

# FANATICISM;

ITS SOURCE AND INFLUENCE,

ILLUSTRATED BY THE SIMPLE NARRATIVE OF

ISABELLA.

IN THE CASE OF

MATTHIAS,

MR. AND MRS. B. FOLGER, MR. PIERSON,  
MR. MILLS, CATHERINE,  
ISABELLA, &c. &c.

A  
REPLY TO W. L. STONE,

WITH DESCRIPTIVE PORTRAITS OF ALL THE PARTIES, WHILE AT  
SING-SING AND AT THIRD STREET.—CONTAINING THE WHOLE  
TRUTH—AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH.

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BY G. VALE.

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REPLY TO W. J. STONE

BY G. VALE

NEW YORK

1831

## PREFACE.

THE object of this publication is to make known the whole truth in relation to Matthias, Mr. and Mrs. Folger, Mr. Pierson, Mr. Mills, Catherine Gallaway, Isabella, and others, in reference to the whole of those hitherto mysterious transactions, which have so excited the public mind.

It has fallen to our lot to come in possession of facts, extraordinary facts, in relation to this subject, not yet published; these we have determined to make known, and satisfy the public curiosity; and to perform, what we think, an important duty to society and to posterity; and, at the same time, to do justice to the parties concerned; and, if in these details we shall expose the crimes and follies of some individuals, we shall, at the same time, remove the guilt from comparatively innocent shoulders, and place the burden where it ought to be; nor have these persons reason to complain, for they have given their version of the subject, they have covered up their own crimes, and they have sought to fix upon the *innocent*, crimes of the blackest dye, when they knew, and have since avowed, the innocence of the party; they have too designedly omitted or garbled the most interesting parts in the history of the transactions they relate, and therefore have invited the publication of the *Truth*.

It has always been a question how far fanaticism or imposture could go; and to what extent credulity might be exercised? It has always been a question, how much real crime may be mixed with sincere, but mistaken piety, and how far the human character is susceptible of being at once a knave and a dupe; a sincere dupe, and at the same time,

an operator on the credulity of others? Philosophers have often sought the point where fanaticism ends, and knavery begins, and to what extent fanaticism may set aside the most established code of morals in their own persons, while in others not operated on by the same spirit, they would condemn in the most absolute terms; in fact, when men do wrong in the name of God, it becomes a matter of real interest to know the motives which prompt to the wrong, or the cause from which it flows.

¶ In this point of view, the subject becomes one of moral philosophy, alike interesting to the present generation and to posterity; and for this we think the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, should be laid before the public.

On this subject, a cheap pamphlet, without name or authority; and an expensive book, with a respectable name, embodying the report of one of the parties, have been published: We pronounce both false! the one evidently got up upon *hearsay* evidence, the other designedly *omitting* the most curious parts of the subject, apparently because those parts impugned the party writing, and garbling and perverting much of the remainder; the facts are purposely distorted, the names omitted, and the whole calculated to deceive—to convey a false impression; and, consequently, unfit to afford a safe data on which to reason.

! We propose to give names, dates, places, and facts, without reserve, the subject requires it! and our research and industry will enable us to do this. Delicacy of language will be observed as far as the subject will admit of, but we have to treat of the assumption of supernatural power in more than one case, uncleanness, seduction, and adultery, committed in the name of the Lord; with reciprocal charges of something like murder and theft, among the party, who are still serving the Lord with apparent sincerity. Their sincerity we shall not dispute, but we shall confine ourselves to the facts, the proof of the facts, and the consequences.

It will be asked, how we have got our information? we answer, explicitly. In the first place, through Isabella, a coloured woman, who lived successively with Mr. Pierson,

Mr. Mills, Matthias, and Mr. and Mrs. Folger; and that **EVERY MATERIAL POINT** of her evidence has been verified by other respectable witnesses, in connexion with the party, directly, or laterally: we shall lay before our readers documents, showing the degree of credit which is due to her testimony, and on what points her testimony has been confirmed, and by whom; for we have no secrets, nor do we choose to keep any.

We shall divide the work into two parts, *first*, A narrative of facts, embracing a review of Mr. W. L. Stone's "Matthias and his Impostures," and, *second*, A portrait of the parties composing the society at Sing-Sing, in which various details, amusing, interesting, and important, will be given, which would break too much into the simple narrative.

We merely add, that in publishing this work, we do it upon our own responsibility; we have no prejudice in favour of any of the party; we have made no promise to suppress or keep back any point, unfavourable to our communicants; on the contrary, we have endeavoured to obtain the whole truth, and avowed our determination to publish it; we are under no control, promise, or obligation. On reading Mr. Stone's book, we were satisfied that he had *suppressed the truth*, and we resolved to publish it, if we could obtain it: perhaps our remarks in the Citizen of the World led to the application of a gentleman on the part of Isabella, who declared, in consequence of her evidence being suppressed in the trial at White Plains, and in consequence of misrepresentation at that trial before the grand jury; and in consequence of the errors in Mr. Stone's book, and of the invectives against her, she was desirous of telling the whole truth. Our reply was, bring her here immediately, we wish to publish the *whole truth*: the gentleman added, "You may rely upon her statements, for she has repeated the story at different times, to different persons in my family, and in parts, and never varied;" he also added, that in the parts of her narrative which agreed with Stone's book, he found her correct, and where she differed, she was consistent, while the book was not; in that there were

many gaps and inconsistencies, these were made clear by her supplying deficiencies, and identifying the parts of her story with the dates given in that book." Thus we do her a service in publishing it, for she wishes the Truth told: and we gratify ourselves, and render a public service in laying before them the whole truth, which we have taken care to have verified in every possible case.

In seeking confirmation of some facts, we, on one occasion, travelled ninety miles, but we were amply repaid for that journey by the quantity of important information we obtained, and the ability we shall possess of rescuing an injured person from the private malice of an abuser of the press.

G. VALE,

No. 84 Roosevelt Street, New York.

# FANATICISM;

## ITS SOURCE AND INFLUENCE.

NARRATIVE OF ISABELLA, IN THE CASES OF MATTHIAS,  
MR. AND MRS. B. FOLGER, &c.

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### CHAPTER I.

*Important errors in Mr. Stone's book—his dishonesty in writing it—testimony of Isabella's veracity and moral character—the charges of poisoning and fraud—the blackberry story.*

MR. W. L. STONE, of the Commercial, has written a book, and like *charity*, has covered a multitude of sins: for this we might give him credit for benevolence, if not honesty, were it not that he meanly attempts to transfer the sins of those he has taken under his protection, to others, not guilty of those crimes; but, unfortunately, poor, uneducated, and coloured. He could expect no defence from a woman, formerly a slave incapable of reading or writing, and already labouring under the accusation of having attempted to poison Mr. Folger's family, and with having prepared the blackberries of which Mr. Pierson eat a short time previous to his death, and which he brought up in his repeated vomitings during his sickness.

In page 63, of "Matthias and his Impostures," published by Mr. Stone, the author, speaking of Mr. Pierson's church upon the Bowery Hill, remarks, that "the Kingdom now come consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Pierson, Mrs. \* \* \*, Mrs. M. Mr. L., and Isabella, the black woman," &c. Now the black woman Isabella never belonged to this church, was never in it, and did not know Mr. Pierson at the time, upon her declaration, of the truth of which we shall presently furnish a positive proof.

So much for Mr. Stone's matter of fact, and his attempt to identify this woman with every act of extravagance, and finally, to make her bear the sins of those whom he wishes to shield.

In page 65, he thus mischievously repeats this error :

"The original members of this church were about a dozen, whose names are among the loose papers of Mr. Pierson. Among them was Isabella, a black woman; who, with another black woman, named Katy, was attached to Mr. Pierson's household. Their names are mentioned here, because they will both come conspicuously before the reader in the pages of this narrative. Both entered into all the vagaries and delusions of Mr. Pierson; and one of them, (the former,) was probably, before the end came, among the most wicked of the wicked."

So much, we repeat, for Mr. Stone's matter of fact. Here, he is *very* minute, as false witnesses generally are, and marks out Isabella, the black woman, to be *proved* in the sequel, the MOST WICKED of the WICKED. We repeat, Isabella did not know Mr. Pierson at this time, nor was she ever a part of this church, or present at its meetings. When reading this book of Mr. Stone's, we were of course, ignorant of this fact, but we never lost sight of the expected proof of her being "the MOST WICKED of the WICKED," and Mr. Stone's failure on this point, (for, throughout the book, he produces *no proof* of wickedness,) was one reason that satisfied us of his *dishonesty* in writing it. Since then, we have had several proofs, especially in relation to Mrs. \*\*\*. We shall take up this lady's case separately; she has been cruelly abused by Mr. Stone, but in doing which he has completely committed himself; we shall presently show who the lady thus designated is, and how she has been abused; in the mean time, the passages we may quote containing this signature, (Mrs. \*\*\*) should be remembered, for the circumstances are generally false in which Mr. Stone has placed her.

In page 66, Mr. Stone thus describes the famous *anointing* meeting at Mr. Pierson's, just after he had heard God speak to him in an Omnibus in Wall street:

"After a special conversation with Mrs. B. Folger, in which he stated the object of the meeting, she also consented to attend.

"Assembled round the bedside of Mrs. Pierson, now evidently near her end, Mr. Pierson quoted the passage from James, heretofore referred to, and urged that it was indispensable to the recovery of his wife that he should literally fulfil that injunction. He had called the elders of the church together, and she must be anointed. Arrangements were accordingly made for that ceremony. Among the persons present on the occasion, were Mrs. \*\*\*, and the black woman Isabella, who was very forward and active. According to the impressions of persons in the adjoining apartment, who were too much shocked by the procedure to be present, Isabella must have been one of the principal actors and speakers in the religious rites and ceremonies that were observed. The fact of the anointing is briefly noted in the diary of Mr. Pierson, thus:—

*Monday, June 23, 1830.* Anointed Sarah with oil, in the name of the Lord, according to James v. 14, 15."

What are we to make of this passage, *Mrs. Folger* was present, it is expressly stated; she wrote part of this book, her name would not have been mentioned as the person "*especially consulted*," without her consent, Isabella is pointed out as being "*very forward, must have been one of the principal actors*," yet Isabella was NOT present, upon the testimony of Isabella herself, confirmed by Mrs. Pierson's daughter, who was present and has expressly given us this confirmation. What now are we to think of this *apparent* combination of Mrs. Folger and Mr. Stone, to attach to a poor, coloured, unlettered woman, this extraordinary degree of enthusiasm! why thus so *falsely* point to Isabella, with the impression in the mind of the reader that she is yet to be made the "most wicked of the wicked," but for the purpose of destroying her character, in order to invalidate her testimony! why all this, but from the FEAR of her testimony! and what confidence have we in *any one fact*, which Mr. Stone may afterwards state, for Isabella never saw Mrs. Pierson, or lived with Mr. Pierson, till after his

wife's death, on the above testimony, confirmed by other persons then present.

After the death of Mrs. Pierson, an attempt was made to pray her to life, and at the funeral, even an attempt of this kind was there made; Isabella was *not* there then upon the testimony of Mrs. Bishop, the cousin of Mr. Pierson, who expressly gave us this information, and who knows the time at which Isabella came to Mr. Pierson, which was not till after he had removed to 4th street, and after Mrs. \*\*\* had ceased to keep house for him: so much, we again say, for the honesty or ability of Mr. Stone, as a narrator of facts, thus disproved by the most respectable testimony, while we have yet other testimony equally strong to the same effect: but proof is *proof*, additions would be superfluous.

We can show equally false statements on the part of Mr. Stone, in relation to the early history of Matthias, upon the evidence of the wife of Matthias, from whom we have obtained the confirmation of important facts within her knowledge: but we have preferred selecting a few of those in relation to Isabella, because these extracts show a design to injure that woman, or to destroy her credibility: for the very opposite reason we have taken some pains to ascertain the personal character of Isabella, and before we lay her testimony before the public, we wish to show what confidence was placed in her by those families in which she lived from her womanhood or even childhood, and it shows no small share of sensibility to a fair fame, on her part, when we inform our readers, that on our expressing a wish to know her character previous to her connexion with Mr. Pierson, Matthias, or Folger, she thrust into our hands a lot of papers containing written characters from a regular succession of her employers, even from the time of her slavery; these papers will speak for themselves, and we shall merely remark, that we have seen some of the persons who have testified to the character they gave her. Here are the copies of the documents:

*Hurley, Ulster Co., Oct. 13th, 1834.*

This is to certify, that I am well acquainted with Isa-

ella, this coloured woman; I have been acquainted with her from her infancy, she has been in my employ for one year, and she was a faithful servant, honest, and industrious; I have always known her to be in good report by all who employed her.

ISAAC S. VAN WAGENEN.

Oct. 13th, 1834.

This is to certify, that Isabella, this coloured woman, lived with me since the year 1810, and that she has always been a good and faithful servant, and the eighteen years that she was with me, I always found her to be perfectly honest; at the time she came here she was between 12 and 15 years of age, and we have never heard any thing disparaging against her since she left here, until I heard this; the contrary, I have always heard her well spoken of by every one that has employed her.

JOHN J. DUMONT.

New Paltz, Ulster County.

Kingston, Oct. 14th, 1834.

The bearer of this, a coloured woman, named Isabella, lived in my family during a part of the year 1828, and I thought at that time, that she was an honest, faithful, and industrious servant.

JOHN H. RUTZER.

Kingston, Oct. 14th, 1834.

Isabel, a coloured woman, lived with my family in the summer of 1828. She came to me well recommended by a respectable family in this village, and during her term of service with me, she merited the entire confidence of my family, by her good conduct and fidelity.

A. BRUYN HASBROUCK.

(See from the same of an earlier date.)

Kingston, N. Y., Sept. 13th, 1834.

The bearer of this, a coloured woman, named Isabel, has lived in my family for some time, and merits the commendation of an industrious and honest woman, with regular habits, and great fidelity to her employer.

A. BRUYN HASBROUCK.

*New York, Nov. 11th, 1834.*

This is to certify, that Isabella Van Wagenen, a coloured woman, lived in my family as a domestic above a year, 1829, and we do state, that we never had a servant that we could place such implicit confidence in.

Mrs. GATFIELD, 73 Nassau Street.

*New York, Nov. 12th, 1834.*

This is to certify, that Isabella Van Wagenen was a servant in my family, from about the first of September, 1830, until the following summer, during which time she performed the part of a good, and faithful servant, worthy of any trust that might be committed to her charge. I believe her to be a strictly honest, moral woman, and her equal, I have not found since she left me.

J. C. DOWNING, No. 177 Duane Street.

*New York, Oct. 20th, 1834.*

This is to certify, that during the time that Isabella lived in my family, which was some months, she was faithful, honest, and looked to every thing with more care and prudence, than could be expected from a woman in her capacity. I have known her many years, and she has ever heretofore borne a character superior to her colour. She came from Mr. Whiting to my house in the fall of 1833.

DANIEL SMITH, 44 Hudson Street.

*New York, Oct. 18th, 1834.*

This is to certify, that Isabella Van Wagenen, a coloured woman, lived in our family as a domestic some three months, in the summer of 1833, and I do state unequivocally, that we never have had a servant that did all her work so faithfully, and one in whom we could place such implicit confidence—in fact, we did, and do still, believe her to be a woman of extraordinary moral purity.

PEREZ S. WHITING,

74 Canal Street.

*Note.* We place this after the former, because she has lived with Mr. Whiting since the breaking up of the party, and she is now in a confidential situation, having the care of house and property in her charge.

Here Mr. W. L. Stone of the Commercial is the death warrant to your hopes; here the proof that the woman whom you wish to be believed as the most wicked of the wicked, upon your assertion, and promise of proof, but which proof does not exist, at least in your work; there, sir, is the proof that this woman has uniformly sustained an unequivocally good character, and your endeavour to play the atonement, and transfer sins on an innocent woman to save a polished adulterer and an adulteress of no ordinary appetites; and on whom there ought to rest a stronger suspicion of fraud than on this woman, whose character up to the present time stands as high as character is possible for integrity and confidence. The originals of these documents may be seen at our office. Some of the parties giving the characters, we know to be truly respectable, and she has been in the employ, without loss of confidence of some of the above persons, since the indirect charge of murder, poison and robbing Mr. B. Folger; nor has the book of W. L. Stone shaken the confidence of some of her friends who have heard her statements. Could Mr. Stone, or could his partners in the book, get a better character? They may be whiter in skin, more elegant in manners, able to read and write, of literary fame, we must not say honesty, more pious, and greater supports to the church; but are they more honest, can we depend on their testimony, or on either one of them? And what shall we do in cases where the single testimony of one of them is opposed to the single testimony of this black woman? For our own part, — and we have no prejudice in her favour, — we can depend on Isabella's statements, because we have not detected her in inconsistencies or opposite statements, strange as her accounts are. While judging only from what Mr. W. L. Stone, and Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger have chosen to publish, we conclude that they are already convicted of misstatements, and a mean attempt to associate Isabella's name with the **MOST WICKED** of the **WICKED**, by *assumption*, and by drawing the most monstrous inferences from the slightest and accidental circumstances.

Our readers must have patience with us, as we have had in the investigation of Isabella's moral character, for we at

once saw that a great deal depended on that, and therefore we investigated it thoroughly, and weighed well the accusations and the evidence against her. We have before said that on all important subjects, we have collateral evidence of the most respectable character. These we shall bring forward to establish those great points; but the development of character is shown in little things—manners, expressions, and incidental or designed conversations, &c., &c., for which there may be no collateral evidence, and the truth of which will depend on the consistency of the development and character of the narrator. Had we found Isabella a silly, worthless being, known for foolish or wicked lies, one in whom no confidence could be placed; and had we found she had varied in her statements at different times, and to different people, we would have thrown up our design, or published only what had other testimony; but our investigation has terminated in a conviction of her honesty, and we must lay part of this evidence before the public.

In the progress of Mr. Stone's book, we find the **ABSENCE** of *all* evidence that Isabella was the most wicked of the wicked; but instead of which, there is the blackberry story preceding Mr. Pierson's death, the poisoning the coffee story, on the alleged morning of Matthias' departure, (really on the morning before,) and Mrs. B. Folger's *illness*, (mark this;) and the suspicion declared that she and Matthias had appropriated property not their own; for which *no* evidence was ever given. The property story involves an important subject; Mr. Pierson did possess \$80,000, as his family suppose; (he may have been overrated;) his family can recover but \$7,000. The \$500 dollars so mysteriously given to Matthias after a disagreement and separation, nay, supposed discovery of imposture, and the *advice* given with it, that Isabella should have the gold in her care, we really think was a *trap*, which she wholly escaped by having nothing to do with the money; but on this subject, we must and will treat more fully in its proper place. The coffee story too, when Mrs. Folger *unexpectedly* remained up stairs, was afterwards ill, and Isabella took *none*, involves such a scene and such an exposition of character of

Matthias, Mr. Folger, Mrs. Folger, Catherine, and Isabella, as never before was exhibited. The whole scene is too good to be spoiled by a hurried description, and a full one would be out of place here. Suffice it for the present, that we are satisfied with the clear illustration and exposition of Isabella, and that we will give this scene in the course of the narrative, or in illustration of the portraits.

The blackberry story we may as well dispatch now. Mr. W. L. Stone's version of it will be found on page 193 of his book.

"Mr. Pierson's sickness, which terminated in his death, commenced on the afternoon of Tuesday, July 29, 1834. The evening—say twenty-four hours—before, he ate freely of some blackberries, picked by Matthias and his youngest son, and prepared with sugar for the table, as is supposed, by the coloured woman. The persons at the table at the time were Mr. Pierson, Mrs. Folger, Catherine, and Matthias. The latter served out the blackberries at that time, as he invariably did every description of food at the meals. He helped Mr. Pierson, Mrs. Folger, and Catherine, to the berries, but none to himself. Mr. Pierson ate two ordinary sized dessert plates full: Catherine one: Mrs. Folger tasted of them; remarked that they were not perfectly ripe and sweet; and, owing to the state of her health, which had been feeble for many years, declined them, lest they should disagree with her."

It will be remembered, that Mr. Pierson died of fits, to which he was accustomed, and that this blackberry feast preceded Mr. Pierson's last illness twenty-four hours, and was held in July 28, 1834. On the next day, in the afternoon, as related in the book, page 134, he was hay making, and *picking* and *eating* blackberries; that is, just previous to his fit, and to his purging and puking, in which he brought up blackberries, (the mysterious circumstance!) What blackberries, we ask? Those supposed to be poisoned, which had lain in his stomach without inconvenience twenty-four hours? or those which he had recently been picking and eating, as stated by W. L. Stone himself? Three hours is the ordinary time for the digestion of much

more stubborn food than blackberries, from recent positive experiments. Mr. Pierson was ordinarily well, *hay making*, and eating a hearty dinner, and with an appetite for the same sort of food supposed to be operating on his stomach. Here we think Mr. W. L. Stone is as unscientific as ungenerous in his suppositions, or he must know that not a blackberry, in those circumstances, would remain a blackberry, *twenty-four hours*, the time he himself allows: but we have positive evidence to meet his ungenerous, nay, unjust supposition, to be reconciled perhaps with his standard of piety, but certainly not with a correct standard of morals. Mr. W. L. Stone says, these blackberries "were prepared with sugar for the table, as is *supposed* by the coloured woman." Now, without any supposition, we are authorized to say, that Elizabeth, Mr. Pierson's daughter, prepared those blackberries; and on the declaration of Catherine Galloway, made to Mr. Western, the counsel, in Isabella's presence, and since reported to us, agreeing with Isabella's statement, who is always consistent, and to which she will now swear, Mrs. B. Folger eat heartily, instead of *tasting* them, as reported by W. L. Stone. The reader, by a comparison of the two books, will know on whom rests the greater credit. So much for the blackberry poison story, and Mr. W. L. Stone's veracity, generosity, and Christian feeling; and his *strong proof*, that Isabella is one of the MOST WICKED of the WICKED. How Col. W. L. Stone, of the Commercial, could thus commit himself, we cannot conceive.

## CHAPTER II.

*Sketch of Isabella's Life—Recovers her child from Slavery—Early Religious Opinions and Habits—The source of Fanaticism—Advantages taken by Matthias—Isabella comes to New York—Becomes a Methodist, and joins Latourette's Church—Introduced to Mr. Pierson, and engaged as an answer to prayer—Mrs. Bolton, the Matron of the Magdalene Asylum—Her former vicious life, and Camp Meetings—Influence over Mr. Pierson, till the time of Matthias—Her disgrace with Mr. Pierson—The Magdalene Society, and probable source of the information which the celebrated Report embodied—Mr. Mills, short account of—Mr. and Mrs. Folger's conversion—Holy Club—Mrs. B. Folger—Holy Club—Retrenchment Society—Pierson's call from God—Opinions and Practices of the party before Matthias was among them—Opinions on Marriage—Mysterious Letters—Mr. Pierson's proposition to be united to a married lady—The author and object of the Mysterious Letters.*

ISABELLA VAN WAGENEN, in early life, was a slave. She was born in the family of Col. Ardinburgh, in Hurley, Ulster county, New York, and is now about 38 years of age. While young, she was successively sold to John Nealy, Kingston, New York, to Martin Scriver, Kingstou, and then to John J. Dumont, in the same neighbourhood, with whom she lived eighteen years. This person is now alive, and is one of those who has given her a character; she left him one year before the state made her free, because he had promised her this favour, and lived with Van Wagenen, whose name she takes; but she returned to J. Dumont at his request. During her residence with J. Dumont, she had five children, without a legal marriage, according to the custom of slaves; but during the greater part of the time she lived with a black man, on the farm, as her husband, to whom she was joined by a coloured man of the name of King, who frequently performed this office. One of these children was sold illegally into southern slavery, by one Solomon Gedner, and her exertions to get him back, which were crowned with success, mark the energy of her character. In this she was greatly assisted by Judge Ruggles, who tried Matthias, Squire Chip, Lawyer Romain, Lawyer Hasbrouck, and others. At this time.

she was of course very ignorant, not being able to read; and judging of Jesus Christ by the pictures in the large family Bibles she had seen, she supposed him a great Man, like Washington, &c. Her belief was of the simplest kind, and, like Matthias, Pierson, B. Folger, and a whole host of females, she mistook her *feelings* for divine impressions, and this mistake, common to so many, we may notice as the great source of fanaticism. At an early period, when she had scarcely heard preaching, and had formed no distinct creed, she was in the habit of "talking with God," as she expressed herself, and imagining that she had answers, by supposing a voice expressing her thoughts, or by interpreting her *feelings*. We afterwards find, that this state of mind was common to Mr. Pierson, and the whole party, who followed Matthias, previous to their acquaintance with him; and of this feeling, Matthias took the greatest advantage, but he did not originate it; indeed, it is common to large bodies of very pious people, and Matthias himself was perhaps its dupe, in the first instance. It was this feeling, and an early belief, or rather impression, that she should see Christ in the flesh, that made her afterwards the ready disciple of Matthias, whose appearance instantly struck her as that which accorded with her early impressions; and when she saw Mr. Pierson, and others, whom she esteemed good and wise men, wash his feet, as was the case, and agree with him in matters of belief, she supposed it an answer to prayer; her *feelings* told her so, and she thanked God accordingly.

Isabella remained in the neighbourhood of Kingston after she left J. Dumont for the second time, till some time after her boy was brought back and made free; during which time she lived both with Mr. J. Rutzler and Mr. Bruyn Hasbrouck, a lawyer. This was about the year 1828. She then came to New York, with Mr. and Miss Gear, a respectable lady engaged in teaching, and obtained by their recommendations many respectable places of work, and among the rest, she worked and occasionally lived with Mr. Latourette, in the Bowery, became a zealous member of the Methodists, and with them attended many camp meetings,

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and became the means of converting some by her zeal, and was much respected in the connexion, especially of Mr. Latourette, upon the testimony of other members, and of Mr. Latourette himself. Her observations on this period of her life, are of consequence as illustrating character, and the people and scenes with which she was familiar. These observations, and our own on them, we shall defer for the present, in order to reach the narrative in relation to Matthias, Mr. and Mrs. Folger, and others, at an earlier period. In 1829, Isabella lived with Mrs. Catfield, 73 Nassau Street, New York, and in 1830, with Mr. J. C. Downing, 177 Duane Street, from both of whom she has certificates, now in our possession. While in these situations she was a zealous and consistent member of the Methodist church, in John Street, joining the coloured class, and attending the meetings with the knowledge of her employers. After which she joined the African church, in Church Street; during her membership there, she frequently attended Mr. Latourette's meetings; at one of which, Mr. Smith invited her to go to a prayer meeting, or to instruct the girls at the Magdalene Asylum, Bowery Hill, then under the protection of Mr. Pierson, and some other persons, chiefly respectable females. To reach the Asylum, Isabella called on Kata, Mr. Pierson's coloured servant, of whom she had some knowledge. Mr. Pierson saw her there, conversed with her, asked her if she had been baptized, and was answered characteristically, "by the Holy Ghost." After this, Isabella saw Kata several times, and occasionally Mr. Pierson, who engaged her to keep his house, while Kata went to Virginia to see her children. This engagement was considered an answer to prayer by Mr. Pierson, who had both fasted and prayed on the subject, while Kata and Isabella appeared to see in it, the hands of God. This engagement took place in August, 1832, and must have been nearly two years after Mrs. Pierson's death. Mr. Pierson had then retired from the Bowery Hill, and was then living in Flourish Street. Yet, as we have seen, Mr. Stone gives the particulars of her conduct at certain meetings at Bowery Hill, and mentions the two black women as being present.

and ascribes to Isabella chiefly what is objectionable, assuming her presence; yet we have direct proof to the contrary. At the time when Isabella went to Mr. Pierson's, a Mrs. Bolton, afterwards the *Matron* of the Magdalene Asylum, visited the house frequently, did needle work for the family, and frequently slept there. This lady possessed the qualities which king George IV. is said to have admired; she was fair, fat, and forty, dressed well, was pleasing and genteel in her manners. On her we must bestow a few lines, for through her we shall get at the character of some of the parties, as well as a key to the celebrated Magdalene Report.

It appears that Mr. and Mrs. Pierson, assisted by some of the clergy and other persons, had most benevolently established a Magdalene Asylum; that Mrs. Pierson and other ladies frequently visited the Five Points, and other similar places, to make converts, and supply the Asylum. Of this Asylum, a Mrs. Carpenter, (now Mrs. M'Dowall,) was at one time *Matron*—a lady of whom we know nothing, except that she was respected where known; but she was made to give way to Mrs. Bolton, who was placed over her; in fact, Mr. Pierson preferred Mrs. Bolton, whom at this time he thought highly of. Now Mrs. Bolton, besides the qualities which we have already mentioned, apparently possessed a great share of humility, with much zeal, for she was a new convert. She had been a great sinner, but her sins she confessed openly, in the presence of both Mr. Pierson and Isabella, as well as before other persons occasionally. In these confessions she admitted that she had lived in fornication; that she had used much skill and cunning in seducing men, and had received large sums of money from different gentlemen. She would even describe the manner in which she communicated her inclinations to various dry goods merchants and clerks, some of whom she betrayed by naming to Mr. Pierson, before Isabella, (we, however, have not sought the names.) To this ample confession of former sins she added, that she had been a great hypocrite; and to hide her lewdness, that she had joined the Methodists, had attended the various protracted and camp

NARRATIVE OF ISABELLA

meetings, and had those famed, been carried into tents and expressively carried on, to use a Yankeeism; and at the same time she continued her intercourse with men. She would then add, "now do you think I can be forgiven?" Well Mr. Pierson thought she could, nay, he received her declaration as a proof of candour; he believed her repentance sincere, and he was strengthened by a text of scripture, which he often quoted about "Harlots entering the kingdom of heaven before others." He was in fact pleased with her confessions; she apparently knew he was, and apparently confessed to please him for it always increased his confidence in her; though we really think that she was probably much less guilty than she pretended, and only played upon the weakness of Mr. Pierson. Isabella, however, drew a different conclusion. She thought that she who had played the hypocrite so well at camp meetings, might be playing the hypocrite now, and that she who had seduced so many men with such skill, might be seducing Mr. Pierson; and as Isabella, in consequence of her religion, was familiar with Mr. Pierson, she communicated to him her doubts: but these doubts excited rebuke from Mr. Pierson and Mrs. Bolton exerted considerable influence over him, till Matthias came, when her influence declined, and after a considerable time, she was finally forbid the house by Mr. Pierson's sister, in accordance with Mr. Pierson's wish, as an improper person to associate with him and his friends.

Matthias at first pronounced her a devil, and a lewd woman; while she, after an amusing attempt to conciliate him, which failed, boldly pronounced him an impostor; but Matthias' fortune prevailed, perhaps, because at that time, he had personal purity on his side, a patriarchal beard in front, and did not differ from Mr. Pierson in religion, but only carried forward his ideas. There are one or two anecdotes in relation to this lady Matthias and Pierson, which we shall reserve for our Portrait. We cannot, however, dismiss this subject for the present, without observing, that from the parties connected with this Magdalene Asylum, issued the famous Magdalene Report; and though that was published

before the time of Mrs. Bolton's matronship, yet the information given was just such as persons in her situation could give; and the errors committed, and exaggerations made, just such as we might expect, from persons whose present merit was rated in proportion to their former vices. Mrs. Bolton had been an exact specimen of corruption, in a pleasing and unsuspecting form; and her practices, on her own showing, if believed, those which would justify the assertion in the Magdalene Report, that women were generally the seducers; and perhaps there were many Mrs. Bolton's about the establishment. As proof, however, of the humility of this lady she used to wash the feet of Isabella, who in return washed her's, as part of the religious duty then thought necessary by Mr. Pierson.

At this period, Mr. Pierson was in the habit of preaching in his own house, and Mrs. Bolton may be remembered as going about the city soliciting hearers to the Prophet Elijah, or John the Baptist, (Mr. Pierson,) and delivering religious tracts, with extraordinary zeal, and thus obtaining a degree of public notoriety, and accession to houses under her apparent character, and whose residents might not have esteemed her, in proportion to her former course, as Mr. Pierson did.

Among the attendants on Mr. Pierson's preaching, and indeed among his friends, was Mr. Mills. In page 96 of Mr. Stone's book, we have an account of Mr. Mills, under the letters M. H. S. which was almost unnecessary, as his connexion with Matthias was notorious. The account of his previous impressions are probably correct; we see no inconsistencies, nor any object to be obtained in falsifying. His history is that of many, very many fanatics; he felt a deep conviction of sin, and made himself miserable under the idea that he had offended Deity, beyond the hope of pardon. To divert him, he travelled over land to New Orleans; he afterwards visited England, Ireland, the British and French capitals, and returned to New York in 1831, very little altered; yet he became a member of the Presbyterian church, was regular in his devotions, and fervent in prayer, using ejaculatory prayer frequently; and with much

He pressed the subject of religion on the clerks and acquaintances in his store; prudently, however, begging his friends to check him when he was going too far in his store exhortations. In the spring of 1832, he became acquainted with Mr. Pierson, and soon formed an attachment to him; and being informed that Mr. Pierson was not considered quite right in his mind, he replied, says Mr. Stone, "Oh, it is not so now." The impression of Mr. Pierson's sanity, among the party, we find to be general, notwithstanding a few very singular acts, such as anointing his sick wife, and expecting her resurrection; yet in this he relied on his understanding of scripture. It is evident that Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger received their doctrines chiefly from Mr. Pierson, and regarded him as perfectly sane; even on the late trial, Mrs. B. Folger conveyed that idea.

We see no reason to doubt the outlines of the *early history* of Mr. and Mrs. Folger, as given by Mr. Stone. The conversion of Mrs. Folger, who had been brought up in the bosom of the Dutch church, took place in 1825, two years after her marriage; and in the same year was formed what was commonly called the *Holy Club*, the essence of which was Mrs. \*\*\*, (so says Mr. Stone,) who is said to have influenced the mind of Mrs. Folger, but the credit of the conversion is given to the Rev. Mr. Dubois. Previous to this a series of societies had been formed, of which Mrs. \*\*\* is said to have been the focus; but against her Col. Stone is evidently prejudiced, for he wishes to transfer to that lady a great portion of the sins of Mrs. Folger, as the original cause of her fanaticism, while the sequel evidently shows, that however zealous Mrs. \*\*\* might be, she did not fall into personal guilt, and would have saved Mrs. Folger from her course, if she could; while there is clear evidence of Mrs. Folger's originating things calculated to ruin this society, which she fortunately, and with good sense and principles, escaped. These are inferences drawn from Mr. Stone's book, for we have not yet seen this lady; we shall, however, if possible, obtain her version of the subject.

After the conversion of Mrs. B. Folger, her house became

the theatre for fanaticism; she had female prayer meetings on any, and sometimes every day and evening in the week, and Mr. Stone remarks, that these were attended with lasting good to many; notwithstanding they were chiefly influenced (Mr. Stone says) by Mrs. Stone, the apparent terror of Mr. Stone. Mrs. Sarah Pierson, the then wife of Mr. Pierson, was also a constant attendant at these prayer meetings. Mrs. Folger became a convert in 1827, under the preaching of the Rev. Dr. Matthews. He afterwards projected the Day Street church, and united with three others in calling the Rev. Joel Parker from Rochester, as we learn from Mr. Stone's book. Thus it appears at this time the party were orthodox, merely having more zeal than others, and merely following out their principles, like honest people, who are not restrained by the fear of singularity, or popular and prudential considerations.

As we are now about to introduce Matthias, it will be proper to show the opinions and practices of those who came in contact with him, previous to that introduction, in order to estimate justly the characters of each. In doing this, we shall be assisted greatly by Mr. Stone's book, which may be corrected on subjects which were within his reach, without much trouble; and where he had no object in suppressing the truth, or perverting it.

In chapter the second of Mr. Stone's book, he shows, in 1821-22, Mrs. Stone, the daughter of a clergyman, and cousin to Mr. and Mrs. Folger, was converted, and from a lively, intelligent, and agreeable female, became a believer, possessing the spirit of proselytism, and at the same time a lover of reform, that she formed several societies, of which she was the master spirit, as Mr. Stone calls her. She first proposed entering private houses, and praying for the inmates, with or without their consent, then to reduce female dresses to much simplicity; and these measures were carried into effect, not beginning with the poor and ignorant, but with the popular minister, who had preached to her; these ladies entered his house, and prayed for his conversion. Mr. Stone says that her father, and the husband of the chief spirit, were made miserable. In 1825, an associa-

After the conversion of Mrs. B. Folger, her house became

tion of male and female zealots was formed, consisting of Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists, including the ladies before mentioned, for mutual instruction and prayer; but those only were to speak who were moved by the Holy Ghost, or who thought they were. This association was afterwards called the Holy Club. Mr. Stone says they did not believe in the special observance of the Sabbath, but that every day should be alike. He likewise says, they did not believe in the institution of marriage, and that a single life was essential to purity; however, many of these then single, afterwards got married; they did not believe in a final day of judgment, but that mankind were judged of their deeds every day. We have not, however, perfect confidence in Mr. Stone's statements. It was this society that Mrs. B. Folger associated with after her conversion, and to whom she opened her house, and these proceedings were simultaneous with Mr. Pierson's preaching in his own house. Mrs. \*\*\* of Stone's book, afterwards removed to Bowery Hill, lately cut down, attracting to her neighbourhood Mr. Pierson, Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger, and others, forming a society, who believed themselves under the teaching of the Spirit; the source, we again repeat, of all fanaticism. Here the Retrenchment Society was formed, and Mr. Folger, under the influence of his wife, disposed of his elegant furniture in town, and replaced it with plain furniture at Bowery Hill; the party partook of plain food only, abstaining even from butter, tea, and coffee, while the ladies sacrificed their ornaments, personal as well as household, and even instituted rigid fasts, not to precede a feast, as among Catholics, to which it serves as a whet to the appetite; but, to be broken by bread and water. Mr. Stone adds, that Mr. Folger, notwithstanding the sacrifice of his furniture, was not a member of this society. We must now request our readers to look over the last page or two again; it is the representation of Mr. Stone in reference to societies and individuals: in that representation there is much *general* truth, but there is a particular instance of ill feeling towards the lady with the \*\*\* Mrs. \*\*\*; she is thrust forward perpetually and always for censure. We have already promised to show who this

lady is, and we shall in the future have to make frequent references to these statements, and therefore now endeavour to fix the attention on them, while they occur in the narrative.

Mr. Pierson carried his principles further than the rest, but he had no principles that were not common to others, if not to all; for others believed in the direct teaching of the Spirit, and these mistook their feelings for the effects of the Spirit, and their transient thoughts for emanations from the Spirit; and being thus enlightened according to their leisure, and to the encouragement they gave to their thoughts and fancies, they could frequently see farther than other people into the Scriptures and the will of God, or fancied they could; and Mr. Pierson possessed these qualities in a superlative degree, and was hence highly respected by the party, while the world thought him a little deranged; but on all subjects disconnected with religion, or where he did not assume being divinely taught by Scripture, or the Spirit, he was very rational and intelligent. He kept a sort of diary, and hence we learn, when he received what he thought a communication from the Spirit in Wall Street, that he was then called Elijah the Prophet; and this took place before he had seen Matthias.

Among other specimens of Mr. Pierson's diary, Mr. Stone furnishes the following, which we offer as a proof of the importance he gave his thoughts:—

“Prayed for the harlots at Five Points: asked the Lord to give us all the ground whereon the soles of our feet had trod, and all the souls now alive who had heard our voices in that neighbourhood.

“*Answer.* The Lord said, ‘You must go and fetch them out.’ The Lord said, concerning the two witnesses, ‘Thou art one and Sarah the other.’”

We have already noticed Mr. Stone's gross error in ascribing to Isabella a part, and a very prominent part, in “the kingdom,” as it was technically called, on Bowery Hill, before either she or Matthias was connected with the party. Mr. Pierson had assumed the title of Prophet, asserting that God had called him in an Omnibus, as before said, in these

words, "Thou art Elijah the Tishbite—gather unto me all the members of Israel at the foot of Mount Carmel;" which he understood as meaning the gathering of his friends at Bowery Hill; and Mrs. Bolton, before noticed, with much zeal went about the city and into churches distributing tracts, and inviting the people to "come and hear Elijah the Prophet." Before Matthias appeared, the anointing had taken place, in which Mrs. Folger was consulted; and the assumed influence of the Spirit over the party believed, and being led, or supposed to be led, by the Spirit, they pushed their inquiries with zeal, and projected improvements both in creeds and practices; still they were orthodox, zealous persons, and as such in intercourse with their fellow Christians. As a proof of this, it is noted in page 94 of Mr. Stone's book, that after the death of Mrs. Pierson, Mr. Pierson and Mrs. \*\*\* removed from Bowery Hill to Fourth Street, in one and the same house, while Mr. and Mrs. Folger went to reside at Sing Sing, and where they were baptized by the Rev. Mr. Frey, and admitted into the fellowship and communion of Mount Pleasant Baptist church. It was at this period that Isabella went to live with Mr. Pierson, (Mrs. \*\*\* having left him, and Katy having gone to Virginia,) without any previous knowledge either of him or Matthias, who soon afterwards followed.

Previous to this period, and indeed before the party left Bowery Hill, and consequently long before Matthias appeared among them, a transaction occurred which is minutely related by Mr. Stone, page 114, 15, 16, which indeed we shall transcribe, which shows in some a peculiar state of mind, and fitness for what we shall afterwards have to relate, and which would be scarcely credible, if it were not for the publication of an *original document*, in Mr. Stone's work, and which we could not otherwise have got possession of. We knew that such a document had an existence: Mr. Stone, indeed, by taking out the names, excepting that of Mr. Pierson, who is now dead, has deprived it of interest; this interest we can restore, by replacing the name, and showing its connexion with the principal persons about Matthias, and by showing that this document demonstrates

a position we shall afterwards take; and it clearly illustrates facts, which, as we before said, would be incredible, without this document; yet its absence would not make these facts untrue. In making this exposure, we are but rendering justice to an injured party, for one of the parties is injured. This passage in Mr. Stone's book is rendered further obscure, by being inserted after he had quoted dates from Pierson's diary of 1832, whereas it relates to 1830, for he himself has preserved the dates. After quoting several passages from Pierson's diary, in relation to the expected resurrection of his wife, Mr. Stone thus proceeds:—

“ This is the last mention the writer has been able to find among the papers of Mr. Pierson of his wife, whom he so dearly loved, and to whose memory he so fondly clung. It is well known, however, that he had latterly imbibed the singular idea, probably after all hope of her resurrection had vanished, that he was the spiritual husband of another—a lady who had been one of the Bowery Hill association. His latter belief was, that after the decease of Mrs. Pierson, her spirit had entered into the body of the lady referred to. It is not known how, or exactly when, this strange conceit originated; but it is not more surprising than many other features of his melancholy hallucination. Among his loose papers, however, are two anonymous notes, in the handwriting of a female, which, taken in connexion with a circumstance or two that will presently be related, render it at least possible, that there may have been an artful conspiracy at the bottom of this particular instance of delusion. Mrs. Pierson, it will be recollected, died on the 29th of June, 1830. The following note is endorsed in Mr. Pierson's handwriting—‘ Received July 20, 1830.’ And here it must be borne in mind, that, connected with the idea that his wife would be raised from the dead, and restored to him on earth, was the farther belief, that she would bear him a son, to be called ‘ James.’ This was one of the promises which he had received from God, and which he has recorded as the answer to his prayers, in perhaps fifty places. The first note is as follows:—

“ When my cousin —— was engaged in prayer a few

days ago with Katy, I saw a vision which I was directed to write and send to you. I was lost a few minutes, when I beheld my cousin walk into your back-door with the dress which she usually wears. She passed through the entry, and went into the parlor. The difference in her state was, that she was big with child; and I thought in the vision that she was at *home*\* in your house. I knew not the meaning of it, but was constrained to send it to you. Perhaps the Lord will show you the interpretation. My cousin told me some time ago that the Lord had promised her a son. I never realized that it would be so until I saw the vision.'

