NICHOLS' MONTHLY.

JULY, 1856.

One year ago, we commenced the present series of our monthly, and we begin, with this number, its third half-yearly volume. We are glad to know, by the prompt renewal of our subscriptions, and by other expressions, that it meets with an encouraging appreciation.

The story of The Sisters, commenced a year ago, is brought to a conclusion in the present number. We shall make arrangements for its early publication in book form, and hope that it may find a large circulation. It seems to us to have elements of popularity which will carry it to many homes, and we hope much good from its teachings. We cannot fix the date of publication, but it will probably be issued in September, for the early fall trade. It will make a handsome dollar book of nearly four hundred pages. Those who wish for copies in this form can forward their subscriptions at any time, and receive the book as soon as issued.

The Life of a Medium approaches its completion. The recent chapters have given much satisfaction to our spiritual readers, and the coming ones are full of instructive interest. This also will be ready for the press this fall, and will be published, neatly done up in cloth, at seventy-five cents.

We shall now give larger portions of Esperanza, hoping also to complete that in the present volume. As far as we can learn, no serial that we have ever issued, has been read with more interest.

We hope also to be able now to go on with our biographical serial, the World's Reformers, and complete it according to the original design. Probably it may be continued for two or three years, and published in a series of volumes.

It has been determined, in the Central Bureau of the Progressive Union, to organize a board, or bureau, for the propagation of our principles, with a President or Director, Treasurer, Publishers,

Auditors and Council. The method of organization, officers, and functions of this bureau will be given in a circular, sent to every member. Our readers, who have not yet united in this organization, will do well, perhaps, to read over the principles contained in the July number, 1855, and see if they cannot send in their affiliations, and take an active interest in this work.

We hope to be able to say something definitely of *Memnonia* in our next number. When the opposition was excited against us at Yellow Springs, our spirit friends promised us that the battle should be fought, and the victory won for us, and almost without our striking a blow. This seems to have been accomplished. Mr. Conklin, the medium, has been there, and most of our opponents have been converted to spiritualism; and, of course, have no longer any fanatical prejudices against us. One of the charges urged against us by Horace Mann was, that we were spiritualists; and he treated our belief in immortality with ridicule and contempt. Now, a large number of the most respectable citizens of Yellow Springs, and many of the professors and students of Antioch College, are believers, and even Mr. Mann thinks the subject worthy of serious investigation. It is therefore probable that we shall be allowed to take and hold peaceable possession of our property, and no longer be defrauded of our legal rights by a fanatical and ruffianly opposition. So we hope and believe. The world moves.

CHAPTER XXV.

MUMBO JUMBO—JUGGERNAUT—HELL.

MRS. MEADOWS grieved secretly for Caroline, though she seldom spoke her feelings or her fears. Frederick Sherwood had, prior to his marriage, been regarded as "a wild young man." If the truth must be told, there was much more charity toward his faults before his marriage than afterwards. Lady mothers did not care to exaggerate, or even mention the demerits of a young man who might offer himself as a son-in-law, with a property large enough to make it a lucrative object to reform him. Before marriage, then, Frederick Sherwood's faults were indiscretions—after this event, they had no such mild designation. Ladies who laughed at his furious driving, and heavy drinking, and his odd vocabulary before his marriage, were found in no such pleasant mood, over the same facts, afterwards. Formerly, he was "a daring driver," now "he would break his worthless neck;" formerly he was "too convivial," now, "he was sure to be a sot;" formerly his *outre* string of words was regarded as "very droll," "exceedingly amusing," now, his language was "ridiculous in the extreme," "very disgusting."

Ladies, young and old, who avoided Caroline Sherwood a few months ago, now expressed their pity in the most lugubrious way—they feared for her, they compassionated her, and they had "no idea what Frederick Sherwood would come to."

All this affected Mr. and Mrs. Meadows, as a malarious atmosphere affects us, without our being conscious of it, till we are very ill. Mrs. Meadows went about with a heavy fear at her heart, that she was hardly conscious of. She knew that she was not happy, but in the superincumbent weight, she could not tell what pound pressed heaviest. It was, however, true that Caroline's present

and prospective misery was the burden that pressed most sorely upon her mother. Still she had a support, that her husband had not. She was inwardly angry with Fred and his mother all the time. Though she said nothing, she imitated her ideal God, who was said to be angry with the wicked every day.

Mr. Meadows was seeking all the while the grace of forgiveness. He prayed for Frederick Sherwood, and Caroline, and the "Old One," fervently, every day. We can't say that his was the prayer of faith, but it surely was offered with great patience and commendable perseverence.

Mrs. Meadows was in constant anxiety for Caroline, after she learned that her other daughter could not be expected to come to her. Who would take care of her poor, sick child, and who could be trusted with the knowledge of Fred's infirmities? Neither Caroline nor Mrs. Meadows could bear to think of the truth being known. What nurse, or what "help" could be relied upon, to conceal what these unhappy persons so much wished to hide? There was no hope of cure in their hearts. To conceal this social and domestic cancer, was all that they could do, and the dread that they would fail even in this, was a continual misery to Mrs. Meadows and Caroline.

Poor Fred had no sympathy, not even Jerry's. Deacon Meadows pitied him, and prayed for him, but they shunned each other instinctively; and when they met, they never conversed beyond mutial inquiries about health, or remarks upon the weather. Mrs. Meadows' stern severity awed Fred away from her, as if she were a judgment seat and prison for two worlds.

Mrs. Sherwood, the elder, was "steady," and people supposed that she was becoming pious in her old age. Rawson had induced her, by some occult ways and means, to join "the Daughters of Temperance," and when she condescended to speak to Fred at all, it was to give him good advice.

"You can't say," said she, "that your mother is leading you to destruction; you know that I've took the pledge, and what's more, that I keep it, and I give you good advice. What more can a mother do?"

Fred sat with his hands clasped around his forehead—the blood seemed ready to burst from every pore of his fiery, swollen face. "There is one thing I wish to Jupiter you had not given me," said he, "and then I should have no occasion for your good advice."

"And what is that?" asked his mother in a shrill voice. She had an idea that all gifts and gains were of value, and not to be despised. "What is it that I have given you, that you dont want? I did not give you your fine, high-flown lady, that never does nothing but sulk; that dont speak to you or me, if she can help it, from week's end to week's end."

"You need not scold about Caroline, mother, for without your infernal gift I should never have had her."

"I'd like to know what my infernal gift is, or was," said Mrs. Sherwood, beginning to be tormented by curiosity.

Fred hissed through his teeth, "My cursed existence. I have not a piece of brain as big as a mustard seed, that does not ache. I have not a nerve that is not skinned; and if I weigh one pound, I swear I weigh a thousand."

"The way of the transgresser is hard," said Mrs. Sherwood; and then she added, "but if you feel so bad, you know how to pity me; I never feel well, and then why dont you get a doctor?" She did not say, "why dont you consult Dr. Brown?"

"It's no use going to a doctor. I have got poison enough aboard my ship now to sink it; and as to Dr. Brown, and his sugar pills, when I can stop the Connecticut river with a shovel, I'll believe that the sixty billionth part of any thing will cool down the fire that I am kindling and quenching every day with brandy and water. Water by courtesy, for I hate it as bad as you did when you brought me into this world, damned from the start."

Mrs. Sherwood began to cry. "I have been a good mother to you," said she, "and I would have saved you from all the trouble you have now, but you would not hear to me; you went crazy, and deeded away my hard airnings, and now you are gittin' your pay for it."

"Mother," said Fred, rising, and his eyes flashing terribly, "if you ever mention that deed again, I'll" ———

"What will you do? Strike your poor old mother?" said Mrs. Sherwood, tauntingly. Fred sat down, and held his head a moment, and then he said, without anger, and very solemnly, "I'll never hurt any body but myself when I'm sober, and have my senses; but if you or Caroline provoke me much farther, I'll just borrow Smask's rope halter, and I'll get rid of my damned self, if it is to be done; and if it is not, I am not afraid of being any worse helped than I am now. I have given you warning, old lady; you may go and tell Rawson if you like, and see what you can do about it."

We have reason to believe that Caroline received a like warning from her husband, for she bade Tim secretly to look after him carefully, and she got the homeopathic medicine, that is considered the preventive of suicide, from Dr. Brown, and put it in the brandy bottle. Why she did this, when his life so oppressed and tortured her, and when she often wished that he would die, we cannot tell. There are strange inconsistencies in human characters, and she had fears that governed her more than she knew. She had an intuition that Rawson and Mrs. Sherwood had united to injure her; in some way to defraud her of the property, or something. She could not tell what she feared, but she felt that while Frederick lived she was safe from them.

In the midst of all these troubles, Sarah Moreton "was called to part with her husband." So the pious people expressed it, and they hoped she would be enabled to bear her loss with christian fortitude.

More than a year the poor girl had been wife, nurse, servant, and bond slave. Deacon Moreton left her fifty dollars in his will, and when her mourning was paid for, which was ordered with that for the rest of his family, but paid for out of her legacy, she had twenty dollars. She was treated with such coldness by her husband's children, that she was glad to leave in less than a week after his death. She brought her emaciated body, her diseased lungs, and her broken and resigned spirit to Deacon Meadows', just in Caroline's great need. There was still a little usefulness left in her, for she had originally a strong constitution. She was hard to kill. Her burdens would be much lighter with Caroline,

and both she and Mrs. Meadows considered it a providence that she had come in the present state of things.

Fred was glad to see Sarah—he had liked her formerly, and any variety in his wretched life was a comfort. It was true he hated sick folks, but then his wife was always sick, and he had got used to it somewhat, and then Sarah looked well. Her cheeks were red, her eyes were bright—every other day she was better, and she coughed most in the morning, when Fred knew nothing about it. So, on the whole, he was glad of her presence. He said some cheerful words to her. So did Caroline and Mrs. Meadows. Mr. Meadows said more than any one, and Sarah felt happier than she had been since her impalement in marriage with old Deacon Moreton, who, though nearly deaf and blind, had still the love of money strong enough within him to save it for his own children, and turn off this poor slave, with a pittance that would not have paid for two month's night watching. Truly marriage is a beneficent institution, and worthy of all respect from a *christian* community.

In justice to the friends who had advised Sarah to marry, we must record the fact, that they were really distressed at the way she was treated, and turned off without even nurse's wages. It may be said also for the miserly husband, that he did not realize that Sarah had been burdened heavily in her care of him. She had had a home, and he supposed would continue to have one. He was habitually a miser, and small sums looked large to him. Fifty dollars seemed a great deal of money to him. He felt very poor, and had no idea that he was being cruel or unjust. His daughters supposed that Sarah had helped herself unscrupulously to money, and other things; they resented this imaginary crime of hers, and even privately searched her trunks. They found nothing; but their suspicions were not removed, and their coldness drove the poor woman away, as surely as force could have done it. Poor Sarah! A little longer and you will escape from your suffering body, and reach a better world, and you may be sure that no such marriage as yours will ever be made, or continued, in the next world, unless the orthodox idea of hell should be excelled by chaining wretched couples in the fire.

Mumbo Jumbo! Juggernaut! The orthodox christian hell!

CHAPTER. XXVI.

BIRTH AND DEATH.

WHEN Mrs. Sherwood asked Dr. Brown for those papers, and failed to get them, she immediately concluded that Frederick had really deeded away her property to Caroline. From the time that she was fully convinced of this fact, she seemed to lose all affection, natural or other, for him. She saw in him the robber of his poor old mother for a girl that she hated, and who she knew did not love her son. Dr. Brown she regarded as little better than Frederick and his wife. He was at best an accomplice.

It is said that carrion birds scent a battle field at vast distances. On this principle, Rawson seemed to have been drawn to Mrs. Sherwood. He came ostensibly as a temperance man, who wanted to reform her habits. What passed between them no one knew, but some powerful motive must have been presented to Mrs. Sherwood, for she changed outwardly, very much, in a comparatively short space of time. She became better in health, more careful of every thing, sharper at a trade, a great deal more constant in her attendance on religious meetings, and more partial to conversing on the subject of paradise. She lamented that Frederick would not reform, and threw out dark hints that his brain had never been right since his injury, just before his marriage.

Mrs. Sherwood shunned Dr. Brown, and felt very bitterly toward him ; but she had the art to conceal her dislike, and spoke of him very favorably, and advised Sarah Moreton to consult him about her cough. Rawson did not call often at Mrs. Sherwood's. Caroline had watched for his coming, and had determined, if possible, to know something of the "moving why" he came. There were two doors in the cheese room, for the greater circulation of air,

and Caroline had observed that she could hear Mrs. Sherwood's voice, from her throne-room, the kitchen, when there.

For several weeks she watched for Rawson, and at last he came. She made her way to the cheese room, with some difficulty, and remained, whilst Mrs. Sherwood and Rawson were holding a conference. "He will not do it," she heard Rawson say. "Barking dogs never bite." "He's much more likely to run away than to hang himself."

"I don't know," said Mrs. Sherwood; "he seemed dreadfully in *airnest* then, and he never speaks to his poor old mother now, unless about something that he can't well help."

"You are placed in a very trying situation," said Rawson; "I am afraid you'll be robbed of every thing in the end. Frederick can't outlive you, that's certain. You have a good constitution, and your habits are regular now; whilst his are as bad as they well can be. But if you should lose him, you have other great difficulties to contend with. His child" ——— The old woman elevated her voice, as if she did not care if all the world heard her. "She'll *never* have a living child. I'm as sure of it, as I am that he struck her down yesterday, and that he grows worse every day."

"But is not Sarah Moreton with her?" said Rawson.

"Yes, by times, but she was gone over to her father's yesterday, and he don't mind Sarah much now. She is no tell tale."

