THE

FREE CHURCH CIRCULAR.

—oo—

The Truth shall make you Free.—John 8: 32.

—oo—

VOL. IV.] ONEIDA RESERVE, JUNE 28, 1851. [NO. 16.

☞ *The* 'Home-Talks' *and* 'Reports' *from Brooklyn, which compose so great a share of this paper, are extemporaneous, conversational lectures by J. H. N., discoursed in the freedom of the family circle, and reported for the benefit of the Association, and the readers of the Circular.*

Home-Talk by J. H. N.---No. 67.

[Reported for the Circular, June 11, 1851.]

LONDON AND THE ENGLISH.

In what I have to say about London, I will not undertake to describe the round of 'sights' that every visitor is expected to see, or even the greatest of them, the 'World's Fair.' There will be descriptions enough of the Great Exhibition better than I can give, by those who go there for the purpose, and have more time and opportunity for observing particulars, than I had. So, it would be a thrice told tale to go over all I saw at St. Paul's, Westminster Abbey, the Tower, British Museum, Zoological Gardens, &c. I shall only select out some of the impressions I received on points that interested me, that are not so likely to be handled by those who write for the newspapers, and leave the rest.

The first thing I would observe is, I found by experience that we Americans had a very mistaken apprehension of the difficulty there would be in finding lodgings at London. The idea prevailed in this country, and on the ship going out, that London would be crammed full of visitors, so that it would be difficult to get lodgings and board. A great many of our Baltic friends had sent forward and engaged lodgings in advance; and others I found did not dare to go into the central part of the city, but stopped in villages and in the outskirts of the city, for fear that they would not find lodgings if they went forward. We went on however, without any previous attention to the matter at all, and found without difficulty quiet pleasant lodgings, in a central situation, near Tottenham Court Road. It was in a genteel family, and proved to be every way a pleasant and desirable place. We had a sitting-room, and each a bed-room, for 30 shillings (a little over 7 dollars) per week. We had the privilege of taking breakfast and tea there, by purchasing our own provisions, they preparing our meals and furnishing attendance for 6 shillings a week. We took our dinners abroad.

I had the curiosity to enquire of our Baltic friends, as we met occasionally in the city, (and by the way I may mention that we were all acquainted and glad to see each other, after the voyage; persons that perhaps hardly spoke with each other on board the ship, meeting afterwards in London or Paris were on familiar terms at once,) I enquired of them about their

luck in finding lodgings, and I generally found that their care on this point had spoiled their game. I did not find one so well situated as we were, both as to accomodations and price. They took too much care of themselves; and it certainly did not turn out so well with them as with us, who left the matter to the care of Providence.

We were finally introduced to the place we chose, by a sort of lucky chance as it afterward seemed to be. We inquired at several houses in the same street, where lodgings were offered, (and I may say here that the city from end to end was speckled with placards offering furnished lodgings,) and among the rest, we examined and liked this place; but on the whole selected another, a few doors from it, where we called, and after the usual inquiries told the landlady that we would take her lodgings. She asked for references, and we gave her the name of a clergyman, Mr. D——'s brother-in-law, living in Islington, which was satisfactory. We told her that we would go back to the Hotel and get our baggage, and go into our lodgings at once; to which she made no objections, and we left. We came there soon after with our baggage, dismissed the cabman, and leaving our trunks on the sidewalk, went to the door and rung the bell. There was no answer. We repeated our ringing and finally knocked, but no one came to the door. At length a servant girl appeared at the window, and said that her mistress had gone out, expecting to be absent several hours, and had left orders not to let any body in till she came back. We found ourselves in rather a poor situation, with our baggage on the door-stone of a house where we were refused admittance, and we strangers in the midst of London. We inquired of her if she would not take our baggage in, while we waited for her mistress to return. No, she had orders not to open the door or let any body in till her mistress came back. We then made up our minds to leave it for the time being, in the street; and try to engage lodgings at the other place—the one that we liked first. We proceeded there, and were hospitably received. On telling the story how we were refused admittance by the servant girl at the other house, the landlady laughed, but readily took us in, and made no objections to the suspiciousness of our situation.—When we went back after our baggage, we found the people of the house had returned and taken it in. They apologized for the mistake they had made, and were evidently anxious to keep us; but we told them it was too late; that we had engaged lodgings at another place.

There we found ourselves at home right away. The household that we were thus introduced to, proved to be a very pleasant woman and her family. They made it a home for us, which was every way agreeable. When we were abroad, they looked into the books that we left on our table, and finding that we had a religion of our own, and belonged to an Association, they became very much interested, and finally we appeared to be involuntarily making proselytes of them. We separated from them in something more than the mere relation of lodgers and entertainers. The last thing the lady said on parting was that she did not know but they should all come to America and join our Association. So much for our getting lodgings without taking any forethought.

I think it is no more than fair to remark, that I was struck in all my intercourse with persons in London, and so through England, with the politeness of

the people. I think there is one element in ordinary society there, that goes to civilise and polish it to an extent perhaps that we do not see here. Their *women* mingle in a great many kinds of business there that they do not here.—At the Hotels you deal with the landlady, not with the landlord; women keep the books, make out the bills, and wait at the bar of all the large Hotels. And I should judge that there is more mingling in business, more easy, free intercourse in common affairs, between men and women than there is with us; and I think that one influence must tend to make them gentle and polite as a people. Then undoubtedly the distinctions in society and the habits of subordination they are trained in, give them an obsequious and obliging air. You don't meet with anything rough, or even with coldness and indifference, in servants or porters or people that you deal with of any kind. They treat you with a certain degree of affection apparently; there is a *show* of brotherly feeling in the service which they render.