"The second note, in the same handwriting, and attached to the first by a wafer by Mr. Pierson himself, with the memorandum, 'Received 27th July, 1830,' is as follows:—

"'I thought, sir, that an apology was due to you for the abrupt note I handed you. I have felt quite uneasy about it, and wished to say to you, that after I had the vision, I thought I must write it; and thought I had better tell it to you than cousin, as I know she has a remarkably pure mind; and I judged that if she suspected that I let you know [it,] it would make her feel very unpleasant. I have taken up a cross in making it known to you: if I have done wrong, be kind enough to forgive me.'

"It so happens that there was a very remarkable counterpart to this vision of the writer of these notes. The lady possibly referred to, had a vision on a certain night—she being at a distance from the city at the time—in which it was revealed to her, that she was the spiritual wife of Mr. Pierson. And she believed that such was the record in heaven. This conviction was moreover strengthened by another circumstance. On one occasion, her husband being absent, she prayed very fervently that the first person who entered her door, might be him. It happened shortly afterward, and before any other person came in, that Mr. Pierson made his appearance; and the good lady at once concluded, that although it had been written otherwise on earth, yet, in the records of heaven, Mr. Pierson and herself were

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\* Italicized in the original.

one. Subsequently, on comparing notes with Mr. Pierson, no doubt was left of the fact; since it appeared that on the self-same night, he had had a similar dream in his own house. On discovering the coincidence they joined hands, and walking into another apartment, where a third person was sitting, presented themselves, and mutually declared themselves to be, spiritually, man and wife. Whether there was, or was not, any connexion between the mysterious notes which have been quoted, and this singular incident of the delusion, is left for the reader to determine."

Now, in the first place, who wrote these notes, to whom do they relate, and what actions in this mysterious affair correspond with these sentiments? Mr. Pierson declared to Isabella, that Mother (Mrs. B. Folger) had had a spirit of this kind for some time; and that she had declared to him that he should have Mrs. — for a wife. Mrs. B. Folger also stated the fact, that she had communicated this vision to Mr. Pierson before Father (Matthias) had come, and repeated nearly the words of the letter. Mr. Pierson also declared, that Mrs. Folger must be a master spirit, because she had first discovered this *light*. Mrs. — was a married lady. We have not yet seen her, but judging from Mr. Stone's book alone, we are perfectly satisfied that however fanatical she may be, she has been unjustly abused by Mr. Stone, for the sake of others less virtuous, or more fanatical.

Of the supposition that this lady intrigued to get these notes written in her favour, and the assumed facts that this lady had a corresponding dream, and that her prayer was answered by the appearance of Mr. Pierson instead of her husband, we know nothing. We have detected Mr. Stone in notorious false statements in relation to Isabella, and these therefore *may be* incorrect, especially as the subsequent conduct of that lady does not accord with the facts, as related, and yet the thing may be possible.

The note has internal evidence "to (her) my cousin." The lady was cousin to Mrs. B. Folger, and both were associates at the Bowery Hill "kingdom." Mrs. —, though married, had no children, and therefore needed revelation, "that

she should have a son;" and explains Mrs. Folger's "never realizing this," till she saw the vision.

When a note on this subject was at first mentioned to Isabella, she instantly declared its contents, before it was read to her, using some of the very expressions, and immediately applying them to the history of the Sing Sing *mystery*, relating where it was first named to her, the occasion, and the action on it, a long while after. She instantly recognized the phraseology as being used on another very singular, but similar occasion, especially the expression, "If I have done wrong, be kind enough to forgive me," and imitated the soft tone and manner in which Mrs. B. Folger would express herself. It is also true, that her cousin was of a remarkable pure mind.

For the sake of connecting this subject with facts, we shall now anticipate the history of events, in relation however only to Mr. Pierson. This gentleman, at a subsequent period, and while the parties, including Matthias, resided at Sing Sing, and after some very singular events had occurred there, of which he was made a party, and of which we shall afterwards speak, applied to this *married* lady, not for a spiritual union only, but for a bodily one; and at this period he related the facts of the note to Isabella, and repeated to her the contents, explaining the propriety of such unions. For this purpose he went to the residence of that lady, and formally proposed the union, declaring both to the husband and the wife, that he had a revelation from God, that marriage was not of God, and that he was to take Mrs. — for his wife. This formal application both the husband and the lady regarded as the act of a mad man, and treated it accordingly. This occurred about two months before Mr. Pierson's death; but he had frequently named the subject before, but delicately, as a dream, and only urging the lady to come on a visit to Sing Sing, trusting to the power of Matthias to effect the rest. This the lady had named to her husband, while she declined the visit, never going there but once, and then to reprove Mrs. B. Folger for harbouring Matthias.

The fact of Mr. Pierson's making this singular applica-

tion to a married woman, strange as it is, is attested by Mr. Pierson's relatives, from some of whom we have the corroborative evidence; nor do we believe the lady will disavow the fact; she has nothing to be ashamed of: she was not duped by Matthias, nor did she tolerate, for a moment, the preposterous *proposition* made to her. It is for this reason we doubt the facts formerly related of her. The curious circumstances which led to this monstrous proposition, besides the *notes*, a long while previous, will be related in their proper places, and will, in some measure, reduce the surprise. We speak, however, *positive* on the fact of Mr. Pierson making such an application to the lady before mentioned, and we know that this fact is known to his relatives, who are also now living; we have not asked their leave to give them as a reference, for fear they should be alarmed at the publication, and attempt to induce us to suppress it. The excuse for him, is of course his insanity; and if others, with or without visions, have made similar applications, and succeeded, they must invent their own excuses: we shall publish facts; the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

We have thus anticipated the history, in order to identify the author and object of those notes; and we do not hesitate to say, that in our belief, Mrs. B. Folger is the author, and Mrs. — the object; but these notes were written in 1830, two years before Matthias or Isabella was known to the party, and consequently proves a peculiar state of mind on the part of Mrs. B. Folger, in relation to the marriage contract, by no means uncommon among some religious people. The Antinomians of England were frequently charged by their opponents with violations of the marriage compact; while we have known some of them justify leaving their husbands or wives, because they were not spiritual, and quoting Scripture, as, "Be ye not unequally yoked." It must be observed too, that Mr. Pierson believed in the transmigration of spirits; he supposed that his wife's amiable spirit had taken up its abode with Mrs. —, while that lady's husband, however excellent a man he may be as a citizen, never made any great pretention to spirituality; and therefore Mr. Pierson, *advised by others*, might think the lady

unmatched. Clergymen who have not been considered deranged, have held similar opinions, and acted in a like manner, from fanaticism, united perhaps with lust.

Now let any persons regard the consequences of these sentiments, apparently expressed by Mrs. B. Folger and Mr. Pierson: the teaching of the Spirit, which means any emotion or thought, in accordance with what we think Scripture, including dreams and visions, a supposed holy community or selected favourites of God, together with the belief of spirits, good or bad, successively occupying bodies; and you have, in these sources of fanaticism, the seeds of all the mischief ascribed to Matthias; and these existed before he made his appearance. We are not about to excuse him, or take one particle from his shoulders which he ought to bear; but we have set out with a candid determination to investigate the whole subject, and we are resolved to do justice to every individual. In relation to those notes, we should be unwilling to ascribe them either to design by Mrs. —, or by Mrs. B. Folger: we see no reason, without very strong evidence to the contrary, to deny that Mrs. B. Folger had a vision, and believing in such visions as the effect of the Spirit, we are not surprised at the result. All we want is to give the facts, and to show their causes and necessary results.\*

\* In the above narrative we have omitted the lady's name, (as an exception to our general rule,) we think her perfectly innocent; we think both she and her husband have been severely injured by the base insinuation of Colonel Stone, and we should only increase that injury by giving publicity to the name: there are some crimes of so degrading a nature, that humanity shrinks from the association of the name with the crime, even if no proof can be alleged; the crime here insinuated is one of that kind, and the lady implied is either a degraded being, or she has been most egregiously sinned against by Col. Stone and his coadjutor: either she is debased by the perpetration of some attempt to seduce Mr. Pierson, or he, the calumniator, is a wretch dangerous to society.

There is no doubt that Mrs. B. Folger wrote that note or a similar one, and we shall afterwards find in her, corresponding feelings and actions: the strength of the insinuation depends upon the counterpart, "that the lady dreamed that she was the spiritual wife of Mr.

Such then were the feelings and faith, and such the disposition to act on those feelings and faith, by the party before Matthias came. We shall now introduce this important gentleman.

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Pierson; and that on another occasion she prayed to see her husband who had been absent, and that Mr. Pierson presented himself accidentally; that discovering the coincidence with a dream of Mr. Pierson on the *same night*, they joined hands, walked into another apartment, and presented themselves as spiritual man and wife." There is in this account a peculiar caution which we overlooked at first; we had supposed the presentation was to a *company*, instead of which, upon recurring to the book, we find it was to a *third person*, or *individual*; thus this tale of infamy rests on an individual, and that individual we believe to be a degraded one, to be in fact, Mr. or Mrs. Folger, both of whom, together with Mrs. Stone, the lady with plumes in her hat, introduced in Mr. Stone's book, have been offended with the candour and honesty of this victimized lady; we mention this as a fact, not as the motives for a dastardly infliction of a rancorous wound, for it does not appear a sufficient cause for this vindictive course; we could, however, have wished that no private cause had existed for such an attack.

We have now seen this lady and her husband, we find in her nothing fanatical, but a great deal of good sense, and a very lively sense of propriety. The testimony of Mrs. B. Folger to her, that she has a remarkably pure mind, is verified by others who know her; while she denies ever holding the peculiarity of Mr. Pierson's creed about marriage, or any other of his peculiar opinions, such as the direct teaching of the spirit, &c. She at once recognized this note as Mrs. B. Folger's, that both Mr. Pierson and Mrs. B. Folger had spoken to her on the subject, and that to the latter she had replied, "Well, cousin, a dream is but a dream." The mention of the subject by the former, only created a more distant or circumspect intercourse, so that she does not recollect even shaking hands with him afterwards, while he in his general deportment appeared modest: his invitations to Sing-Sing, she then regarded as friendly, intended for her spiritual benefit, and were declined by her, because she regarded Matthias as an impostor, exclaiming "I will not visit at Sing-Sing while that man remains there." On this lady's testimony about eight weeks before Mr. Pierson's death, he did visit the country residence of this lady and her husband, and then he firmly announced his purpose both to the husband and the lady, as we before related, and was treated by them in the manner described: thus the facts give the lie to the pretended seduction of Mr. Pierson, and Mr. Stone knew this, or might have known it, for his wife, the lady with the plumes, was intimate with this object of slander, and his informer must have been aware of the facts, from the know-

ledge of which, without seeing the lady, we draw our conclusions as to the vileness of the slander, and the probable falseness of the counterpart.

Of this counterpart, this lady knows nothing; she utterly denies it, and throws it back as a base fabrication on the author, or his informer, or as a concoction of both; or it might have been another dream of the author of the first dream; but Col. Stone has given currency to this counterpart, without proof, just as slanderers do who wish to believe a statement detrimental to an object of displeasure.

This lady then denies ever having, or relating a corresponding dream to Mr. Pierson; she denies recognizing the coincidence and walking hand and hand into another apartment, and presenting herself to a third person, or being so presented as the spiritual wife of Mr. Pierson; she denies the prayer and the incident of Mr. Pierson coming in after that prayer, although he might have come in after such a prayer, (a prayer for her husband at variance with the supposition of betraying him) without her observation. Now then is Col. Stone put to his *trumps*, he must bring his *respectable* proofs of these facts, or be regarded as a base slanderer of a respectable, well educated, talented, and virtuous female, one described by Mrs. B. Folger as "of a *remarkably* pure mind."

That we are correct in our object, the facts connected with the letter show; nay, Mr. Stone himself identifies her, but this we cannot show without giving the name; we will however give Colonel Stone proofs of identity:—this lady is the cousin of Mrs. B. Folger, as the note itself intimates, she was the early friend of Mrs. Stone, and member of the same church, and she did offend Mrs. Stone on the subject of her peacock like appearance in church; her husband was known to Mr. Stone at Hudson, in his earliest exertions and honest endeavours to raise himself from poverty: at that time, her husband was a man of good family, fortune, and education, he was on the ground when Col. Stone, not then a colonel, was selling his last dying speech and confession of Peg Houghtailing, (Peggy Houghtailing, executed for infanticide,) before that miserable female had drawn her last breath; he knows the history of that pamphlet, and he was arm in arm with Lieut. Allen, on the morning after that gentleman had nearly choked Mr. Stone, who, in a drunken frolic, after a ball, at which they had all been, had called the Lieutenant a coward; he was present we say at the reconciliation, and heard the Lieutenant say, "Well, Mr. Stone, if you are satisfied, I am." These facts are mentioned to assure Col. Stone, that we are correct in our information; and now we may add, that the highly indignant husband is only restrained from offering a public insult to the slanderer of his wife, from the fear of the press, over which his antagonist would have a control from his situation; and if Colonel Stone is not now satisfied, we are authorized to say, that this gentleman's name and address is at our office, and at Col. Stone's service, for any purpose he may choose.

### CHAPTER III.

*Brief History of Matthias—Isabella's Evidence—Mr. Stone's Errors—Mr. Matthias's Account—A Clergyman's Blessing determines his Character—His Property and Ruin—Kirk and Finney's Preaching Influence—His Principles—His Beard and new Character—Leaves his Wife—Interrupts a Clergyman—Professes to be a Jew—His Travels—Mistakes of Mr. Stone—His peculiar Dress, Ability, and Opinions—Introduction to Pierson—Impression on Isabella—Pierson and Matthias mutually acknowledge each others Pretension—Singular Coincidence—Matthias Preaches at Mr. Pierson's—Objects to Women Speaking—Is Shaken by Mr. Sherwood, and removes from Mr. Pierson's to Mr. Mill's—Isabella goes to Mr. Mill's—Matthias Preaches at Mr. Mill's—John Galloway—Mrs. Darch—Mr. Stone's Management—Specimen of Matthias's Preaching—Letter of Mr. Mills—Peculiar Sermon of Matthias.*

WE propose to give only a sketch of the life of Matthias in this place, because Mrs. Matthias, we understand, is publishing on this subject; and her work will be the best authority for his early life, unless it shows marks of prejudice, while we believe that our work will be the best authority for that period of his life after he left his home in Albany, and appeared amongst us as a prophet, and took up his abode successively with Mr. Pierson, in Fourth-street; with Mr. Mills in Franklin-street; at his own house in Clarkson street, and finally at Mr. Folger's in Sing Sing, because we take our narrative from a living witness, with him during all that time, sufficiently shrewd for careful observation, and too simple in character and defective in education to conceal the truth, even if she desired it, and sufficiently injured by the declarations of Mr. Folger, and the publication of Mr. Stone's book, to seek a justification of her moral character, and consequently to desire the publication of the whole truth on the subject, as the only means of an honest justification.

We have seen Mrs. Matthias, and ascertained from her that Mr. Stone has been equally ignorant of facts, or careless in the relation of them, in the early life of Matthias, as he was about Isabella, but as these matters are mostly im-

material, we may safely leave them to her, taking the liberty of reviewing her book in the second part of ours, when we propose drawing the portraits of the several persons forming the Sing Sing group, as before expressed, and in such portraits we may properly introduce illustrative conversations, and minutia, exhibiting characters, some of which are sufficiently curious and amusing, and some rather indelicate, according to our vulgar notions of propriety; these, however, we shall manage without giving offence, and yet retain the truth.

Robert Matthews, or Matthias, is of Scotch extraction, but a native of Washington county, New-York, and is now forty-seven years of age; he was religiously brought up among the Anti-Burghers, a sect of Presbyterians, the Clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Bevrige, visiting the family after the manner of the church, and being pleased with Robert, put his hand on his head, when a boy, and pronounced a blessing, and this blessing, with his natural qualities, determined his character, for he ever after thought he should be a distinguished man. Matthias was brought up a farmer till nearly eighteen years of age, but acquired indirectly the art of a carpenter without any regular apprenticeship, and showed considerable mechanical skill; but he never did act as a mill-wright, as stated by Mr. Stone, as we are assured by himself; there were several others in the family, one brother died in January last, 1835, and one other brother obtained considerable skill in painting, but died insane, according to Mr. Stone, but this is not acknowledged by Matthias. Mr. Stone says Robert accumulated property by his trade; this is a mistake, he never obtained money by industry, on the authority of his wife, although he was not an idle man, but he obtained property from his uncle, Robert Thompson, and then he went into business as a store keeper, and was considered respectable, and a member of the Scotch Presbyterian Church; he married in 1813, and continued in business in Cambridge; in 1816 he ruined himself by a building speculation and the derangement of the currency which denied bank facilities, and soon after he came to New-York with his family, and worked at his

trade; he afterwards removed to Albany and became a hearer at the Dutch Reformed Church, then under Dr. Ludlow's charge; he was frequently much excited on religious subjects, and especially on one occasion by Mr. Finney, now of Chatham Street Chapel, whose powerful preaching has driven several persons mad; next to the influence of the blessing which he received at the hand of the Scotch clergyman; the preaching of Mr. Finney and a Mr. Kirk, seems to have assisted in forming his character, for after hearing him, he declared that though he had professed religion twenty years, he never had any till he heard them: he did not however become a follower of either of them, but they gave a new direction to his thoughts. Before his late appearance as a public character he advocated enthusiastically the abstinence system as to liquor, and enforced it in his family.

In 1829 he was well known, if not for street preaching, for loud discussions and pavement exhortations, but he did not make set sermons. In the beginning of 1830, he was only considered zealous, but in the same year he prophesied the destruction of the Albanians and their capital, and while preparing to shave, with the Bible before him, he suddenly put down the soap and exclaimed "I have found it, I have found a text which proves that no man who shaves his beard can be a true Christian," and shortly afterwards without shaving went to the Mission House to deliver an address which he had promised, and in this address, he proclaimed his new character, pronounced vengeance on the land, and that the law of God was the only rule of government, and that he was commanded to take possession of the world in the name of the King of kings: his harangue was cut short by the trustees putting out the lights. About this time Matthias laid by his implements of industry, and in June, he advised his wife to fly with him from the destruction which awaited them in the city, and on her refusal, partly on account of Matthias calling himself a Jew, whom she was unwilling to retain as a husband, he left her, taking some of the children to his sister in Argyle, 40 miles from Albany, and as he walked partly in the night, and slept in

an empty house, Mr. Stone says he was cruel to the children, but we do not hear that the children themselves complain; his wife and children since then have chiefly supported themselves by their own industry, although he has given them money when he has had it. At Argyle he entered the church and interrupted the minister, declaring the congregation in darkness, and warning them to repentance; he was of course taken out of the church, and as he was advertised in the Albany papers, he was sent back to his family. His beard had now obtained a respectable length, and thus he attracted attention, and easily obtained an audience in the streets; for this he was sometimes arrested, once by mistake for Adam Paine, who collected the crowd and then left Matthias with it on the approach of the officers. He repeatedly urged his wife to accompany him on a mission to convert the world, declaring that food could be obtained from the roots of the forest if not administered otherwise. At this time he assumed the name of Matthias, called himself a Jew, and set out on a mission, taking a western course, and visiting a brother at Rochester, a skilful mechanic, since dead; leaving his brother he proceeded on his mission over the northern states, occasionally returning to Albany, but he did not visit Arkansas, nor the south, nor the Cherokee country in Georgia, as Mr. Stone says, nor, of course, did he preach to the Indians, nor was he imprisoned there, all of which is reported by Mr. Stone, who apparently confounds him with Adam Paine, whose experience was something like this, but he did visit Washington, and passing through Pennsylvania, he came to New-York; here he visited his brother-in-law, Mr. Andrew White, corner of Duane and Broadway; Mr. Stone says that at first he behaved mildly, but that on being asked why he left his family, &c. he became furious, uttered curses, and declared that he had come into the devil's house. During his journey we suppose he supported himself as the apostles did formerly, at least we believe he did not work, leading perhaps the benefit of clergy. His appearance in the city of New-York at this time was mean, but grotesque, and his sentiments were but little known. At this

time we knew something of Matthias, and we once heard him lecture; his aspect was certainly much like the engravings of Jesus Christ in the family bibles, and like him he sat to lecture, and dealt, in unconnected sentences, sometimes much to the purpose, at others very flat, while he certainly displayed no marks of great genius, or much learning: the only peculiarity then expressed was to denounce the practice of the clergy in seeking to make converts of women, and visiting them in the absence of their husbands. On one occasion too, he called on us on some business; in this interview we certainly thought he displayed both vanity and presumption, with a portion of clerical or prophetic assurance, for he wanted some printing done at our establishment for nothing although we were strangers to him.

On May the 5th, 1832, he first called on Mr. Pierson, in Fourth-street, in his absence; Isabella was alone in the house, in which she had lived since the previous autumn; on opening the door she, for the first time, beheld Matthias, and her early impressions of seeing Jesus in the flesh, rushed into her mind, she heard his inquiry, and invited him into the parlour, and being naturally curious, and a good deal excited, and possessing a good deal of *tact*, she drew him into a conversation, stated her own opinions, and heard his replies and explanations; her faith was at first staggered by his declaring himself a Jew, but on this point she was relieved by his saying, "Do you not remember how Jesus prayed," and repeated part of the Lord's prayer in proof that that Father's kingdom was to come, and not the son's; she then understood him to be a converted Jew, and in the conclusion she says "she *felt* as if God had sent him to set up the kingdom;" thus Matthias at once secured the good will of Isabella, and we may suppose obtained from her some information in relation to Mr. Pierson, especially that Mrs. Pierson declared that there was no true church, and approving of Mr. Pierson's preaching: Matthias left the house, promising to return on Saturday evening. Mr. Pierson at this time had not seen Matthias.

Isabella, desirous of hearing the expected conversation,

between Matthias and Mr. Pierson on Saturday, hurried her work, got finished, and was permitted to be present; indeed the sameness of belief made her familiar with her employer, while her attention to her work, and characteristic faithfulness, increased his confidence. This intimacy, the result of holding the same faith, and the principle afterwards adopted of having but one table and all things in common, made her at once the domestic and the equal, and the depository of very curious, if not valuable information; to this object even her colour assisted: persons who have travelled in the south know the manner in which the coloured people, and especially slaves, are treated, they are scarcely regarded as being present; this trait in our American character has been frequently noticed by foreign travellers. One English lady remarks that she discovered in course of conversation with a southern married gentleman, that a coloured girl slept in his bedroom, in which also was his wife, and when he saw that it occasioned some surprise, he remarked "What would he do if he wanted a glass of water in the night?" Other travellers have remarked that the presence of coloured people never seemed to interrupt conversation of any kind for one moment; thus the peculiar religious and other characteristics of Isabella, gave opportunities which none other had, and circumstances have induced her, nay rendered it necessary that she should keep back nothing, but to tell the whole truth, which was the only way in which she could escape the position of a scape-goat, which Mr. Stone and some of the party seemed to make her; this diversion is not out of place, it accounts for much information on the subject which she possessed, while her consistency has won our credence, and her good character and corroborative evidence has continued it. Isabella then was present at the first interview between Matthias and Pierson; at this interview Mr. Pierson asked Matthias if he had a family, to which he replied in the affirmative; he asked him about his beard, and he gave him a scriptural reason, asserting also that the Jews did not shave, and that Adam had a beard. Mr. Pierson detailed to Matthias his experience, and Matthias gave his, and they mutually discovered that

they held the same sentiments, both admitting the direct influence of the Spirit, and the transmissions of spirits from one body to another. Matthias admitted the call of Mr. Pierson in the Omnibus in Wall Street, which, on this occasion, he gave in these words: "Thou art Elijah the Tishbite, and thou shalt go before me in the spirit and power of Elias, to prepare my way before me." And Mr. Pierson admitted Matthias' call, who *completed* his declaration on the 20th of June, in Argyle, which, by a curious coincidence, was the very day on which Pierson had received his call in the Omnibus. Such singular coincidences have a powerful effect on excited minds: from that discovery Pierson and Matthias rejoiced in each other, and became kindred spirits; Matthias, however, claiming to be the father, or to possess the spirit of the Father—he was God upon earth, because the spirit of God dwelled in him; while Pierson then understood that his mission was like that of John the Baptist, which the name Elias meant. This conference ended with an invitation to supper, and Matthias and Pierson washed each other's feet; but washing of feet had been established. At this first meeting a Shaking Quaker was present, and Matthias remained over night. On the curious coincidence of time above referred to, we must remark, that Matthias declared himself in Albany, in the beginning of June, and at Stillwater on the 19th, as Mr. Stone says; and therefore the expression, *completed* his declaration, is used; but it is evident that if Mr. Pierson's call had happened on either of those previous days, the *coincidence* would have been more striking, and equally asserted.

Mr. Pierson preached on the following Sunday, but after which, he declined in favour of Matthias, and some of the party believed that the "kingdom had then come."

Mr. Stone gives the following paper, found among others, dated May 9th, before the interview just related, which he supposes formed the heads of one of Matthias' discourse: it is worth preserving, as showing some coincidence with the belief of the party, and some bearings on future practices; he supposes Matthias meant to curse the following objects:—

"All who say that the Jews crucified Jesus; all who say that the first day of the week is the Sabbath; all who say that immersion with clothes on is baptism; all who say that sprinkling is baptism; all who preach to women without their husbands; all who drink wine in bowls; (he advocated eating the grapes, which he called new wine in new bottles;) all who eateth the passover in a lower room."

Before this period, Mr. Mills attended Mr. Pierson's lectures; so did Mr. and Mrs. Folger, occasionally a Mr. Beauman, a carpenter, Mrs. Bolton, Isabella, and Katy, who had returned from Virginia, with many others. These exhorted and gave their experience, before Matthias came, but not afterwards, as he disapproved of women speaking. Some of these persons very soon became disciples of Matthias, and among them was Mr. Mills, who invited Matthias to his house whenever he pleased, and a circumstance not generally known soon occurred, which induced Matthias to accept of that gentleman's hospitality, in exchange for that of Mr. Pierson's. Mr. Pierson had let out part of his large house in Fourth Street, to a Mr. Sherwood, who used it for a respectable school. This gentleman was thus brought in contact with the party, and he pronounced Matthias an impostor; and irritated by his language, for perhaps he had called him a devil, he shook him well, pushed him down on the sofa, and indignantly pulled his beard. This circumstance, together with Mr. Pierson's timidity, induced Matthias to go to Mr. Mills's house.

For some time before this, Katy had returned from Virginia, as just stated, where she had visited her children; and on her return she lived with Mr. Mills, leaving Isabella in her former situation; by mutual consent, and for general conveniency, Isabella and Katy now changed places; in fact, Isabella was the stronger and more active woman, and her services more desirable at Mr. Mills's, than at Mr. Pierson's, at this time; besides, she wished to get out of the way of Mrs. Bolton. Isabella therefore followed the course of Matthias, and thus we are enabled to continue our history, upon her authority, testified by others, in a variety of

At Mr. Mills's Matthias preached frequently, and on every Sunday, and introduced the curious practice of providing a dinner for any of the company who chose to stay. Pierson had before preached all things common, and Matthias had approved it. Matthias, too, taught that the good things of this life were for enjoyment, and that the time of abundance had come; he was not now abstemious, yet he was not extravagant, except in dress, for which Mr. Pierson was responsible, and afterwards in equipage; he eat plain good food, but not pies, and drank no wine; he abstained also from pork.

At his house, Mr. Mills was served by a man called Galloway, a sort of half disciple. This man died some months after Mr. Mills's establishment was broken up, leaving a young widow, Catherine Galloway, afterwards a conspicuous person, without any very distinguishing qualities. We may remark, in anticipation of the history, that Matthias had *cursed* her husband, because, contrary to orders, he had opened the door to the officers who arrested him, when Mills's establishment was broken up. This man's death, by a troublesome and lingering disease, following the curse, strengthened the faith of *some* of his disciples.

We return now to the history of events. Matthias continued for some time preaching at Mills's, and among his hearers was Mrs. Drach, an elderly Jewish woman, very talkative, and very familiar with Matthias, to whom she would give her experience, almost the only female with whom he was familiar at that time. This is the same Mrs. Drach who afterwards gave evidence against him. The female relatives of Mr. Mills left his house soon after Matthias came; they would not be his disciples, and he would not bear rivals.

Mr. Stone, in his relation of this part of his history, commits a sort of fraud, for he introduces some finery, such as beautiful ruffles, worked night caps, &c. whose proper place is at an interesting period further on. About this place too, he introduces the two curious notes, on a very curious subject, which notes refer to a period two years before. Thus he connects this excess of finery with Mr. Pierson and Mills,

to whom they do not belong; and introduces the letters, apparently Mrs. Folger's, before she is named as the disciple of Matthias, thus obscuring the facts. As specimens of Matthias' preaching and sentiments, which he broached while at Mr. Mills's, we copy from Mr. Stone's work, because we know the gentleman who furnished these specimens, and because they are admitted to accord with Matthias' sentiments at that time.

"The spirit that built the Tower of Babel is now in the world—it is the spirit of the devil. The spirit of man never goes upon the clouds—all who think so are Babylonians. The only heaven is on the earth. All who are ignorant of truth, are Ninevites. The Jews did not crucify Christ,—it was the Gentiles. Every Jew has his guardian angel attending him in this world. God don't speak through preachers, he speaks through me, his prophet.

" 'John the Baptist,' (addressing Mr. Pierson,) 'read the tenth chapter of Revelations.' After the reading of the chapter, the prophet resumed speaking, as follows:—

"Ours is the mustard-seed kingdom which is to spread all over the earth. Our creed is truth, and no man can find truth unless he obeys John the Baptist, and comes clean into church.

"All *real* men will be saved; all *mock* men will be damned. When a person has the Holy Ghost, then he is a man, and not till then. They who teach women are of the wicked. The communion is all nonsense: so is prayer. Eating a nip of bread and drinking a little wine won't do any good. All who admit members into their church and suffer them to hold their lands and houses—their sentence is, 'Depart ye wicked, I know you not.' All females who lecture their husbands, their sentence is the same. The sons of truth are to enjoy all the good things of this world, and must use their means to bring it about. Every thing that has the smell of woman will be destroyed. Woman is the capsheaf of the abomination of desolation—full of all deviltry. In a short time the world will take fire and dissolve—it is combustible already. All women, not obedient, had better become so as soon as possible, and let the wicked

spirit depart, and become temples of truth. Praying is a **mocking**. When you see any one wring the neck of a fowl, instead of cutting off its head, he has not got the Holy Ghost. (Cutting gives the least pain.)

"All who eat swine's flesh are of the devil; and just as certain as he eats it, he will tell a lie in less than half an hour. If you eat a piece of pork, it will go crooked through you, and the Holy Ghost will not stay in you, but one or the other must leave the house pretty soon. The pork will be as crooked in you as rams' horns, and as great a nuisance as the hogs in the street.

"The cholera is not the right word; it is cholera, which means God's wrath. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are now in this world: they did not go up in the clouds as some believe: why should they go there? They don't want to go there to box the compass from one place to another. The Christians now-a-days are for setting up the *Son's* kingdom. It is not his; it is the *Father's* kingdom. It puts me in mind of the man in the country who took his son in business, and had his sign made 'Hitchcock & Son,' but the son wanted it 'Hitchcock & Father,' and that is the way with your Christians. They talk of the Son's kingdom first, and not the Father's kingdom."

We shall also copy a letter, written during this period, to Mr Pierson, in New Jersey on a visit, written by Mr. Mills, because it shows the standing of Isabella with both Mr. Mills and Mr. Pierson, at this time. (Isabella heard this read.)

"New York, 20th July, 1832.

"JOHN THE BAPTIST, OR DEAR PIERSON:

"I have your letter, and am glad to hear that you are well. The angels of destruction are making dreadful havoc, but do not be troubled; they are reaping the tares. The harvest is begun, and not a single blade of wheat can fall or be injured.

"Katy is well, and at the 'Lord's house' often.

"Isabella is also well.

"Matthias is still with us, thank God! and I think we can

no longer say, 'when he, the Spirit of truth, is come,' &c. Surely this is 'the Kingdom of God.'

"The money you spoke of I can use, if you choose to send it, and on your return will place it in a satisfactory shape. I will venture to send you the love of all 'the kingdom.'

"Yours, sincerely."

At this period Matthias was well dressed, and we suppose visited the Battery frequently in a dark carriage, for Mr. Stone says so, and we think it probable; but Mr. Stone goes on to say, that he was frequently accompanied by Mr. Pierson and his children, and he thus *particularizes*: "He would take the children by the hand at either side, and thus with stately tread," &c. Now here we detect Mr. Stone in writing falsely. Mr. Pierson had but two daughters, the elder, indeed, the daughter of his wife, by a first husband: we have seen her, and she positively declares she never walked out with Matthias in her life, and never heard her sister say she had, and does not at least know of it, though then living with her father. It is of no great consequence, but it shows the inaccuracy of Mr. Stone's *facts*. Matthias explains this; it was Mr. Mills's children; (see his book, page 120.)

Mr. Mills, it is known, was arrested for insanity, and his establishment broken up, but his property saved. We are not surprised at the course taken by his friends; it was perhaps advisable, and the last of the evils prevented. Previous to this event, Matthias preached a remarkable sermon, which, if it contained nothing new to his disciples, who had believed in the same doctrines before he came among them, yet they were new to the people, and being preached openly, occasioned some trouble. Candour is one of Matthias's virtues; as far as we can see, he would keep nothing secret, and if secrets have been kept, they have so been at the request of others; he appears to have spoken openly and to have acted openly, and this openness seems to be the charm which has attached Isabella to him; she could scarcely believe that he did not mean well; yet her conclusions are not necessarily true.

Matthias, a few days before Mills's arrest, preached against

the earliest commandment, "Increase and multiply." He declared "that God had never authorized wicked people to multiply, and that preachers who, in the marriage ceremony, said that God had joined them together, were sent of the devil." He was repeatedly interrupted during this discourse, for as he admitted none righteous but his party, and as his audience were males, and understood themselves as being meant for the wicked, and *disliking* the doctrine, they repeatedly interrupted him, and had not Mr. Mills used his authority, by insisting on peace in his *private* house, violence would have been committed. This event perhaps brought on the next, the breaking up of Mr. Mills's establishment, with which we shall begin the next chapter.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Magnificent project of Matthias—Mr. Mills and Matthias charged with lunacy—Violence to Matthias, its impolicy and consequences—Matthias liberated by his brother—Charge of blasphemy never tried—His moral conduct while at Mr. Mills's—Mr. Mills at the Asylum—Matthias in his house at Clarkson Street, sends for his family—George, the brother of Matthias—Matthias at a boarding house—His conduct there—Isabella washes for him—He goes to Sing Sing—Mrs. B. Folger calls on Isabella for Matthias' clothes—Mr. Pierson has fits—The Folger's account of Matthias—Introduction to them at variance with facts—An omission fatal to the honesty of the writer—Assumed motives of the Folgers'—Mrs. B. Folger's narrative—Her sickness—Isabella at Sing Sing—Her description of the family—Mrs. B. Folger's attentions to Matthias—The improvement made by Matthias on these attentions—Mr. Pierson and Catherine Galloway join the family at Sing Sing, and in Third Street—Their occupation and amusements—Decline of religious ceremonies—Property given to Matthias—Mrs. B. Folger's re-marriage—Her attachment to Matthias—The disclosure to Mr. Pierson, in a journey to New York—Monstrous proposition to Mr. B. Folger—Her success and triumph—Mrs. B. Folger given up to Matthias by her husband—His returning fondness—The consummation of the union—Superhuman pretensions of Mrs. B. Folger—Mr. B. Folger fetches the family of Matthias—Commits legal adultery on the road—Lives with Mrs. Laisdell as his wife—Conclusion from the above acts.*

THE circumstances which led to the arrest of Mr. Mills upon a charge of insanity, was no doubt the rumoured expenditure of Matthias, who about this time, the summer of 1832, appears to have projected the building of a New Jerusalem, to be furnished elegantly and with plate, of course at the expense of his friends. Mr. Stone relates his having called at the store of Mr. Gardner, in company with Mr. Mills, and giving large orders for plate, surmounted with the Lion of the Tribe of Judea, and of Mr. Mills subsequently calling there, with a servant bearing a large tea service of silver, to receive the ornament of the Lion, and various scriptural inscriptions, such as, "The kingdom of God is at hand." He then ordered a silver chalice, with two inscriptions, one of which was, that "it was presented to the prophet Matthias by himself and children." These events seem to have determined Mr. Mills's family to arrest both him and Mat-

thias on the charge of lunacy. The account given by Mr. Stone is extremely brief; he simply says, "That on a warrant, the gentleman referred to (for he is not named in the book) was sent to Bloomingdale Lunatic Asylum, and Matthias to the apartment of the insane poor at Bellvue." He adds, (page 139,) "It having been suggested to the brother of one of the disciples, (Mr. Mills,) that the secret of the prophet's power over his infatuated followers, like Samson, lay in his hair, means were found to set the Philistines of the police upon him, and he was shorn of his favourite beard."

When this transaction occurred, we wrote an article in the Sunday Reporter, which we then published, regarding Matthias as a fanatic or impostor, but highly condemnatory of this act of violence, disgraceful to the parties originating it, disgraceful to the police, a portion of whom could be bribed to violate the peace, for which they are paid to preserve, and disgraceful to the county in which it could exist without a redress; and we have not altered our opinion. It is precisely this spirit which is now ruining the country, and blasting its fair fame in the eyes of Europe. We then declared that that treatment was likely to excite pity and sympathy, and this we believe to have been the case, and Mr. and Mrs. Folger, with several others, possibly owe a chain of unpleasant circumstances to this feeling: it certainly riveted the devotion of Isabella and Mr. Pierson to the cause of Matthias, and Mr. Folger expressed the opinion, that he was ill treated, and hence induced, after a lapse of time, to offer him an asylum. Isabella's account of this affair does not differ, but she gives the detail of the arrests, and their effects, without judging of the motives. Mr. Andrew Mills, Mr. Crocker, and Mr. Dias, appeared to direct, while the constables stripped Matthias, took his money, cut his beard off, and tormented him in every way. Mr. Mills was taken without resistance, previous to the violence on Matthias. Isabella, who is a powerful and energetic woman, offered some resistance to the violence to Matthias, and was violently struck by Mr. Andrew Mills, and repeatedly put out of the house, which, to the consternation of the party,

she as repeatedly re-entered, sometimes by one door and sometimes by another. Mr. Andrew Mills, indeed, kindly offered her an asylum afterwards, but she was not disposed to accept his offer. Those who assisted Mr. Andrew Mills in this violence, she supposes to be members of churches, or, as she calls them, Christians, of whom she says the house was full, and with whom she appears to be completely disgusted, by their lecturing her on the subject of religion, giving her advice, and denouncing Matthias as an impostor. This pious lecturing, advice, and denunciation, were lost upon her, from the fact of these persons sanctioning the tormenting, as she expresses it, of Matthias. She could see nothing humane in this treatment, or any thing to recommend the religion which suggested it; while she contrasted Matthias' philosophical submission, and at least apparent humility; she could see nothing but the old story of "Crucify him, crucify him;" and thus she became, by this impolitic treatment of Matthias, more closely devoted to him. We believe it had the same effect on others.

Just after Mr. Mills was taken, Mrs. Drach came to the house, and continued in close conversation with Matthias. Catherine Galloway, whose husband was Mr. Mills's servant, also came in. She, too, offered Isabella an asylum; but this also she declined, and returned to Mr. Pierson's, whom she assisted in procuring Matthias' release, by application to Mr. Buckland, a lawyer, and then to the brother of Matthias, to take out an *habeas corpus*, by which he was discharged, as of sound mind. He was then arrested on a charge of blasphemy, but for this he gave bail, and was never brought to trial, as he merely asserted no more than other clergymen, who say they are directed by God's spirit; the difficulty of course was to prove that he was not, as he could offer the same proofs which others, who are not called blasphemous, could.

Mr. Stone says that Matthias, while at Mr. Mills's, was suspected of *gross licentiousness*, because he had females sometimes with him; and that being sometimes angry, he whipped one or some of them. Mr. Stone does not say by whom he was at this time suspected: we have made dili-

gent inquiry on this subject, and find no truth in it. Mrs. Drach, an elderly person, was his chief female companion, and scarcely any others saw him. One indeed he whipped, a young Methodist woman, who declared that she was sent by Jesus Christ. Matthias undertook to say that the Lord never spoke to young girls, and that she had a devil; he directed her to go to her father, and gave her a few stripes with a rattan; she never came again. This may be the conduct of a tyrant or fanatic, but certainly not of a licentious person. We notice this the more as unfair and unjust in Mr. Stone, because the leading object of his book is to cover up the licentiousness of his friends, and that of Matthias, when its exposure would involve them. It is this conduct which provokes a reply, for we wish to deal out evenhanded justice. Mr. Stone, too, says, that he learned from papers discovered after the arrest, that Matthias wished to unite his daughter to Mr. Mills. We think this possible, from what afterwards took place. Mr. Stone says, too, that Mr. Mills was pleased with the asylum and his treatment. This he might be; but he adds, that in a short time he became convinced that Matthias was an impostor. We have some evidence which contradicts this, which we shall offer in its place, as our only object is the truth of the statements.

