



DEVOTED TO RATIONAL SPIRITUALISM AND PRACTICAL REFORM.

A. E. NEWTON AND S. B. BRITTAN, EDITORS. PRINCIPAL OFFICE OF PUBLICATION, AT NO. 14 BROMFIELD STREET, (UP STAIRS,) BOSTON, MASS. TERMS, TWO DOLLARS A YEAR, IN ADVANCE.

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Entertaining and Instructive.

A SPIRITUAL SUBPCENA.

Some dozen years ago, I passed a couple of early summer months in Devonshire, fishing: changing one picturesque scene of sport for another, always disbelieving that I should find so fair a place as that last quitted, and always having pleasantly to acknowledge myself wrong. There is indeed an almost inexhaustible treasure of delicious nooks in that fertile county, which comprehends every element of landscape beauty—coast and inland, hill and valley, moor and woodland—and excels in nothing more than in its curved rivers. What cliff-like and full-folaged banks about their sources, and what rich meadows sprinkled with unrivalled kine, as they broaden towards the sea! At the close of my tour, I was lodging in a farmhouse near a branch of the Exe, rather regretful at the thought of having so soon to shoulder my knapsack and return to native Dorset, near a certain provincial town of which county, and in a neighborhood without a single tree in sight, or a stream within sound, it was my lot to dwell. We had lately thrown out a bow-window to the drawing-room there, but why, I cannot tell, for there was certainly nothing to see from it. What a difference between such a spot and my then abode, from the windows of which a score of miles of undulating and varied landscape could be discerned, with the old cathedral towers of the capital city standing grandly up against the southern sky.

It is not true that people who live in picturesque places do not appreciate them, but only that they require to be made to understand their good fortune. Michael Courtney, the good man of the farm, and like all his class, a thorough stay-at-home, could not discover what I found in the look-out from his house to make such a fuss about; but his wife, who had once paid a visit to her son when in business in Birmingham, knew perfectly well. Concerning which son, Robert, by the by, there was a sad tale. He was the only child of the good pair, and one who should have been there at Cowles, the right hand of his father, and the comfort of his loving mother; but the young man had decided otherwise. He had never taken to farming, but had grieved father hugely by hankering after mechanical studies, which the old agriculturist associated almost with the black art itself.—Thinking himself to have a gift for the practical sciences, Robert had got apprenticed in Birmingham, and for some time bade fair to acquit himself well. But it had not been farming to which he was in reality averse, so much as to restraint of any kind; and finding, after a little, that he could not be his own master at the lathe, any more than at the plough, he forsook his second calling likewise. This had justly angered Michael, and drawn from him, on the return of the lad, certain expressions which his young spirit unduly resented. There was a violent scene in that peaceful homestead of Cowles one day; and the next morning, when the house was astir, it was found that Robert had gone away in the night-time, nor had he since either returned home or written of his whereabouts.

It was a year ago and more by this time, during which period Mrs. Courtney had grown older than in the half-dozen years before, while the old man, himself, said the farm-people, had altered to the full as much as she, although, for his part, he never owned to it. It was not he who told me of the matter, but the gudewife, who was fond of me—as my vanity was obliged to confess—mainly because I was of the age of her lost lad, and so reminded her of him. I slept in the very room which had formerly been Robert's, and a very comfortable little room it was.

Here it was, very early one May morning, before even the earliest risers of the farm were up, that I was awakened by these three words, pronounced close to me in the distinctest tones: "The ferryman waits."

So perfectly conscious was I of having been really addressed that I sat up in my bed at once, and replied, "Well, and what is that to me?" before the absurdity of the intimation had time to strike me. The snow-white curtains of the little bed were completely undrawn, so that no person could have been hidden behind them. Although it was not broad daylight, every object was clearly discernable, and through the half-opened window came the cool, delicious summer air with quickening fragrance. I heard the dog rattle his chain in the yard as he came out of his kennel and shook himself, and then returned to it lazily, as though it was not time to be up yet. A cock crew, but very unsatisfactorily, leaving off in the middle of his performance, as though he had been mistaken in the hour. My watch, a more reliable chronicle, informed me that it wanted a quarter of four o'clock. I was not accustomed to be awakened at such a time as that, and turned myself somewhat indignantly on the pillow, regretful that I had eaten clotted cream for supper the preceding evening. I lay perfectly still with my eyes shut, endeavoring, since I could not get to sleep again, to account for the peculiar nature of my late nightmare, as I had made up my mind to consider it, until the cuckoo clock on the oaken stair outside struck four. The last note of the mechanical bird had scarcely died away, when again, close to my pillow, I heard uttered, not only with distinctness, but with a most unmistakable earnest-

ness, the same piece of information which had once so startled me already: "The ferryman waits."