Caroline had heard enough, and too much. Only her pride hindered her from going directly to her father, and claiming his protection for herself and her unborn babe. She could not do it. She went to her chamber, and laid down on her bed, as she believed never to rise again. She sent for her mother and Dr. Brown. She said nothing of the insane violence from which she had suffered the day before, indeed she had thought little of it, till she heard Mrs. Sherwood's dreadful words. Frederick had left her soon after the occurrence, and had not returned. He was often two or three days gone, at shooting matches and fishing excursions, each in their season. But now the hour was come, hour of keenest agony, when Doctors are hired to make atonement for drunken, good-for-nothing, or unloving husbands. Mrs. Meadows was firm,

Dr. Brown was kind and skilful, and Sarah Moreton was tender and sympathising.

It was well for Caroline that the miserable husband and father was away. Better thus than with his presence, that inspired terror and disgust. But what words can tell the agony of the proud woman, with no love in her heart, neither sustenance from without nor within, with more than death pangs upon her, and the fearful sentence ringing in her ears, "she will never have a living child." The long night crept slowly away, and the dawn brought no relief. And then the day was measured by the same period of unutterable anguish. She prayed to die, but could not, and not until another morning was the long agony over. And then the prophecy was fulfilled — "she will never have a living child." Her babe was dead. About midnight Frederick had returned. Tim had put up the horses, but he had shunned Sherwood, for, as he afterwards said, "he looked wild like, and he was afraid of him." Fred did not come into the house, and no one thought much about him, until Caroline was out of danger, and then Dr. Brown sent Tim to the barn to seek him. He came back to the house, too much frightened to speak coherently, and Dr. Brown went himself. There was Frederick Sherwood, with a rope halter about his neck, suspended between his horses, his right hand was clutched fast in Vixen's mane, and he was quite dead. The doctor satisfied himself of this fact, and then he went to Caroline. Tim had recovered his speech after the Dr. left him, and had told Sarah Moreton that Frederick had hung himself. Sarah had repeated what he said, in what she thought a whisper, to Mrs. Meadows. Caroline heard the words plainly, but she did not speak. She was fully sensible that she was a widow and childless, but this was nevertheless the happiest hour of her life.

Dr. Brown decided that Caroline should not be told at present, of the fact of her husband's death. Deacon Meadows was sent for, and immediately took the requisite steps with regard to the coroner, etc.

The kind Doctor was distressed for his patient and friend. He did not like to leave her in ignorance. He was fearful that some

one might tell her less gently than himself. He went and sat by the bed, and his eyes ran over with tears. Caroline languidly looked up at him. She wanted to sleep. Her only desire then seemed to be, that she might sleep forever. She saw the Doctor's tears, and beckoned him to her. He put his face near to hers, and she whispered very low — "Let me rest. I know that he is dead, but let me rest."

The Doctor pressed her hand. He was greatly relieved. She whispered again, "Go away now. They will tell me when I wake. Don't be troubled. *Let me rest;*" and she sunk to sleep before the Doctor was gone.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SARATOGA AND MRS. MEADOWS.

"I'M here, Miss Minnie, sure and sartin," said Jerry, as Miss Meadows met him at the door, and welcomed Norah and the baby, who had come in the gorgeous close of the afternoon to enjoy the country, the ride, and to meet the elder and the younger Minnie.

The little Minnie greeted her baby brother with great joy, but she was shy of Norah, and hardly recognized her.

"Sure ye are not kind to me," said Norah. "What's come till ye? Have ye ne'er a word for one that's fed ye this many a day?"

"I want to see the baby," said Minnie, "and you need not disturb me."

Miss Meadows drew Minnie away to prepare her to go home, and said quietly to her, "Don't you love Norah any more?"

"Yes, I love her, but———" She paused, and her aunt waited for her to go on. She did not speak, but great tears come into her eyes.

"What is it, Minnie, dear? What has Norah done?"

"Nothing," said the little one, in a choaking voice.

"Will you not tell me how Norah has grieved you?"

"It is of no use to tell you," said Minnie, "you can't help it."

"But I want to know," said Miss Meadows. "Perhaps I can do something to comfort you."

"Well, it is just this," said the child, with a trembling voice, but with great resolution, "Norah is very big, and I am very little. I want to be as large as Norah, and I feel very bad in my heart to her, because she is grown so very big. She don't know as much as you, aunty, and why should she be quite as tall as you, when I am very little?"

Miss Meadows laughed heartily.

"You dear little simpleton," said she; "is Norah naughty because she could not help being larger than you? Poor Norah! go and kiss her, and I promise that you shall grow as large as you like in time."

"But I cannot kiss her, for I feel bad in my heart to her," said the child.

"I am very sorry," said Minnie. "What if we should all feel bad in our hearts to you, because you are little?"

"You will not, will you?" said the discontented one.

"Certainly not, if you are good to us all, and especially to Norah."

"I love Norah," said the child. "Do you think I will ever grow as big as she is?"

"Yes, if you kiss her, and love her, and are good, you will be well, and happy, and grow finely,"

Minnie was comforted, and ran away to kiss Norah.

Miss Meadows stopped for a few last words, and last flowers, and told Mrs. Margaret of Minnie's trouble.

"Just like us larger children—always impatient for the unattainable, or rather, the not yet attainable. How I longed, when I was ten years old, to be in my teens;—how anxiously I wished to be designated as a young lady;—and then when I was a young woman, how I longed to be educated; and later, I prayed just as earnestly to be wise and good.

"We first imagine that there is some perfectness to be attained at a certain age; then we look to classes for goodness. We imagine that the church embosoms peculiar piety. We find good and bad there, as every where;—a mixture of good, bad and indifferent characters in the class, and a mixture of good and bad qualities in the individual.

"I remember my great disappointment with the church. A similar failure to find my ideal has always attended my efforts or expectations to find it in any class. I looked among the aristocracy for taste and culture. I looked amongst authors and artists for a higher standard of esthetic work and beauty than we find amongst the people. I was disappointed in all, and never till I

was free to seek the good and the beautiful wherever they are to be found, and to love and accept them, whenever and wherever discovered, was I enabled to escape from failure and disappointment. Bright fragments of the true and the lovely are everywhere. They are the scattered seed of the Divine in all souls."

"The little one has been the occasion of a great lesson," said Minnie; "I will remember." She took Mrs. Margaret's soft hands in hers; she wiped her beautiful eyes, and both said as one, "We part in hope;" and then after a moment Mrs. Denby said, "I will send for you as soon as he comes. It will be a joyful time."

The forgiving Minnie, the happy Norah, the light hearted Jerry, and the quiet baby, made a pleasant sphere for Miss Meadows, whose spirit was reposing in great peace and an abounding hope.

Mrs. Meadows was ill when Minnie returned to her. She had one of those severe attacks of headache, consequent on her superabundant mentality. All her friends were deeply anxious about her, but she had seen no one for an age, they said, How many hours make an age, in fashionable parlance, we will not stop to inquire.

"Dear Imogene," said Minnie, "I am so sorry to find you ill."

"And out of temper," said Mrs. Meadows.

"I will never go from home again without my husband. No one else ever understood me;—or knew in the least how to sympathise with me."

Minne had heard her say full fifty times, that Mr. Meadows was the dearest fellow in the world, but that he never understood her. It is surprising the number of women who fancy they are never understood, especially by their husbands. They would be deeply grieved and offended if they should be told, ever so truly, that they were not worth five minutes study for any earthly use, and as they are of no use, what's the use in understanding them?

Mrs. Margaret's remarks had somewhat enlightened Minnie respecting Mrs. Meadows, and she felt sure now, intuitively sure, that something had occurred to greatly annoy the lady. As she got in conversation, and pleased herself by arranging her flowers, she seemed better.

Minnie inquired for the Denbys, and spoke of Henry. Mrs. Meadows was evidently tired of him, but she spoke of him as favorably as she could in her weariness. She had still designs upon him for her sister, or upon Minnie for him.

Minnie asked after the senator somebody. Mrs. Meadows frowned. "He had been attentive, but she was not pleased with him;" and again she wished for Mr. Meadows, and declared she never would go from home without him.

"Speaking of an angel you are sure to see his wings," cried Minnie, laughing, as her brother entered, and embraced his wife most tenderly.

"I could not live any longer alone," said he. Mrs. Meadows was overjoyed. "Now I have a husband all to myself. I shan't borrow or lend," said she merrily;—and in the course of the next half hour it come out how the senator had offended Mrs. Meadows. He had been very polite and attentive, and had given her flowers, and had admired, as in duty bound, the blonde beauty. But in the midst of a great triumph, which Mrs. Meadows felt sure she had achieved, in winning the admiration of a grave, great man, and when she had laid up half a dozen most delicate and insinuating compliments for all that was blonde and pearl-like in her style, she had overheard him speaking to a brunette, in terms expressing an enthusiastic preference for the brown, over all other styles of beauty. From that moment he lost Mrs. Meadows. She was confined to her room with "a severe headache," alias a fit of mortification, or vexation, that another woman could be admired in the same world with herself.

The distinguished senator somebody found himself opposite Mrs. Meadows next day, when radiant with beauty, and most charming adorning, she introduced him to her husband, as if he, the distinguished senator, had been he most indifferent person to whom she had ever found it her duty to be civil.

Still the lady was never guilty of wasting present or prospective advantages. She delegated to her husband the privilege of being polite to the gentleman, and also of inviting him to visit them on his way to congress the coming winter. Mrs. Meadows

languidly seconded her husband's hearty invitation, and the distinguished senator somebody found himself piqued and attracted, and resolving to accept, and not to accept the invitation, just as if he were not a distinguished senator, and a grave, great man. Mrs. Meadows pleased him, and attracted him, and piqued and provoked him. "Surely the lady was of no more consequence," he said mentally, "than fifty other well dressed wives of merchants sojourning at Saratoga." Still she *was* of more consequence to him, and the *rosettes* of her morning dress, her pearl crosses, and her pearly transparent complexion, her white flowers, and white dresses, and a diamond larger than any one else had, glittering in the center of all, and then her gentlemanly, kind, and most devoted husband, and the train of poetical, intellectual, and, more charming than all, musical and artistic admirers, who clustered around her, and offered the incense of their gifts at her shrine, all this made a sort of halo around the lady. Queen Victoria, in a peasant's hut, with six children, and her husband gone to a day's work, digging a ditch, would look, and seem strangely different from herself on her throne, with crown and courtiers, ministers and mitred men, and beauteous women, and fair children, and her handsome husband, and a loyal nation to sustain a glorified ideal of royalty.

Mrs. Meadows was, and is, a beautiful woman, but she needed as much her surroundings, probably, as any other queen.

The hours and moments that must intervene before Ashton came passed slowly away, but at last they were gone, and the loved one was present in Mrs. Margaret's sweet home, and, what was entirely unexpected to Minnie, George Vinton was there also.

"I came of an errand," said George, "as little Minnie used to say, when she was pretty sure she was intruding." Miss Meadows was too well schooled in independent individualism, which alone is the condition of true dependence and unity, to be curious.

"We all have our functions," said Ashton. "If it is needful for you to know any thing of our work, you will know it. If not——"

"I assure you I am as content with my own place and work," said Minnie, "as if I were the center of perception. My heart is my domain and dominion, and I always learn from its impulses my

own work." And so all perceived their appropriate work. No one had to give information, and reasons, and explanations to discontented friends, but amongst a considerable number who came, as apparently unbidden as George Vinton had come, Minnie found herself joining hands with several, in what she felt must be a life work, and a life unity, and the mystery of her future went on, forming, and yet elucidating itself to her.

What a net work of Providences—what a congress of counsellors and lovers was this, and there was a joy in meeting and conferring under the grand old trees, in the free air of heaven, that could not be realized in the tainted atmosphere of the city. Love, wisdom, peace and power, all were evolving a future, in which all had the faith of assurance. It is not the work of this history to record actualization. The real that lives in the heavens, that comes into the heart of woman, and the thought of man, and that had just now begun to be an actual in the world, of this it is my work to give glimpses here and there. Another shall, daguerreotype, in living light, the picture of life in Esperanza. I speak only of preparation; of devotion, of entire consecration to the thought and the work of a true life and a true society.

It has been wisely said "The kingdom of heaven is within you." Only as the Divinity in humanity is acknowledged; only as the God-man rises from the crucifixion of law and custom, to live a true and heavenly life, can we have a harmonic society. Only by individual fidelity to the holiest within us, can the heavens descend, and man and the earth be redeemed.

Christians have looked beyond this world for happiness; for heaven. They have lived by faith and hope in the future. The time has come for a holy and happy life on the earth. The day of atonements for many is passed. The prayer that has been breathed and moaned through the long night of our humanity, nailed to the cross by falsehood and oppression, is about to be answered. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, *on earth*, as it is done in heaven." Amen and amen.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MORE OF LIFE.

MRS. MEADOWS was the genius of a party. Nobody gave such parties in New York. The reason was she had too much taste and freedom to be governed by the popular pattern. She did not give the furnishing of her house into the hands of an upholsterer to make it precisely like every "first class house" in Bleecker street, and for the same reason she took the management of her own parties, and never employed a master of ceremonies, who might be a sexton, or an undertaker, and suggest ideas very foreign to the spirit of the occasion. In matters of taste, and in the freedom with which she brought individuals of different classes together, Mrs. Meadows was a public benefactor. There was a breaking up of the everlasting formality of furnishing the house, and inviting the guests. The succession of velvet and damask for chairs and sofas, and of lace and crimson for curtains, was broken, and her own thoughts and loves found place in her parlors, and other apartments. Then the careful invitations to people in "our set" were just as much disturbed.

The consequence was that many persons were delighted, they knew not why, simply by having the monotony of their dull lives broken.

Mrs. Meadows became a queen of fashion, so that in most things she was not imitated, only because she was inimitable.

