

RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNAL

ARTS, SCIENCES, LITERATURE, DEVOTED TO SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY, ROMANCE AND GENERAL REFORM.

Truth fears no Ask, Holds at no Human Shrine, Seeks neither Place nor Applause: She only Asks a Hearing.

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Biographical Sketch of Thomas Shorter, of England.

BY HUDSON TUTTLE.

Spiritualism in England has no more representative man than Thomas Shorter, better known by his *nom de plume* of Thomas Brevier. He illustrates the intellectual phase of the movement in that country, and has done as much as any other to propagate its doctrines and maintain its dignity. His contributions to the spiritual press have been constantly marked with broad and comprehensive views, and a kind and fraternal feeling such as mark the true scholar and gentleman.

The subject of our present sketch was born in London, in that busy hive of watch-making industry, the parish of Clerkenwell, in the year 1823, on the first day of November, the month in which—according to French novlists,—Englishmen generally hang and drown themselves. Losing his father at an early age, and the mother being left with a family of young children, he had little opportunity of school education, but soon manifested a passion for reading, eagerly devouring whatever books came in his way, for he had no judicious Mentor to guide his choice, and, indeed, little chance of picking and choosing.

At eleven years of age he began the battle of life as an errand-boy with Southgate, the book-auctioneer, in Fleet Street. At thirteen he was apprenticed to the business of a watch-case joint finisher, his regular hours of work being in summer from six in the morning till eight at night, and in the winter from seven till nine. At that time there was no working-men's college, and the only means of mental cultivation free to him, besides such few books as his scanty means could buy, was by what were known as "mutual improvement societies," and by attendance at public meetings and lectures, and at coffee-houses, where discussions were held on public affairs and on questions social, political, and theological. He took a keen interest in these subjects, and when only about fifteen years of age, occasionally joined in these coffee-house debates, and began to receive invitations to deliver public lectures, with which he complied whenever it was possible to do so. His sympathies were especially enlisted in favor of the socialist movement, to which the impulse was given by Robert Owen, and to the political movement for the enfranchisement of the working-classes.

When about eighteen he became honorary secretary to a branch society of the friends of the former movement in Finsbury, and was one of a committee of five who drew up the rules of the first Bowket Building Society in London, (a society to enable working men to purchase a house for themselves from a common fund subscribed by them, the purchase money being repaid without interest by small subscriptions at regular intervals) and remained on its board of management till other avocations compelled him to withdraw from it. He also joined the committee of the People's Charter Union, and took an active part in forming a small local society in Finsbury, which was its immediate precursor. His political action at one time very nearly brought him into serious trouble. He had been the leading speaker at a public meeting at Farringdon Hall, a grossly false report of his speech appeared the following day in the *Morning Chronicle*, in which sentiments and language of the most violent and outrageous character were imputed to him; and on this scurrilous report a leading article was based, calling on the Government to prosecute the speaker. That this recommendation was not adopted

was probably due to the circumstance that a Government reporter was present, and made a verbatim report of the proceedings. An indignant letter from Mr. Shorter appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, but the editor declined to withdraw the false and offensive imputations that had been made.

The great political events of 1848 and the letters on "London Labor and the London Poor," which appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, and at the time attracted such wide attention, give a new impulse to inquiries into the condition of the working classes, and to efforts for its amelioration. One of these may be here referred to. The late Professor Maurice and Professor Kingsley, with Mr. Thomas Hughes, Mr. J. M. Ludlow, and other professional gentlemen, invited certain working men, among whom were Mr. Walter Cooper, Mr. Joseph Milbank, and Mr. Thomas Shorter, to meet them in order to learn the views and feelings of those working men, and to confer with them as to any practical measures which it might be considered advisable in consequence to adopt. The outcome of these conferences was the establishment in 1850 of the Society for Promoting Working Men's Association, afterwards called the Association for Promoting Industrial and Provident Societies, and to which Mr. Shorter was appointed secretary.

