

The Spiritual Age.

Progress is the Common Law of the Universe.

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THE NEW ENGLANDER'S REVIEW.

The writer of the article on "The Literature of Spiritualism," in the New Englander, (which was finished in our columns last week,) doubtless intended to be scrupulously fair in his presentation of the subject. But it was quite too much to expect that a clergyman,* whose sympathies and interests are strongly identified with the dominant church, should fully apprehend and impartially present the claims of a movement which he honestly regards as hostile to that church, as well as destructive to true Religion and to the best interests of Humanity. That he has not done this, in several particulars, is quite evident, and the more prominent of these we wish to point out, in the earnest hope that a mind possessing so marked a degree of candor and conscientiousness will yet acknowledge the whole truth, and recognize its momentous bearings.

The first important error which we will mention is this:

"It is to be noted that the quasi-spirit claims to be only human—never divine; never God, nor from God; never to belong to any rank of beings higher than man. In all the multifarious Bible of the Spiritualists, there is no 'thus saith the Lord,' but only thus saith 'Swedenborg,' or thus thinketh 'Francis Bacon.' The ladder of the Spiritualists, indeed, is not Jacob's; for though the foot of it, plainly enough, is on the earth, the top does not 'reach to heaven.' Not the 'angels of God,' but only men, are 'ascending and descending on it.' Be Spiritualism, then, all that it claims to be, it is in no sense a revelation from God, but, at most, the unauthorized utterance of finite and fallible men—disembodied indeed—yet no more entitled, for that, to influence the conduct or bind the consciences of their fellow-men, than when tabernacled in the flesh."

Is this true? On the contrary, does not every well-informed person know that intelligences claiming to be "God"—in each of the three persons of the popular trinity, too, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—have often communicated in these days?—and that no inconsiderable portion of the "literature of Spiritualism" consists of communications purporting to come, either directly or by special commission, from Jehovah himself? It seems scarcely credible that our reviewer could have overlooked so patent a fact. To begin with Swedenborg—who was a Spiritualist in everything distinctively implied by that term, and whose writings, nearly qualling in extent the whole amount published since the "Rochester Knockings" began, should be classed among the literature of Spiritualism—this seer, while he conversed much and often with disembodied spirits or angels. So in the more modern movement—Mr. Scott, the prophet of the New Jerusalem at Mountain Cove, and the originator of the first periodical devoted to spiritual literature, was on most intimate terms with what claimed to be the Almighty. He had a 'thus saith the Lord,' for almost everything said and done. Mr. Harris, while associated with him, but now prophesying on his own responsibility to the New Jerusalem in New York, and publishing a Monthly Magazine, with occasional volumes of revelations, claims to be inspired and directed from no less exalted a source. Besides these, we have numerous lesser prophets and seers who come to the present generation "in the name of the Lord." There is Arnold, of Poughkeepsie, through whose hand Jesus Christ (?), the only mediator and Lord of all things, has written a ponderous volume or two of "authoritative utterances." There is "the Medium D.," who ratiocinates "spiritually in the sphere of Columbus, Ohio," from whose "hand" we have had several "Raps" in the Lord's name. And there are others scattered over the country—each of them, we believe, claiming to be the sole channel of Divine intercourse with this mundane sphere—who occasionally favor us, personally, with manuscript messages, written, as alleged, sometimes by the very finger of Deity, and sometimes by his specially commissioned angels; and more than once have we been visited with threatenings of Divine displeasure because we have not published the said messages to the world as commanded! There is, too—to go outside of what belongs distinctively to Spiritualism—the "Sacred Roll" of the Shaker Societies, not to mention the Book of Mormon, and various other productions of modern times claiming a source equal to that which dictated the statutes of Moses or the revelations of Isaiah.

Now these facts, so strangely overlooked by our clerical reviewer, have, to our apprehension, a very important significance. Most completely do they negative the inference which he evidently would have us draw in favor of the exclusive authority of Bible revelations. They show conclusively that, as intelligent, rational men and women, we must go behind the claim of any modern medium, prophet, seer, spirit, angel or book, which speaks in the name of the Lord. The common experience has been that those who make the loudest pretensions in this line are the least worthy of respect. We are therefore compelled to seek more reliable credentials of a Divine revelation than can be furnished by any such claim, even when supported by "great signs and wonders" wrought by spiritual power. And if we do this as regards the modern, why not also with respect to the mediums, prophets, seers, angels and Gods who had to do with the contents of the Bible? Our reviewer himself has insisted that "no lame exception" should be shown in favor of ancient revelations or miracles. The necessity of discrimination, then, in regard to all professedly divine revelations is thrown upon ourselves, and no thinking man or woman can escape it. Those who think to do so, by retreating behind "the church," or "the fathers," or a mere blind educational reverence for the book, are like the silly ostrich which hides its head under a bush, but leaves its whole body exposed to the shots of the archers. The test of divine origin and authority can be found only in the intrinsic quality of the revelation itself; and the final standard to which it must be brought is to be found in the reason and judgment of the individual.

*The author of the article is Rev. C. S. Lyman, (Orthodox Congregationalist) of New Haven.
† See Matt. xxiv. 24.

