

THE SPIRIT WORLD.

VOL. III.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, JULY 12, 1851.

NO. 2.

NATURE.

HUMAN, SPIRITUAL, DIVINE.

[Original.]

EVIL.

BY W. RIMMER.

The soul is a real organic substance; sensation is its first quality or condition; emotions are the first results of the action of this quality, while inclination springs from emotion, and actions from inclination. What is there in all this that is evil? Is the mere essence, as such, evil? Substance, to exist, must extend; to extend, it must be a quantity. Is there anything evil in mere quantity or extent? Is it a sin to occupy space? to possess a vacuum? No! for these, though essential, are but primary forces. From some strange necessity these are the conditions of life. The difference between the manifestation of that which is, and the equal, in this particular—want of manifestation in that which is not—then life, as such, is not evil.

Now, the living thing may, by a strange power, become aware of the existence of other things; yet by the exercise of that power it does not necessarily become evil. And if this is true of one man, it must be true of all men. If the ability to perceive necessarily makes a man evil, there must be some necessary connection between the existence of the power and the condition of the being. If it does not, then evil cannot follow as a legitimate result of its exercise. That it does not, is evident, for a man may know things which of themselves have not a moral bearing. Then if mere existence and knowledge does not make a man evil, we must look for it somewhere else.

It is sometimes said that certain spirits delight in evil; and the delight is taken as a proof that the spirit must, of necessity, be an evil thing.

Now, that a spirit would not put itself to the torture; that for the mere purpose of feeling pain it would not seek to be burned in an endless hell—is evident, for the reason that pain or hell is supposed to be at one end of existence, what injustice is at the other, as that pain is the just and legitimate reward of injustice, opposed to happiness as injustice is op-

posed to justice. Then as happiness is supposed to be the just reward of righteousness, we have hell and heaven in idea, justice and righteousness pointing to the path in which it is the interest of the spirit to tread—the *nature* of its wants. Then so far as pain, or evil, is concerned in relation to the spirit's self, we see that it is not evil—it has no desire to do herself an injury. Now, as this is true of all spirits or men, it follows that as every man has the same want in this particular—that is, desire to shun pain—that an attack made by one man upon another, necessarily, since each desires his own happiness, makes of the assailed a kind of hell, or pain, for the assailer; since pain is found to be the motion to the means by which the assailed may defend himself. Then the want of each man's nature is opposed to evil, or pain, in what he may do to himself, and what he may do to others. That it is possible for a man to do an evil action, is true; that it is possible for him to do a good action, is also true; and between these possibilities lie the wants of the being.

Then as it is the nature and interest of each man to desire the greatest good to others—since by this means he promotes his own happiness, or the good he desires—it follows that no man can be evil by nature; for the demand of his nature is "good for himself;" and as the demand of the nature of others accords with the demands of his nature upon himself, the nature of no man can be evil; in other words, his nature is not opposed to harmony and peace.

Here, then, we recognize and understand Mr. Davis's sublime teachings. He says, on page 11 of the Principle of Nature, "Inasmuch as man is governed by interest, this is, in reality, his principle; and the general object to be aimed at, is to change his interest to the interest of the whole." And again, "He should feel that the highest and only good of his own nature comports with, and is conducive to the highest and only good of all his species." Therefore in the quality in which man is good in himself, he is good in the nature of things.

Dr. Gridley makes a mistake when he says the spirits organize the body, if he means that the man, when organized, represents precisely the forces of his own spiritual nature, and nothing more. Or

rather he does not understand Mr. Davis. Mr. Davis and nature teach that matter possesses certain inclinations and powers or ascending forces, by which it assumes general forms—becomes a radiate moluse, articulate or vertebrate—yet that surrounding circumstances always determine the order, species, family and variety of the thing; or, in other words, that the departments represent forces, while the difference existing in the forms and habits of animals belonging to the same department, represent and show the modifying influence of circumstances; that though the germ, when deposited, if conception is true, will become a man, yet that the habits, emotions, health, and general state of the parent's system will have, and must of necessity have, a powerful influence upon it during gestation. There, again, representing the circumstances affecting the parent—that as the parent is favorably or unfavorably circumstanced, the child will have a good or bad organization. In assuming that man, from any cause whatever, is evil, we deny the most important fact in nature. If we examine nature, this becomes evident. First, in animals we have the simple pulsatory sac, or auricle and ventricle in one; then the one auricle and one ventricle; next, two auricles and one ventricle; and at last the perfect heart. Within the ear it is the same. The sac, the tympanic cavity, the external auditory passage, and next the cochlea—the animal becoming more perfect throughout as these become perfect. And this is true not only of animate nature, as a whole, but of the fetus as a part. Here we see nature's aim and nature's end. All things, save man, are *embryonic*. Man is the height, the glory, and aim of all.