Several industrial co-operative societies were formed in London—tailors, shoemakers, engineers, printers, bakers, pianoforte-makers, etc., and a central co-operative agency was established in London (obituary notice of the general agent, Mr. Edward Vanstarr, Neale) for supplying co-operative stores throughout the country with groceries of unadulterated quality and at wholesale prices, and a correspondence was entered into with these and all co-operative societies in Great Britain, of which information could be obtained, in order to promote greater unity of action among them and mutual support. A register was also kept, giving the date of formation of each society, the number of its members, the amount of business done by it, and such other particulars as it was deemed useful to learn, and which these societies were willing to communicate.

Mr. Shorter attended as Secretary the Annual Co-operative Conferences convened by the Society and held in London, Manchester, and Leeds, and took part in the public meetings which followed. It would be out of place, and would occupy too much space to enter here into the causes which led to the failure of this movement in London. It may be sufficient to say that co-operation can only be successfully carried out by co-operators, and that most of the members of these industrial co-operative societies had no previous knowledge of co-operation, and were only interested in it for what they hoped individually to get out of it; and the few who really cared for co-operation as a principle, had little of the practical knowledge and business experience on which success in business is so largely dependent.

The movement of "Christian Socialism," as it was termed, however, bore some valuable fruit. Its publications, lectures, meetings and conferences did much to spread a knowledge of the principles of co-operation throughout the country, to elevate the moral tone of the movement, to diffuse a higher spirit among its workers, and to smooth the road for co-operators in the future. Mainly owing to the indefatigable exertions of Messrs. Hughes and Ludlow, the Industrial and Provident Societies Act was passed, by which legal protection to these societies was first obtained. The Working Men's College in Great Ormond Street, founded in 1854, was the direct outgrowth of the Christian Socialist movement, and Mr. Shorter was appointed its secretary, a position which he held till 1867, when ill-health and falling sight led him to resign the responsible office, whose duties he could not efficiently discharge, and which he left not without substantial evidence of the good-will of those with whom he had so long been working.

Mr. Shorter's investigations into Spiritualism began in 1852, and his experiences were published in a series of papers in the *Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph* in 1856 and of the kind in England. It was subsequently published in a volume (now out of print) entitled "Confessions of a Truth-seeker." Besides being a constant contributor to the *Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph*, he contributed to other journals more or less devoted to the advocacy of Spiritualism. Among these were *The Two Worlds*, a weekly journal, edited by Dr. Jacob Dixon, advocating Spiritualism, homeopathy, and total abstinence; the *Spiritual Times*, the first weekly journal in London exclusively devoted to Spiritualism; and the *Biological Review*. To his friend Dr. Dixon he owes his first practical introduction to Spiritualism. This gentleman was one of the very few—not more than a score—who in England at that time had the courage openly to avow themselves Spiritualists. In connection with Mr. W. M. Wilkinson he established in 1860 the *Spiritual Magazine*, to which he was from the first a constant contributor; though, from loss of sight in 1875 he resigned its editorship to Dr. Sexton. Besides numerous contributions, in prose and verse, to spiritual journals, several volumes and pamphlets on subjects connected with Spiritualism have been written by him. These include the volume already named, "The Two Worlds," a work of some 600 closely

printed pages, the fruit of much careful reading and research; an essay on "What is Religion?" in which the bearings of Spiritualism in its relation to religion are considered and defined; a "Reply to a Sermon by the Rev. John Jones, entitled 'Spiritualism the work of Demons';" a "Sketch of the Life of John Murray Spear;" an essay, entitled "Concerning Miracles;" a treatise on "Immortality in Harmony with Man's Nature and Experience;" a small volume of poems, entitled "Way-side Verses," chiefly in illustration of spirit-communion and kindred themes, and "My Confession;" "Psychological Oddities," brochures of humorous and satirical verse. It may not be out of place to mention here that the plan of a Spiritual Institute, as it appeared on the cover of one of the early numbers of *Human Nature*, was drawn up by Mr. Shorter, as were also the addresses generally presented to Emma Hardinge, William Howitt, and Judge Edmunds; and he has recently contributed the article on Modern Spiritualism to the new edition of Chambers' Encyclopedia, by invitation of its editor, at the special recommendation of Mr. Alfred Russell Wallace.