Then I got up, and looked under the little bed, and behind it; into the small cupboard where my one change of boots was kept, and where there was scarcely room for anything else. I sounded the wall nearest my bed's head, and found it solid enough; it was also an outside wall; nor from any of the more remote ones could so distinct a summons have come. Then I pushed the window casement fully back, and thrust my head and bare neck into the morning air. If I was still asleep, I was determined to wake myself, and then, if I should hear the mysterious voice again, I was determined to obey it. I was not alarmed, nor even disturbed in my mind, though greatly interested. The circumstances of my position precluded any supernatural terror. The animals in the farm-yard were lying in the tumbled straw close by, and near enough to be startled at a shout of mine. Some pigeons were already circling round the dovecote, or pacing, sentinel-like, the little platforms before their domiciles; and the sound of the lasher, by whose circling eddies I had so often watched for trout, came cheerily and with inviting tone across the dewy meadows. The whole landscape seemed instinct with new-born life, and to have thoroughly shaken off the solemnity of dreary night. Its surpassing beauty and freshness so entirely took possession of me, indeed, that in its contemplation I absolutely forgot the inexplicable occurrence which had brought me to the window. I was wrapped in the endeavor to make out whether those tapering lines, supporting, as it appeared, a mass of southern cloud, were indeed the pinnacles of the cathedral, when close to my ear, close by, as though the speaker had his face at the casement likewise, the words were a third time uttered: "The ferryman waits."

There was a deeper seriousness in its tone on this occasion, an appeal which seemed to have touch of pathos as well as gloom; but it was the same voice, and one which I shall never forget. I did not hesitate another moment, but dressed myself as quickly as I could, and descending the stairs, took down the vast oaken door-bar, and let myself out, as I had been wont to do when I went betimes a fishing. Then I strode southward along the footpath leading through the fields to where the river-ferry was, some three miles off, now doubting, now believing, that the ferryman *did* wait there, at such an unusually early hour, and for me. I made such good use of my legs, that it was not five o'clock when I reached the last meadow that lay between me and the stream; it was higher ground than its neighbor land, and every step I took I was looking eagerly to come in sight of the ferry-house, which was on the opposite bank, and by no means within easy hailing distance. At last I did so, and observed, to my astonishment, that the boat was not at its usual moorings. It must needs, therefore, have been already brought over upon my own side. A few steps further brought me into view of it, with the ferryman standing up in the stern leaning on his punt-pole, and looking intently in my direction. He gave a great "hollo" when he recognized me, and I returned it, for we were old acquaintances.

"Well, Master Philip," cried he, as I drew nearer, "you are not here so very much betimes, after all; I have been waiting for you night upon half an hour."

"Waiting for me?" echoed I, "I don't know how that can be, since nobody knew that I was coming, and indeed I didn't know it myself, till"—And there I stopped myself upon the very verge of confessing myself to have been fooled by a voice. Perhaps the ferryman himself may be concerned in the trick, thought I, and is now about to charge me roundly for being taken across out of hours.

"Well, sir," returned the Genius of the River, turning his peakless cap hind before, which was his fashion when puzzled, and certainly a much more polite one than that common to his brethren of the land, of scratching their heads—"all I can say, as I was roused at half-past three or so by a friend of yours, saying as though you would be wanting me in a little on the north bank."

"What friend was that?" inquired.

"Nay, sir, for that matter, I can't say, since I didn't see him, but I *heard* him well enough, at all events, and as plain as I now hear you. I was asleep when he first called me from outside yonder, and could scarcely make any sense of it; but the second time I was wide awake; and third time, as I was undoing the window, there could be no mistake about—Be ready for Philip Reaton on the north bank," he said.

"And how was it you missed seeing my friend?" inquired I, as carelessly as I could.

"He was in such a hurry to be gone, I reckon, that as soon as he heard my window open, and knew he had roused me, he set off. His voice came round the east corner of the cottage, as though he went Exeter way. I wouldn't have got up at such a time, and at such a summons, for many other folks but you, I do assure you, Master Philip."

