

THE COMING LIGHT

Vol. 4

APRIL, 1899.

No. 5

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A STORM SCENE.—By *Alfred Lambourne*.

The Coming Light

VOL. 4

APRIL, 1899

NO. 5

A STORM SCENE.

BY JOSEPHINE SPENCER.

In the deep valley a lake lies, margined by meadows;
Steep and high circle the mountains—
Dark with the shadows
Of rain-couds—black, vapor-carved fountains.

Dead in the lake lie the ripples—
A death-hush is over
The meadow—no flickers nor dimples
Of motion—but low droop the grasses and lower
The pink-cushioned clover.

Close lean the flowers, for cover
The leaved marsh-stalks pushing.

Is there some lethargy touching
The insects that hover?

Silence below—but above on the hillside a roar
As of waters down-rushing—the deep shadows lower;
Afar the trees bend—and a groaning
Comes from the forest—
From the lake and low meadow, a moaning—
The storm-flood down-pourest!

* * * * *

A lull in the tempest—like surges
Of music swift hushed—the lake, swaying
But now in fierce swells, into slow rythm merges,
The master Wind's baton obeying.

The rain lapses, lingers in cadence, then hushes
Its murmur—a silver shade creases
The cloud-folds with threads of soft fleeces;
Through the thin woof a golden beam rushes—
The tempest-swell ceases.

UNITE OR PERISH.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE NATIONAL UNION REFORM LEAGUE.

By W. D. P. BLISS.

THE Union Reform League, which was organized in San Francisco, Sept. 1897, and which for a while had its early local meetings in the hall connected with the publishing house of THE COMING LIGHT, has recently, after the tribulations usually incident to young organizations, taken upon itself a new national form and in that form is moving on to large success and national importance. Its new aim is not only to educate, which was its only aim when first formed, but also to unite in one strong organization the reform forces of the United States. It is in this that it is finding its success.

It has drafted a simple, concise platform of concrete practical measures, and is receiving favorable response from every quarter. It is organizing with a Vice President and Secretary for each State of the Union, and through them obtaining enrollment over the land. Among those who have already accepted Vice Presidencies are: The Rt. Rev. F. D. Huntington of New York, Prof. George D. Herron of Iowa, the novelist W. D. Howells, Gov. Pingree of Michigan, Senator R. F. Pettigrew of South Dakota, Mayor Jones of Toledo, Ohio, Eltweed Pomeroy of New Jersey, Prof. Frank Parsons of Massachusetts, H. N. Casson of Tennessee, Mrs. M. T. Maynard of Utah, Rev. F. M. Sprague of Florida, and others equally prominent in other States.

The League has also arranged to have departments to represent its work in prominent reform journals like the *Arena*, now edited by Paul Tyner, the first President of the League; the *American Fabian* of New York, the *Social Gospel* of Georgia, the *Coming Nation* of Ruskin, Tennessee.

Arrangements are also being made for a series of studies on each plank of the platform, prepared by such men as Profs. Commons, Bemis, Parsons, President Wells and others. Altogether the

work of the League is in a most promising condition. And there is need of such a union. Conditions are saying to this land what they said to the American Colonies during the years that preceeded the Revolution, "Unite or Perish."

Do we realize the conditions? Conservative authority puts the long time debts of the land, public, corporate and mortgage, at \$20,000,000,000. Some put the total indebtedness of the land, public and private, on long and short time debts, at no less than \$40,000,000,000. The assessed wealth of the United States in 1890 was less than \$26,000,000,000. The real wealth is of course more, but it is doubtful if the country, at forced sale, would bring its debts. And this is not all. According to the last national census expert on wealth, 9 per cent. of our people own 71 per cent of our wealth. Many believe the facts worse than this. But take this estimate. Who owns the debt? The nine per cent who are wealthy, largely own the debt; the ninety-one per cent who are comparatively poor, largely owe it. The assets then of those who have to pay the debt are only 29 per cent of the total wealth or \$7,250,000,000. With which they are trying to pay off \$20,000,000,000 and perhaps twice that on debts of all kinds. Is it a wonder that they fail? Is it strange that our small farmers toil all day for a pittance and when there comes a bad season or a dry year, that they fail and leaving their farms over to some mortgage company go themselves to swell the growing army of tramps? Is it strange that our artizans find themselves increasingly unable to maintain their unions, and compete in the market to see who can steal their neighbors' jobs? Is it strange that our smaller business men toil all day harder than any clerk and toss all night wondering how they can meet their engagements? Is it strange that our lawyers cannot collect, that our clergymen fail to get their salaries, that our physicians are tempted to thank God for an epidemic or a smallpox scare?

Nor is this all, nor half the truth. When men cannot get an honest living they will try dishonest methods. Gambling and speculation give some a gambler's chance. Crime claims an increasing number. In Massachusetts in a recent single year there was one arrest for every 29 persons, or one arrest for every six families in

and water the stock, but when new roads are built they clear no dividends. Capital to-day in New York is a drug upon the market. The people have been so robbed that it no longer pays to be a robber.

Hence capital is seeking new markets. Hence the movement for an open door in China; hence the "benevolent assimilation" at the point of the musket of Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippine Islands. Debt is the White Man's Burden. Beneath it he has succumbed. We must now take it up and place it upon heathen nations who have not yet been civilized or Christianized into debt. Such is capital's policy, as being carried out by Mr. McKinley "under the leading of God."

This policy, too, means not only new markets, but new chances for new franchises, new loans, new subsidies, new jobs. Mr. Carnegie can sell more plate armor made chiefly "to sell." Mr. Alger can supply more chemicals mixed with a little more beef. New millions can be made out of our annexed subjects.

It means more. It means an increased army, and to this capital is not averse. It is well to be prepared. Great armories are being built in all our cities with loop holes pointing down the streets. Camps, not mining camps, are being built in every mining section. Our railroad kings have wires from their offices to the War Department. It is well to be prepared. Rich men expect trouble, and when strong men cannot work and children cry for bread, there is likely to be trouble. So rich men favor the army. Let poor men's sons who cannot get work at home, and rich men's sons who rather enjoy rough riding over human bodies, go to our new possessions. Let them get their hand in at Porto Rico; let them practice their aim on Phillipino skulls; let them get a taste of blood in Cuba. It may all be useful some day nearer home.