Life is the base on which rests the living world, and motion is the force of life. Can the life of things die out? Can motion cease? No! If nature cannot die, then through unending stages of perfection must all things pass. If nature's aim is man—because of nature, motion is nature's life—man, by that motion, still must move, move on forever. Imperfection, whether in the moral or physical world, is inharmonious action of the circumstance of life, whether external or internal. If external, then is it moral; if internal, then physical perfection or imperfection. Can nature descend? Can

for men to escape from the prevailing evils of the world. Never did invaders make more serious breaches in the walls of a fenced city, or Moscow more completely destroy itself at the approach of Bonaparte, than Mr. D. has his theology."

It appears to us that the writer has here made quite an important mistake. If we do not entirely misapprehend the meaning of Mr. Davis, he does not intend to convey any such idea as that which is said to be expressed in the first volume of the Great Harmonia. In order that the reader may determine whether we are correct in this assertion, we will here quote the passage which seems to be referred to in the above language:

"The true Savior—he who is co-essential and co-eternal with the creator of all things, and who is incarnated and represented more or less in every correct movement that has been made since the world began—is Wisdom, the embodiment and image of universal Harmony, and the ever-blooming flower of the Divine Mind."—Page 453. From this language it appears that the Savior referred to by Mr. Davis, who is co-essential and co-eternal with the Father, is not Christ, but Wisdom, which, as will be seen from the context, is exhibited "in the harmonious society of universal worlds," and "is, in a finite degree, the resident, and the bright and protecting angel, of the human soul." With this mistake corrected, the inconsistency of which our brother speaks is resolved into a misapprehension in his own mind, which seems to have resulted from a too ardent ambition to display his powers as a critic. We do not refer to this apparent mistake for the sake of defending Mr. Davis, or from any feelings of unkindness towards the author, but merely for the purpose of removing any misunderstanding which may have arisen from this cause.

R. P. A.

—Spirit Messenger.

THE RAPPERS EXPOSED.—The New York Express publishes a long affidavit from a female, who says she assisted the Rochester women, Fox and Fish, in their rappings, and who avers that the raps are made by the toe-joints and knee-joints; and the other sounds with the movings of furniture, &c., by some very simple process, which she does not, however, explain. We will only say, that the woman's explanation will have no weight whatever, with those who have investigated the subject, and who are still wholly at a loss for an explanation of the phenomena, however opposed they may be to any preternatural theory. There are hundreds—nay, thousands of persons in this city, who are fully persuaded that the phenomena are produced without the collusion or conscious instrumentality of any person whatever. A *bona fide* offer of a thousand dollars for a solution of the trick (if it be one) has been made in this city, and no one has yet taken the first step towards an explanation. We are as anxious as our brother of the Express to have "the humbug exploded;" but must in candor confess that it has not yet been done—the "affidavit" to the contrary notwithstanding.—*Boston Transcript*.

EDITORIAL.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, JULY 12, 1851.

IDENTITY OF SPIRITS.

In preceding numbers of this paper we have spoken of the difficulties in the way of determining the *identity* of spirits who communicate with mortals, and suggested the necessity of caution in the use of the names under which they may appear. The reports which reach us from different localities where audiences are held with the spiritual world, abundantly confirm the views we have before given on this subject. We do not, by any means, deny that the real identity of spirits, in certain cases, can become known to mortals; but it is attended with so many limitations and difficulties, that we know many have been deceived in regard to this matter. The following positions seem to approach the truth, as far as we have been able to find it:

1. That mortals may generally, and in many cases without any doubt, become perfectly and safely satisfied as to the identity of their own guardian spirits. These are the spirits of their deceased *relatives* and friends, whom they (or some of their family, now in this world,) knew before they died. *Personal knowledge* and ardent love, before death, afford the greatest facilities for determining the *identity* of spirits after death.

2. That in particular cases, like that of Swedenborg, and A. J. Davis, where mortals have a special and peculiar mission to fulfil, which is under the supervision of superior wisdom in the spiritual world, such mortals may become safely and fully cognizant of the personal identity of individual spirits whom they never knew in this world, and with whom neither they or their ancestors ever sustained any near relationship.

But then it should be understood that mortals, whose mission is as *spiritual* as that of Swedenborg and Davis, may be deceived with regard to the identity of spirits, as we do not doubt both of these seers have been, in some instances; for the former admits that he was temporarily deceived by spirits, and that the latter has been deceived with regard to the identity of some whose names he has published, we have no doubt at all. It is one thing for a clairvoyant to satisfy himself as to what spirits visit him, and another thing for him to satisfy others that everything in the spiritual world is just as it appears to the clairvoyant who attempts to describe it.