At the same time, however, that you meet with so much politeness, I think there is a *stiffness*, a *fixed character* to the social state of things there, a despotism of fashion and custom that there is not here. They are more civilized, but less progressive, less open to change; anything that crosses the fashion of the times there, is noticed and criticised more rigorously than it is here. So that if in one sense they are more polite, in another sense they are less so than the Americans. They are polite in all the regulated forms of society, but they also have a very polite way of resisting innovation. If a man wears his beard a little out of their fashion, they stare at him, and not unfrequently the stare ends in a laugh. It is a pretty serious thing for a man to go into London, where the fashion is to wear standing collars, and have his collar turn over. It seems to be taken as a sort of insult, for which a man is either to be frowned on or pitied. That is my impression from what I saw and felt there; and I think I could judge pretty accurately, because I compared the state of London in this respect, with what I saw in Paris; and I did not discover in Paris that sharp surveillance and jealousy of fashion that I did in London. There is more of the free and easy spirit in Paris that there is in New York.

To illustrate the order and prudence of the English people, I noticed that during our whole stay in London I did not hear an alarm of fire, and don't think there was a fire within hearing of where I lodged. It is a rare thing here to pass more than a night or two without an alarm; and in New York there are alarms of fire probably every night.—Another very favorable symptom that struck me constantly, was, the solidity, smoothness and perfection every way of their streets and side-walks. The streets of New York and Brooklyn look slovenly compared with them. They use there and in Paris, for some parts of their side-walks, and for flagging broad courts, *asphaltum*, a substance something like pitch, which is heated into a liquid state and spread on the side-walk; as it cools it becomes hard and looks like granite. In the Place de la Concorde, in Paris, there are acres of it. They have for the paving of their streets, something like our Russ pavement, only the blocks of stone are not quite so large. The result is, a very fine pavement indeed, better I think than the Russ, because not so slippery.

I did not like the looks of their houses in London; there is the same fault to find

with them as with the houses in the country. The great public edifices, palaces, &c., of course are grand; but the houses of the commonalty, the general mass, are of brick; and various colored, poor looking bricks. I saw nothing of our hard pressed, smooth colored bricks in England. They do not paint, and I should say in general, that the fronts of their houses look as bad as the backs of houses here—those parts that we do not expect will be exposed to view.—There is a dull, ancient appearance to the city as a whole. I should say of their houses as I say of the women there, that I cannot call them handsome. Speaking of the women, I may as well give my opinion in passing. The Queen seems to have set the fashion in respect to beauty. I don't know but it is contrary to etiquette for handsome women to appear there; at any rate I did not see them. Perhaps it is because I am not deep enough in science to know what beauty is, and therefore failed to appreciate them; but there again, my impressions of Paris are very different. I thought there was a great deal of beauty in Paris, especially very fine complexions. Rich brown complexions were very common in the street, and to be met with every where.

I must praise London for the liberality of its Parks. I should think the Americans who go there this year from New York, would so many of them get an idea of what a park is, that they would stir up spirit enough on their return, to have New York provided with one.—There is nothing in the city now, at all resembling a park. The best they have, is no more to a London park, than our door-yard is to the Battery. Hyde Park, on which the Crystal Palace is built, has 400 acres, including Kensington Gardens. Then there is an open connection and continuation of that park into Green Park, which probably has 100 acres, and St. James Park containing 50 more.—There are five or six hundred acres together right in the midst of London—quite a little patch of country in the midst of the city. Hyde Park is common for the people, and a parade ground for the military. It is also a place of great resort for horseback riding. There are drives reserved on purpose for this exercise; and it is a splendid sight in a pleasant afternoon to see the squadrons of riders of both sexes cantering about this park. Then the other parks are enclosed and ornamented with shrubbery, fountains and sheets of water, and are enlivened with swans, pheasants, fine flocks of sheep, groves full of birds, &c.

I will say a few words about the great Exhibition, and then refer our people to the descriptions of those who go on there to write about it. I shall strike directly on to the subject that interested me most, and let the rest go, just remarking, first, that the impression produced by the Exhibition was far more wonderful and overwhelming than I was prepared for—it would be impossible to give you an idea of its splendor and magnificence by any description; second, that the exhibition on the part of the United States was very shabby; third, that shabby as it was, it presented one specimen, that as a work of art, attracted more attention and admiration than all the rest; that was, Powers' *Greek Slave*. Mr. D—— is an Englishman, and consequently an unprejudiced judge; he had never heard of this statue, but he would sit down and study it by the hour together. There were thousands of statues and works of sculpture, collected from all nations, but D—— said the Greek

Slave spoilt them all—made them look ordinary. That statue was all that saved the reputation of the nation; and hence it lays in my line, both as an American, and a moral reformer, to remark a little further on it.

Well, it is the statue of a naked female, of most beautiful proportions and interesting countenance, standing as she might be supposed to stand, for exhibition in the market place, to be sold to the highest bidder. There were a great many exhibitions there of the human form in marble. In fact public opinion and taste has come to allow the exhibition of such statuary, to an extent that would have been considered diabolical a few years ago. I recollect when this same statue was first brought into the country there was some debate in the papers as to where it should be set up for exhibition; and a Methodist paper, I believe, suggested that the best place to exhibit it would be in a dark closet. But good sense has triumphed over the law of old-fashioned modesty, I suppose, in this country; and it certainly has in England, as tested by that exhibition, to such an extent that gentlemen and ladies in company admired that figure without any embarrassment or blushing at all. And I think that one special beauty of the statue, one ingenious and sensible idea of the artist, was the contrivance by which he avoided the ordinary show of shame that is supposed to belong to the subject. Now in the other statuary of the Exhibition, and as we see it generally elsewhere, the figure is in some crude twisted attitude, as though trying to cover its nakedness, and show the shrinking that is supposed to be necessary to modesty. Or if that is left out, all the central part of the figure is covered in some unnatural way with fig leaves or drapery. Almost every figure you see will have some offensive expression or appurtanence suggesting the idea that people are ashamed of what God has made; but in the Greek slave, while the most perfect delicacy and all that is desirable of seclusion is preserved quite as effectually as in the other cases, it is evidently not done intentionally and with a view of covering the human form. The contrivance by which this is effected is this. She is a slave and the fact that she is a slave is indicated by a chain, the ends of which are fastened to each of her wrists. It is rather short, and as one hand rests on a short pillar that stands beside her, the chain draws her other arm into a position just adapted to the artist's purpose. There is no appearance of design in it, or of conscious shame and concealment, but it appears to result from her natural positlon.—There is no awkward drapery about her, nothing of the kind; and the figure is in a perfectly easy attitude. Then the countenance expresses dignity, and in fact, the entire absence of a feeling of shame.