Isabella, ever active in what she believes right, visited the asylum, where Mr. Mills was, two days after he was confined. The keepers supposing she was sent by his brother, was about to lead her to him; Isabella saw that they were deceived, but not choosing to act under false colours, she declared her name, and who she was, when she was refused admittance. She however went again in a few months' time. Mr. Mills saw her coming up from his window, and came down to meet her. At this meeting he expressed the same faith as before, and gave her an order on his brother's house for twenty dollars, which money was given to Matthias. Mr. Mills exhorted her to continue in the faith; this exhortation, and the gift of twenty dollars, seems at variance with Mr. Stone's account.

In the first visit, some gentlemen in the stage discovered who she was. She stated to them that Matthias did not be-

lieve in going to the sky. On this they rallied her, when she thus defended the doctrine, after, we suppose, the style of Matthias: "Paradise," she observed, "was formerly on the earth, and it would be so now if the wicked were not here; the wicked then will be driven from the earth into the sky, and the earth made a paradise again for the good." This notion, it appears, occasioned some amusement, if not conviction. Matthias and his disciples at this time did not believe in a resurrection of the body, but that the spirits of the former saints would enter the bodies of the present generation, and thus begin heaven upon earth, of which he and Mr. Pierson were the first fruits.

Mr. Pierson appears to have been timid, and was apprehensive of violence in his house, if Matthias remained there; he therefore proposed a monthly allowance to him, recommended him to take a house, and take Isabella to live with him. This he did, and took a house in Clarkson Street, near St. John's burying-ground. On this occasion Matthias sent for his family, and gave money to his brother George, a shoe maker, to go on to Albany and bring them down, together with his own family, to whom also he offered the use of his house. George did go to Albany, but gave Mrs. Matthias no money, as she says, and she now complains that he did not properly represent his situation, and consequently that she refused to come or send the family, which she now regrets, as it might have prevented unpleasant consequences at an after period. George, however, brought *his* family,\* and found comfortable quarters with Matthias. These circumstances are not mentioned by Mr. Stone, who merely says, that he took the *noted* Isabella for his housekeeper; and conveys the idea, in another place, that at this time Matthias was immoral. We have examined into this fact, and see no reason for such a conclusion; but believe this a mean insinuation, and an attempt to fasten on Matthias im-

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\* Mrs. Matthias states in her book, since published, page 28, that this brother was commissioned to give her \$100, by Matthias; but that he kept it for himself; and that he did not direct her to come to New York and bring the family, but instead of which, he barely told her, that Matthias had died in Philadelphia.

purity, without affecting his friends, and with a perfect indifference to the injury he did Isabella, a coloured woman, who is neither very young or beautiful. Mr. Stone states, too, that when Matthias was angry with Isabella, he would stop at home and preach to her the whole day. This she denies, nor is it reasonable.

George, Matthias' brother, became or was fond of spirits, and sometimes intemperate. For this Matthias reprov'd him, and after a time required him to leave the house, which he did, taking two loads of furniture belonging to Matthias and Isabella, in Matthias' absence, with him, and some expensive articles. The chief funds of course had previously been furnished by Mr. Pierson, but Isabella had drawn her money from the Saving Bank to help furnish the house. At this time Isabella was alone in the house with Matthias; her being so was evidently accidental, or she might have been so before; nor do we see any impropriety in his having such a housekeeper. Indeed, up to this time, and till after he went to Sing Sing, his moral character was not affected, against which Mr. Stone shows no facts; neither does he make out that Isabella is the *Most wicked* of the *wicked*.

In May, 1833, Matthias left this house, and placed the furniture, part of which was Isabella's, in the store of Mr. Southerling, in Greenwich Street. This furniture was afterwards removed to Mr. Whiting's, Canal Street, where Isabella lived as servant; and Matthias lodged at the hotel corner of Marketfield and West Streets. Mr. Stone says, that while here his conduct was liable to no censure; he continued to converse and dress as before, but if the landlord thought him troublesome, a hint was sufficient to make him cease. Mr. Stone adds, "Justice requires it to be said, that so far as is known, his moral character was irreproachable while residing at the Battery."

We now return to Isabella, who still kept up a connexion with Matthias by washing for him, even while in the service of Mrs. Whiting, by her permission.

Isabella afterwards paid a visit to her former master, John Dumont, by whom she has always been respected, near Poughkeepsie, and visited her children in that neighbour-

hood. On her return she lived with Mr. Smith's family, a grocer, in Hudson Street, and here also she washed for Matthias; and while in this situation, Matthias called on her, paid her for washing, and told her he had seen Mr. Folger, and was going into the country for a short time. We believe Mr. Folger had not seen much of Matthias before, for he had retired into the country about the time that Matthias introduced himself to Mr. Pierson, and Mr. Folger's business had led him much out of town, so that he had heard but little about him. A short time after Matthias had gone into the country, Mrs. B. Folger and Mr. Pierson's youngest daughter, Elizabeth, called on Isabella, and asked for Matthias' clothes, and said that she was Mrs. B. Folger, and that Matthias was at their house, and well pleased. Mrs. B. Folger was then introduced to Miss Smith, to whom she related the same. The clothes were given to her, and by instructions forwarded to the Union boat. We shall presently see how these facts comport with the account published by Mr. Stone, which he says is furnished by Mr. and Mrs. Folger conjointly.

In about a fortnight after *Mrs. Folger* had fetched Matthias' clothes, Matthias called on Isabella, told her that Mr. Pierson had fits, and that Mrs. Folger wanted help at Sing Sing, and would be glad to have her. Isabella went to see Mr. Pierson, and saw him in fits. She afterwards went to Sing Sing, and resided with Mrs. Folger; but as they had all things common, she removed there her furniture, Mr. B. Folger superintending its transfer, which had been stored at Mr. Whiting's.

We will now open Mr. Stone's book, and there show how he manages this introduction to Sing Sing.

In chapter 7, page 146, of Mr. Stone's book, we find the account of Mr. and Mrs. Folger's introduction to Matthias. He there informs us, that Mr. Pierson had frequently sought to get Mr. Folger to hear Matthias, but owing to business he had no opportunity; but that in the autumn of 1832, finding he had some time to spare, after a return from the country, Mr. and Mrs. Folger sought out Mr. Pierson expressly to learn the particulars of Matthias, the accounts of

which, and of Mr. Mills's arrest, they had seen in the papers. Mr. Pierson of course gave a favourable report; and Mr. Stone then states, that the account he is about to give of the proceedings at Sing Sing, he has received from Mr. and Mrs. Folger; he adds, that he has entire confidence in the narration, and he again says, the *occurrences* at Sing Sing, except those concerning Mr. Pierson's death, are *only known* to Mrs. Folger and Matthias. Well, we have *seen Matthias*, and obtained from him a direct or indirect assurance of all the important facts which we have to state; but Isabella, who was evidently not calculated on by either Mr. Stone or Mr. and Mrs. Folger, is perhaps equally knowing with those before mentioned, and what is of great consequence, willing to tell the whole truth, or all she knows.

After this introduction their narrative begins, which briefly states, that they received instruction from Mr. Pierson to close their Sunday Schools, which they had opened in Sing Sing, and to discontinue communing with the church at the same place, and urged them to search the Scriptures in proof of these things. They did search, and Pierson explained difficulties. These instructions are understood to be in accordance with Matthias' principles. They then publish the deposition of Folger, made at the time of Matthias' arrest, which states Matthias frequently called on Mr. Folger, at his house of business, and assumed that the spirit of Matthias animated Jesus, but that at the second coming, he, Matthias, was animated by the Spirit of God, could forgive sins, and communicate the Holy Ghost to *such as believed*. And taking advantage of a circumstance, he said, "You see but one end of this sheet of paper, which is outside this draw, but I see the whole of it; I see the end—and thus I see the end of all things." Folger then states, that he became fully convinced of the truth of Matthias, (and we believe invited him to his house at Sing Sing, and that, too, much at the instigation of Mrs. B. Folger;) yet the next sentence begins thus: "About the 20th of August, 1833, on our return (Mr. and Mrs. Folger's) from a short visit to New York, we found Matthias at our residence. He had been there two days. He was an unexpected visiter, but we

soon heard from his lips an account of his sufferings for the cause of truth, and our minds being prepared by Mr. Pier-son, to receive him in the character he announced himself, it being as dangerous to reject truth as to receive error, we invited him to stay over Sunday, expecting him to go on Monday."

Such is the commencement of Mr. Stone's publication of Mr. and Mrs. Folger's narrative; yet it will be remembered that Mrs. B. Folger *fetched* Matthias' clothes.

In Mr. Stone's book there is at this place a line of stars, thus :

\* \* \* \* \*

We must endeavour to supply the place. The fact is, that Mrs. \*\*\*, the lady whom we shall soon introduce, and is much abused by Mr. Stone, visited Sing Sing about this time, for the express purpose of denouncing Matthias, and cautioning Mrs. B. Folger against the delusion. This, it appears probable to us, was inserted by the honesty of Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger, but erased by the *tact* of Mr. Stone, who saw that it was fatal to the previous part of the work, in which he endeavours to show, that Mrs. B. Folger was the unfortunate dupe of Mrs. \*\*\*'s enthusiasm, being influenced by her. We believe, then, that these stars refer to this omission, for this fact is excluded from his book. We cannot, then, compliment the honesty of Mr. Stone, nor even his wisdom, shining in \* \* \* \*.

Our quotations from Mr. Stone's book must now be understood to be from the narrative furnished him by Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger. In page 153 they make the declaration,

"That every thing they have done, notwithstanding the loathsome scandal heaped upon us by the unprincipled, has been done under full conviction that we were doing right."

This position we shall not dispute, at least for the present. We shall remove the scandal, and supply *facts*, and then review the position; for several pages after this, we have the opinions of Matthias, or his doctrines, founded however on visions and fancies, and supported by texts from the prophecies and other scriptures. These we shall pass for the present; every person can conceive of *visions*, and the

effects of regarding them as realities or emanations from God. Those, however, which bore upon conduct, we shall notice, as illustrating the workings of the minds of the party.

He taught that all diseases were devils, and should be cast out as formerly by Jesus; that wives were decoyed by false teachers to prayer meetings and church, and children to schools in the care of strangers, but that God's plan was to place all in *families*. In page 164, the narrative states, (which is evidently principally written or indited by Mrs. Folger,) that they were in good health generally, while Matthias was there. This she ascribes to the previous advice of Dr. Paine, of New York, and plain food. It is however but justice to say, upon the authority of Isabella, Matthias, and some of Mr. Pierson's family, that improvements were made by Matthias, who banished *pies*, and other superfluities, but *lived well*; and that he banished pills and medicines, which Mrs. B. Folger had constantly used, before he came.

In page 165, Mrs. B. Folger relates that in the winter of 1834 she was sick; but we shall copy the exact words in this case.

"On one occasion, in the absence of Mr. Folger, in the winter of 1834, Mrs. Folger was taken sick, but she was required to attend to her household duties as though she was well—she was not allowed to complain, but censured with savage severity because she looked ill. Her fever and distress, however, increased to such degree, that she could no longer keep about—and then he indulged in threats of torment, &c., but she was so ill as to be indifferent to them—in the excess of her pain she put a little quilt on the back of a high chair to lean her head against, but even this was seized by Matthias, as soon as observed, and taken from her. She was denied any food whatsoever, but not craving it, she supposes that abstinence from food, a supply of coffee, which he saw fit at last to allow her, with the bathing of her feet in warm water, produced the effect, with the blessing of the true God, to break her fever. She often looked to Mr. Pierson, who saw her treatment, and he told

her to be *strong*—that there was no doubt that this was the way—and would often encourage her with assurances that we were right and had the truth.

“ We had long been in the practice, by the advice of our physician before named, of using warm and cold baths, and we continued them after Matthias and his children, and the servants introduced by him, came into the family. It no doubt was beneficial to our health, and we believe that Matthias was himself satisfied of the fact; for when our use of the bath became known to him, he enjoined the practice upon all the family. It seemed to be something entirely new to the strangers who had joined us, and they talked much about it—but there was no indecorous washing, as has been rumoured. Mrs. Folger always had the assistance of her mother, or of a nurse who had been with us several years; and subsequently, after she left, of one or the other of the servants introduced into the family by Matthias—one of them was Mrs. Galloway, and the other the coloured woman, for a long time previous, and still a follower of him.

“ Mrs. Folger always readily assisted any of the females in turn, when it was necessary. The bath-house was in the north wing of the building, where the nurse and children—and, when Mr. Folger was absent, Mrs. Folger—slept. Matthias was quick to observe and improve upon little circumstances. Soon after his visit commenced with us, the housekeeper, in replenishing the pitcher in his room, carried up more water than the pitcher would hold, and poured the surplus in the wash-bowl. He observed it—said his spirit had directed it, which she had done well to obey; and from that time he made it a law that all must wash his or her hands the first thing in the morning. Many instances of this kind, where he borrowed ideas and examples from others, could be named, and we would sometimes tell him so; but he would argue the subject quite ingeniously—showing that the action was by his spirit, and that we were indebted to him for the loan of it. Indeed, whatever was said or done in the community, that met his approval, was by the influence of his spirit, sent forth by him. He could, as he said, call his spirit out of any individual to give an

account to him, from any part of the world, in a moment. This he called his omnipresence."

The reader will observe that this extract is *dated* 1834, and consequently refers to a late period, although given in the beginning of the narrative; and though perhaps not meant to deceive, is certainly calculated to do so. The sickness here mentioned was that which accompanies child bearing, and the whole relation is admirably calculated to obscure, not explain facts; but as it refers to a later period in the history than that on which we now are, we merely beg our readers to retain the sense of this extract, till we have filled up the intermediate space in the narrative, from the testimony of Isabella, which is very curious and interesting, and absolutely necessary to a proper explanation of this extract.

Isabella went to Sing Sing, as we have related, as one of the party; she had no wages, put in some goods, and had all things in common; her regular employment was, however, in the kitchen; each member of the family had their regular province. Matthias was called Father, and certainly directed all, but did not interfere with the several departments, when the appointments were once made; so that this "all things in common," amounted to very little except a common table and greater familiarity. Isabella did the common work, Mrs. Folger assisted in the light work, Matthias did what he liked, while the farm was worked by others of the establishment. In fact, the family at this time differed in appearance very little from other well conducted families; and new comers, such as Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, assisted according to their qualities; he in farming, she in needle work. Mr. Pierson, his daughter, and Catherine, also came to Sing Sing, and filled up their places according to their habits, he doing light work and amusing himself in the garden, or on the farm; Catherine assisting Isabella in the kitchen, and the daughter engaged in light employment, and chamber work. When, too, Matthias' family, that is, his daughter and three sons, arrived, these also filled the stations they were fit for, assisted on the farm and in the family, and partook of the produce.

Mrs. B. Folger, when Isabella first went to Sing Sing, was not called Mother; that title was reserved for a special occasion. Isabella describes the appearance and manners of Mrs. B. Folger as particularly fascinating, and from the first her attention to Matthias was extreme. Mrs. B. Folger is not properly a beautiful woman, but extremely pleasing; her complexion is light, features good, nose prominent, mouth pretty, amber eyes, of great power, and pretty chin; the form of her face is long in the upper part only, and her figure tolerably good; her voice is extremely soft, and her tones insinuating; gentleness is her apparent characteristic, and innocence and harmlessness appears natural. We can therefore more easily account for the attachment which Matthias formed, which we are about to relate, and on which he shipwrecked his prophetic character, than we can for the attachment which she formed to him, and the extreme sacrifices which she made, and her perseverance in obtaining the object of her choice, when so many difficulties presented themselves, except upon the principles, that the internal spirit contained principles more active than the external appearance of Mrs. B. Folger warranted in supposing, and that these principles obtained strength by the powerful aid of fanaticism, which were here thrown on the side of passion.

Mrs. Folger, from the first, appeared on each morning dressed with much taste, highly scented, and her first business was to prepare the seat for Matthias; his linen and clothes were carefully aired, and when he appeared, in the kindest accents she would ask his wishes, thus: "*Father, would you like this? Father, will you have that? Father, shall we do this?*" and so on; but by the account of Isabella, it was like Corporal Trim's eloquence, more in the manner than the matter. We have been amused at Isabella's attempt to imitate the soft manner of Mrs. B. Folger, which was certainly clumsily done, and generally terminated in the expression, "O, I can't do it," heartily expressed. Indeed, Isabella's manners are what we think the reverse of Mrs. B. Folger's; she has shrewd, common sense, energetic manners, and apparently despises artifice; and it is even

Matthias' apparent candour and openness, which has fascinated her; she does not conceive of such openness with a base design. Of course we cannot write Mrs. B. Folger's tones, gentle inflections of the head, and bend of body; and yet when refined education is more common, the association of musical notes with written language, may even effect that; in the present case, it must be conceived.

Mrs. B. Folger appeared particularly desirous of pleasing Matthias, and apparently used an artifice calculated to effect this object, by *according* with his *feelings* and *opinions* before he had expressed them to her; it was done thus, perhaps, without improper design. She would first learn from Isabella, who had longer known him, his feelings and opinions on particular subjects; these opinions and feelings she would afterwards express as her own, in his presence; when of course he pronounced them *very wise and very correct*, felt highly gratified, and in his turn complimented her upon the possession of the truth, the *very spirit which he had*. She too made the discovery, that they were certainly *match* spirits. We are obliged to mention these things, for they alone explain what follows.

At this time Mrs. B. Folger began to make Matthias night caps; she gave him also a large golden ring. The attentions at first paid to Matthias by Mrs. B. Folger, with these exceptions, were not more than other single and married females pay to handsome popular clergymen, whom they regard as possessing particular gifts; for these are served with the first and best attentions, and they only abuse their influence in some cases, such as that of Avery, an aggravated case. Within two months after Matthias was a Folger's, Mrs. B. Folger stated to Isabella, that *all the property* (the house and farm) at Sing Sing belonged to Father given at her request, as it afterwards appeared. Isabella however, had some doubts as to what these things would lead; she had, as she expresses it, her own thoughts about it. From our listening to this coloured female, questioning her frequently, and often recurring to very curious and doubtful subjects, we have discovered that she too, like Mrs. B. Folger, is not exactly what she seems. Though bor

in this state, she has African features, and no apparent mixture of blood; she is not exactly bad looking, but there is nothing prepossessing or very observant or intelligent in her looks; yet throughout we find her reflecting, "she had her own or private opinion on every thing;" and these opinions of her own we have frequently found very correct; yet she is not communicative, and if circumstances did not prompt her to tell all she knows, it would be difficult to get at it.

At first, Matthias appeared only the recipient of Mrs. B. Folger's attentions, and he was unconsciously made to flatter her, when she presented to him his own opinions; in these experiments, if Mrs. B. Folger made a mistake, and advanced an opinion or feeling contrary to his, with the authority of the Father, he corrected it, when Isabella found that Mrs. B. Folger possessed a wonderful tact in backing out, explaining away her meaning, and getting at last to mean just what Matthias meant. She has given us, or rather we have extracted from her, a variety of amusing examples of this sort, but the detail would be trifling in point. Isabella had her own opinions of these things, and getting at her private thoughts, she said it appeared to her, that the spirit which had occupied Mrs. Bolton, being foiled in its attempt upon Matthias in her person—(Matthias had rebuked the pretensions and conduct of Mrs. Bolton)—had left her person, and got into the *more delicate* frame of Mrs. B. Folger, that in that shape she might tempt him. We asked how such an influence over him could comport with his pretensions of professing the spirit of the Father? and she replied, like as David was tempted, who was after God's own heart; and Matthias was not more than David. Here we stopped our theological inquiry, to get at facts.

During the progress of these things, Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger spent much of their time in conversation, a large portion of which consisted in telling each other their experience, and it may be charitable to conceive that a great deal of self-delusion followed. As the conversations, though not private, were *tête-à-tête*, we have no right to know any thing about them directly; all that Isabella can speak to,

is the quantity of conversation, and the general subject, their mutual experience, after the manner of Methodists; but we have been surprised at arriving at information of the greatest importance in illustrating facts and character, that would at first appear impossible to reach. Thus we get at the nature of these conversations, not from Isabella, but from other persons in the establishment, one of whom has known Matthias many years, to whom Matthias has related facts, and the nature of some of these conversations, to explain and justify his intimacy with Mrs. B. Folger, while Mrs. B. Folger has done the same to other persons, to justify her intimacy with Matthias, and consequently explained much of the conversation that passed between them.

Matthias, who, as Mrs. B. Folger observes, is not slow to learn or to take a hint, must have observed the devotedness of Mrs. B. Folger to him, and the advantage it gave him over her, if he chose to exert it. The basis was already laid on both their parts; he had openly denied the common marriages to be of God; and she had had apparently, two years before, a *vision* about her married cousin having a holy child by Mr. Pierson, and being at *home* in his house. Here was the base work; the superstructure was commenced when he went to Sing Sing, first by her extraordinary attentions to the Father; he soon informed her that he had a revelation before he came to Sing Sing, in which he had *seen her* as the Mother of the Institution he was about to raise; so that when he did see her, he instantly recognised her as the object of his vision. He, too, was the master builder, and the proper person to select the most suitable materials to build up the temple of the Lord. He, too, represented himself as Adam, the beginner of a new order; and where God made Adam, there was somewhere an Eve to be brought to light in the course of events. Thus these things were gradually opened to Mrs. B. Folger; his experience and revelations were re-revealed to her, and she replied with her experience. These were the conversations by day, and they were very naturally followed by dreams and revelations by night; and then again, each went to the Lord, with all humility, to seek the interpretation of these

things, and after the manner of Mr. Pierson, they received various answers, which must have consisted in other dreams, feelings, or thoughts. Such is the explanation given by Matthias himself to one of the inmates, of his whole course of wooing, and this person has confidence in the sincerity of Matthias, and also in Mrs. B. Folger, with which we at present shall not interfere. We relate these things as facts: we have compared this account with relations through Mr. Pierson, and other sources, for we have with a singular coincidence had access to nearly all the party, with the means of extracting matter from each, separately, which, when the account accords with accounts from others, and the whole resolves difficulties, we conclude that we are correct.

Some time after Matthias had been at Sing Sing, in 1833, Mr. Pierson getting something better of his fits, came to Sing Sing, but retained his house in Third Street, in care of a coloured woman named Julia, and still later in care of Catherine Galloway, holding the creed of Matthias, the young widow of Mills's serving man. This house was used by the party for their town house, but towards the last, Catherine was much at Sing Sing, and the whole party were occasionally in Third Street.

It must not be supposed that this ultra religious party, who had now veered off into followers of Matthias, spent much of their time in long prayers, psalm singing, long preaching, and religious exercises. They were chiefly engaged in the farm, garden, and household employment. Matthias and Mr. Pierson were good and cheerful companions, discoursing indeed much about Scripture. Mrs. B. Folger had in her room a piano forte, and she and Matthias often amused themselves with it. They kept a handsome carriage, and Matthias was frequently kindly, and even affectionately, invited to ride out by Mrs. B. Folger, in their carriage; generally some of the children went with them, but these, when boys, frequently rode on the outside; but on one occasion, Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger rode to Tarrytown alone, on the authority of Isabella, partially confirmed by Matthias, who *thought* he recollected once or more riding alone with her. This we extracted from him.

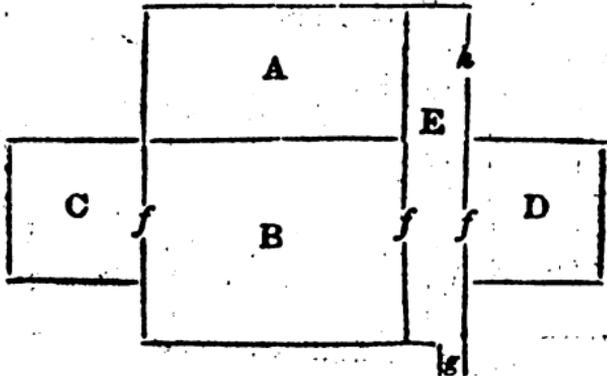
for he did not appear very desirous to communicate on the subject. This fact is of no consequence, except that it is explicitly denied by Mrs. B. Folger, in Mr. Stone's Book, in these words: "*In no instance did Mrs. Folger ride with him unaccompanied,*" and positively avowed by Isabella; it was of consequence for Mrs. B. Folger to deny it, for she has suppressed other conflicting facts; it is of no consequence to us which is correct; we have the whole truth to tell, and that single fact is not essential to the general truth.

External religious worship was gradually given up, and ejaculatory prayer substituted, while Matthias lectured irregularly at meal times. Matthias afterwards had a close carriage, and a beautiful pair of gray horses, given him.

The following is the representation of the ground floor of Mr. B. Folger's house, at Sing Sing:

- A—Front Parlour.
- B—Back Parlour.
- C—South wing, Mr. Pierson's room.
- D—North wing.
- E—Hall.
- f—Doors.
- h—Window.
- g—Kitchen stairs.

North River.



New York Road.

Over the middle and north wings were chambers, and over the centre were garrets. Isabella slept in the north wing, with the children, and, when she first went there, Mrs. B. Folger slept in the same room when Mr. B. Folger was in New York. A reference will be made to these rooms presently.

The affectionate attention of Mrs. Folger increased, as she daily discovered that her spirit more and more assimilated to his spirit, while he was loud in her praise, for her wisdom, gentleness, purity, and other spiritual qualities, which did not excite any particular attention; during which time, large portions of the property, both of Mr. Pierson and Mr. B. Folger, were made over to Matthias, but it does not appear that they were legally conveyed; they went, however, in his name; it was his house and his coach, and he was preparing a temple for the Lord. He too, at one time, made most of the purchases for the house.

The opinions of Matthias on marriage we have already noticed, and the previous opinions of Mr. Pierson and Mrs. B. Folger. These opinions seemed to have weakened the marriage tie, for Mrs. B. Folger gives an account of her being re-married by Mr. Pierson, in 1832, simply by each declaring that he or she took the other for husband or wife; and she admits that she was afterwards married by Matthias. This Matthias denies. He says, rather, that he admitted that they were man and wife, after Mr. Pierson had united them. We can scarcely credit this weakness; yet the fact is as we have stated it, and the effect must have been to weaken the tie of matrimony, because it assumes to be based on a union of spirits: but we have recently been tracing the gradual approximation of Mrs. B. Folger's spirit to that of Matthias', and we are not surprised to find that at length this lady discovered she was mistaken; but we must give all the facts.

Late in the fall of 1833, scarcely three months after Matthias' arrival at Sing Sing, on one evening, Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger remained in the parlour longer than usual; the family had retired, except Isabella, and she entered the room to take coals for the morning, when she found them

sitting near the fire place, intent in conversation, and she felt by their appearance, that she had intruded. Isabella, however, went to bed, and Mrs. B. Folger followed in the same room, in the north wing. On the next evening, Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger were again in intense conversation, and the appearance of Mrs. B. Folger forcibly struck Isabella, as she entered the room; her eyes, as it were, flashed fire; she found again that her presence was not wanted, and after some careless remark from Matthias, she again went to bed, and Mrs. B. Folger followed. The day after the next, Mrs. Folger went to New York with Mr. Pierson, and took this opportunity to make a singular disclosure to him, which had occupied her mind some time, viz. that she was instructed by the Spirit that she ought to have Matthias for a husband; that they were *match* spirits, (a favourite expression among the party.) This fact was stated to Isabella afterwards, both by Mr. Pierson and Mrs. B. Folger. Mr. Pierson received the declaration without astonishment; his mind was evidently prepared for any strange revelations, and he was one who might be said to be greedy of belief. The two notes, written two years before, upon a similar subject, and his own reflections on them, and his confidence in the purity of Mrs. B. Folger, and in the belief of the truths of visions and revelations, explain this subject, we do not say sufficiently; it is so strange that it may be incredible to some, yet it is true, for subsequent events show it to be the only possible case.

It appeared that Mrs. B. Folger's mission, at that time, was to visit her husband, then in New York, and induce him to give her up to Matthias, and to induce Mr. Pierson to second her monstrous proposition, and in this she succeeded. We must beg our readers' patience; the subject is so strange, so monstrous, so out of all course, and contrary to experience and history, so comet-like, that we can scarcely hope to carry the credence of our readers with us. That a wife should secretly betray her husband, is very possible; such things have always been; and that a clergyman, a pretender to holiness and inspiration, should secretly abuse his influence, obtain the affections of married women, and

wrong them and their husbands, is not only within the range of belief, but a matter of fact and record, which has always followed the course of a wealthy clergy, gradually becoming corrupt; but that a virtuous, respected, and amiable married female, should deliberately undertake to induce her husband to give her up to an inmate claiming to be very holy, and endowed with the Spirit of God, never before happened, to our knowledge, and stands unique in the history of the world, and therefore we scarcely expect credence, especially when that husband was of the same faith, was gentlemanly, humane, fond of his wife, even to excess, in good circumstances, had a family, and surrounded with domestic comforts, with the power to enjoy them; but if such a fact is so incredible, if it is a new case in human society, or nearly so, there is the greatest necessity for a faithful account, a full, true, and particular account of such a phenomenon; tracing as far as possible all the secret sources and motives of the mind. We do not then ask your credence in this monstrous fact; we only ask your patience till we have laid before you all our propositions, and the evidence, both in testimony and in consequences, for it will be found that this belief is necessary to the explanation of facts indisputable, and quite as marvellous.

Mr. Pierson and Mrs. B. Folger went to Mr. B. Folger, and succeeded in their strange and monstrous project, but not without a severe struggle, passion and distress of mind, on the part of the affectionate husband, and, we suspect also, from subsequent events, that a positive promise was also given of a substitute, which, while it explains one part of the subject, renders another more difficult. The representation to him was, that it was the work of God; that God designed it; that she and Matthias were *match* spirits; that the Lord had shown her that she should take Father to be her husband; and that she was to have a holy son. To induce Mr. B. Folger to consent to this, we have reason to believe, from facts afterwards to be established, that a beautiful young daughter of Matthias, then supposed to be a maid, was promised to him, as a substitute; but Mr. Folger pretended no vision; he had no *match* spirit with a person

he had never seen; and though Matthias might have suggested it, as a holy proceeding, Mrs. B. Folger must have urged it, as gratifying to him, or not entirely from spiritual motives; and this strange mixture of spiritual credence and carnal impulses, are found mixed up through the whole proceedings, and could only be conceived and practised in connexion with great fanaticism. It is this connexion of carnal feeling with spiritual fanaticism, which can alone explain the strange subject we are now delineating.

We do not know the particulars of the treaty, or what took place at the interview between Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger and Mr. Pierson, from them, nor from Isabella, through them, except the result and occasional expressions and conversations of Mrs. B. Folger with Isabella, on the difficulty of her task. This was not made generally a subject of conversation; but the facts often came out in disputes; but Catherine Galloway, who then kept the house in Third Street, where this scene took place, told all she knew on the subject to Isabella, which was, that "there was a terrible to-do nearly all night," and that from the noise and tones, she discovered that Mr. B. Folger was afflicted with both grief and passion.

Isabella did not know the object of the journey, but in about a week Mrs. B. Folger returned, and as the carriage was seen coming, the family had assembled in the hall to receive her, and among the rest her children and Isabella. On former occasions, she would caress her children, as the first objects of her affection; on this, she hurried across the path, rushed up the steps, passed her children, Isabella, and the rest, and, to the astonishment at least of Isabella, flew into the arms of Matthias, standing in the north wing doorway, and he and she hurried into the chamber, and shut the door, where they remained at least half an hour alone. These facts render the occasional, or the single case of riding in the carriage alone, previously, an object of no consequence. Some time afterwards, on the Saturday, Mrs. B. Folger went into the kitchen, appeared particularly happy, gave directions to have the house set in order, and an especial direction to set the west room (Mr. and Mrs. Folger's

bed room) in order, and stated that she would tell her (Isabella) something that would make her (Isabella) very glad. She also had made up three new *chemises*, without name, and gave out a new shirt and night cap to wash, that had been previously made with care, while the wristband of the shirt was carefully set with *edging*. This excited some surprise in Isabella, as it was not the *time* for washing. The same day she set out for New York, promising to return on Saturday.

On Saturday, Matthias took the carriage and went to Tarrytown to meet the boat, and brought up Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger, and Mr. Pierson, and on their arrival, and in the presence of Mr. Pierson, Mr. B. Folger solemnly gave his wife into the hands of Matthias, to be his, Matthias', wife, for the future, in the name of ANN DESBROSSE, and renouncing her as his wife. On the same night Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger slept together in Mr. Folger's former bed room; and from that time forward Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger lived within the house avowedly as man and wife, while Mr. B. Folger slept in the room formerly occupied by Matthias.

Previous, however, to the parties retiring to rest, the uxorious fondness of Mr. B. Folger appeared to revive, and he seemed to wish some token of kindness from her. In the hall, and in the presence of Isabella, he followed his wife about, who evidently avoided him, and in the most plaintive tone, he exclaimed, "Ann, Ann," while she repulsed him at every point. He endeavoured to catch her by the hand, but she withdrew it, and in stern accents exclaimed, "Benjamin, behave yourself." He attempted to lay hold of her person, when she pushed him away with force, and he sunk on a chair, while she escaped precipitately to her room. So pitiable did Mr. B. Folger look on this occasion, and so much did Mrs. B. Folger's sternness excite Isabella's feelings, that she looked upon Mr. Folger with the greatest pity, surprise, and sympathy, and in the relation of these facts, used a most expressive, but coarse comparison, for she is uneducated, and was brought up on a farm: "My God," said she, "when I saw the manner he

was treated, my anger rose, and when I saw him laying on the chair, I thought he looked like a dog with his tail singed, or one drawn through a gutter; and I could not help pitying him." We must, however, remind our readers, that Mr. B. Folger had *formally* given up his wife to Matthias, and this apparent sternness on her part, might be a painful exercise of philosophy. To have indulged the fondness of Mr. B. Folger, would only have increased improper desires in those circumstances, and have led to further importunities.

From that time Mrs. B. Folger was called MOTHER. How the parties slept, we have not the means of knowing, but they all appeared for inspection at the breakfast table, Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger in high spirits, and very loving; while Mr. B. Folger, in the eyes of Isabella, was treated with neglect by his late wife, and his spirits and appearance were necessarily affected.

Were we writing a tragedy, or a fiction founded on facts, we should leave off here; but this would leave a wrong impression of character, for miserable as we may suppose Mr. B. Folger passed the night of his separation from his wife, and miserable as he appeared on that evening, following his wife and spurned from her, and in the morning at the table, he had joys in store, at least in anticipation, and perhaps, could we hear him tell the tale separate from fanatical feelings, he would, in his story, say that he had exchanged a wife for a maid, in prospect, young, plump, fresh coloured, and pretty, though certainly not possessed of those highly feminine qualities which rendered Mrs. B. Folger so attractive. We are aware that these remarks may remove, in some measure, the sympathy which we might otherwise feel for him, but they are correct.

Isabella was not present at the ceremony of the transfer of Mrs. B. Folger to Matthias, in the name of Ann Desbrosse, nor was there scarcely any ceremony on the subject; the facts were related by Mr. Pierson to her, and also by Mrs. B. Folger, or rather *Mother*, as she should henceforth be called. This was the grand story which was to make Isabella pleased, but which Matthias observed would possi-

by make her sorry; and when informed of what had taken place on the day of the union, and that she was now united to Matthias, and should take her *station*, (Mother,) with much simplicity, Isabella asked, "but are you going to sleep with him?" to which was replied, "yes, certainly." These, and other questions, led to explanations, and the subject was afterwards one of frequent conversation between Isabella and *Mother*, the one asking questions, and the other replying; while Isabella "had her *own* thoughts about the matter," as she expresses herself.

Upon investigating this subject thoroughly, we discover that Mrs. B. Folger had long wished for this union, and that she ascribed the feelings of desire which she admitted she had strongly felt, to God. Matthias, too, attributed similar feelings to God, in an acknowledgment to a friend of ours. Mrs. B. Folger really supposed, or at least appeared to wish that Isabella should suppose, her something superior to other women, just as she supposed Matthias superior to other men, not only in holiness, and as recipients of the Holy Ghost, and of the Spirit of God, but in bodily qualities also. She claimed to be a virgin, and considered herself either more than woman, or Mr. Folger less than man, and declared that she received no satisfaction from the one, and great satisfaction from the other, and offered some physical reasons why she should be a virgin, and yet have children, which she attributed to extraordinary circumstances on particular occasions, and after fasting. We do not, however, pretend to understand the physical power claimed or derived, nor do we understand the mystical: we regard the whole as hallucination, or the doctrine of visions or dreams, supposed to be emanations from God. We believe Mrs. B. Folger to be no more than woman, and Mr. B. Folger not less than man, and the whole a self-deception, or an attempt to deceive others, and to offer excuses for what those not instructed by the Spirit, called errors, faults, or crimes.

Mrs. B. Folger, too, admitted that she made the application to Matthias: that in so doing she had *taken up a cross*; and used to him, in conclusion, precisely the words she had formerly used in the note to Mr. Pierson, "If I have done

wrong, please to forgive me." Matthias said "he would think of it," and took the next day to consider it, and then replied, "Follow the dictates of the Spirit." We suppose this took place on the two nights of close conversation before noticed, which preceded Mrs. B. Folger's application to her husband for a disunion.

Strange as this may appear, and strange it is, yet of the explanations, this is the most reasonable, or rather, the least unreasonable.

That Mrs. B. Folger should place her affections on Matthias, is no more than thousands of women do on ministers, who might abuse them. The previous notes of Mrs. B. Folger to Mr. Pierson, shows a state of mind susceptible on these subjects, and suggests the manner of doing it: revelations were made to Sarah and Abraham, and why not, she would suppose, to herself? and if a revelation, then no shame. This seems to be the position taken; and that may be done and said under the sanction of God's will revealed, which could not be thought or spoken of, without such a knowledge, or supposed knowledge.

Matthias, it appears, did not apply to Mr. Folger to give up his wife, and we can scarcely conceive that such an application could be made without the conviction striking the person applied to, that the applicant was a knave and impostor. Besides, in the after parts of this narrative, we shall find Matthias justifying himself, by saying to Mr. Folger, "Did I ask for your wife? Did you not give her up to me voluntarily?" and appealing to Mrs. B. Folger for the truth of his statement. We do think, then, distinct from the evidence we have received, that Mrs. B. Folger sought the union, and projected the means; or at least we do not put the whole blame on Matthias, unless it shall be shown, that he was all knave and carnally minded, while she was the victim of his winning ways; and that the sternness of his character forbids.

When Matthias was in town for a single day, he had heard of our intended work, and called to make some inquiries. We took that opportunity to obtain from him a confirmation of the material points, which he gave us, but

we cannot say very readily; he however only hesitated a little, and did not deny any fact we put to him.

In a few days, the party returned to New York, leaving Mr. Pierson with Isabella, on which occasion, he gave his version of Mrs. B. Folger's previous journey. To him it was chiefly a spiritual affair; he regarded the whole in a serious light, and considered it the work of God. Yet Mr. Pierson, too, it appears, had a partiality for Mrs. B. Folger, and sometimes expressed an opinion, that he thought his spirit would have matched her's very well; but this we believe was after his disappointment with the lady before referred to, who gave him a prompt and positive denial, at the same time telling her husband, and treating the subject as the vagaries of a mad man.

In a few weeks after the union of Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger, Mr. Folger set off in search of his promised spouse. (He had indeed a substitute in the interim, of whom we shall speak afterwards.) We find in our notes, that Mrs. B. Folger had informed Isabella, that Matthias' daughter had been promised to Mr. B. Folger. The account given in Mr. Stone's book runs thus:

"Matthias was anxious to have his family with us for some time before they finally came. Mr. Folger was unwilling to go for them, and suggested that Mr. Matthias should go, with the carriage and horses, but he declined for reasons known only to himself. At length Mr. Matthias' and Mr. Pierson's continued urgency prevailed, and Mr. Folger took his son with him and went to Albany, with the carriage, for his wife and children. He found them in reduced circumstances, and barely able to obtain a support. He gave Mrs. Matthews whatever means she asked for, to clothe the children with warm clothing entirely—bought several articles and presented them, and gave her money for her own purposes. Mr. Folger was instructed by Matthias before he left home, as he understood him, in case any thing should prevent any of the family from coming before the spring, to have them comfortably provided for there until that time; and in conformity with this direction, Mr. Folger promised to remit to Mrs. Matthews thirty dollars on the

first of each month, for the support of herself and youngest child, about five years old—as she determined not to go herself, or send the youngest child, until spring; but on reporting the promise to Matthias, he said he had been misunderstood, and totally forbade any money being sent her—that she was a wicked, lying devil, unworthy of any favour. Mrs. Matthews gave into Mr. F.'s charge four of the children—a daughter and three sons. The daughter had been married about a month previous, to a young man by the name of Laisdell; but for some reason, never explained, this was concealed from Mr. Folger by the mother and the husband, or he would have felt it his duty to have had the husband accompanied the children, or to decline taking the daughter. Mrs. Laisdell mentioned her marriage in the course of conversation on the journey. The boys were somewhat ungovernable, and having been rather exposed at Albany, their manners were not as good as could have been desired, so that with four boys (including his own son,) and Mrs. Laisdell, he found it quite a burdensome expedition, and excited much remark on the road, which was truly unpleasant.”

Mrs. Matthias, in her book of “Matthias, by his wife,” gives an account of Mr. B. Folger's arrival at Albany, and her surprise, for she had heard that Matthias was dead, as before stated. Mrs. Matthias was pleased both with the appearance and liberality of Mr. B. Folger, and finding he was known to some persons in Albany, and considered respectable, she consented to send her family, by the advice of some of her friends, as she says, to see how matters were, but declined going herself, not liking his doctrines. Mrs. Matthias, however, suppresses some curious facts, which occur at this time, and which illustrates character, and among the rest some kissing. Mr. B. Folger had presented Matthias' daughter, who was named Isabella, with a riding habit of Mrs. B. Folger's, and to this he added a gold watch, and when adorned with these articles, Mr. B. Folger kissed her, observing, that she looked much like his wife. This kiss Mrs. Matthias turned into a joke, perhaps to satisfy the young woman's husband, who we believe was present.