Almost all admired, but they had neither her taste, tact, or courage. They could not make innovations successfully, and so they were content with admiring Mrs. Meadows. Sometimes they went to her milliner, but she was like others of her class, and could only give them Paris fashions, which Mrs. Meadows had

changed into perfect charmingness, by a very slight change of her own.

Mrs. Meadows knew when the distinguished senator somebody would be in the city. She knew when he would call on her, and she knew what she should wear when she went down to see him. And she would punish him by being very cordial, and she would give a party on purpose for him, for she knew he would linger on his way to the National *jardin des ours*, and she would invite the brunette, who gave her the bad head-ache, and she would give the grave, great man a heart-ache, or at the least, she would make him feel very much vexed with himself, and his want of taste, or sincerity on a certain unfortunate occasion. All this Mrs. Meadows had calculated. It was her kind of diplomacy: the employment of a rational being, and a more charming woman than you might find in a day's journey amongst the "upper ten thousand" of New York."

Mrs. Meadows was right in a part of her intentions. The gentleman would call to see her, for she interested and attracted him. He had an eye for beauty, and he had a heart and moral nature of his own. He had not given away the one, or sold the other. Mrs. Meadows was not as well acquainted with him as she thought. He would linger in New York, but not because she pleased him; but he had motives that would be very discreditable with many; he was determined on extending his acquaintance with the spiritual world; if the plain truth must be told, the distinguished senator somebody was a spiritualist, and was determined to spend a week in New York, in visiting Mr. Conklin, and "the Fox girls," and other members of the fashionable, and yet very unfashionable fraternity of ghostologists, and in witnessing the manifestations. He did not reveal his intentions to invite ridicule, and he did not conceal himself from his fellows, as if the love of immortality were a crime.

Minnie and Ettie met him at Mrs. Brown's, (formerly Miss Fox,) and Miss Meadows was almost sure that she recognized him. She could not persuade herself to believe that the grave, wise looking man, who was getting answers to mental questions through

the raps, could be the person who had been the admiring friend of Mrs. Meadows. She did not like to think of him, belittled into a carpet knight.

She sat calmly observing him, as he took down a communication made by the raps and the alphabet. He paused after reading what he had written and said "who is this for?" The alphabet was called, and "Esther" spelled. Miss Dean had been called Esther Hester, and Ettie indifferently from her childhood, but her father's favorite name for her was Esther. The gentleman handed her the communication. It was as follows:

"MY DEAR ESTHER,

"I am inexpressibly happy in being able to communicate with you here. My friend (a christian name was here given) is also your friend, I give you to his guardianship. Trust him, for he is wise and faithful. Your loving father, "JAMES F."

Ettie asked for his whole name, though the first name and the initial were correctly given. The alphabet was called, and these words spelled out:

"Names belong to your sphere; but even with you, strictly speaking, only given names belong to individuals. The last name is the common property often of a great many persons."

Ettie looked inquiringly at the gentleman. He gave her his card, which bore the given name contained in her father's communication, and also another name honorably known to Miss Dean. He introduced himself to Miss Meadows, reminding her of his meeting her friends at Saratoga, and told her he had just come from her brother's house;—and also remarked that he was engaged to spend a social evening at Mr. Meadows, and meet a few friends, before he left.

Minnie and Ettie were much affected. Ettie because she felt the verity of her father's presence and guardian care; and Minnie, because she saw another and a very different man in the gentleman than she had thought him to be. She saw by a symbol, of solemn and beautiful import to her, worn by this man, that he was a member of the Orders of Harmony, and her heart warmed to one

who a few hours before she had thought at best a worldly self-seeker of learning and ability. The girls took the offered hand of their new friend in silence, and went away, each to her own reflections. That evening he came with Ashton to Miss Dean, and Minnie and Vinton joined the home circle, and great peace and joy brooded over them. Minnie felt as if her dear father were present, so mild, so gentle, so kind was the man who seemed a mere society man in the world of fashionable shams, and a granite man in the world of political shams. The dear old master was able to be with them for an hour, and all hearts were melted as Ettie gave them some of his most beautiful compositions from the pianoforte, while Ashton accompanied her on the idolized harp of the master.

The foreshine of the happy home, the kingdom that cometh on the earth, was over the little group, in Miss Dean's room, this blessed evening. The warm hearts of youth, and the chastened pulse of experience, of fatherly wisdom, leaped synchronously to-night, as they spoke of their future.

They lingered late, and parted reluctantly, with the sweet hope of that coming companionship, which the faith of the christian has constantly deferred to another world. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done *on earth as it is done in heaven.*"

It was the night of Mrs. Meadows' party. Her friends of the mercantile aristocracy were present, the Denbys, and many others —and there was a sprinkling of artists, with long hair, full beards, and Byronic collars. There were some musical stars, a chief justice, a judge, and the distinguished senator.

It was to be a very brilliant party, with white roses and white japonicas, in an Eden like profusion. Mrs. Meadows had overcome her weakness in favor of crosses and rosaries, or there was an interlude, for she was magnificient in white moire antique and diamonds.

Henry Denby met Minnie this evening with a great purpose struggling in his heart for utterance. He felt sure that he must speak to her, or his heart would break, on a subject that involved her happiness greatly more than his own. He had come early, and he begged of Miss Meadows a few minutes conversation. She led

the way to the library. He had not come to ask Minnie to marry him on this inopportune occasion, but to warn her of a terrible evil.

"I hear," said he, "that you are a member of a secret infidel society. Is it true?"

"I am a member of a society, Mr. Denby, the principles of which are as open as the sun in the heavens. You, and all others can join it without oath or promise, if you are convinced of the truth of its principles, and the wisdom of its methods."

"Is it not infidel?" said Henry, shuddering, though he tried to be calm.

"What do you mean, Mr. Denby? If with you the word infidel means unfaithful to truth and right, then I answer NO. If you mean by infidel as does the Mohammedan, those who are unconvinced of certain dogmas that you believe, I answer yes. I am infidel to the monstrous absurdities of your belief."

"What dogmas do you consider monstrous in the church?" said Henry.

"The belief, sir, that a Father will make an eternal fire to burn his helpless children, who were bound to transgress His laws by His omnipotent and irrevocable decree.

"Still our society does not spend its efforts in contradicting such barbarous puerility. We have another work to do. We have to aid the right, to defend the Divinity in the heart and life of man. We have a work to do as mighty as the world's evils, and the power to achieve it is the God-man in all souls."

Henry Denby was awed by Minnie's earnestness. He had come to convert her, to save her from a terrible something, a phantom in the dark, he knew not what. When this work of saving his friend should be accomplished, he intended to offer her his hand and heart. She had overwhelmed him at the very first by her earnest zeal, and he feared that she might lead him into temptation, instead of his delivering her from evil; and so he said gently, "Miss Meadows, you will give me the credit of good intentions. I wish to do you good."

"I believe you, Henry," said Minnie. The tears were in his eyes, and she held out her hand. He took it reverently.

"Henry," said Minnie, "our paths in life diverge as widely as possible, but you will always be to me a pleasant memory."

"Is it possible," said the young man in bitterness of spirit, "that I can be nothing more?"

"Nothing, Henry; but you will understand me a little, with your heart, and not profane me as many will by and by."

They went to the parlors, and watched the coming guests with smiling faces, and overfull hearts, for they had a true friendship for each other. And Henry believed in all honesty that Minnie was in danger of "eternal fire;" and Minnie pitied the child-man, who with taste, culture, and what the world calls education, had not outgrown an infantile and absurd religious belief.

Miss Meadows found her troubled spirit full of rest in a few moments, for she was beside Mrs. Margaret Denby; the soft hand clasped hers, the mild, wise eyes beamed upon her, and Minnie sat by her, as she sunk in "sleepy hollow," and looked up into her face with a thankfulness that was more of heaven than earth. One after another came to tender reverent homage to the noble woman. Ashton and senator ——— were among the first;—then there were artists and amateurs; all these gave glad recognition to each other, for they were brethren by virtue of a great thought, and a common purpose.

Mrs. Meadows was radiant with beauty and happiness, for every thing was successful. Her dress was the perfection of elegance, and its exceeding costliness seemed justified by its exceeding beauty. The roses scattered through the rooms were fresh and fragrant; the bouquets were the finest, and the japonicas were the purest and most perfect that could be selected. The company was composed of the fasionable, the distinguished, and the gifted. What more was needed? The distinguished senator ——— treated her with marked consideration, and kindly remembered his young pet, the brunette of Saratoga. But if there had been any especial charm in the brown maiden in the days past, when beauty, fashion and frivolity had congregated, it had evidently passed away. The

gentleman was grave, earnest, and more devoted to Mrs. Margaret, than to all the youthful beauty that beamed around.

Minnie was very happy, too happy to be troubled that Ettie Dean and George Vinton left early, because the old master was ill. Mrs. Meadows was satisfied, and delighted with her success, but at midnight, when they went into the refreshment rooms, she was drawn aside by Jerry, with a most earnest communication.

"He's dying, ma'am, the dear old master, and Miss Dean asked me to bring you, and not let the rest know, for its only you that he wants. He don't care for nothin' in this world, but you."

Mrs. Meadows hurriedly told her husband, and wrapping herself in cloak and shawl, she entered the carriage without once thinking of her dress. She loved the master. Through all her worldliness, the fire of his genius had melted its way, and the calm light of his beautiful soul was a heavenly light to her. She hoped that he would be spared a little longer, till she knelt beside him, with the death dew and the death pallor upon his face, and his breath faint and short as an infant's. A vision of loveliness, she knelt before him, and held his hands, and laid her face upon his, whilst her tears rained upon him. He revived at once, as by a miracle. The loved presence was a potent spell. "My darling! my pet! my beautiful one! have you come?" said he.

She wiped the cold damp from his face, and kissed his forehead, and his eyes.

"My master! O my master! do not leave me—do not leave me," she murmured, in an agony of prayer.

"Beautiful angel of my life! I must go, and you will come, Keep my harp for me till you come. I am at peace. I go to the Orchestral Harmonies. I shall be with you till you come, and then you will be with me forever. Give my love to your husband. Tell him I leave you to his best care, and his holiest love. You have been the light of my life these last, best years. O how I thank the Divine Being that He gave me your loving friendship."

There was again a sinking of the momentary energy. Again the failing breath, and the death sweat told the friends that the dear one was departing.

Ettie sat upon the bed. George knelt by his sister, and even took her hand in his. Jerry and Nancy were calm, trembling, and sorrowful, but ready to render any service. Ettie fanned him gently, for the air seemed to give him relief, and her tears fell fast. Yet she was not grieved or troubled for her friend, except for the suffering of the transition moments. She felt that he would be doubly her own when he was released from the clay tenement. He had bade her and George farewell, and had given them the fullness of his blessing before Mrs. Meadows came. He had previously spoken words of comfort to Nancy and Jerry. The last moments were all to be given to Mrs. Meadews, for she was his ideal—his worshiped one. She loved music, and could perform creditably on the harp and pianoforte, and she loved the master, and had been most kind to him. He had invested her with many imaginary charms, and beauties and goodnesses, but she was good, and loving, and appreciative to him. He had awakened and evolved the real life within her, more fully, perhaps, than any other could, or would ever do the same in this world. And now she would lose him. She had not the certainty of immortality of individual spiritual existences that blessed George and Ettie, and their friends. The other world was not all dark to her, but it was not *certain*, as to them. And so she grieved without a fulness of faith and hope. And she did grieve with her whole heart, as the fainting breath grew fainter, and the dim eye became dark forever. In a little while all was over; the fluttering pulse was still, and the slight form was cold. The dear master was gone to the harmony of the inner world, and Mrs. Meadows would not be comforted. It was very difficult for George to draw her away from the bed of death, and not until Mr. Meadows came, and took her in his arms, and whispered words of love and consolation, and assured her that her friend still lived, still loved her, and was with her, did she cease her agonizing sobs.

Mr. Meadows sat soothing his sorrowing wife till George and Nancy had shrouded the dear form for the coffin, and then he gently led her to look once more upon the calm features of the dead. Again her tears fell abundantly, and she could not be

restrained from kissing the marble forehead of him who had been more than her father. And then her husband almost bore her to the carriage, and she went home with her deep sorrow.

Gradually she grew calm, and then she became interested in the funeral; and the thought of the resting place at Greenwood, and of the beauty she would create around the spot where the hallowed dust should repose, gave her much comfort.

"O for the faith that hath knowledge!" This is the conscious, and unconscious and deeply agonized prayer of many hearts—yes, a multitude, too great for us to number, are this day seeking certainty with regard to the life that is to be. Life seems too wonderful a miracle for us to believe that it can cease. Annihilation were a million times more strange and impossible than that the thing which is should continue to be, though passing in a great change beyond our mortal ken.

The day in which we live is greatly honored and blest, for the heavens have descended, and angels walk verily and sensibly with men, and the cloud of witnesses that it is so is daily and hourly increasing.

But Mrs. Meadows had not yet the faith that is based on knowledge.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DARKNESS.

It was a dark day in Meadowsville. Death is always solemn and affecting, but death by suicide is doubly so. Frederick Sherwood had left his wife in an insane fit of anger, and she never saw him more. She did not grieve; she shudderingly and sadly rejoiced at his death, Soon after his body was carried to the grave, Caroline was removed to her father's house. Old Mrs. Sherwood was calm to stolidity through all. She seemed to have forgotten that Frederick was her son after his marriage, and what she considered her great wrongs.

Rawson went to Mrs. Sherwood when Caroline was gone, and it was soon known that efforts would be made to crush both the will and deed that Frederick had made in Caroline's favor, on the ground that they were made by an insane man. In due time the scheme was put in execution, and Jerry was summoned as "a witness," in good earnest, to prove Frederick Sherwood's insanity.