I think the effect of the exhibition of that statue, and of other sculpture there, will be in the direction of the whole movement of the times, i. e., will tend to the purification of people's imaginations—tend to the abolishment of artificial modesty, and to the establishment of a standard of taste that has for its motto, the motto of the crown of England, 'evil be to him that evil thinks.' If you consider it, that is Paul's motto, 'to him that esteemeth a thing unclean, to him it is unclean.'

I will speak briefly of the comparative preparation of the three nations, England, France, and America, for the changes that are coming. As I said, custom, fashion, is more despotic in England than

here. It would be far more difficult to introduce this new dress, for instance, there, than here; not because the English have more squeamishness and artificial modesty than we, for they have less; but because that artificial modesty is here matched with, and ready to be subdued and controlled by, principles of reason to an extent that it is not there. The people here, so far as sentiment and feeling rules them, are more sensitive in regard to the delicacies of the distinction of sex than they are in England; and yet they are more ready to change, to submit their feeling and sentiment to common sense and reason when they are called to it.—I should think that it is a general truth, that the Americans are less civilized than the English, on certain given points; and yet they are in a better state, because they are malleable--ready to be changed; and hold themselves amenable to common sense, when they can see truth. Then the French, you may say, are better prepared for such changes as we see coming—changes in dress and in ideas of social and sexual morality—better prepared by the familiarity and customary freedom which they allow in society already. But this familiarity with them, is not a matter of principle, founded on investigation of truth, but is a matter of mere custom; and I suppose that the French would be really less safe, teachable, easy to manage, and reliable in regard to this subject, than even the English. You cannot estimate at all, a people's real preparation for right progress, by the state of their customs, fashions, and feelings. The real question as to the state of a people or an individual, is not what is the state of their *feeling* on this point or that, or what are their customs, or whether their habits are nearer or further from the truth; but whether they are rational, or becoming rational enough to subdue feelings, whatever they are—to lay aside their customs, and change them for better. I think the Americans as a mass, in reference to the mere feeling of shame, are more unreasonable than either the English or French.—There is more of this nonsensical delicacy here than there; and yet I am sure there will be a far greater readiness here, to come into a right state, than in either of those countries; and that, because a preponderance of reason over feeling is growing here It is not by a change of feeling or fashion, that true improvement is made, but by the prevalence of reason over fashion.

The Dress Revolution.

HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT.

It is not to be expected that our Society should see this Dress Reform rising to the top wave of popular favor, and moving on with such *eclat*, without temptations to interpose the claim of being itself the originator and rightful patentee of the new costume. We feel very much indebted and obliged to those who, in spite of the odium of its birth, have dared to assume the 'short dress,' and become its sponsors in society abroad, and have not wished to spoil any advantage which ignorance of its connections might ensure to it. Now, however, when its destiny to succeed seems past doubt, we think it will do to tell the truth about it.

We do not need to impute any unfairness to Mrs. Bloomer and her cotemporaries for not disclaiming the honors of this innovation, as she may be innocent of any knowledge of the facts, yet we may express our conviction, that the practical movement at Oneida first broke the spell of false sentiment and prejudice which

bound society, and gave her freedom to advance: our pioneers met and overcame the 'dweller of the threshold,' and left the door open for all that has followed.—Well do we remember the awful spirit of shame and reproach which had to be braved in the change here. But not to get before our story, we propose in this paper, to give a true history of the rise and progress of short dresses, compiled from authentic records in our possession.

In March, 1848, which was the time of the infancy of the Oneida Association, Mr. Noyes wrote and circulated in manuscript, what is called the Bible Argument, or his theory of the relation of the sexes in the kingdom of God. One of the concluding propositions in that argument relates to our subject, and was as follows:

PROPOSITION XXIV.

"In vital society, labor will become attractive. Loving companionship in labor, and especially the mingling of the sexes, makes labor attractive. The present division of labor between the sexes separates them entirely. The woman keeps house, and the man labors abroad. Men and women are married only after dark and in their sleeping hours. Instead of this, in vital society, men and women will mingle in both of their peculiar departments of work. It will be economically as well as spiritually profitable, to marry them in-doors and out, by day as well as by night. The difference between the anatomical structures of men and women, indicates the difference of their vocctions. Men have their largest muscular developments in the upper part of the trunk, about the arms, and thus are best qualified for hand-labor. Women have their largest muscular developments in the lower part of the trunk, about the legs, and thus are best qualified for duties requiring locomotion. Girls outrun boys of the same age. The miraculous dancers are always females. How abusive then are the present arrangements, which confine women to the house! They are adapted by nature, even better than men, to out-door employments and sports—to running, leaping, &c., and yet they are excluded from every thing of this kind after childhood. They are not only shut up, but fettered. Gowns operate as shackles, and they are put on that sex which has the most talent in the legs! When the partition between the sexes is taken away, and man ceases to make woman a propagative drudge, when love takes the place of shame, and fashion follows nature in dress and business, men and women will mingle in all their employments, as boys and girls mingle in their sports, and then labor will be attractive.