If the reason and judgment of our reviewer satisfy him that the Bible as a whole, or even such portions of it as are preceded by the formula "thus saith the Lord" or its equivalent, are "from God and God only," as he intimates, we have no fault to find. But what authorizes him to make the assumption for all others, as he so coolly and confidently does? If modern spirits sometimes claim to be what they are not—if Satan has now the power of assuming to be an angel of light, or even God himself—who shall say that ancient seers, prophets and mediums were not sometimes imposed upon? Should a spirit claiming to be "the Lord" in our day command a father to sacrifice his own child, as Abraham was commanded—or in his hot wrath should threaten the annihilation of a whole people, and be persuaded to repent of his threat by the entreaties of a medium more humane than himself—or require his mediums and followers to slaughter thousands upon thousands of men, women and children—say and do various other things reported of the Jehovah of the Old Testament—we think it would be difficult for even our reviewer to pay a very high regard to such "authority." And why should the distance at which these things occurred lend such "enchantment to the view" as to transform what would now be esteemed revolting fanaticism and atrocity, into acts of superlative piety and godliness?

We must add that among all the diverse "Lords" and "Gods" who have undertaken to reveal themselves in this era of modern inspiration, we have heard of none who have manifested the vengeful and blood-thirsty proclivities of the Hebrew Jehovah. The world evidently progresses.

Another important particular in which our reviewer misconceives Spiritualism is in relation to what he calls its "religion." After admitting the cogency, if not impregnability, of its phenomenal claims, he says:

"The religion of Spiritualism is, in our view, its most assailable point."

But what is the religion of Spiritualism? He seems to imagine, like Mr. Coby, that Spiritualism has a definite creed, and that creed opposed to Christianity. Will he please to define it? We incline to think that should he proceed to assail and demolish what he conceives to be the religious belief of Spiritualists, nine-tenths of them would say that he had merely been contending with a man-of-straw. Modern Spiritualists are of almost all religions—some of them, we are sorry to add, of almost no religion.

Spiritualism—let us repeat what we have so often stated—does not designate any distinct system of religious faith. So far as the term properly applies at all to moral and theological tenets, it designates that which is refined, internal, essential, spiritual, in all systems and teachings, as distinguished from that which is gross, external, superficial and formal. No statement, creed, or confession of faith, has yet been drawn up which receives the common assent of Spiritualists. Each thinker among them is working out a system for himself, as best he can. If any portion of them have vague or erroneous religious notions, it by no means follows that all have, or that these notions are any part of Spiritualism. Let these ideas, and those who hold them, be criticised on their own merits; Spiritualism has no responsibility for them.

The recommendation of our reviewer as to what shall be done—namely, that science and philosophy should carefully explore this whole field—is precisely what Spiritualists have always for the most part contemptuously turned away from this service, or shown themselves wholly unqualified to perform it, it does not become them to complain if the "common people," the "publicans and sinners" even, have determined to break from their lead, and see, hear and know for themselves.

The concluding paragraph of this review—we are sorry to be obliged to say—displays an ambiguity and inconsistency unworthy of the writer. It shows that the struggle between philosophic candor and priestly dogmatism had not quite ended in his own mind, or that he felt the necessity of saying something to propitiate his more bigoted ecclesiastical associates. "All should investigate," he says, "only as all would be geologists or explorers of the heavens." Indeed! but is it not the privilege and duty of every man and woman in an enlightened community to know enough of both geology and astronomy to save them from the superstitious fears and degrading errors on these subjects which have prevailed among the ignorant? So also, does it not behoove us all to acquaint ourselves as we may, with the beings and forces of the spiritual realm, which are revealing themselves among us, that we may be saved from superstitious fears on the one hand, and from priestly domination on the other? Does it follow that those who investigate Spiritualism must "go to the peepings and mutterings" for their religious faith? Mr. Lyman does himself gross injustice by such a contemptuous sneer. The facts and laws of spirit intercourse are one thing; religious belief is quite another.

And then, after the frank admission of a "striking resemblance" between the phenomena of modern Spiritualism and those of ancient "divine" inspiration, we are advised to engage in personal inquiries into their nature and significance, "only as we would go to a lazaretto for health"! Were, then, the ancient schools of the prophets, and the pentecostal gatherings of the early Christians, where the spirit came upon them with its wonderful gifts—were these more moral or spiritual pest houses, to be avoided by all sane people? Such, at least, is the fair inference from this ill-considered advice.

Some further points in this remarkable production, especially some of its significant admissions, we had designed to notice; but our limits forbid. Suffice it to say, that as a whole it has afforded us great satisfaction and encouragement. It shows that Spiritualism is surely though gradually producing its due effect, and in the right quarter. Candid and conscientious men, in spite of educational prejudices, feel the force of its evidences. The contest respecting the phenomena and their significance is nearly ended; bigotry and saduceism are being put to shame. As the light advances, men will see the error and absurdity of the old theories of divine inspiration, and of slavish obedience to external authority. They will find that of themselves they must judge what is right and what is true; and thus become willing that all others should do the same. Freedom, growth, and a higher spirituality, in all rightly disposed minds, will ensue.

A. E. N.

THE TRUTH MAKES ITS WAY.—A resident of Vermont informs us that of ninety churches of various denominations within his knowledge in that State, seventy have already been opened more or less frequently for Spiritualist lectures. This is to be accounted for, not in any increased liberality on the part of the creed-worshippers, but it comes from a demand on the part of the people which cannot be resisted.

S. B. BRITAN'S appointments may be found in another column.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

WARREN, Mass., Sept. 3, 1858.