In our last paper we published an article headed "Interview with Spirits," in which the name of Dr. Benjamin Franklin is used

with as much freedom and confidence as if all the parties concerned had all been his old and familiar acquaintances. We do not wish to be understood as expressing any doubt, here, whether that was the identical spirit of the philosopher, or not. Similar accounts have appeared in different papers, recently. Here is one of them:

"On several different occasions, by making the enquiry in various ways, the number of spirits so engaged, indicated by the sounds, has been six, and composed, for this locality [Chillicothe, O.] at least, of the following, viz: *George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, Zachary Taylor, Charles Pine*. I made another trial, at this setting, to ascertain the correctness of this, with the same result as before. The communications by the usual sounds were made on this occasion, without placing the medium in the magnetic state. The company was dismissed this evening, by what purported to be the spirit of Thomas Paine, after this manner:

If the spirit of Thomas Paine is really present, we wish him to indicate it by *three* distinct sounds. *Nine* loud sounds were given."

From this account it will be seen that the answer given to the last question, indicated that "the spirit of Thomas Paine" was not "really" present! And yet the Circle took it for granted that he was personally present; nor did one of them seem to entertain any doubt but that every spirit whose name is given above, was personally present. Whether they were or not, we neither affirm nor deny, but refer to these cases for the purpose of bringing before our readers such a train of suggestions on this subject as may assist them in arriving at the truth, whatever it may be:

It is worthy of notice, that such free and general use should be made of the names of Dr. Benjamin Franklin, Tom Paine, &c., all over the country where spiritual communications have been made to mortals. There are now a large number of media, in different places, who claim to be Dr. Franklin's spiritual subjects.—That is, the Doctor is said to magnetize (or as we should say, spiritualize) them into a state of trance, daily, and when having entranced them, he speaks through them, and utters one thing in one place, and another thing in another place. Indeed, for some two years or more, persons in Western New York have been reporting themselves as under the special care and influence of Dr. Franklin. And Mr. A. J. Davis, it will be remembered, says Dr. Franklin claims the "discovery of the *electrical* method of telegraphing from the second sphere to earth's inhabitants;" and Mr. Davis goes so far as to say that he quotes Dr. Franklin's own words, "faithfully recorded." We have elsewhere spoken on this alleged quotation from Dr. Franklin; and if we are to receive

what Mr. Davis and the Cleveland friends say on this subject, we must believe that one of the profoundest philosophers that ever lived uses such language as the following:

"This put an end to our *then* communications."—*Phil. of Sp. Int.*, p. 79.

The difficulty in the way of receiving these as Dr. Franklin's "own words," is increased by similar language made use of by Mr. Davis, in other places. Thus:

"His *then* impartations of thought."—*ib.*, p. 142.

From the article before referred to, it would seem that the following question was put to Dr. Franklin:

"What is the *dividing link* between matter and mind?"

And the philosopher gives the following lucid answer:

"Between magnetism and vitality."
Not a very intelligent answer, certainly.

We often hear of communications made to various circles, all purporting to come from Dr. Franklin! Some of them, no one in the circle, or out, believed to be from him; and whether any of them have come from him, in person, we have seen no evidence to prove; indeed, no evidence has been asked, that we know of; at any rate, none has been published, that we have seen. However, it must be understood that these remarks are not made because we have doubts (to speak of,) as to whether the spirit of Dr. Franklin did or did not make the communication above quoted. What we mean to say is this:

(1) That it is reasonable to presume that intelligent spirits, like Dr. Franklin, would not authorize mortals to make use of their names unless it was in their power to give some satisfactory evidence as to their personal identity. And

(2) If the circle is satisfied as to the personal identity of any spirit communicating, it does not follow that others out of that circle must or should be equally so.

We suppose the circle in Cleveland, to which the above communication was made, were not aware that communications are made in Cincinnati, Pittsburg, Auburn, Providence, Taunton, (and, indeed, any where and everywhere, as the case may be) purporting to come from the spirit of Dr. B. Franklin; and these communications do not all of them agree! And the same remark might be made of other "names" of certain spirits. Different and discordant communications, are made in different localities, and all purporting to come from Dr. Franklin, St. Paul, George Washington, Tom Paine, Andrew Jackson, Napoleon Bonaparte, Lord Byron, Martin Luther, Zac. Taylor, and others!