"*Note* 1.—The present dress of women, besides being peculiarly inappropriate to the sex, is immodest. It makes the distinction between the sexes vastly more prominent and obtrusive than nature makes it. In a state of nature, the difference between a man and a woman could hardly be distinguished at a distance of five hundred yards: but as men and women dress, their sex is telegraphed as far as they can be seen. Woman's dress is a standing lie. It proclaims that she is not a two-legged animal, but something like a churn, standing on castors! Such are the absurdities into which the false principles of shame and sexual isolation betray the world.

"*Note* 2.—When the distinction of the sexes is reduced to the bounds of nature and decency, by the removal of the shame partition, and woman becomes what she ought to be, a *female-man*, (like the Son in the Godhead,) a dress will be adopted that will be at the same time the most simple, and the most beautiful; and it will be the same, or nearly the same, for both sexes. The dress of children—frock and pantaloons—is in good taste, i. e., taste not perverted by the dictates of shame, and it is well adapted to the free motion of both sexes. This, or something like it, will be the uniform of vital society."

This was first published in the Annual Report of the Association, Jan., 1849; and the same document contains a notice of the adoption of short dresses by the women of the Association, which we also copy in the following paragraph:

"Early in the summer, in consequence of some speculations on the subject of women's dress, which will be presented in a subsequent part of this Report, some of

the leading women in the Association took the liberty to dress themselves in short gowns or frocks, with pantaloons, (the fashion of dress common among children,) and the advantages of the change soon became so manifest, that others followed the example, till frocks and pantaloons became the prevailing fashion in the Association. The women say they are far more free and comfortable in this dress than in long gowns; the men think that it improves their looks; and some insist that it is entirely more modest than the common dress."

It was in the upper room of an Indian log house, which we think of now as the cradle of the Community, rich in memories, that the writer assisted in the clandestine preparation of two short dresses for Mrs. C—— and Mrs. N——, who proposed to experiment on the fashion described in the Bible Argument.—This was in June, 1849. In the present mellow state of public sentiment, it is impossible to appreciate the heroism that was then required, to appear in the semi-masculine attire, now so much applauded. There seemed to be but one opinion in the world, that it was unfeminine and immodest; and the whole atmosphere was charged with this accusation. The principality of *shame* was the power that was met and broken by this movement.—We were accustomed to defy *fashion*, and felt freedom and toleration in disputing its sway; but the despotism of shame was absolute. All our spiritual sensations convinced us that this principality suffered irrecoverable injury at that time, and we leave it to the world to find out how much Perfectionist heroism had to do in breaking away the obstructions to the present influx of reform.

To show the state of feeling that prevailed at the time we speak of, we have invited a young friend who was then in the precincts of worldly society, to describe her sensations when she first heard the report of our short dresses; which she has done in the following note.

"Myself and my sister at the time the short dresses were assumed at Oneida, were living at Putney, Vt. We were partially connected with the Association, and therefore more interested in such a move as the adoption of short dresses, than most persons, although we fairly represented the spirit that prevailed in regard to them, in the world at that time. I remember my own sensations, as vivid and distressing. All my feelings of womanly propriety and delicacy were extremely shocked and astonished. I could conceive of nothing more ridiculous or absurd, and felt confident that no thoroughly modest woman would ever disgrace herself enough to appear in a short frock and pantalettes. So much for narrow-mindedness, and a rush of blind and unreasonable feeling: had I stopped to reason the matter, I should have seen differently; but the strength of feeling was such as made it impossible to reason. On coming here, a rapid change took place in my feelings. I found myself in love with the modesty and simplicity, as well as the superior convenience of the costume. I heartily sympathize with the movement that is now going on in favor of a reform in women's dress, and congratulate all upon the feeling of youthfulness they will receive, so fast as they can lay aside prejudice, and adopt the short dresses."

The style adopted by Mrs. C—— and N—— was the plain loose pantaloon; and though some of us have tried at different times the Turkish fashion it has never suited—we have always returned with decided preference to the first pattern, originated in the Indian cabin, as the most simple and convenient, if not the most elegant. We were pleased with a criticism in favor of our fashion, by a writer in the Tribune, who discusses at

some length the philosophy of the Dress Revolution. It was as follows:

"For every purpose of industry, for active life in the country, for a pic-nic in the woods or long walk, a dress admitting perfect freedom and ease of movement, not encumbering the arms or legs, or embarrassing the muscles, is plainly better than that proper for ceremony and the elegant round of social life. Here we do not mean a Turkish dress by any means. It is simply absurd to resort to the lazy and luxurious harem and to a tropical climate for the working costume of American women. Those bulging drawers of silk or diaphanous muslin may be good for the latitude of Constantinople or Cairo, but they are neither tasteful nor convenient for that of New York or Boston. The experience of men is worth consulting, and that decides in favor of a plain but moderately loose trowser as altogether best for the purpose. We can't help thinking there is some timidity and affectation when our fair friends resort to the unhappy victims of Moslem domestic stupidity for patterns of their reform."

It is the fundamental principle of our Society in all kinds of reform, *to act more than we talk*, and we have thought it a good way to commend the comeliness and convenience of short dresses by *wearing* them rather than by words. Last winter however, in answer to the inquiries of a correspondent in Wisconsin, we freely described the Oneida fashions in the Circular, and it is naturally noticed by our folks that this was before the first whisper of the Bloomer costume came abroad. As what we refer to is appropriate in this connection, we make no apology for republishing it.

From the Circular, Feb. 20, 1851.

Dear Mr. & Mrs. R. * * * You will see a brief notice of our women's dress, in the First Annual Report which we send you. The Oneida fashion is described there as the common dress of children—short frocks and pantaloons: they are usually of one material '*Simplicity and convenience*,' is our motto; and we feel free to make any improvements in that direction thatwe please. We have gradually simplified our dress in all respects, and have lost all taste for a *superfluity* of this article. It is very fashionable with us to wear one dress till it is worn out, with change, of course, necessary to keep it clean. By this practice, we avoid many temptations to vanity and distraction, and our friends are saved the difficulty of recognizing us in new colors, and their attention is not continually attracted to our external appearance. The truth is, we are so engaged in getting an *education* that we value highly the time and thought we save from outward adorning.