"Thank you," said I, though by no means quite convinced; "you're a good fellow, and here's five shillings for you. And now, put me across, and show me the nearest way by which I can get to the city."

Now if, by some inscrutable means, the ferryman—who had become the leading feature in my mind because of the mysterious

warning—or any accomplice of his, had played me a trick, and trumped up a story for my further bewilderment, they had not, I flattered myself, very much cause for boasting. I had evinced but slight curiosity about the unknown gentleman who had heralded my approach at daylight, and I had given them to understand that I had a real object in my early rising—that of reaching the capital city, at least ten miles away. But my own brain was, for all that, a prey to the most conflicting suggestions, not one of which was of final service towards an explanation of the events of the morning.

There was I, at a little after 5 A. M., with a walk before me of ten, and a walk behind me of three good Devon miles, breakfastless, without the least desire to reach the place I was bound for—and all because of a couple of *vox-et-præterea-nihilis*, without a body between them. I consumed the way in mentally reviewing all the circumstances of the case again and again, and by no means in a credulous spirit; but when I at length arrived at the city upon the hill, I was as far from the solution of the matter as when I started. That the ferryman himself, a simple countryman, should be concerned in any practical joke upon me, a merely fly-fishing acquaintance of a couple of weeks' standing; or that such persons as the Courtenays should have permitted the playing of it on a guest at Cowles, was only less astounding than the perfection of the trick itself—if trick it really was. But neither my feelings of anger, when I looked on the matter in that light, nor those of mystery when I took the more supernatural view of it, in anywise interfered with the gradual growth of appetite; and when I turned into a private room of the "Bishop's Head" in the High street, the leading idea in my mind, after all my cogitations, was Breakfast. If seven-and-forty mysterious voices had informed me that the ferryman was waiting *then*, I should have responded: "Then let him wait—at all events, while I eat a breakfast and sundries."

Although Exeter is as picturesque and venerable a city as any raven could desire to dwell in, it is not a lively town by any means, in a general way. A quiet, saintly solemn spot, indeed it is; excellently adapted for a sinner to pass his last days in—although he would probably find them among the longest in his life—and peculiarly adapted to that end in its very great benefit of (episcopal) clergy; but for a hale young gentleman of nineteen to find himself therein at nine o'clock on a fine summer morning, with nothing to do, and all the day to do it in, was an embarrassing circumstance.

"Nothing going on, as usual, I suppose?" inquired I, with a yawn at the waiter, when I had finished a vast refection.

"Going on, sir? Yessir. City very gay, indeed, sir, just now. Assizes, sir, now sitting. Murder case—very interesting for a young gentleman like yourself, indeed, sir."

"How do you know what is interesting?" retorted I, with the indignation of hobbledohyhood at having its manhood called in question. "Young gentleman, indeed! I am a man, sir. But what about this murder? Is the prisoner convicted?"

"Convicted, sir? Nossir; not yet, sir. We hope he will be convicted this morning, sir. A journeyman carpenter, one Robert Moles, have been and murdered a toll-keeper—killed him in the dead of night, sir, with a 'atchet; and his wife's the witness against him."

"That's very horrible," remarked I. "I didn't know a wife could give evidence."

"Nossir, not his wife, sir; it's the toll keeper's wife, sir.—She swears to this Moles, although it 'appened two months ago or more, sir. Murder will out they say; and how true it is! He'll be hung in front of the jail, sir, in a hopen place upon an 'ill, so almost everybody will be able to see it, bless ye!"

"I should like to hear the end of this trial—very much, indeed, waiter."

"Should you, sir?" fondling his chin. "It couldn't be done, sir—it could not be done; the court is crowded into a mash already. To be sure I've got a—But no, sir, it could not be done."

"I suppose it's merely a question of How much?" said I, taking up my purse. "Didn't you say had a?"

"A cousin as is a javelin-man, yessir. Well, I don't know but what it *might* be done, sir, if you'll just wait till I've cleared away. There, they're at it already!"