A spirit purporting to be Swedenborg, in

Cabotville, Mass., is reported as saying that he wished all his writings burned; but in Boston, "Swedenborg" denies that he ever uttered anything of the kind. In Springfield, "Swedenborg" says "Brother Fernald is mistaken;" but in Boston, Swedenborg says he never "responded" in Springfield at all!

Now, we suppose the knowledge of these discrepancies should excite our causality and caution. We do not undertake to decide for one spirit and against another; but we state what we know to be facts, in these matters, that all may understand and judge for themselves.

"BIOLOGY" A HUMBUG.

An article quoted in our last number, from the Spirit Messenger, represents the spirit of Dr. Benjamin Franklin as affirming that the term "Biology" was applied to Mesmeric results for the purposes of deception, in "order to make the subject a humbug." This statement affirms what we believe to be true, and what we have stated in these columns before. The first term, however, used for "making the subject a humbug," was "Electrical Psychology."

The idea seems to be conveyed, above, that "Burr" originated the use of the term "Biology," when speaking of "Mesmeric influences." This is a mistake, we think. The term "Biology" was first used by a Mr. T. F., and that he did use it "to make the subject a humbug," was abundantly shown by his "pupils," in a public meeting held in Tremont Temple, February 6th, 1850.

But the term "Biology," as is well known, was but the second edition of what had previously been called "Electrical Psychology." And who does not know that this term, "Electrical Psychology," was concocted "to make the subject a humbug?" That is, to make people imagine that a "new science" had been discovered, "as different from Mesmerism as day is from night?" Hence, if "Psychology" be "a better term," as we think it is, and a sufficient term, without the adjective "Electrical," this is the word which was first "used to make the subject a humbug."

The object in using this word, when speaking of "Mesmeric results," was to give the impression that a "new discovery" had been made; and persons are now lecturing in different places in the United States and in the Canadas, who pretend to teach what they call a "new science," under this name. Thousands, and we may say tens of thousands of dollars have been demanded and taken by these lecturers, for teaching the art of this so-called "new science."

It is susceptible of demonstration, that

the term first used for deceiving the public in regard to an assumed "new discovery," was "Psychology," or "Electrical Psychology;" and after using this term awhile, one of the lecturers began to use the term "Electro-Biology," when speaking of the same thing. Mr. Burr calls it "thusology." We do not object to this, or either of the names we have quoted. What we object to is the use of a *new* name for purposes of deception, and this we suppose to be the meaning of what is communicated in the article we have quoted. When persons use new terms to describe what was known before, under other terms; and when they do so for the avowed purpose of making out a claim to a "new discovery," it amounts to fraud; and we have only to add, that whoever the spirit may have been who made the above communications, we believe he uttered what was strictly true when he said that this word was used in this new sense for the purpose of "making the subject a humbug."

We have no idea that either of these new terms will ever come into general use, any more than we have that persons of intelligence will ever speak of being "Biologized," or "Psychologized." How would it sound to speak of being "Physiologized," or "Geologized," or as one lecturer on the "new" science once called it, "Phrenologized?"

MURDER AND SUICIDE.—Probably most of our readers have heard of the murder and suicide committed in Roxbury, Mass., June 7, 1851, by Ephraim L. Daggett, who had a "New Testament in his pocket" at the time. The various accounts given of that melancholy catastrophe, all make mention of the circumstance of the murderer having been seen "reading his Testament" just before the deed was committed; and also that this book was found in his pocket. Nay more, that "its leaves were found folded" and marked, so as evidently to designate those passages which alluded to cases of *lunacy* similar to his own!

However, we have not noticed that any of the religious or secular papers, in reporting the facts of this deplorable case, have suggested that it was produced by reading the New Testament! And why not, pray? Have we forgotten how ready many of these papers were to attribute the murder and suicide committed by John R. Grieve, last Fall, to the "humbug writings of Fowler, and A. J. Davis?" Grieve and his wife had a copy of Mr. Davis's writings in his possession, and the imbecile father gave directions to have it put upon the gravestone of his unhappy child, as if that book had made him a murderer! The papers, far and near, published this request of

Peter Grieve, without one word of disapproval.

And more recently, a lady in Concord, N. H., Mrs. Chandler, is reported to have committed suicide, influenced to do so by what are called "spiritual rappings," and the Concord Patriot, when speaking of the event, says it is one of "a large number" of suicides which have been committed from the same cause!

Now, to us, the case of Mr. Daggett seems a clear one. If J. R. Grieve was "deluded by the writings of A. J. Davis," so was Ephraim L. Daggett deluded by the writings of the "New Testament;" and if it was just to have the inscription put upon the tombstone, which was directed by his father, then it will be just and proper to put upon the tombstone of poor Daggett, "Deluded by the New Testament." Had Grieve been found with one of Mr. Davis's books in his pocket, it would have given more show of justice in this wicked imputation as to the cause of his delusion. But Daggett was seen reading his "New Testament" immediately before the dreadful deeds he committed; and he committed them, as it were, with that book in his hand, for it was found in his pocket after his death.