Do I exaggerate conditions? Mr. McKinley told in his last message that there was prosperity in the United States. A California clergyman the other day said that there was no need for Christians to heed economic reform, that things were well as they are. But Republican authority reports that Mr. McKinley's Cabinet will have to face a deficit this fiscal year of at least \$150,000,000. The

clergyman above referred to, last week resigned his charge because his people were too poor to pay his salary. I do not know whether he still thinks there is no need of economic reform. The advance agents of prosperity, both secular and ghostly, have great difficulty in delivering their goods. But our exports, people say, are increasing. Exactly; when goods cannot be sold at home because the people are too poor, they must be exported. Reduce American wages low enough and speed our wheels fast enough and we can probably increase our exports still more; we might even export slaves for Mohammedan Philippine task masters or living targets for our new army to practice on. But we are told that our clearing houses report greater financial transactions than ever in our history. Undoubtedly. Last year there were formed ninety-two trusts, nearly two a week. This year prosperity is increasing and our financial transactions are even larger than last year. This year a new trust appears almost every morning. If the robber-barons that rule our industry could make a new steal every hour, our financial transactions would probably be larger still. No, Mr. McKinley; records of thefts do not prove that the country is prosperous. No, Mr. Clergyman; if Christians give no heed to applying their religion in business, they may be put out, not from their pastorships, but from the kingdom of Him who said "Do unto others as ye would that men should do unto you."

Is there no need that reformers unite? Can we divided expect to conquer capital united? Capital controls the Republican party. In California and in Pennsylvania, in Ohio and in New York, it nominates men for Senators who should wear the convict's stripes. It controls the pulpit and purchases the press. It has four great bureaus, one alone employing 150 clerks, sending out matter all the time to deceive people. Against that party dominated by capital, Democrats, Populists, Prohibitionists, even honest Republicans must unite. We must unite politically, but we must also unite for education. Politics without ideas are as a ship without a rudder. Education without politics is nationally as a rudder without a ship. We must draw together *all* the reform forces of the United States. To do this is the aim of The Union Reform League. The following is

its simple platform. Prof. Ely says it is one of the best he has seen and one upon which all reformers can unite. It is brief:

OBJECT.

To unite, all over the land, workers and believers in various lines of reform, and also to educate the people at large on the following immediate measures:

1. Direct legislation, including the initiative and referendum, to be applied to important measures.
2. Civil service reform in all departments of public service.
3. Reform in the system of political nominations, to give the people an opportunity to nominate directly.
4. Exemption from taxation of personal property and improvements on real estate up to a valuation of \$1000, and provision for a progressive inheritance tax.
5. The issue of money to be a sovereign act of government only.
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7. Public ownership and operation of natural monopolies, and the abolition of the contract system on all public works.
8. Employment on needed public works of those actually unable to secure work elsewhere.
9. The gradual reduction, by legal enactment, of the hours of labor, and limiting the age at which children may be employed.

Those who believe in this platform and on uniting—it need cost nothing—can send their names to the Secretary, Mr. Wm. H. Knight, 27 Bryson Block, Los Angeles, or to its President, Rev. W. D. P. Bliss, Alhambra, Cal.

We must "unite or perish."

IS A UNIVERSAL RELIGION POSSIBLE?

BY SELINA SEIXAS SOLOMONS.

IN THE innermost nature of man there is deeply implanted a mysterious something which we call the religious instinct. In studying the development of this instinct, we find it to have followed the general laws of natural evolution. In the beginning partaking of man's primitive and brutish nature, it has changed with his change and grown with his growth, until we now see existing upon the earth nearly all the various forms of religion that have ever prevailed. Thus, while the barbarous tribes of Africa and the islands of the Pacific are given up to the grossest superstitions, the Asiatics remain devoted followers of Buddha and Mahomet, the inhabitants of Europe are for the most part Catholics, and forty denominations of so-called Christian and other sects flourish in the United States.

From the degraded worship of a South Sea Islander to the code of ethics held by a cultivated man or woman in the centres of civilization seems to the superficial observer a vast distance of irreconcilable thought, but the earnest student of man recognizes in them respectively the lowest and highest rung of a ladder whose intervening steps are all the successive stages of religious belief of the centuries.

Now this religious development has always corresponded to the exact stage in mental and moral development that the individual, race or nation has reached.

The well-known paraphrase of Ingersoll, "An honest God is the noblest work of man," though somewhat shocking to orthodox ears, still contains a germ of truth, inasmuch as each human being invests the Deity with such attributes as he conceives to embody perfection. Thus each religious system is but the outward expression of the deepest needs and highest aspirations of its adherents. A man's creed is the expression of his finest conceptions of law and duty, hence his deduction that his own contains absolute truth, while others are mistaken and imperfect.

When we look about us and note the different forms of belief, even among people of similar environment and education, and each apparently satisfactory to its followers, we cannot avoid the conclusion that the fact of each adherent being what he is, renders it absolutely necessary that he should believe as he does.

The series of papers published a few years since by a leading magazine forcibly illustrates this. In explaining to the outside world "Why I am a Catholic" the writer describes his religion as being "in the highest sense rational, and which unites me to God in soul and body." The Quaker declares that the doctrines of the Society appeal to his understanding as "consistent, rational, and practical." Another declares that the beliefs and principles of the Unitarians are precious to his mind and have supported him through all life's vicissitudes, and the Presbyterian is convinced that his church is "the one in which I should be the happiest and most useful till I die."

Thus each advocate of these widely divergent and seemingly irreconcilable beliefs affirms in substance the same thing. His creed satisfies him;—is rational to him. Undoubtedly the writers are sincere, and undoubtedly the particular religion of each is the best that could possibly be devised for him.

Now it is evident that some great law must be in operation to account for this wide diversity of faiths and creeds, and for the great inequalities in spiritual development that they indicate. That body of thinkers known as Theosophists formulate this law as that of the successive re-incarnations on higher and higher planes of existence, of the spiritual monad or human ego, which must travel the entire round of creation before attaining to union with the divine spirit of the universe. It follows then, that the individual who in the course of these countless incarnations is working out his eternal destiny, is able to attain and appreciate only that degree of perfection to which the acts of his former lives entitle him, and this, not as an arbitrary decree, but by the natural operation of the law of cause and effect.

In the light of this philosophy we may regard the first appearance of religious instinct expressed in the blind worship of

natural forces as the dawning of spiritual light in these undeveloped people, who were the rude survivors of an extinct civilization.