The spring was merging into summer when the trial was to be had, and Ashton, Minnie and Jerry went home. Minnie was very anxious to visit her parents, before her great settlement in life. The time that Miss Meadows had spent in New York, though so long to her parents and friends in Meadowsville, seemed as a day or week to her. Constant thoughtfulness, and constant occupation in the service of the idea of a new social order, and the means of realizing the greatest good possible to us, the cultivation of music and her reading and studies, the social life with "her family," and the general life of the society in which she moved, had left no time heavy on her hands. Fully sustained by the love and the devotion which filled her spirit, she had suffered none of the want and weariness that had afflicted her father and friends.

She went home in blooming health, such as the city is famed for destroying, with a fulness of peace and power, that made her seem a winged joy to the fond father, and a wonder to her friends. Jerry's improvement was as marked as Minnie's, but it seemed so natural, that people wondered less than one would suppose, who had not been witness of his progress.

Ashton was unchanged. The same broad, thoughtful brow, the same clear, steady, heaven beaming eyes, the same full, red, loving lips, the same manly bearing, and most gentlemanly dress and address, the same concentrated purpose, and devotion, and consecration of life, apparent in every lineament of his person, and in every expression, by word, look, or motion. All who saw him, whether they were humble or exalted, were obliged to feel that in him they behold a true and noble man.

Deacon Meadows found himself treating his son in law elect with real reverence. Infidel as he considered him, his heart warmed when this man came into his presence; and when he held his hand, and spoke a few words to him, he became more precious than any other man. It was strange to him, but it was one of "the decrees."

Minnie met her mother joyfully, and Mrs. Meadows melted more than was her wont. Even Caroline relaxed from her frozen solemnity, robed all in black, and gave her sister something like a welcome. Sarah Moreton was living, but she was confined to her room, and the last little flame of life was flickering to its close. She was glad to see Minnie. She thought that that God was very good to her to let her die with her good kind friends, instead of killing her by inches, with her old miser husband, who only thought of being served by her; and blessed by the God he prayed to, for the sake of getting something for the prayer. And then it was a superabundance of kindness in the good God, that she was allowed to see Minnie. Poor resigned christian victim! you shall yet know a fullness of life and happiness, in the world that is to be, for growth, bloom and fruition are for every spirit, in a present, or in a future, which is just as sure as the now.

Caroline was anxious and miserable about the trial. If Mrs.

Sherwood and Rawson succeeded, she would have only the use of one-third of her husband's real estate during her life. This was a poor recompense for what she had suffered. Dr. Brown was also in a very unpleasant position. By some he was considered an accomplice with Caroline in drawing Frederick into marriage, and securing his property in such a strange and unusual way to his wife.

On the trial the proof of insanity was clear, and the fact that Mrs. Sherwood was systematically kept out of her son's room was also shown and commented on. Rawson had secured the service of a lawyer who was worthy of him—as a client. He had also caused Jerry to be summoned. The morning of the day that Jerry's evidence was to be given, he was very grave, and put many pins in his coat sleeves, and changed them many times. He also came to Minnie and Ashton to have them hold his hands for a little time, for said he, "I feel the need of something to stiddy my nerves, and stop the trip-hammer that's beatin' at sich a rate under my jacket. Oh, Miss Minnie, I dont like to be a witness."

Miss Meadows spoke encouragingly, and gave him a handkerchief that she had held, and perfumed; and Ashton said, "now Jerry, you have only to be a man, and do the best you can; you know the best can't do any better. Take time when you answsr questions, and carefully speak the truth, whether it helps Rawson's side or Mrs. Caroline's."

"I'll do all that, if they let me speak at all; but Tim says they are goin' to prove that I haint got sense enough to be a witness, and he says I must give 'em a touch of my quality. Now I don't want to tell anything but the truth about myself, or anybody, and I dont think I've got much sense. I dont know how much it takes to be a witness, but I just want you and Miss Minnie to tell me what you think of me. If I aint fit, I can bear to be told of it."

"What do you think is needed to make you fit to be a witness?" said Ashton.

"I'll consider before I answer, as you advised me," said Jerry. He pondered the subject a little, and then said, "as fur as I can see, I ought to remember well, and tell the truth."

"Exactly," said Ashton. "You are all right, Jerry. You are as good as the best of them."

"And do you think so, Miss Minnie?" said Jerry timidly.

"Certainly I do. I would trust your memory, and your truth, as soon as my own," said Minnie.

"That's the best thing the good God has done for me sence he made me a Believer," said Jerry; and he went as confidently to the court, as he had formerly gone to take care of poor Fred in his delirium tremens.

The question of Jerry's competency was raised at once. Rawson's lawyer first examined Dr. Brown, in order that he might commit himself by testifying to Jerry's idiocy, and thus weaken Caroline's cause. The doctor fell into the trap. He had always considered Jerry idiotic. Every body knew that he was insane about the spells, and also *non compos mentis*. His evidence was accepted without a remark.

Deacon Meadows was next called. The single hearted, honest man swore that Jerry had a good memory, and always told the truth, so far as he knew. His testimony exonerated him in the minds of the people from complicity with his daughter and Dr. Brown. Jerry was next examined.

"What is your name?"

"Jeremiah Gerald Fitz Gerald."

"How old are you?"

"The town record says I'm thirty five, but I can't remember," said Jerry.

"Do you know the nature of an oath?"

"Can't say I do, but I think it's a very hard sort ot a promise to tell the truth, just as you'll wish you had, when you are just a goin' to die, and go to the good God, who haint no place a near him for liars."

"Do you understand the pains and penalties of perjury?"

"If perjury means not to tell the truth, then I don't know nothin about the pains and penalties o' not tellin' the truth, for I haint never been a liar," and Jerry drew himself up to his full height.

"I mean," said the questioner, "do you know what the pains and penalties of perjury would be, if you should swear falsely?"

"I guess," said Jerry, "I should git in a hotter place than I should want to stay in."

This was a more orthodox answer than might have been expected of Jerry, and he was allowed to give his evidence.

"You are to tell all you can remember of Mr. Frederick Sherwood's illness at the time the will and deed were executed."

Jerry considered.

"Well," he began, "Mr. Frederick upset on the Ferry Road without the shadder of an excuse; unless Rice's brandy had strike-nine in it, as he said it had. But whether he was drunk, or pisoned, I can't say, but he upset, and Rawson found him, and brought him home."

"Do you know what you say to be true?"

Jerry considered. "Well now, I can't say I do, because I did not see it all, I saw Rawson with him in the wagon, with Vix and Smash along, and I thought I knowed the rest, as well as I know that the sun riz this mornin', though I did not see it rise.

"What I do know is, that Mr. Frederick was very bad; and that I had a trial about goin' to take care of him, that turned out in my bein' a Believer,—but I suppose you don't want to know nothin' about that, seein' you found that I believed enough to be a witness. Well, the long and the short of it is, I took care of Mr. Frederick till he got married. Some o' the time he was crazy as a loon, and some o' the time he wasn't. He did some things that was very crazy. He knocked down his mother, and struck Dr. Brown, and got married. Them seemed the craziest things he did, to me. As to his givin' his property to Miss Carline, he *meant it*. I knows that if I knows anything."

"Was Mrs. Sherwood allowed to come into her son's room freely?"

"We never let her in after Fred got so bad when she was about. It wasn't safe, no how."

"It was safer to make a will and deed without her no doubt," said the lawyer, sneeringly.

"That's sure and sartin," said Jerry, "for he liked to do that,

and he did not like to have her stop him. He was himself some of the time, as much as ever I see him."

"Do you think Mr. Sherwood was sane when he made the will and deed?"

Jerry considered. "Honor bright," said he, "I think he was not any more crazy when he got Dr. Brown to draw up the will and deed, and when he signed his name to 'em, than most any fellow would be that wanted to get married, and was afraid his gal loved money better than him, and who had drinked a great deal too much good brandy, not to speak of the pisoned sort, and who had been upset on the Ferry Road, and had had his head burst and been picked up and brought home by Rawson."

The lawyer would not lose the effect of this speech, and he allowed Jerry to sit down at once.

Jerry wiped the sweat from his forehead and face on the scented handkerchief, and felt happy that he had told the truth.

The end of the proceedings may as well be stated without further record of details. Caroline lost all but her life interest in the third part of the property. Dr. Brown was a good deal injured. Deacon Meadows was cleared fully in the minds of the people, and Jerry was considered a very competent witness.

Rawson came into possession, nobody knew how, of Vixen and Smash, directly after the trial. But he had won his doom with his success. The first time he drove the horses they became unmanageable, and overturned the waggon on the brow of a hill, pitching him down a precipice some thirty feet, where he was taken up disabled for life. The waggon was destroyed, but the horses escaped injury, and were met by Jerry on their way home to Mrs. Sherwood's. Jerry renewed his acquaintance and amicable relations with them at once, and took them home.

Mrs. Sherwood had a superstitious dread of the horses, and she begged Jerry to take them over to Deacon Meadows.

Rawson was left with life, but a palsied and idiotic being from that day. No one ever knew his relation to Mrs. Sherwood, or whether the horses were his or hers. She quietly took the ownership of them, as if they had been loaned him.

After Jerry had put the two beautiful beasts in Mr. Meadows' stable, where they went with him as docile as lambs, he went to Minnie and Ashton.

"I've a plan," said he. "You know I've a right to make my fortune if I can by fair means."

"Certainly," said his friends.

"Well—maybe you don't know that I've got two hundred dollars of my own airnins and presents from good friends. Now I am sure and sartin that I can buy Vix and Smash for my money, and that Mrs. Sherwood will feel as if two divils had gone out of her way, and I am sure and sartin that Mr. Nelson Meadows will give me a thousand dollars for my bargin, and think himself well off. Now shall I trade?"

"Certainly," again said his friends.

"In an hour more, Jerry and Ashton had made the purchase, and Jerry had a bill of sale of the horses."

A week after, and no span of greys on Broadway were so splendid as Mrs. Meadows'.

Minnie and Charles had thought of submitting to the ceremony of marriage during this visit, but the depressing influnences around them, the funeral of Sarah Moreton, which occurred a few days after the decision against Caroline respecting the property, with the invincible repulsion they felt toward parson Wilson, determined them to wait.

They returned to New York, to rest in the heart of their friends. The night of their departure, Mrs. Deacon Meadows was summoned, without warning, to the world of spirits. It was supposed that she died of apoplexy, consequent upon her sorrow and trouble concerning Coroline.

The blow fell upon Deacon Meadows with a crushing power. If Minnie had been with him, it seemed natural to suppose he would have borne it better. He lost very soon his memory for present facts. He was rational and right judging, and more capable of reasoning on subjects involving principles, than before his partial loss of memory, for he seemed to have forgotten his creed and his prejudices. Nelson Meadows went to Meadowsville, and brought

his father to his home. This father should have been in the prime of life and usefulness, but he was wrecked thus early on the dim strand of forgetfulness; his hair was blanched to snowy whiteness; his form was no longer erect, and his step was firm no longer.

But the dear father was welcomed by all as a beloved child, and the little Minnie found in him the dearest playmate she had ever had.

When Nelson Meadows conceived the idea of bringing his father to his home for a visit, it was with the hope that he would soon be restored to the ordinary use of his faculties. He wished to take him into the country, and to give him the advantage of change of scene, and to tend him carefully, with the aid of his wife and Minnie.

Mrs. Meadows had great love for the aged, and though Mr. Meadows was prematurely old, he still took somewhat the place that the dear old master had in her heart. It was beautiful to see her tender care and affection for the silver haired, gentle hearted man. She made a tableau vivant of herself for him every day, and he became so loving, and attracted, and attached to her, that she felt less and less the loss of the master, and her brother and Minnie said that she improved constantly by her association with Mr. Meadows.

Caroline was left with a widowed sister of her father to take care of every thing, and she was well pleased that it was so. A strange alliance is before her. We may as well look forward, and tell all we have to tell of her history now, for Mr. Meadows never returned to Meadowsville, and his property there was conveyed to Caroline, through the mediation of her brother. When the period of her mourning was expired, she entered into the "holy bands" of matrimony with Jo Putney, and Mrs. Sherwood's remaining days were rendered thereby very uncomfortable. The result was, that the old lady "took to drink." The contest was, however, kept up between her and Caroline, through her husband, for some ten years, when the poor woman laid down the burden of her unprofitable life, that she had sustained some seventy years. Truly human nature is tough!

Jo Putney was a sharp, hard Yankee, without education, except enough to reckon dollars and cents, especially the latter, and to write his name upon occasions. He was a good farmer, and was proud of his oxen, and his wife. Caroline had many children, and lived very meanly, and saw herself surrounded by a vulgar family, and took to snuff, and even a pipe, spite of homeopathy and Dr. Brown, who was always her friend, and did much to lighten her burden of life.

It would have been very hard to recognize the proud, handsome and fashionably dressed Caroline Sherwood, in a careless, scraggy, wringled and scowling woman, who scolded every body, from the child that she loved best, to the husband that she liked no more than the scare-crow that was kept up in the cornfield, because of its exceeding usefulness. How many women regard a husband as a necessary evil. They must have a home, or an establishment; they must have fashionable clothes and service, and above all, they must have respectability. Girls are often a miserable burden and responsibility to their parents, especially the maternal parent, and old maids are universally sneered at.

"A protector" is as needful to a woman as a master is to a negro at the South. Is it wonderful that Caroline Sherwood married Jo Putney.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

ANOTHER winter has come, and Mrs. Margaret Denby has returned to New York. In her home are gathered our friends, and many more. Mrs. Margaret, Ashton, Vinton, Miss Dean, and Minnie, Nelson Meadows, Miss Dean's father-guardian, Senator ———, and many that we have no space to introduce to our readers, were there.

The movement so long in the preparation of its constituent portions; so loved and so labored for; so systematized and ordered in loving and self-sustaining groups, spiritual families, who had the interior sustenance of love for each other, and those external industrial relations, that made a sure basis on earth on which to rest, was at last ready for an ultimate destiny.

