madame, as the case may be, we are aware that we have approached a subject tabooed; we see the notice "dangerous;" we hear your warning, and feel the ice crack under our feet; still we do not fear to proceed, and may arrive in safety at the opposite side after all. Society turns away in disgust; but we shall take the liberty of holding to her ladyship's skirts, while we say a word or two in her children's ears, as they indignantly flatter around.

Here now is Lady Augusta Carmine. Had Heaven much to do with her Ladyship's marriage? We think not. There was nothing very heavenly about the old Duchess of Dandelions, the print of whose claw might have been seen upon her daughter's ivory shoulder upon her marriage morning. Is a marriage blessed by Heaven, Lady Augusta, when the "yes" is pronounced by trembling lips, pale from the heart's pain? Surely, no; or your fine eyes would not have filled with such bitter tears each time they rested upon that simpering imbecility, your husband. Made in heaven! Pshaw! we are enemies to cant of all kinds—it was made by the Duchess, your mother, and the old Duke of Fortywinx, the Earl of Carmine's highly respectable father; it was a

very earthly affair, indeed ; an affair of settlements, estates, and ready money—they sold all they could of you, Lady Augusta, and it was not their fault if your heart was left out of the bargain.

And Society is shocked at the depravity of the poor !

“ Really this is shameful ! ” screams old Lady Limetwig ; “ has the man no respect for the marriage tie ? ” The greatest possible respect for everything that is good and holy, but not an atom of respect for her ladyship. Abolition of the slave trade indeed ! why this worthy old woman, who wept herself blind over the sorrows of Uncle Tom, is as hardened a slave-trader as ever rejoiced in the clank of a fetter, or laughed at the smack of a whip ; this respectable woman is horrified at the benighted African who barter his children for a string of beads, a looking-glass, or an old gun, and yet the worshipers of Mumbo Jumbo might clasp hands with the disciple of Mammon—her ladyship, in similar bargains, only getting a “ pull ” over the heathen in a matter of price. All the Limetwigs sold well—“ went off,” we believe, is the market phrase ; but Mildred fetched the most. She was a gauzy little thing, with a bright complexion and flaxen hair—a porcelain beauty with many bidders—and was “ knocked down ” at last, to a rich baronet, for ten thousand a year and an opera box. Her mother fastened her wedding-dress, say the bridesmaids ; but others say that on the wedding morning the bony fingers of death drew a shroud round her shuddering form, and sure enough she died some twelve months afterward ; and it was not her husband’s name that was wafted by her dying breath through the ever after silent lips. Bah ! you’re a nice woman, old Limetwig, to talk of the holy rite of matrimony, and dilate upon the innate depravity of the poor.

Innate depravity of the poor ! It is the lie in which Dives clothes his selfishness—an excuse which he advances for his neglect of the Lazarus at his door. Depravity of the poor ! Do you dare say this—you, who barter for food and raiment, a coronet and a coach, the person of your child ?—you who stand rejoicing while the priest—we had almost written auctioneer—fastens the manacle on her hand—the golden manacle—yet strong as the iron collar of the serf, which showed him to be the property of his master ? Depravity of the poor ! Better the wind howled over a fireless hearth, and the rain poured through a broken roof, than your children be sold to a splendid misery, to act a lie at the husband’s board, where Memory embitters the contents of the cup, and Hatred poisons the bread they eat !

The time is fast approaching when the important question of Divorce will have to be pretty generally discussed. At present,

as the law stands—and we are backed by powerful authority in our assertion—the difficulties it presents are incentives to depravity and crime. “It’s all a muddle,” said Stephen Blackpool; and “it’s all a muddle,” say not only our magistrates, but every right thinker in England. Divorce *must* cease to be a question of money. It must be as much within the reach of the steady workman—who is now compelled to live with his drunken drab of a wife within the four walls of a room—as within that of the noble lord, who is more than suspicious of the titled drab, his wife, who leads a life of riot in Belgrave-square.

As for the Limetwigs and Dandylicions, silence alone becomes them. We must have no cant of Scripture from them. We pity—and with reason—the unhappy negro who drags his fettered limbs over the burning sand; and the nation must be no longer deaf to the crack of the whip at home—to the groans of the suffering slaves in this Christian land.

So far *Diogenes*, and very good, so far as it goes. Public sentiment, thoroughly aroused in England, is often, but not always, followed by legal reform. If the aristocracy which governs, thinks it best to allow free divorce to the people, it will be granted.

England is the centre of Conservative Hypocrisies; yet it may be doubted whether any civilized country is more thoroughly demoralized. Society requires a scrupulous conformity to the Church; and religion is a sham. It demands a no less scrupulous conformity to conventionalism, and morality is no less a sham. Phariseism and depravity go hand in hand. Law and formality are every thing; while the holiest life, in any but the manner prescribed, is a passport to martyrdom. In England, a man may revel in debaucheries, scatter desolation and ruin around him, and undermine his health and fortune by his sensuality, with less social blame, than he would incur by the most conscientious repudiation of an unholly marriage.