READERS OF THE AGE:—I had long entertained a desire to visit Milford and the little village of Hopedale (in the aforesaid township), where a number of free spirits—free in the exercise of their faculties and free from the corruptions of the world—have been earnestly laboring to realize a better state of society. That desire has at length been partially realized. On Sunday morning (Aug. 29th) the writer had the pleasure of meeting the Hopedale friends in their own little Chapel, away from the noise and feverish excitement of the great world. It was a glorious morning. The skies were radiant; the fields had all the freshness of early summer; the clear waters sparkled in the sunlight, while the rain of the preceding night had enlivened the flowers as with the renovating power of a new baptism. I found the moral and social atmosphere of Hopedale eminently pure. The people have never confounded a rational freedom with lawless indulgence, nor manifested their independence by that species of vandalism which maintains its "individual sovereignty" at the expense of reason and the common welfare. We feel stronger and more hopeful whenever we meet with people who are neither unduly devoted to the mere pleasures nor the ordinary business of this world, but who entertain intelligent and comprehensive views of the actual duties, the real interests and the ultimate issues of life.

In the region about Milford the careful observer will not fail to discover many indications of the spirit of free thought and Christian charity which ADAM BALLOU—that noble minister of true religion and practical reform—has infused into the minds and hearts of the people. For many years he has walked before them in blameless rectitude, and we trace his footsteps by the scintillations of divine light, the flowers of new hope and spiritual beauty, and the golden fruits of a ripe experience which he has left behind. No man in or about Milford is so universally respected and esteemed by the people of all religious denominations and by the world at large. His distinguished abilities and incorruptible integrity, combined with Christian charity, unimpeachable candor, and a certain dignified condescension and freedom in his intercourse with men in the humblest walks of life, have continually increased the measure of his personal influence and widened the sphere of his public usefulness. His name is now fondly cherished at a thousand firesides, and his words and deeds will live after him, in the memory of the people whom his superior wisdom and virtue have enlightened and exalted.

While in Milford the writer delivered a course of five lectures to very large and intelligent audiences. The first and second discourses were given on Sunday, 29th ult., in the "Old Brick Church," which was filled to its utmost capacity. The interest seemed to extend quite beyond the numerous class who have heretofore identified their names with the general subject. After the delivery of the second lecture, Mr. G., who has been an active but candid opposer of Spiritualism on Biblical grounds,—a gentleman of large influence in his social and business relations,—came forward and kindly proposed to secure the Town Hall, which is one of the most spacious and elegant assembly rooms in the State, affording seats for about twelve hundred persons. Mr. W.—another live man—generously proposed to become responsible for all the expenses incurred by the lecture on Monday night, that the doors might be opened wide to the night. This arrangement drew together a large number of persons, who listened with fixed attention for an hour and a half. The gentleman referred to, with Mr. Stacy, formerly a Unitarian clergyman, and some of the early and tried friends, at once resolved to make the remaining lectures free to the public. Accordingly, the invitation was universal, and no silver bars obstructed the entrance to the hall. The interest seemed to increase, and the people came in from the neighboring towns, the multitude filling the hall night after night to the close of the course. The public appreciation of the generosity of a few individuals was clearly manifested in the collections, which were sufficient to cover the entire expenses of the course.

Miss Davis, the trance-speaking medium, has been at Hopedale for several weeks, but left for Troy, N. Y., while the writer was at Milford. She is a living illustration of the power of the spirits to rescue the body from wasting disease and the mind from the darkness of ignorance and unbelief. The opening of the Spirit-world in her case occurred while she was prostrate on a sick bed, and during a trance that lasted, if I mistake not, over forty days. She now speaks under Spiritual influence with ease and fluency to the satisfaction of intelligent audiences, while at the same time she is most truly beloved for her sincere devotion to truth and duty, for the purity of her private character, and with the simplicity of her daily life.

We met with some noble friends at Milford who are not unmindful of the necessities of those who labor in the field of Reform, and of whom we shall cherish pleasant memories. Of course there may be persons attached to or identified with every great cause whose zeal only finds expression in words, and whose real interest in the most important subject would not suffice to counterbalance a single dime. It is confidently presumed that the persons of this class are not numerous in and about Milford, and if there are any who answer the description, there are also generous spirits ready to "kick the beam," and turn the scale in their favor. I trust I shall not so much as seem to be unmindful of the kindness of many others—both ladies and gentlemen—if I here acknowledge my obligations for personal favors to John G. Gilbert and W. W. Dutcher, whose living faith is not without demonstrative illustrations in the earnest work of their hearts and hands.

I have delivered two lectures in this place to good audiences, and the public interest in the subject is increasing through all this region. Mr. S. Hellyar is the right arm and spinal column of the cause in Warren, and he stands erect, with a smiling countenance, under the weight of moral and financial responsibility that is inseparable from his position. But the carriage is waiting at the door to convey me to Ware Village where I am to speak to-night, and on this account I suspend the function of writing. Hoping that the reader may find something more interesting and instructive in the additional space I might otherwise have occupied, I remain fraternally and in the spirit.

S. B. B.

P. S. Mrs. Hatch has recently rented a cottage at Hopedale for her mother, who has just removed to that place. Mr. and Mrs. Currier, of Lowell, are at North Brookfield. I learn that Mrs. C. is held in high estimation as a test and speaking medium in the places she has visited, and I doubt not, both herself and husband will be sure to make and to leave a very favorable impression in every place they be called to visit.

S. B. B.

LEWIS B. MONROE lectured before the Spiritualists of Portland, Me., on Sunday last.

EQUAL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN VERMONT.