Mr. Shorter has never been a professional lecturer, but he has freely given himself to the advocacy of the spiritual philosophy from the platform, as well as in the press. He was of the promoters of the Conferences on Spiritualism in 1869, held in Lawson's Rooms, Gower Street, in which Emma Hardinge took the lead—one of the most useful series of meetings in connection with the movement ever held in the metropolis of England. Mr. Shorter was a member of the committee, acted as vice-president, and delivered the opening address, and next to Emma Hardinge, he was the most frequent speaker at these meetings.

On his retirement from the post of secretary to the Working Men's College in 1867, a number of friends who appreciated his services to Spiritualism presented him with a testimonial as an expression of their sympathy and regard. His address in acknowledgment of this mark of kindness and good-will towards him, published in the *Spiritual Magazine* for April, 1868, is an example of his public oratory.

In addition to his writings on Spiritualism, Mr. Shorter has been a contributor to other branches of journalism and literature. Among these journals we may mention *Cooper's Journal*, *Christian Socialist*, *Journal of Association*, *Weldon's Register*, *Working Men's College Magazine*, and *Quarterly Journal of Education*, of which latter journal he was for three years the editor; he was also for some time sub-editor of the *London American*, a weekly newspaper devoted to the cause of the American Union during the great civil war in the United States. Several reading-books of general interest, though most of them primarily intended for scholastic use, have been compiled and edited by him. These are "Poetry for School and Home," "A Book of English Poetry," "A Book of English Prose," "Shakespeare, for Schools and Families," "Love: a Selection of Poems from the best Poets."

Mr. Shorter's life has not been an idle one. He has been, perhaps the most voluminous writer on Spiritualism in England. When the committee of the Dialectical Society began its investigation, Mr. Shorter was one of the first persons to whom they applied for information and advice, and his letter to the committee and the evidence given by him appear in its report.

His chief writings are contained in the eighteen volumes of the "Spiritual Magazine," which, besides many independent articles often without name, contains several series of papers, as those on "Spiritualism in Biography," "Mysteries of Nature and Spirit," "Healing by the laying on of hands," and "Spiritual Teachings in great Poems." The first of these would alone make a large volume, and it was his cherished intention to collect the others so as to make of each a separate work, but unfortunately his sight has long been failing and for many years he has been unable to read or write, and this precludes him from undertaking any work of original research and has compelled him to resign many literary plans he had formed and especially a History of Modern Spiritualism in England, for which he had for years been collecting materials. He published in the *Spiritual Magazine* a Biography of Spiritualism, which will be of great value to all future students and historians of that subject, as it gives a classified list, as complete as could be obtained of books, pamphlets, journals, magazine articles and reviews relating to Spiritualism, and this indicates the chief source from which such history may be obtained.

He is at present a regular contributor to the "Psychological Review," which has taken the place of the "Spiritual Magazine," and generally attends and takes part in the discussions of the British National Association.

He has ready for the press a volume of about three hundred Spiritual Lyrics, designed for meetings of Spiritualists and other liberal religious societies, as well as home use, and also a volume of Poems of a more general character.

Considering that all this work for Spiritualism is gratuitous, the honesty and self-sacrifice of Mr. Shorter merits highest praise. He is no iconoclast, preferring to present Spiritualism from its affirmative, constructive side, feeling assured that whenever received and incorporated into the mind, error will melt away without antagonism or strife.

The latest efforts of Mr. Shorter have been put forth in arousing public attention to the terrible consequences and cruelty, injustice, and barbarism of the law compelling vaccination.

DISINHERITED CHILDHOOD.

BY MRS. MAYWRIGHT SEWELL, OF INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

[Read before the Moral Education Association of Massachusetts, at its tenth annual meeting in Boston.]