The pure monotheism of the Hebrews was as far in advance of the idolatrous practices of the other Asiatic nations as these were an improvement on savage worship. The ethics of Christ were the flowering of this monotheism, but his pure and exalted teachings were far in advance of the comprehension of his professed followers, and not until to-day, two thousand years after their promulgation, have these sublime truths begun to be actualized in daily life.

But all forms and ceremonies are but the gross and earthly expression; the outward symbol which can be interpreted only by the initiated. The pure, white light of absolute truth, in passing through the imperfect media of men's minds, becomes clouded with error, refracted into the separate, colored rays of formal creed and dogma. To him who will patiently investigate, it is clear that the heart of all religions is one and the same. Thus we find, going back three thousand years, reference to "A Being who above the gods was the one God." Six hundred years before Christ it was said by Laotze, founder of Taoism, one of the three great religions of China, "Recompense injury with kindness." Confucius commented on this and modified it thus:—"With what, then, will you recompense kindness? Recompense injury with justice, and kindness with kindness." Buddha said, "Let a man overcome evil with good, for hatred does not cease by hatred at any time;—hatred ceases by love. This is an old rule." The Koran mentions with condemnation "him who pusheth away the orphan, and stirreth not others up to feed the poor."

Thus we see that this law of love is the essence and heart of all the creeds. The existence of a Mighty Power for Good, the Divine in the Human, the Brotherhood of Man,—this is the Universal Religion. All the world's prophets and sages have taught it, all the heroes and martyrs have practised it. It was thundered from Mount Sinai, spoken of in parables by Jesus of

Nazareth, repeated by Luther, and Wesley, and Channing, and all great souls who ever lived and tried to make men better. In this broad and high sense, we have, and have always had, a Universal Religion. If, however, we construe the expression to mean a definite form of worship, including certain articles of faith to which all must subscribe—we are basing our hopes on a mere chimera.

For how can there be any common ground save that of humanity between—let us say—the ignorant peasant telling over his beads, and the erudite scholar and thinker;—the one who would trace the workings of eternal law from the atom to infinite worlds, the other whose conception of law is limited to the caprice of a supernatural Man-God? Human beings can no more rise at a bound to grand conceptions of the Universe, overleaping the necessary steps in their spiritual evolution, than the child at school can be suddenly advanced from the alphabet to the fifth reader.

Having observed the marked falling-off, of late years, in the ranks of the orthodox, progressive people have rashly concluded that a wholesale abandonment of creeds is to result, but on careful investigation we find this extremely unlikely. True, there has been a general advance all along the line of religious thought, but this does not necessarily tend to universality of belief, the proof of which is—and there is an element almost humorous in this aspect of the subject—that everybody is as sure of himself, and his own beliefs as ever. While looking forward, in common with the rest of the world, to a union of faiths, each thinks his own is destined to be the Universal Religion. Who, then, is right? Will this favorite dream of enthusiasts ever be a waking fact? Eternal laws more wonderfully wise than our feeble thought can grasp, perhaps, forbid it. But what ought to be demanded of us all is that we should live up to our own highest beliefs. It is a common experience to meet persons professing the utmost piety who constantly transgress the most vital precepts of any and all religions. Such are perhaps to be mercifully dealt with on the theory that it is those who are lacking in

moral force who more than others require the leading-strings and props of doctrine and dogma. But when the day comes that sees all of us, whatever be our creed or philosophy, following this with perfect fidelity in every act of our lives, then indeed the world will become a Paradise, and the Millennium be near at hand!

You ask me to say a word about the Iowa College controversy. Personally, I am not interested in this struggle. I have no personal interest in what happens to me. I am utterly indifferent as to whether I stay in college or not. In some ways I should be freer to do my public work if I were not in the college. But the principle involved is so tremendous, that I shall fight the battle to the finish. I shall make no defense. But I shall defend the liberty of the truth to be spoken and heard. This is the only important college in America that has not been passed under the direct or indirect control and intimidation of money. If this college passes under the yoke, then the last citadel of free teaching is gone. For my brethren's sake, I will not submit to this bald and brutal force of money—not for a moment. I will not resign. If I go, the trustees must put me out, and the people will know why. If I must die institutionally, I will die with my back to the wall, standing for the freedom of the truth to the last breath. I will not alter nor retract one word at the bidding of sheer financial might. Between this materialism, that holds the world in tyranny and darkness, and spiritual liberty, there is war to the death. I will exhaust my life in doing what I can to arouse the people to destroy the spirit of materialism, and emancipate their souls and bodies. There will be no truce between us. The battle is on, and I am as serene and happy as a child on its mother's breast. I am not alone, for God and the people are with me, and that because the word I speak is the word of their liberty.—*George D. Herron in Social Gospel.*

Suffice it to say that in the process of time it appeared, and from the time that it has appeared the best of men have worshipped it, the wisest of men have thought for it, and the poets have sung for it and broken their hearts for it.

When Mazzini held up the banner inscribed with the words "God and the People" he raised the standard of a new religion, the watchword of a new faith, and the text which has formed the basis of the great preaching of the century. The two words God and People sum up in themselves the whole history of the last hundred years. It is around these two that the fight has waged, and scientist and ecclesiastic, philosopher and politician have equally and with ever varying success contested and striven, until in the fury of the combat the original causes of dispute have been lost to view, only to reappear in the lull of the fight, and to exasperate the warriors to still more strenuous exertions. And with regard to the actual results achieved by all this strife? As far as concerns the first of the two words, can it really be said that we are any nearer to an understanding of the idea which the word is intended to convey? Has all the toil of sages and orators been in vain? It is difficult to say, but it may be well for those who speak so confidently of a higher conception of religion ultimately prevailing to remember that to the open-minded spirit of inquiry which prevailed to so large an extent at the beginning of the century there has succeeded a spirit of inflexibility and of dogmatism. Then, men dreamed of a religion of humanity, or at all events of either no religion or something higher than that which then existed; now, the altars of the Old Faith are crowded with ardent worshippers, and the more onerous the demands of dogma the more devoted and eager the disciples. Mazzini's God has taken second place to the God of Pius the Ninth, and the red-shirted soldiers of the expulsion of the Papacy are either putting on or looking longingly for the cassocks of the Cordini. And when one comes to think of it these disciples of Mazzini have not shown themselves by any means worthy of our esteem and continued regard. There is not much to choose between the Quirinal and the Vatican; Humbert is not

altogether a commanding figure by the side of Leo XIII, and Crispi is by no means an equal exchange for Rampolla.