We have received, with a request to publish, a copy of the following petition, which is now in circulation for signatures in the Green Mountain State. It would seem that the late Free Convention in that State is to be followed up by a vigorous attack upon that stronghold of conservatism, the enforced civil disability of woman.

"IF WE ARE NOT REPRESENTED, WE ARE SLAVES."—House of Rep., Mass., 1764.

A PETITION FOR EQUAL RIGHTS.

To the Hon. Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Vermont:

We, your petitioners, citizens of Vermont, request you to consider the following principles, that were adopted by the people of this country, in their memorable struggle for Independence:

1st. "That taxation and representation are inseparable." The women of this State pay a large amount of taxes, but there is no legal provision enabling them to represent this tax, by their vote, or by the election of a representative.

Many women pay taxes to support public schools, and have children attending them, but are not allowed any voice in appropriating the money, in the construction of a school-house, or in the selection of a teacher. This is a peculiar hardship, when we consider them the best educators of children, and more interested in their comfort and progress than men are.

2d. "Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed."

Women are governed by the laws of the State; but there is no legal provision enabling them to express their opinion of the justice or injustice of the laws, or to give their consent to them; and when we consider that the earnings, person and children of the wife belong to the husband and are under his control, we have a right to believe that they would object to the justice of such laws, because good men do not wish for such legal power and control, and bad men should not have it.

Therefore we respectfully request you to so change the laws that women may have the same legal rights and privileges that men have, and be subject to the same restrictions and disabilities—so that the rich inheritance of a just and equal government that our fathers and mothers of the Revolution sought to establish for themselves and their posterity, may be enjoyed equally by all their children, whether they are men or women.

This petition is accompanied by a letter addressed to reformers, urging their co-operation, and answering some of the common objections against woman's participation in political affairs. The following extracts from the reports of committees to the Legislature of Ohio and Wisconsin, are to the point, and worthy of consideration:

"In our political campaigns, all parties are anxious to secure the co-operation of women. They are urged to attend our political meetings; and even in our mass meetings, when whole acres of men are assembled, they are importunately urged to take a conspicuous part, sometimes as the representatives of the several States, and sometimes as the donors of banners and flags, accompanied with patriotic speeches by the fair donors. And in great moral questions, such as temperance, for example, she often discharges a large amount of the labor of the campaign. But yet when it comes to the crowning act of voting, she must stand aside—delicately forbids—that is too masculine, too public too exposing, though it could be done, in most cases, with as little difficulty and exposure as a letter can be taken out or put in the post-office. But, with all our dainty notions of female proprieties, women are, by common consent, dragged into court as witnesses, and subjected to the most scrutinizing and often indecent examinations and questions."

"It is prejudice, custom, long established usage, and not reason, which have demanded the sacrifice of woman's natural rights of self-government; a relic of barbarism, still lingering in all political, and nearly all religious organizations. To declare, therefore, that a voice in the government is the right of all, and then give it only to a part, is to renounce even the appearance of principle."

"Let no one imagine that he can dispose of this question by a contemptuous fling at strong-minded women; for it may be that democracy, too, to restrain and overawe the ruffianism of man."

The letter adds:

This view is supported by the effect of woman's voting in Canada, as described by an eye-witness: "The first woman who came to vote, was a large property-holder in Toronto; with marked respect the crowd gave way as she advanced. She spoke her vote, and walked quietly away, sheltered by her womanhood."

And when we remember that our independence was gained by promising laws of EQUALITY and JUSTICE, and that the Constitution of the United States coincided with these promises, so that women are eligible to the offices of President and Vice-President; and that power was retained by the States to fulfill their part; there can be no excuse for State Constitutions and laws remaining in violation of these promises, when the subject is fairly presented to the people and the legislatures; because a refusal to repeal them would be a public declaration, that fraud and deception are better than truth and freedom, and be a disgrace to the voters of a free, enlightened and Christian people.

This letter is signed by Dr. H. S. BROWN, of North Clarendon, and JOHN LONDON and NEWMAN WEEKS, of Rutland.

Suicides and their Cause.

"The late suicide of Mr. Wills Upson, a prosperous merchant of Waterbury, Conn., was caused by Spiritualism."

So says a paragraph now going the rounds. But a gentleman well acquainted with Mr. Upson informs us that the real cause was depression of mind consequent upon the destruction by fire of a manufactory—that of Brown & Brothers, in which Mr. U. was a large shareholder and manager. The loss of property occasioned by this calamity, together with his sympathies in behalf of a large number of operatives thrown out of employment, are believed to have so wrought upon his sensitive nature as to lead to the fatal result. This, at least, is far more probable than that it was caused by Spiritualism. For, in the first place, there is nothing in this belief to lead one to suicide; and secondly, if there were, why should not Mr. Upson have been led to the deed before—he having been a Spiritualist for several years?

But to what shall we attribute the following case of self-mutilation, which is but a single remove from suicide?—

"Mrs. Chadwick, wife of Mr. George Chadwick of Peekskill Hollow, Putnam County, N. Y., cut off her hand between the wrist and elbow, while laboring under religious excitement. She had recently been frequently heard to say: 'If thine hand offend thee, cut it off.' The wound is a terrible one, and her recovery is doubtful."—*Ecch.*

Will our sectarian friends be satisfied to have this melancholy event charged upon the Bible or Christianity? And yet with how much better reason could this be done, than can be given for attributing many cases which have occurred to Spiritualism.