The Home had been selected, the land of hope and promise had been entered upon by bands of earnest pioneers; a basis for extended operations was now prepared, and new groups were invited from different points throughout the wide-spread organization, that had wrought so earnestly for the great end; the Harmonic Home; the Esperanza of the sunny south.

The series of groups of devoted ones, gathered in Mrs. Denby's parlors this evening, would have been a worthy study for Lavater. Most of those present were vital centers, that is, leaders of groups, which they represented and vouched for.

This was a business meeting, but of a very vital kind. In its opening they joined hands in silence that they might come more sensibly into the brooding sphere of the spiritual and heavenly society, whose harmony they were seeking to represent on the earth.

Then a report of progress was given by one who was entrusted with the condition and prospects of those groups that were this

evening represented by their chiefs. And then a letter was read that Ashton had recently received from the only Free State on the planet; a State where men and women could be trusted to be a law unto themselves; where men's loves were as pure as the fruits upon which they lived; and where the air was not more free from external and arbitrary restraint, than the attractions of those who dwelt together in the home they had created and beautified.

The letter was as follows:

"MR. VINCENT TO MR. ASHTON.

"MY FRIEND:—I confide much in your judgment. Your group, as you have pictured it to me, seems to be rich in the elements of a harmonic life, and only wanting its conditions. These, to a great extent, are provided in our home, to which many true hearts will joyfully welcome you. We have just completed a suit of rooms, sufficient for your party, which you will have furnished and ornamented to suit your own taste, on your arrival; and you can then aid in preparing room for the groups which will follow you. Our society grows by gradual accretion; and each group is joined to the harmony of our beautiful life before another joins. Thus we increase with the natural process of a healthy growth in a true order.

"I send herewith the route you will pursue, to the point at which some of our friends will meet you. You will guard the secret of your destination; for by no means must we risk any harm to this hope for humanity. We must guard with watchful care this tender plant of harmony, so that when fully grown the weary hearts may find shelter and repose. He whose own life is harmonized, will be in accord with ours: still more, a group, living in harmony, can bring to us no discord. So coming, you will be welcome."

The time for emigration was this evening fixed. Mrs. Denby, Minnie, Ettie, Vinton and Ashton were as one family. Ashton's mother had come to him in trust and peace, having settled all outward business, and resigned all else for the love of her son.

Jerry was the happy possessor of a thousand dollars and leave to go with "his family." Nancy had been well endowed with the

remnant of the master's savings, and was also to go with her friends. Ettie had a fountain of energy within herself, all the dear master's music, and his piano forte. George Vinton was moderately rich in outward goods, but more than all he prized the treasure that he had in the love of Ettie Dean. Ashton and Minnie were not unprovided for. Mrs. Denby and Nelson Meadows had much wealth; and these were all very dear to each other, and a true love embodies and expresses itself in every worldly good, where it is possible.

There was a great struggle in Mrs. Meadows heart, in giving up Deacon Meadows to Minnie. It was almost a renewal of her parting with the master. She even thought she would soon visit her friends, and bring little Minnie, and perhaps she would come and educate her children in the Home of the Free. There was no drop so bitter in the cup of parting, that George and Minnie had to drink, as the separation from little Minnie.

Nelson Meadows was full of sanguine hope of meeting them all, soon again.

"One year more amidst the falsehoods of commerce, and the hollowness of fashion and folly, and we shall be free. Then we will come and have a villa in the New World, and watch your progress, as one looks into a glass bee-hive."

Mrs. Meadows wept upon the bosom of the dear father, and she burst into a psssion of tears at parting with George and Minnie. She felt that the only genuine lives she had known, except that of her husband, were going far from her. A mighty bond seemed to fasten her to these loved ones, that she had never before recognized.

For once, Mrs. Meadows' emotion was true as truth, and a hope and trust came into the hearts of all, that Nelson Meadows' prophecy of freedom would surely be fulfilled.

There is a destiny for the individual who can achieve it. It may be deferred, but it cannot fail. Some time, or some eternity the human race, and each individual of this great unit, shall accomplish a holy destiny. Redemption goes not backward, but onward forever.

"Who
Shall keep the sun back when he thinks to rise?
Where is he chain shall bind him? Where the cell
Shall hold him? Hell he would burn down to embers,
And would lift up the world with a lever of light
Out of his way: yet know ye 'twere thrice less
To do thrice this, than keep the soul from God."

Man's hope shall be fulfilled. His long, tearful night, illumined by the dead moon of a once living faith, and the starry light of a long past era of once sunny brightness is waning to its close. The sun of a living and integral righteousness, the center and soul of light and heat, spiritual and material, is arising for man, as surely as this sad and sorrowful, yet strange and mighty miracle, our earth, now rolls in space. So surely shall its afflicted soul, and the afflicted race that clings in desperation to its bosom, be redeemed.

The prophecy and the power are within us. And God, the Father, the All Living, and All Loving, and God the Son, the still crucified Divinity in all, and God the Holy Spirit, who is to bring Harmony to our life, and deliver all from the atonement of sacrifice, shall be as they have ever been, one God over all, and in us all, blessed forever.

"Ah, I surely hear
The voices of the spirits of the Saints,
And witnesses to the redeeming Truth,
Not as of old, in scanty, scattered strains,
Breathed from the caves of earth, and cells of cities,
Nor as the voice of martyrs, choked with fire
But in one solemn, Heaven-spreading hymn
Of happiness impregnable."

AMEN, AND AMEN.

VIII.

HARMONIA.

MY CLARA;—I wish to give you, as freshly as I can, and before one emotion has obliterated the impression of another, each day's experience of my trial of this new life. So I write on from day to day, and shall send the package by the weekly mail, sent by a messenger to the nearest post office.

My slumbers had not been disturbed by any seranade, unless it were the music of the opera, which came back in dreams; and I woke with the first clear bugle note, the salutation to Aurora, bathed, and joined the parade at sunrise. I am not an early riser from habit, and a sunrise is a novel spectacle; but I find here an impulse and attraction which I cannot resist. There is a fresh spirit in this morning assembly, a vigor of vitality, which inspires me. Is it the magnetism of the *esprit de corps* which animates every member of this society? No regulation demands the presence of any; there is no compulsion, any more than there is to labor—no external force, but in each case an attraction of abundant potency. No discipline demands it; no roll is called; there are no fines assessed, or penalties inflicted; yet you can see and feel that no man, woman, or child of sufficient age, would willingly be absent.

Each day is a new life, and has new achievements. The order is also different for each day. This morning, for example, the band had another leader; the morning choral was different, and the order of the day was called by Melodia, with different leaders in nearly all the groups of industry. The groups also, were all freshly arranged; and if any one had failed to be present, his place would have been filled by some ready volunteer.

I observed that the hardest and most repugnant labors were sought as posts of honor, as the bravest soldiers volunteer for the

most dangerous duties. Approbativeness finds here its legitimate action. The night-watch, and other posts of responsibility, are also places of honor, to which only the most trusty and devoted are elegible.

As Melodia had directed the music, and the Order of the Day, she also gave the morning lecture. It was a beautiful statement of the political and social movements, tending to the progress of humanity, which she had observed during her recent journey. Many eyes sparkled, as she told of the rapid spread of the principles of their organization. She inspired the enthusiasm of hope in those who wish to see the happiness they enjoy extended to all humanity, as fast as men can be prepared to receive it.

Even in our latitude, we know how delicious are fruits in the morning. It is even more so here, or else the fruits are of a richer flavor. Those which loaded the breakfast tables were fresh and delicious; and I made my breskfast almost entirely on melons, peaches, and plums. After the groups of industry had gone to their labors, I wrote to you, until it was time to meet an appointment with Harmonia, who had invited me to make her a visit this morning.

I found her in her own parlor, study, or boudoir, for it is all combined. She held out her left hand to me as she laid down her pen with the right, and when I sat on a low ottoman beside her, she laid her thin pale hand on my head, and said: "Are you a good boy to-day?" I think young men do not usually like to be called or considered boys; but I was very grateful for this maternal recognition. I only kissed her other hand, and looked up with a smile.

"And do you think the little one you have left is as good as you?" She asked, with a serious look.

It was you, Clara, she meant by the little one. I told her of my great faith in you, and my great love for you. "Yet it is a hard trial," she said, "for the absent one. She is lonely and desolate —you have the excitement of new scenes, and the interest of new friends. Have you been quite frank with her in your letters? It is well that you have," she continued, when I assured her that I

had written every thought and feeling to you; "for though the trial may be sharp and difficult to bear, neither of you can afford the expense of deceit."

"I have been true as truth," I said.

"And you hope," she continued quietly, "that she has borne it as well as you would have done, were she now here, and you at home in her place."

O my Clara! I was rebuked and humbled by the consciousness that I could not have borne this trial as I have wished you to bear it; and were I not sure that you are better than I feel myself to be, I should fear that I have made you suffer more than I can tell; for it all came over me in a moment—all the loneliness, all the fear, all the agony, I might have endured. And yet, O beloved! I have been true to the deep love of my heart for you all the moments. May you so feel it.

Harmonia saw how troubled I was at the thought she had suggested, and said with a smile, "We, who are children of Providences, are not tried beyond our strength to bear. The angels who have led you to us, have filled the loving heart with the consolation of trust. If she is to come to us with you, she, like you, must have her preparation. She must understand, and lovingly accept our life of truth and freedom. Do not fear to be as frank to her as you have been hitherto. Let her know all our life that comes to you, that she may accept it as you accept it."

"I accept and welcome joyfully all I see and comprehend of it," I answered; "but how it has come to you, and how it exists, I do not yet understand."

"This is the lesson you have come to learn, and all here will be your teachers. Shall I begin my lesson?"

"I would drink at the fountain," I answered.

"The rains, and the hidden sources supply the fountain," said she; "I have been but the instrument of this work. The thought and the love were born; and the world groaned with its great needs. Civilization, with all its progress, and all its triumphs, had never satisfied the social wants of man.

"At last, the harmony, sought in vain on earth, descended from

the heavens. The angels, in the higher spheres, live in harmony: and the germ fell into the hearts of a few who could receive it humbly and joyfully, and give it the conditions of growth. We sought for freedom and truth in all relations, and especially in the relations of love, and all that cluster around them. With a single devotion to this work, we accepted for it the consecration of our lives, receiving into our group only those who could join in this consecration. Our lives were thus made pure and fitted for harmony; for we had seen that there could be no social harmony, until the faculties of the individuals composing it were first harmonized."

"It is of this harmonization," I said, "that I wish to know. By what process was it attained?"

"We endeavored to free ourselves from every thing discordant in our lives, and to put away all hindrances to harmony. Our minds were freed from all prejudices and superstitions, so that we could receive the truth. We rejected the false gods, that we might accept the true. Individual freedom came to us, as the first condition of this purification. To be able to do any thing, we must be free to do it—free in ourselves, and free from all control or influence of others. So we became self-centered and self-governed beings. We sought physical purity, or health, by pure habits, and the disuse of all diseasing aliments. So the germinal group became purified."

"And all bonds were severed?"

"All false ones fell from us; all arbitary restraints of law and custom we put away when we passed to a higher plane of life, where they were no longer of any use, but only encumbrances. Thus marriage, as a legal bond, had no more use to us. If a love relation was a true one, we needed no legal bond—if false, we could not be compelled to live the lie. Our higher law was to live the true life—in all things to cease to do evil, and learn to do well.

"In the consecration of our lives, during this period of probation and germination, when the central group of this society was forming, and when all the energy and power of our lives was needed in the work of growth, our love became spiritual, to the exclusion of

the sensual element, or the material union. We formed a sacred vestalate. It was necessary that the harmony of love should come to us on the spiritual plane, before we could be fitted for it on the material. In all this we were guided by the wisdom of the Heavens, which we received with reverence and lived to with devotion. So it was, my friend, that those who came to us were of the same life, entering into a perfect accord with us, in a loving harmony, the fruits of which you see around you."

"And there came no jealousy — no discord?"

"Jealousy and discord were severed from us, or they severed from us all who were not ready for harmony. The selfish only are jealous. It is the passion of claim or ownership. When we renounced all claim to, or ownership of, each other, there was no longer any ground for jealousy; and when this principle had been extended to all things, there was no cause of discord. When the harmony was established in our little group of earnest and devoted lovers, they drew others to them, of whom other groups were formed, until we were strong enough to seek our Home which Providence had given us."

"And all came here?"

"First, the central group, and a band of pioneers, to build, and plant, and prepare. Then the groups who were harmonized with us. You will better learn the details of the work from others. My work has been to harmonize the interior life, and to be the medium of the spiritual society, in the heavenly life, which it is our work to represent in the Earth-Life."

She sat a moment in silence — then binding a fillet over her eyes, she held my hand. A tremor passed over her, and she smiled and said: "A lovely woman is standing beside you; she is tall and graceful, with blue eyes and curling auburn hair: she has a deep dimple in her left cheek: she bends over and kisses your hair. She says she is your mother; that she guided you to Melodia, and so to us; and that she will not leave you until you are one of ours. She watches over the beautiful one at home, and consoles her, and is preparing her, with your help, to come to us. She says there is a good work for you to do in the future, both in the world

and in Harmony, and that you will be the instrument of bringing many into the True Life: and Earthly Harmony, which is but the prelude to the Grander Harmonies of the Life of the Heavens. She kisses you, and she smiles upon us—and I see her no more."

I did not doubt that it was the spirit of my dear mother. True, there was no test—she might have had her description from Melodia—but there was the internal conviction of truthfulness and reality which was worth all tests. My mother still lives; surely, if living, she comes to her child; and why should not this woman, so pure, so spiritual, so gifted, be clairvoyant enough to see her. It is but one spirit seeing another.