Has there not been a certain waste in all this movement? Have we seen any results at all adequate to the toil, and the infinite love and devotion which the best of men have spent in their endeavor to instruct the People? Compare what has been accomplished with what has been confidently predicted and see how pitiful is the yield, how barren is the crop.

When we turn from the religious to the material interests of the People, we find the same unselfishness and self-immolation of many of the best men followed by the same unsatisfying and inadequate results. The amount of human energy, and intellectual effort of the highest class placed at the feet of the People, for nothing, is one of the phenomena of our age. The men of the first rank who have fought in the army of Socialism alone form an imposing and inspiring list, such a list as no other movement in the history of the world has yet furnished; and yet Socialism is only one of the forms which the desire to ameliorate the condition of the masses has assumed. When men awoke and found this great creature, the People, securely enthroned, they regarded it with different emotions. To some it was an angel which should establish a reign of right and justice; to others it was a good-natured, albeit somewhat dirty and disreputable fellow, who might and probably would come out all right in the long run, but who in the meantime must be washed, his hair combed, and his nails pared; and to others again he was Minotaur, he who would ultimately devour their sons and daughters, who would destroy the little distinctions of good manners and refined tastes, and be none the better himself for what he had eaten. And perhaps he was more Minotaur than anything else. At all events the economic conditions which brought him into being have continually increased his bulk at the expense of those who at first stood off and mocked at him. And he has also been Minotaur in another sense, a more terrible sense, he has devoured the best; the pick of the earth have voluntarily surrendered their lives to him; and he still sits there the same inexplicable monster

sometimes showing a good-humored careless mercy where we expected him to strike, at other times striking vindictively where we were sure he would have spared.

“Sacrifice to the Mob!” Yes! willingly, but does the Mob understand the sacrifice? And having understood it, is the Mob any the better for it? It has been the dream of social reformers of all descriptions to rouse the People to some sense of their own material requirements; have the People made any effort which will show that they are not perfectly satisfied with their material environment? You answer me with the tremendous votes polled for Continental Socialism? I ask in reply, how much of that vote is the genuine striving for a cleaner and a better existence, and how much of it a mere discontent with a too paternal government?

Lammenais left the Church under the ban of the Papacy and entered the ranks of the Paris proletariat. The Paris proletariat did not appreciate him at his worth, that could not be expected. But on the other hand was that same proletariat any better for having Lammenais in their midst? In other words did the effort of Lammenais produce any effect, was it waste effort?

It is the present reaction which makes me ask these questions. One cannot fail to observe the reaction. It is in the air. It has laid its blighting hand upon every forward movement; it is equally observable in the monarchies of Europe and in the American Republic. What does it portend? Is it a lull before a storm, an invigorating storm, which shall leave the air purer and clearer for its passing, though its lightnings strike death and its thunders appal? Or is it the languid acquiescence of ennui and laziness, the evidence that the efforts of the reformers have been wasted, the proof that the People, like a lazy Pasha, was tickled into a show of life and has sunk back again to sleep?

A TRUE SAN FRANCISCO STORY.

BY CORA A. MORSE.

JUST before the Powell St. cars turned the curve to Sutro Heights I signaled the conductor to stop. Clambering down the steep hill-side I soon reached the beach. The long rolling waves broke in froth at my feet. The gray day harmonized with my feelings. I had run away from the sight of every one, away from the cares that harassed me, away from the sounds of the city, to be alone with Nature, in the hope of gathering courage to press on with life's duties. The sea rested me and murmured comfort to my fainting heart.

Looking along the beach I spied an object that appeared to be a man, though it seemed as immovable as rock. Is it a man or a rock? thought I, while leisurely walking in the direction of my discovery. It was soon patent that my first impression was correct. It was a man, scantily clad, sitting silent as a statue, with his head bowed forward in his hands. His elbows rested upon his knees. His almost shoeless feet were half hidden by the sand. I could not see him breathe. Half in awe, lest the man were dead, I was about to speak, when to my surprise he said to himself, "What is hope? Is it a light divine or a mere will-o'-the-wisp, leading a trusting people to despair? I wish I could solve it." I had time to study him and instinctively felt that he was more than an ordinary man in spite of his habili-ment. I was interested in his questions which were moaned as if to the sea. My petty griefs and trials were forgotten as I stood waiting for him to speak again, but he lapsed into silence and sat dumb like one weighted with woe. Shall I leave him alone with his sorrow and the sea or shall I call him my brother? thought I. Deciding on the human side, I said, "What can I do for you, my friend, are you in trouble?"

He was startled for the moment, then said, "I am trying to decide about the truth of things."

"Can I help you?" I asked.

"No one can help me," he answered, "and yet I would like your opinion. Have you time to hear my story?"

"Yes," said I, at the same time seating myself on the rock beside him.

He straightened up now and looked squarely at me. "It isn't much of a story," he said. "Such stories are common, these days, but the problem of life seems different to me to-day from what it did—well—even a month ago."

"Go on," said I, with increasing interest as his face betrayed his earnestness. Fixing his eyes on the sea he began:

"Early in life I commenced the struggle with the world for standing room and daily bread. For a time all went well. I succeeded in gathering together enough of the world's goods to equip a modest home, married the woman of my choice, worked hopefully and hard and lived happily, though plainly, in a little cottage of my own for ten years. Three bright children came to bless and comfort wife and me. Many were the castles we builded for these little home treasures. At the end of ten years I lost my position through the failure of the firm I worked for. I had saved about \$1000, which I was sure would tide us over until such time as I could obtain lucrative employment. Weeks went by, then months, till a year had passed. Sickness, with its attendant expenses, overtook myself and wife and two of the children. My cottage had to be mortgaged and after six months it went into strangers' hands. And now after three years of earnest search for permanent employment, I find myself and family living over bare floors, sleeping on straw, using goods boxes for seats and with nothing to eat but navy beans, no bread for many weeks."