While he spoke, a fanfare of trumpets without proclaimed that the judges were about to take their seats, and in a few minutes the waiter and I were among the crowd. The javelin-man turning out to be amenable to reason and the ties of relationship, as well as not averse to a small pecuniary recompense, I soon found standing-room for myself in the court-house, where every seat had been engaged for hours. As I had been informed, the proceedings were all but concluded, save some unimportant indirect evidence, and the speech of the prisoner's counsel. This gentleman had been assigned to the accused by the court, since he had not provided himself with any advocate nor attempted to meet the tremendous charge laid against him, except by a simple denial. All that had been elicited from him since his apprehension, it seemed, was this: that the toll-keeper's wife was mistaken in his identity, but that he had led a wandering life late, and could not produce any person to prove an *alibi*; that he was in Dorsetshire when the murder

was done, miles away from the scene of its commission; but at what place on the particular day in question—the 5th of March—he could not recall to mind. This, taken in connection with strong condemnatory evidence, it was clear would go easily against him with the jury, as a lame defence indeed; although, as it struck me who had only gleaned this much from a bystander, nothing was more natural than that a journeyman carpenter, who was not likely to have kept a diary, should not recollect what place he had tramped through at any particular date. Why, where had I myself been on the 5th of March? thought I. It took me several minutes to remember, and I only did so by recollecting that I had left Dorsetshire on the day following, partly in consequence of some alterations going on at home. Dorsetshire, by the by, did the prisoner say? Why, surely I had seen that face somewhere before, which was now turned anxiously and hurriedly around the court, and now, as if ashamed of meeting so many eyes, concealed in his tremulous hands! Robert Moles! No, I had certainly never heard that name; and yet I began to watch the poor fellow with a singular interest, begotten of the increasing conviction that he was not altogether a stranger to me.

The evidence went on and concluded; the counsel for the prisoner did his best, but his speech was, of necessity, an appeal to mercy rather than to justice. All that had been confided to him by his client was this: that the young man was a vagabond who had deserted his parents, and run away from his indentures, and was so far deserving of little pity; that he had, however, only been vicious and not criminal: as for the murder with which he was now charged, the commission of such a heinous outrage had never entered his brain. "Did the lad look like a murderer? Or did he not rather resemble the Prodigal Son, penitent for his misdeeds indeed, but not weighed down by the blood of a fellow creature?"

All this was powerfully enough expressed, but was not evidence; and the jury, without retiring from their box, pronounced the young man "Guilty," amid a silence which seemed to corroborate the verdict. Then the judge put on the terrible black cap, and solemnly inquired for the last time whether Robert Moles had any reason to urge why sentence should not be passed upon him.

"My lord," replied the lad in a singularly low soft voice, which recalled the utterer to my recollection on the instant, "I am wholly innocent of the dreadful crime of which I am accused, although I confess I see in the doom that is about to be passed upon me a fit recompense for my wickedness and disobedience. I was, however, until informed of it by the officer who took me into custody, as ignorant of this poor man's existence as of his death."

"My lord," cried I, speaking with an energy and distinctness that astonished myself, "this young man has spoken the truth as I can testify."

There was a tremendous sensation in the court at this announcement, and it was some minutes before I was allowed to take my place in the witness-box. The counsel for the crown objected to my becoming evidence at that period of the proceedings at all, and threw himself into the legal question with all the indignation which he had previously exhibited against midnight murder; but eventually the court overruled him, and I was sworn.

I stated that I did not know the prisoner by name, but that I could swear to his identity. I described how, upon the fifth of March last, the local builder being in want of hands had hired the accused to assist in the construction of a bow window in the drawing-room of our house in Dorsetshire.

The counsel for the prosecution, affecting to disbelieve my sudden recognition of the prisoner, here requested to know whether any particular circumstance had recalled him to my mind, or whether I had only a vague and general recollection of him.

"I had only that," I confessed, "until the prisoner spoke: his voice is peculiar, and I remember very distinctly to have heard it on the occasion I speak of; he had the misfortune to tread upon his foot-rule and break it, while at work upon the window, and I overheard him lamenting that occurrence."

Here the counsel for the accused reminded the court that a broken foot-rule had been found upon the prisoner's person, at the time of his apprehension.

Within five minutes, in short, the feelings of judge, jury and spectators entirely changed; and the poor young fellow at the bar, instead of having sentence of death passed upon him, found himself, through my means, set very soon at liberty. He came over to me at the ion to express his sense of my prompt interference, and to beg to know how he might shew his gratitude. I am not so mean a fellow as I seem," said he, "and I hope, by God's blessing, to be yet a credit to the parents to whom I have behaved so ill."