I visited not long ago a Foundling Inn. As I walked from room to room the kindly matron proudly pointed out to me this and that convenience for the reception, and the feeding, the bathing, the dressing, and the general care—of what? of whom? The nameless occupants of fifty little baskets, cribs, cradles and cots, which, ranked by size, stood in regular rows, and thus filled two neighboring rooms on the second floor of this establishment. This is one of the unique outcomes of the civilization in whose meridian light we boast to stand. I met with the board of managers of an orphan asylum in the parlor of that sad-named but cheerful fronted place. The secretary, in a pleased tone, read the annual report, which told her equally well-satisfied auditors that four hundred and sixty children, under fourteen, had been housed in the asylum during the year just closed; that of these certain had been claimed by relatives, other certain had been placed in homes under the laws regulating adoption, while seventy remained, and sixty-five had died, the latter mostly young infants.

I went one day to inspect a "Boys' Reform School." The grounds were inclosed by a high wall, which suggested a prison guard; but once within, the smooth-shaven lawn, brightened by clumps of flowering shrubs and tasteful garden paths, shaded by lofty trees and peaceful arbors, and all irradiated by the sparkling jets of a tireless fountain, caused me quite to forget the name that gleamed in gilded letters on the entrance gate and tricked me into fancying myself on the private secluded estate of some rich gentleman, until reminded by the superintendent of the place, who was acting as guide, "There are now five hundred and eighty boys in the school." Then I hastened from the grounds, went within the great, commodious brick house, and looked upon them at their work. I saw the hats, baskets and chairs forming under their busy fingers. I saw them sitting in solemn rows of what seemed childish mimicry of the attitudes of shoemaker and tailor. I shared through sympathy the glow of interest which brightened the heavy downcast faces of some whose dainty carving almost rivaling the famed handiwork of the Swiss peasant was exhibited; and then I walked through the corridors of cots whose cleanliness and order were matters of evident pride to the manager, and reaching at last the chapel, I watched the orderly procession as it filed into this sacred room, and I heard the five hundred and eighty boy voices join in singing: "I have a Father in the promised land."

I was in a strange city. By the morning's mail came to me the prospectus of a "Girl's Industrial School." That afternoon I found my way to it. Sixty girls, from two years old to sixteen, gathered from the different county poor-houses of the State, had been placed here; and here, through the success of the garden only, the next to a garden in aristocratic neighborhood where the little pupils were brought to school by liveried coachmen or dainty, jaunty nursery maids. The rosy faces and graceful movements of these well-fed children were things to gladden one's eyes, but one did not need Titbottom's spectacles to see what indeed all the philosophy of Pestalozzi's system and all the poetry of Froebel's could not hide, viz: The self-consciousness and arrogance growing so rankly in many of the children.

"But," I reflected, "the very poor and the extremely rich have each their peculiar sources of weakness. The great public schools, filled with the children of the great middle class, these are the bulwarks of virtue and morality, as well as the source of intelligence and executive power in the American people." So, in a city noted for its superior schools, I made the rounds of the departments. Faith in the race and hope for its future grew in my heart as I looked into hundreds of bright young faces bent over evidently pleasing tasks, or listened to fresh, buoyant voices, reciting well-learned lessons. But here and there I saw downcast, uncertain eyes, pale, hollow cheeks, sallow, actually wrinkled brows, and small young hands, nervous and trembling, as if palsied. These features caused my exhilaration to abate, the more so as the faces and demeanor of these unchildlike children recalled a painful vision of years ago. Into a country school, where health and joyousness and purity were the rule, vulgarity and coarseness the exception, and morbid and mysterious manners quite unknown, two little ones, morning (in my childhood) were came one morning, of ten and twelve years. They were comfortably dressed, and at the noonday recess their baskets opened to abundant, appetizing lunch. But they were not like other children; they had thin, pinched faces, with vulgar mouths, and a sidelong look from their always downcast eyes, which

revealed the overwhelming degree of care bestowed upon childhood. At the head of this institute is a millionaire who has attained that distinction through business which now has a mammoth branch in each quarter of the continent; a business really depending for its main support upon natural deformities, and counting its baby patrons by the tens of thousands.