We like our *short hair*, as well as our short dresses. The effect of both is to make us feel youthful and free. We can put on our bonnets and run like children, without any combs falling or frocks entangling. You can conceive how much more at home we are *out doors* without these embarrassments; and that is a favorite object with us, as we think much of the companionship of the sexes in their industry and recreations, and believe that in a true state of things, as in the primitive state, the disparity of their tastes and spheres of action will be much less than now. We are not Woman's Rights people, as that name is applied abroad;—but we have no fellowship with the effeminacy and superficiality that women are trained to by the fashions and prejudices of the world. We are ambitious, at least, to understand and appreciate the inventions and workmanship of the superior sex, and desire by every means to increase our sympathies with them. The standard of feminine character to which we aspire is the acquisition of healthy, vigorous bodies, active, fruitful minds, large hearts, and perfect sincerity of manners.

We can appreciate the courage which Mrs. R. [who herself had adopted our fashion,] must assume, in her situation, to make this sacrifice of fashionable propriety. When the short dresses were first adopted at Oneida, though we knew they were modest and becoming, as well as convenient, there was something about the change, repulsive to worldly feeling; it cut across a strong prejudice of false delicacy, that was deaf to good sense. But we have outlived these feelings com-

pletely, and now the stare of strangers is often the first thing that reminds us of our oddity in their presence.

I might remark that the fashion is not arbitrary with us at all; it is a matter of choice and individual taste. For instance, it is generally conceived that short dresses are rather incongruous with caps; so that our elderly women do not often wear them; and we are always free to consult good taste in individual cases. Neither do we profess to have attained perfection in our fashions. We mean to perfect our inward adorning of meekness first, and expect that God's spirit will cultivate in us good sense, and good taste, and a true sense of the beautiful in outward ornament. Thus far, we have not obtruded our peculiarities in dress outside of the Community; but we see signs of a revolution in the popular taste, which promises, ere long, to restore us to the caste of fashion, if there is any thing desirable in that. Yours, &c.

If it appeared that the new costume of short dress and pantalettes was only a sport of fancy and ephemeral fashion, we could not say much for the dignity of the movement. But fancy does not seem to be its chief inspiration. We entered into it here, as simple followers of the truth; and it is interesting to observe how every where this revolution in dress is connected with excellent ideas about health, grace of person and carriage, economy, simplicity, and the redemption of woman from the frivolities and vices which the fashions of the past are associated with.

The unanimous approbation of the men, is no mean compliment, in our estimation. They are used to say of anything going, get the *women's* vote and it will succeed; but it is the glory of this innovation that it is particularly favored by the men. They show a generous enthusiasm in forwarding the movement that is worthy of the gallantry and noble-heartedness belonging to their sex.—Among all the notices of the press, we have seen only one that we should call disrespectful and vulgar, which, it deserves to be told, was in the *Boston American Union*.

From a great mass of newspaper comments on the new costume, collected by the Tribune, we have taken for this occasion, what we thought would fairly represent the genius of the reform, as it is going abroad.

NEWSPAPER COMMENTS.

A short dress on the outside, with pants under, is the most convenient form of female dress, and one which will best display the natural figure of the person, which is ever the most acceptable to a gentleman's optics, whatever it may be to a lady's. We say bring out your short and convenient dresses and those who say they are immodest let them be watched, as there is some fear that they may want the principle of virtue in an unusual degree. [York (Pa.) Advocate.

The witless scapegrace who presumes to *laugh* at the idea of the gentler sex donning the pants, had better have a mill-stone tied to his neck and cast into the sea! Laugh at what? Why, at women who have *mind* enough to discard the errors of generations by assuming the apparel eminently calculated to add grace to the form and confer the inestimable boons of comfort and health. In truth, no lady need fear an appeal to the common sense of mankind, and the well established chivalry of the Press, in such a cause as this. [Salem (N. J.) Journal.

The New Costume.—Our female readers will find a long and very sensible article on the first page, relative to the new costume for ladies. It is from an intelligent physician, who is competent to speak from book, as well as observation, and we commend his remarks to the attentive perusal of every lady. We should rejoice to see a change in ladies' dresses, which should give them freedom of action and comfort in motion, and at the same time be graceful and modest. The absurdity of the existing fashion is so manifest, that it is astonishing that sensible ladies have so long submitted to it. What can be more uncomfortable, ungraceful, uncleanly, than the tight-waisted trailing dresses of the present fashion. And how much of actual suffering, and of injury to health, this style of dress has inflicted on the mothers and daughters of our land. [Boston Traveller.

THE BLOOMER COSTUME.—It is hardly to be supposed that it is in the annoying curiosity or idle vulgarity of the boys in the street to prevent the adoption, by the better half of our race, of a great improvement in costume. There may be philosophers who think this subject a very trifling one, and the improvement in question not worth encountering the ridicule of the boys, but we think they must be very shallow philosophers. Wherewithal shall we be clothed, is one of the great questions of life. He who clothed the birds and the beavers with feathers and fur, left mankind to complete his creative work in regard to themselves; and for thousands of years, the various tribes of man have made more or less advancement towards perfection in the business.

To us it seems that the costume of the female portion of the most civilized nations is wonderfully behind-hand in many respects. It is sadly deficient both in utility ard beauty, if not positively detrimental to health and comfort. A lady highly dressed in the latest Parisian style, is as unfinished as a Sphinx. There is an enormous consumption of textile fabric for no earthly purpose but to impede motion and sweep the streets. The idea of adaptation, neatness, finish, is entirely lost sight of. Mrs. Bloomer has had the boldness to encounter the silly prejudices of her own sex and the heartless ridicule of the ill-bred of the other, and put her plastic hand to the task of finishing the civilized female dress. Without trenching on the distinguishing characteristics of the male attire, either in materials or form, she has produced a dress which is at once neat, graceful, modest and bewitching—if that is any recommendation. The saving in the quantity of stuff must be considerable, and the saving in the wear, by avoiding the abrasion of the pavement and the contamination of the mud is beyond calculation.