Our opinion is, that the "New Testament" had precisely as much to do with the murder and suicide committed by Daggett, as the "spiritual rappings," had to do with the death of Mrs. Chandler, or as the writings of Mr. Davis had to do with the death of Grieve and his wife.

Mrs. Chandler we know to have been predisposed to mental aberrations, as she consulted me about it, when in Concord, some three years ago. And full well do I know that great injustice has been done in the reports that have been made of her case. Editors, above all others, should be careful in attributing cases of *insanity*, *murder*, and *suicide*, to particular causes. All are liable to disease, and surely it is enough, when any such cases occur, without having them colored and misrepresented by fixing on incidents in the lives of the deceased, as the real or probable cause of these distressing events. Let them sleep in peace.

A DEATHLY SERMON.—We find the following account in the papers:

"Stephen Smith, of Northford, Ct., a soldier of the revolution, died at that place on Sunday, the 22d ult., at the great age of one hundred years and eight weeks. Mr. Smith possessed the full use of all his faculties until his hundredth birth-day, upon which occasion a sermon was preached, which is supposed affected his mind, and during the past few weeks he has been sinking to the grave."

Had that old man been in any way con-

nected with the spiritual manifestations, or had he been a reader of Andrew J. Davis's writings, his death would have been reported as having been caused by spirits, and this fact might have been put on his tombstone. But his death having been caused or hastened by a *sectarian sermon*, nothing is said or thought of it at all.

RAPPING AND SUICIDE.—The New York Express has a blast at the rappings, founded on a paragraph to the effect that it has caused a young woman in New Hampshire to commit suicide. We see another statement that the man who cut the throat of an innocent child, and then killed himself, in Roxbury, Mass., a few days since, was insane on religion, (nothing new or rare.) We suppose the Express will therefore advocate the extirmination of religion and rapping together. Why not?—*Providence Mirror*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

James Creek, Jackson Co. }
Iowa, June 16th, 1851. }

Friend Sunderland,—You will see from the above, that I write from the "far west;" but as "the sun shines from the east, and spreads his glories to the west," so we of this remote region have heard and seen (as through a glass darkly,) the light of those "Spiritual communications" that are now being made in the east. We have had the pleasure of reading a few numbers of the "Spirit World," and feeling very anxious to see, hear, and know more of the "eternal state of all the dead," or rather those spirits who have left their "earthly organisms" for "that bourne from whence (as it has been said) no traveller returns," and the communications they are permitted to make to mortals here, and, if possible, to obtain a more direct communication, we have concluded to address you upon the subject, feeling confident that you will afford us the light we desire, if in your power to give it.

I have no doubt but I shall be able to obtain a number of subscribers for your paper, as I have heard some of my neighbors express a desire to read it and become better acquainted with those matters of which it treats, and I have no doubt will take it after reading a few numbers. I think you may safely count on five or ten from this neighborhood. I shall do all I can to extend the circulation of your paper, and promote the success of the cause.

Yours &c.,

WM. MARDEN.

Kenosha, Wis., June 16, 1851.

Dear Sir,—There are some nine good mediums in this city who are enabled to receive communications from the Spiritual World. I have myself received spiritual manifestations almost every hour that I have been awake, for the last two weeks. I have soul-cheering promises for future developments.

Yours respectfully,

J. S. RANDALL.

Birtland, Lake Co. Ohio, June 19, 1851.

Brother Sunderland,—I have taken your paper for the last year, to wit, the "Spiritual Philosopher and Spirit World." I have read it carefully, and am well pleased with its contents. I think it a useful and instructive paper, calculated to destroy priestcraft and "spiritual wickedness in high places." It seems to be calculated to draw out the intellect of freemen, and to teach all that will be taught, that "all men are created equal," and that they have no right to place their priests between themselves and their God; but are individually accountable for their acts.

I wish you to go on with the paper; let it spread throughout the land! let the inhabitants of the earth be enlightened, and then knowledge will cover the earth, and "no man will be saying to his neighbor, know the Lord, for all will know him, from the least to the greatest," and those ungodly principles of lord and serf, master and slave, priest and laity, will be banished from the earth, and truth, hope and brotherly love will every where prevail.

But it will require all the energies of freemen, together with the help of the Spirit World to accomplish so great an undertaking; for surely, "the priests bear rule," and many enlightened people love to have it so.