Not much cheered by my inspection of the wonderful resources of this surgical institute, or by my interview with its affable and complacent head, but yet determined to see every curious expression of ingenuity applied to philanthropy, I went straight from here to the children's hospital, which was the favorite recipient of Flower Mission charities, and in two rooms, on 69 little pallets, against the white pillows, I saw the pallid faces of 60 little children; some with useless spines could never run and play, probably could never stand; others, little creatures of five to twelve years, had the flushed cheeks and the hollow cough of the consumptive; others pale and skinny were fighting with nameless diseases which set at naught all effects of diet and medicine. I came upon a little group of convalescents, each propped up in a chair, and as I listened to their comparison of symptoms, the exactness with which they tried to locate their recent pains and to describe their present weaknesses, made me for the moment fancy that they were imitating the invalid gossip of a set of val-etudinarians. At last one exclaimed with more melancholy in her voice than I had detected in any of their dreary prattle before: "Oh, dear! I must go home next week. I wish the doctor hadn't made me well." And this reminded me that I was witnessing real children, but little Dorrie's voice got queerly mingled with theirs. "Hospitals is nice places—doctors and chickens you know" and I wondered what might be the home in the background by comparison with which the hospital was so dear, so cheering a place; but while I was musing the clock struck five, the visitors' hour was over, and I went away to meditate, leaving the tiny patients to their gloomy talk.

As the most fatal defect does not pertain to the body, so highest skill and tenderest philanthropy cannot be illustrated in the body's care. And the next morning, to see the climax of human consideration for human ill, I went to the asylum for feeble-minded children. Here I watched with interest the patient efforts of a gentle woman to catch the intent of the vacant stare of eyes whose utter emptiness expressed the unawakened soul; but involuntarily, as I measured what was involved in the process of instruction, I contrasted outlay with result. The woman's efforts spoke volumes for the capacity of one heart for self-denial and for humanity, but the fifty empty faces were each an index to a larger volume of human sin.

Not long since I was in a city where kindergartens were so marked a feature as to have won national repute. I started early to visit one opened in a poor quarter of the city for the reception of the small children of working women, that the latter might not be retarded in their labor by the clutch of baby hands.

It was a pretty sight enough, and I enjoyed their little successes in weaving and braiding, and the baby mimicry of military precision in their marching, and of mathematical harmony in all their movements, was not unpleasing; but the demurrers they entered against going home when the hour for that exercise came revealed not the success of the garden only.

I went next to a garden in aristocratic neighborhood where the little pupils were brought to school by liveried coachmen or dainty, jaunty nursery maids. The rosy faces and graceful movements of these well-fed children were things to gladden one's eyes, but one did not need Titbottom's spectacles to see what indeed all the philosophy of Pestalozzi's system and all the poetry of Froebel's could not hide, viz: The self-consciousness and arrogance growing so rankly in many of the children.

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This is a valuable essay from a scientific point of view, giving the statistics and a table of comparison of relative weight and height between the Community children and the average American boys and girls...

made me shudder, and skin so yellow, so wrinkled, that my childish fears...

But that sentence explains fatally and explains fully the one gross and painful blot on our fair system of public education.

Ridiculous hypothesis! Absurd assumption of importance by a trivial deed. The last will and testament of a Rothschild...

The child's birthright is that strength and health which attest the joyful meeting of two healthful, joyous life currents in his own.

Dr. Mansfield's Mediumship. A REPLY TO WM. EMMETT COLEMAN BY HENRY KIDDLE.

I agree with Mr. W. E. Coleman that it is astonishing that I should have "utterly misconstrued the plain, positive language" used by him in a recent article on Dr. Mansfield's mediumship...

Now Mr. C. informs us that he has been a student of psychical and mediumistic science for more than a quarter of a century, and I have sufficient respect for his talent and mental acumen to believe that he must have stored up vast treasures of information...