Mrs. Matthias, indeed, though she omits the kissing, acknowledges she observed Mr. B. Folger *eye* her daughter, and therefore asked him if he was a married man, and on the assurance that he was, imputed his attentions to honourable motives; she says, too, that she told him that her daughter was married; but the reverse appears to be the case. Mr. Laisdell, the husband of Matthias' daughter, assisted in getting the party ready, tied up their boxes, &c., and, in conclusion, kissed his wife at parting, which we are assured by a Mr. Thompson, known to the party, that Mrs. Matthias again excused as a joke, and even stated to Mr. B. Folger, that he might think it strange that the young man should kiss her daughter, but he was her *lover*. Thus for a very shallow motive, she assisted in the delusion. We believe this correct, because it accords with another fact, of which we have abundant proof, and with the silly cunning of the mother, of which we have since had abundant proof also. The daughter has declared to several persons whom we have seen, that soon after the journey had commenced, Mr. B. Folger inquired who that young man was who had kissed her, when, for the first time, she informed him that he was her husband. The fact is, the mother evidently concealed the marriage of the daughter, either because she was ashamed of the connexion, and had some vague ideas about the wealth and respectability of the Folgers, from which she hoped some advantage; while the husband shared in the bounty of Mr. B. Folger, and evidently winked at the delusion.

The account of the journey, as given by Mr. Stone, is perhaps true, as far as it goes, but there are some important omissions. Mr. B. Folger's son and Matthias' boys were sent in the stage, except the younger, John, about eleven years old; he travelled with Mr. B. Folger and Mrs. Laisdell, the daughter of Matthias, who, it appears, without the father's knowledge, had been married. This little boy, too, slept on the road, in the same room with Mrs. Laisdell, or in the same bed. On this occasion, Mr. B. Folger, during the night, came into Mrs. Laisdell's room, and remained there; in fact, committed adultery with her, in the common

acceptation of the word; nor do we believe that Mr. B. Folger, on this occasion, believed he was prompted to this by any vision or good spirit, for he acknowledged it as a fault to Matthias, after his arrival, which sort of acknowledgments, it appears, he was in the habit of making to the *Father* as a part of the system. We extracted this confession from Matthias himself, when excusing himself for some part of the transaction, and whipping his daughter. He said to us, "that before he knew she was married, that marriage was virtually annulled by the act of her's and Folger's on the road," which we have just explained. Mr. B. Folger had also named it to Catherine Galloway, and she of course to Isabella. Mr. B. Folger said to Catherine, that he liked Johnny, because he had never mentioned the fact of his having gone into his sister's room; but the child has since mentioned it to his mother, and his mother to us directly. We know that Mr. Folger knew she was married then, but we do not know if the child slept in the same bed with them, which, if he did, it supposes a grossness inexplicable by any visions, dreams, or spiritual influences. We do, however, suppose that he had explained previously the object of his mission; and he might plead the sacrifice he had made for her, and he was no doubt goaded by passion, independent of the spirit. From this fact, and various others, Mr. Folger appears to us decidedly amorous, and therefore we are more surprised at Mrs. Folger's preference for Matthias, and neglect of him. The sequel shows, too, that Mrs. Laisdell was fond of him, and that he was a general favourite among females who *knew* him, and latterly, even his wife explained away objections.

On the return of the party to Sing Sing, Mrs. Laisdell lived with Mr. B. Folger as his wife, with the knowledge of her father, (Matthias,) Mother, or Mrs. B. Folger, Mr. Pierson, Catherine Galloway, and Isabella. It must also have been known indirectly to many others.

On this return of Mr. B. Folger with the family of Matthias to Sing Sing, the beating of the daughter followed, for which he was afterwards convicted of an assault. Neither Mr. Stone nor Mrs. Matthias gives a correct account of this

beating. Mrs. Matthias, in her book, page 34, intimates that her daughter was beaten to compel her to take Mr. B. Folger, or rather compounds this reason with another, her impertinence to Matthias, and especially to Mrs. B. Folger, whom she refused to call Mother. Mrs. Matthias knows that this is incorrect; she knows that she indeed urged her daughter, when at White Plains, to make this charge, but that she refused, alleging that she was beaten for impertinence only, and for not calling Mrs. B. Folger Mother. We have seen several persons to whom the daughter has thus stated the fact. This was her evidence on the trial, and this the statement she gave to Mr. Western, the counsel for Matthias. The daughter of Matthias wanted no beating to go to Mr. B. Folger; she was decidedly fond of him. On the very day she was beaten, Mr. B. Folger had made his confessions to Matthias of having slept with his daughter on the road. Matthias in the afternoon assembled the children of the kingdom (the family) in the front parlour, and made a proper representation to them, stated that this act of Mr. B. Folger and his daughter on the road, had virtually annulled her marriage with Laisdell, and that as they were fond of each other, and in fact could not be kept apart, and submitted it whether it would not be better to sanction their union. Mrs. B. Folger was asked first, then Mr. Pierson, then Isabella, then Catherine Galloway; all assented, or answered in the affirmative. Catherine Galloway, however, answered very faintly; she had indeed some reason to be dissatisfied. Mr. B. Folger and Matthias' daughter needed no driving together; she having passed the first step, evidently preferred the change. The polished manners, kind treatment, and rich dress furnished by Mr. B. Folger, were more agreeable to her than the comparatively rude manners of her husband, whose claims to her fidelity were certainly not of the first order. Matthias confirmed some of these facts to me, without knowing what other evidence we had.

If it be asked why Laisdell has not prosecuted Mr. B. Folger, we only know, that the mother of Mrs. Laisdell, Matthias' wife, informed us, that Laisdell has received gifts, after knowing the fact, and consequently deprived himself

of legal redress, besides other positive disqualifying circumstances.

Now let us take a retrospect of the party before us. Our great object in communicating these facts to the public, was to show the extent of credulity, and to show in what proportions animal feelings could mix with spiritual; and in fact, what deeds might be done in the name of the Lord; and, at the same time, to apportion to each their share of the blame, according to their deserts, and to relieve those who were unjustly blamed, or blamed to an improper extent. The latter object must be yet deferred, because just inferences can not be drawn till the whole facts are laid before the public. On the first object we can now draw some conclusion. In the name of God, and under the assumed guidance of his Spirit, Matthias procured the possession of large property, both of Mr. Pierson and Mr. Folger, and received the wife of the latter into his bosom, and she a woman of a gentle spirit, with a family, living in the affections of her husband, and respected by her friends. But Matthias is already reputed an impostor by some, and insane by others, and that may be considered an answer, as far as he is concerned. We will therefore let him pass, till we draw his portrait.

Mr. Pierson has been kindly admitted to be partly insane, and he too may go, together with Mr. Mills. Then we have Mr. and Mrs. Folger, both regularly converted, the one at least religiously brought up, both moral, benevolent, and apparently sincere, pious, and extremely zealous, wearying heaven with prayers and singing loud hallelujahs, the active members of various religious and charitable institutions, and unspotted in the world; yet the one, the fair female, seeks to detach a pious, childless friend, from her husband, and, in the name of religion, to cause her to have a son by her friend, Mr. Pierson, a holy son it is true. She afterwards allows her affections to centre on another man than her husband, and carefully nourishes the passion which another woman would suppress, and seeks to have a son by him, also a holy son, and the desire itself, or the lust of the flesh, is ascribed to be God. She concocts the means of

separation from her husband, and yet living with him in the same house, and in the interchange of civilities, and indeed with kindness, as will afterwards appear, and in the name of her maiden name, to his guest, a spiritual instructor, assuming superior holiness and power; and this is deliberately done, in the presence of witnesses; effecting this, however, by avowals that she would not live with her legal husband any longer, and yet making no charge of conjugal neglect against him; declaring afterwards that she was not his wife, and this, too, in the face of his children, one of whom must be ten years of age, or more. Her new husband is then taken to her old bed, while her former husband is still lying in the house, and soliciting acts of kindness like a lover, which, as it will appear, are partly granted and partly refused. And all this is done in connexion with religion. While her legal husband's property, too, by her previous advice, is put into the hands of her lover, or new husband, for the glory of God, and, as Mrs. B. Folger declares, with the consciousness of doing *right*. Now, separate these acts from this consciousness, and they must be regarded as immoral and destructive to the happiness of society.

In Mr. Folger we have a moral and a respected man, a man of business and virtue, whose virtue is strengthened by religion, and conversion under a regular minister; who joins a church, of which he becomes a consistent and zealous member, and one who serves God by constant attendance at his house, or the church, and in acts of charity, and especially those connected with the soul; nay, up to a late period, he becomes the patron and chief support of a Sunday School in his vicinity; yet this man, consistent with his conversion, in perfect sincerity, which we do not doubt, gives up his wife, the mother of his children, some of whom are large, into the arms of another, and in the name of God engages to take the virgin daughter of the man to whom he gives his wife; but in the intermediate time commits fornication with another, as will be shown. He then goes to Afton to bring a family to his establishment, including his intended new wife; her, he finds a married woman, soon

after they commenced their journey; yet in spite of this knowledge, he proceeds on his course, the family is forwarded by the stage, except his intended and her younger brother, a lad about ten years of age; and in the night Mr. Folger commits adultery with Mrs. Laisdell, with this boy either in the same bed, or in the room; but it is done in the name of God, for he joins Mrs. B. Folger in the declaration, that they have done only what they considered right. He afterwards deliberately lives with this female, indeed, formally takes her for his wife before witnesses, who becomes attached to him, and he resists her return to her legal husband, till compelled by power to give her up. We do not deny the sincerity of Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger, but then we must come to the conclusion, that conversion is no protection against crimes, and that any degree of grossness is compatible with sincere religious profession, and the most pious practices and appearances; or that fanaticism is compatible with any degree of laxity of established morals. Our language is perhaps strong, but not stronger than facts already published, and yet to be published, will justify.

Of Mrs. Laisdell, we shall say nothing. She is, we think, inexcusable; but we do not know that what she did, she did in the name of God; and therefore her's is an ordinary case.

Of Isabella, we have as yet nothing to say; she has told her own story, and has not accused herself. Mr. Stone has proved nothing against her, and yet he must have said all he could, as he wished to prove her the *most* wicked of the wicked; and the assertions of an anonymous pamphlet are false, and do not deserve even to be referred to, because they are anonymous. Isabella, however, is candid enough to say, that if she has escaped the peculiar pollution which threatened to affect the whole community at Sing Sing, that she believes she owes it to circumstances, as much as any thing—(she is near forty, not handsome, and coloured)—for at one time the spirit which affected the head, was infectious, and threatened the whole body. She says it pleased God to preserve her, as no match spirit was found in the establishment for her.

Other members have scarcely yet been introduced, and what remains to be told is about as curious as what we have already stated.

We have now to show the proceedings from the union of Matthias with Mrs. B. Folger, which happened early in the winter of 1833, to the present time, including the particulars of Mr. Pierson's death, Mrs. Folger's sickness, child bearing, and child birth. To this we expect to add a series of portraits, or description of characters forming this singular group.

G. VALE,

84 Roosevelt Street, Teacher of the Arts depending on Mathematics,  
and Editor of the Citizen of the World.

**Note.**—There are two subjects we have omitted in the preceding narrative: one, the supposed quarrel of Matthias with Mr. Pierson at one period of the connexion; and the *eclaircissement* of Mrs. ... the alleged *superinducing cause* of all the fanaticism and crime already mentioned, and to be mentioned.

The supposed quarrel between Matthias and Pierson, while Matthias resided in Clarkson Street, is based upon the following entry in Mr. Pierson's journal, as given by Mr. Stone, page 142:

"October 3, (1833.) Mr. Matthias shall go from you, and you shall go on with your work, and be prospered, and have every needful gift and wisdom."  
After which we find another entry, supposed to be dictated by the Spirit:  
"Gibson (Matthias) no more money."

We omitted this subject, because there appeared a mystery in it, which we could not fathom, and we feared the mention of a subject of which we were not master. Isabella merely admitted the fact of the supplies being at first curtailed, and afterwards stopped; but would or could say no more. The fact is like Freemasonry, there was no secret or mystery in it; all was expressed on the journal by Pierson; there was no quarrel, but he was fond of preaching, as we learn from Mrs. ... and others, who knew him well, and therefore easily imagined that the Spirit directed him to resume his *duty*; and when opposed by Matthias, and encouraged by Mrs. Bolton, who resumed her task of looking up hearers, easily again conceived the instruction of the Spirit to curtail at first, and then stop the supplies. We have since seen Mr. Hunt, who furnished these diminished supplies on Mr. Pierson's account, and relieved Matthias when distressed. We have also spoken to Matthias on the subject, who merely remarked, that "Pierson for a time took my place, and became the Father; he was mistaken, but he had the power in his hands. We had no quarrel, but I had to submit for a time." Matthias says, from this time Mr. B. Folger managed the large money transactions of Mr. Pierson; that he after that period did nothing more with such accounts. This stoppage of supplies broke up the housekeeping at Clarkson Street. Matthias went for a few days to a Mr. Southerland's, in Greenwich Street, and afterwards lodged at a hotel near the Battery, while Isabella went to Mr. Whiting's, as a domestic, in Canal Street, and at that time assisted Matthias from her earnings. During this period, Matthias manifested all the appearance of sincerity, stating that his trial was the Lord's will, but that he would bring him through it, and bring to repentance. Mr. Hunt says that he saw him once at that period, unless

bled by want, but full of faith, alleging his strength and patience, under his sufferings, as a miracle.

The Mrs. \*\*\* is a lady now residing at Oyster Bay, to which her husband and herself retired, in the time of the cholera, where they have remained ever since, in a plain cottage, surrounded by beautiful scenery. This house is amply furnished with every comfort, and the husband, a relation of Mr. B. Folger, unfortunately bearing the same name, is evidently hospitable, social, and jovial, farming and gardening for exercise and amusement; the lady equally hospitable, of easy manners, and pleasing appearance, literary, and pious, but without prudery and fanaticism, at least in her appearance and conversation. Both, as the husband expresses himself, "feeding their chickens, and looking after their pigs and poultry," and, in fact, retired from the world, during the whole period that Matthias has figured before the public; and yet are they dragged before the public by Mr. Stone, in connexion with that subject, and the lady charged with being the super-inducing cause of Mr. Pierson's and Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger's extravagant opinions, and more extravagant conduct. Finding discrepancies in Mr. Stone's book, on this subject, and a decidedly bad feeling towards Mrs. \*\*\*, we suspected all was not right, and sought an interview with this lady, and find that she utterly denies holding any of the peculiar sentiments of Mr. Pierson, and every act of extravagance imputed to her. That she was placed at the head of societies, with which she was connected, we can easily conceive, from her good sense and superior attainments. Instead, however, of promoting the delusion which Mr. Pierson and Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger fell into, she would have restrained them, and actually visited Sing Sing for that purpose. She was never a member of any other than a regular church, and is now a member of the Baptist church at Oyster Bay. She never did believe in the direct teaching of the Spirit, and she holds the common opinion of the sanctity of the Sabbath, and the sacredness of marriage. The items in which Mr. Stone has falsified her we shall point out in our Second Part; in the mean time, we can assure Mr. Stone, without instructions on the subject, that Mrs. Frances Folger is a very different person from Mrs. B. Folger, and that she has most certainly reason to repent ever having, in kindness, attempted to save from errors, both in judgment and practice, Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger, and especially ever having suggested that the lofty plumes and very gay or gaudy attire of Mrs. Col. Stone, did not strictly accord with her religious professions, the services of the church, or the simplicity of the Christian character when in church. If she erred in taking this liberty with her earliest Christian friend, her husband, the editor of the Commercial, has amply and gallantly revenged the insult; and the nameless lady, with the plumes, referred to in Mr. Stone's book, has gained a complete triumph over the devoted victim, whom her husband has made a scape goat, to bear, by imputation, the sins and fanaticism of all the foolish, extra zealous, and fanatical females, who may have joined her in acts of charity connected with religion. Yet Mr. Stone says, page 304, "it was the principal and almost sole design of the present work, to make it a simple record of facts;" and Mr. B. Folger, in his address to the public, page 241, says, "I have no objection that Matthias, or any one else, should state the *whole truth* in reference to any transaction of mine." We have endeavoured, and shall endeavour, to oblige him.

**END OF PART FIRST.**

# FANATICISM;

ITS SOURCE AND INFLUENCE,

ILLUSTRATED BY THE SIMPLE NARRATIVE OF

ISABELLA,

IN THE CASE OF

MATTHIAS,

---

MR. AND MRS. B. FOLGER, MR. PIERSON,  
MR. MILLS, CATHERINE,  
ISABELLA, &c. &c.

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A

REPLY TO W. L. STONE,

WITH DESCRIPTIVE PORTRAITS OF ALL THE PARTIES, WHILE AT  
SING-SING AND AT THIRD STREET.—CONTAINING THE WHOLE  
TRUTH—AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH.

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BY G. VALE.

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NEW YORK:

PUBLISHED BY G. VALE, No. 84 ROOSEVELT STREET.

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1835.

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ENTERED, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1835, by G.  
Vale, in the Clerk's office of the District of the Southern District of  
New-York.

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## PREFACE TO PART SECOND.

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SINCE publishing the first part of this narrative, Isabella, from whom we originally obtained the leading facts, has recovered \$125 in a slander suit against Mr. B. Folger, one of the principal subjects of this narrative; and in this case this gentleman offered no defence; thus leaving us to draw the inference that his statement was a groundless falsehood, and as it appeared on the trial, for a sinister purpose; and one too, of the most atrocious nature. The slander consisted in having stated that this coloured woman had attempted to poison his family; made, apparently, to destroy her credibility, as she was expected to give evidence unfavourable to him, in the case of Matthias. The first part of this book was published before this slander suit came on, although that suit was begun a long while before. Now this suit offered a fine opportunity, to throw discredit upon her testimony, could it have been done, which would have at once reduced the damages to that which was merely nominal, and have put the extinguisher on this publication, as far as her evidence went: now no such advantage was taken, from which we draw two conclusions; that her character for truth is at least established, and that he, Mr. B. Folger, is capable of falsehood of a most atrocious nature.

On publishing the first part, we forwarded a copy to all the New York papers that we could think of: several of these have reviewed the work, and no one has shown a single error in one of our statements. We have reason to believe that all the parties named in the work, or referred to, and those interested in it, and know some of the facts,

have seen the first part; they have been publicly invited to point out any errors in it, with an assurance that we would correct them in this part, but no complaint has been made. We have seen some relations of Mr. and Mrs. Folger, and Mr. Pierson, and we have seen several inmates of the house at Sing-Sing; and these, as far as each one knows, confirm the truth of our statements: we have also seen a number of persons in New York, and Sing-Sing, connected with some of the transactions, and each of these confirms the accuracy of our facts, as far as each is acquainted. Besides, we have made ourselves legally responsible: we could have no right to publish these statements if they were not correct; and if this coloured woman has given to us false statements, she would deserve a criminal prosecution for such conduct, but we have had now abundant opportunity to test her evidence: we have perhaps seen fifty different people, *some* who knew some small parts of the transactions which she has related, and not one out of the whole, gives a statement different from hers; while most of them, in speaking of the same subjects, which she has mentioned, give some *additional* facts, which she either did not know, or had forgotten at the time; but which additional facts, invariably harmonize with and corroborate her testimony; while some facts, apparently incredible, have received confirmation, from sources which she did not know to exist. While therefore in this second part, as in the first, we have sought out other evidence than hers, yet we are restrained to say, that we might place a perfect reliance on her narrative. A large portion of our white evidence, are desirous not to have their names introduced: this we have complied with as far as the necessity of the case would admit; without, however, binding ourselves, which we have avoided. In the case of Mr. Burnham, a respectable merchant and agent to Mr. Pierson's brother, who administered, he was particularly anxious that his name should not be connected with so dirty a subject, as he expressed himself, and he very insolently told us we *must* not bring his name in; while at the same time he refused us information, which would have precluded the necessity for such mention of his name. And

as to his *must*, we know of no obligation where truth requires it; and where it does, our only answer to his *must not*, is, that we *will*. That gentleman is or was in possession of Mr. Pierson's Diary, a fact we ought to mention as the means of confirming many of our statements. He has made this diary a subject of conversation, for his friends have mentioned it to us; and he let Mr. Stone extract from it, but he has denied it to us, with a plausible reason; but neither will he give us any information from it, when a reference to that Diary would be better evidence for many things, than to him, or to others; because Mr. Pierson had put to paper, facts as they occurred. This gentleman did indeed tell us, that he would, condescendingly, say whether any fact in the Diary was correct or not, if we would submit any known fact mentioned in the Diary to him: but in the same conversation he said we had published an error, or repeated one of Mr. Stone's, but declined pointing out what or where; the consequence is, that we have no confidence in his simple yea or nay: nor are we under any obligation to him for his endeavours to suppress the truth. We believe we are in possession of every important fact: but the public would have been glad to have Mr. Pierson's testimony to its truth, in addition to the evidence we offer. We have seen also Mr. Pierson's brother, the administrator, and his sisters; but they, while they display a great and feverish anxiety about the property of their late brother, know very little about the kingdom, and affect to believe that Mr. B. Folger has the Diary, and that Mr. Burnham has only a few papers: we have obtained from this source no valuable information; but at the same time we are untrammelled by any partial obligations.



# FANATICISM;

## ITS SOURCE AND INFLUENCE,

ILLUSTRATED BY THE SIMPLE NARRATIVE OF ISABELLA  
IN THE CASES OF MATTHIAS, MR. AND MRS. FOLGER,  
MR. PIERSON, MR. MILLS, CATHERINE, ISABELLA, &c.

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### PART II.

#### CHAPTER I.

*Object of the work—Piety, no protection against error or crime:—Importance to the religious world—parts formerly omitted, as being incredible—Mrs. Folger washes or bathes Matthias.—Doctrines of Matthias on Washing, and practice of his disciples—White evidence adduced.—Second omission supplied—a marriage ceremony in the kingdom—Catherine Galloway, her prior claim to Mr. B. Folger.—Slight descriptive portraits of the leaders in the kingdom.*

THE object of this work is usually mistaken by those who look only at the titlepage: it is commonly supposed to be a detailed account of monstrous opinions, and acts of deception, and gross immoralities of a man, already regarded as mad, or as a vile, unprincipled impostor; and as the people are necessarily prepared to believe any thing of such a man, there is little curiosity on the subject, because results ever so monstrous would prove nothing, as the feats of madmen, and the villany of knaves, have no limits, and however strange their conduct, that strangeness is in perfect accordance with their supposed characters and principles. Without determining the precise character of Matthias for the present, we declare this not to be the object of the work, and only introduced as subservient to another important public object: viz. the clear manifestation that sincere piety is not a protection against the grossest errors in principles, and the grossest abuse of established morals, when such individuals ascribe their feelings to divine influence. Now

there are thousands of persons in this city, and tens of thousands without it, in the wide world, who do this, and who never dream that these feelings may obscure their judgments even when they are in close communion with deity, as they suppose, and supplicating him daily for direction; there are thousands we say, who never dream that these feelings may render them dupes or fools; and that their feelings are excited by circumstances, and are *natural*, but mistaken for Divine; and thus they render them the dupes of fervent fools or designing knaves: and yet this is the fact, and it is this fact which this narrative is intended to illustrate. And therefore the subject is of importance to thousands, and especially to the religious public: but also to the people at large as a matter of curiosity, and for philosophical investigation. The work, then, has more to do with the disciples of Matthias than with Matthias himself; and for the illustration, it matters not what is the character of this man: but in our relation of facts, we have been, and shall be strictly impartial, and draw only such conclusions, as the facts shall fairly warrant, whether such facts are in favour, or against Matthias, or the most humble or most elevated of his followers.

The first part has now been before the public several weeks. It details facts never before published, nor ever supposed, and it gives names without reserve, where any responsibility is implied. We have challenged both investigation and discussion, and avowed a determination, in this second part, to correct any error we may have committed in the first; but no error has yet been pointed out, except the fact, that we have misspelled the maiden name of Mrs. Folger, which should have been Disbrow, and not Desbrosse, as we spelled it. We are informed too that Mr. B. Folger ought to have been called Mr. B. H. Folger. Wherever, therefore, in this second part, we mention the name of Folger, let it be understood as meaning Mr. B. H. Folger, without we otherwise distinguish it. We conclude, therefore, that our first part is correct; and yet we are conscious that we have not told all the truth. We have suppressed a portion of what properly belonged to the first part; not with the intention of deceiving; but because the facts

were too incredible to be believed at once. Thus: when we stated the fact, that Mrs. Folger had first made known to Matthias her wishes towards him as being "The Will of God," and had obtained from him a sanction of her course, in the expression, "Follow the leadings or dictates of the Spirit," and that in consequence of which she had proceeded to New-York, and after much entreaty, prayer, and supplication to her husband, and threats not to live with him, he, Mr. B. Folger, did give his consent to give her up as Matthias' wife;—when mentioning this fact, we had omitted to state, that a few days before these things took place, she had washed or bathed Matthias, in the bathing-room, with the room-door locked on them alone; and that a surprising length of time elapsed in this operation. Our readers must now have patience, till this subject is properly placed before them, with *all* our evidence on the subject; for this is one of those facts we suppressed in the first part, as being too incredible for belief; and yet it is a fact, for which we have positive *white* evidence, according with the narrative of Isabella, who fetched the water on the occasion, and remained in the passage by the stove, with Elizabeth, Mr. Pierson's daughter; and while thus standing, a child went to the door and tried it, but finding it locked, retired. To make the above subject intelligible, we must explain the doctrine of Matthias on this topic, and explain also the practice; previous to which we shall remove the rubbish which occupies the public mind on this topic, by an unprincipled anonymous publication in this city, viz. that in the bathing-room, there was a globe stove; and that the whole family, in a state of nudity, stood round this stove; that Matthias first washing himself, communicated a holiness to the water, and that he then sprinkled and washed the bodies of his disciples. Now, the whole of this is false. The only globe stove was in the hall, and that in the ordinary bathing-room, in the north wing, there was no stove, but a common fire-grate, and no such wholesale washing took place. We need say no more in contradiction, than that this amusing tale was published in the Sun, which published the Moon Story.

The facts are these, Matthias preached against baptism, or sprinkling, but in favour of washing, or purification; and the members of the family were enjoined to wash their entire body, or purify themselves, at least once a week; and on other occasions, which seemed to require a sort of covenant, as we shall afterward find it practised on such occasions. This washing was performed in a perfect state of nudity; sometimes in a large tub; and at others, in a shower bath; both generally in the same room: the men ordinarily assisted the men, and the women the women. But in order to comprehend the fact before stated, it is necessary to mention another doctrine of Matthias', which led the way to the result we are relating. Matthias preached that *all shame* was sin, or consciousness of want of purity; and consequently that the most pure would have the least shame. Now, this doctrine carried out, leads to the exposure of the person; and though there is no proof whatever for the assertion of the Sun, there is certainly proof that an indiscriminate exposure might have been the consequence of this principle; and under certain regulations, was probably intended, had the society continued together.

By turning to page 67 and 68, of the first part, the reader will find that previous to the union of Matthias with Mrs. Folger, they kept up a longer and closer conversation than usual, and that Mrs. B. Folger appeared, especially on the second evening, much excited, we do not know that we shall now be incorrect, if we say by the passion of love or desire, for we have very strong evidence. When we wrote that paragraph, we did it on the evidence of Isabella; it was one of those cases we could not hope for other proof: it made her story consistent; there was, then, no doubt about the after facts; and those facts must be brought about by some means, and a free communication must have been held, before Mrs. B. Folger would have gone to New-York, to gain Mr. B. Folger's consent for a separation. On this reasoning, and because we had not detected Isabella in a *single* falsehood, we admitted that paragraph, and certainly believed that to have been the time she communicated to Matthias her wishes in plain language, so as to bring the

affair to the desired end. Since that paragraph was published, we have obtained, what we certainly did not expect, positive, and white evidence too, that these conversations were on the subject supposed; thus again establishing the evidence of Isabella, in a case on which neither she nor we supposed any other evidence existed. With a good deal of trouble, we sought out a Mrs. Thompson, who with her husband and family, resided at Sing-Sing. after this period, for about a month, she, to assist the family in needlework, and he to assist in the garden and other work. If these persons were not disciples of Matthias, they held some notions of the happiness to be derived from a family or community system; and they were certainly expected to become disciples by the other members, but revolted at the initiating ordeal. We shall have afterward to mention these persons more particularly. They are not our friends; we only saw Mr. Thompson once, and Mrs. Thompson once, at separate times and places; they were strangers to us, and Mr. Thompson has since attached himself particularly to the interests of Mrs. B. Folger. They are therefore the friends of both Mr. and Mrs. Folger, of whom they now speak with respect: we obtained, however, much information from these persons, chiefly in confirmation of what we already knew; but as this information came to us through an ordinary conversation, without their knowing how much we knew, we obtained again a valuable confirmation of Isabella's truth. Mrs. Thompson then told us in answer to a general question, of how the connexion between Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger was brought about? that Mrs. B. Folger took upon herself the whole credit; that she had conversed on the subject; and on the evening when the spirit directed her to declare herself to Matthias, that God had assisted her, for that Mr. Pierson had given her an opportunity, by retiring early to bed, and thus leaving them alone, when she introduced the subject. She explained some of the means by which she was led to this resolution: she observed, that she had a vision, and saw two columns of smoke ascending and uniting at the top; and one, she explained, as representing herself, and the other, Matthias;

And thus we get at her state of mind, and source of self-deception. We get too at more, for she observed to Mrs. Thompson, "If you have a dream, go to Father." Now, this going to Father with dreams and visions, satisfies us, that though Mrs. Folger takes the credit of seducing Matthias, that Matthias, holding the power of interpreting the will of God, by dreams, visions, and feelings, was able to direct her thoughts and actions, and therefore we do not give her all the credit she takes for overcoming difficulties; and we doubt if the subject was not anticipated by Matthias. Now between the time of her declaration to him on the evenings noticed on the 68th page of the first part, and her departure for New York to get her husband's consent to give her up to Matthias, as she supposed according to the will of God, Matthias was washed by Mrs. Folger; and so much time was occupied in this operation as to excite the remark of a child, Elizabeth Pierson, then only ten years of age, who observed, that "Father would be clean enough this time." Isabella had fetched the water, and had supposed that Mr. Pierson would have assisted Matthias, for that was the custom; but when Matthias had gone into the room, Mrs. Folger opened the door a little way, and said "Father, shall I wash you," and just after went in: and this was not done secretly, it was known to the whole household then at Sing-Sing, and excited the remark of the child, as before stated. We have seen this child; but we avoided direct inquiry, for we have seen some of her relations and friends, to whom she communicated at her pleasure, and at different times, this and various other facts. We thought, and still think, that we have more dependance on facts being thus confirmed, than by any direct inquiry of a child; our object was to get the truth, and if this child related to different persons, the same account of what she had seen, and that when such information was not sought for, a reliance might be placed on it; especially when it confirmed the same facts before known. This washing of Matthias did not greatly excite the household or kingdom, although Isabella had her own thoughts of it, as she before expressed herself: the fact is, the *kingdom* had been prepared for it,

by the sentiments before noticed; and it only supposed that he as the Father, and she, about to be the Mother, had arrived at a greater degree of perfection than other members of the kingdom. Our opinion is, but it is only an opinion, that on this occasion, Matthias and Mrs. Folger washed each other, as a sort of purification preparatory to the union they were about to form, and as a ceremony accompanying the contract formed, agreeable to an opinion before expressed. Matthias had no set or written rules for the *kingdom*; we have to pick up his doctrines, and connect them with his practice how we can. He never committed any thing to writing; and therefore we cannot get at the exact rule for this washing: but as we find the practice introduced on other similar occasions, and as this is not only the most charitable, but the only rational supposition for such a departure from common practice, or indeed decency, we adopt it, as a supposition, *viz.* that Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger, assuming, and perhaps believing that they were pure, had no occasion for masks of shame, and perhaps as a trial of their faith, had sought to subdue their passions in the greatest temptations. However, we have nothing to do at present with reflection, we give only the fact, and for this fact we have ample evidence: the interpretation too of Isabella, is, that Matthias and Mrs. Folger assumed to be further advanced in purity than the others of the kingdom, and therefore could do this, while the rest, at this time, were washed by those of their own sex.

We have now then supplied one of our omissions; and in doing it we have effected another object: we have shown that we have white evidence, that Mrs. B. Folger first conceived and brought to bear her union with Matthias. The public press has not confronted us in one single point: but in private, we have heard the remark, that we rested our evidence that Mrs. B. Folger *seduced* (an expression we did not use in the first part) Matthias, on the credit of a coloured woman; and although we had given other evidence for other important facts, for this, we had not; and that it was so incredible, that they never could believe it. This was said by a bookseller, who knew the Folger's, and

who thus discredits our judgment or honesty. We have now given him and others white evidence for this fact, in the person of Mrs. Thompson, a stranger to us and friendly with Mrs. B. Folger; and this evidence comes to us from a very different channel than the other which it confirms, and there are yet other evidences to be had, if we want them: indeed our strongest proofs are sometimes reserved, both as a matter of policy in case of a denial of any part we have stated, and to avoid inserting names unnecessarily; but the identifying Mrs. B. Folger as the author of a note addressed to Mr. Pierson, see pages 28 and 29 of the first part, calculated to induce that gentleman to seek to obtain a married lady as a companion, ought to have been presumptive evidence that in the same spirit Mrs. B. Folger could negotiate for herself.

We shall now supply another omission, made indeed in the same spirit. If our readers will turn to page 79, first part, they will find the marriage ceremony of Mr. B. Folger and Mrs. Laisdell mentioned. This was not done justice to: we shall take the liberty of going over the scene again, and then connecting a subject with it, before omitted.

Mr. B. Folger, it will be recollected, went to Albany to fetch Matthias' daughter; and that he slept with her, accompanied with circumstances before named, on the road home; and that Matthias, to whom this fact was confessed, assumed it as the base of his proceedings, alleging that as her former marriage was nullified by this act, she had better marry, or be espoused to Mr. B. Folger, as their affection for each other showed a kindred spirit. This was what lawyers call profiting by the wrong done: while the fact of a courtship to a married woman, a consummation, a marriage, and then another consummation, all in three days, is certainly incomprehensible to persons of ordinary faith and ordinary morals. For such things an extraordinary faith or revelation is necessary, or we must suppose gross and corrupted morals. The line of conduct having been agreed upon by the Father, Mother, and the chief disciples, in the evening a ceremony was determined upon, and Mrs. B. Folger, then the Mother, stepped into the kitchen with a

Every air and smiling countenance, asked the inmates of the kitchen, Isabella and Catherine Galloway, if they would go to a wedding. The former, naturally gay, though neither young, or white, readily answered, yes, I am ready, and prepared to follow; the latter, as if struck with sorrow, faintly drawled out, y-e-s, and with a heavy dull step joined the festive party, and proceeded to the front parlour. In this parlour, the party took their seats in the following order:— Mr. Pierson near the end of the room opposite the windows; then in order, opposite the fire, Mr. B. Folger, Mrs. Laisdell, (the daughter of Matthias,) and Matthias; Mrs. B. Folger took a place by the side of the fire next the window, and Catherine Galloway on the other side, with her head crouching under the mantelpiece, and her eyes occasionally learing towards the happy pair, Mr. B. Folger and Mrs. Laisdell, who, though she had been improperly whipped the night before and on the same morning, for impertinence to her authoritative father, by no means showed marks of sorrow on this occasion. Isabella, the coloured woman, humbly, or not humbly, took her place by the door, rather without the party than among them, but admirably situated for observation. Matthias began by explaining the circumstance, without, however, mentioning particulars, and it is probable that all the facts already stated were not then known, except to Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger and Matthias. Matthias simply stated, that an act on the road had nullified his daughter's marriage with her husband Laisdell; and this being nullified, and Mr. B. Folger and his daughter being fond of each other, he thought the best thing they could do was to unite, or be espoused. He then asked Mr. B. Folger and his daughter if they were willing to be thus united; these cheerfully replied they were. He then asked Mr. Pierson, if he gave his consent; to which that gentleman replied, yes. Then Mrs. Folger was asked, who also replied, yes. Then Catherine Galloway, who in a very faint voice, doleful tone, and sorrowful countenance, with her head still poked under the mantelpiece, and only moving her eyes in an upward or oblique direction, replied, y-e-s - sir. This question was repeated to Cathe-

time, by Matthias, and again answered by the slow *ye-a*. The same question was then put to Isabella, who replied, yes. Matthias then put his hand upon the head of Mrs. B. Folger and his daughter, and said, "You will be blessed in obedience, and in disobedience thou wilt be cursed," &c. Mr. B. Folger then kissed the bride, and then kissed Matthias, then Mr. Pierson, Mrs. B. Folger, Catherine, and lastly Isabella, the door-keeper and cook in the kingdom. This kiss was afterward referred to by Isabella, before the grand jury at White Plains, who asked her, if Matthias had ever kissed her: and on her replying, yes, one of them asked, "Now, didn't he kiss sweet?" To which she replied, "No sweeter than Ben. Folger;" for she supposed Mr. B. Folger to have suggested this question, as he had just been in the room. The grand jury, on this reply, declined pushing their inquiries.

After this kissing ceremony, Mr. B. Folger showed a disposition to retire, with his new bride; he supposed the ceremony closed: but Matthias was in a preaching humour; and commenced a lecture, which if they were not obliged to listen to, they were at least obliged to sit under. We do not think it was very edifying, or else it was apparently badly timed; for he certainly did not get the attention of some of the party: Catherine remained immovable, her head in the usual place, and her eyes, when engaged, were stealing a dissatisfied look at the happy pair! while Mr. B. Folger manifested a most ridiculous uneasiness, almost starting up at every period, apparently hoping it was the last. He had been alone on the previous evening, and manifested the greatest anxiety to retire with his wife, to the great amusement of Isabella, who seemed, like the rest, not much occupied with the prophet's discourse, but engaged in watching the countenances, and trying to catch the thoughts of the party. Matthias, alone, seemed charmed with his own voice, and with the greatest deliberation was laying down moral rules, and giving spiritual advice to those whose minds were not apparently then in a very spiritual mood. At length, the prophet ceased, and Mr. B. Folger led off his blooming bride, we cannot say blushing,

for she had been married *one month* before to a mechanic in Albany, named Laisdell, whom she had just left on a friendly visit to her father.

We return now to the kitchen. The subject of this marriage necessarily became a topic of conversation between Catherine and Isabella, who was not acquainted with all the facts then. Ignorant people can only talk about what they see and hear, and on these subjects they are always talking: when they have said all they know, then they begin again; and thus an ignorant person is easily detected, if a liar. Catherine's mind was evidently full of the subject, and when she answered, therefore, on the last occasion, in so doleful a manner, and appeared so thoughtful and dull, with her head pertinaciously stuck under the mantel-piece, "Good God!" inwardly exclaimed Isabella, "does Catherine think any thing of Benjamin Folger!" It struck her, as we learn by inquiry, for the first time, that Catherine had pretensions to Mr. B. Folger; and this, it appears, surprised Isabella; for Catherine is rather a homely young woman, the widow of a serving man to Mr. Mills, and herself formerly a servant to him. She is uneducated, without polish in her manners, and as Isabella expressed herself, only fit to be in the kitchen with her. Catherine could not help talking, nor Isabella inquiring, till at length, Catherine declared that she had a greater right to Mr. B. Folger than Mrs. Laisdell, for that Mr. Folger had lain with her in the house in Third-street, New-York, several times, since he had given up his wife, (about six weeks,) and that too by the apparent consent or knowledge of Mrs. B. Folger, who had perhaps innocently prepared the way. It appears, that Mrs. B. Folger, after her marriage with Matthias, went to New-York, and communicated the joyful intelligence to Catherine, as one of the kingdom. She had explained to Catherine how that the Spirit of the Lord had made known to her, that she should take Matthias, as her match spirit. Her visions, dreams, and feelings, were explained, as the leadings or guiding of the Spirit of God. Catherine in relating these facts to Isabella, said that she pitied Mr. B. Folger, especially as she then recollected the

apparent trouble he was in during the time Mrs. B. Folger was soliciting his consent to her union with Matthias, and which she then did not understand; but as "pity melts the mind to love," it appears to have been the case with Catherine; for the same sort of spirit that had operated on Mrs. Folger, began to operate on Catherine: and she began to dream, had visions, and strange feelings, which convinced her that she was a match spirit for Mr. B. Folger. So powerful was this spirit in Catherine, that she rolled on the ground with its violence, and became extremely uneasy in her person; and perhaps like her instructor, the Mother in the kingdom, included lust with the workings of the spirit; for that lady distinctly admitted, that previous to her union with Matthias, she was all on a ferment, or to use the expression of St. Paul, that she burned. This proof of the error arising from feelings, we before omitted, for reasons before given. Whatever were the exact feelings of Catherine, her situation was explained to Matthias, and he admitted their genuineness, and supposed that Mr. Folger and Catherine were matched spirits; and that it was the will of God that they should be united, and as such he sanctioned it, although there must then have existed a treaty for his daughter to be given to Mr. Folger. Now, whether this fact was made known to Mr. B. Folger by Catherine, or by Mrs. B. Folger, we do not know; but we know that Mrs. B. Folger assisted Catherine in her wardrobe, and in the improvement of her personal appearance. One garment purchased for Catherine was afterward appropriated to the use of Matthias' daughter. Catherine, it appears, was really fond of Mr. B. Folger; she had known the bliss of matrimony, nor did she discover those deficiencies in him which Mrs. B. Folger so frequently referred to, in comparison to Matthias. Catherine was conscious of the inferiority of her personal appearance, in taste and face, to the daughter of Matthias; but she flattered herself that she was not less acceptable to Mr. Folger, and actually once made the ridiculous proposal to Isabella, that she should ask Mr. Folger which of the females he liked best in the dark; a proposition which only could have been made to

a coloured woman, of nearly forty; but as the proposition never went beyond Isabella, we can of course furnish no answer.

We have now supplied the deficiencies of the first part; but as many of our readers, out of the city, and some in it, may be ignorant of the parties alluded to, and suppose that the disciples of Matthias were depraved people, rich or poor, who, without principle, indulged their appetite at their pleasure, and merely sought the sanction for religion as a joke, or cover for their proceedings, and that they never were or could be sincere; we shall again briefly notice the leading characters. Mr. Pierson was a retired merchant, supposed to be worth \$80,000; for many years connected with, and an officer in, the Baptist Church of Mr. Somers; and this gentleman supplied Mr. Stone with some facts and some errors. Mr. Pierson's sincerity was never doubted, even by those who disapproved of his opinions and practices. The most extravagant act before his connexion with Matthias was his praying solemnly for the resurrection of his wife after her death, and his belief that this would happen; but for this he had scriptural authority, while his intense affection for his wife, and uxurious passion, no doubt, assisted the delusion. After his death, his friends and the public, in charity, regarded him as deranged; yet his judgment, knowledge, and sincerity, were so highly respected, even while his opinions were verging on extravagance, that we have known a very sensible and well-informed person send a friend to him for instruction on the subject of baptism, as the more capable of the two,

Mr. Mills, who just escaped pollution by the energy of his friends, was a merchant, respected for his intelligence, wealth, and sincerity. Before he became acquainted with Mr. Pierson, he was a desponding Christian; Mr. Pierson was his instructor, and he became full of faith and hope, and, with Mr. Pierson, a disciple of Matthias; to whose views he devoted his house and fortune. His manners are gentlemanly, himself liberal and of an independent sincerity, which despises popular opinion when he believes himself right; and hence, sometimes, an extravagance in action. These qualities, decidedly good, are thus illustrated:—At Mr.