The man choked back the tears as he said this and after a moment proceeded:

"I am an American, with a university education. I have never smoked, chewed or drank. I have been forced to pawn my furniture and articles of clothing. In desperation I went to the German Consul in this city and asked him for employ. Here I was informed that unless I could make oath that I was

born in Germany he could do nothing for me. 'My wife is German,' I urged, 'and my children are half German. Can you not give me work for their sakes?' I was told that their regulations were such that I must be German-born in order to claim help there. Application at other foreign headquarters elicited the same response.

"Failing in all other directions I sought the Salvation Army and asked employment on their farm. I was met here with the assurance that they would gladly help me but their rules required that a man must be a criminal who wishes to reform. 'If you are a drunkard and want to reform we will take you,' the manager said. You may think it strange but I was tempted, *really* tempted to beg drinks enough to *insure* arrest and thus get opportunity to work. The thought of my wife and children restrained me."

Here he stopped to brush away a tear. I sat speechlessly waiting for him to continue, which he did presently.

"I sometimes go to the various charitable places where men are fed and obtain a meal. I meet at these places a great army, ragged, and half famished, most of them full of hope that they will soon find something to do. I asked the kind-hearted manager of one of these soup houses how many he fed daily. He said 'from fifty to seventy.' I asked if many among them were desperate or contemplated an uprising. He assured me that most of them were law-abiding and believed they would get employment somewhere. I asked him what *he* thought about it. *Mark his answer!* 'Well, about a third of them will starve to death if things go on as they are now going. A good many more will get desperate and commit suicide. A good many more will commit crime so the State will provide for them, and the rest *may* find work.' I was dumb with astonishment at the revelation the man was making. Starvation! Suicide!! Crime!!!—hope's reward at last to trusting hearts in the majority of cases. My own experience came up before me, also that of others I am familiar with, most of whom are in reality drifting on an open sea

of despair, blinded by the white mirage of hope in the distance and totally dead to a perception of their true situation."

He paused as if gathering courage to go on, rose to his feet, walked to and fro excitedly a few moments, the while there was dawning upon me the probable cause of his inability to solve his own questions which first arrested my attention. He sat down again and calmly continued his narrative.

"Revolving this in my mind I walked homeward. The picture the man at the soup house had drawn grew stronger with every step I took. I remembered my mother's hopeful disposition, and could recall her cheery voice saying, 'It is always darkest just before day,' 'Every cloud has a silvery lining,' 'Never despair while life lasts,' and, strange as it may seem, I recognized for the first time the fact that in *reality* her hopeful life went out in a night of black despair and disappointment. My early religious teachings came crowding in as if to comfort my distraught brain. 'The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want,' 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,' 'Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' I have closely adhered to my faith in God through the years of adversity as in years of prosperity. My wife is a devoted Christian Scientist clinging with great tenacity to the faith that the things we hope and work for shall be ours. She has been my support in hours of doubt, often saying, 'Though he slay me yet will I trust him.' I pondered over this faith and hope which had been so sweet to us, and for the first time called them in question. Have these teachings been a strength to us? Are they a strength to any one? How much of this inexplicable thing called hope, which rises up out of the darkness inciting to new endeavor, belongs to the reality of things and how much is illusory? If it is largely illusory is it wise to foster its further growth?

"In this perturbed state of mind I reached home, just in time to see my baby girl four years of age greedily gnawing the end of a loaf of bread which some neighbor had brought in. The child's face was bathed in tears of excitement. She held the loaf fast in her arms while my wife, also in tears, was trying

to save a portion of it for the other children, who were as feverish for lack of the 'staff of life' as the little one was. The strength left my body for an instant and I fell to the floor weeping and helpless as a child."

His face was pallid now and I could see through the tears, which I made no effort to restrain, that his breast was heaving with emotion. Slowly and softly he continued:

"After this agony of soul passed, I picked up the paper in which the bread had been wrapped. It contained Edwin Markham's 'Man With The Hoe.' I read it slowly as a condemned man might read his life sentence. When I had finished I read it aloud to my wife and told her the incident of the day which had aroused another creature within me which seemed to have been asleep since time began. She gave me a frightened look, then said quietly, 'My dear husband, your vision is narrowed to the present life. In the great forever, the eternity of years, the life to come, our hopes will be fulfilled and everything will be righted.' I felt irritated by her reply, but concealing my feelings I kissed her and left the house. I must be alone with this other self which was now thoroughly aroused and speaking in unmistakable language, following the thread of thought suggested by my wife, 'Since hope has mocked me in *this* life how much less illusory are its promises as applied to a life to come? A conception of the unknown must be based upon a knowledge of the known. What has the present life to offer as an inducement to the development of a blind faith or an unquestioning hope? Thousands testify to the guidance of voices purporting to come from the life beyond, and these vainly try to account for the unwisdom of the advice given, and will testify in many instances to having followed hope thus held out until forced to abandon it. A hope that proves illusory in one life will prove illusory forever.' Stunned as by a blow I thought what can or should be done? Love disillusioned perishes; will not life bereft of hope share the same fate? Is it wise to send a thought like this broadcast for the pessimistic to take advantage of? The new creature within spoke again, 'Do you want policy or truth for your guide? Cowards always

the presentation of half a truth, is the most dangerous thing in the world. It is a disintegrating power in civilization from which there is no escape except through the knowledge that it *is* a destroyer.

“Traceable to the religious training of centuries is the faith that believes in the impossible which furnishes oil for the lamp of hope that begins to burn with every individual born. Allowed to burn untrimmed, constantly supplied with the stale oil of antiquity, it either flashes in uncertain though alluring flames, or smoulders fitfully, until extinguished by despair, in which darkness the demon of rebellion rises, shakes the world in his fury, and reason no longer holds sway. The denizens of earth are groaning and perishing with physical disease, because of their uncontrolled and misdirected passions. The all creative spark, this sacred fire which animates all living things, runs riot in their veins, consuming their strength to the third and fourth generation.

“Like unto this is hope misguided and untrained. If you would aid the world to escape the insanity of despair, point out the danger of following the leadings of hope beyond the limits of reason.’

“Reflecting upon the present condition of mankind,” said he, “thinking of my hopeful fellow sufferers, and of their probable fate, I tried to make answer to this revelator within, but words failed me. Again it said:

“The hope of ignorance goes smiling to defeat, the hope of wisdom masses its forces and *overcomes*.

“It is *unnecessary* that Dumb terrors reply to God after the silence of the centuries. It is *unnecessary* that Whirlwinds of rebellion shake the world if men will stop when hope has been followed as far as the reason can sanction and demand the counsel of wisdom. It is possible singly and by combination to institute sane methods of overthrowing obstacles or systems which stand in way of success and righteousness.