The practical common sense of the people of this country, has liberalized the law of divorce in many states; and the time is not distant when in all, people will be left as free to get out of a bad marriage, as they now are to get into one—when the penalty for doing a wrong, will not be a life-long continuance in wrong-doing.

THE HARMONIC HOME.

THERE is a good will to work at the present day. Many have an ardent longing to do something, but they do not see the way ; and when attempts are made to exercise a newly assumed freedom, there is often necessarily great want of wisdom. Men and women have been tyrannized over by laws, theories, and customs, religious and civil. They see that this is all wrong—that they get neither health, wealth, nor peace of mind, for their craven obedience. They revolt and protest. The revolution and the protest may neither of them lead to a good life—though the good life cannot be reached, or achieved, except in freedom.

ON and after the day that the Maine Law took effect, in this, or any State, there was doubtless more of a desire for strong drink, on account of the restrictions imposed. Men, especially in this country, have an instinct for freedom, but if they are not apt to learn the right way, their very freedom may be only liberty to enslave themselves, by their own acts, more pitifully than law and custom has enslaved them. Freedom from outward restraint, is not inward harmony. The worst bondage is the chain of selfishness riveted on our own spirits.

THE first and last condition of good, is to give as we receive. Whatever Truth or Love we have for the world must go onward—it dies to all uses if stagnant. When we clutch and keep for ourselves, regardless of the good of others, we kill inevitably. At this moment there is in our room a vase of cut flowers—moss roses, lilies of the valley, azalias, and other equally beautiful blossoms. We breathe their perfume, and feel their blessing, but there is death with it. A few hours, and all their sweetness is exhaled, and no seed, bearing more flowers, can come from the beauty thus appropriated. We do not say we have no right to cut these flowers, and destroy their living bloom, for our joy, but if they were living spirits of men and women that we so imprisoned, we should be criminal ; and a nicer conscience than ours might find us guilty of the death of the flowers.

EVERYWHERE men and women are clutched, and kept from their true freedom, lovingly, it may be, as we keep the flowers in the vase of water—but not growing, not living freely, from the root of Life. Now we have had to protest against all bonds—to ask that men be left free, as the only means to the great end of human existence—Happiness. Still this earnest protest must go on—

still must human beings disintegrate themselves, even if they do it with the sword. Still must sorrow come in many homes, for this terrible transition.

The sewer of moralism must be opened, and the foul fetor will kill—especially if we have not great care and wisdom. Dissolving marriage bonds is not forming pure and true sexual relations, but it is a step toward it. Many will get out of one selfish bondage, merely to get into another. In view of all the blunders of experiment, we still cry aloud that Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. We see in the human body, the analogue of society. If the passions or faculties of the soul are in-harmonic, one or more despotizing over the rest, disease, physical and spiritual, or moral, is the inevitable consequence.

Men must learn that a protest against a Maine Law, simply for liberty to get drunk, is no good done to freedom. If men will be free from law, custom, or marriage bonds, only to be licentious, to destroy themselves by an excess of amativeness, what better are they than miserable married persons, who do the same thing?

LET THERE BE LIGHT should be our motto; our great Thought. Liberty is death, without wisdom. Whoso has any Light let him most earnestly and religiously give it. To spread the principles of the Progressive Union, and the Reports that contain the Wisdom we are constantly receiving from the Heavens, is the first duty of Harmonists. We believe that we have the Law of Life clearly revealed to us, that we have only humbly and lovingly to receive it—that we have no need of our freedom to walk into pits and make ourselves miserable in order to learn the way to be happy. To live faithfully according to our Life Law, to work economically for those who will thus live—is for us. It is idle to spend our lives for men and women, however attractive they may be to us, who will not sever themselves from false relations, and live to the Law of Life revealed within them. There is a gathering that does not increase. There is a giving that maketh rich.

Justice to ourselves has to be studied to-day, more than all other justice. We have come through a wilderness of atonements, of false benevolence and death-creating kindness. Between married partners, parents, children, and friends everywhere, the great sin of the world is kindness. We must do this, or that, not because it is a vital and true right thing to do, but because another who has claims on us wishes it done, or we suppose he so wishes—for there is deception everywhere. With many, truth is not—in any relation of their life. In view of all this we have simply to do our duty. From day to day and from minute to minute, study to do the truest and highest thing, no matter what

comes of it in the present. Its ultimate end will be good—good for us and for all connected with us.