Pierson's house, just before the time of Matthias, humility became the subject of discourse; Mr. Mills remarked to this effect: "I am for doing, not for talking; we have too much talking and too little doing; I will kiss Isabella's feet," and suiting the action to the word, he forthwith kissed this middle aged, not handsome coloured woman's foot. The spirit of the act was the result of generous and noble feelings, but prostrated by fanaticism. We have this fact from one of his equals present, but confirmed by Isabella. Mr. Mills, as a disciple of Mr. Pierson or Matthias, was cheerful and happy, and thus improved in that particular.

Mr. B. Folger was a poor lad with an ordinary education; but brought up by rich relations of the same name, who assisted him in getting forward in life. By becoming a partner in a good house, he soon became rich, and respected as one of the first importing merchants of hardware in New York; but engaged in other speculating pursuits, especially latterly. From his success in business, and rather showy style of living, he necessarily became connected with the best society, and by being rather a handsome man, and acquiring a very polite manner, with considerable knowledge of business, and necessarily some knowledge of the world, he effectually concealed rather a defective education; his good temper, extreme politeness, kindness, for he has forwarded the interests of many poor men and families, and his generosity, chiefly in his religious connexion, established a strong feeling of sympathy in his favour, which would have been respect, but for recent events, and but for some vices and weaknesses in his character, which counterbalance his virtues, and which recent events are calculated to expose. Nine years ago this gentleman became a convert and made a particular profession of religion, and supported that profession by distributing tracts, attending Sunday-schools, prayer meetings, and meetings for experience, in which he expounded the Scriptures, and manifested on all occasions the greatest sincerity; especially as these religious exercises, and his connexion with a small church at Greenwich, could not forward his temporal interests, while they cost him large sums, as subscriptions to various religious objects connected with them.

Mrs. Folger is of a respectable family, merchants of the name of Disbrow, from whom she inherits, while her mother yet lives, \$16,000. There is nothing peculiar in the education or abilities of this lady; but her manners and voice, by description, are the most persuasive possible; she is gentleness itself, and appears to have been simple and artless as a girl, and particularly modest; the very last person we should suppose capable of the facts we have already named. She, too, was converted before her husband, and became a zealous member of various religious societies connected with charities, held prayer meetings in her house, contributed to the establishment and conducting of Sunday-schools, explained the Scriptures, and became in every sense an active, and sincere Christian; she, too, adopted Mr. Pierson's opinion, and always regarded him as an intelligent, sincere, and able man, even to the time of his death. The other disciples of Matthias, or members of the kingdom, were in more humble life, and not having the required time or money, could not be distinguished; except Isabella, the coloured woman, who had previously been noted in Mr. Latourette's meetings and at camp-meetings, for long and loud preaching and praying, remarkable for their influence in converting: she is well known among the Methodists, and while amongst them, or known to them, was much respected by them. Mr. Latourette assured us the influence of her speaking was miraculous, that even learned and respectable people were running after her; and she even commanded a larger audience than the celebrated Maffet, when both were preaching on the same ground, at the same time. The rest were Christians of good repute, with one exception.

NOTE.—On looking over our notes, we discover that Mrs. Laisdell, the daughter of Matthias, was bathed or washed, previous to her ceremonious union with Mr. B. Folger; this washing was performed by some of the females in the kingdom, but it was done expressly in preparation for the union. This and other facts to be mentioned, satisfy us, that, besides the ordinary weekly washings, this sort of baptism, or washing, was performed as a ceremony, accompanying a covenant or engagement; the subject was not, however, perfectly understood by Isabella and some others of the kingdom, whom we have seen; but whatever may have been the design of Matthias in introducing it, it became the means of subduing the feelings of delicacy common to women, among the females in the kingdom.

## CHAPTER II.

*Matthias and Mrs. Folger in love with each other—Mr. Pierson's Connubial prospects—Consequences of the Union of Mrs. Laisdell with Mr. B. Folger—Mr. Laisdell seeks his Wife—Curious proposition to him—The flight of Mr. Folger and Mrs. Laisdell—Pursuit of Mr. Laisdell—Excitement at Sing-Sing, and examination of Matthias, his daughter, and Mr. B. Folger—Laisdell obtains his wife, and returns to Albany—Friendly visit of Messrs. Voris and Prime to Mr. and Mrs. Folger—Mr. B. Folger's union with Catherine, with his wife's consent, and the singular manner in which it was carried on—Consequences of this union in the parlour—Mr. Folger's dissatisfaction with Catherine—Mr. and Mrs. Thompson admitted into the Kingdom—Their mutual discoveries and caution—Mrs. Thompson initiated into the mysteries of the Kingdom by Mrs. B. Folger—Internal discontent—Scene of jealousy and re-marriage of Matthias with Mrs. Folger singularly effected—A feast—Accident at Yonkers—Advantage taken of it by Mr. B. Folger, who obtains possession of his wife for one night—Singular effect—Mr. Thompson leaves Sing-Sing—Mrs. Thompson's timely escape from pollution.*

THE party, or Kingdom as it was called, appeared now perfectly happy; even Catherine seemed to forget her neglect, though she possibly received some private consolation: Mr. B. Folger was then living in the same family with three females, whom he had enjoyed as a husband; and his wife, with two men whom she had successively taken as husbands. She was warmly attached to Matthias, after their union, and the subject of her bliss formed a constant topic of conversation. She regarded all former connexions as nothing, and not only supposed, but declared, that she never knew a man but Matthias. For this fact, we have legal white evidence, and we instance it only to show the strength of the delusion and the effect of sentiment on the mind. Of Matthias she spoke with enthusiasm; and, like the followers of Mahomet, regarded him as supernatural, physically and mentally; he, she remarked on several occasions, and to *different* persons, could "enter the most Holy of Holy," and "penetrate to the Sanctum Sanctorum," speaking, we suppose, of his understanding. These were the precise terms used, and reported to us by different persons, who never could have thought of agreeing in these expressions, if not true; while, at the same time, we have no

reason to doubt the truth of those whom we have never detected in falsehood, and whose testimony, as in this very case, is supported by other evidence, with whom she was not connected. Matthias, too, was evidently in love; in spite of his sternness, his prophetic character, and deep design, which, we think, he frequently manifested. He called her by all endearing names: she would hang upon his neck, and at her instigation he took up her petty causes of discontent in the kitchen; listened to her complaints, and scolded Isabella in good set terms, even about washing; and committed all the follies that young love is capable of; which, as Isabella had no match spirit in the establishment, she had more opportunity, and felt more disposed to notice. What she formerly considered as spiritual attentions, she now perceived to be the beginning of carnal attachments. Such was his affection for her, and such it continued, that at a later period, after the death of Mr. Pierson, Matthias, when in the habit of pacing the passage in the Third-street house, frequently stopped at the front of a closet in that passage, and looking steadfastly at some of her garments, hanging there, has been seen to embrace them, and once was seen to kiss them. And now we may so far anticipate the narrative, as to say, that this reality of practical love, between Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger, is the key which unlocks the mystery about the neglect of Mr. Pierson. He was neglected, because the only two persons who had authority in the house, were *courting* or spending a long honeymoon. For the same reason, Mr. Folger could not get his breakfast in time, but was sometimes pacing the passage, and waiting for Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger, coming out of their bedroom. The work of the house was thrown back by their delays in the morning, and by Mrs. B. Folger doing less household employment, and spending large portions of her time toying with Matthias. This had nearly caused Isabella's leaving the Kingdom, as she did nearly all the hard work, and received no wages; but had all things in common. Her duty, however, was in the kitchen, and when she once complained, especially of the late breakfasts, that it threw her back in her work, she re-

ceived this characteristic reply, viz. : " that she should be furnished with his and Mother's spirit, so that if they laid in bed, their spirits should be with her, and enable her to do twice the work in half the time." This was said to Isabella in Matthias' bedroom, where he and Mrs. Folger were then in bed ; for as the fire was lighted in their room before they got up, she was frequently there while they were in bed. This anecdote, more than any other, has raised a doubt in us both as to the sincerity of Matthias and Mrs. Folger, who admitted the excuse, and frequently repeated it. Setting aside sincerity, it was certainly a good joke upon a coloured woman, and calculated to induce her to do more labour with less opportunities. It was a good trick to subdue her dissatisfaction ; but it certainly also disturbed her faith : both in that and the love affair, she had no faith ; she did not believe in the coming of a holy child, where so much carnal affection and weakness were shown ; nor did she believe in a double spirit, when self-indulgence dictated the liberal donation.

Mr. Pierson was happy in anticipation ; he was decidedly uxorious ; his deep affection for his wife was founded in constitution and desire, as well as in the mind. His form was what phrenologists call amative ; and of these facts we have some very curious proofs. His affections were, however, concentrated wholly on his wife ; and hence his extreme grief at her loss. To this loss his friends attribute his after sickness, accompanied with fits, and his strange hallucination of mind on religious subjects ; for he continued apparently of sound mind, for all secular purposes. His sincerity and religious faith, and code of morals, forbid the indulgence of his passions after his wife's death, while the strength of those passions constantly reminded him of his loss : the proof of this fact is in our possession, but cannot with propriety be published. Nor did his grief for his wife subside, till he conceived the agreeable but curious idea that her spirit would occupy another body ; and that he should again be united to her in another form : and this delusion was strengthened by Mrs. B. Folger in every way. The lady referred to, who was the innocent subject of

this imaginary transfer of spirit, was alike ignorant of the workings of both the minds of Mrs. B. Folger and Mr. Pierson, till we pointed out the connexion between Mrs. B. Folger's two notes, mentioned in our first part, and Mr. Pierson's direct application both to this lady and her husband in the name of the Lord, to be given up to him. On pointing out this connexion, and the fact that the subject was seriously entertained at Sing-Sing, by the leaders in the *kingdom*, that lady suddenly exclaimed, "I see it," and then mentioned that Mrs. B. Folger was the general contriver of their proximities; to which she then attached no importance. Mr. Pierson then was happy, in the prospect of this union, which he imagined was the will of God: he made several visits to this lady, but being naturally modest, except on the last occasion, merely invited her to Sing-Sing; but his pretensions to this lady, we know to have been encouraged by Mrs. B. Folger, if not by the other inmates of Sing-Sing.

Happy as the parties now were, it wants very little penetration to perceive that in that society were the elements of disorder, and frightful consequences; the machinery was imperfect and had not worked well, and some disappointments seemed calculated to prostrate the whole plan, and defy the bold efforts of Matthias to keep the kingdom in peace, composed as it was. The most unfortunate affair seemed to be the previous marriage of Matthias' daughter. The reader may easily perceive that the first squall would come from that quarter. Mrs. Laisdell had left her home, with her brothers, on a visit to their father; the mother had refused to come, and the daughter was to have informed her of the situation of her husband, and prospect of the family. In the ardour of love or passion these difficulties appear to have been jumped over, and Matthias solemnly sealed these difficulties by the formal union, at which he assisted; apparently regardless of consequences. After this marriage, which took place in the winter of 1833, the family left Sing-Sing for New York, leaving Isabella and Catherine Galloway with Matthias' boys, and other young people; with whom it appears she had a great deal of trouble. At

this period Catherine Galloway told Isabella of her previous claims on Mr. B. Folger, and of the workings of the spirit, or rather of her spirit, on the relation of Mrs. Folger's story. There is no proof, however, that Mr. Pierson ever knew of this connexion between Catherine and Mr. B. Folger; and this apparent secreting, even in the kingdom, is not very favourable to the supposition of positive sincerity, or consciousness of right.

The union of Mr. B. Folger with Mrs. Laisdell had taken place early in January, 1834; no information was sent to Mrs. Matthias for three weeks, and then only a meagre note from Mr. B. Folger, informing her that the children were well, and no more money would be sent, as Matthias disapproved it; (Mr. B. Folger had promised to send money monthly.) But in this note no notice was taken of Mrs. Laisdell; this we learn from Mrs. Matthias. On the receipt of this note, it appears the husband, Mr. Laisdell, set out for Sing-Sing. On his arrival there, he was not permitted to enter the house, then in charge of Isabella, who acted under general instructions. Laisdell was an English mechanic, a combmaker, not very exalted in his notions of dignity, and perhaps a little awed at the elegance of the house, and the supposed wealth and power of the party's circumstances, which would not affect a Yankee in low circumstances. He obtained nothing satisfactory from Isabella, who could not be faithful to both parties; and as she was put in trust by Mr. B. Folger and Matthias, she preferred serving them, or at least not committing them on her own responsibility: she therefore kept him at bay for two days, and on the third sent word to the family at New York, that Laisdell had come; and in the mean time gave him no satisfactory answer. Not being permitted to enter the house in the absence of the proprietors, he endeavoured to attract the attention of Matthias' sons, then in the house or garden, and learn from them what he in vain sought of Isabella; while she, who has much energy, considerable shrewdness, and great strength of body, endeavoured to keep the boys out of his way. The manœuvres of these parties at this time, must have attracted the attention of the villagers;

for though the house is a considerable distance from the village on the New York road, Laisdell was for several days skulking about the house, and backwards and forwards to the village; and not being bound to secrecy, or very philosophic, he of course told all he knew, and awakened the curiosity of the people, some of whom also wandered about the house, and advised with Laisdell. On the knowledge of Laisdell's arrival at Sing-Sing, Mr. Pierson and Matthias then in New York, came up to Sing-Sing, still leaving Mr. B. Folger and his newly-acquired bride, Mrs. Laisdell, in New York, to make the most of their time. On their arrival, Laisdell was admitted into the house, but Isabella was seriously scolded by Matthias for not treating Laisdell more severely, and for sending for them: for whatever he might think, he behaved as if he had a right to give this man's wife away to Mr. B. Folger, and as if the other ought to submit without grumbling. Pierson, however, gave him money, and made several propositions to him; one of which was that he should return to England to see his friends, for which purpose money should be provided; another was, that he should return to Albany, purchase instruments and the raw materials, and that he should then come again to Sing-Sing, and set up business, for which money should be provided: and to this last he assented, without ever seeing his wife. And while these arrangements were in progress, he made himself comfortable, chiefly, however, in the kitchen; where he became very talkative, even to his old enemy, Isabella, who had kept him at bay during the absence of the family. Matthias, too, lectured him considerably, speaking to him with authority mixed with kindness; himself assuming a superiority, and treating Laisdell like a boy, who ought to submit without trouble. What they told him about his wife, we don't know; but we do know that he was neither invited to New York, nor was there any intention of bringing her to Sing-Sing, nor did they explain to him how she was situated. In two or three days Laisdell was furnished with money, and left the place at Sing-Sing to return to Albany for the purpose before mentioned. Now, whether this was done merely to gain time, or in per-

sincerity, with the strange expectation that this husband, being thus engaged, would quietly give up his wife, and remain in the same neighbourhood, and perhaps become one of the family, or kingdom, we know not; but this fact, together with the fact of Matthias sending for his wife and family, to be similarly situated, has always struck us as a proof of his sincerity, and, at the same time, of his assurance, his consummate impudence, and high opinion of himself: for no man, without a conceit reaching almost to madness, would think of sending for a wife, children, and son-in-law, while he and his daughter were living in the interchange of matrimonial enjoyments with others in the same house. However, the fact is positive, and our readers must draw what conclusions they please. Laisdell left the house for Albany without his wife, and Matthias returned to New York, leaving Mr. Pierson at Sing-Sing.

After the lapse of a few days, when it was supposed that Laisdell was in Albany, Isabella discovered a figure like him, idling on the road near the house, and talking to a neighbour, Mr. Hatfield; and Isabella pointing him out to Mr. Pierson; that gentleman went to look after him, and found that it really was Laisdell himself, the real Simon Pure. Mr. Pierson brought him home, dined him, pretended to believe his tale, (of his being too late for the coach, &c.) and gave him more money, and took him down to Sing-Sing, in order to see him in a fair way of starting; but after Mr. Pierson left him, he altered his tact, under advice previously given. His manners and habits certainly did not command respect; it was evident he liked beer quite as well as his wife; and it was equally clear, that he was foolish enough to enter into a strange engagement, and unfaithful enough to break it. Still his stay in the village excited much curiosity, and himself a good deal of sympathy; perhaps, too, he did not tell how he got the money he was spending. The whole village appeared excited: crowds walked out to see the house; but all was mystery within. Laisdell at length applied to law, and set out for New York in search of his wife, at No. 8 Third-street. He was not admitted, and even threatened by Matthias, as

He had broken his promise; and the family, to avoid his annoyance, and the service of a writ, fled to Sing-Sing, leaving Laisdell again in the lurch, and without his wife. Laisdell, however, followed up, and arrived again in Sing-Sing. As these things became known in the village, the excitement of course increased; crowds assembled about the premises; the hill which overhung or overlooked the house, was peopled; the enclosures were violated by some, and great numbers thronged the road and lane leading to the house: while Laisdell, now assisted by the civil power, had the means of compelling the parties to appear before a magistrate. The carriage was now got ready, and the family, with great reluctance, got in and drove off to Mr. Crosby's tavern, at the top of the hill, where the magistrates then sat. On the road, the carriage was of course followed by the mob, previously assembled, hooting, hallooing, and implicating Matthias, on whom the whole weight of the displeasure of the people fell, while Mr. B. Folger, the most culpable in this case, not only escaped their violence, but was enabled to protect Matthias. The family, including Mrs. B. Folger and Mrs. Laisdell, who was very unwilling to leave Sing-Sing, determined to prolong her stay, if possible. They relied on the promise of Laisdell, to come there and live, and on the wishes of Mrs. Laisdell, to remain; and this evidence she gave in court, concealing the real case, by stating that she preferred staying with her brothers, and wished her husband to come there to live, as he had promised: but Laisdell, being unwilling, and proving his marriage by a certificate, obtained his wife; and set off for Albany, from whence he had been absent three weeks. Thus Mr. B. Folger retained possession of Mrs. Laisdell about six weeks from the day of her leaving Albany, in January, 1834, to her return.

In a visit which we recently made to Sing-Sing, these facts were confirmed, as far as was known outside the house, and by this accordance we again test the truth of the narrative. Mrs. Laisdell, on her return home, informed her mother, Mrs. Matthias, of her father's new connexion, and the situation of her brothers: and when these brothers

afterward returned home, the younger, John, mentioned the case of Mr. Folger sleeping with his sister on the road; but these boys, and the men engaged chiefly out of doors on the farm, were not generally intimate with the in-door transactions.

As to the family, a different fate awaited them. Matthias continued to be mobbed, and it required all the energy of Mr. and Mrs. Folger to protect him from personal violence.

The next day Messrs. Voris and Prime, (the former a respectable lawyer, and the latter a teacher in Sing-Sing,) visited Mr. B. Folger, in the morning, for the purpose of offering their friendly aid and advice, and anxiously desiring the dismissal of Matthias, as the supposed cause of the various suspicions: for some of the bolder people now declared their belief of the facts we have related; viz. that Matthias had taken Mrs. B. Folger; and Mr. B. Folger, Matthias' daughter, even though a married woman! Isabella saw these gentlemen approaching the house, and knowing that Matthias and Mrs. Folger were yet in bed, and together! and being unwilling, as she expressed herself, that they should be caught in this situation—for their connexion, though known to the *kingdom*, was not acknowledged to the world, or among the devils, as the whole family, in imitation of Matthias, were accustomed to call other people: and in this, perhaps, Matthias gave more offence to many individuals than by his associations;—Isabella being unwilling that they should be so caught, hastened into their room, to which she had access, as before explained, and gave the necessary information: on which, Mrs. B. Folger hurriedly assumed her garments; while Isabella went to call Mr. B. Folger, also in bed. He and Mrs. B. Folger then received their visitors, and not very kindly declined their services; in fact, they considered their offers as obtrusive: the parties had then no wish to alter their circumstances, and regarded advice, out of the kingdom, as the advice of devils.

After the departure of Mrs. Laisdell, Mr. B. Folger returned to Catherine Galloway, with the knowledge and assistance of Mrs. B. Folger, who again discovered that they

were matched spirits: she assisted in making up clothes for her, and adorned her naturally rather plain person in the best manner; and apparently took so much interest in her happiness, as to inquire after her wedded enjoyments, as proofs of their being matched spirits. This extreme attention to personal pleasures, among the adults, led to a partial neglect of others in the household, or kingdom, at a later period. Thus Mr. Pierson's daughter was made to wear some garments made from rejected clothes of Catherine, after Catherine dressed well, and spent a large portion of her time in the parlour; while this child, then only ten years old, did considerable of the chamber-work, and even washed the outside stoop to their handsome establishment; which, we suppose, Catherine would have done had there been less love. We do not know that this union was known or approved by Mr. Pierson, as before expressed, at least there is no proof of it: it was not openly avowed, but it was the frequent subject of conversation between Catherine and Isabella, and occasionally mentioned or referred to by Mrs. B. Folger, to one or other or both together, of the other two. Catherine slept avowedly with Elizabeth, Mr. Pierson's daughter, the child before mentioned, in the north wing; Mr. B. Folger slept over Matthias' room, and Matthias and Mrs. Folger slept in the front parlour. Catherine used to get from her bed, leaving the child, and went up to Mr. B. Folger's room: this the child not only knew, but talked about; it is true she was but a child, but we think Mrs. B. Folger, who had the charge of this child, ought not to have placed her in such a situation.

With regard to several members of the kingdom, no secrecy was attempted. At a late period, in Third-street, Isabella would frequently go into Mr. Folger's room with Catherine, and remain there till Mr. B. Folger came up, when she retired, and saw the door locked on them both, no reserve being thought necessary in her case: The consequence, too, of this intercourse was a miscarriage on the part of Catherine; which unfortunately occurred in the parlour, in a full meeting of the kingdom, when Matthias was lecturing. As this was a very early miscarriage, it

was attended with a little sickness only, and Elizabeth, the child, was made to attend her, and even to wash her garments. Its consequences, in the parlour, were observed by the child before mentioned; who spoke of the occurrence as singular, without understanding it; and yet she performed part of the washing which this circumstance occasioned.

It does not appear that Mr. B. Folger was ever fond of Catherine, but took her merely as a substitute; or, as Isabella coarsely expresses herself, as a hack. Catherine, on the contrary, appears to have been extremely fond of Mr. B. Folger: he was indeed a handsome man, but rather effeminate—only, however, in appearance; of extremely pleasing manners, very polite, and very generous: while she was a woman of no conversation, nor of any qualifications, but those fit for the kitchen. The consequence was, a dissatisfaction on the part of Mr. B. Folger: he found that he had given up an extremely pleasing female to his bearded friend; and got, in exchange, a woman whom he did not value. In spite of Mrs. B. Folger's and Catherine's discovering that Catherine was the match spirit to Benjamin, (as Mrs. B. Folger used to call her husband,) this dissatisfaction was shown, by Mr. B. Folger, not towards Catherine, but towards Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger, whom he now evidently wished to recover. This, we have no doubt, was foreseen by Mrs. B. Folger; and hence her anxiety to adorn Catherine, and to please her husband through her; for in all these transactions, besides the teachings of the Spirit, we generally perceive some human passion or principle at work, to which the teachings of the Spirit seem subservient. Indeed this is the danger of the doctrine of supposing feelings supernatural, or the effects of the Spirit of God; they are liable to be mistaken or confounded. Mr. B. Folger's dissatisfaction evidently increased, till the final breaking up of the kingdom, of which it was the cause; and, in its progress, produced singular scenes and curious effects. Of course it began in gentle murmurs, which gradually rose to a storm, and even a hurricane; when a calm would ensue, to be succeeded by other murmurs, storms,

and hurricanes: while the terms of peace were often curious, and quite characteristic, involving singular violations of decorum, and curious reasonings and self-deceptions, to reconcile practices even to an altered code of morals. Indulgences were granted to Mr. B. Folger by Mrs. B. Folger, as the terms of peace; but these will be illustrated as we progress in this singular narrative.

In the spring of 1833, the *kingdom* was increased by a family from Albany. Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, (before mentioned,) with their young children, joined them, as an experiment. Mr. Thompson was a combmaker in Albany; he had seen Matthias there, and knew something of him: he heard of the wealth of the parties at Sing-Sing through Matthias' wife, Laisdell, and the family; and he held some peculiar notions about the advantages of living in the country and in families. About March, or soon after Mrs. Laisdell had returned home, he visited Sing-Sing, and then made arrangements to bring his family and be admitted into the kingdom; he to be employed about the farm, and his wife in needle-work. We have seen both the husband and wife, but at different periods, and not in each other's presence, but in the presence of other persons. Mr. Thompson does not profess to have believed in the supernatural character of Matthias; but he had no objection to the principle, that heaven should be upon earth, or that men should be as comfortable as possible; and that large families were, by united efforts, best calculated to effect that object. He had no objection to some of the doctrines of Matthias, and could see no great harm in Matthias holding any curious notions, provided he was at liberty himself, and nothing more required of him but *hearing*; at least, he was willing to make the trial; and his wife necessarily came along with him, without any particular profession. Mr. Thompson did not know, at first, the connexion between Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger, nor that between Mr. B. Folger and Catherine, when he took his family. He soon, however, made these discoveries; but at first flattered himself that his wife could not see them, and consequently would remain with a mind uncontaminated; and he even reproved her for some obser-

vations she made, which raised a suspicion of that kind. Thus he flattered himself on his own shrewdness, while she made far greater discoveries than he did; but prudently made a timely retreat, after some initiating instruction.

Mrs. Thompson had all to learn and much to discover. She soon perceived that Mrs. B. Folger did not sleep with her husband: she next observed, that there was but one chamber in which she could sleep, unless with Matthias; and in that chamber china was placed on the bed after using; and she was much struck to find the china apparently in the same position on a successive morning. In order to satisfy herself on this point, this lady, with very natural curiosity, made an experiment. She placed some pieces of china in a particular position on the bed; and then her curiosity was satisfied, by finding, on the following day, those pieces retained precisely the same position. Thus, while Mr. Thompson was flattering himself on his superior shrewdness, and was very cunning to keep his wife in the dark, she had actually proved what he had only suspected. This experiment was, however, wholly unnecessary; the union of Matthias with Mrs. B. Folger became a subject of conversation afterward, between the latter and Mrs. Thompson, as Mrs. Thompson says; to her Mrs. B. Folger acknowledged, that the union was of her seeking—that she had seen the two volumes of smoke *unite* in one—that she had visions, and that God instructed her how to act; and, as we before observed, advised Mrs. Thompson to go to the father (Matthias) for interpretations, if she (Mrs. Thompson) had visions, dreams, &c. To her Mrs. B. Folger declared the superior powers of Matthias, and affirmed that there was no man but him, and that even her husband was not a man: and such open avowals, based upon divine teachings, or impressions, admitted, of course, of questions being asked, and some would very naturally arise. Thus Mrs. Thompson asked, “But when you go to New-York, where your husband is, do you not sleep with him?” To this question was answered, “Yes;” and then a justification, by observing that *Benjamin* was but a child, he could do her no harm; it was only like a mother sleeping with her son.

These were the subjects of frequent conversations, with singular illustrations. "The Spirit," she observed, "worked with Matthias, but it did not work with Benjamin." Thus was Mrs. Thompson being initiated into the whole of the mysteries, while her husband was arriving at the same information by observations, reflections, and more cautious conversations with Mr. Pierson and Matthias.

We have no acquaintance with these persons, we never saw them before or afterward: they are attached to Mr. and Mrs. Folger, and only gave us this information in conversation, as not being bound to secrecy. The strength, then, of this additional testimony is, *in its perfect accordance* with what we before knew; for, as strangers, we could not have relied on their single testimony, however respectable and artless they might appear: but as their testimony was individual, and apparently disinterested, with a feeling in favour even of all the parties, including Matthias and Mr. and Mrs. Folger, and as that testimony accords with Isabella's, we regard it as good evidence, from the *impossibility* of its being otherwise; for amusing or slanderous falsehoods would not accord with each other.

Soon after Thompson came to Sing-Sing, (he believes on the first Sunday,) he witnessed a curious jealous fit of Mr. B. Folger, and a singular termination. Of course we can only relate a portion of what took place. Mr. B. Folger's discontent, on this occasion, rose to such a height, that he denied Matthias' right to Mrs. Folger, and high words and angry feelings ensued: but as Mr. B. Folger had a legal claim to the lady, Matthias could use only spiritual weapons; and he alternately denounced judgments with a high hand and a strong voice, and appealed to the sympathy of Mr. B. Folger, and to his religious faith. The family, it appears, had received anonymous letters, threatening Matthias, and treating him as an impostor; and Mr. B. Folger, in his angry moments, applied similar epithets. Matthias, in great fury on this occasion, stalked about the place, cursing with all his soul; and collecting the various letters, and some other documents, thrust them into the fire, denouncing the most horrid curses upon their authors,

and then upon Mr. B. Folger and others who had not faith in his prophetic character; he cursed also the quills, and goose that supplied the quills for these writings. This scene, however, thus terminated.

It is evident Matthias could not retain Mrs. B. Folger by violence, and these paroxysms of passion and curses only served to subdue the spirit of Mr. B. Folger, and perhaps allay his passion by the creating of fear, lest he should really be opposing God's anointed. Matthias appealed to his sensibilities and to his own superior character: and when all was calm, Matthias solemnly observed, "I grieve in the spirit for a bosom companion." Some conversation then arose with him and Mr. B. Folger about the object; when Matthias declared, that there was but *one* person of sufficient purity of mind for him, or suitable to his character, in fact his match spirit, and that was Mrs. B. Folger. Matthias added, "You know I have declared Ann (Mrs. B. Folger) to be the MOTHER." To this Mr. B. Folger replied, "Thy will be done;" and Matthias rejoined, "I have not found such great faith, no, not in Israel." And Mrs. B. Folger was thus a second time deliberately given up to Matthias by her husband's consent; and the covenant was sealed by the ceremony of washing or baptizing: and Mr. B. Folger was, on this occasion, solemnly washed, in the manner before described, by the *conjoint* services of Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger, and this was known to the whole household. The washing part is, indeed, the only portion that Isabella has spoken to, as the rest took place in the parlour while she was in the kitchen; but she knew the rest by report, which accorded with the information we had received from other sources.

While Thompson was there, another occurrence took place, to which he attaches some importance, but in which we can see nothing but a good dinner. A fatted calf was ready for the knife, and Matthias chose to make it a time of rejoicing and amusement. He called the season a feast, and Mr. Thompson one of the Levites, and *ordained* him butcher on the occasion. The fatted calf was killed, various Scripture names were given to the parties, and the flesh

in various forms, roast, boiled, and stewed, with suitable accompaniments: and the whole family, including those who worked out of doors, sat down to table, making more than twenty. Of the adults were Matthias, Mr. Pierson, Mr. and Mrs. Folger, Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, and Henry, a young Englishman, now in Ohio, and, from his long residence, acquainted with most of these facts. Catherine and Isabella were also there; the latter taking the head of the table, next to Matthias, by invitation, as, from accident, every other place was filled before she came to the table. Of juniors, there were Matthias' children; Elizabeth, Mr. Pierson's daughter; Mr. Folger's children, Mr. Thompson's children, and Catherine's by her late husband. This feast received a Scriptural name, but we do not identify it with any fixed principle, belief, or practice.

In June, 1834, an event occurred which immediately decided Mr. Thompson on leaving the kingdom, after a sojourn of little more than three weeks. Matthias, his son, and Mr. and Mrs. Folger, were returning to Sing-Sing, from New York, in their carriage, when an accident occurred, and the carriage broke down, some distance from Yonkers. Matthias took advantage of this circumstance, as he did of most others, to enforce his authority. His son had been appointed driver, but Mr. B. Folger chose to conduct the carriage, and was in the act of driving when the accident occurred; and to this act of disobedience Matthias ascribed the mischance. With him every one in the family was ordained to some duty or office, and any deviation from this was considered an act of disobedience. We believe he was judicious in his appointments, and suited the employment to the person; while he, as the Father, and Mrs. B. Folger, as the Mother, directed all, and received the homage due to each. Matthias, on this accident, was out of temper, and ascribed it wholly to a curse resting on disobedience. But he had other causes of discontent; for this accident obliged the party to remain at Yonkers, where they put up at Mr. Christfield's store and tavern, who assisted them with their broken carriage, and engaged to carry them forward the next day. The tavernkeeper, knowing the par-

ties, provided a double bed for Mr. and Mrs. Folger and on the same floor provided other beds, for Matthias, Catherine, and the boy. We have, since then, seen these rooms, and obtained some facts from the landlord. Thus, without an open declaration of the peculiar situation of the parties, for which, it appears, they were not prepared, Mr. B. Folger was obliged to sleep with his wife. We do not know that Matthias laid him under any injunction, or heavy curses, as we believe he did on some other occasions, when under trial of his faith; and when under these circumstances, he was permitted to enjoy the presence of his wife in bed, but denied the privileges of a husband, under the severest curses which Matthias could bestow, and the fear of which, he supposed, would destroy passion or desire in Mr. B. Folger; from which he then inferred the will of God, that he, Mr. B. Folger, was not her match spirit. We believe this to have been practised, but we do not know the consequences; Matthias, we suspect, deceived himself. On this occasion, Mr. B. Folger laboured under no curse; perhaps he contrived to keep in company till bedtime, and thus avoided an injunction. Matthias, however, pretended to have confidence in him, and the parties went to bed as the landlord had arranged. In the morning Matthias crossed the passage, opened the door of Folger's room, and demanded if "all was well." Thus much we must have put up with, had Mrs. Folger held her tongue; but Mrs. Thompson relates, that she told the affair to her; and added, that she felt utterly prostrate in the morning, with no power to rise or get up, till Matthias assisted her: and we believe she was going to say, until she was purified or washed; but finding that she could not mention the subject to her own mind, she broke off, declaring it impossible to explain herself; indeed we found that she had already said more than we had a right to expect, and her very confusion looked as if she had been betrayed into the truth. We have since found that Catherine, who slept on the same floor, and whose curiosity prompted her to make observations, confirms this testimony.

The next day the family set forward in two carriages:

The ~~other~~ driven by Mr. Christfield, with Mrs. B. Folger and Catherine in it; and the other by Mr. B. Folger. Matthias being out of humour, declined riding, and obstinately refused the continued entreaties of Mr. B. Folger; who at length drove on, and left him on foot, having about eighteen miles to walk. Mr. Christfield having left the family, returned with the carriage, and met Matthias on his journey, with whom he conversed some time. And here we discover a characteristic trait of Matthias; for he repeated his inquiries about the journey, putting the question several times, "Was there *no accident?*" which suggested to Mr. Christfield the idea, that Matthias would have been pleased if there had been. This is perfectly characteristic; Matthias' great influence lay in the heartiness of his curses, and in his adroitness in interpreting natural or accidental events as the results of his judgments. While Matthias was at the tavern, he assumed a superior deportment; and informed Mr. Christfield that all was under his direction, and that he would pay his bill. In the mean time Mr. B. Folger had paid the bill; and this being discharged, Mr. Christfield was not particularly sympathetic with Matthias' resolution to walk.

On the arrival of the party at Sing-Sing, Matthias' conduct became the subject of conversation to the family, then sitting down to dinner, and Mr. Pierson immediately despatched a man with a horse to meet him. But Mr. Thompson perceiving no prospect of great comfort from the divisions in the family, and from Matthias' authoritative, or rather tyrannical manner, at once resolved to leave the house; and taking leave of the party, went off, even before Matthias returned; leaving, however, his wife, till he could make arrangements for her removal. The authoritative manner of Matthias was, no doubt, a sufficient reason for his removal, and this he assigned to us; but he had other sufficient reasons, one of which he gave to Isabella when preparing for his departure: he observed, "There is too much changing of wives here; I have a nice little woman, and I should not much like to lose her." Nor was this said without reason: his little wife was looked at, as a victim of love or

lost, by the chief members in the kingdom. Mr. B. Folger had noticed her significantly; Mrs. B. Folger had instructed her in some of the mysteries; and Matthias had at least attempted to corrupt her mind; while Mr. Pierson had some pretensions to her, as he was partly in despair of obtaining the lady for whom he had so long waited. These are rather inferences than facts; but they are fair inferences, when all the circumstances are known and considered.

Mr. B. Folger had been disappointed in Matthias' daughter: he was not satisfied with Catherine; and although he had twice given up his wife formally, he never lost his affection for her, nor did she lose her influence over him; he was consequently in a constant state of irritation; for while he professed a belief in Matthias' power, he yet could not acquiesce in the substitution of a very plain, unpolished woman, for his fascinating wife. Events, too, turned the mind of Mr. Pierson on the same subject. He had been very happy in his marriage; nor could he be reconciled to the death of his wife, till he was amused with the thought of again possessing her spirit in the person of another: and when there appeared but little hope of possessing his first object, he became unsettled, and sometimes even thought to rival Matthias; and even expressed an opinion that he ought to have been the Father, and that Mrs. B. Folger ought to have been his; and in despair of this, turned his attention to Mrs. Thompson, without, perhaps, her knowing it; for Mr. Pierson was always extremely modest in his deportment, and never gave her any offence, but sometimes paid her little attentions. But this subject was discussed with Matthias, especially with Mr. B. Folger; and it was long agitating, whether Mrs. Thompson should be given up to Mr. Pierson, or to Mr. B. Folger; and this was only prevented by her timely removal, at her wish, when she became acquainted with some of these facts. It is true that we should not present this subject to the public as facts, on the evidence we possess in relation to any other set of people, nor should we believe it of other people; but there is no reason for disbelieving it, in relation to these

persons, for it is consistent with their former and after conduct, and of which we have positive proof; and we venture to say, could we see Mr. Pierson's diary, it would contain evidence of what we have now asserted. This diary has been denied us, while it has been the subject of conversation, and much stranger things have thus been revealed from that source.

In addition to the testimony of Isabella on this subject, we get at the following facts:—Mr. Thompson related to us the doctrine of Matthias on the subject of marriage, and their effects, as extremely artful, based on apparently lofty morals and high pretensions to superior power and divine wisdom; but, in their progress, calculated to overcome the barriers to female purity, which might be abused at any time. There is no proof of Matthias' incontinence to Mrs. B. Folger, but his opinions might be applied to a community of females, if he had chosen, after the manner of Mahomet. He then mentioned, that Matthias had thus attempted to overcome the modesty of his wife; who herself told us, that she had objected to any bathing ceremony: but Matthias, in talking to her on this subject, had reproved her for her pride, obstinacy, and improper thoughts; he said to her, "You have a little devil about you, which I shall sometime see, in spite of your present pride." And this her husband interprets as referring to the exposure of her person. And yet he then entertained considerable respect for Matthias, at least no ill-will; and hoped, in treating on the account of the kingdom, that we should not be too severe on the *old man*, as he did not think him worse than others in the kingdom.

Mr. Thompson, it will be observed, went away from Sing-Sing, partly on suspicions of this sort, but left his wife till he could make arrangements for her departure. Previous to her husband's resolution she had reason to suspect some such design; but as the approaches were gradual, and the language doubtful, there was an uncertainty as to the intention of the party. Mrs. Thompson then informed us, that Mr. B. Folger would sometimes walk under the portico in front of the house with Matthias, and vent his disappoin-

ment that he had given up his wife, and had no suitable match spirit, for he could not be content with Catherine: and Matthias would comfort him, urge him to patience, and assure him that God would provide a match spirit for him; and on one occasion assured him, that perhaps that very house contained such a match spirit. He frequently repeated, that Elizabeth (Mrs. Thompson's name) and Benjamin were Scripture names, and indicated a likeness of spirit. And these conversations, part of which were frequently heard, she understood as referring to her. And after her husband's departure, the doors were locked and bolted, at perfect variance with Matthias' former doctrines, which despised locks and bolts; and, in explanation, Matthias observed, "If I have a tender lamb, and I see a wolf coming to take it, shall I not take care of her?" This, too, Mrs. Thompson understood as referring to her; but the bolts might also have reference to his unpopularity in Sing-Sing. Matthias also distinctly told her, that her husband was not her match spirit. Now this lady may have been mistaken in some of her conclusions, but she could not be in others. On her husband's return, she immediately acquainted him with her suspicions, and he removed her as soon as possible.

Our explanation of this strange affair is this. Matthias had taken Mrs. B. Folger, at her will, for his own pleasure. To justify this he was obliged to enforce and enlarge upon his former doctrines, of the marriage of devils, match spirits, &c. His doctrine of heaven upon earth led to personal enjoyments, which, in the weak and perverted minds of some of the establishment, led to voluptuousness, as yielding the greatest enjoyment, and hence a gross sensuality pervaded the whole establishment. Mr. Pierson was disappointed; and Mr. B. Folger clamorous—deceived in obtaining a plain widow, instead of a beautiful virgin, and impatient at his disappointment. Matthias was led to adopt any measures to satisfy the parties; and like many others, only sought how to get out of present difficulties, even at the risk of others. But let the interpretation be what it will, the facts remain unaltered, and may be relied on, that Matthias was

pondering upon the propriety of inducing Mrs. Thompson to give herself up to either Mr. Pierson or Mr. B. Folger, with whom conferences were held on the subject; and, as we before observed, we venture to say, that Mr. Pierson's diary will contain evidence of this. The other facts, whatever conclusions may be drawn from them, may be equally relied on; and therefore our conclusion, if not correct, is at least according to evidence, in the circumstances of the party; but every reader will, of course, draw his own conclusion.

*NOTE.*—When Mrs. Thompson was preparing to leave Sing-Sing, Mrs. B. Folger, aware that she carried with her some secrets of the kingdom, which it appears she was not desirous should be made public, said to her, amongst other things, "Well, you are going to leave us; now what can you say you have seen here? you cannot say you have seen me sleeping with Father Matthias, can you?" To which Mrs. Thompson says she replied, "No, ma'am, I cannot say I ever saw you sleeping together; I have only seen you in Matthias' room in your nightclothes, and with your shoes and stockings off."