“It is possible to strangle false hopes, to trample them

under foot, and thus avoid such answers as starvation, suicide, crime, the despair that drives men to insane action, and prompts them to insurrection against the order of things they have permitted to develop while listening to hope's siren song.'

"'When wrongs appear never trust hope to right them, rather trust the Lord within who says, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay.'

"'Vengeance to be righteous is never meted out in anger and lawlessness, but strikes intelligently, with coolness and wisdom, at the heart of a wrong and destroys it before it develops strength to become a destroyer. *The Man With the Hoe* is hoping against hope. He and his fellow workmen need to be brought together for decisive action, they must be turned away from the allurements of a hope that defers to some future time the things it promises.'

"' *The Man With the Hoe*, and in fact *all* men, must be brought to understand that the safety of the present, the permanence of the future, depends on the discovery of hope's dead line, and upon the ability of the race to stop short of it.'"

He ceased speaking. He had grown more and more excited as he delineated his wonderful experience with his newly awakened conscience. In a moment he said, "What do *you* think? Have you anything to offer that will clear the mystery? Is hope an allurements or a beneficence?"

His troubled eyes were fixed upon me but I could not answer. A choking sensation overcomes me yet when I try to think. My new found brother and I are still wrestling with the problem. Can my readers satisfactorily reply?

Is hope a light divine or is it a mere will-o'-the-wisp leading a trusting people to despair?

AN EASTER ALLEGORY.

BY E. D. WARD.

I WANDERED in what was reputed to be the Forest of Life, and I found that there was death therein as well as life. There were growths that had just begun to be, and growths that were in the full strength and flower of life, and growths that had grown old; but also there were growths that were dying, and others that had just ceased to live and others still that had long been dead and were prostrate and half buried in the forest mould. Then I said, "Henceforth I will call this forest the Forest of Life and Death." And I wandered among the living and the dying and the dead, and wondered.

At last in the very deep of the forest I met him who is called the Lord of Life. Then I marveled and said, "O Lord of Life, thy Kingdom of Life is strangely intermingled with the alien Kingdom of Death." But the Lord of Life said, "Nay, the Kingdom of Death is not an alien kingdom, for therein also is my will done." Then said I, "Henceforth I will call thee the Lord of Life and Death."

Then I pondered long, and the Lord of Life and Death stood, with a great patience, waiting while I pondered. Then said I at last, "But, O Lord of Life and Death, how can this be? How can thy will be done in the Kingdom of Death? For the Kingdom of Death wars against the Kingdom of Life and triumphs over it. Is thy kingdom divided against itself? And can a kingdom that is divided against itself stand?"

Then the Lord of Life and Death looked steadfastly upon me, and his gaze was like beams of light from the sun; and he said, "The kingdoms which thou seest are both temporal, they pass away. For the Kingdom of Life which thou seest is not in truth the Kingdom of the Perfect Life, but only the Kingdom of Growth; and the Kingdom of Death which thou seest is not in reality the Kingdom of Death, but only the Kingdom of Change; and both shall pass away and be no more." Then said I, "O Lord, if this Kingdom of Life and this Kingdom of Death are temporal, then when they pass away

thou wilt be no more a king, and though this would be mournful there will be none even to mourn."

But the Lord of Life and Death answered me and said, "In the great realm of the Unseen lies the Kingdom of The Perfect Life, and this kingdom is eternal, and of this Kingdom of The Perfect Life I am the King and Lord forever." And I said "Henceforth will I call thee Lord of the Kingdom of the Perfect Life."

Then again I pondered long and deep and the Lord of the Kingdom of the Perfect Life waited with a great and gracious patience. Then at last I said, "Lord, forgive me if I err in judging of thy ways; but this seemeth unto me as a divine folly—that thou hast reared this Kingdom of Life and this Kingdom of Death which are temporal and are to pass away, the while that thou hadst the Kingdom of the Perfect Life which is eternal and of which thou art King and Lord forever. This is as if one were to sow and plant, only to permit the harvest to lie waste in the field, and the field itself to become at last as desert and as dust."

Then he answered and said, "Child, thou dost not understand; but learn now the unity of truth. For the Kingdom of Life and the Kingdom of Death which thou seest, and which are temporal, are but thresholds and opening doors into the unseen Kingdom of the Perfect Life which is eternal; nay, more—for the Eternal Kingdom of the Perfect Life could only come to be through the temporal Kingdoms of Life and of Death."

"But," said I, "O, Lord of the Kingdom of the Perfect Life, reveal to me further of thy wondrous ways. For as I look I see these Growths of Life, all sweet and fair, but they tarry in their beauty but a little while and then the Power of Death seizes upon them and they die, and this ravage of the Power of Death seemeth to be but an end of all. How, then, can this passing Kingdom of Life and this ravaging Kingdom of Death make possible and real the Eternal Kingdom of the Perfect Life?"

Then the Lord of the Kingdom of the Perfect Life, with a smile that seemed like a benediction, answered me and said, "O little child, how long wilt thou not see and understand? But listen now and learn of my wondrous ways. The Kingdom of the Perfect Life