There is now everywhere a great prayer rising, and quaking in the human heart, for true relations. "Lord, give us to our own," is the burden of prayer rising to our Father, from thousands on thousands of almost breaking human hearts. Those who but a little time ago, were hugging their chains, and cursing the Apostles of Freedom, are sitting with bowed spirits, and feeling the awful burden of death, that comes from false relations. And the nearer these relations, the more terrible, if they are false. And everywhere the human heart is deceitful—unwilling to break with the moral world; for fear of a loss that they cannot bear, they deceive. Friend, if you knew the heart of your wife, your child, or your neighbor, you would find a want like your own; for if you are starving, you have nothing to give to your famishing partner in misery.

The plant that most needs culture in the heart is Honesty—truth to each other. Better that honesty should cut you off from another, in all openness and friendliness, than that there should be the withering blight of concealment, spoiling your own life, and bringing mildew on all about you.

The Law of purity that we accept for our progress into our Harmonic Home, demands some words from us. Great Love is flowing from the Heavens, into the hearts of those foremost in Human Progress. The question comes, shall we waste this love in selfish gratification, or in bringing children to us, for whom we have as yet no true conditions, no Harmonic Home?

Friends, there are very few of us thoughtful Workers in Reform, who are fitted to have children. Our lives are full of want. We want Life in ourselves, and the conditions of Life about us. The Freedom to waste our Love in sensual gratification, when our Work is before us, and a Love Home, our Heavenly Aim, is not to be conceived of or tolerated by Harmonists for a moment.

It seems to us that we should leave far below us all but the glorious watchwords—Freedom, Fraternity, and Chastity. Those who can thus unite and devote all the energies of soul and body to securing a Love Home, a domain filled with external use and beauty, and having the unity of spirit in the bond of peace, pervading all its members, deserve such a Home. Those who ask for individual freedom and isolation, must pay its cost; and those who selfishly seek sensual gratification, or thoughtlessly bring children into the poverty and bondage of the present, must also pay their own cost so far as they can. We by no means condemn birth, even in our progress from the discordant to the unitary, but

in our transition work, when the passions are excessive and inharmonic in their action, we would have men and women thoughtfully wise—we would have them understand their rights, and know very certainly whether they are dominated by diseased amative-ness, or by a desire to give a worthwhile Life to a child, who shall be worthy of the gift. The world is now one vast arena of waste, from the terrible sensuality of marriage, and its illegal counterpart, the house of ill-fame, through all the monopoly, competition and swindling of the commercial world. We are to come out from all this, and seek the balance of the passions, or faculties of the soul, as the only end worthy of human life.

No association or conglomeration of persons uniting in the waste of licentiousness and its consequent discord and wretchedness, can ever prosper. Morality and Law, or Freedom and Chastity, must be the conditions of even an outward material success in forming an Association.

It is not needful for us to speak of the wisdom of the law of Progression in Harmony, or of the law of progress in Passional Harmony. Every spirit in this world, or another, who is fitted for Harmonic relations, will see and feel at once the wisdom of these laws. Those who cannot see their wisdom, and accept them lovingly, simply belong to the old world of moralism, or the transition through Individual or isolate freedom. We blame them not—the sapling cannot be a mast, or a strong column, but it can grow and take its place in a tower of strength in the future.

We have but to do our work in peace and love, and not throw away effort on those who do not know our Truth, and cannot accept it, but who may nevertheless be doing a worthwhile work, in the transition, or in the old world of cheating and charity, of evils and restraints.

The tendency of the age is beginning to show itself in the direction of combined action. If the Law of the Group, of men being free to seek their own, in all things, from the love for kindred spirits, to our tastes in food, drink, dress, and all culture, if this law be consciously, or unconsciously accepted, and lived, there will be good results from combination, because it will be healthy and orderly.

It is for us to be tolerant of all, and yet to seek our own Home, and the good of those who are on the same plane of Life, and accepting the same truth with ourselves, above all. There will be many Homes, or associate bodies, many Love and Light centres, to which the people will gather. Let each be true to his, or her own centre, and work for a Harmonic Home, as earnestly as men have worked for a Heaven in the future, and a great deal more

understandingly. A Home where there may be true love relations, where children may be born who are creditable to God and man, where all Art and Beauty may have true culture, blossom and fruitage;—this Home is for us if we can unite in the integral and unalterably earnest pledge of soul, body and spirit to the Idea, the Law and the Work that shall secure our progression into Harmony.

The Council of the Progressive Union is to meet in the interior of Ohio in August. Our spirit friends have appointed the meeting, and have given instruction as to the formation of the Council. We hope to have light as respects a Domain, and to see much farther regarding practical operations than we now do, by means of this Council.