EXTRAORDINARY.—A writer in the *Christian Repository* with an astonishing rashness of generosity, offers to pay \$100, to any medium "who will cross Lake Champlain at Burlington, in open day, without any visible human agency." A certain Nazarene that we read of performed a feat of this character gratis. What a pity he were not alive to-day to avail himself of such extraordinary inducements as the above. If a few more dimes were added, we doubt not our liberal gentleman could accomplish what a predecessor of his failed in, and induce some medium to precipitate himself from the pinnacle of a temple.

FELLOWSHIP WITHDRAWN.—At the Universalist Convention held week before last at Bethel, Vt., fellowship was withdrawn from Rev. Gibson Smith of South Shaftsbury, Vt., now of Camden, Me.

FREE SPEECH—FREE CONVENTIONS.

BROTHER NEWTON:—Would it not be best, at the next "Free Convention," to discuss first what constitutes "Free Speech"? Is there freedom, unless each person in attendance has opportunity, and an equitable part of the whole time set apart for the Convention? Should a partial elevated platform, for select speakers, be reared and sustained in a Free Convention; or a Business Committee be appointed to select persons and subjects for a thousand free souls to think and talk upon?

I see by the last Age that "speakers have been engaged" for the Free Convention at Utica. I would like to know what portion of time will belong to those ten speakers "engaged," if the Convention is to be free for all; also who "engaged" those speakers; where such authority is to be found.

To me, there is no freedom in a partial business committee, selected speakers, and an elevated platform.

Great modest souls will never be heard from in such "Free Conventions."

NATH'L RANDALL.

ST. JOHNSBURY, Vt.

As to the "speakers engaged" for the Utica Convention, we understand the facts to be these: Persons designing to be present and to speak on the occasion, were requested to indicate such intention on signing the call. Those who have done this are considered "engaged" on their own authority. Others have the same authority, doubtless, to engage themselves, if they choose. The object in securing and announcing speakers beforehand, we presume, is to assure hearers that something will be said worth going to hear.

The term "free," as applied to a convention, seems to be understood in different senses by different persons. We certainly should not recommend the calling of public assemblages, in which every attendant is to feel "free" at any time to "blow off steam" on any topic, regardless of order or decorum. Freedom, in a convention, is of no value, without some sort of order. Two or more persons cannot exercise their right of "free speech" at the same time to edification; nor should one take an undue share of the time, or talk on irrelevant subjects.

If individuals lack sufficient sense of propriety to observe proper order of their own accord, there should be some mentor to aid them by expressing the general sense of the assembly.

Hearers have rights as well as speakers; and the former generally constitute by far the larger part of such assemblies. They have the right to determine whether they will listen to one who interests and instructs them, or be bored by some impracticable hobby-ride; and they may protect themselves against the latter by means of a business committee and selected speakers, if they choose—such committee, of course, being responsible to its constituents for a proper discharge of its duties.

In a popular gathering, all cannot be speakers, at least without prolonging sessions equal to those of Congress, where both talkers and listeners can vote themselves pay at the rate of "eight dollars a day" all round—and if speakers who are "selected" by any fair method are allowed to express their thoughts without restraint on the topic in hand, it may properly be called a free convention.

A. E. N.

A PRACTICAL SUGGESTION.

"The great evil in our agriculture is, that we attempt too much with too little means. We spread over too much ground, and the consequence is, no field is cultivated as it ought to be. Nature is a bountiful mother, but if neglected, she withholds her gifts. If we scatter our manure and our labor for her crops, she will increase them; but if we withhold what is needed, we may dig in vain. We believe that if our farmers would bestow the manure and labor upon thirty acres we have every thing we desire, they would harvest heavier crops, and

So says one of our journals devoted to agriculture, and we incline to think it is pretty near the truth. It has been the almost universal admission of intelligent farmers with whom we have conversed on the subject,—and our inquiries relative to it commenced many years ago,—that most of them would be really better off to give away one half of their lands, and expend the same amount of labor, etc., on the more thorough culture of the remaining half. If this be true—if it be even an approximation to truth—is not the present state of things a very reprehensible one? Are not these landholders playing the dog-in-the-manger towards the balance of Humanity? There are thousands of landless families seeking a precarious subsistence in our cities, unable to buy farms at the common rates, and equally unable to remove to the far west, where lands are cheaper, who, we think, would gladly accept of, and support themselves from, these surplus tracts, could they be allowed to do so.

Many are of opinion,—and there is certainly some shadow of reason for the idea—that individuals have no right to claim exclusive and entire ownership of any portion of God's earth, any more than of the air or sunlight. Be that as it may, what possible justice or propriety can there be in holding in one's grasp a portion which not only is of no real value, but a means of impoverishment, to the holder; and which might yet be a priceless boon to some less favored brother in the great family?

Our suggestion, therefore, is, that those farmers and landholders who see the fact to be as above stated, should set off such portions of their landed estates as they cannot cultivate to advantage, or as their own reasonable wants do not require, and give up these for the benefit of landless humanity. Such dedicated lands might be taken in trust by either town, county or state commissioners, specially appointed, or by voluntary associations of responsible persons organized for the purpose, who should properly apportion the same to worthy applicants who would enter upon immediate occupation. Such commissioners, or associations, could also take measures to aid temporarily those who might require it, in the erection of the necessary buildings, and the procurement of agricultural implements requisite to make a beginning.