She removed the fillet from her eyes, and said, "I am very glad your mother has come to me, for it confirms our acceptance of you, and our belief in your usefulness. Use your time here diligently; see all you can of our life, and try to live in its spirit. Live in unity with those you most love on the earth, and in the heavens. When we taught freedom, a sensual world accused us of licentiousness; you will find in it the removal of all hindrances to the highest and most heavenly life. Our life here is not perfect, but progressive. Every day it grows more beautiful."

"Ah! but the great world, and all its miseries. Can you enjoy all this plenty and happiness, and not think of others?" I asked.

"We *do* think and we act. It has been our high mission to show mankind the possibility of a harmonic society, free from all the cares, discords, and miseries of civilization. The work is nearly done. The experiment, or working model of such an association is accomplished, and, after an earnest trial of five years, you see its success. Could we have done so well for the world by any other means?

"We cannot open our doors to unprepared and discordant civilizees, with their present habits and vices of thought and life. It would peril all. Could we have a flesh-eater with his butcherings; a tobacco user, poisoning our atmosphere; a bigot with his persecuting spirit, willing to commence on earth the tortures he believes to be in store in future for all who are not of his creed; a domestic despot, holding property in a wife or husband—in the life and

soul of another? Do you not know that a single untuned instrument, or unskillful player, will make discord in the finest orchestra? So would it be with us. We cannot destroy our work, but we can perfect and extend it; and we shall be ready soon to receive such groups as are forming and attuning themselves to our harmony; and when our number is complete, you and others will be ready to form the germ of another association. Meantime our thought is finding its way to many minds, and the love of a pure and integral freedom to many hearts. Many will soon be ready to graduate out of civilization, and the movement will go on with an accelerating momentum.

"But nothing must be done hastily or rudely. We do not give concerts with a band of beginners in music. And we must guard with care the tender plants of harmony. You can see well, how all previous attempts have been failures of necessity. There must be no more with us."

"I know that all have failed, but I have not seen the reason."

"In every case there have been many causes of discord, any one of which was enough to drive asunder those who wished for harmony, and not an aggregation, and aggravation of discords. Disease is a burthen, and all civilization is full of disease. Marriage and the family, the central institution of civilization, is unsuited to any other social state. A single family here, living in the usual relation of husband and wife, parents and children, would destroy our harmony. In a true society, self-ownership and self-governmnet, and the mutual adaptation and responsiblity of each to all, and all to each, must pervade the whole body. We have no married couples; no family jars; no education in discordances. But you will see all this better than I can tell you.

"Well, does this hurt you? Do not be troubled for the little one. Her instincts are more to be trusted than your reason. Have you a confession to make?"

It was not strange that she asked this question now, for my head was bowed in a profound sorrow. I told her, frankly, that I had thought of you, and that I could not endure the idea of your loving another.

"No," she said, with a tender smile, "you want the dear one all to yourself. Well, find a nice cottage, with a pretty garden, a horse and cow, and have it as you will. If she were here, she might love Vincent, or Angela, or Alfred, as much, perhaps, as you love Melodia, or might love Serafa, or Evaline, or me, even — who knows?"

I laughed. It was too ridiculous. I was ashamed of my inconsistency and absurdity.

"Come, we have talked enough here," she said, rising from her easy chair; "you shall go and help me work now."

We went to a portion of the garden, where a multitude of roses, of the most fragrant kinds were blooming. A group of young girls and children were busily and merrily at work, gathering the petals of the fully opened flowers into baskets, which, as fast as filled, were carried into a room, for the manufacture of perfumery. I saw that the roses, and other odorous flowers cultivated so profusely were not alone for ornament, but were converted, by a pleasant and most attractive industry, into many rich and delicate perfumes, which yielded a handsome revenue. So we worked, picking roses, and one of the young ladies, an adept in botany and vegetable chemistry, explained to me the processes—how some odors were separated by the fixed oils, and others by distillation, and how they were combined to form the various mixtures of the toilette.

Farther on were groves of the sun-flower, so arranged as to give great richness to the landscape, and whose seeds, gathered by a group of juveniles, and submitted to a hydraulic press, a mysterious power they were delighted to exercise and explain, yielded a large supply of a pure oil, for various uses; after which the seed cakes was conveyed to the poultry yard.

Flowers, useful for show alone, were cultivated sparingly, but the odorous one in great abundance. We found great beds of the heliotrope, the white lily, the lemon verbena, and the sweet voilet, all used in perfumes. Here, also, were groves of the magnolia, and flowering locust, whose blossoms they make as profitable as the fruit of other trees; while they are, in their season, the glory of the landscape.

upon a statue, while one was standing near him, on a pedestal, in all the purity of truth—a statue, but living, I found, like the picture. I hesitated—but Harmonia laid her hand upon my arm, and I went forward. The undraped and most beautiful model whom I did not recognize, so accustomed are we to look only at faces, held out her hand to me, and with a start of surprise, I saw that it was Eugenia.

Well, I took her hand as if she had been only the loveliest statue in the world. She blushed no more. Enshrined in the purity of art, there came to her pure spirit no thought or emotion of evil. The sculptor worked on with his copy, soon to be moulded and cast in alabaster; while others were taking advantage of the presence of the model, to make exquisite drawings; and two or three advanced students were modelling busts, or statuettes.

The long room, with its soft, cool lights, its groups of earnest students and artists, its stillness, broken only by low murmurs, and the pictures and statues along the walls, seemed to me a sacred temple for the worship of the Divine Beauty. All art schools and artists, I know, have models, such as they can procure; but they are usually such as serve for hire. Here were those who gave themselves to the uses of art, with a real enthusiasm; who entered into the spirit, and could give the very expression of each subject. I cannot doubt that pictures and statues, produced under such circumstances, must have a peculiar value, and I can well believe that no other industry yields more revenue to Esperanza than the works of her artists.

Pictures and statues are multiplied, to a limited extent, by the means I have described; but engraving and lithography are also employed for this purpose, and to aid in the mission of the beautiful.

"I thank you!" was my exclamation to my friend, as we descended from the gallery. "You have afforded me much pleasure."

"And you have also given me some. 'Blessed are the pure in heart.' The rest of the verse is, 'for they shall see God.' Perhaps if you read for they shall see *good*, it will be as well. I do not think we are likely ever to see God, but as we see him always,

in all the universe; but the pure in heart see good, where the corrupt find only evil."

"I have never seen evil in works of high art; they have always seemed to me to be elevating and refining in their influence."

"You have been fortunate in your birth and your culture; but there are thousands in our country, of Pharisaic pretension, who are much less fortunate, and but few in the world of civilization, not accustomed to the sphere and methods of art, who could have passed so well through this ordeal. In our life, and with our thoughts and feelings, clothing is a convenience, a necessity of climate, or an ornament; not a moral necessity, as in civilization. Madame 'George Sand' once said, when her friends were talking enthusiastically of the establishment of association — the Phalansterie of Fourier — 'Gentlemen, I will tell you when it will be possible to realize association. When a woman can walk out into the street naked, and excite no more attention or remark than if she were dressed; then, and not till then, may your dreams be realized.'

"It was a profound truth. What is needed for harmony is that moral purity, which comes from the development and equilibrium or harmonization of all the faculties. It is here — here where a woman may wear any clothing, as you see, or none, without offence or injury to any."

"Is the studio I have visited to-day," I asked, "open to every person?"

"Assuredly, it is open to every one of us at proper times; but our principles guard us against intrusion. Eugenia, or Melodia, or whoever might be the model, would not be troubled at being seen by any who would wish to visit the studio. If there were strangers, they must be such as we know, and could welcome into our family."

I expressed my thanks for this confidence; but I confess, dear Clara, that I was not quite satisfied. It is not easy to say why one may not look at a woman, beautiful as she came from the hand of nature, with the same feeling with which we may look at the picture or statue of one, such as may be seen in all of our galleries;

and it may be that there is prejudice in one case, as there has been in the other. But though I was reconciled to having my divinities seen by a few, I did not wish to extend the privilege to so many, and I expressed these doubts to Harmonia, who said:

"You are still a little prejudiced and unjust. The rules, and customs, and restraints of civilization may be necessary to the conditions it creates. Here it is not so. All who are here have come through the gate of consecration; and though some have less of culture and taste than others, all are honest, and have a right to the refining influences of both nature and art. Beauty exerts a holy influence on such souls; why should you deprive them of the highest beauty? The legend of the Lady Godiva, while it records the devotion of one woman, also records the conscious unworthiness of all the men of Coventry to look upon her, as well as their honest self-denial in refraining from looking unworthily."

"But, dear madam," I said, "you would not have sensual eyes gloating on the beauty of those you love?"

"I would not have sensual eyes around me to gloat on any thing. Where there are such, beauty needs protection. But when fashion tells your New York ladies to uncover their arms or bosoms, do they ask any questions about sensual eyes?"

"They do not: but I have never felt satisfied that any one I cared for should be exposed to such rude gazings."

"You were right, I think. Sensitive natures feel the influence of the emotions they unwittingly excite. Your shrinking from it is a true instinct — but were all men and women pure and honest, could you have such a feeling? We do not hide ourselves from the angels, nor from any that we love and trust."

"But would you have Eden back again?"

"Perhaps not; certainly not until the race improves in beauty. There are few of us who do not need clothing to conceal our imperfections. Beauty, now, is the exception; it will soon be the rule, and then universal. When that comes, Eden, if you will. At present, I should beg to be excused, for the sake of my own eyes, as well as those of others."

So our strange conversation ended; and I walked down to the lake-side, thinking of it all, and surveying the beauty of the scene, until the bright Angela came running to invite me to take my supper with her sister, and the group of artists to which she belongs.

It was served in Evaline's apartment, where she sat at the head of the table, as hostess, while I had the place of honor as her guest.

It was a delightful party. We had Melodia, Eugenia, and a bevy of bright girls, with the charming Angela; and for men, Angelo, Paul, and their brother artists. The conversation was of beauty, and taste, and I saw evidences of both all around me.

I wish I could describe this room of the gentle, artistic Evaline. It is the more outer covering or clothing of herself. Its walls are of her choice colors, in which blue and rose predominate; and though delicately painted in fresco, they yet admit of many gems of art, pictures of her own, portraits of her friends, and the works of her brother and sister artists. There is a library of her choice books; and with her pianoforte and guitar, a music rack, filled with her favorite music. The furniture is of carved wood—each piece of some different device, and each the design and work of some one who wished to be remembered. Every thing has its story, or its memory. The room opens into a sleeping room, with its closets, bath-room and dressing-room.

Every person here, who has arrived at the age of twelve years, has his or her own independent suite of rooms, with the simple necessities of furniture, at first, to be added to afterward, according to taste and ability. Each apartment is sacred to its owner, and free from all intrusion. Parent or friend cannot come without knocking, and no one asserts claim or authority. Privacy and entire individuality are thus secured.

So the tasteful Evaline was here in her own home, and those she chose to have with her she took here, as she might have taken them into her bosom. She had dressed for the little fete in colors harmonizing with the room; and her guests had each dressed for the occasion in varied, but graceful costumes. It was a refined

adornment of natural charms, like a fine setting of gems, or a fit framing of pictures. Conforming to no tyranny of fashion, each one was a separate study in character and becomingness.

So in our little feast, while all was gentleness and courtesy, there was an entire absence of all formality. When any thought of a story to tell, it was told; and if a song or an air was spoken of or thought of, some one would run to the pianoforte to sing or play it. This gentle revel, so full of wit and soul, lasted until we heard the music of the band on the western lawn, summoning us to the parade at sunset. It was a moment of sublime beauty. The descending sun, sinking in the golden west; his beams reflected from the windows of the Home; the grand music of the full band, and a chorus of two hundred voices, all produced an effect of sublimity, until the evening gun boomed over the waters, and came back in echoes from the forest coves, and the flag descended, and the day was done.

I could see the harmonizing influence of these morning and evening assemblages, in which all were animated and inspired by one common emotion, in one common act. As the last echoes died away, the sacred emblem was folded with religious care, and brought to Harmonia. She gravely thanked the pages who had brought it; then others came, took it in charge, and conveyed it to its place of deposit, to bring it forth in the morning to be raised at sunrise, with similar ceremonies.

When this was done, the assemblage, which had been formed in crescentic order, broke into groups, and spent the next half hour of early twilight like innocent sportive children; and then all went to prepare for the evening festival.

It was a concert and ball of an entirely informal and unpretending character. The evening was warm, though freshened by the lake breeze; the toilets were light, gauzy, but very graceful. The music, mostly of stringed and light wind instruments, as the flute and oboe, was of a soft exhilaration, while the dances were of a gentle, graceful character, such as we seldom see in our assemblies.

After a little practice, I found this style of dancing very agreeable. In a quadrille, where the sets change so that you dance

with many partners, it was pleasant to be acquainted with every one, and to need no introductions. It was better to feel that every one treated me with entire confidence. I saw no sadness here, such as one sees with us in the gayest company, and felt no distrust. There was the most perfect freedom, without riot or disorder. A refined courtesy, a gentle politeness, a self-possessed, and yet deferntial behavior, was universal. There was no haughtiness, and no intrusion. Groups clustered by spontaneous attraction. If I looked at a lady wishfully, as if I would speak or dance with her, she held out her hand to me, or signed with her fan or bouquet to invite me to approach her. And I have observed here, that at all times, in the fields, shops, or assemblies, no one ever risks intrusion by approaching an individual or a group, without an invitation. So, if you choose, you may be in the most perfect isolation. I have seen no rudeness, coarseness, or impertinence of speech or action, such as we have seen but too often, even in the most fashionable assemblies.