The general adoption of the dress will do more for the national wealth than the mines of California, and more for the national health than all the discoveries in medicine since Galen. These are our sincere and earnest opinions, and we accordingly wish the new invention all possible success. Both in an economic and esthetic point of view, it hardly yields to any improvement of the age which can be named.

Moreover, we learn that the most gifted and beautiful of the sex are every where making preparations to adopt the new American style. It will be a great thing for the ladies of Paris before long to be dressed *a l' Americaine*. [Boston Commonwealth.

THE NEW COSTUME.—The costume for ladies which is so much talked of, has made its appearance in the streets of Hartford. We hope it will soon make its appearance every where. Fashion often induces the ladies to wear dresses and appendages of rather monstrous appearance. Why should not good taste induce them to wear this new costume, which is really very appropriate, convenient, and beautiful. [Hartford Repub.

THE NEW COSTUME.—The first "Bloomer" made its appearance in our city yesterday.—It was pronounced on all hands to be a neat and graceful attire for a young lady, and to have been no discredit to the fair maiden who dared to take the lead in a reform which contemplates a sacrifice of long-established custom, for the sake of health and comfort.

[Worcester Spy.

We venture an opinion that there is not a man in the State who could carry about for the space of four weeks, and retain his health, the quantity of skirts which hang about the waist of every woman who pretends to dress fashionably. Off with them ladies, sell the vile things to the paper makers, don the new style, and our word for it, you will enjoy better health, be happier, and consequently add a hundred per cent to your charms.

[Sandy Hill Herald.

One of the best things we have seen on this subject in the papers, is the following communication to the Tribune, from a lady in New York.

New York, Monday, June 16, 1851.

Mr. Editor: For one, I am very glad to perceive some hopes of a reform in dress. Our voluminous skirts certainly injure health, impede free motion and are excessively inconvenient. They undoubtedly enhance our fatigue in walking as well as originate the many weaknesses that render us unable to support that fatigue. There is no reasonable objection to the proposed change as I can perceive.—The new style is comfortable, convenient, very becoming, and perfectly feminine,—yet I *dare* not assume it, not that I fear so much cynical censure, or the ridicule of fools, as that it would make me unpleasantly *conspicuous*. Therefore, much as I desire to add my mite of influence to so good an object, I am effectually deterred

Why can there not be some mode devised for the ladies of this city to act *en masse*? Why can they not call a meeting in the Tabernacle for instance, and decide by majority whether or not this improvement or change shall be adopted.

If ladies of position and standing have the moral courage, much good may be done *at once*. In this case a delay is dangerous, as those who desire simply to be conspicuous will rush to adopt the "new costume" and bring it into disrepute ere it has had a fair trial.

It is very desirable that this reformation extend beyond the diminishing of the lengthened volume of skirt. The innumerable fantastic and troublesome details of female apparel should be discarded. Two or three *visible* garments should suffice. This would give a charming and dignified simplicity, at the same time that the ease and dispatch of dressing and undressing would be secured, and leave the mind free for better and nobler things. It is indisputable that the best part of a woman's life is consumed in trifles, and if woman is ever to come to a right knowledge of herself and her own capacity for intellectual development, let her joyfully hail anything that promises, even in a small degree, to disenthrall her from the thousand pettinesses and contemptible little cares and avocations which degrade her into a mere lay figure, swathed with silks and velvets and bedizened with ribbons and laces.

Let us, as American women, set a noble example to the world. Let us shake off the trammels of the *French metropolis*, and dare to be sensible and rational in studying our own rights, convenience and comfort.

By so doing we shall gain undoubtedly much credit to ourselves. The whole world will admire, and ere long imitate us. Admiration we shall secure—but it is the lesser good, for humanity will be benefited. There is no question that many of our suicidal and unnatural customs in dress have dwarfed and enfeebled the race. The women of the presnt generation are unfit for maternity. Let them so act and so live, as not only to enjoy life themselves in a newer and greater degree. but also insure more of life and vitality to their children. Each woman is in duty bound to give whatever influence she may possess to the promotion of anything that promises improvement, reformation and advancement in human welfare and happiness.

If the mooted change in costume does not promise all these things, then for one among many, and those many, including physiologists, physicians and *women* of *mind* and *character*, I have read its promises blindly and stupidly. A WOMAN AND MOTHER.

In continuation of our subject, we have the pleasure of presenting the following contribution from a sister in Brooklyn, containing the latest news of the progress of the revolution.

Brooklyn, Sunday, June, 1851.

DEAR H.—You doubtless saw the announcement in the Tribune of a meeting of the ladies of New York at Hope Chapel, called by Mrs. Gove Nichols and others, for the discussion of the new costume.

Yesterday afternoon at an early hour, Mrs. W—— and myself went to the Chapel. We found Mrs. Nichols and a few others present, and in a short time the room was filled with a large and respectable assemblage of ladies. Presently the entrance of a young lady (a daughter of Mrs. Nichols) in a straw hat and short dress, produced a great sensation. Her movements, and those of Mrs. Nichols, who passed freely about, and up and down the steps of the speaker's platform in a veritable short dress and pantalettes, excited a general titter and buzz of astonishment and trepidation all over the house, that was very amusing to us who have worn this costume for three years past. As soon as the house was quiet, Mrs. Nichols proceeded to explain the objects of the meeting, and proposed to organize by choosing a President, Secretary &c., that the results of the discussion might be reported in the papers, and thus sent abroad through this country and to Europe. Accordingly, the meeting was organized in a very business-like manner. Mrs. Nichols was chosen President, Miss Townsend secretary, and a committee of two on resolutions and two on finance. After some preliminaries, Mrs. Nichols read an address she had prepared, interspersing it with extempore remarks and anecdotes. She appeared to be thoroughly in earnest about the subject, and bating the self-reference and assumption of immense responsibility, which women in public stations so readily acquire, I thought her an able and interesting speaker. The address and resolutions will probably appear in the papers, so I will only touch upon the points in the whole affair that interested me the most.