## CHAPTER III.

*Mr. Hunt's defence, and account of the business transactions of Mr. Pierson and Mr. B. H. Folger—Land speculations—Mr. Pierson's curious manner of doing business—Globe stove factory; causes of loss—Magnificent scheme of a Temple—Mr. Folger's jealousy—His resolution—Singular dialogue and uproar in the kingdom—His resolution of Mr. Folger, indulged by Mrs. Folger—The village in commotion—Matthias shaved—Mrs. Folger's distress—Matthias driven from Sing-Sing—Mr. Pierson's pretensions to be the Father—Mrs. Folger rejoins Matthias in New York; her anxiety about him; with child with a supposed holy son; pretensions to be freed from sickness—Management of the property in the kingdom—Strange infatuation of Mr. Pierson and Mr. Folger relative to Mr. Hunt's claims—Mr. Hunt referred to Matthias about his claims—forces a settlement by a suit at law—Mr. Hunt applied to, to write for Mr. B. Folger, before Col. Stone—Mr. Hunt's opinions of the parties and circumstances.*

WHILE the events which we have been relating were in progress, there were others of a distinct nature, contemporary, which we have not mentioned, because they were principally unconnected with the events we have related; and their introduction would have spoiled the unity of those transactions which bore upon each other. We must now, however, introduce another person, and with him the history of his connexion with Matthias, Mr. Pierson, and Mr. B. Folger.

In pages 247, 8, 9, of Mr. Stone's book we find the following:

"There is no doubt of the fact, that there were a set of thorough-bred knaves hanging about the skirts of Pierson and Folger, more especially the former; a knot of harpies, who, availing themselves of the delusion by which those gentlemen were blinded, sported with their credulity, under pretext of joining the association, but in reality to plunder them of their property. Such an impression has long been entertained by those conversant with their pecuniary concerns; and when circumstances previously known are compared with some of the private but imperfect memoranda left by Mr. Pierson, the proof is as clear as could be de-

said, that there was indeed a combination of robbers who plundered them, though the evidence is not exactly such as can bring home the facts, in a legal form, to a court and jury. The loose papers, just referred to, contain various entries of moneys advanced, or rather given, to these people. To one individual, on a certain occasion, he gave the sum of one thousand dollars, by direction, as he supposed, of the Holy Spirit, and with a promise, from the same source, that he should receive threofold in return. Pierson and Folger were likewise inveigled into various unfortunate speculations in patented inventions, by which many sums of money were lost. What some of these unlucky adventures were, the reader will discover by the following prayer, taken from the papers of the former:—

“*Nov. 12th, 1833.* Spirit of Truth! guide us into the right way concerning the globe stove, self-loading cart, and planing machine. Manifest thy mind concerning these things, that we may know and do thy pleasure.

“I ask that the evil spirits may have no power to hinder the successful and beneficial operation of these things.

“O Lord God! let not the enemies triumph over us, but send help, such as is needed.

“We [I] consecrate the gain to the building of thy kingdom. Now, Lord God, hear this my prayer.”

“They likewise embarked, to a considerable extent, in speculations of real estate—always under the direction of the Holy Spirit—Mr. Pierson having the vision, and Mr. Folger making the purchases and sales. These were not all unsuccessful, but no very great profits were realized. And even had there been, the avails would have been swallowed up in the stock operations which Mr. Pierson supposed he was making by the same Divine direction. The following is a copy of one of his spiritual missives, to Mr. Folger, to purchase stock:—

“*June 3, 1833.* Wrote to B. H. Folger: Now is the accepted time; buy three hundred shares. Let it be left with thee to sell, and I will direct. More than ten will be obtained for it. Cost, 105 per cent.’”

Now a Mr. Hunt, the inventor of the globe stoves, con-

siders himself as one of the persons alluded to in the above paragraph; and alluded to in such a manner, that while it serves as an accusation, understood by him and his friends, he is not named or mentioned in any way which makes the author of the allusion responsible. This is cowardly, mean, a stab in the dark. It was this trait in Mr. Stone's book which first arrested our attention, and determined us to reply to it, could we get at the facts. And what dependance is to be placed on such allusions may be judged by the infamous attack on the Mrs. \*\*\*, and the exposure which we gave of that in the first part.

We are not about to deny allegations made in relation to persons whom we have not seen or known, and concerning which we have never examined. Some allusions may refer to facts, which could be established; but then, we think, these facts ought to be stated, in relation to such individuals, leaving the public to draw such conclusions as the facts justify. Instead of which, we find the basest charges brought in the meanest manner; and in the cases we have examined, these charges have been vicious, or *designing*.

We have seen Mr. Hunt; he has put into our hands papers prepared for a court of law; he has given us every information we sought, and candidly answered every question, and explained every matter apparently doubtful, and challenges even public exposure, without reserve: and as we have followed up his references, through the most respectable sources, we get at what we believe the truth.

Though Mr. Pierson had left business, and was very desirous of becoming a minister of religion, and, as such, was a close student, especially of his Bible; and although he was successively engaged with various institutions, and particularly the Magdalene scheme, which he first established, and to whom it was finally given up, after the public testimony and the publication of the celebrated report. Although he was thus busy in collecting inmates for that institution, managing it, and forming a church, and afterward so closely engaged with Matthias, he was, nevertheless, engaged in speculations, and had a particular inclination for machinery and patent-rights. With this object in

view he obtained an interview with Mr. Hunt, (mentioned above,) in 1832, through a disciple of Mr. Pierson, whose name has not appeared, because he was not connected with Matthias; and by Mr. Pierson Mr. Hunt was introduced to Mr. B. H. Folger. Soon after the first introduction, Mr. Pierson informed that gentleman that he had considerable sums of money at command, which he would like to invest in machinery and patents; and wished Mr. Hunt, whom he regarded as a mechanical genius, to direct him in the disposal of his money, and urged him to commence some operations. This gentleman, aware of the uncertainty of mechanical operations, dissuaded him from this purpose, and advised a speculation in lots in the upper wards. With much difficulty Mr. Hunt succeeded, and introduced Mr. Hiram Parker to Mr. Pierson, a respectable land agent in the 6th and 3d Avenues. We happened to be known to Mr. Hunt, and we knew Mr. Parker; the former sought us out, and we sought out the latter: and thus we have seen both the gentlemen separately, and obtained from them a correct account.

It appears that speculations in land, to the amount of fifty thousand dollars, were entered into by these gentlemen. The land was bought principally by Mr. Parker, assisted by Mr. Hunt. These purchases were made in the name of B. H. Folger, but chiefly with Mr. Pierson's money, as Mr. Parker *supposes*. The fact is, that Mr. Pierson would not suffer his name to be used in any way connected with either manufactories or speculations; but he was regularly consulted, and appeared the principal in the transactions. We believe his reason for not putting his name to these secular transactions was, that he wished, as before expressed, to be a minister, and supposed these business and speculating concerns would injure his claims to the ministry. Mr. Parker and Mr. Hunt were to have a small share of the profits, if any, for their agency, but supplied no capital. Matthias, it appears, objected to the appropriation of this money in the purchase of land—he called it buying his mother—and he had then much influence over Mr. Pierson. Matthias preached that the whole earth was theirs,

and would be in their possession when the kingdome was complete: and on this hint Mr. Hunt, who was not a disciple, urged that there could be no impropriety in their obtaining a portion of it now an opportunity offered; and this, for the time, obtained both his and Mr. Pierson's consent. But Matthias' objections were renewed; and taking advantage of opportunities, under the direction of Mr. Parker, those lots were finally resold, and the accounts closed, at a profit of about eight thousand. We have this from Mr. Parker, who very candidly gave us every information; and not knowing that we knew Mr. Hunt, referred to him for further information: and thus we obtained a corroboration of Mr. Hunt's statements.

Mr. Parker is now in occasional intercourse with Mr. B. H. Folger; of him he remarks, that, as far as the transactions with *him*, on which he lays emphasis, he has been always honourable: he also considers Mr. Pierson and Mr. Hunt, particularly, honourable in all their transactions.

On inquiry, we found that the money actually paid down on the various purchases was a very considerable proportion of the whole; in some cases half, but in many two thirds. Mr. Pierson, however, was not satisfied with these speculations; and, even before they were closed, urged Mr. Hunt to commence the manufacture of his globe stoves, in partnership, desiring also to buy the patent-right. At his entreaty Mr. Hunt commenced a manufacture, in partnership with Mr. Pierson, and afterward with Mr. H. Folger. Here again Mr. Pierson and Mr. B. H. Folger were to find capital. Mr. Hunt was to take up what money he wanted for the manufactory, and monthly settlements were to be made. But Mr. Pierson, from the motive before noticed, would not suffer his name to appear; and therefore *lent* Mr. Hunt the money, from time to time, taking his acknowledgments regularly for so much money *lent*. The fact is, a clergyman, (the character to which Mr. Pierson aspired,) might *lend* money, when he could not appear as a manufacturer, according to prevailing usages. There appeared not much inconvenience in this at first, as the settlements were monthly, when the disbursements cancelled the an-

knowledgments, but it afterward proved a very serious evil. Mr. Hunt was engaged in this factory when Matthias was in Clarkson-street: and when Mr. Pierson, for a time, banished him, perhaps merely because he stood in his way of preaching, (in which Mr. Pierson was very fond,) as no quarrel appears to have happened; he then permitted Mr. Hunt to give him small supplies, from to time, but stopped his regular allowance.

Here we may notice, and we learned it both from Mr. Parker and Mr. Hunt, that Matthias recovered his influence in a very characteristic way. Mr. Pierson was taken ill, which afterward terminated in his being subject to fits.— While sick, he sent for Matthias; to which Matthias, though then on very short and precarious allowance, and much distressed, haughtily answered, there was no necessity for his coming; that if he, Pierson, had faith in him, he would get better; if not, he would die. Mr. Pierson had faith, and did get better. Matthias then returned in triumph, and referred to his sickness as a judgment on his late conduct, and his recovery as the effect of his power. From that period Matthias ruled in his house. But Matthias informed us that he had not the charge of the accounts, or the management of the large sums, such as were required for the transactions we have recently referred to. He said, that at the time of his difference, Mr. Pierson assumed to be the Father, and gave to Mr. B. H. Folger the charge of the accounts at that time, with whom they continued till his death.

In the hands of this partnership the globe stove was not successful; but it is now in successful operation, but out of the hands of Mr. Hunt; and hence we conclude that the invention was good. Mr. Hunt gives the following reasons for the globe stove failure while he was connected with it. His partners were *not* mechanics, but had equal influence with him in the shop: the consequence was, that many improvements were suggested, and money foolishly expended in experiments. Mr. Pierson called this stove, from his confidence in it, the "No plus ultra kingdom stove," and fixed the price of it at not less than \$70 or \$75, nearly

double its average value. And as the improvements were not all made when the stove was begun, customers were informed that they might return their purchased stoves at any future period, to have the improvements added. The consequence was, that they had their shop full of old stoves, some of which were not fit to receive any alteration. This was, in fact, an illustration of the old proverb about "too many cooks," &c. But the greatest cause of loss arose from Mr. Pierson taking a foundry at Waterford, above Hudson, on the North river, while Mr. Hunt and the factory were in Greenwich. The inconvenience of this was pointed out by Mr. Hunt, but overruled by his partners. The consequence was, an enormous loss, as no errors could be easily remedied at that distance, and bad castings accumulated; which, at last, was remedied by Mr. Hunt's presence; thus carrying, in part, the factory to the foundry. A person, too, named Doyle, employed when Mr. Hunt was ill and absent, tried experiments, lost considerable, and then returned to the old methods. We can easily conceive, as there was no want of capital at first, and as the stove was begun before the plans were completed, urged on by Mr. Pierson, and as their sale was impeded by an overcharge, and as there would be orders and counter orders, with equal power, and different opinions—we can easily conceive of the want of success in the first instance, and of its final success, now they have profited by experience.

After a lapse of time, for some reason, which Mr. Hunt does not suppose was the want of money, the monthly settlements were not made by Mr. Pierson and Mr. B. H. Folger; and the supplies were given niggardly, and often so as to increase the difficulties and final expense: and every application to obtain a settlement, by Mr. Hunt, was put off, till his acknowledgments, in the hands of Mr. Pierson, became large, and to him alarming, as they stood as borrowed money, which, in case of Mr. Pierson's death, might appear against him. As the active partner, he was entitled to remuneration for his services, besides expenditures.—When, too, the supplies were irregular, and a great loss would occur by stopping the manufactory, he was induced

to raise funds elsewhere, from week to week, expecting a settlement, according to the terms. We think it likely that Mr. Folger began to feel a deficiency of money, as he afterward became embarrassed, and therefore cut off the supply from this unprofitable business, and deferred a settlement from necessity. But in the midst of this a curious event occurred, highly characteristic, which marks the folly or madness of the party.

Mr. Pierson, it appears, had intended the profits of this globe stove manufactory to be applied to the building of a magnificent temple, suitable to the future splendour of the kingdom; that is, what it was going to be: but although this concern was rather a loss than a profit, this object was seriously proposed; and Mr. Hunt conceives, that their not settling with him was possibly connected with a desire to command his services in this scheme, as they had great faith in his knowledge as a mechanic; at least thus much is true.

Mr. Pierson had now removed to Sing-Sing, in 1834, and by what took place on the subject we are about to relate, it was after the period of Mrs. B. H. Folger's union with Matthias, when one day Mr. Hunt received a pressing invitation to come to Mount Zion, Sing-Sing. He had some idea of the subject from previous hints. This subject he would gladly have evaded; but as he wanted a settlement, he thought he might promote that object by going; and he therefore went, and was met at the landing-place by Matthias and the carriage, in which he was driven to the house, Mount Zion. On entering which, and addressing Mrs. B. H. Folger as such, Matthias corrected Mr. Hunt, and informed him that that lady was not called Mrs. Folger, but *Mother*. This was acquiesced in by Mr. Hunt, who only wanted a settlement. He then had a private interview with Mr. Pierson and Matthias; when the latter, assuming a smiling countenance, expressive also of doubt, as if what he was about to say would be received as folly, remarked to Mr. Pierson, "Shall I?" to which the other gave his assent. When Matthias, resuming his gravity, began to state to Mr. Hunt, that *they*, Pierson and Matthias, had sent

for him, to induce him to assist them in building a temple, or rather twelve temples, forming one great whole, which should, in splendour and magnitude, when finished, exceed that of Solomon's. Mr. Hunt received the proposition with due gravity; as he wanted a settlement and not to offend them. And after receiving various compliments upon his mechanical genius, and pressing invitations to join the kingdom, he begged to take time to consider the proposition, and then hinted at the settlement; but Mr. Pierson was now wholly engrossed on this temple building, and could attend to nothing else: he left, therefore, without effecting any thing for himself or them.

Now this temple scheme supposes an extra degree of madness, if the parties were really so short of money. As the scheme was one of Matthias', in which Mr. Pierson entered with all his soul, Mr. B. H. Folger must also have been privy to it, as one in the kingdom. It was calculated, however, to have a curious effect on Mr. Hunt; he could not conceive that there could be a deficiency of money for his settlement, or for carrying on the factory; and as such, it was well adapted to make him submit to the delay he experienced in getting a settlement, however singular he might think it. The factory, therefore, went on as well as he could make it, with partial supplies and all the difficulties stated; and at every opportunity seeking a settlement, sometimes from Mr. B. H. Folger, and then from Mr. Pierson, and by both put off: indeed, the longer it ran the more difficult a settlement became, and new reasons could be given for deferring it.

We are now approaching the period we left off at in the last chapter; and as Mr. Hunt had something to do with the next singular transaction in the kingdom, we chose to introduce him, as we have done, in connexion with the property of, Mr. Pierson and Mr. B. H. Folger. We shall now, therefore, resume the proceedings which properly belong to the kingdom, or which arose out of the religious doctrines of Matthias or Mr. Pierson; and these might be called spiritual, in distinction to the secular transactions, lately mentioned, if they were of a less gross nature.

Mr. B. Folger's discontent was not remedied by the departure of Mrs. Thompson, (whose account closed the last chapter,) or the recent formal, second delivery of his wife into the arms of Matthias: his dissatisfaction evidently increased; and if he had not resolution, or strength of mind, to renounce the faith of Matthias, and take his wife, to whom he was yet attached, yet he had frequently courage to go half way, and deny her to Matthias. The barrier which he met was in his wife's affection for this latter, and the contempt in which she apparently held his physical powers. In this case a sort of middle course was observed: he, Mr. B. Folger, denied by his wife, denied her to Matthias, as he had the *legal* right: she, so situated, slept, when in Sing-Sing, in the north wing; but, as may easily be supposed, she left her chamber frequently in the night, or morning, for Matthias' room; believing him to be her proper spouse, or matched spirit. The discontent of Mr. B. Folger continuing, he not only gave vent to it within the kingdom, but complained also to his friends, of the intrusion of Matthias, without explaining his exact situation; and these generally supposed that Matthias had obtained that sort of influence over Mr. B. H. Folger which clergymen often obtain over females. But it was not then generally supposed that he had given up his wife. Besides, he was vacillating—one day a sincere believer in Matthias, and another, did not scruple to suspect him an impostor. Perhaps, as Voltaire says of courage, it depended a good deal on his physical state, and he believed or disbelieved according as his passions or desires prevailed or subsided. His friends, about this time, took a good deal of interest in his case, and advised him to get rid of Matthias.

On Sunday, June 1st, Mr. Stone relates, (page 189 of his book, that Mr. B. Folger remained in New York, much agitated about Matthias' doctrines, (we think it would be nearer truth if he said, his wife,) that he attended the Rev. Mr. Duboise, in Franklin-street, and sat in his mother-in-law's pew; and was there so much affected that he wept. That in the afternoon he attended Mr. White's church, Allen-street; and that, on the following morning, he went

to Sing-Sing, determined to withdraw his family from there. Then follows a description of what took place at Sing-Sing, and the consequences: but as his account is extremely garbled, and as proceeding from the pen of Mr. or Mrs. Folger, actors in the scenes, and consequently interested, we shall prefer giving our own narrative, which we have obtained from Isabella, *corroborated*, in various parts, by others.

The going to church part is, we believe, correct; and it is equally correct that, at this time, Mr. B. Folger's discontent, assisted by the advice of friends, had worked him up to the purpose stated in Mr. Stone's book: but the person who chiefly influenced him at this time was Mr. Hunt, his partner in the globe stove manufacture, whom we have just introduced; and who walked about Greenwich with him, for about four hours, urging him to this step, and at last obtained his consent. It was to this gentleman, and at this time, that Mr. B. Folger made the exclamation, "If Matthias is not true, I am a ruined man!" This gentleman prevailed with Mr. B. Folger, and he determined to remove his family from Sing-Sing. Mr. B. Folger mentioned his purpose to Mr. Whiting, in Canal-street, and also, we believe, to others in New York: and when he got down to Sing-Sing, he mentioned his purpose to several of his friends there, and fortified himself for the encounter by some potations of liquor. These friends all encouraged him in his object, and offered their assistance.

Being thus determined, he proceeded to his house; and meeting his wife in the entry, the following is part of the scene which occurred, on Monday, June 2d, 1834:—

He caught hold of her, and exclaimed, "I am glad to meet you!—You are my wife, and I am going to take you and my children away;" when the following dialogue ensued:—

*Mrs. B. Folger.* "Benjamin, behave yourself." (Here Matthias came forward from a room, and put out his hand, which was declined.)

*Matthias.* "Behave yourself."

*Mr. B. Folger.* "You're a d—d impostor!—I will have

you out of this house—put you where you will, not be heard or seen.” (With several other similar expressions.)

*Mrs. Folger.* “I am not your wife!—Behave yourself!” (As Mr. B. H. Folger now grew more angry, indeed furious, Mrs. B. Folger took shelter partly behind Matthias; who, in front, thus appealed to Mr. B. Folger,)

*Matthias.* “I never courted her favour, nor ever asked you for her; but you came and gave her up to me, in the name of Disbrow; and you actually told me, she was not your wife, but that she was mine.” (At this period Mr. Pierson and Edward Folger, about ten years old, son of Mr. B. H. Folger, came in from the garden, where they had been cutting weeds.)

*Mr. B. Folger.* (Catching at the knife in the hand of his son.) “D—n you, I’ll stab you!” (Edward here throws away the knife. By this time the party had moved or shuffled into the parlour; and Mr. B. Folger, rushing towards the poker, exclaims) “I’ll split your brains out!” (The poker was removed, and Mr. B. Folger rushes from point to point, to seize some offensive weapon—all the kingdom present, and in confusion, each removing every kind of offensive instrument. The knives were thrown, partly into the cellar and partly into the garden, and other instruments were scattered about; and some of the knives lay three weeks in the garden. Mr. B. Folger at length obtained a broom, and menaced Matthias, who still kept in front of Mrs. Folger; or, rather, she kept behind him. The broom was wrested from Mr. Folger; and then, summoning all his strength, he at length seized Matthias and threw him on the sofa, evidently much alarmed, Matthias, with an effort, freed himself from his antagonist, and rushed towards the door, entangled with Mr. B. Folger; whom Isabella, the coloured woman, seized by the arms, and held him against the door. Mr. B. Folger’s strength was now exhausted—he shook like a leaf, and stared wild—when Matthias returned with a sword, and drew it. Mr. B. Folger exclaimed) “Isabella, Isabella, go down in the kitchen!”

*Isabella.* “I have never done you any mischief.” (Here

Matthias swung his sword about, and with characteristic solemnity, thus exclaimed,)

*Matthias.* "Let that spirit be destroyed!" (Still swinging the sword and repeating the words.) The spirit, however, did not obey him just then; and Mr. Pierson interfered, with a mild and slow speech.

*Pierson.* "Now, Benjamin, let me have a private interview with you."

*Mr. B. Folger.* "Pierson, when you told me that the Lord told you, not to let Matthias have any more money, that was a true spirit: Why don't you stick to that?" (Mr. B. Folger's strength was now expended, but not his passion, and he still determined upon his purpose; and for that end said to his wife) "Fix yourself to go with me."

*Mrs. B. Folger.* "Benjamin, I will not."

Much more occurred, in the same spirit; but Mr. B. Folger still insisted on his wife's leaving; and telling her he was going to get a wagon and a carriage, desired her again to fix herself, and left the house, still in his passion, to go up to Sing-Sing, for the purpose mentioned: and here, it appears, he repeated his grievances to several friends.—He procured a wagon, and directed the landlord to forward a coach to fetch his family.

In Mr. B. Folger's absence, Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger sat in each other's arms on the sofa, lamenting the events of that day, and devising the best means of defence; while Isabella forwarded dinner, and the rest of the family contributed to the restoration of order. But curiosity prompted Isabella occasionally to observe the conduct of the principals in the kingdom. And when Mr. B. Folger returned, which he soon did, with the wagon, Mrs. B. Folger retired to one end of the sofa, leaving Matthias in the middle: in the mean time dinner was prepared. On the entry of Mr. B. Folger he was more calm, but apparently determined; and he took a chair near them, and the dialogue recommenced.

*Mr. B. Folger.* Now, Ann, I want you to go. Come, fix yourself.

*Mrs. B. Folger.* Now, Benjamin, eat something, and I will tell you what I will do.

*Mr. B. Folger.* Won't you come with me at all?

*Mrs. B. Folger.* Stop a bit, and I will tell you.

After much more persuasion and evasions, the family sat down to dinner, and soon after Mr. B. Folger joined the table: in fact, he was evidently foiled, and his resolution, perhaps, began to waver; and after dinner he submitted to discussion. But this quarrel closed in a characteristic way. Mrs. B. Folger led off Mr. B. Folger into the north wing, calmly to discuss the matter, and arrange affairs privately. This was the chamber into which she and Matthias had retired when she first announced her husband's consent to their union, as match spirits. It was used, it will be recollected, as the bathing-room, and as the children's bedroom; in this room, too, Mrs. Folger sometimes slept. What were the arguments used on this occasion, or what were the means of persuasion, (for the interview was strictly private,) we know not: they must, however, have been extremely soothing; and if not gratifying, at least satisfying to Mr. B. Folger, for he came out like a tamed elephant, with all his passions subdued; affording the strongest proof of his irresolution, and of her influence over him. Whether this magic spell was the effect of favours granted, and promises made, or of religious instruction, we know not, but he now professed to have been in the wrong. He renewed his faith in Matthias; and, conscious that he had raised a storm in the village, which might not be easily laid, he desired to go into Sing-Sing, and quiet, if possible, the feelings he had excited against Matthias. He then dismissed the carriages, and went immediately on this new mission. And now, after many hours' ferment, there was a calm in the kingdom; but of short duration, for other troubles, anticipated indeed, were just at the threshold.

On Mr. B. Folger's arrival at the village, he observed his assembled friends, who were waiting to hear, that he had either turned out Matthias, or that he had brought away his family; but when Mr. B. Folger informed them,

that he must have been mistaken, and that he then believed Matthias a good man and true prophet, they could not suppress their astonishment: and however he might have changed his opinions, his friends retained theirs, and avowed their determination to expel Matthias from the village, with or without Mr. Folger's consent. When, therefore, Mr. Folger returned, he was followed by some of the people. And soon after he entered his house, several of his friends came to offer their services and give advice. Mr. Folger begged them to retire, declared he had no complaint, that he must have been deceived, and urged them, as his friends, to leave him alone. Still the people increased in numbers; and if night had not kindly come to their relief, the mob would possibly have proceeded to some violence, as it was with much reluctance they retired. Matthias slept that night with Mrs. B. Folger; but, in her night-dress, leaving Matthias in bed, she visited her husband in his chamber, in the morning.

On that morning the sun arose as usual, and so did the people; and a few ominous stragglers, and impertinent boys, made their appearance about the house. Mr. B. Folger, who knew the irritated state of the public feeling, again proposed going into the village to attempt to allay it, and set off for that purpose. But on entering the village, he found so high an excitement against Matthias, that though he proclaimed, as before, that he was mistaken in his former accusations, yet he had no hopes of allaying the strong feelings against Matthias. And doubting the safety of the prophet, he procured a coach, with the intention of advising the Father to retire from what evidently appeared an approaching storm. The carriage, therefore, was driven to Zion Hill, and Matthias acquainted with the state of things, who himself thought it prudent to retire; and in much sorrow, especially to Mrs. B. Folger, the members of the kingdom began to prepare his baggage. But by this time (now about noon) the crowd had increased. The hill which overlooked the house was capped with spectators, expecting some movement; the road and lane leading to the house was crowded; the fences invaded, and the trees climbed

by great boys, who hung on the boughs, as a bad substitute for fruit; and it was now thought dangerous for Matthias to appear in the crowd. In this dilemma, providence seemed to contrive a way for his safety, but at the expense of his beard.

A wag of a fellow, known by the name of Elephant Taylor, undertook, for a sum of money, to cut off the beard of Matthias, and bring it to the tavern. For this purpose he drove up to Zion Hill; and assuming to be a constable, and pretending to have a writ, he demanded that Matthias should be surrendered to him: but intimated, that it would be extremely dangerous for him to go to Sing-Sing, and through such an enraged crowd, with his beard on, and advised him to have it cut off, or let him cut it off. Matthias believed he had a writ, and took ten minutes to consider his advice; at the expiration of which he wisely determined to sacrifice his beard, for the preservation of his head or body, and himself began to cut it off; but not making much progress, he sought the assistance of Mrs. B. Folger, and these two, with much mutual condolence, effected this object; while Catherine received the locks in her apron, and Mr. Pierson kept Elephant Taylor in conversation. Isabella seeing the beard off, hurried Catherine into the kitchen, and, without instruction or advice, rolled up the precious relic, and stuffed it under the kitchen carpet, as a prize, which she suspected Mrs. B. Folger would like to retain.

Thus altered in his appearance, Matthias entered the carriage, and with him Mr. Pierson and Mr. B. Folger, as part of the kingdom, and thus set off for the village, Elephant Taylor bringing up the rear in his old wagon. The people were ignorant of this measure, and were consequently confounded, especially as Pierson wore a beard. Some followed the carriage, some staid behind, some said Matthias was in it, and others that he was not: but a universal shout of triumph, as the carriage drew off, and the crowd followed, agonized the delicate frame of Mrs. B. Folger. When she entered the house she directed the windows to be closed—called that the house of mourning, and gave vent to the

most lamentable exclamations. "O, my poor Father! my poor Father! What will become of him?" She rolled on the bed, with excessive agony of mind, and at first refused all consolation, uttering a succession of lamentations.

On arrival at the village inn, the people about were equally confounded, as Elephant had not made his engagement very public: he succeeded, however, in showing Matthias without his beard; and then, assuming an excuse, told him there was some mistake about it, and allowed him to depart. But the people now began to understand it, and again to rally; and having got him out of the house, they seemed determined not to suffer him again to enter. On his return, therefore, to Zion Hill, before the body of the people got up, he did not get out of the carriage, or even drive up the lane, and his baggage was brought to him; Mrs. B. Folger running half across the lawn, in the presence of the whole people, in the most frantic manner, and wringing her hands, apparently much agonized, as the carriage drew off on the road to New York.

Late in the afternoon, after Matthias had gone to New York, and while Mr. Pierson and Mr. B. Folger were in the garden, back came Elephant Taylor, making a request, or rather a demand, for Matthias' beard. But as the trick was now understood in the kingdom, he was received with a show of violence, and obliged to make his retreat in quick time; for Mr. Pierson and Mr. B. Folger seized upon some poles, then in the ground, and put themselves in fighting attitude. Violence, we believe, was prevented only by his timely retreat.

It appears that Elephant had engaged to cut off the beard himself, and bring it to Sing-Sing, and in this he had failed; and committed himself by saying, that he had cut off the beard, but forgot it. Had we not known of this falsehood we should have endeavoured to see this person at Sing-Sing; but this fact would render any additional evidence, on his part, doubtful. We believe, however, he got his reward; and he has since been made constable, perhaps for this feat of humour, on his side successfully executed.

As the evening closed in, Mrs. B. Folger became more

calm, and Mr. B. Folger betrayed great uneasiness and anxiety to get to bed; exclaiming to his wife,—“Come, Ann, let’s go to bed! I’ve had a great deal of trouble to get you.” And that night Mr. B. Folger slept with his wife; Tuesday, June 3d, 1834.

After the departure of Matthias, Mr. Pierson affected the character of the Father. At the supper and breakfast table he took his place, adopted Matthias’ style of speaking, and spoke of the late events as of the will of God; and plainly intimated, that if it were the will of God to remove Matthias, that the same spirit would be in him, and that he should be the Father. Mr. Pierson had before even intimated to Mrs. B. Folger, that he ought to have been the Father, and as such, to have had her as the Mother. And Matthias himself told us, on the occasion before mentioned, after his imprisonment, in answer to our queries relative to the reported quarrel between him and Mr. Pierson, that there was no quarrel; but that Mr. Pierson thought he ought to be the Father, and having the means in his power, assumed, for a period, that character. To make this intelligible, we must explain what Matthias meant by “assuming to be the Father:” and this is the explanation he gave us.

Matthias held that he had the Spirit of God given to him, as the fittest person to govern the kingdom; and in that sense he was the Father, the head: and with much modesty he assured us, that if a more fit person should arise up among them, to be the Father, he should resign his pretensions. In the same spirit, when the kingdom was once assembled, he inquired, “Now who do you think the most proper person to be the Mother?” when, one by one, beginning with Mr. Pierson, each declared, that Mrs. Folger was the most suitable; while she, with becoming modesty, held down her face, and that face on her hand. This, however, took place after Matthias had declared her the Mother, and taken her as such to his bed.

Mr. Pierson then, it appears, at times, did not heartily acquiesce in the assumption of Matthias. He did think, sometimes, that he ought to have been the Father; and at all events, he held himself as successor, in case of God, in

his providence, removing Matthias. It is, too, very evident, that the fascinating manners of Mrs. B. Folger had made considerable impression on the stern virtue of Mr. Pierson. Now Mr. Pierson was a man who *thought* and wrote much more than he spoke; he was not a talking man, and he evidently could restrain his feelings. When, therefore, Mr. Pierson says a little on a subject, and when he showed a little attention to Mrs. B. Folger, we believe there were very strong impressions made on him; and we believe that his diary, or journal, would contain strong evidences of his wish to become the Father, and to take Mrs. B. Folger as the Mother, as a substitute for the lady in whom he was disappointed. We feel it our duty, however, to declare, that we know of no evidence of any improper freedoms ever existing between Mr. Pierson and Mrs. Folger; for she, who must have known the influence she had over him, always expressed dislike; and, on this very occasion, declared, "she could not bear to see Mr. Pierson sit in Father's place, and pretend to be the Father."

The effects of a corrupted moral atmosphere, which Mr. Pierson had partly created, on the honest and pure mind of himself, is a very singular case; and we much regret that we cannot lay open his diary, as proofs of our conclusions, and for the benefit which might be derived, by showing, the connexion between error in principle and practice, however pure the motives may have been.

Mr. Pierson's assumption of the Father was, however, of short duration; for Matthias was not permitted to languish long in New York for his matched spirit, "which," as he said, "his soul desired:" for, the day after the next day, Mr. Folger, Mrs. Folger, and Isabella, went to New York, and on their arrival, Mr. B. Folger was sent to look after Matthias: Mrs. Folger first sounding her husband, by observing, "I wonder where Father is: Benjamin, I wish you would go and see where Father is." Matthias, it appears, first went to the City Hotel, and afterward he came to the house in Third-street, No. 8: and on his arrival, while Mr. B. Folger was out, Mrs. Folger came down stairs, and flew into his arms and kissed him; her fondness appearing

rather to increase than to diminish. We shall now, however, leave the regular narrative of the kingdom, to recount several miscellaneous transactions, which were contemporary with some of the events we have been relating, but for all of which we have not the exact dates; as, at the time they were noticed, there was no intention of making them public.

In consequence of the connexion between Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger, this lady became with child, as she had expected and foretold, agreeable to certain visions and impressions, which she supposed to be from God, and in which Matthias acquiesced. The expected offspring, she supposed, would be a holy son; and Matthias, with more boldness than cunning, taught her to believe that she would bear this child, as *holy*, without sickness, and bring it forth without pain. But, as early as the preceding March, 1834, the sickness, which usually follows conception, came on her, and she manifested all the symptoms of other women in such a situation. Now it will be recollected that Mrs. Folger stated, in her narrative, in Stone's book, an example of Matthias' cruelty, in taking a pillow, or little quilt, from her, which she had rolled up and placed on a chair when sick, to give her ease. This then occurred on the occasion we are speaking of, in her, or Matthias' room. We have quoted the passage in full, in the first part of this work: see pages 57 and 58, part the first. Matthias did pull the quilt from the chair, exclaiming, "This will never do! This is the old story," in reference to sickness in child-bearing—shaking his head, putting out his lips, and assuming a superiority: for she had supposed that she should have no sickness, and he had encouraged the idea, and now wished to overcome the feelings of the body by the excitement of the mind; either sincerely, in faith, or cunningly, upon philosophical principles; and could he have enabled her to surmount her feelings, he would have obtained a triumph. The account in Mr. Stone's book, (page 153,) avowedly written by Mr. and Mrs. Folger, is calculated to deceive and conceal the fact we have just stated.

We shall now proceed with the narrative, in which we

advanced as far as the summer of 1834: but, as far back as the winter of 1833, Mr. B. Folger had become insolvent, soon after he had given up his wife, and at the very time he was engaged for or with Matthias' daughter. Previous to this, however, he had made over the house at Sing-Sing, and considerable property, to Matthias, at the instigation of his wife. This Mr. B. Folger would frequently remark, in pleasantry, that she (Mrs. B. Folger) had played the Jew; in first getting the property made over to him, (Matthias,) and then taking him herself. Mr. Folger's insolvency did not appear to be generally known; for Mr. Hunt, at that time, did not seem to understand it so: perhaps the magnificent ideas of Mr. Pierson, about the twelve temples, as we before supposed, might have misled him. About this time, however, the property was taken away from Matthias and made over to Pierson, as being more secure. Isabella heard, at that time, a good deal about bankruptcy; but from her previous habits, in a farm, and in the Methodist church, she did not even know then what it meant, but supposed it referred to property in a bank. She was, however, informed, by Mrs. Folger, that this transfer was to make the property more secure, as it might be taken from Mr. Folger, as Mr. Mills' property was taken from him. Mr. Pierson, however, afterward made the same property, and other, over to Matthias again, at Mrs. B. Folger's entreaty: but which property has since been recovered by the executors of Mr. Pierson for his daughter, some of which was never legally transferred. We learn from Mr. Pierson's sisters, and the former owner of the property in Third-street, that Mr. B. Folger claimed that property, in exchange for the house at Sing-Sing; and that much of Mrs. B. Folger's fortune of \$16,000 is now lent on mortgage on that property. We should certainly feel a great delicacy in going into the account of property, were it not for some mysterious facts connected with Mr. Pierson's estate, and the foolish but characteristic attack on others, in Mr. Stone's book.

Mr. Hunt, partly in ignorance of Mr. Folger's circumstances, still continued to press for a settlement; and when, at a later period, he became convinced of Mr. Folger's in-

solvency, he of course became more anxious for an arrangement: he was, however, assured by Mr. B. Folger, that his insolvency should not affect him. After various delays, some of which appeared trifling, and others cruel, as an appointment at a time of Mr. Hunt's known sickness, when it was impossible for him to attend;—after every excuse made, both by Mr. Pierson and Mr. B. Folger, had been exhausted, he at last obtained a meeting, and a positive proposition, but one of the strangest that ever one business man put to another; which was no less than that he, Mr. Hunt, must apply to Matthias, and that, whatever he (Matthias) said, should be done. Now Mr. Hunt held Matthias in contempt, especially as a business man. Mr. Hunt had, indeed, treated him kindly, but as a weak-minded fanatic; who might be sincere, but, if sincere, then a foolish man. Matthias, apparently, knew Mr. Hunt held him in this estimation, and did not generally presume, as he did with those of the kingdom, and therefore he remonstrated against such a decision, from the incapacity of Matthias, independently of his will. But as this was resolved on, and as Mr. Hunt wished to remove every excuse for a settlement, he consented to go to the Prophet. At this interview Matthias claimed all the property, spoke in mysterious language, gave no satisfaction, and finally, positively refused to come to any settlement: and as this decision was considered final, on the part of Mr. Pierson and Mr. B. Folger, Mr. Hunt now had recourse to a suit in Chancery; which was begun to compel a settlement, without any angry feelings; and the papers prepared for this suit have been put into our hands. When, however, the suit was commenced, Mr. Pierson and Mr. Folger came to Mr. Hunt, with various propositions for closing the old and making new engagements, and requesting from him propositions. At length a proposition was made on the part of Mr. Pierson and Mr. B. Folger, which Mr. Hunt chose to accept, rather than leave the affair unsettled, and all his acknowledgments in the hands of Mr. Pierson. The substance of this arrangement was, that Mr. Hunt should receive back all his acknowledgments, which gave him so much uneasiness, and

that his claims for salary should be allowed for the time he had been engaged, that he should be liberated from all demands on the concern, and receive something less than a thousand dollars clear. And that he should give up his share in the globe stove manufactory, with the patent-right; also his right in the globe castors, coach bell, screw machine, his profits on the land speculation, and his good will on a lease of property in Amos-street, then occupied as a factory. And these terms were finally complied with, as far as he was concerned. But Mr. Hunt yet complains, that Mr. B. Folger has not settled some small debts, on the part of the concern, which he (Mr. Hunt) had promised, and on whom a moral claim yet exists, extremely unpleasant, as he relied on the word, and consequently the honour, of Mr. B. Folger.

Now, of course, this is a one-sided story; but we had the means of testing the truth, in a great measure, as well as the character of Mr. Hunt for probity; and on this we have relied. But in addition to this, we have the fact of this claim being settled before Mr. Pierson's death, and in fear of a lawsuit, upon terms proposed by Mr. B. Folger and Mr. Pierson; and, therefore, on terms which *they* thought just—and this, certainly, ought to have shielded Mr. Hunt from any insinuations. Mr. Hunt is yet in friendly intercourse with Mr. B. Folger, and was the adviser and corrector of that address to the public, in the name of Mr. B. Folger, in answer to some statements of Matthias about property, when first in custody; the facts, however, were furnished by Mr. B. Folger. This address may be seen page 241 of Stone's book. It is a curious fact, too, that Mr. Hunt was applied to, to write the book which Mr. Stone has written, or one on that subject, from facts to be furnished by Mr. B. Folger; but Mr. Hunt declined. The book, therefore, published by Mr. Stone, may be regarded as the joint product of Mr. Stone and Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger, the latter supplying the body of the materials; while the Rev. Mr. Somers assisted in furnishing what items were thought *advisable to publish*.

The opinion of Mr. Hunt on Matthias we have already

given; viz. that he might be sincere, in whole or in part, but that he was not a sensible man; and as he believes, he is partially deranged. His opinion of the property is, that Matthias might at one time have secured any quantity of it to himself, but that he did not; and really obtained no more than he expended about his person in the little finery he displayed. He supposes Mr. B. Folger got rich from necessity; being, as he expressed himself, in harness, connected with others in a wholesale house, where he made money from necessity—not ability; and that as soon as he had left that concern, he got rid of it as quick as he well could. He considers that he did suffer great losses; and he accounts much more readily for the diminution of Mr. Folger's property, than for that of Mr. Pierson's. Mr. Pierson spent eleven thousand dollars in machinery, and employed a Mr. Alexander Shanklin to go to Europe on that account, especially on account of a planing machine, (before he was known to Mr. Hunt;) which was rendered of no value, by the resistance of the London mechanics, and not from any defect in the machinery. But this patent-right, and others, Mr. Hunt says, was resold by Mr. Pierson, to Mr. Folger, for thirty thousand dollars; and that Mr. Pierson actually received a sufficient sum of money to cover his advances, and that the rest was paid to his agent in London in cash or notes; some of the latter, we believe, are yet unpaid. Nor can we discover any serious loss sustained by Mr. Pierson; except in a note in Mr. Stone's book, which supposes a loss to both him and Mr. Folger by stock-jobbing. Mr. Folger accounts for his failure by endorsements to large amounts, and to a want of confidence in his creditors, in consequence of his supposed expenditure about the kingdom. Matthias gave us the same account; and he supposed that Mr. Pierson's property was much overrated, even by himself, from various motives.

Upon inquiry about the patents and machinery, we find they were all useful inventions; even the self-loading cart has the approbation of some of our ablest men: they were intended to save labour, in cutting down banks, and in making and improving roads.