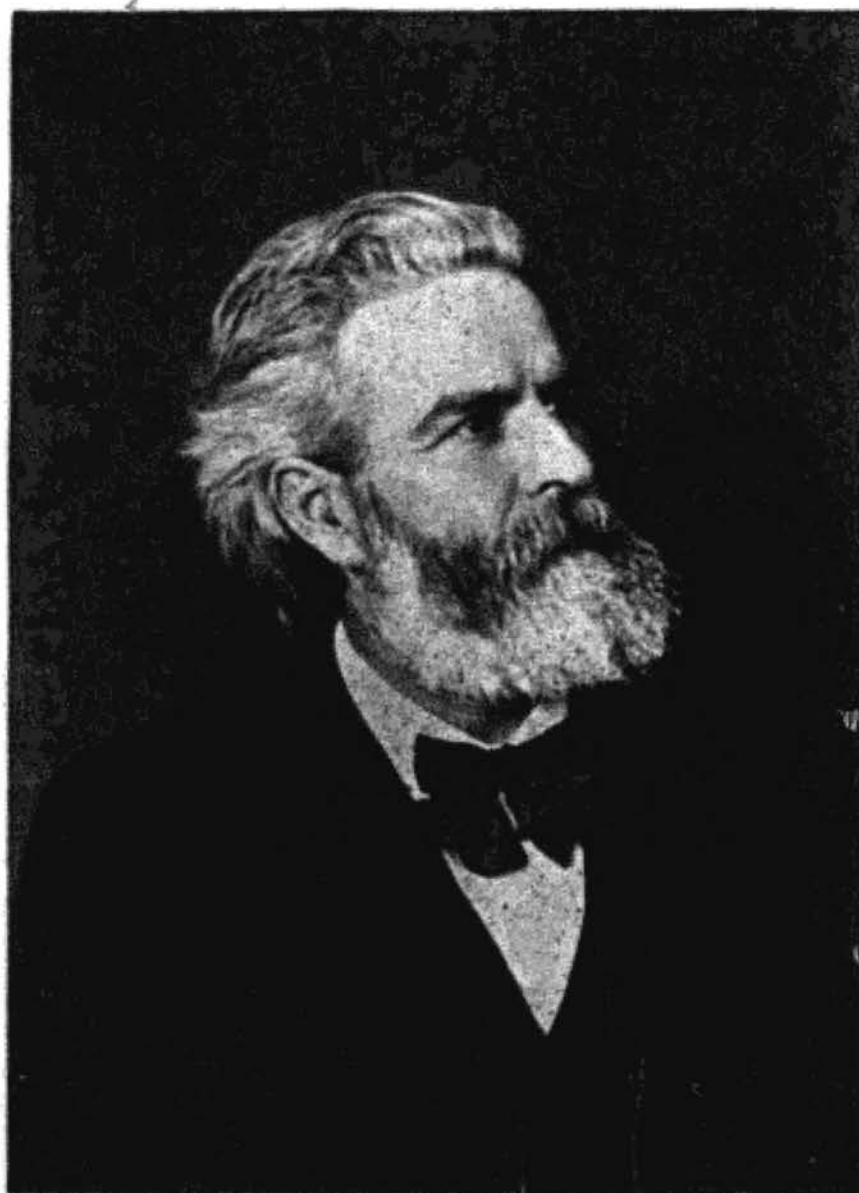
is my fair Eternal Garden which buds and blossoms and bears fruit forevermore. But this Kingdom of Life which thou seest is but the natural seedplot for the Eternal Garden in the unseen; and the Power of the Kingdom of Death is not a ravaging power but a transforming power, through which the natural passes into the spiritual. And so it is that of all the growths that thou seest not one is lost but all are transmuted through the Power of the Kingdom of Death and pass into the Kingdom of the Perfect Life and the Eternal Garden in the realm of the unseen."

Then, turning, I looked forth again into the Forest of Life and Death; and I saw that some of the dying growths in the forest seemed to be stricken as if from disease, and some were smitten by the blasts of the storm; and some were struck down by the lightning's lance; and some seemed to starve amid the crowded and tangled growths which contended for space and food; and some fell upon each other as if in anger, and carried their fellows to the ground; and some seemed even to will in themselves that they would die, and through the will to die they withered and drooped and sought a bed of rest amid the fallen leaves and the forest mould. And I saw, as with the eyes of the spirit, that there was this diversity of the Power of Death because the forces of the Kingdom of Life and the Kingdom of Death, which are in the Realm of the Seen, are natural and wild, though yet they work the will of the Lord of all the Kingdoms both in the Realm of the Seen and the Realm of the Unseen.

Then again I saw, as if with the eyes of the spirit, that the forces at work in the Kingdom of the Perfect Life are spiritual and that theirs is the husbandry of grace in the Eternal Garden which thrives and buds and blossoms and bears fruit forevermore; and so that they work at last the perfect will of the Lord of the Kingdom of the Perfect Life, who is Lord and King forever.

Then I turned again, and lo! the Lord of all the Kingdoms was gone; but I felt the lasting grace of his patience and the sweet beatitude of his benediction and I was moved to trust and love.

And I turned and wandered again in the Forest of Life and Death. But I was comforted.



EDWIN MARKHAM.

A LEAF FROM THE DEVIL'S JEST-BOOK.

Beside the sewing-table chained and bent,
 They stitch for the lady, tyrannous and proud—
 For her a wedding-gown, for them a shroud.
 They stitch and stitch, but never mend the rent
 Torn in life's golden raiment. Glad Youth went,
 And left them alone with Time; and now if bowed
 With burdens they should sob and cry aloud,
 Wondering, the filled would look from their content.

And so this glimmering life at last recedes
 In unknown, endless depths beyond recall:
 And what's the worth of all our ancient creeds,
 If here at the end of ages this is all—
 A white face floating in the whirling ball,
 A dead face plashing in the river reeds?

JOY OF THE MORNING.

I hear you, little bird,
 Shouting aswing above the broken wall.
 Shout louder yet: no song can tell it all.
 Sing to my soul in the deep still wood:
 'Tis wonderful beyond the wildest word:
 I'd tell it, too, if I could.

Oft when the white still dawn
 Lifted the skies and pushed the hills apart,
 I've felt it like a glory in my heart—
 (The world's mysterious stir)
 But had no throat like yours, my bird,
 Nor such a listener.

THE TRAGEDY.

Oh, the fret of the brain,
And the wounds and the worry;
Oh, the thought of love and the thought of death,
And the soul in its silent hurry.

But the stars break above,
And the fields flower under;
And the tragical life of man goes on,
Surrounded by beauty and wonder.

BROTHERHOOD.

The crest and crowning of all good,
Life's final star, is Brotherhood;
For it will bring again to Earth
Her long-lost Poesy and Mirth;
Will send new light on every face,
A kingly power upon the race.
And till it come, we men are slaves,
And travel downward to the dust of graves.

Come, clear the way, then, clear the way:
Blind creeds and kings have had their day.
Break the dead branches from the path:
Our hope is in the aftermath—
Our hope is in heroic men,
Star-led to build the world again.
To this Event the ages ran:
Make way for Brotherhood—make way for Man.

THE CRICKET.

The twilight is the morning of his day.

While Sleep drops seaward from the fading shore,
 With purpling sail and dip of silver oar,
 He cheers the shadowed time with roundelay,
 Until the dark east softens into gray.

Now as the noisy hours are coming—hark!
 His song dies gently—it is growing dark—
 His night, with its one star, is on the way!