We have here an "Investigating Society." We have held our meetings every week for ten months past, which have been edifying and interesting. I wish you to send thirteen copies of your next number to this office, and I will send you the money as per direction in your last number. All that go for eternal progression should be encouraged.

Yours in truth, hope, and love,

ALFRED BONNEY.

Nantucket, Mass., June 22, 1851.

Dear Sir,—There are six mediums upon this island. Wonderful communications have been received, and physical force manifested, which have astonished all who have witnessed it. Very many believe the manifestations to be from the spirits of departed friends.

Respectfully Yours,

PHEBE ANDREWS.

Dundee, Ill., June 24, 1851.

Mr. Sunderland,—Dear Sir: I hope you will be encouraged to continue the Spirit World. Media are multiplying fast, here, in spite of all the unbelief that can be scared up. It is truly amusing to witness the manifestations of feeling. One says, "Well, if the Spirit World has got such a lying set of scamps in it, it is no great improvement on this, and I sha'n't want to go there." But, notwithstanding all that can be said in opposition to it by way of accounting for the rappings, whether by calling it "Electro-Voltaism," "Tocology," "Kneecology," or what not, it thickens around us—pops out here and there, where least looked for. One man here who has blown at it all winter, has a son recently become a medium,—the spirits rapping to him

while doing up goods in a store, he being a clerk.

The trouble of it is, the most of us have formed an idea of the Spiritual World; and now, because that idea is not realized by the manifestations witnessed, lo, forsooth, it can't be spirits making these communications!

J. R. ROBINSON.

Utica, N. Y., June 23, 1851.

Friend Sunderland,—We are on good terms with the spirits here. We have the "sounds," "writing," and a variety of physical manifestations. My wife has been moved in her chair by the spirits.

I regret to inform you that some of our neighbors are in the Lunatic Asylum, in consequence of getting too much excited on this subject. A hundred persons might be crazy in consequence of getting excited upon the subject of religion, and nothing said; but now "the devil is in it" because one or two get crazy on this subject.

Your friend forever,

T. A. HOLT.

MISCELLANEOUS.

SCIENCE, EDUCATION, HEALTH.

THE INCENDIARY.

BY MRS. E. WELMONT.

It may have been the good fortune of some of my readers to have been in the habit of visiting some rather antique dwellings where two or three Firemen's Buckets were hung in the entry labelled with the name of the owner, and the number of the ward where he resided. It is only now and then this relic of the past is permitted to hang unmolested; for modern house-wives displace all such unsightly articles, and instead of Fire Buckets we have great unsightly images of Venus and Apollo setting in niches to illuminate stair cases when parties are given. But Aunt Hannah was an old fashioned lady who retained good sense enough to keep pleasant associations before her own mind, and to awaken them in others. She seldom failed in narrating the progressive movements of the age, to speak of the organization of *Fire Companies*, and then she would compare this present admirable system to former days when every good house-holder was always a Fireman ready to run at the call of the bell, or the cry of fire. "And my poor husband," she was wont to say, "used always to sleep with his window down a bit at the top to be early apprised of the noise;—for he was expert in passing buckets. And dear me, said she, wasn't that an awful fire which destroyed so much of our village about seven and thirty years ago? Poor Mills, I wonder what ever became of the boy?" Aunt Hannah always called every body a boy that she lost sight of before his majority—she never seemed to think they grew after she saw them.

Since the story of this awful conflagration is now re-awakened in my recollection, supposing we tell it just as it happened.

It was a cold night in December—a terrible cold night;—and forty years ago nobody owned a thermometer in our village save Deacon Dennison, and the mercury was run out of *that*;—so nobody ever knew how cold it was—only so many feet and ears were frozen, that it was most incontestible evidence it was dangerous to be out in exposed situations. Aunt Hannah (for she was the Deacon's wife,) shut up the listed doors, and the Deacon rolled in a back log, and raked out the fiery coals in front, and the walnut and maple and birch sticks, formed an intimate and lively acquaintance, and such snapping and sparking went on as to inspire the idea of warmth, although one's back was all *but* frozen; and as nobody washed their bodies in cold water, there was a greater sensitiveness than now. Aunt Hannah shrugged up her shoulders, told Hitty to come in out of that cold back room, while the Deacon lighted his pipe and prepared to take a little comfort. When Hitty came in she wondered what made Parson stay so long? He is always at the beck and call of Brown said she, and mother I don't believe that man is any better than he should be—

The scripture says, "speak evil of no man," quoth the Deacon and he knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and actually raised the window curtain to look out for his boy.