Mr. B. H. Folger has recently been again in connexion with Mr. Hunt, in the land agency business, holding an office together at 292 Bleeker-street; and this renders the supposed implication the more ridiculous, when we consider that Mr. B. Folger supplied the materials of Mr. Stone's book, and moulded it to his own fashion.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Mr. Folger revisits Sing-Sing—Change of manners in Mr. Pierson—He visits a married lady, and demands her of her husband, as his match spirit, by the advice of Mrs. B. Folger—Matthias revisits Sing-Sing—Matthias kisses Mrs. Folger's garments, in token of affection—Mr. B. Folger retains his wife for a time—denies her to Matthias afterward—Singular consequence, and curious employment for Isabella—Henry, a little English tailor, one of the kingdom, and in love with Catherine—Mrs. Folger's influence over her husband—acts w. Mr. Pierson's death—Mr. Pierson singularly affected by his fits, and curious gestures—neglected by Matthias and Mrs. Folger—Dialogue in Mrs. Folger and Matthias' bedroom, with Isabella, on the night of Mr. Pierson's death—Errors corrected in Mr. Stone's account of his death—Mrs. Dratch returns to New York—Coroner's inquest held—Curiosity of the jury about the internal affairs of the kingdom—The body removed to Morristown—disinterred and examined—bowels sent to Dr. Torry—the consequences—The family go to New York, except Catherine and the children—The house taken possession of, and discoveries made—Testimony of Isaac Ter Boss, tavern-keeper, at White Plains—Mr. and Mrs. Folger revisit Sing-Sing, to select their property left there—occupy the same chamber at Crosby's tavern—Mr. Folger explains the future prospects of the kingdom—The sale of property at Sing-Sing—Mr. Burnham takes possession of the experience papers of Mr. Pierson, and with them Mrs. Folger's note—Mr. Burnham demands Mr. Pierson's title-deeds of Matthias—Curious interview between the parties—Obtains these deeds on a second visit—Affairs of the kingdom—Mrs. Folger possessed by both Matthias and her husband—Matthias jealous—Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger's journey to the North, travelling as husband and wife—Corroborative extract from Mrs. Matthias' book, in relation to her daughter and Mr. Folger—Mr. Folger retains his wife, now very large with the expected holy son—Matthias leaves the family—Mrs. Folger's deep distress, and Mr. Folger's acquiescence in Matthias' return—her joy at that return—Matthias and Mrs. Folger remarried, solemnly, and for ever, three weeks before the final rupture in the kingdom—Mr. B. Folger retakes Catherine for ever—Singular communication to Isabella by Mrs. Folger—Three weeks after the late cross-marriages, Mr. B. Folger violates his engagements on a Sunday, and the person of Mrs. Folger—detected by Matthias—the kingdom in confusion—Two nights after the detection, Mrs. Folger leaves the bed of Matthias, and takes refuge with Isabella—Matthias follows, and denounces judgments on her—Mrs. Folger seeks protection in Mr. Folger's bed, in the morning, after Catherine had left it—The breakfast following, and coffee, said to be poisoned; for which Mr. Folger has since been convicted of slander—Matthias prepares to leave the kingdom—Mr. Folger restored to the affections of his wife—Curious dialogue between Matthias and Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger, respecting the relative physical*

*powers of Matthias and Mr. Folger—The breaking up of the kingdom by the departure of Matthias and Isabella—Matthias obtains from Mr. B. Folger 500 dols.—Weakness or defect in Mr. Folger's character—Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger's confessions, acknowledgments, and apparent repentance—Mr. and Mrs. Folger's account of the few last days, as published by Stone, with explanatory notes—The property of Mr. Pierson—his accounts not found; but his drawer, containing papers, found open by Isabella.*

THE heads of the kingdom were now in New York; but Mr. Pierson was left at Mount Zion with Catherine and the young people. In about a week after the flight of Matthias from Sing-Sing, and the subsequent departure of his matched spirit, she (Mrs. B. Folger) returned to Sing-Sing, to make further arrangements; and apparently had considerable influence over Mr. Pierson, as, after this time, his manners changed considerably. He interfered in the kitchen, to the annoyance of Isabella; and he used Mrs. B. Folger's name, and enforced her authority, as the Mother, in a manner which he before did not; but her influence on another subject was now apparent; for, on this visit, it was arranged that Mr. Pierson should make the formal application to his supposed matched spirit, then in the country, the married lady referred to in our first part, and so much abused by Col. Stone, whose wife she had gently reformed for her excessive gayness. This was about two months before the death of Mr. Pierson: he was then in health, but subject to fits, accompanied by some singularities, in perfect keeping with the practices in the kingdom, of which we shall afterward speak.

In a day or two after Mrs. B. Folger's arrival at Sing-Sing, Mr. Pierson set off on a journey of eighty miles, on a formal visit, to demand that the lady above alluded to should be given up to him, as his matched spirit, agreeable to visions first seen by Mrs. B. Folger two years previous, and to visions which he had since seen. But as the history of this singular event has been already recorded, together with the result, and the base insinuation of Col. Stone on that subject, we must refer our readers to that record for the particulars now: see first part, pages 31, 2, 3, 4, 5.—We merely remark, that Matthias, as we have since learned, did not approve of this journey, and regretted the part

Mrs. B. Folger took in it at this time: in fact, Matthias was not fond of this lady, and did not want her approximation; for she would have prevented his residence at Zion Hill, Sing-Sing, if she could.

Mr. Pierson called at Third-street house, New York, on his journey, and there the opinion of Matthias was given; but he so far sanctioned it, that when Mr. Pierson returned to New York, disappointed, Matthias characteristically observed, "The time had not yet come." Matthias too, at this period, made his flying visit to Sing-Sing, with four horses, to the surprise of the villagers who heard of it; but we do not know that he entered the village, as the house lay a considerable distance on the New York side: his object was evidently twofold; to fulfil one of his own prophecies, and to astound his enemies, by an elevation after his persecution: the people, however, thought him mad. He did not then remain long, nor did Mrs. B. Folger return with him; but he took *his three boys* away, and his carpenter's tools; we suppose he then gave up the idea of a temple at Sing-Sing. On his return, Mr. Pierson and Isabella went to Sing-Sing; for, as she could perform all country work, her services were more desired there: and Catherine returned with Mrs. B. Folger to New York, where Mr. B. Folger then resided, and where she could be more useful; and this arrangement remained till one week before the death of Mr. Pierson.

About this period, however, perhaps in the absence of Mrs. B. Folger, occurred that proof of the strong affection of Matthias for Mrs. B. Folger which we before gave; viz. his kissing her garments, which hung in a clothes closet, ingeniously contrived in the passage of the house in Third-street; which passage he would frequently pace, exclaiming to himself, "Poor Mother! Lovely creature! Oh, the dear soul!" &c. Perhaps these proofs of Matthias' affection for Mrs. B. Folger were connected with his circumstances, and heightened by a suspension of conjugal rights, which he generally enjoyed. For after the return of the family to New York, on the occasion of Matthias losing his beard, and when, as we observed, Mr. B. Folger slept

that night with his wife, this gentleman, it appears, did not give her up immediately, but continued to sleep with her in New York, openly, for three or four days at least; and though friendly to Matthias, he yet retained his wife, apparently, however, against her will.

And now another ridiculous scene was to be exhibited in the kingdom, for Mrs. Folger at length declined sleeping any longer with her husband; when he, without quarrelling, as far as we know, refused her to Matthias. But, as they were living together in one house, and as she acknowledged Matthias as her spouse, or matched spirit, such a denial was of course useless; except to make them all partially uncomfortable, by occupying different beds. This was all it could do; for as Mr. B. Folger left the house, to go down town to business, there could be no impediment to any intercourse between her and Matthias, except by any sudden or unexpected return of Mr. B. Folger: and these circumstances gave additional employment to Isabella, and she was intrusted with a new charge, being occasionally placed as a sentinel, or outpost, to give early intimation of Mr. B. Folger's approach, while she was closeted with Matthias, whom alone she acknowledged as her spouse; and these kindnesses no doubt increased his affection for her. Arrangements were, however, again made, and Mrs. B. Folger was again given up to Matthias; and Isabella lost her office, her services being no longer necessary in that way.

There is one person of the kingdom whom we have scarcely mentioned, because no act of his was sufficiently prominent; yet, as a believer, one of the kingdom, and a member of the family, and as faithful and well spoken of, he deserves a niche recorded in this account of the kingdom. Besides, he knows the truth of these statements, less from observation than from familiarity in the kitchen, and conversation with Isabella, and especially with Catherine, whose love he affected to inspire. But he was only a tailor—"a little bit of a fellow," as Isabella expresses herself, and not very straight, and an Englishman: but he appears to have been what is called smart, good-tempered, and our

ning: and besides the religious exercises in the kingdom, now reduced to a small quantity, he made clothes for the children, worked in the garden, and about the coach and horses. Catherine declared, she would not have such a bit of a fellow; and if she could not have Mr. B. Folger, she would have none.

At the breaking up of the kingdom, Henry, the little tailor, received twenty dollars, and went to his friends in Ohio. About this time, too, Lewis, a German, joined the family, but remained pretty much in New York, with the carriage. This man was called to the trial of Matthias, at White Plains.

There were several other believers in Mr. Pierson and Matthias, not of the family, and some apparently very sensible men, who thought Mr. Pierson more than ordinary humanity, from the amiableness of his conduct, his profound judgment in ordinary affairs, and his very great knowledge of the Scriptures: while they attributed the excesses, in relation to his wife's death, to intense feeling, affection, and grief at his loss.

From this time to the near proximation of Mr. Pierson's death, nothing material occurred. Mr. B. Folger continued, occasionally, to show marks of dissatisfaction, and disbelief; and again a return of faith and reconciliation: the most remarkable circumstance during this period, was the influence his wife yet retained over him; this was noticed by those within the kingdom, and his neighbours, some of whom were now satisfied of an improper influence exerted by Matthias; indeed, in the moments of his dissatisfaction, Mr. B. Folger would complain of this influence, and yet his wife, while bestowing her favours on others, could call him from the conversation of those whom she suspected of advising him, and always retained over him the influence of a mistress, if not of a wife; indeed she did not appear to wish to give him up entirely; or to wish any one to have a greater influence over him than herself.

About a week previous to the death of Mr. Pierson, the family went to Sing-Sing, except Mr. B. Folger, who had taken a journey to the North, and did not return till im-

diately after the death of Mr. Pierson: this circumstance should be remarked, for some of the nearest relations of Mr. Pierson, dissatisfied about the property, speak disrespectfully of Mr. B. Folger, as if *he* had neglected, or in some way promoted the death of Mr. Pierson, while from his business habits, and attention to other things, there does not appear to be the least ground for any such imputation. Still, Mr. Pierson was neglected in his last illness, while all the family, with the exception just made, were present. This subject requires particular attention; it has never been understood; neither did the Coroner's Inquest extract the truth, nor did it come out at the time of the trial of Matthias, nor is it explained in Mr. Stone's work, from matter furnished by Mr. and Mrs. Folger. The facts, briefly expressed, are these:—

It has been already noticed that Mr. Pierson, though extremely modest in his deportment, was of an amative disposition, which increased the severity in the loss of his wife. Indeed, after her death, we have evidence of his practising onanism for a considerable period; not however after his sickness, a short time before Matthias came to Sing-Sing: after this period he had fits, which gradually increased in frequency and severity till near his death, while on the few last days, he had a number of lighter fits in succession, together with sickness at the stomach. These fits came on gradually, as fits sometimes do; they affected his sinews and muscles, drawing his head on one side, and almost round: and while in these fits, he would utter singular sounds, at first unintelligible, and then less so, as the fit increased in strength; while his gestures were very singular, and sometimes disgusting; if a person ought to feel disgust, at the actions of a sick man, insensible, and in a fit. Mr. Pierson appeared conscious of something ridiculous or disgusting in his manners while in these fits, for he frequently asked persons about him, whether he said or did any thing wrong while the fit was on him, and seemed very anxious to avert, both the fits and their consequences; and for that purpose gave particular instruction to some of the household: Isabella he instructed to strike the palms of his hands,

and the strong sinews on his neck, when the fit was about to draw his head on one side or around, and to rub him in various parts, and restrain him from any improper act. When his fits came on when at table, as they sometimes did, Matthias would lead him from the table into another room, agreeable to his wish, as Mr. Stone says, in his account of Mr. Pierson's sickness, page 195 and following. The reason for this will appear evident, but we do not see why he should be left *alone*, and the door shut, as Mr. and Mrs. Folger relate in Mr. Stone's book, even if he had wished it. When these fits were coming on, the presence of particular persons affected him in a singular way, and especially the presence of Mrs. B. H. Folger: if she appeared in the commencement of his fit, he would look at her intensely, stretching forward his head and one of his hands, as if he would draw her to him, and exclaim Ann, Ann, Ann, Ann, Ann, &c. &c., repeating with greater rapidity, and looking more eagerly and wildly as the fit advanced; he would also alternate this expression with the exclamation, looking at her as before, and exclaiming, my wife! my wife! my wife! &c. &c., repeating more rapidly as the fit grew stronger. During this time, while endeavouring to approach her with one hand extended, he would feel about his person with the other within his clothes. His whole appearance at such times excited disgust in that lady, and she would leave his presence as soon as possible, using even the term *brute*, to express her disgust; Matthias too, would attempt to rouse him on such occasions, to a sense of impropriety, by exclaiming, "Why, Elijah! what are you saying, what are you about?" while other persons would remove his hand, and hold him. When these fits came on in bed, Mr. Pierson would generally throw himself out of bed; and this led Matthias to observe, that he had a Devil which appeared to like the floor best, and therefore some bed-clothing were placed on the floor, on which he sometimes lay. These bed-clothes he would frequently draw to him as if embracing a person, still making singular exclamations, or, in the strength of his fit, unintelligible noises, and using improper gestures, which made his friends inter-

tere, and endeavour to rouse him; especially would Matthias attempt this as before explained: between these fits he appeared tolerably well, and even walked in the garden, a few days before his death, as related by Mr. Stone, p. 193, and in our first part, p. 15, in the account we there gave of the blackberry feast and sickness. In reference to what we have just said, it will now be seen why Matthias led Mr. Pierson from the table when the fits were coming on; and why Isabella slapped him on the face, as reported in Mrs. Folger's evidence, at Matthias trial, and from which unfavourable impressions were drawn; still Mr. Pierson's manners while in the fits had excited a degree of acknowledged disgust, mingled with pity, and a desire to assist him; and when to these fits, sickness was added, the pity and sympathy of the family were increased, but this was partly paralyzed by an increasing disgust, the consequences of his sickness. The blackberries eaten, mentioned in the 15th page, part the first, which were said to contain poison, were eaten on the 28th of July; the next day he was well, and eat more blackberries from the bushes, and on the afternoon of that day, he was taken sick and vomited, bringing up, not the supposed poisoned blackberries, eaten twenty-four hours before, as Mr. Stone very unphilosophically intimates, but, as we suppose, the blackberries which he had last eaten. Nothing it appears would then stay on his stomach; and as he wore a long beard, we have no doubt that his appearance was disgusting, but at the same time most pitiable; besides, his bowels were relaxed, and at one period he was helpless. Catherine's sickness, mentioned in Stone's book as following the consumption of blackberries then supposed poisoned, arose from disgust at the appearance of Mr. Pierson, and continued only while the nausea remained. Matthias took Mrs. B. Folger out of the room, especially to prevent her being sick, and succeeded, though she had eaten heartily of the blackberries, and not just tasted them, as she says in Mr. Stone's book. Matthias also left the room, expressing a belief that he should be sick if he remained, and Isabella, the coloured woman, was the only person who would, or indeed could assist him, when most he needed

help; and she could scarcely restrain from being sick herself. As the parties had means, Mr. Pierson ought to have had one or more nurses, exclusively to attend him, and keep him clean; for it was not possible for those in the family to do justice to him, and continue their services in the family. Nor did they do what they might, partly from disgust, and partly from the attentions which Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger were paying to each other, and thus neglecting the necessary orders; Isabella was even reproved for her officiousness, because, being cook, her employment was incompatible with attention to Mr. Pierson. It does not appear either that they had once thought of his death, nor did he apparently; he seemed principally affected by his fits, and these he had had for a long while; nor did they appear much to hurt him, as he was well in the interval, and the additional sickness was not apparently alarming. He retained his senses, and had so firmly expressed his opinions about physicians and medicine, that no medical aid could be given him; in this respect his firmness was equal to that of Matthias. This is evident from Mrs. Folger's evidence at the trial of Matthias, and also, from her evidence before the coroner. We cannot learn that there was any abuse, or even designed neglect; considerable services were rendered him, but not near enough; his linen was seldom changed. Isabella was sent into the hay-field a large part of three days by Mrs. B. Folger, "to help poor Father gather up his hay," and Mr. Pierson became then really filthy. Mrs. Folger did or could do but little, and Matthias was haying, and unwilling to use means; he had always spoken against it in the time of health, and by a system of dieting he had preserved the family in health, without physicians or medicine; his system, which had some good in it, alike banished the medicine of the regular doctor, and the pills of the quack, to which Mrs. Folger had been devoted before her acquaintance with him. Had Pierson got better without medicine, Matthias would have ascribed it to faith, as he did on a former occasion: and yet we have it as a fact, that Matthias instructed Lewis to go for a physician, if Mr. Pierson wished it, and this evidence-

he would have given, had any defence been necessary or gone into on Matthias' trial, yet Matthias would not himself send for one.

On the evening when Mr. Pierson was first taken sick, there was more alarm, or apprehension, than even on the last day, for his fits were then more powerful, and had been increasing. On that evening, when he had vomited, and when in the night his bowels were so deranged, Isabella and his daughter sat up with him, while Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger retired to rest, she retiring first as before described, lest she should be sick, and Matthias following her. In the progress of his last sickness, which lasted from the 29th of July, to the 5th of August, his vomiting was less severe, and his fits less strong, and the first alarm having subsided, it was supposed he was getting better; the worst symptom being interpreted for the best, for want of correct medical knowledge; for his fits being less strong, was probably the effect of declining strength of body.

On the morning of the 5th, (the night of which he died,) Mrs. Dratch, a Jewess, a sort of disciple of Matthias, and a widow, came to see Mr. Pierson, from whom she had received some acts of kindness, and from whom she then expected more. She conversed chiefly with Matthias, with whom she was familiar, but wished to see Mr. Pierson. This request was not at first noticed, but when she repeated her request, Matthias replied that he wished Mr. Pierson to take a warm bath first. None, of his family, however, wished to expose him in his fits, from his singular behaviour, and now he was scarcely decent from partial neglect and other circumstances. And to this request, perhaps, Mr. Pierson was indebted for the warm bath, which merely as a measure of cleanliness ought to have been administered before. Mrs. Folger directed the bath to be prepared, and Isabella immediately got it ready, and with the assistance of Lewis, put him into it, and she perceiving a fit coming on while putting him in the bath, Isabella slapped him on the neck, or side of the face and neck, as before explained, as the wish of Mr. Pierson, and exclaimed, with the characteristic of one of the kingdom, "come out of your hellish sleep,"

and this was the slap at the spirit, which appeared in the absence of her evidence, as an act of cruelty, of a very strange character. From the bath Mr. Pierson was taken to bed, and Mrs. Dratch was informed that she should see him in the morning. But that night he died, and died alone; for Matthias and Mrs. B. Folger had retired to bed together, for they did not consider it necessary that any one should sit up with him. Isabella, it appears, would have attended to him, but after Mrs. Folger had reproved her for officiousness, she did not like to; besides, Mrs. Folger complained of her to Matthias, and declared that Isabella was always in Mr. Pierson's room, running in every minute as soon as her back was turned; and Matthias had scolded her, for disobeying Mrs. B. Folger. And thus Mr. Pierson was partially neglected.

The last scene observed by Isabella immediately before the death of Mr. Pierson, is thus described by her: Mrs. Dratch, after offering to sit up with Mr. Pierson, and that offer being declined, retired up stairs to bed. Matthias, also, soon after retired into his room, and apparently fell asleep or dosed; when Mrs. B. Folger entered his and her room, and leaning against the bed was in the act of withdrawing her stockings, when Isabella approaching the chamber door, which stood partly open, thus spoke to her.

*Isabella.* Mother, what is best for me to do; stay up with Mr. Pierson, or go to bed? (Here Mrs. B. Folger, throwing herself into bed, and turning to Matthias, repeated the question thus.)

*Mrs. B. Folger.* Father, what is best for Isabella to do: stay up, or go to bed?

*Matthias.* (Turning round and speaking quickly,) How is Elijah?

*Mrs. B. Folger.* Well, he is somewhat better.

*Matthias.* Well, Isabella, you had better go to bed.

Isabella went to bed as instructed. She had been sitting up, or lying on chairs several nights previous, and felt weary; she did not then think him in dying circumstances, although she did think it very likely, that he would die suddenly, from his fits. In the morning she was acquainted

with Mr. Pierson's death, by Matthias calling to her, and informing her of that event. And on coming down stairs, she found Mrs. B. Folger lying down in the children's room, in the north wing, showing that that lady must have been up before; and thus agreeing with her narrative in Mr. Stone's book, where she says, that she was up with Mr. Pierson during the night, but not exactly in his room at the moment of his death.

In the evidence given by Mr. Folger, on the trial, some things are not correctly stated. There it was shown, that Matthias had dropped water in the mouth of Mr. Pierson from a height, while he could scarcely swallow, and thus performed an act of cruelty. This we have examined minutely into; and though there might have been an apparent carelessness in Matthias' manner, we are satisfied that the act was one of kindness. Mr. Pierson could not drink; his lips were closed, and his mouth full of phlegm. As Mr. Pierson could not drink, it appeared to Matthias that it would afford him some relief to drop water between his lips, drop by drop, which, by their weight, might penetrate into his mouth; while Isabella, on her knees, and with a soft towel in her hand, hung over Mr. Pierson's head, and wiped away the phlegm as it was displaced by the drops of water; and this defence would have been given, had any defence of Matthias been necessary. Our opinion is, that this fact is a strong proof that Mr. Pierson had attention paid him, if not all that he ought to have had: it is, we say, a proof of attention, and not of cruelty. The descent of the water was not a foot; in fact, not more than it ought to have been to effect such a purpose.

During Mr. Pierson's illness, he asked Isabella's forgiveness. And this fact is noticed by Mrs. B. H. Folger as something very mysterious; and in consequence of which we have inquired into it. We find it a fact; and Isabella supposes Mr. Pierson referred to his altered manners sometime before his illness, when he interfered more, and was less kind. She also supposes he referred to her increased labour with the double spirit, the gift of Matthias and Mrs. Folger, frequently referred to; especially by Mrs. Folger,

as we have learned since our former notice of it. She supposes that Mr. Pierson felt conscious of this imposition, which arose out of the indulgences of Matthias and his matched spirit.

In the morning after Mr. Pierson's death, Matthias entered his room; and finding him dead, returned to Mrs. Folger, and informed her of it. Mrs. Folger soon informed others of the family, and Mr. Pierson's daughter, into whose room she had entered and laid down. The whole family were much surprised, as they did not acknowledge either sickness or death. Matthias, however, remarked, that Pierson wanted faith; and for that his body was not permitted to enjoy the kingdom, but the good part of his spirit remained among them.

The death of Mr. Pierson had no effect on the faith of the disciples, as Mr. Stone supposes. Mrs. Folger was as full of faith as ever, as she soon after manifested before the coroner; nor was her love diminished. Matthias, who was on very good terms with Mrs. Dratch, explained to her why Mr. Pierson must die; and in the afternoon, on her departure, gave her money, as she had been disappointed in seeing Mr. Pierson, from whom she expected relief.

Mrs. Dratch, at the request of Mrs. Folger, called on Mr. Folger, in New York, who had then just returned from his journey in the North; and when informed of the event, he wrote to Mr. Pierson's brother, Mr. Mahlon Pierson, Bottle Hill, New Jersey: he also communicated the fact to Mr. Pierson's relations in New York, and some of whom prepared to come to Sing-Sing immediately, with Mr. B. Folger. In the mean time, as Mrs. Dratch, or Mr. Bishop, a neighbour, had mentioned the death of Mr. Pierson as sudden, in Sing-Sing, a coroner's inquest was held in the afternoon of that day, and Mrs. Folger and Isabella, with others, were examined.

From Isabella we learn, that the jury were more inquisitive of her and Henry, at least, about where the parties slept, than other subjects; and they got so far as an acknowledgment that Mr. B. Folger and his wife did not sleep together: but nothing further was then elicited on

that subject, from the caution observed. And as the jury were prying into subjects not properly before them, Isabella replied, with some tartness; for one asked her, "what had become of Pierson's devil, or evil spirit?" when she took the liberty of replying, that it might have entered into one of them.

Mrs. Folger's replies on this occasion, as given by herself in Mr. Stone's book, show that she then retained her full faith. The following is an extract from page 208 of Mr. Stone's work:—

"Mrs. Folger was the fifth person examined. She informed them that her husband was absent; and, as she was ignorant of legal matters, wished to know if they had a right to proceed as they were doing. They replied, that their proceedings were all legal. She then detailed to them all the particulars of Mr. Pierson's sickness and death. She said she did not consider this event as they did, a visitation of Providence; but that the devil, *death*, had robbed us of the *body* of Mr. Pierson, while his *spirit* was as much with us as ever. They asked if Mr. Pierson had had medicine given him:—she replied, no—that they considered medicine an evil—that Mr. Pierson would not have taken any while he had his senses, and violence had not been done to his often expressed sentiments on this point, after he had lost his senses. They inquired if Mrs. Folger would not employ a physician if she were herself sick: she said, no—that she had already passed through the hands of so many, that she feared her body might yet be rejected from entering the kingdom of heaven. They asked several questions relative to Mr. Pierson's property and business with Mr. Folger: she replied, that she knew no particulars respecting it; referred them to her husband, whom she believed to be a correct business man, and that they might rest assured he would render a true and accurate statement of all his transactions with Mr. Pierson—that she knew, from their conversations, that they had confidence in each other, and were partners in some kind of business; and in conclusion, said, if they had any more inquiries to make, she would like to hear them. She then

mentioned, that there were some marks on the skin of Mr. Pierson, which were occasioned by his knocking his feet together while in the fits; but if they found any marks of violence on his body, or were not satisfied, they would oblige her by letting her know it. Mrs. Folger then left the room, and supposed they examined the body.

Matthias, in the mean time, had sent for one of the neighbours, Mr. Bishop, and induced him to make arrangements for the funeral; when the body was to have been buried next day (Thursday) at noon. But Mr. B. Folger, accompanied by a Mrs. Bishop, the cousin, and a married sister of Mr. Pierson, arrived; and these desired the body to be removed to Morristown, near which Mr. Mahlon Pierson, the brother of Mr. Pierson, resides: and there it was taken. But on the 18th of August it was disinterred, and carefully examined, by Drs. Condicts and others; and the stomach, with its contents, carefully packed in a jar, and sent to Dr. Torry, a chemist, for examination. No proof whatever could be found of poison; but a variety of ingenious suppositions were made, from some slight appearances about the gullet and stomach. The fact is, the family, after the alarm raised by Mr. Folger about the coffee poison, evidently believed Mr. Pierson poisoned—the physicians thought it probable, and they wished to discover something of the kind. The suspicion then fell on Matthias; and this continued till his trial at White Plains, in April, 1835;—when the prejudice was so much against him, that one of the jury, on that trial, has since informed us, that *he wished* to find Matthias guilty. The result of that trial is known; and in spite of every evidence being brought up, and facts perverted, like the dropping of the water into Mr. Pierson's mouth, and the blackberry story—in spite of the prejudice of the judge, the officers of the court, the people, and the jury—the judge was obliged to declare, that the evidence did not warrant Matthias being put upon his defence. It is true he was ably defended by Mr. Western, and a less able man might have been cowed before the prejudices and power arrayed against him.

We are not disposed to justify Matthias; nay, we even

think that Mr. Pierson might have lived a little longer with other treatment; but we can see no act of deliberate design to shorten his life, either by any slow process or more active agent. Matthias, however, did ascribe the death of Mr. Pierson to his want of faith; which, he said, he had observed since his visit to the married lady whom he wished to espouse. This is noticed at page 236 of Mr. Stone's work; and this we think possible; indeed, Matthias was evidently afraid of her influence.

The day after the body of Mr. Pierson was removed from Sing-Sing, Matthias went to New York in a carriage, and Mrs. B. Folger and Isabella went to the same place in the steamboat, leaving Catherine and the young people in the house in Sing-Sing. Two days after the family had gone to New York, the house at Sing-Sing was taken possession of by Mr. Barker, the treasurer of the county, as the property of the late Mr. Pierson, and in trust for his heirs, and a Mr. Isaac Ter Boss, and a Mr. Williams, were put into it as keepers, and Catherine and the rest of the family were obliged to remove. This possession of the house was by surprise, and consequently every thing was left without precaution. Mr. Ter Boss now keeps a tavern at White Plains; we saw him there, and obtained from him some information, chiefly, however, in confirmation of our statements, as a good white evidence. On taking possession of the house, and looking over the rooms, Mrs. B. Folger's clothes were found in Matthias' room. He too had lived on the spot in Sing-Sing, and had since carried Isabella from White Plains to Tarry Town, and on the journey had heard the whole statement, which he informed us agreed with our account, and thus showed that at least she had been consistent in that statement. He had, too, a knowledge of parts of many of the facts, and of those parts he admitted her correctness. And thus we get at another proof of her veracity. He made, too, a remark that we have already put in print, viz.: "that a woman who could neither read or write, would be incapable of relating so many circumstances, during a considerable period, so as to make a consistent story, unless true; or without furnishing the means of de-

fection." On taking possession of the house, by instructions we suppose of the administrator, Mr. Pierson's brother, (Mr. Mahlon Pierson,) before mentioned, preparations were made for selling the furniture, and in a few days Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger, with Isabella, went again to Sing-Sing, to separate their property from the late Mr. Pierson's, and while at Sing-Sing put up at Mr. Crosby's tavern, where Mr. B. Folger and his wife occupied one chamber, into which they retired early, as Mr. B. Folger apparently manifested some impatience. On the next day, Mrs. Folger returned with Isabella by the boat, and on the journey, explained to her the circumstances of Mr. B. Folger, and her future plans. She stated, that Mr. B. Folger had lost much of his property, and had spent her private property also, but that he yet had some that he had kept back; and that she advised Matthias taking a farm with part of this money, and retiring into the West, where she, Isabella, had better go with him; while Mrs. Folger should remain in New York with Mr. Folger, who would speculate, and soon obtain plenty of money, and they, then, would join Matthias again, and re-establish the kingdom. This subject, after this time, frequently became one of conversation, but Mrs. B. Folger observed, that Matthias was unwilling to go. Mr. B. Folger returned to Sing-Sing, and was present at the sale of furniture there, and he purchased several articles, and on his return related that Mr. Burnham, a merchant in Cedar-street, had acted as agent for Mr. Pierson, and finding a drawer full of papers, he had turned them all out and stuffed them in his pockets. Mrs. B. Folger remarked that, among those papers were Mr. Pierson's experience papers; and among them was her note to Mr. Pierson; this was said with apparent concern, and at the same time with a half laugh and finally the laugh prevailed, making it a subject amusement. This, we suppose, has reference to the <sup>o</sup> published by Mr. Stone, containing her vision in relation to Mr. Pierson and her cousin. Mr. Stone, who had seen <sup>ese</sup> papers, or Mr. Pierson's diary, observes, that latterly <sup>at the</sup> set down very little of religious experience, but <sup>transac-</sup> diary was occupied with an account of the curre

tions from day to day; and hence we believe, that this ~~diary~~ <sup>diary</sup> would confirm much of our statements: indeed we know it ~~does~~, for the possessor has very naturally made it the subject of conversation with his friends, and some of the contents have been recounted to us, and others are published in Mr. Stone's book, and which agreeing with what we have positive proof for, we know to be correctly related. Mr. Burnham professes to be the deadly enemy of Matthias, while Mr. Pierson's family do not think Mr. B. Folger worthy of respect; we cannot therefore conceive why important facts honestly recorded in Mr. Pierson's diary, illustrative of the singular events at Sing-Sing, should be withheld from any motives of delicacy, especially when many of those facts are isolated and separated from Mr. Pierson, whose sincerity no one doubts. It is however a fact, that Mr. Pierson destroyed considerable portions of his memorandums, just before his death, at the suggestion of Matthias, who preached against so much writing, and himself was so prudent as not to commit any thing to writing.

We have before stated, that Matthias held much of the property of Mr. Pierson, and he had in his possession the title deeds of such property. After the sale of the goods at Sing-Sing, Mr. Burnham, as the agent of Mr. Mahlon Pierson, and as a more fit person to transact business, waited upon Matthias to obtain from him the title deeds, accompanied with a friend. Mr. Stone relates that Matthias had agreed to give them up before their arrival, from a conversation with Mr. B. Folger, and he gives a characteristic account of this meeting. Matthias seated himself in a rocking chair, and commenced preaching to them, exclusively occupying the time, and when at last they became impatient, he declared that he should test the strength of the Gentile law; and he afterward said to Mr. Folger, that the spirit had informed him, that he must not give up the property of God, <sup>to</sup> the devil. The parties of course left him in much irritation, and without effecting their object. On a second visit, <sup>tho</sup> <sup>u</sup>er, after a suit in Chancery had commenced, he <sup>possib</sup> proper to resign the deeds in question, from the impossibility, we suppose, of obtaining bail to the enormous

amount required, to prevent any sale or injury to the property till the suit should be disposed of.

We return now to the affairs of the kingdom, which grew worse and worse. Mr. B. Folger's discontent continued; and though he had again given up his wife, he evidently sought every opportunity of indulgence; and as the price of which, he became extremely polite to Matthias; while Mrs. Folger, who evidently loved Matthias, not only chose to indulge her husband occasionally, but evidently wished to hold him to her affections, but inferior to Matthias, and consequently gave him many gracious smiles: and while caressing Matthias, or one of his little boys, would sometimes, by a peculiar wink, (certainly not very dignified,) convey an idea to Mr. B. Folger, that she was not wholly devoted to Matthias, but still held him and her other children in her affections. Matthias apparently began to see this, and he became a little dissatisfied. He frequently exclaimed, that he did not want quite so much politeness on the part of Mr. B. Folger; that he doubted some of its sincerity: indeed he appeared to think it cost too much; and when Mrs. B. Folger proposed taking a journey with her husband to Albany, Matthias opposed it. But upon her representing to him, that Mr. Folger had sacrificed much for him, she thought, as he wished it very much, she might so far indulge him as to accompany him in this journey. The journey was undertaken, and Mrs. B. Folger slept with her husband while thus travelling, either with or without the knowledge of Matthias.

It should be remarked here, that Mr. B. Folger had made several journeys to Albany during the summer; and when there, that he visited the family of Matthias: this we learned from Mrs. Matthias; but whether Mr. Folger renewed his acquaintance with her daughter, or not, we do not know. Yet Mrs. Matthias has this note in her little book:—"Matthias by his wife," page 36,—“Mr. B. Folger often came to Albany on business, and called at our house. I suppose his object still was, to influence my daughter, and in some way to get her to join them, and become his substitute for his wife, whom he had given to Mr. M.” (Mat-

thias.) On the occasion of one of these visits Mrs. Matthias remarks, "I then told him how I felt towards Mrs. B. (Folger,) and how sinful I thought her conduct to be." And he (Mr. B. Folger) replied, that "she was as pure as an angel in the sight of heaven." "I told him, that I looked upon her as no better than any other woman of ill-fame; and, in many respects, I thought her to be worse." (See "Matthias," by his wife, page 36.)

Notwithstanding these opinions, and that these opinions were known to Mr. B. Folger, Mrs. Folger afterward visited Mrs. Matthias, the legal wife of Matthias, in New York, and no caps were pulled; Matthias' wife making no other pretensions than that of a poor woman, while Mrs. Folger sustained the character of the lady; and she very condescendingly remarked, that she was agreeably surprised at the manners and appearance of Mrs. Matthias, whom she complimented on the expression of her countenance: in fact, both the wife and the spouse of Matthias agreeably deceived each other.

On the return of Mr. Folger and his wife from the North, Mr. Folger was unwilling to give up his wife, although she was very far gone in the family way, with the expected *holy son* of Matthias, in whom there was yet much faith; and the subject was now resumed of Matthias going into the West, to seek a farm. After some manifestations of dissatisfaction, on the part of Matthias and Mr. B. Folger, the former resolved upon leaving the family, at least for a time, and set out on a journey, and reached as far as Newark; and Mr. B. Folger slept that night with his wife. When Matthias left, he wept, and evidently went, more at the desire of Mr. B. Folger than his own. He took with him no baggage, and must consequently have meant to return: yet, from what follows, he appears to have left his return uncertain, as well as the place of his retreat.

In this flight Matthias compared himself to David, and Mr. B. Folger to his unruly son Absalom, warring against his father. The fact is, that Matthias had scarcely left the house when Mrs. Folger commenced the most doleful lamentations, and manifesting the greatest marks of distress.

and yet this was not three weeks before the kingdom was dissolved. Her distress was so great, that it affected those about her, and drew the attention of the whole household: even the little son of Matthias noticed and reported it to his mother, when he got back to Albany, (and she informed us of it;) while Isabella was perfectly astonished at what she called her "taking on so." Mr. B. Folger, too, became distressed at the unhappiness of his wife; and being melted into sympathy, remarked, that if this was the consequence of Matthias' departure, he could have no comfort with her, and consequently wished him back. Among other expressions of grief, she used this, just previous to Matthias' departure: "How can I live if Father goes away!" After his departure she said to Mr. Folger, "What has become of him?" To which the good-natured husband replied, that "he would go and see." To Isabella and others she gave also other reasons, in conjunction with her avowed affection for him, for her grief; she remarked, that Mr. Folger would, perhaps, ill use her when Matthias was gone. Before his departure, too, when complaining of altered circumstances, as the cause why Matthias should leave them for the present, Isabella, with much simplicity, forgetting her occasional angry feelings at Mrs. Folger, offered to work for the common good of the kingdom. She had before assisted Matthias, when his allowance was stopped by Mr. Pierson; her offer, of course, only showed her sympathy—it was unavailing.

Matthias, who probably knew the effect of his absence, returned the next day, and was received with open arms; and Mrs. Folger manifested joy as rapturous, at his return, as her lamentations had been dolorous; and then followed the last mockery of marriage, more solemnly contracted than before.

The church or kingdom was assembled, and Mr. B. Folger assuming the firmness of a man, and the sageness of a philosopher, declared to Mrs. Folger in the most solemn manner, that he was then about to give her up for ever; that after that period, he would never take her back again. Then appealing to Catherine, he declared himself

willing to take her for *ever*, but with much solemnity and apparent prudence and sageness, pointed out to her the difficulties of her situation; he foretold that the world must become acquainted with the facts, and that persecution would possibly follow; and he then asked her solemnly, if she was willing to take him with these prospects, and if she felt that she had strength to bear up against the frowns of the world; concluding with repeating the question, was she willing to take him for ever? To which Catherine, who was unable to make a speech, or to look solemn, only looked foolish, and hung her head down, and drawled out the accustomed "Yes, sir." And then appealing to Mrs. Folger again, Mr. Folger remarked, "Now Father takes you for ever." The unusual solemnity of Mr. Folger on this occasion, and the firmness with which he pronounced the words *for ever*, seemed to unnerve Mrs. Folger. She was not accustomed to it; she paused, and faltered, as if she was about to lose the influence she had exerted over Mr. B. Folger, and this perhaps Matthias observed, and for the first time, probably, conceived the idea, that Mrs. B. Folger really wished to retain two strings to her bow. However, the solemnities closed; the family wounds were healed, and the kingdom was again built up. Harmony reigned that evening, and Matthias, at night, retired with Mrs. B. Folger, while Mr. Folger led off the young widow; each of the parties being now fixed for ever. We have already remarked, that from Mr. Pierson's death, the beginning of August, 1834, up to the period we are now speaking of, (a lapse of about five weeks,) there had been much dissatisfaction, and the usual course had been observed to obtain peace. Mr. B. Folger had been indulged for a time, as in his northern journey, and then put off; when he would interdict Mrs. B. Folger from sleeping with Matthias; and on such occasions, Mrs. B. Folger slept with Isabella, and on these opportunities made to her very free communications, while the subject of her union with Matthias seemed to occupy much of her thoughts, and it became the subject of conversation; besides, being under partial restraint, and denied the company of Matthias, this perhaps operated in exciting the

imagination the more. Mrs. B. Folger had, on a former occasion, called the attention of Isabella when she entered their bedroom on a morning, to the subject of her happiness: for as she was laying her head on the beard of Matthias, she remarked, "Isabella, this you see is my pillow." And on the present occasion, or when Mrs. B. Folger was in bed with Isabella, and when Matthias was spoken of, Mrs. Folger actually showed Isabella how Matthias kissed or embraced her. This, with other facts, shows clearly, that the death of Mr. Pierson made no alteration either in the faith of Mrs. Folger, or in her affections; and it shows most clearly, that her mind was at least much occupied with her enjoyments with Matthias, whom she still regarded as her proper spouse. The account therefore in Stone's book of her decline in faith, after Mr. Pierson's death, is incorrect.

We approach now the crisis, the breaking up of the kingdom, which is extremely characteristic. For three weeks after this last marriage, which was to bind them for ever, the parties seemed to get on tolerably well. But Mrs. Folger was probably more attentive to Mr. B. Folger than before, as she evidently did not wish to lose her influence over him; and this perhaps excited or increased the jealousy of Matthias, whom we before remarked did not like so much politeness on the part of Mr. Folger. For three weeks, Mr. B. Folger seemed to be satisfied with Catherine, but he could not last out the honeymoon. On Sunday afternoon, September 15th, 1834, about three weeks after the late marriage, Mrs. B. Folger went into the garret to lay down on Isabella's bed, when Mr. B. Folger, after sometime, followed her, entered the room, shut the door, and locked it. Now whether Matthias' suspicions were awake, or whether by accident, we know not; but, he too went up to the garret, and finding it locked, ascertained who were within, and why they had locked it; but as he had no legal remedy, he had to put up with it. Catherine, who was a party interested in this transaction, went into the kitchen, and said to Isabella that Father had caught them, or caught her at it. She also complained, that it was too bad that Mrs. Folger had two men; and using an exaggeration, declared that

she had Matthias all night, and Ben Folger (as she said) all day.\* Soon after this, Mrs. Folger came down stairs, and said to Isabella, that Mr. Folger had forced her,† but as he was her legal husband, she had no remedy. Matthias however, on this occasion, did not impute all the blame to Mr. Folger, for Mrs. Folger and Matthias after this had some words for a day or two; and on Tuesday night, Matthias got out of bed, and left her. She then also left the bed, and came up stairs into Isabella's bed, (Catherine was at that time in bed with Mr. Folger,) and lay down with her, and mentioned the fact of Matthias' leaving her, and declared that she could not lay alone, for that Pierson's spirit haunted her. This she had said several times before, and added, that if she got out of the bed in the night or in the dark, that she required Matthias to hold his hands over her eyes, for she seemed to see Pierson's spirit.‡ After a short time Matthias also came into Isabella's room, apparently to look for Mrs. Folger, and seeing her in bed with Isabella, he desired the coloured woman to get up, and leave her, exclaiming that Mrs. Folger was a harlot; and used the expression, "My Lord and my God, have I had that devil in my bosom!" And then appealing to Isabella again, exclaimed, "God will curse you if you do!" (that is, lay in bed with her.) To which Mrs. Folger replied, Well, where can I go, I must go somewhere; where shall I go Father? Matthias said, "Go to the pit from whence you came, you cursed creature." Matthias left the room, and Isabella got

\* The exact words of Catherine were, "Lord God, Ben and Mother are locked up in your bedroom together. What a devilish shame it is, that a woman wants two or three men."