In the first place, just think of a meeting in the city of New York, composed of some of its most intelligent and refined women, for the approval of the identical costume which originated three years ago in that little log cabin at Oneida, the first gathering place of the fugitives

from Putney, and the Oneida church! Certainly this is railroad speed in the onward course of truth and freedom.

In the next place, Mrs. Nichols appearing herself in the costume she advocated, was a great advance in good sense on her predecessor in lecturing on the subject, Mrs. Oakes Smith. Then her dress was in its details the same with that most approved among us—that is, the pantalettes were not Turkish but plain, and moderately wide; the waist fitted with a yoke, and without a boddice: the skirt was somewhat longer than ours, which I think detracted from its lightness and grace.

Most of her views I liked very much. She advocated the reform not as a caprice of fashion, but for its health, beauty and utility. She repudiated the idea of calling it the Turkish or the Persian costume, but would have it called the American costume. It was the American woman's declaration of independence of Parisian despotism. She could not by any means assume that the style she had on, was the standard of perfection; it was simply a transition one, appropriate as a first step in freedom; when freedom was secured, taste and art must come in to improve and beautify. She expatiated on the fettering, cramping effect of woman,s dress, from the cradle to the grave, except for a short period in childhood, and then said the result was, we were compelled to go to the Circus or Theatre to see specimens of well developed forms, with grace and agility of motion. The poetry of motion, such as Fanny Ellsler and the Ravels exhibit was not attained in the heavy entanglements of skirts and quilts, &c., &c.

After the address, the Committee presented a series of Resolutions which were read and put to vote. Those approving being requested to rise, I should judge nearly the whole assembly arose. Some six or seven non-approvers on the back seats were complimented for their moral courage in dissenting from the majority. There were no other regular addresses, but after the business of the meeting was through there was a general loosing of tongues, and every one talked out their opinions. A crowd gathered round Mrs. Nichols and her daughter to ask a variety of questions about the making of the new costume; and fianlly, Miss Nichols was requested to step up on to the speaker's desk, so as to give a fair view of the much talked of short dress and pantalettes. Mrs. Nichols announced as a piece of good news for those who were waiting for some *en masse* movement to keep them in countenance, that very soon Madame Hawley, the first Gymnast in the country, with her numerous pupils would appear in public in the new costume.

Another meeting was promised with addresses from several ladies, and then the assembly broke up. C. A. M.

[*For the Circular.*]

The Moral of the Movement.

There is something quite transcendental even, in the outward aspect of this movement for a change in women's dress. The suddenness of the reform, without previous agitation—the universality of its appearance, the interest and almost unanimous approbation of the press, are curiosities of the times.

We are led to look below the surface of the thing, and to speculate on the spiritual cause and meaning of it. It strikes us as the opening act of a great moral, æsthetic and social revolution.—It is the revolt of woman against the tyranny and nonsense of the past in regard to dress. We understand it not as a change of fashion merely, for the movement has none of the characteristics that belong to the phenomena of fashion. It originated in the country—in *this* country: and so far it has been sustained by the 'rural districts' rather than the cities. However fashion may hereafter sieze upon and make game of it, it is really the offspring of principle and sober earnestness. We say it is not a change of fash-

ion that is going on, but the overthrow of an institution.

It is said by some that the long skirts of woman's dress, that are now under indictment, are symbolic of her dignity &c. We believe they are rather the uniform of her slavery and shame. There is something in the custom of woman's dress in the past that has identified it with the original sin and degradation of the race. There has been a spirit connected with it, entrenched in utter irrationality, but still mighty enough to hold women in immemorial bondage. That spirit we should say is now broken; and we look upon it only as the precursor of other changes reaching in the same direction—toward the recovery of our orginal birthright. Women and society under this new development cannot be like the women and society of the past. It seems to be a fitting inauguration of the age of reason, which is also the age of the Bible; and now that it is well begun, we may expect rapid criticism and correction on every hand, till all old abuses are removed.

The movement, as has been shown in another article of this paper, originated with the central members of the Oneida Community. They first broke the spell, and pushed open the door. We care nothing about the name of the thing, and only mention it for the sake of deducing the general truth, that all popular reforms begin with some individual victory over a *spirit*, and hence that their real history does not lie on the surface. We have so often seen this illustrated, that it has become a settled principle of great practical use in regulating our policy and expectations as reformers.

What is shown to be true of the origin of this movement, might be shown of all the radicalisms that for the last sixteen years have been tending in this country to a Theocratic millennium. They may all be traced back to the influence, either collateral or direct, to the truth that is central to this Community, and finally to the individual experience of John H. Noyes. In every case of general advance into freedom to thought on the subject of government, society, spiritual existence, &c, we are familiar with the fact that he made the previous assault, and won a spiritual victory. And it has become a perfectly habitual thing with us to assume that our innovations begin to take effect abroad, from the time they are fairly uttered in the little circle here; and to expect without noisy effort on our part, a certain and simultaneous movement of public feeling, from the point of persecution to that of toleration and compliance. This indicates the way in which the world is to be conquered. All that is necessary, is that a man should have moral courage and communication with the heavens enough to pierce through into the truth, and break the principalities of darkness that surround our most vital interests, in one instance. That may be done in a person's private closet, but it is good for all mankind. G.