Without doubt the soil of New England even, sterile as it is, could support double or treble its present population, under an improved system of agriculture. The commissioners or associations we have suggested might, in connection with this matter, do much to awaken interest in improved methods of culture, and to diffuse information respecting them.

Among the numerous schemes of Reform now agitated, is not this suggestion worthy of serious attention? Who will move in it, by setting a practical example of surrendering to Humanity that which is of no use to themselves?

A. E. N.

Spiritualism in Earthly Misfortunes.

We are permitted to make the following extract from a private letter written by J. S. RYMAN, Esq., a distinguished barrister of London, Eng., to Mrs. S. J. Newton:

"Since I had the pleasure of your company at Ealing, the world's sun has become dark and murky—obscured. It does not shine as then. And yet the spiritual sun shines more brightly. I am well and happy; and with the many spirit-blessings that are mine, I do not grieve for the loss of temporal. My gain indeed has been great, and I am thankful to my Maker for his goodness in having vouchsafed to me such manifestations as converted me from infidelity, from a profane of the Bible, to a belief in God, and to a love of his word; and produced in me a heartfelt desire to do His will on earth as it is done in heaven—Spiritualism converted me to a firm belief in Immortality."

Entertaining and Instructive.

FAIRY LORE—No. 2.

BY EMMA HARDINGE.

THE COUNCIL OF NIGHT.

The little harebell with its tiny peal of summons had ceased; fairies, old and young, tall and short, varying from one inch to three feet high, were all assembled, at the solemn call of King Reform and Queen Progress. The outer world was sleeping; unresting spirits—such as were too happy or too wretched to slumber in the shadowy arms of night—alone flitted in thought through the dark halls of space, or roamed in aspiration through the starry courts of heaven.

I was neither happy nor wretched, yet supremely did I love the mystic stillness of the moonlit hour. The dim echoes of the world's wild clash come faintly on the ear at midnight, like the memory of distant bells. Their harsh, strong peal would rend the sense like painful dissonance in too close proximity; but, borne by the lengthening hours through the wastes of time, they come sweetly softened into the lull of pleasant memories, from daylight to darkness. Then the kingdom of the invisible, the deep mystery of life, the strong unseen, comes out like the stars—worlds of power revealed by the darkness, and absolutely concealed by the garish light of day. The existence of other worlds, like fairies and stars, is only a revelation of darkness, while sorrow and death are the midnight vaults upon which blessings and immortality are mapped out like stars. The phosphorescent bodies of the green-robed fairies then, alone made visible in the gloom of night and shining like a star, a grief, or a spirit, from out the blackness, become apparent to such vagrant strollers as myself, while the deep stillness suffered their silver-toned whispers to beat the air, and bring to my listening ear revelations of fairy policy.

Now the council to which, on a certain midsummer eve, I was thus an unobserved auditor, was conducted on this wise: The assembly was held according to the strict rule of fairy conventions, in a beautiful green dell, where a multitude of bell-shaped wild flowers formed a convenient harbor in case of foul weather. A large green patch of open sward had already been marked out with that mysterious symbol of eternity which intuition, unskilled in the angular geometry of religion, always conceives of as the deific emblem, namely, a circle; and here the little magicians of Nature proceeded to enact their unholy, because unsanctified, because unhappied, unsprinkled, unanointed, unparsonized, and therefore unholy rites. First in the very gleam of their jolly little hearts (delighted to live, grateful for the boon of life, and stupidly ignorant how to testify their gratitude except by cheerfulness), they danced a tripping measure to the clang of harebells, trumpet-lilies, and the snapping of lady-finger castanets. Then they sang—oh wicked little Pantheists!—"Glory to God," they called it, but pious men would have pronounced it to be invocations to the bright stars—praises of the kind shining Lady Moon, enraptured laudations of the sparkling waterfalls, and tender love songs to the flowers and butterflies. Poor ignorant fays! They thought these pretty things were all brothers and sisters, the work of one dear Father's hand,—a large parti-colored family, each launched into life in a little boat of its own, but sailing on the same broad ocean of existence, and bound for the same port of immortality, steered by the same pilot, Progress, and governed by the same Almighty Master, whose seal was found on rock, river, bird, beast, fairy and mortal.

And so they praised the Father in sweet communion with his works, and then the unsanctified little gluttons set to work to make a feast. They called it "The Lord's Supper;" first, because they believed it the Lord's gift; secondly, because they conceived they partook of the Divine nature in the works of the Divine hand; thirdly, because they thought it very good religion to enjoy the meal their beautiful Master had spread for them; and lastly, because they, the narrow-minded philosophers, imbibed the vulgar, anti-saintly notion that a well-blessed spirit must have a well-supplied body to lodge in, and that a hungry body was but a poor apology for a well-fed soul.

"Eat, my fays!" cried King Reform; "practice, not preaching, is our motto. A starving fairy is always a poor moralist, and if money be the root of all evil with mortals, want is the parent of all crime with fairies,"—a sentiment so heterodox that it was fortunate the tractarian societies were all asleep in their warm beds, otherwise they would have felt themselves bound to order ten thousand more bibles to feed the souls of starving operatives with on the spot, and clothed ten thousand more naked, houseless wretches with small pamphlets entitled, "Groans from the Bottomless Pit;" or "God's mercy manifest in eternal torment," before they had sat down to their own luxurious breakfasts. As it was, however, the impious sentiment fell as flat on the ears of mortality as the parable of the good Samaritan, and merely found a faint echo in spirit-land where Queen Progress had some very near relatives. In fact, many of "the spirits" attended these meetings, and this may account for the confusion which sometimes arises concerning the real personages who figure in the worlds of supernaturalism.