"He is a strong boy," said the father—"a very stout boy—he can handle a bigger log than I can any day,"

"But," says Hitty, "he has a dreadful habit of swearing lately—I suppose he thinks it is manly—I wish you would correct him father—"

"La," replied his mother, "them only sons have dreadful hard times with only sisters who are so straight laced."

"Boys *will* be boys, and ape the manners of men too," said the Deacon—"but hark—the bell strikes—there is a fire as sure as the world;" and sure enough since the Deacon pulled up the curtain, a great lurid blaze reddened the heavens and lighted up the steeple of the meeting house, and gave fearful warning that the Great Red Tavern was on fire?—

The old man put on his boots, and his wife drew a knit cap over her head, and threw on her cloak, while Hitty rushed out only stopping to throw a shawl over her—and now we leave this comfortable sitting room with the doors ajar and its inmates fled, the buckets and pails all snatched to aid in subduing the devouring flames. The Deacon was a slow man, before he would do a thing he must always be informed, "how the fire originated."

"Caught in the stable," said Mrs Howe the landlady, and there she stood with not a thing on her more than she wore in the house, wringing her hands, and saying, "all she had in the world was a going—my best beds," said she, "that my poor mother gave me, and my nice china set, and looking-glass that was grandpa's, and his great arm chair, and my bureau that I spun so much to buy and oh, oh, oh," were the accompaniments of all her heart rendings.

But where was the Engine? It was broken, and sometime ago was carried to

be mended, and there it stood two miles off in a blacksmiths shop! They said the Deacon's son Parsons, and Brown the grocer, had gone for it on the "clean run." But how the fire crackled and shot up in the air, and how aghast the villagers looked is not a subject transferable to paper.—Open vision would only leave a correct impression. The Red Tavern was burnt to the ground, piles of rubbish were thrown in dreadful confusion, and now the roof of the meeting house was on fire, men and women's hearts died within them but necessity gave strength to action, and how they labored! There was Susy Blunt quite a rheumatic lady, as limber jointed as her little granddaughter May, and Unice Slocum who had just recovered from a lung fever, and the minister's wife whose baby was only six weeks old, and the Deacon's wife and Hitty, all passing buckets of water along as steadily, as on washing days at home;—they were tremendously nerved for action. Hitty would not but keep repeating "what an ugly thing Parsons is mother, not to hurry more," but "mind child, mind what you say," would occasionally escape her mother's prudent lips—the engine did not arrive, and the fire made terrible headway, the wind having changed and driven the flames across the street right against the brick academy and Brown's Grocery.

Hitty could not help saying, "I don't care if it does burn Brown."

"Don't add sin to flame," said the Deacon, wiping the frozen drops from his face, for the fire would melt one way, and turn opposite to it and a cold breeze would freeze the water on the face. It was an awful extremity; and the wisest men feared the whole village must be laid in ashes when the project to avert it by blowing up the Town House with gunpowder, was proposed by Judge Burleigh. It was done as a last resort, and a terrible scene ensued—the powder drove the timbers much farther than was anticipated, and Deacon Dennison was the first man carried home maimed. Of course his wife and Hitty were away from the scene of action as soon as this happened, and although it was nearly midnight, no Parson had arrived to go for the Doctor. The Deacon's head was affected by a stick of timber having grazed his temple.

It was a dreadful night—The village in ashes, the Deacon hurt, the minister bruised, the women half dead with fright and fatigue, but the fire was arrested!

Such a scene as the rising sun disclosed was rarely seen—Such a motley parcel of furniture all thrown in heaps, broken, wet, useless, with its frantic owners claiming the relics, but house-less and unprotected, was a sight to melt stout hearts.—But every body opened the doors, and the unharmed gave welcome hospitality to all the sufferers. Yet make the best of it—it was an awful conflagration. The Red Tavern gone;—the meeting house in ruins, the academy burnt, small shops missing,—poor tenements in smoking heaps, and the Town House blown up! was it a scene of desolation?

And now came out the dreadful truth that it was the work of an incendiary.

But who would be bad enough to do such a deed? "There is not a man among us," said Judge Burleigh, "who would be guilty of such an atrocious act." Rewards were offered for detection—even the Deacon said he would give half his farm to bring the wretch to condign punishment. All who put up at the Red Tavern were examined; but they were only some drovers and market men loaded with butter and cheese for the City. It was outrageous to suspect such men who had nothing to gain, but endangered their own safety.

No clue could be obtained, and a profound mystery rested on the fact.