"What is your real name?" inquired I, struck by a sudden impulse.

"My real name," replied the young man, blushing deeply, "is Courtenay, and my home, where I hope to be to-night, is at Cowles Farm, across the Exe."

And so I had not been called so mysteriously at four o'clock in the morning, without a good and sufficient reason, after all.

HEALTH A RELIGIOUS DUTY.

In the course of an address lately made to the young men of Brooklyn, Rev. Henry Ward Beecher uttered the following sound sentiments, which we would gladly hear echoed from every pulpit in the land:—

A truly religious matter, is the subject of *health*; nothing is of more importance to the young man. A young man needs strong, vigorous health; he wished to ask the young men of the Christian Association, if while they were exploring the rum holes and gambling dens, whether they had at all considered what the thousands of young men, middle-aged men were doing in the matter of health. How is the young man to get the proper exercise? In billiards there is not exercise enough.—There is nothing more healthful than bowling; yet he would soon be bowled down in society should he go into any of the saloons in Brooklyn. There was rowing, and all the various games of ball; and if the Young Men's Christian Association of Brooklyn would only take this subject in hand they would be taking a step far in advance of any other city. He urged this matter most strongly upon the Association. He said that young men sit up too late—though he did not follow his own advice, nobody ever did; he thought no young man should ever see the backside of 10 o'clock at night. He suggested that perhaps the procuring of books for a library was not the most important to the Association. The faces of our young men are blanched white enough already, and their chests almost collapsed. When he came to look at the books in that library, he should not look to see how many volumes of theology they had, but how many books they had from which a young man could learn something of the world, into which they were born, and about that body upon which their natural and spiritual interests depend. If the church does not permit this matter, it will go on without the church; God is not half so careful about the church as church members are. He thought they should thus glorify God, in everything that makes a sound body as well as sound morals.

The exercises were then closed with singing and the benediction.

Does Sex Qualify Morality?

The common judgment of the majority, would lead one to infer that sex does qualify morality. Man is tolerated in saying and doing much, that would be generally considered intolerable if said and done by woman. Many immoralities that would bow and crush woman are lightly judged of in man. Man is permitted to outlive frailties—woman, never. Man's sins against virtue are counted as his 'wild oats,' the 'follicles of youth,' etc., but woman's are set down as inextinguishable stains. Woman becomes an outcast, for what man does with comparative, if not perfect, impunity. But is this all right—is it meeting out judgment as God metes it? Morality is an affluence of the conscience, of the soul, and has it yet been discovered that the soul has any diversity of sex? However true it may be that, according to our habits of thought, many things involving no particular morality may seem proper to man and improper to woman, we hold that all essential morality is just as binding upon man as upon woman. To use an old, homely proverb, 'what is sauce for the goose should be sauce for the gander,' and in morality, 'it is a poor shoe that does not fit both feet'—a poor morality that condemns one and spares another, on the score of sex. Happily for the dignity of morality, this invidious measure of judgment is slowly passing away. In a not distant hereafter, the world will have done with this discreditable and most unjust partiality.

Beautiful Illustration.

There is a fine engraving of Jean Paul Richter, surrounded by floating clouds, all of which are angels' faces; but so soft and shadowy, that they must be sought for, to be perceived.—It was a beautiful idea thus to environ Jean Paul, for whose ever reads him with earnest thoughtfulness will see heavenly features perpetually shining forth through the golden mists or rolling vapor. . . . Remember—this picture embodies a great spiritual truth. In all clouds that surround the soul, there are angel faces, and we should see them if we were calm and holy. It is because we are impatient of our destiny, and do not understand its use in our eternal progression, that the clouds which envelop it seem like black masses of thunder, or cold and dismal obstructions of the sunshine. If a man looked at his being as a whole, or had faith that all things were intended to bring him into harmony with the divine will, he would gratefully acknowledge that spiritual dew and rain, wind and lightning, cloud and sunshine, all help his growth, as their natural forms bring to maturity the flowers and the grain.—Mrs. L. M. Child.

"When man has withdrawn heart, soul, and senses, from external things, and keeps himself without impulse toward them, it is the great degree of union. Then man will not fall into error by mistake or negligence. He watches incessantly to preserve himself from it. If all do not see the soul, it is because their soul turns the senses from her, and makes them tend outward; for the soul is the true controller, and does all she wills."—Vedas.