All minds being at length composed by the due observance of the useful and temperate laws of natural existence, namely, the merry dance, the cheerful song, the generous feast, the fairies proceeded to open the business of the meeting as follows:

An old fairy, whose wrinkled face and spectacled nose gave token of an unusually lengthened pilgrimage, arose, and at once the whole band, with that foolish and superstitious reverence for age which once distinguished the patriarchs, but which young 19th century has so judiciously ignored as old foginess, became silent, and bent a respectful ear to what the ancient of days had to say.

"Weary and long have been the years of my pilgrimage," began the old fay, "and still I shall have to go down to the valley of nothingness with the aim of my existence broken and lost. It is well known to every intelligent spirit amongst us, that the object of our creation is to attain to immortality; that there is no possibility of attaining anything like happiness in our little lives, without the hope of this prolonged existence; that storms and tempests, and hunger and pain, war and strife, and a thousand little hardships which afflict a mere rudimental and transitory state of being, render such a bubble of existence an utter failure, without the certainty, to say nothing of the hope, of a better life; and that therefore to die, or pass away into annihilation without this glorious boon, is rather to punish than bless us by calling us into existence at all. It is also a well-understood fact in fairy policy, that our worthy rulers, to wit—King Reform and Queen Progress—have been appointed to conduct the fairy world up to that point where they could earn for themselves this most inestimable boon of

life eternal;* and therefore that all sprites, fairies, gnomes, or other malicious parties who interfere in any way to prevent its attainment, are guilty of the highest dereliction from the understood rule of right written in every fairy heart, and that the highest aim of fairy policy should be to over-reach and defeat their malice.

"Surely," continued the venerable old fay, "nothing can be a more deplorable spectacle than that which you now look upon and are listening to in my own person. Behold me, fellow fairies! ready in the course of nature to give up a ghost which has been all my life toiling to preserve and adorn its identity. Of what avail is my life to me now, if it must cease to be? Why is my memory made holy with sweet affection for my kind, beautiful by the appreciation of beauty, and radiant by the acquisition of knowledge, if all is to be scattered to the viewless winds, and this aggregation of sweet clinging, thinking, active life, is to be nothing? I look with agony upon yonder boundless vault, with its starry eyes and thick strewn pearls of light, if mine eyes shall never again behold them. I would be content to live forever, if I might do no more than gaze on the sailing moon;—she looks so very beautiful that I feel as if she breathed and heaved pulses of silver life. She moves, too, and speaks to our earth, for do we not hear the plants and trees answer her, and grow and die, blossom and sleep, as she bids them; she talks to the ocean, and the rivers come and go at her bidding. I have seen her descend to bathe in the glassy lake and adorn herself with ten thousand glistening gems when she came in solemn pomp to visit the leaping fountain. Besides, I cannot think how I can cease to inhale the perfume of the violet—I love violets so very, very dearly. There is a bank yonder, amidst which I have many acquaintances, and they have all told me, they shall live again. Their eyes of blue will close, and their sweet breath will exhale for the last time as violets, but the night winds will bear their spirits to Nature's work-shops and remould purer atmosphere out of their ever sweet breath, while flower, leaf and root will be used to make butterflies, and perhaps one day chirp on the waving willow in the form of a dainty blue bird.

"I love, too—oh, I love my kind!" cried the poor sprite, rising in enthusiasm with his subject. "I love my little ones and a sweet sylph that once winged her way with me through the glancing greenwood shade. My bright-eyed fays and lily-loving companion, how dearly do I love thee! I have hidden thee in my coat of green when the pattering hail wounded thy tender form, and climbed through cloud and mist to bring thee down pure mountain dew to bathe thy rosy brows. I have stolen the zephyr's evening balm to fan thy golden heads, and sped o'er tallest cliffs, through briery roads and far-off swamps, to gather marshy lanterns for thy sports.

"Ah me! I would live on eternal years of toil unnumbering, might I but live to pleasure those I love. Immortals, too—I have so striven to aid them, I thought my services might be esteemed when reckoned up as worth the gift of life. I've guarded little children from their birth, presided at their sports, and crowned their brows with lilies when they died. I've whispered danger to belated travellers, and upheld many a foot from falling. I've hung on the assassin's hand, and made it heavy—dashed the cup from many a drunkard's lip, and weighed like lead on the arms of gamblers. When death was near a dwelling, I've striven to tell the tale of warning, and many and many a good prescription I've whispered in the ears of those who would listen to my fairy promptings, but alas, alas! when I came to present my record to the custom-house, which, I was informed, would grant me a passport to the realms of immortality, to my great dismay I found all my store of wealth was pronounced contraband. The affection I had manifested for my own kindred, I was told, was an absolute sin, seeing that I ought to hate father, mother, wife and child, if need be, for the sake of the glorious kingdom; and as I professed myself an aspirant for its honors, my first duty should have been to turn my back on all I loved, because they did not believe as I did.

"As for my services to unbaptized babes, they were merely ministering to the opposition kingdom, since all such of due course belonged there until they were duly sprinkled and blessed, after which the ministry of any spirit out of the heavenly custom-house would be of necessity evil, instead of good, while all my little efforts to befriend mortality were either set down to the credit of the government, or another pettifogging system of excise they call coincidences, which has neither a government nor any organization that I could find out, and in my own opinion is merely a custom-house device to cheat poor fairies out of their dues in the name of chance.