Faintly the light breaks over the blowing oats—

Sleep, little brother, sleep: I am astir.
 We worship Song, and servants are of her—
 I in the bright hours, thou in shadow-time:
 Lead thou the starlit night with merry notes,
 And I will lead the clamoring day with rhyme.

MUSIC.

It is the last appeal to man—
 Voice crying since the world began;
 The cry of the Ideal—cry
 To aspirations that would die.
 The last appeal! in it is heard
 The pathos of the final word.

Voice tender and heroical—
 Imperious voice that knoweth well
 To wreck the reasonings of years,
 To strengthen rebel hearts with tears.

THE VALLEY.

I know a valley in the summer hills,
Haunted by little winds and daffodils;
Faint footfalls and soft shadows pass at noon;
Noiseless, at night, the clouds assemble there;
And ghostly summits hang below the moon—
Dim visions lightly swung in silent air.

THE OLD EARTH.

How will it be if there we find no traces—
There in the Golden Heaven—if we find
No memories of the old Earth left behind,
No visions of familiar forms and faces—
Reminders of old voices and old places?
Yet could we bear it if it should remind?

IN THE STORM.

I huddled close against the mighty cliff.
A sense of safety and of brotherhood
Broke on the heart: the shelter of a rock
Is sweeter than the roofs of all the world.

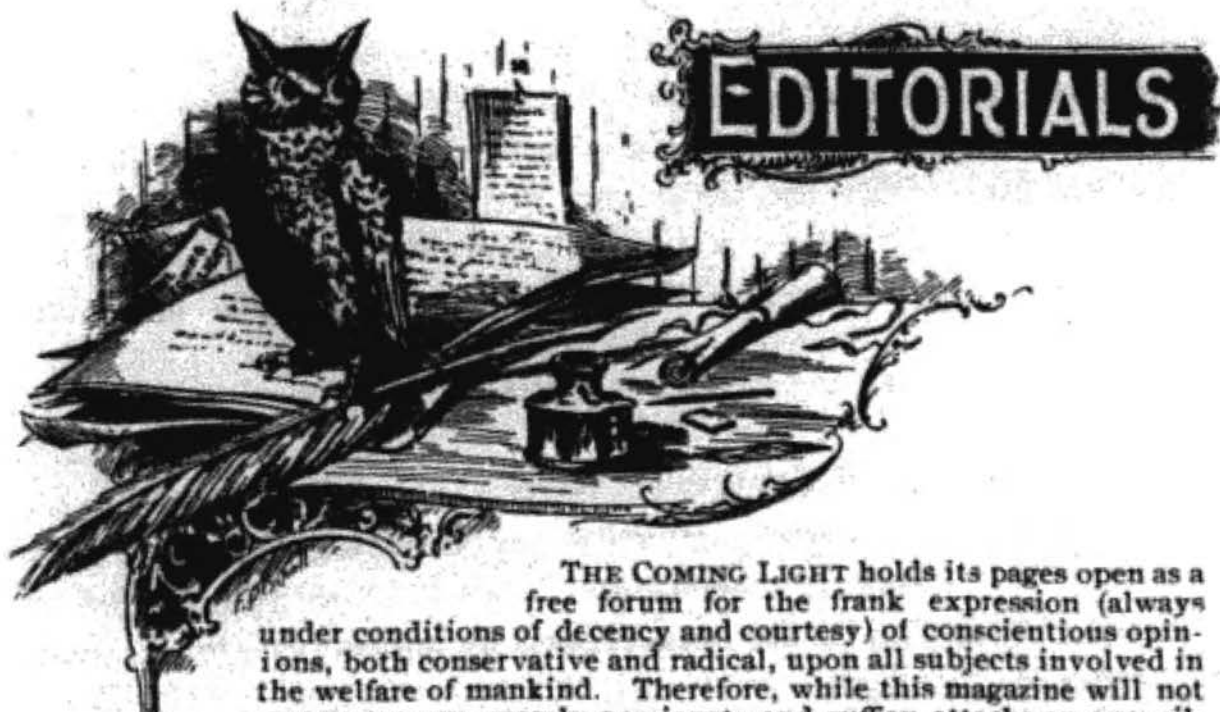
INFINITE DEPTHS.

The little pool, in street or field apart,
Glasses the deep heavens and the rushing storm;
And into the silent depths of every heart,
The Eternal throws its awful shadow-form.

A PRAYER.

Teach me, Father, how to go
Softly as the grasses grow;
Hush my soul to meet the shock
Of the wild world as a rock;
But my spirit, propt with power,
Make as simple as a flower.
Let the dry heart fill its cup,
Like a poppy looking up;
Let life lightly wear her crown,
Like a poppy looking down
When its heart is filled with dew
And its life begins anew.

Teach me, Father, how to be
Kind and patient as a tree.
Joyfully the crickets croon
Under shady oak at noon;
Beetle, on his mission bent,
Tarrys in that cooling tent.
Let me, also, cheer a spot,
Hidden field or garden grot—
Place where passing souls can rest
On the way and be their best.



EDITORIALS

THE COMING LIGHT holds its pages open as a free forum for the frank expression (always under conditions of decency and courtesy) of conscientious opinions, both conservative and radical, upon all subjects involved in the welfare of mankind. Therefore, while this magazine will not encourage any merely passionate and ruffian attacks on prevailing ideas and principles, or upon established customs and institutions, it will regard nothing that is of human moment as too sacred for honest, out-spoken and fearless comment and criticism. These principles will guide the editors, both in passing judgment on manuscripts submitted and in the expression of their own views and sentiments.

The Literature of Aristocracy.

We have a complaint to place on record; namely, that Lady Randolph Churchill has not asked us to put her new magazine on our exchange list. It has been announced that she proposes to publish a monthly whose contributors shall be only European kings, nobles and aristocrats. It is to be blooded literature. The editors will be spared the duty of carefully estimating the literary merits of an offered article. They will need only to consult the books of heraldry to see if the pedigree of the writer is emblazoned therein. This remarkable magazine is to be sold at a guinea a number. We feel inexpressibly saddened that we have not that spare guinea. We literally hunger for the supremest thoughts exuded from the supremest brains; and our guinealess condition, together with Lady C's. failure to propose an exchange, plunges us into the blackness of the darkness of despair. If others feel as we do about it, we might form a club of five hun-

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