In the intervals of the dancing we had two or three stories, recitations, or speeches; and some choice vocal music; and at the close, one of those grand chorusses, which seem to melt all into the same harmony. So the merry evening closed with a calm happiness, and Harmonia, who had given me the morning, now came to bid me good night. We walked out into the moonlight, and down through the soft odors of the night to the sands of the lake, and sat there by the silvery ripple of its waves.

"Two days with us, my friend," she said; her hand resting on my shoulder, "two days of our life. Will you tell me how it now seems to you?"

"It seems like dream-land.'

"It has been a dream—but all such dreams come to be realities."

"But is there no fear that some calamity will befall this happy scene; that these gathered groups may be scattered again into the discords and isolation of the outer world?"

"We have no such fear. What is to scatter us?"

"If you and Vincent were to die."

"As we must, soon. There are many ready to stand in our

places. The harmony clusters around the central life, but that belongs to no individual. And each group has its own center, as well as all the groups a central group. All are educated, and are being every day more educated in this life. Nothing but some convulsion of external force can destroy us. From that the Providence that has brought us so far, will guard and defend us."

"Amen!" I murmured reverently. "But I have much yet to learn. You now, sitting with me alone in the night. Does no one wait for you?"

"Do I belong to myself, or to another?" said she, with energy. "But I can pardon the question and the thought, for I have lived in all the slaveries of civilization. I know what it is to be owned. But now, and here, I am free, as every one here is free. No woman here is owned by husband, or parent, or lover. She lives her own life, accountable only to her own interior sense of right—to the Divinity of her own being. So, if I should sit all night by the lake shore, alone, or with another, there is no one to call me to account, or to criticise my conduct."

"And Vincent?"

"Is he less his own? Look!" She pointed across the lake, where I saw a boat with its white sail, and in a few moments we heard first a few clear bugle notes, and then a glee of three voices, in which I recognized Melodia, Vincent, and Evaline. The boat sped on, and the music died away in the distance.

The lights had been extinguished, one by one, until the home was lighted only by the clear moonbeams, a picture of wondrous beauty; a cluster of buildings, which have spread out like the banian tree; a symetrical variety, every addition adding to the picturesqueness of the whole mass without marring any effect

"Our life is three-fold," said Harmonia, when I had looked some moments at this scene; "the life of the individual, of the group, and of the whole society. Our life secures to us the most absolute individual freedom. Every one consults his own tastes, chooses his own employments, and disposes of his time, labor and affections as he wishes to do. Every one finds those with whom he can group in the relations of friendship and love, and all groups

join together in those enterprises and amusements which are for the common good. We have a beautiful home, plenty beyond all care, a healthful and attractive industry, a growing and refining art, means for intellectual improvement and enjoyment, freedom and love. Heaven is very near us in this Home. With our own present and future assured to us, we only ask that others may be prepared as fast as may be to join us, and then to form other Homes like this, until the world will be filled with riches, beauty harmony and happiness."

"Will it be soon?" I asked, as if certain that she could tell me.

"Not soon, if we reckon by our wishes," she said, "and yet sooner than would be reckoned by our fears. It is a question of progress or growth. But few of the present or passing generation can be developed up to the plane of harmony. Our work is with the young. We are preparing the means of education for vast numbers, who will come to us soon, before the habits, and vices, and bonds of civilization have gathered around them. The older, who can become as little children, may also enter this kingdom of Heaven."

"You have a goodly number here; and persons of all ages."

"Yes; yet they are mostly young. And these have been gathered from a large territory. They have come, many of them, out of great tribulation, and with the sundering of many ties. It required years of progressive development, before they were ready even to form the first groups of harmony. But the great want and the great love conquered, and when Providence opened the way, we came, and our groups gathered around us; and here we are, the only free society upon the earth."

"It seems to me," I said, "that if I could present simply and truly the fact of this life to our society, they would receive it at once, and that the whole world could be revolutionized in a few years!"

"So thought Fourier. He believed that if some great monarch or great capitalist would only advance the means to form the first Phalansterie, it would not be more than seven years before the whole human race, even the barbarians and savages, would come

into the harmonies of the combined order. Enthusiasm is very credulous. Think what men must abandon before they are fitted for the first step. Man must be freed from all their prejudices. They must give up all sectarian bigotries. A man cannot live in harmony with those he believes to be totally depraved and destined to eternal perdition. Men must give up the selfishness of personal ambitions, the lust of wealth, the lust of power, the lust of appetite; they must be cleansed of all lusts, and come into the consecration of all faculties to the work of development and the purposes of harmony."

"Leave all, and follow the Divine Truth?"

"Leave all that is inconsistent with the practice of the truth. A man may not necessarily leave father, and mother, and children; property and friends; but he must be ready to do so, or there is no true consecration. Think now, if you know many persons ready for our life."

I thought earnestly, my Clara, and I could only think of you, and of you hope, not without trembling. It asks for so much, and yet it seems to me but the most simple, natural, and beautiful life, and one every body ought to live.

We heard now a song stealing over the waters; a sweet low song of love and happiness. I recognized, even in the far distance, the voice and guitar of Evaline. Soon the sail whitened in the moonbeams and the boat drew nigh. We rose and Harmonia waved her handkerchief, and the boat, obeying her signal, soon grounded on the beach where we were standing. the sail was furled and a party of six came on shore. Vincent put his arm around Harmonia; Melodia came to me, and we went slowly up the gravelled walk, through the heavy perfumes.

We all went to Melodia's apartment, when each one drank a single glass of wine, as if it were a sacrament; then, with a kiss of peace they went to their repose. And I was left with Melodia, alone, at midnight.

She sat upon a couch, and I sank at her feet — the beautiful feet of her who had brought me glad tidings. Lovely as I had thought her, when I first saw her; beautiful as she was to me on

all our journey, she had never appeared so beautiful as now, in the heart of her Home, and among her loved ones. She did not wait for me to speak first, but said:

"Have I done well to bring you here?"

"I can never thank you as I wish," I answered.

"I am thanked and paid, if you come back to us."

And I said "Oh, beautiful one; my life is here. I shall come, for I love you."

She took my hand and held it a few moments in silence. I would have spoken, but I could not. I felt a subduing power, which calmed me. I wondered how I had said what I did, but I could not take it back. It was not needed. She said very softly and tenderly to me —

"I know that you love me; and this love, which must live a a sacred thing in your heart, will help to conquer obstacles, and bring you here again. When you have come, and have passed through the portal of consecration, you will find all that is truly yours. I accept the love with a devout thankfulness; you must trust me as you love.

"Is it so hard to wait?" she asked, responsive to some look or thought of mine. "You must wait with an entire patience, until you are in the harmony, before you can know what the harmony will bring to you. I accept your love as a prophecy, which may help to accomplish its own fulfilment. I thank you for your love, and I give you *hope*."

She rose as I did, put back my hair, and with an inexpressibly sweet, tender dignity, pressed her lips to my forehead, and I went from her presence as reverently, as I would have parted from an angel.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FREE CIRCLES.

THE first accusation against spiritual mediums, was that they had contrived a scheme of deception, to make money. It is the first thought that occurs to all sordid persons. The man who makes such an accusation has large acquisitiveness, and judges out of his own nature. He says, money is the chief good. If I could deceive people, and so excite their curiosity, as to get them to give me money, I would soon get rich; and he naturally and inevitably judges that others will do as he knows he would. When you hear one say, "it is a speculation," be sure that the organ of acquisitiveness is active, and that he would like to speculate

It is true that many mediums, who give their life to this work, with no means of living, and incurring often heavy expenses, rent in cities, or expenses in travelling, have taken money; but much less than is generally supposed, while hundreds have given much time to this work without any compensation. Had it been a money-making deception, some would have got rich. Where are the Barnums of Spiritualism? Great singers and actors lay up thousands, and even hundreds of thousands; but I have yet to learn of the first medium, who has done more than to get daily bread. Nearly all have depended upon other resources, or upon the voluntary contributions of those who have known their needs. In nearly all cases, there has been, at first, a great repugnance to receiving money; and when it has become a necessity to do so, the amounts received, have much oftener fallen short than exceeded actual necessities.

The Fox sisters, the first or among the first known mediums, in the more recent and general manifestations, were at first annoyed, terrified and persecuted. Their house was stoned; their friends

deserted them, and they were often driven almost to despair; but as often as they closed their doors, and refused to admit visitors, the manifestations compelled them to open them again, until they were driven into the work, and made to become the mediums of spirit manifestations, first in Rochester and then in other places; yet, I know the fact, that when they were supposed to be receiving large sums of money, from throngs of curious visitors, they did not actually have enough to pay their bills, and were relieved by the contributions of benevolent spiritualists.

Taking money of visitors who come to sit for communications, was always repugnant to me; but it was a simple necessity. It took up my whole time, and left me no means of support. Poor, with a family, I had no other means of living. Hard as it was, therefore, to fix a price for such service, I was compelled reluctantly to do so. But my guardian spirits, after a time, wished me to open free circles, that the poor might have this gospel preached to them, and that the sordid and suspicious might not have the excuse of believing it a money-making speculation. I was willing to give myself to the work, but could not see how it was to be sustained. I said, if I do this, who will pay my heavy rents, and support my family? My guardian spirits promised that they would see to this, but my faith was weak, and I waited and wavered. I barely lived as it was, and did not see how I could live, if I got no fixed compensation; for I had seen that most persons would give money for evils much sooner than for goods. I knew that men and women would pay dollars for rum, tobacco, useless luxuries, finery, or amusements, before they would give sixpences to any good cause. I resisted and delayed, until the spirits threatened to take away my power, if I refused to do their work.

As I dreaded this more than anything else, and as I knew by many experiences that such medial power or condition could be removed or suspended, I consented to give free circles, as soon as proper arrangements could be made for that purpose. I therefore, with the aid of some friends, hired the dwelling part of the house, 154 Canal Street, in the lower part of the city, and near all the great thoroughfares, and advertised free circles, morning and after-

noon, reserving my evenings for private circles, with compensation. The spirits promised that I should be sustained, as well as I had been, but I did not see how it was to be done. Hundreds came and filled my rooms; receiving communications of a most satisfactory character to all who could understand the nature of a test, or were impressible to spirit influence — for this impression is often better than any intellectual test. But of these great numbers, very few thought it necessary to make any contribution. I think much the greater number thought that they were doing me a favor, in coming to investigate, and had the air of patrons, who expected gratitude for their countenance and support. With many it was thoughtlessness. They were interested in the subject, glad to have the opportunity of conversing with departed friends, but did not think of cost. The circles were free and they were very glad they were so; but they did not consider that those who had ability ought to contribute, in order to make them free to others. I trembled for the result; but my fears proved to be groundless, and the promises of my guardian spirits were kept to me, as they have ever been.

Though the great mass of my visitors gave nothing, there were a few who contributed liberally. Some were thoughtful enough to give more, for the very reason that they saw so many go away without giving anything; and the private circles paid, perhaps, more readily and liberally, so that at the end of the week, I found the united sums much the same as formerly. The work was harder; but I had the satisfaction of being of greater use, and as soon as I could trust in being sustained, I was very glad that I had opened my doors to the poor and unbelieving, and invited them to "partake of the waters of life freely."

I was very efficiently aided in this work by many personal friends and devoted spiritualists, particularly Mr. M. A. Curran, who projected the publication of a monthly paper, intended to give publicity, and if successful, pecuniary support to the free circles. The PUBLIC CIRCLE was published one year, nearly printed, and edited by Mr. Curran, with singular good taste and ability, and though not a source of pecuniary profit, as it was hoped it might

be, I know that it did a good work in the cause of spiritualism. Many of the facts contained in this narrative were preserved in that paper from which I have copied them, hoping to give them by this means a more permanent form and a wider circulation.

If the records of this year of the free circles, from May, 1855, until May, 1856, had been kept, and its history written, it would have filled a large volume. I can only give results. I can not even give, except by estimate, the number of visitors during this period, who either received themselves, or saw others receive spiritual communications. If there were fifty a day, for three hundred days, which is a moderate average estimate, I had fifteen thousand visitors. Of these, more than half, and probably two-thirds or ten thousand, were not citizens of New York, but strangers from every part of the country and world.

These, you will say, had money to spend, and could pay. True; but would they have done so? Strangers meet at a hotel in New York, and one says to the other, "What is going on worth seeing?" "Suppose we go and see what the spirits will say to us," suggests the other. In most cases the ready answer would be, "Oh, I shall not give my money to such a humbug as that!" "But," replies the other, "how are you to be sure it is a humbug?" "Sure enough. The city is full of schemes to make money. I'd rather give my quarter to Barnum, who professes to be a humbug." "But here is a medium," says the other, "who opens his circles for every body, without asking pay of any."

This alters the case, and probably induces the man to visit the free circles, and he becomes first interested, and then convinced, and probably goes home a confirmed spiritualist, and a better and happier man.

Better! Yes. No man can believe in the existence of spirits, and that they are hovering around us, sorrowing for our evils, and rejoicing in our good, without being made better. The man who has convincing evidence that a dear father or mother, brother or sister, or child, in the spirit world, watches over him, must be influenced in his conduct by this assurance. It must be a restraint from evil, and an incentive to good. O the blindness of those who

ask, "what is the use of spiritualism?" and do not see how much better it must make all who believe in its realities.

Better and happier! To be better brings with its consciousness this result; but the assurance of immortality; the knowledge that those who were dear to us in the earth life, still live, and are still dear; and that when these outward scenes are over, we shall assuredly join them in a life of ceaseless progression and ever increasing joys—is not this enough to give us perpetual happiness?

On how many have I seen this light from the spirit world dawn for the first time, with the effulgence of an assured knowledge! In hundreds, I may say thousands of minds I have seen this absolute knowledge take the place of a dim, doubting, mystical religious faith, which is seldom or never a real, earnest belief. I believed, perhaps, in my early days of methodism, as earnestly as any one; but it was very different from my present state.