"I die, then," continued the disconsolate old sprite, "after a long life, spent, as I deemed, in usefulness, to find it has been all utterly wasted. I have no hope, no certainty that I shall ever live again; and why I ever was born, except in the dark doom of annihilation, to satisfy the cruel pastime of a magician who could not make me happy, would not make me better, I don't know. I wish some intelligent spirit, as the last favor I can ever receive, would kindly tell me why I ever was born."

To this pitiful appeal the dejected fairies all shook their heads sadly. Not one of them had a word to say. In fact, as the poor old fay had suggested, if the end of a moment's brier existence, if the individualization of a moment was to end in the utter annihilation of eternity, or the still more horrible fact of eternal torment, the ignorant little sprites might well be puzzled to know why they were born at all.

At last one of the more inquiring among them ventured to ask if no kind of alternative had been offered by which the

* It may be here necessary to inform the unlearned reader that European fairies are commonly supposed to be mere evanescent emanations from the natural world, endowed with a fleeting and transitory life-principle, but not with immortality. Many beautiful legends are founded upon the efforts of the poor sprites to attain to their much prized desideratum. Baron Fongue, in his spiritual romance of Undine, and several other still more ancient writers, have placed the boon of immortality within the reach of their sprites, on the condition of their union with mortals; hence the strong anxiety on the part of all marine hobgoblins to seduce unwary mortality into their damp habitations, where, by dint either of threats, or, possibly—as in the case of Undine—blandishments, and the profuse display of aquatic jewelry, they might induce them to unite their fate with these otherwise mere bubbles on the ocean of life. I have never heard that these unions are productive of good or happiness to the mortal, however efficacious they were supposed to be in conferring souls on the sprites. Moreover, I believe they are chiefly confined to water spirits, whose negative aqueous natures appear to crave the stimulating property of the human aqueous vito. Vampires and gnomes proceed on a far more objectionable mode of prolonging their existence, while the sylphs, fairies and flowery existences of whom I am writing, time out of mind, have been elevated to the rank of immortal beings, simply through the performance of a certain amount of good service rendered to humanity, which thereby elevated them into the dignity of guardian spirits, made them worthy subjects of King Reform, who himself is as old as the world, and useful allies of Queen Progress, who is popularly supposed to be the female St. Peter, who keeps the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.

dying fairy could exchange his contraband goods into legitimate stuff; to which he replied with some reluctance, that there had been a proposition made, it was true, but the conditions were such as no honest fairy could comply with, and therefore—but ere he could conclude the sentence the eager throng, stimulated almost to a frenzy of joy by the remotest prospect of obtaining the desired boon, broke in with searching inquiries into the "conditions."

Slowly and sadly the old fairy pulled out from one of the pockets of his green paletot a number of little pamphlets of various sizes. They were all inscribed with different titles, such as Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Unitarian, Episcopalian, &c., &c., &c.; all and each claimed that its own particular custom-house was the only true and genuine entrance to the gate of the kingdom, and all and each ended with the same valedictory, "Believe and be saved, or disbelieve and be damned."

"See, now," continued the poor fay, piteously, extending the thousand and one pamphlets to his astonished auditory—"each of these—"arians" claims to be the only true and saving road; and how, in the name of the one God, was I to judge between so many ways of getting at him. The land-marks have all been lost ages ago. The pilots were dead and buried more than a thousand years since, and those who now set up to show the way never either walk or sail in it themselves. They tell me I must believe, and they can't tell me who or what I am to believe in. They tell me of things that happened a thousand or more years ago, and can't refer me to a single witness; and when I inquired if they wouldn't please to refer me to some respectable party now living and able to testify to that they do know, they tell me God never speaks to his children nowadays, and never did, except they were desperately wicked and lived eighteen hundred years ago; that since that time it was blasphemous to talk to or of him except through the regular custom-house (if one could but find out which the regular one was), and that as the officers were all highly paid for doing their duty, so they must know all about it, although they could give no proof of their knowledge.

"Now, although these were hard terms, dear friends, still I thought I would try to believe; and as I began to think how impossible it was to do so at will, and yet I saw how many passports were granted, it at last occurred to me whether making believe would not do as well. Upon strict inquiry, I found this was the case with at least two-thirds of those who passed; but when I discovered that if my wife and little ones would not make believe too (and as I felt sure they were too honest to do so), that I should be expected to sing and rejoice whilst they were blazing in fire and torments, I indignantly rejected the passport altogether, although it was offered me on these terms by at least three-score of eager excitement. And so to the pit I must go, my fellow fairies, in darkness, hopelessness, night eternal! My only comfort is, however, that the hell they told me of is so detestable, so blasphemous to the character of the dear Father who made sunlight and stars, flowers, butterflies and fairies; while the heaven is so dismal, impossible and unlike, that I question whether annihilation is not after all the happiest lot of the three."

So saying he expired—a slight twinkle of satisfaction lighting up for a brief moment his violet eyes; and whilst certain spirits who, unperceived by the fairies, slyly winking to each other, bore off a dapper little invisible form which ascended directly out of the dead fairy's head and bore a marked resemblance to that venerable person when he was young and handsome, his sorrowing relatives proceeded to enter his shell in the cup of a newly-blown fuschia, and then sternly resumed the business of the meeting in the resolutions which will be submitted to the public on some future occasion.

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