A late editorial in the N. Y. Tribune, on the 'Revolution in Dress,' written in the peculiar strain, if not by the real pen of Henry James, enters into a systematic defense of the principle of shame, calling it 'decency,' 'modesty,' &c. The argument is put forward with new decorations, but it is simply the old position, that shame is the natural and proper disgust of the soul at the meanness of the body.

'When the celestial visitant [i.e. the soul] looks forth from the walls of her prison only to discern the narrow and unworthy dimensions to which she has accommodated herself,

a feeling of surprise and revulsion necessarily ensues, and the conscious body, confessing the shame, mantles with a cordial and responsive blush.'

The philosophy of this talk is miserable twaddle, and the sentiment particularly base, besides contradicting all that is known of true taste in the fine arts. In degrading the human form, to excuse the soul for an instinct of shame that belongs to its own defection, the writer must know that he is offending really, one of the deepest and purest harmonies of the soul itself; which comes out in the involuntary admiration of statuary, that is universal to man. In proportion as the soul becomes right, will be its satisfaction and delight in the symmetrical form which God has made for its dwelling and exponent. G.

Our Pedestrian School.

It may be new to our friends when we inform them that during the present spring, we have organized a system of what would pass ostensibly for *Peddling;* and we need not stop now to contradict the term, but will pass on to explain briefly what we mean. The practice is, for several of our members to provide themselves with a light valise each, which is filled with sewing-silk and light articles from the store, and specimens of our publications from the Printing-Office, and to set out on a pedestrian tour, two in company, in different directions. They sell whatever is carried, mostly in private families, adhering strictly to one price, and take the names of such as wish to read our publications. Their excursions generally last a fortnight; and in this way they have visited many of the counties of this state. It is generally arranged to have all return at an appointed time, which they can do by means of the Railroads, and the event makes an occasion of festivity and mutual gladness in the Community. The direction of the matter has been specially attended to by J. R. Miller.

Our first objects in this enterprise, are to advance our own education, to get spiritual control of the business department, in all directions, and to act as missionaries of the truth. How far these objects are being favored, it would be interesting to tell, if we had time.—It is enough to say, that the operation is abundantly prospered, and we believe, will prove the seed of a world-wide expansion. It is a very popular branch of service in the Association.

We have alluded to it now partly for tha purpose of mentioning that the next company of Tourists, will take with them specimens of the Oneida costume, made here, from material sent from Brooklyn, expresaly for the purpose. It is thought that this will be taken as a favor by many who are now hesitating through ignorance of the manner of construction, and are curious to test the looks of the thing, before adopting it. G.

The Free Church Circular.

HARRIET H. SKINNER, EDITRESS.

ONEIDA RESERVE, JUNE 28. 1851.

☞ *Correspondents will bear in mind that our Post-Office address is "ONEIDA CASTLE, Oneida Co., N. Y."*

Conservative Fire.

For the third time, San Francisco has been almost destroyed by fire; and the last fire is worse than either of the preceding. Three fourths of the business part of the city, and an incalculable amount of property is destroyed; and it is curiously timed, exactly a year since a similar calamity. What is the meaning

of it? Well, in our view, these fires are among the best things going in these times. The circumstances of the settlement of California, are breeding a tremendous amount of animalism and corruption; and God is from time to time, checking the process. 'Hurrah for gold' gets a severe rebuke every little while. The calamities, dangers, and miseries of the gold country, will hold back and suppress the horrible influences that would otherwise come from it. The news from California is news of great prosperity, and great calamity; and they about cancel each other. Millions and millions of gold are discovered, and millions and millions every little while burned. So the balance is pretty well kept; and animalism does not get ahead much.

A Hopeful Sign.

A farewell benefit has been given to George Thompson in Boston. He is an Englishman, a very eloquent man, and a great favorite with the abolitionists. He came here sixteen years ago, as a public lecturer, and under the instigation of such papers as the Herald, and Courier and Enquirer, the wrath of the country was raised against him to such a pitch that he finally had to leave to save his life. The same man who was the object of such malice sixteen years ago has now come back to face his enemies, and the very papers that raised the storm before, have tried to do it again, but it has been a signal failure. He has lectured about the country and been received with a great deal of applause, and at a public dinner, given in honor of him at Boston, recently, he was complimented in the highest degree by the first men of Massachusetts. He announces too his intention of settling up his affairs in England, and coming back here to live. This is a great gain of the free and rational spirit. The papers that have ruled the mob, and said to the wheels of reform, Thus far shalt thou go and no farther, are *down*. They cannot stir up a tumult. 'The tocsin does not yield,' as they said in the French Revolution.

Community Incident.

At the tea-table last evening, Mr. D. J. Hall gave notice that they were ready to hang 'the upper mill-stone' and test its motion for the first time, and should be happy to have the assistance of the men, and the presence of the ladies on the occasion. It was an event of some interest, the attainment of a years preparation, and the invitation was received with enthusiasm. We always enjoy anything that calls us all out, and this was a merry gathering, a charming walk, and exilerating exhibition. The heavy stone of more than a ton's weight, was first raised and suspended on its pivot. Then the group formed a circle round it, and at the signal of a 'rap' from Mr. Hall to the machinery below, with all its ponderosity the stone began to whirl with the lightness of a top—noiseless almost, but emitting a fiery glow where it grazed its fellow stone. As Mr. Mallory poured on water to check the scintillations, Mr. Inslee called it the *christening;* and we expect that the flour which it will hereafter turn out, will be well magnetized with the spirit of thankfulness and brotherly love.

THE FREE CHURCH CIRCULAR

Is published weekly by the Free Church Association at Oneida Reserve, N. Y. The price of it, is $1,00 for 26 numbers. Subscribers, however, will be left to judge for themselves what amount of remuneration agrees with its value and with their ability. It is offered *freely* to all who are interested in its doctrines.

LEONARD AND COMPANY, PRINTERS

INDEX TO VOL. IV.