Three Mediums, of whom Mrs. Nichols is one, have been named to attend this meeting, who have not the means to pay their expenses. All those who lovefully accept the Law of Progression in Harmony, and who look to a Harmonic Home as the Great End of their efforts to live a true Life, and who would feel it a privilege to bear the expenses of these three persons, will forward such sums as they may be able, or inclined to give, to the Secretary of the Progressive Union.

We may properly say a word here respecting funds and contributions. All the religious and philanthropic movements of the age, are upborne by the devotional offerings of those who believe in their efficacy for individual or social redemption. "No man goeth to war at his own charges," saith the apostle—and if we cannot unite in the burthen of work, now in the inception of our movement, how can we ever unite in its realization?

If a Home of Harmony is built upon the earth, we, unitedly, and with a zealous co-operation, must be its builders. It is to be built, first, in the minds and hearts of men—in Idea. When thus spiritually perfected, the physical ultimatum will be comparatively easy. We give our time, our talents, our life and labor to this work. Is it too much to ask of others, who have faith in the work and in us, for such aid as they can give? We have struggled through the dull times, with an unflinching trust. Now wealth is poured into the land in a most bounteous harvest; and we claim all the help that can be given us toward the realization of our Great Idea. Many can give only sympathy and prayer—but let all give according to their ability.

LESSONS FROM OUR SPIRIT FRIENDS.

TO HARMONISTS.

THE Harmony has first to be formed, so far as is possible, in you who are the heart and brain beginning. Like attracts like. Unless a faculty is existent you cannot attract its like in another. Dominants flow together and make bad worse. Harmonies will flow together and make a higher bliss and a larger good. The more comprehensively your faculties exist and act, the more comprehensively they will attract and join in likeness of development.

We have said that dominant or ruling passions flow together. This is seen in eating and drinking groups. It is seen in the cultivation of those faculties that lead us higher, as well as those that exhaust and lead us lower. There is a common life, between cultivators of art, music, and cultivators of the earth; as well as among drunkards and gourmands. What is for you is first to save your life, and then lead to its blossom and fruitage—the highest use being to incarnate a Harmonic Life in children.

You have your lesson with regard to the nutrition and exhaustion—go on.

Lay your basis for Harmony in firm Health. Let your drink be water, or something as innocuous. Eat bread, vegetables and fruit; and do not at any time *take* salt. Avoid animalized substances, except butter, as much as seems easy to you: but do not war upon instincts, but inform and lead them.

A right is not a right to you if out of your reach. It is joined to the other as much.

Set yourselves resolutely to build, first laying your foundation as firm as the earth itself. Leave not your great harmonious work for trifling pleasures. Trifle not with your high mission, for if you lack one grain, the scale turns not in your favor.

We beg you have Faith

OF NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL GOOD.

WE have said that Natural Good is Spiritual Evil. We use words in a widely received sense. Spiritual might be better expressed to the few, by Harmonic—not so to many, to whom the word Spiritual contains the highest good.

We mean by Natural Good, what joins man in useful relations to the Earth-world. By Spiritual we mean what joins him in har-

Chained to the frozen rock,
 With agonies, which ages could not lighten,
 Heaped o'er that godlike heart, which swerved not,
 Suffering, yet undismayed, I see the immortal Titan!
 And tears which flow for that divine despair,
 Win their slow way, and fall along these pages fair.

The vast, and solemn Night,
 Is peopled with thy thoughts, like burning legions,
 Which come and go, making the darkness bright,
 With their swift rushing through the starry regions;
 And from beyond the stars, I hear a voice
 Which saith in the dim ear of Night, Rejoice, rejoice

Rejoice, for lo! the morn
 Along the orient reddens into being:
 Beauty, and Love, and Hope, and Joy are born,
 And the long night of ages hence is fleeing!
 Thus in my heart, an echo o'er and o'er
 Repeats, and still repeats those words for evermore!

Fulton, N. Y.

KATE SEYMOUR.

MORNING, NOON, AND NIGHT.

MORN calleth fondly to a fair boy straying
 'Mid golden meadows rich with clover dew;
 She calls, but still he thinks of nought but playing,
 And so, she smiles, and waves him an adieu;
 While he, still busy with his flowery store,
 Dreams not that Morn, sweet Morn, returns no more.

Noon cometh, but the boy to manhood growing,
 Heeds not the time; he sees but one sweet form—
 One young, sweet face, from bower of jessamine glowing,
 And all his loving heart with bliss is warm;
 So Noon, unnoticed, seeks the Western shore,
 And man forgets that Noon returns no more.

Night tappeth gently at a casement gleaming
 With the thin fire-light flickering faint and low,
 By which a gray-haired man is sadly dreaming
 O'er pleasure gone, as all life's pleasures go;
 Night calls him to her, and he leaves his door,
 Silent and dark, and man returns no more.