And the happiness of the two beliefs, were they equally assured to us; what a difference is here! The evangelical christian believes in a hell of eternal tortures for a large proportion of all the souls who have lived and who live upon this planet. I think a real, earnest belief in this would drive any mind to insanity. I cannot see how it is consistent with the happiness of any being,—God, angel, or man. It has been said, that if but one soul were struggling in the hopeless torments of an eternal hell, all the hosts of heaven would hang over its battlements in sorrowing woe, and weep such tears of pitying agony over the lost soul, as would extinguish the everlasting burnings, wash out the stain of sin, and float the redeemed one up to paradise. It is not possible for men to be truly happy, with the idea of hell remaining in the mind, even as a possibility for any being.

But when there comes to the mind the assurance of eternal progression for every spirit in the universe, the idea is full of love and joy—love of the Infinite Love, and joy in the Infinite Joy in the universe of spirits.

Beyond all other considerations to me, is that of having been the instrument of such an inestimable good to so many of my fellow beings. Were my toils much harder, and my sacrifices much

greater, I should feel repaid a thousand fold; and now, as a humble medium of often undeveloped spirits, I prize my work beyond any earthly magnificence.

In the announcement of the free circles, the poor were invited to attend, and especially those who were grieving for the loss of relations and near friends. My table has often, almost daily, been surrounded by groups of mourners, whose mourning has been turned into joy, by the unmistakable and overwhelming evidence of spirit presence and identity. Wives, parted from husbands, and husbands from wives, have met them here, and interchanging their greetings. Many who came to laugh, have remained to weep; and skeptics, full of proud scorn at tippings and rappings, have been convinced that the departed "still live."

In some cases these scenes have been very affecting. In such calamities as the loss of the Arctic, friends and relations have met at my table those, whose deaths they feared, but of whose fate they were still uncertain. I remember a lady, whose husband had been an under officer on that vessel. Most of his relations had given him up for lost, but she clung to the hope that he might yet return to her. In this state of mind her brother brought her to my room; soon a message was spelled out to her, by the alphabet, and the name of her husband given. Her first feeling was that of poignant grief; but she soon became calm, and was soothed by an affectionate communication, which assured her that her husband lived, and loved her still, in a world to which she could henceforth look forward with a joyful assurance.

The free circles became known over the whole country, and were to thousands the first step in spiritual progress, and the knowledge of immortality. Those who got their first tests of me, were not satisfied with this; they generally visited other mediums, and were favored with various manifestations. Among the most convincing of these are those of the rapping mediums, as the "Fox girls." Mrs. Brown, the eldest of these sisters, has been one of the most favored mediums of these manifestations. The "raps" made in her presence and vicinity, are clear, loud, vibrating, and varying in character with each individual spirit. They

sound as if made with a heavy mallet. There is no darkening of the room, in the usual circles, and no possibility of deception. All is fair and open. Messages are spelled out with great rapidity; and when the circle is favorable, persons are touched with spirit hands, bells rung, and other physical manifestations had.

I have said little of other mediums, as my time for years has been so taken up with my own work, that I have had little opportunity of knowing personally of them. Some professed mediums, I do not question are deceivers, and some are themselves deceived. Some have seemed to me to be in a mixed condition, sometimes the instruments of genuine communications, and at others either deceiving, or themselves deceived. I have been, myself, in many instances, the medium of false communications; it may be from my own fault, or from some discordance in the persons seeking communications, and so, I presume, it must be with other mediums.

The work of the free circles was for a season. Whether it is to be again taken up and continued, by me or others, I cannot say. After a year of steady toil, without change or relaxation, during which I had been sustained better than I feared, having received just enough to meet my expenses, I had a monition to vary the scene by travel, and visiting different places; so in the spring of 1856, I left New York, and visited Buffalo, Cleaveland, and Cincinnati, making shorter stops at intermediate points of lesser importance. Of this journey, I will give some account in another chapter.

As I look back over the work of this year, in which I was brought into contact with so many persons; the time seems very brief and marked by so few incidents, that I can scarcely give any other account than that given by the ancient medium—"the poor have the gospel preached unto them." In all the future I shall be glad that I have done this work, or rather that I was found a suitable instrument for it to be done through. By its means the facts and principles of spiritualism have found a wider diffusion than they could have done, probably by any other means. I ask no higher reward.

THE PROGRESSIVE UNION.

EIGHTH REPORT OF THE CENTRAL BUREAU.

FRIENDS: The success of our society is in your hands. There is nothing now doing on the earth, or soon to be done, so important. Political contests and revolutions are steps in progress, but of less value than our work of integral development, and social harmonization. The magnitude of this work must be seen and felt, that it may inspire devotion, and determine consecration.

It is a work of many functions, and every one can perform his part. The humblest and the weakest member of the Progressive Union can do something for the great cause. He can see that its principles are made known to some one, who might otherwise be in ignorance. He can do something toward the informing and purifying of his own life, and the orderly growth and harmonization of his own spirit.

The first work for all is the propagation of our principles. With an earnest effort for one year, on the part of all present members, we may count our number by thousands instead of hundreds. It is only needed that our principles be known, to find a wide acceptance; and that they may be known our thoughts must have a wider circulation. We shall present to our members a method of propagation, involving a practical and functional organization, adapted to this first necessity. It is one which we believe will command the entire confidence, as we hope it may receive the earnest co-operation, of every true member of the Union. It will be communicated in a private circular to every member.

This work of the propagation of our principles, and the gathering of those who are ready for their acceptance into our society, is the first work in order. First the recruiting of the army; then the discipline of its soldiers; then the concentration and organization; then the victorious campaign. We are now in the first stage of this orderly progression; but the second must also commence, and

the rest will follow in due season. We must have the power of numbers, the power of wealth, and then the greater power of a harmonic organization, if we would not run the risk of either failing from our own weakness, or being crushed out by an ignorant and fanatical civilization.

Many are anxious and impatient for a speedy realization. They are not willing to wait for the external or internal preparation, or the material or spiritual conditions of a harmonic society. Past and present failures are not sufficient to deter them from wishing to try new experiments; as if more such were needed to demonstrate that a higher wisdom than has governed the past, a more advanced science and improved conditions are necessary to any real success in social organization. But if there are any who have a work to do in this direction, it is not for us to dissuade them from it. There are many whose conditions can scarcely be worse, and to whom almost any change would bring relief. There are others who believe that they can succeed, and whom no failures will convince. These must make their trials, and educate others, if not themselves. The headstrong, impatient, self-willed, and fanatical must go their own way; and those who ally themselves to such, must suffer the consequences. This kind of experience is a hard schoolmaster, but there are those who either will not or can not learn of any other.

But we, who believe in an orderly growth and progress—and in the adaptation of means to ends; we who know that the development and harmonization of the individual is the first condition of a harmonic society; that the efficiency of an army depends upon the discipline of every soldier; the harmony of an orchestra upon the skill of every musician; that a true social organization must be a work of growth; that an orderly whole must be composed of orderly parts; that time, and means, and labor, are the necessities of every great work—we shall rush into no hasty experiment.

A society needs to be constructed, as much as a ship. A mass of drift wood may float you; you may pin a few rough logs together and make a raft. On the principle of isolate and selfish individualism, it needs little skill for each man to hollow out and paddle his own canoe. But these are not ships; no more is any discordant aggregation a society. A true society, like the ship, is a thing of order, symmetry, and beauty. Its materials must be gathered with care, fitted with skill, and rejected when unworthy. There must be plan, order, and organization. It is not enough to buy a few acres of land, well or ill selected, and gather upon it a score or two of people, with the diseases, habits, and to a great

extent, the prejudices and vices of civilization. This is only another raft, to float down the stream. Not a ship to breast the billows, and battle with the elements.

The order and method of our work have been given. We are first to spread broad-cast the principles of freedom in right doing. We are to seek, find, and affiliate to our society, all who can accept its principles. We are to join heartily and zealously in the great work of education and enlightenment. We are to labor with all the zeal, courage, and devotion, with which such motives as ours can inspire us. And as we go onward in this work, those who are most worthy will advance to the most integral consecration, and be ready to devote all they have and are, spirit, soul, body, and estate, to their own development, and that of all who are in the harmony of our life.

The central group of workers is now pledged to this entire consecration from inmost to outmost; and all who are willing to live their life, and labor in their work, can unite in the pledges of this consecration. It is a life of purity that few now can lead, but it is one that all must lead who would be in the central life of our harmony.

It is a consecration to chastity, as the condition of harmonic growth; to spiritual purity, and purity of the person as its material correspondent; to a pure diet as the condition of physical and spiritual health and development; and an entire consecration of the whole being to the great work.

It is not expected that all will be able to come at once upon the plane of consecration; but it is hoped that every member will strive to live to his highest idea of life and freedom; and that all will make progress toward the conditions of a harmonic life. Each one is to live his own true life, and not the life of another; and every one is a true member of the Progressive Union, who lives constantly in accordance with his highest freedom and sense of right. The pledges and canons of consecration for development, of the central group, so far from being urged upon any, are sent only to such as manifest a readiness for their reception.

When our principles shall be known to all who can know them, and accepted by all who can accept; when groups are formed and graduated in the orders of harmony; when the central group has gathered around itself a cluster of advanced, harmonized and self-sustaining groups; then, at the right time, in the right method, and by the right means, we shall enter into a domain, fit to be the home of such an organization.

Friends! Let us do our whole work. Let no part be neglected

—neither the sowing of the seed, nor the needful cultivation, nor the glad harvest. But there must be growth before there can be fruition. Pluck not the untimely fruit. We shall reap in due season if we faint not. The purest life of the heavens is in intimate correspondence with our clear common sense; and the supernal wisdom is no other than an enlightened and purified understanding.

We urge upon all the vital work of individual development and harmonization. Strive to attain to health, to knowledge, to that virtue of genuine manhood, so much neglected and forgotten. In all things "cease to do evil, and learn to do well." Cease from every error of life—even in things commonly esteemed small and unimportant; "and whether ye eat or drink, or *whatever* ye do, do all to the glory of God," whose true glory is the wellfare and happiness of all. The only way for a man to "glorify God" is, to be in all things the best and highest man he is capable of being. Those who glorify the Divine within them shall assuredly enjoy the Divinity of Being forever.

The time is coming, when all who have in them the wish for the realization and enjoyment of a true life, will regret that they have neglected the needful preparation. Every day should witness improvement and progress. The time is brief for all the culture we need. Let us work then, to achieve the requirements of a harmonic life; freedom in ourselves, and from all bonds; courage to live to the highest and purest life of which any thought has come to us; devotion to the great work, and entire consecration.

We close the first series of the reports of the Central Bureau with congratulations upon the success of the past year. The work is well begun. From this time forth it takes on a new phase of organization, like a plant, which has germinated, and come up into the light, and now throws out its branches for a more rapid growth, which will be the work of the coming year.

Let us all enter upon it with a zeal in proportion to its importance; with a faith as steadfast as its principles; with a devotion as great as are the needs of humanity; and with an infinite trust in the Infinite Heart and God of all Harmony.

We call then on all in whom the sacred fire is burning, to let their light shine. We beseech the beautiful in thought and being, to help us beautify man and the earth. Let the loving labor to diffuse the warmth of love to all humanity. Let us form a centre of harmonious life, to which all may find accord, until the earth is filled with a universal song of praise; until freedom shall spread over the earth, and elevate the life of every soul, and the songs of

the bards, and the inspirations of the prophets shall be fulfilled—and there shall be glory to God in the highest—peace on earth—good will to men.

Those who give themselves most integrally to this work, must necessarily be best prepared for the life of harmony. Those who do most for others, will doubtless also do most for themselves. Those whose hearts are most engaged in the work, will become best harmonized in all their faculties. It has been said that before heaven can be enjoyed, it must come into our souls. So of the life of harmony; it must be born in us, and mold us to its own spirit, before we can come to its external realization. The enlightened give light; the beautiful radiate beauty,—as warm bodies give forth their heat. So all loving souls diffuse an atmosphere of love around them; so the harmonic exercise a harmonizing influence; and the truly free would extend freedom to all souls.

It is for each member, in an honest self-examination, and in the exercise of his highest freedom and sense of right, to determine what he ought to do for himself, for those nearest related to him, and for the general movement. Each one must see what needs to be done and what can be done for his own emancipation, purification, and harmonization; and then what aid he can extend to others, directly or indirectly. There are some who give all to this work — all time, all strength, all means, in an entire consecration. Many cannot do so much, but all can do something, and every earnest effort will help on the great work of the world's salvation.

[For Nichols' Monthly.]

TO ONE WITH THE ANGELS.

Oh dweller by the streams,
Which are immortal, on the viewless shore,
Once more thy face hath looked upon my dreams,
Thou hast been here once more.

No more beyond the sea
Hast thou thy dwelling — nevermore shall I,
By the dim shore, lift passionate cries for thee.
Alas! no passionate cry

O'erleaps the fathomless wave,
That darkly rolleth now, between us two:
My heart stands still, before the desolate grave,
And lifts no plaint of wo.

Yet oh, beloved and lost!
From that far shore thou hast returned to me;
That unknown sea, thine infinite love hath crost,
And I have looked on thee.

I have beheld thy face,
And looked into thine eyes' ineffable calm,
Till the faint glory of the viewless place,
Bathed all my soul like balm.

There was no voice—no look,
Like that last look of death, I vainly sought,
But all the eloquent silence thrill'd and shook
With thine unspoken thought.

Like an illumed vase,
Lit from within, with an undying flame.
I gazed upon the brightness of thy face—
Another, and the same.

And in my heart upsprung,
The still and solemn triumph of sweet faith;
Oh Love, dear Love! thou hast the victory won,
Thou'rt mightier than Death.

KATE SEYMOUR.

Fulton, N. Y., June, 1856.