Soon after this, a Fire Company was organized—the Town raised two new Engines, hooks and ladders were provided, and able men enrolled as Firemen. Judge Burleigh's son headed the list, and Squire Graves the lawyer was the second;—it was considered a glorious affair, and the habitual dread of fire wore away as the implements were furnished to subdue it. The poor Deacon however never was a participant in the feeling of safety—his brain was affected by the hurt at the fire, and no return of consciousness appeared—he lingered a week and died. Hitty dated her long disease to the exposure of this night, and her cough terminated in a consumption which early in the spring laid her beside the violets and snow drops—only a little deeper imbedded in mo her earth. Parsons had strangely disappeared—so that the widow of the Deacon was the principal mourner. Brown the Grocer never resumed business, and it was supposed that the Deacon's son and the Grocer had gone together.—Wisconsin and Iowa were then new countries, and both of these fellows were versed in their geographical positions.

Whether Parsons had gone on a whaling expedition or not was a query with many—how he came to go was a mystery to all. We will now pass over the period of thirty years—Aunt Hannah is upwards of eighty, and resides with her brother, still erect in form, but withered in face—the lost son is the subject of her nightly dreams.

"Mills," the young man she wondered about at the beginning of our story, has just returned from Constantinople where he has found Parsons living under an assumed name. He entrusts a document to his care to be forwarded to his mother. It ran as follows—

"MY DEAR MOTHER,—Years have passed, yet you rise before me as my mother still. I am now a merchant in Constantinople. My real name I have suppressed, for I am a criminal of the deepest dye, but may heaven forgive what no earthly tribunal knows. I was in league with Brown to burn the Red Tavern, which ended in such a frightful conflagration. He owed a spite against the keeper, and bribed me to be accessory to the deed—with that money. I embarked for foreign ports and having roamed a vagabond for years, I commenced with a clerkship in a mercantile house, and now I am partner in the firm. I enclose you a note for two thousand

dollars payable by——, and wish you to make restitution as far as possible to those I injured. I suppose they are many of them dead;—then give it to their heirs—The other two thousand is for your comfort in your declining years. You may never see me this side of the grave, but I hope I am a penitent for my early misdeeds, and that we may meet in a better world. Brown is dead.

Yours, truly, PARSONS."

The mother was aged and this intelligence gave such a shock to her feelings, as to cause a paralysis. This has deadened intense suffering, but to this day "the fire buckets" hang in her full view mementoes of the past. "Sad recollections!" you will exclaim, but remember age blunts our keen perceptions, and it is a gentle and wise ordination that it is so.

But hallo! they say Sophronia Mills is going away to be married—the girl who dispised the lawyers son because he was a *Fireman*. She said it was so vulgar to put on thick boots and rubber overcoats and those hateful caps, and drag an engine, she never would marry a *Fireman*! Poor foolish thing; the wonder is the young man ever made you an offer, for he is the bravest and best of the company. But the thing took wings; dame Rumor let out the secret about the letter that Parsons sent by Mills to have him escort his sister to Constantinople, when he pledged himself to marry her—and no wonder the sister of the fireman she refused, sent her this note on the morning she sailed—

MISS SOPHRONIA,—We have formerly sported and enjoyed each others society. Still I do not regret that our friendship must cease, for I can no longer desire the love of one who refused a brave Fireman, for the hand of one who confesses himself an *Incendiary*.

Your former friend, AGNES.

The village over which the fire swept so furiously is now filled with beautiful white dwellings—nothing save a few stumps of trees are relics of the past—but among all the pride of the buildings, not one is half as much esteemed as a one story dark building marked "No. 1, Extinguisher;" for within this enclosure is the Engine; and not a man, from the Judge to the laborer is too proud to work it at the alarm of fire.

BOOK NOTIONS.

Once, I remember it well, in a crowded college-hall, I got into a discussion with a shrewd, quick-witted fellow,—a farmer, I believe, from the North. The question was about the price of labor; he treated it like a man of business, and I like a pedantic sciolist. My head was swarming with theories—I was fresh, I might have said raw—from Ricardo, Macculloch, and a host of them, and a precious mess I made of their speculations; my colloquist, nevertheless, listened to me much longer than I deserved, till at last, when my battery of hard words had worked itself to a pause, "Ay, Sir," he remarked very quietly, "these are book-notions, and they may do very well in books, I dare say. Your business is

with books, sir, and mine is with the world; and it's no use to talk learning to me, else you are soon out of my depth, sir, and your own, too, if I may say it without offence. No, sir, depend upon it, by the time you have lived a little longer in the world you will be all the wiser of it." This was the substance of his say, only that he hacked with a blunt edge, and therefore the more painfully. I was cut to the very quick,—confused, silenced, and put to shame. My dinner was spoiled, and so likewise was my digestion. For months afterwards, I could never think of the old farmer but I felt the bile rising to my palate.

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