But what I wish to suggest is, that Mr. C. from the stores of his large experience and deep study, would explain the precise nature, special conditions and sphere of influence, and limitations of action of this "psychism, unconscious cerebration and automatic writing," and show how these mischievous things and their effects are to be distinguished from the work of spirits by means of true mediumship.

Mr. Coleman asks quite pertinently: How can this be called a "dishonest contrivance?" How, indeed? No, it is the automatic writing that is in fault when a false message has been written.

that the Bible enjoins suicide: "Judas went and hanged himself,.... Gothou and do likewise."

Lake Pleasant Letter.

To the Editor of the Religio-Philosophical Journal: Lake Pleasant is crowded by strangers and friends. Over 10,000 people were upon the ground Sunday; hotels and restaurants are working hard to feed the multitude...

On Wednesday Prof. J. R. Buchanan gave a lecture on "Physiological Basis of Spiritualism." He hit severely the conservatism of the scientists who refuse in their study of physiology to consider the soul.

On Friday J. Wm. Fletcher lectured on inspiration on "Po be or Not to Be." Fletcher's lectures are listened to with interest.

On Saturday Dr. Wm. F. C. Mackey lectured on "The Science of Spiritism." He spoke on "Where in do we Differ?" In the afternoon Mrs. C. L. V. Richmond spoke to an immense audience.

On Sunday Aug. 28th, our interesting and eloquent G. W. S. gave us in his usual genial way, a lecture on "Ingersoll and His Critics." "I am not a hero worshiper but I believe in justice," was his first sentence.

Prof. Cadwell is upon the ground and proposes to give some of his wonderful meermic entertainments shortly.

The annual meeting of the association yesterday was conducted very quietly, though some "bolting" and "ringing" took place, according to some testimony.

Last Days of Camp Meeting at Neshaminy Falls Park.

COL. KANE TELLS HOW PRESIDENT LINCOLN WAS INDUCED TO SIGN THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION BY THE UNSEEN INFLUENCE—A LETTER FROM THE DEAD.

Yesterday was the last day of the Spiritualists' encampment at Neshaminy Falls Park. The members of the association have occupied the tented village since the 18th of last month and are thoroughly satisfied with their sojourn.

The services began at 10 A. M. with a short address from President Wood, who congratulated all those present who were interested in the matter on the success of the encampment.

The midday hour was devoted to feeding the inner man, and Mr. Griffiths, the proprietor of the camping land, served over 5,000 dinners to hungry visitors.

Colonel Kane then recounted several communications he affirmed he had received from time to time from his dead wife and children, and exhibited a message which he alleged was written on a slate by his deceased wife, Elizabeth, at a seance he had on the 17th of December, 1874.

My DEAR HUSBAND: Do all you can to bring this truth to those in darkness and sorrow, and you will be doing that which angels will ever bless you for, as well as your loving wife. ELIZABETH.

The Colonel added that he frequently received letters from his dead wife, and after some reference to his meeting with the materialized spirit of Washington at his own house in the spring of 1876, concluded his discourse with a strong attack on Christianity and its followers.

E. S. Wheeler was the final orator of the day, and at the conclusion of his discourse, President Wood declared the encampment in packing up and moving from the tents to the city.

Intolerance.

(By Mrs. Elizabeth Boynton Harbert.) Any one who cares for the happiness and peace of his fellow beings must stand against the heinous crimes committed in the name of religion through intolerance.

will materially effect a material change. Why? Because one of these persons is possessed of a refined, spiritual, generous nature; the other is gross, coarse and selfish. Although they may never comprehend the fact, yet their aspirations, their conceptions of God, are utterly unlike.

Those who cling to the letter rather than the spirit of Christianity, we would remind of that searching text: "Unless a man have the spirit of Christ he is none of His." Remember that the graciousness of Christ's spirit included in its love the most radical reformers of the age in which He lived, and let us earnestly endeavor to hasten the good time when a man and woman shall be judged by their lives rather than by the direction of their mental apprehension of religious subjects.

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