Catherine left for a few minutes, and returning, added, "Father has caught Ben and Mother together; Well, I never see such a woman in my life before, have you? she wants Father all night, and Ben all day."

† Her words were, after inquiring of Isabella if she had not heard of the affair, "I was fatigued, and was laying down on your bed, and Benjamin came up, and locked the door, and forced me; and Father came up to the door, and now he is angry. I am sure, I am not to blame."

‡ The exact expressions on this occasion, were, "I am come to you for protection, for Father has gone off, laying on the sofa, or somewhere or other, and left me alone in the bed; and Pierson's devilish spirit haunts me, so that I don't know where to go."

Isabella replied, "I wish to God he would appear to me, I would ask him what he wanted."

up, not because desired by Matthias, but because she could not sleep in such a confusion.

In the morning, when Catherine left Mr. Folger's room, Mrs. Folger went into it, and did not come down to breakfast; but Mr. Folger took her up coffee: no regular breakfast was taken that morning. The confusion of the night, and the irritated state of the feelings of the party, took away the appetite; Matthias scarcely eat any thing, Isabella very little: and this is the breakfast, and the coffee, which Mr. B. Folger so imprudently said was poisoned, and for which he recently had to pay to Isabella \$125 and costs, in a slander suit. Mr. B. Folger now became urgent with Matthias to leave; still there was no direct quarrelling, and Matthias did not *leave that day*; this is of consequence, for the report of the poisoned coffee, supposed that on the morning of his departure, the coffee was poisoned: in the course of the day considerable alterations took place: Mrs. Folger appeared again in the family, but with an altered tone; she now called Mr. B. Folger, *husband*, a term which she formerly used, but which had been dropped since she was called mother; and she especially informed Isabella that she wanted Mr. Folger to be obeyed; her tone towards Matthias was altered; and her beautiful soft voice, seemed to have acquired a harshness; Matthias was no longer the favourite, and Mr. Folger was again taken to be her husband; and Matthias' physical powers even, were now depreciated. By what follows, it appears that Mr. Folger was told by Mrs. Folger, that she had never enjoyed the Father much, and that she greatly preferred him, Mr. B. Folger: and as Mr. Folger finds it extremely difficult to keep any secrets, this led to a very curious scene. When most of the family, kingdom, or church, was assembled by accident in the kitchen, or basement, including Mr. and Mrs. Folger, Matthias, Catherine, and Isabella, Mr. B. Folger, feeling confident in the affections of his wife, and perhaps not knowing how she had formerly disparaged his physical powers, and knowing only that she then disparaged those of Matthias, he ventured to taunt Matthias on this point; Matthias returned

the thrust, and appealed to Mrs. B. Folger for the truth of his assertions, and to confirm what she had formerly said of Mr. B. Folger, who also appealed to her, to confirm what she had just said of Matthias; being thus appealed to, by her husband and her spouse, she had resort to her ingenuity to get out of her difficulty: she said, that when she spoke of Matthias, she did not refer to actual enjoyment, but that as she had a complaint, (the falling of the womb,) and she found that Matthias made her better, by replacing the fallen part, and that in consequence of this benefit she had thus spoken of him; but that she greatly preferred Mr. B. Folger, whom she enjoyed most. In the commencement of this discourse, by the chief leaders in the kingdom, Isabella was directed to some employment out of the kitchen, as had frequently been done before, when any delicate or family subject was agitated; but she, feeling that the kingdom was about to be dissolved, declined obeying, and chose to stay and hear out this singular dispute. In the course of the day, however, Mrs. Folger informed Matthias that she would not sleep with Mr. Folger till the child was born; this resolution, however, we expect was not kept.

Mr. B. Folger continued more urgent with Matthias, yet no actual quarrel ensued: he offered Matthias any quantity of money, any thing to get rid of him; he saw that the disaffection of his wife was a favourable opportunity, and he pressed it, as Matthias told us; he said that Mr. Folger was with him, as Pharoah with the children of Israel, any thing to get rid of them, and then to pursue them, as in his case. Matthias, in reply to the offer of money, remarked, that if he, Mr. B. Folger, *felt* as though he had money which belonged to God, he might give it him; and Mr. B. Folger gave Matthias \$500 on the day of his departure. Mr. Western, however, shows that this money was still given to Matthias to buy a farm, agreeable to the first idea. Isabella also had engaged to go, and Mr. and Mrs. Folger insisted on paying her wages as a compensation, and gave her \$25. Henry too had been paid off before this period, and thus the kingdom was virtually broken up; but

Matthias just after that time, acknowledged only to his wife, at Albany, that it was necessary that the church should go into the wilderness for a time; still adhering to the notion of a farm, and a reunion. There is something very curious with this gift of money to Matthias and Isabella, with after circumstances. The money was given partly in silver and partly in gold, and Mr. B. Folger urged that Isabella should take the charge of the gold; but she declined, and, like a great fool, added her money, received as wages, to that given to Matthias, for the good, we suppose, of the kingdom. Matthias, however, returned her money before he left the house. It was very well that Isabella did not take charge of this gold, for no sooner was Matthias and Isabella gone, than Mr. Folger raised reports, not only of her having poisoned his family, but excited suspicion that he had been robbed: it appears one of the failings of Mr. B. Folger, that he could never get out of one difficulty without getting into another; and we have proofs not only of his bringing this charge, connected with the other, for which he had to pay \$125; but, when detected in the last act of grossness, after giving up his wife *for ever*, and taking Catherine *for ever*, we have proof of his charging this very act on Matthias, and another person, which if we were to mention, he would be immediately prosecuted again for slander: we have proof, too, of him and Mrs. B. Folger, after the whole was settled, going to Mr. Latourette, in the Bowery, and making there a religious confession, acknowledging the very things mentioned in this book, appearing penitent, spending much time in prayer; and yet, in the midst of this very confession, Mr. Folger imputes sins to others, which would expose him to a prosecution if made known; and to prevent this, he binds his confessor to secrecy; but his confessor told it to his wife, or a part of it, and his wife to a Mrs. McComb, in Fourth street, and this lady mentioned it to a cousin of Mr. Folger, whom Stone so much abuses, and she mentioned a part of this confession to us; and much of these facts we afterward got confirmed by Mr. Latourette himself, indirectly indeed, for being bound as he supposed to secrecy, he de-

clined a *positive* answer to some questions, but substantially confirmed what we before knew. This attempt to injure the reputation or fame of another, without daring to do it openly, destroys our faith, both in the sincerity and efficacy of the accompanying long prayers and tears; it is like getting absolution with the purpose of sinning again.

In Mr. Stone's book, "Matthias and his Impostures," the account given of the transactions at Sing-Sing, and in No. 8 Third street house, is avowedly given by Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger. From such a source we could have no right to expect a correct statement of such transactions as we have related, in which they were the chief actors; and this Mr. Stone must have known: and yet he endorses their account (see page 221 of his work) as "a round unvarnished tale;" "and is, moreover, as far as it goes," as he says, "a tale of unexaggerated, unadorned, and *simple truth*." We cannot notice all the errors and omissions in this "*simple truth*;" but our readers may like to see their version of the few last days, and they may amuse themselves by weaving our account in that published by Mr. Stone; and then, by making an allowance, from a wish to shift the blame from their own shoulders—and from the supposition that Matthias would not be believed if he wrote—and that the coloured woman would not be heard, because she could not read or write—the accounts then may be reconciled with ours, and will be found tolerably minute. To assist in this explanation we shall add notes.

Mr. and Mrs. Folger, up to the period of a few days before the rupture just explained, acknowledge themselves as believers in Matthias; but wished him to retire on a farm, as before explained. The last events are then thus noticed in Mr. Stone's book; see pages 213, 14, 15, 16, 17.

"At length, while Mr. Folger was abroad, Matthias began to charge Mrs. Folger as being responsible for breaking up 'the kingdom.' She would then tell the family, in his presence, what the circumstances were, but to little or no purpose; for, as soon as her back was turned, he would say so much to the contrary, as to recall them to believe in his statements; and they no doubt were aware that it might

be some time before they would be able to find another so independent and well-provided a home.

"Mr. Folger, at this time,\* was much occupied and tried in his mind with business perplexities; and finding him still decided in his determination to separate from Matthias, Mrs. Folger forbore to mention to him her trials in his absence from the house, being sustained by the hope of a speedy deliverance† from them. But Matthias at last ascertaining that Mr. Folger was not to be wrought upon farther by him, attempted to terrify Mrs. Folger into a farther belief of his doctrines. She, however, told him, that she had not faith, and therefore could not exercise it. He asked, if it was then her determination to pursue the course her husband had pursued; if it was, he added, he had made the same sign for her he had made for Mr. Pierson, which would not fail. She said firmly, it was. He then said, at the height of his voice, which was, on the whole, deafening, stamping at the same time violently with his feet, she should be **D-A-M-N-E-D!**‡ Mrs. Folger was much alarmed, and feared that the earth would open and swallow her up, or something worse. She was then quite unwell and wearied, and did not feel sure, for a time, but that some of his curses had taken effect. But finding that she outlived one curse, she felt encouraged to urge her husband, when he came home in the evening,§ to be more prompt in effecting the dismissal of Matthias; and on the following morning she proposed that he should leave her up stairs, and say to Matthias distinctly, that he should have no more opportunity of preaching to her, and insist upon his leaving that day. This was done, and he promised to go, but re-

\* This was after Mr. Folger had infringed the conditions of the last solemn marriage; which, with the former marriage, and violation of the contract, are wholly omitted in Stone's book.

† Matthias vilified her after the violation of the last marriage compact.

‡ His abuse of her, after she left his bed, and was in bed with Isabella, as explained in our text.

§ When she went up to his bed, after Catherine had left it.

requested that the family might dine together once more.— Mr. Folger took Mrs. Folger's breakfast up to her room, and she drank freely of the coffee. She then asked to have her little daughter, about six years old, sent up to her.— When the child came up stairs, she said, 'Mother, Mr. Matthias said, that was not the Lord's table they ate at this morning, but the devil's,' and that Mr. Matthias did not eat any breakfast. The child likewise said, that the coffee was not good, and that she could not drink it.\*

"Mr. Folger being much occupied that morning, in delivering the articles of furniture belonging to the estate of Mr. Pierson, which was to be sold at auction, sent for Mrs. Folger, as he needed her assistance.† Meeting her little son, about ten years of age, as she descended the stairs, he said to her, 'Mother, the coffee was so bad this morning I could hardly drink it.'‡ She merely replied to him, being busy, 'Why did you drink it then?' and the circumstance escaped her mind, as did the other complaint from the little girl.

"Matthias seized an opportunity, while Mr. Folger was in another part of the house delivering furniture, to renew his threats upon Mrs. Folger.§ He was then seated in the kitchen, preaching to Catherine and the coloured woman. Mrs. Folger was engaged down stairs, and continued to be until dinner was ready. Matthias did not eat any dinner, but wept while the rest were eating—intending, perhaps, to try the force of tears, for he did shed real tears. Mrs.

\* All the family in confusion, in consequence of Mrs. Folger leaving Matthias' bed in the night, and successively entering Isabella's and Mr. Folger's. Matthias was in a rage, and ate no breakfast. The child might or might not have observed that the coffee was bad: there was no evidence of this on the late trial.

† The singular conversation about the relative physical powers of Matthias and Mr. B. Folger probably took place at this time.

‡ This may or may not be true. It was not brought forward at the late trial, where no defence was offered, and Mr. Folger convicted of a malicious libel in relation to this coffee.

§ Mrs. Folger promised not to unite with Mr. Folger till the holy child was born.

Folger did not observe the coloured woman at that time, but has at other times, that she did not eat when Matthias abstained. Mrs. Folger retired to her room, after dinner, with her children. It rained that afternoon; and Matthias pleaded that circumstance as an excuse to Mr. Folger that he did not depart. At supper-time Matthias seated himself at the table, but did not partake. He remarked, that he began to realize his situation, and commenced pronouncing woes upon those who had caused it. Mr. Folger forbade his preaching any more to his family, and he was silenced for the time,

“Mr. Folger asked him if he should send his sons to their mother in Albany. Matthias replied, “he would as soon send them to hell!” but, in the same breath, said, “he wished he would.” On a second reflection, however, it seemed to be his design to keep house somewhere in New York. He packed up their clothes with his, and said, he should take them with him. Mr. Folger soon after this recollected, that he had promised their mother, that if they were to leave his family, he would send them to her. He accordingly told Matthias of it, and that it must be done: and in three days, after having things properly prepared, Mr. Folger committed them to the care of the captain of a steamboat, paid their expenses to Albany, and sent them home.

“Immediately after supper, on the last night Matthias was in the house, he went to bed. Mr. Folger had an errand out on business, and went to attend to it. Mrs. Folger, with Catherine, retired to her room; but having occasion to go to the kitchen after a while, Matthias was found there with the coloured woman. Catherine accompanied Mrs. Folger to the kitchen; whereupon Matthias and the coloured woman began to persuade her to join them in keeping house: and they no doubt would have induced Catherine to go with them, but for the advice of Mr. and Mrs. Folger.

“During that night Mrs. Folger was quite unwell, and did not sleep. She observed that Mr. Folger was very restless, and groaned in his sleep. The children, who were in

the next room with Catherine, were restless and wakeful, and rather wild and light-headed. Catherine was also restless, and groaned in her sleep.\*

"Mrs. Folger then remembered the children's complaint about the coffee, and Matthias not eating when they did.† In consequence of this, she told Catherine in the morning to get breakfast separately for us; to be sure they washed every thing to be used, and not to use any of the provisions then in the house. Catherine then mentioned to Mrs. Folger, that she had observed the coffee was bad the morning before, had a strange taste, and had something white in it— that she had asked the coloured woman the cause of it, who had replied, that she could not expect to have good coffee, or any blessing, while her Father was offended.‡ This morning, Mr. Folger went down, at Mrs. Folger's request, to see that her instructions were obeyed. Mr. Folger and family took breakfast in the parlour: Matthias, the coloured woman, and Matthias' sons, below stairs.

"After breakfast, Mr. Folger told Matthias he must be off immediately—that he should not leave the house until he had gone—that as for his sons, they should be sent to their mother. Matthias undertook again to display some of his lofty movements, and made some objections; but the spell was broken, and his day had passed. He was soon silenced, upon being assured, that if there was any farther trouble with him, Mr. Folger would step to the police-office and get assistance. He consumed all the time he could in getting his clothes together, and asking for many articles,

\* Catherine was restless, for she had just lost her spouse, lately taken by her for *ever*; on that day she had cried and wrung her hands at her loss, till comforted by Mr. B. Folger, who promised to protect her.

† None of this evidence was produced on the late trial.

‡ Mr. Folger endeavoured to repair the injury of the libel by charging Catherine as the author, and saying that she was an infernal liar. (This came out on the late trial, in Mr. Whiting's evidence.)

§ Isabella had observed, that "the curse of God was on that house," in reference to the proceedings we have related.

which were denied him. He exercised considerable ingenuity to obtain them; but his true character was understood, and his motions were watched. He at last obtained a cartman, sent away his baggage, and departed himself about noon, on the 18th or 19th of September.

“Mr. and Mrs. Folger went, the same day, in search of a more suitable residence.”\*

We ask, now, what authority this book of Mr. Stone's can have, as illustrating “The Progress of Fanaticism,” as Mr. Stone has it in his title-page, when it so completely garbles and obscures the facts?

In relation to the property of Mr. Pierson, we have already said, that much dissatisfaction exists amongst his relatives. He was supposed to be worth \$80,000, by his own representations; but Matthias, and some of his neighbours, suppose he over-rated himself, as many others do. He did give away large sums in his various charities, and in the kingdom. We know Matthias' tailor's bills were sent to him, and that his expenditures were extremely free; but the household expenses in the kingdom, even though they had a large family, could not be much, as all in that family worked; even the Father and the Mother worked a little, and living on a farm, in a plain way, each must have produced nearly as much in value as what he consumed, except the Prophet. The land speculation was decidedly good. The machinery does not appear to have cost Mr. Pierson much; nay, he possibly gained by it. His stock speculation is alone doubtful, we have no evidence on it. But the greatest cause of dissatisfaction is the loss of Mr. Pierson's accounts—and this indeed is a mystery. Mr. Pierson was a good accountant, had always kept his own affairs in order; and when a firm with which he was connected was once bankrupted, he it was who made up the accounts, to the satisfaction of the parties concerned. From these facts, and the habit of Mr. Pierson to put to paper even the trivial transactions of the day, his family and friends believe that

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\* This going to seek a new residence is not very reconcilable with the sickness said to be occasioned by the coffee.

he must have left accounts of his property and money transactions; and yet no such accounts can be found: and it is these papers which have been so much sought after, and the absence of which creates so much dissatisfaction.

Connected with these papers, there is one subject we have omitted, partly because we could not give the correct date, and partly from an unwillingness to undertake it, from its nature; we have, however, promised to give the whole truth, and, therefore, we shall give the facts as related to us, leaving reflections to our readers. After the sale of goods at Sing-Sing, belonging to Mr. Pierson, that gentleman's goods, property, and papers, were sought after in the house in Third street: the key of that part of a bureau, supposed to contain Mr. Pierson's papers, was lost; but Mr. Folger, about that time, was examining papers for two days; and Isabella, when looking after sheets and other linen of Mr. Pierson's to be given up for sale, entered the room in which the bureau was, and observing a change in its appearance which arrested her attention, and not knowing what was in it, for though she had heard some noise about a key and papers, she did not identify them with this bureau; indeed, a person who neither reads or writes, and who has no property, takes very little interest in papers: this bureau having attracted her attention, while in search for linen, she put her hand on the top of it and it came open,—the drawer, as she expresses herself, dropped out; she then discovered that this piece of furniture contained small compartments, and different papers tied up, but these did not attract her attention, and nothing like sheets or linen appearing, she would have shut this drawer up immediately, had not an object of curiosity arrested her; this was a small round magnifying or shaving-glass, and taking this glass up, to her astonishment, she discovered that it enlarged her face enormously; forgetting all other subjects, and not supposing she had done any thing wrong, she told Catherine of this curiosity, stating where she had seen it; and Catherine next took it to Mr. B. Folger, then in another room. Mrs. Folger, who was present, appeared surprised at the exposure; but Mr. Fol-

ger manifested no surprise, either at the object, or at Catherine's having it; and this should be remembered, for it supposes that Mr. B. Folger did not know that it was taken from that drawer, or else that that act was of no consequence. Mrs. B. Folger, however, discovered an importance in this transaction, and immediately informed Matthias that Isabella had *opened* a drawer of Mr. Pierson's, and she brought him down stairs to scold Isabella, she coming side by side with Matthias, and leaning on him, and in the scolding part supplying him with words, and making a case the worse for her interference; it was this quality in Mrs. B. Folger which chiefly annoyed Isabella. Matthias scolded Isabella severely for meddling with the drawer. Isabella defended herself by stating that she was looking for sheets. Mrs. Folger remarked, "that any one that would open a drawer would do any thing else." Isabella denied opening it, declaring that she laid her hand on it, and the drawer came open; that it was neither latched nor locked. The reflections of Mrs. Folger caused Isabella to express a determination to leave the kingdom; for this, it appears, Mrs. Folger nor Matthias was prepared, and Mrs. Folger coming into the kitchen again, entered into explanations, and stated that she did not mean to say that Isabella had designedly broken open the drawer, but that, being very strong, she had broken the lock or ketch undesignedly, and thus opened the drawer while handling the bureau. Isabella replied, emphatically, "No, there was no ketch or lock broken, the drawer came open simply in touching it." All this while Isabella had attached no importance to the transaction; but Mrs. B. Folger now remarked, softening her voice to a low tone, that "if it were known that the drawer was opened, Mr. Folger would be ruined." She further remarked, "that if Mr. Burnham, (the agent of Mr. Pierson's relatives,) had come, he would have put in the key and opened it, and he never would have known that it had been opened." (This was said in reply to some other remark of Isabella.) To this observation Isabella replied, Oh! oh! (with some astonishment,) was there any of Mr. Pierson's papers

there? perceiving for the first time, what she thought the cause of Mrs. Folger's anxiety. Mrs. Folger replied, No. Isabella afterward resided about ten days in the house with Mr. Burnham, and stated to him all the transactions which we have recorded. We draw no conclusions from these facts relative to this drawer and quarrel; but we think it due to Mr. Folger to state, that he did not mix up with the quarrel, or show any anxiety about it. Nor do we ascribe to Mrs. Folger, individually, any improper connexion with this transaction.

## CHAPTER V.

*No sudden change in the opinions, but a change in the feelings of Mrs. B. Folger—Traits in the character of Matthias—Design or inconsistency of Mr. and Mrs. Folger in the arrest of Matthias—Pierson disinterred, and a new chain of events—Mr. Western and Wilson—Curious scene at Bellevue—Pierson again disinterred, and a charge of murder preferred against Matthias—Trial put off—The Holy child, a female—Catherine confirms Isabella's Narrative—The trial at White Plains—Matthias interrupts the court, and is first tried for insanity; but acknowledged sane by the jury—The evidence—Matthias acquitted without a defence—Vindictive trial of Matthias for assault on his daughter—Convicted and sentenced—Present situation of the prominent members of the late kingdom—Conclusion.*

THE parties composing the kingdom being now separated, and the events which followed being generally known, we might leave off here; but we are desirous of leaving a correct record of the transactions of the party, and fully illustrating the characters in these strangest of all transactions. And that we cannot fully do, without a brief notice of what has since occurred; besides, we have left Mrs. B. Folger *en route* of a supposed holy son, and some curiosity necessarily exists in relation to this subject. In the anonymous and distorted notice of these transactions, it was stated that this expected son being a *daughter*, convinced Mrs. Folger of her error; instead of which, the child was not born when the parties separated in bad feeling, as we related in the last chapter.

We have noticed the altered manners of Mrs. B. Folger towards Matthias. His jealousy and distrust of her, apparently estranged her affections from him; but no sudden discovery took place, which altered her views. It was evident that long before this, the divine and sublime character of Matthias had been differently estimated in the kingdom, especially by Mrs. B. Folger. Notwithstanding Matthias was illiterate, a bad and coarse speaker, apparently mad,

vain in his person and apparel, an enthusiast, with much cunning; yet when dressed, he was of genteel demeanour, he had read much, and mingled much philosophy with his religion and madness; and philosophy prevailed towards the latter days. He preached happiness on earth, not in the sky, as the Scripture doctrine; and *some* of his measures were calculated to effect that end. Religious worship, prayers, and singing, were nearly extinct in the kingdom, while his maxims, referring chiefly to this life, were firmly established; and his followers in the kingdom, including Mrs. Folger, continued attached to him, less from his spiritual, than his mundane qualities. He was extremely cleanly, and a lover of order; and with his authority, the whole house partook of these qualities. He was temperate, without being abstemious, except in wine and spirits, of which he took none. We have no evidence of his being inconstant to Mrs. Folger; and his wife considered him a chaste man, while she knew him; she does not believe that he formed any connexion with any other female, while living with her in a state of matrimony. And he informed us, that he had no matrimonial union with his wife, since he first declared himself a Jew, and allowed his beard to grow. His wife then declared that she would not have a Jew; and this formed part of his excuse to us for his union with Mrs. Folger. We know too, that when he returned to Albany after the breaking up of the kingdom, that he did not sleep in his wife's house, although he gave her a large sum of money, and the care of nearly the whole for a short time. His maxims and interpretations of Scripture were peculiar and original; at least to the party forming the kingdom, and as they were firmly believed in, his disciples, we believe, rather gave him credit for great wisdom and penetration, than for any divine character. Indeed we have now in our possession, a letter written by Mr. B. Folger to one of his relatives, in which he expresses himself as unhinged in his religious opinions, towards the close of the kingdom, and without expressing a belief in Matthias. There was then, as we believe, no sudden disbelief of Matthias. He had gradually assumed another character, without any formal resignation

of his former. He was fond of his fine garments and long beard for their own sakes, and Mrs. B. Folger was fond of him for his personal qualities. But when she became the object of his resentment, her love for a moment appeared to turn to hatred. Before ever Matthias left the house, something of this feeling was shown, but immediately on his departure, it assumed a most baneful course. If we look for any deliberate plan or design running in connected links through the whole period of the kingdom, on the part of any one of the members, we shall perhaps be disappointed; we believe that not one of them was capable of such consistency, unless it were Mr. Pierson in his better days; the rest, including Matthias, evidently were inconsistent, and changed their mind from time to time; and that, too, in some cases most foolishly. Thus we have already related that Mr. B. Folger gave Matthias \$500 in gold and silver, on the eve of his departure, when both he and his wife expressed an unfriendly feeling. This, too, was deliberately done, and Catherine and Isabella were called as witnesses; Isabella, too, was paid \$25. Now this calling of witnesses seems to suppose a deliberate act, and a wish to prevent mistakes. This gift of money was, too, accompanied with some curious advice, as we before related. Matthias was advised to let Isabella take charge of the gold, assuming that she and Matthias would travel together; and Matthias was further advised, when he arrived at the end of his destination, to put the money in a bedpost. At the same time, Mr. and Mrs. Folger were very particular in inquiring where Matthias and Isabella were going, and when, and by what conveyances. But at this time, neither of these persons could tell, for they had made no definite arrangements; while Catherine secretly advised Isabella not to go with Matthias, and to get back her money, for that Matthias would be taken up. Isabella had then confidence in Matthias, and knew of no reason why he should be taken up; she therefore treated this advice with contempt. Matthias and Isabella left Mr. Folger's house in Third street, on Thursday, 19th of September, 1834, separately; without stating where they were going. Matthias, however, told Isabella she might

hear of him at Mr. Durando's, corner of Chamber and Chatham streets, and Mr. Folger engaged to *take Matthias' sons* to Albany. Isabella, on calling on Mr. Durando, only learned that Matthias had left the city, without leaving any directions. She then determined upon going immediately to Albany, as she had promised Matthias that she would be there on Saturday, when his children were expected, and explain the circumstances to his wife. For this purpose she returned to Third street house, to take her luggage, but declined stating where she was going. Mrs. Folger, however, and Catherine, kissed her, and wished her good-by; they were, too, making bedticks, as she supposed, for the country; and at that time no unfriendly feelings were manifested either towards her or Matthias; nor was either she or Catherine ill from the effects of any *coffee*, taken the day previous, as in Mr. Stone's account; besides, Mrs. Folger went out the same day a house hunting; and no poisoned coffee prevented this, or her kissing Isabella, as just related.

Isabella, after calling on Mr. John Dumont on her journey, reached Albany by the Nimrod on Saturday, and found, with some surprise, that Matthias had preceded her, and was sitting in his wife's house. It appears, he had then given his wife the money to take care of, and had told her, that "the kingdom must retire into the wilderness for a time." Matthias went out soon after Isabella arrived, and the boys presently came in, not brought by Mr. Folger, but sent by him in a towboat. Scarcely had the boys arrived, when one of them (John) exclaimed to his mother, "Mother, Mr. B. Folger has got a police officer after father, for *stealing* and robbing things;" the other boy confirmed this, and on the re-entry of Matthias, these statements were made to him, and he was interrogated by his wife, to whom he explained all the circumstances, and took no precaution to escape. Isabella not understanding the subject, returned on Monday to Mr. J. Dumont, near Hyde Park, with whom she formerly lived, perhaps for advice. On Tuesday, Matthias was taken by two police officers, Smith and another; and Isabella hearing of it, when the boat arrived, returned to Albany to make inquiry. And of Mrs. Matthias she then

asked the previous character of Matthias, and finding him honest, she persuaded his wife to come to New York, where they might together assist him. It appears that Mrs. B. Folger had advised the employment of (as she said) Old Hays, who she said would do his duty in this affair, but that Mr. B. Folger had objected, because Mr. Hays knew Matthias, and this apparently strange reason induced them to employ two officers comparatively unskilful. Nor can this strange transaction be explained, except by connecting it with some others. There was, about that time, diligent inquiry concerning Mr. Pierson's property, a small sum being only recovered; suspicion had been excited, and the body of Mr. Pierson had been disinterred a few weeks after his death, and the unlearned surgeons employed on that occasion, tended rather to increase, than allay suspicions. The key of the bureau had been lost, and the accounts not found; but the bureau opened. Mr. Folger, as residing with Mr. Pierson, and as being intimately engaged with him in money transactions, and keeping his accounts, as Matthias informed us, was necessarily mixed up with these affairs and suspicions. Now, whether designed or not, there certainly was the appearance of making Matthias and Isabella the scapegoats in these transactions. It may not have been so; but it does look, as if Matthias and Isabella being sent into the wilderness, were made to bear the suspicions with them then existing; for there was no ground whatever for charging Matthias with stealing. Nor was Mr. Folger duped out of the \$500; it was a deliberate act, after he had ceased to be a believer in his divine character; and having made the charge, he *never* supported it. While rejecting Hays because he knew Matthias, seems as if he did not wish Matthias to be taken; nor can we conceive that he did, as he had committed no legal offence; indeed, he and Mrs. Folger had no thought of his being taken, supposing Matthias and Isabella had gone South. No sooner, however, was Matthias taken, and a trial almost certain, when the charge must be sustained, than Mr. B. Folger circulated the poison story, and declared that Isabella, in conjunction with Matthias, had attempted to poison his family; and this

seems to have been an after thought, to injure the character of Isabella, as Mr. Western stated in court, to affect the testimony she was expected to give in favour of Matthias. For when Mrs Folger and Catherine kissed her, and spoke kindly the day after the coffee was drank, and when they were in good health, and Mrs. Folger was *house-hunting*; it is evident no thought of poison was entertained. And the groundlessness of this charge has since been determined by a conviction of Mr. B. Folger for slander, and damages of \$125 paid to Isabella: and in this case, too, no defence was offered, as if there was even *no ground* for such a suspicion. Whatever may have been the design of Mr. Folger in these measures, they produced a new chain of circumstances, and led to events which he had not calculated.

Matthias was now in custody, under a charge of stealing or swindling, with a report, circulated by Mr. Folger, that he and Isabella had poisoned his family. The consequence of these charges was, that the body of Mr. Pierson was again disinterred, and again examined by medical men; some of whom were not much more learned than the former, if we can judge by their testimony in court, where they excited much laughter, by their assumptions and ignorance. In the mean time Matthias was brought up for examination; and he showed, clear enough, that the money had been *given* to him; and shortly after Mr. B. Folger publicly admitted this fact! But the presumption was, that he had been duped; and public feeling, including those of the magistrates, regarded all the villany on the part of Matthias; and he was committed for trial, for obtaining money under false pretences.

In the mean time Isabella went to Morristown, to Mr. Pierson's friends, to justify herself; but was received with suspicion: she went to her former friends, but was met, in every direction, with the charge of poisoning Mr. Folger's family: yet no attempt was made to take her into custody, nor did she seek to escape. She took, too, the very wise precaution of getting written characters from all her former employers, which we published in our first number: she assisted also Matthias, necessarily, in vindicating herself

A Mr. Hall had been employed by Matthias' wife; but he being absent when wanted at the trial, Mr. Western accidentally undertook the defence of Matthias: and after a powerful appeal, by him, in support of the claims of Matthias to have a fair trial, his trial was adjourned.

A friend of Matthias' wife, a Mr. Robinson, then sought a lawyer, to undertake his case; and as Isabella was necessarily chief witness, he took her with him to Mr. Wilson, who spoke of Matthias as a *beast*: and as this mode of speaking of him did not suggest the chance of an able lawyer in his favour, Isabella advised trying some other. Mr. Robinson then took her to Mr. Western, and that gentleman patiently heard her whole story: and when she mentioned having called on Mr. Wilson, he very liberally declared his wish that she should call on him again, offering to assist Mr. Wilson, if he requested it, or become second counsel. She did call again on Mr. Wilson, and told him of her having seen Mr. Western. Wilson acted with less liberality; and peevishly asked, "Why did you go to Western?" and added, soothingly, "I am going to act like a Christian."

Now it so happens, that the name of Christian had been associated with every act of violence towards Isabella and Matthias. Matthias called himself a Jew; stating that Jesus was a Jew, and came to show men how to become the sons of God. He denounced several real corruptions in the doctrines and practices of the common church, and advanced new and peculiar doctrines of his own, assuming an independent interpretation of Scripture. Those who received these doctrines formed "the kingdom," the rest were called "devils." Those who had violently sent Mr. Mills to the Lunatic Asylum, and who hired brutal men in New York to cut off Matthias' beard, did it in the name of Christianity. And Mr. Mills, the brother of the friend of Matthias, struck Isabella a violent blow on the neck, the swelling of which even now troubles her: and this was done in the name of the Lord! while some of the most distinguished clergy and Christians assisted on that occasion. Matthias, however, held that he had the truth, and all others were called devils; and of these, in his estimation, the Chris-

tians (confounding all) were the worst part: and while he distinguished his party as Jews, the others were called emphatically Christian Devils, by way of contempt; associating always the idea of the violence done him and his party in the name of Christ. When, therefore, Mr. Wilson told Isabella, that "he was going to act like a Christian," she received it with the prejudice she had imbibed from some late acts, and from the instruction she had lately been under. Besides, about this time, she suffered an act of gross injustice from Mr. Latourette, fur-merchant, in Pearl-street and the Bowery, and a very prominent Christian: for when applied to for a character, *during the time he knew her*, in common with others she had served, he *refused it*; although he admitted to *us*, afterward, that she was exemplary—a child of God, and eminently gifted and favoured by God, (she used to preach at camp meetings;) and indeed gave her the very best character for morals, truth, industry, and intelligence. Instead of giving her this character, in reference to her former conduct, when it would have been of use to her, labouring under Folger's charge of poisoning; he preached to her about leaving his church, which he seemed to consider backsliding: yet she asked for nothing that she had not a perfect right to—she wanted no favour—she did not ask him to presume her present goodness; but she simply asked a character, while in connexion with his church, and occasionally in his service and house. Isabella, then, not liking the offer of Mr. Wilson, returned to Mr. Western, to confirm her testimony before given; and he undertook the defence of Matthias, and advised also the prosecution of Mr. B. Folger for slander, as the only means to establish her character, and make her an effective witness.

On this suit being commenced, it is remarkable that Mr. B. Folger went immediately to the parties through whom he had circulated the slander, and contradicted his own statements, offering to give Isabella the very best character. This came out in Mr. Whiting's evidence, in the case of the late slander suit. We have seen also a letter from Mr. Folger to Mr. Whiting, in which he admits the falseness of

the charge, but foolishly puts it off on Catherine's shoulders. Indeed, Mr. Folger appears incapable of excusing himself, without accusing some other person; and this weakness is a prominent feature of his character, and explains many foolish circumstances.

Matthias, at this time, lay in Bellevue; and while here, a singular scene occurred. Some friends of Mrs. Matthias had advised her to seek a divorce; and in order to do this, to obtain some money from Matthias, or an order to get it; for the remains of the \$500 had been lodged in a bank. Mr. B. Folger became acquainted with this movement; perhaps Mrs. Matthias had mentioned it to him, for the purpose of exacting a composition. She was a silly woman, frequently changed her plans, and apparently acted without much principle; for we know that she once contemplated offering to procure the return of her daughter to Mr. B. Folger for a sum of money, expecting to be able to induce her daughter's present husband (whose principles and moral standards are not highly estimated) to go to England. She then had, perhaps, let him know her intention; at least he did know it, and contrived to accompany her and her friends to the prison, at the very time when she went to seek from Matthias the means of obtaining a divorce, (an order for money) or a part of the \$500, which he received as a gift from Mr. Folger. As her friends, especially a Mr. Robinson, wished to shake off Mr. Folger from the company, at one time a complete chase took place, on the way to the prison. Mr. Folger, however, contrived to go in with the party; and when in the presence of Matthias, darted before the rest, seized Matthias by the hand, and called him Father, and begged instantly for a private audience, when he and Matthias retired into the cell. On the exit of Mr. Folger, Mrs. Matthias entered, and then learned that Matthias knew her purpose; and smiling at her simplicity, he declined giving her an order for money for such a purpose. Mrs. Matthias gave us this anecdote.

After a short time Matthias was again brought up for trial, in the criminal court, New York; when no one appeared against him, and Mr. Western ably pleaded for him.

discharge. But in the mean time, in consequence of this charge, and that of poisoning, against Matthias, originating only in the criminal weakness of Mr. Folger, Pierson was again disinterred, under all the excitement of strong prejudice; and though no definite signs of poison appeared in his stomach or bowels, some *unknown* appearances, and an *unknown* substance found in the stomach, was sufficient cause, in conjunction with the reports and charges raised by Mr. Folger, to find a bill of indictment against Matthias; and he was demanded of the authorities of New York, on the capital charge of murder, and delivered over to take his trial.

The trial was appointed at Bedford, West Chester, on the 25th of November, 1834, and the parties went down; but at this time it was put off by the sickness of the Judge. It was then appointed to come on at White Plains, and several of the witnesses were examined by the Grand Jury. On the part of the prosecution were Dr. Conder, Mr. Burnham, and a Mrs. Millspaw, who had formerly lived as house-keeper to Mr. B. Folger, before the kingdom was set up. This woman gave one testimony, in regard to Mr. and Mrs. Folger, on this occasion, but a very different one to some of our friends. We have not sought her evidence, or an interview with her, because she knew but little about the kingdom, and is least respected where best known, especially in the Greenwich Baptist church, to which she *did* belong: and though she has confirmed some of our statements, which she did know, we did not think her evidence would add to the credibility or respectability of the narrative. On this occasion, Isabella also was examined before the Grand Jury; but no trial took place, from the absence of Mrs. B. Folger and Catherine, two witnesses who were deemed essential. In the interval, it appears, the *holy child* had been born, with all the pains and circumstances which usually accompany an ordinary birth; and just at this time both the child (a *female*) and the mother were extremely ill with the small-pox. (This child was alive and well a few weeks since, and out at nurse.) Mr. Western, as counsel for Matthias, declared himself ready, and showed the

injury that would be sustained by his client if the trial was not proceeded in. The trial was, however, again put off; and, for the sake of justice, it was well it was, for a circumstance arose from this delay that much served to confirm, if not to develop, facts.

Mrs. B. Folger, who had taken again her husband to her favour and bed, had become a little jealous of Catherine, to whom he had formally been united several times. This jealousy was shown within a few weeks after the breaking up of the kingdom, and did not diminish; while the renewed acquaintance with Mrs. Millspaw, and the supposed services she had rendered Mrs. Folger, induced that lady to dispense with the services of Catherine, and she and her children became in want. In these circumstances she applied to Isabella; and in conversation told her all that took place in the family (no longer kingdom) after the departure of Matthias; and mentioned the contrivance to take, or to pretend to take Matthias, in relation to the inquiries about Mr. Pierson's property; and mentioned the *return* visit of Mr. Latourette to Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger. (these persons had previously been to him to confess and repent, as before related,) and showed that Mr. Latourette exhorted them to come back to the Lord; and Catherine then made some very sarcastic remarks on the ability of Mrs. B. Folger to cover over what fault she wished, and ingeniously to implicate others; observing, "You know how she can smooth it so." This occurred just after Christmas, 1834.

Isabella, who at this time had obtained the confidence of some of her former friends, by her direct and open conduct, in relation to the charges brought against her, was now in a comfortable situation with Mrs. Whiting, Canal-street, with whom she had formerly lived: she had indeed very little money, but this little she divided with Catherine, whose children were then in want; and, with admirable tact, took her to Mr. Western, the lawyer: here Catherine confirmed the whole of Isabella's story. Mr. Western saw her twice after this, once in the presence of Isabella and once alone; when she confirmed her former statements, even in relation to herself and Mr. B. Folger. Mr. Wes-

tern indeed had told her, that in case she remained faithful, and told nothing but the truth, he would not expose her, if possible; but she did not keep her part of the bargain. Mr. Western, however, has assured us, that he is satisfied of the truth of Isabella's narrative, and she only confirmed it.

On this occasion, too, Catherine informed Isabella, that "all this blessed winter Mrs. B. Folger has been writing against you and Matthias:" she added, that "she will overcome you, and Matthias will be hung; and all the Christians have been helping her." Now, of course, Catherine did not mean the great body of the respectable community under that name, but only a few, like Mr. Stone and the Rev. Mr. Somers, an amiable sort of man, who might wish to restore them to the church and their ancient faith, as Mr. Latourette did; and Mr. Stone and the Rev. Mr. Somers might see the propriety of covering up the iniquities of the kingdom, although such a design is rarely effected by a publication.

When Isabella was thus informed, that a formidable book was coming out against her and Matthias, by Mrs. Folger, aided by all the Christians, she exclaimed, with much energy, (for she is really very energetic and not very timid,) "I have got the *truth*, and I know it, and I will *crush* them with the *truth*." We have no doubt that Isabella was very angry on this occasion, and perhaps expressed some bitter wishes under such feelings; but Mr. Stone has published rather a perversion of the above expression, by leaving out the little word *truth*: so that it stands like an unprovoked, vindictive expression, and desire to crush her opponents by *any means*. It is, however, not to gratify any vindictive feelings that we defend her; we know nothing of Mr. and Mrs. Folger and Mr. Stone, but what they have brought forward by their very injudicious book. We have defended Isabella, because we know she has the *truth*: we have never detected her in a single exaggeration, nor has Mr. Western; and we think the follies of the kingdom ought to be exposed, as arising out of fanaticism, or originating in the dictates of feelings supposed to be divine, and which really operate extensively.

The account given by Mr. Stone of this conversation is from the narrative of Mrs. Folger, page 221; and charges Isabella of boasting to Catherine, of telling lies; and concludes by saying, that "she would crush Mrs. Folger."—Of course the account is taken from Catherine, for nobody else knew of this discourse. We have also given the above remarks on her authority, but we give them no more credit than what appears natural and reasonable: from what follows, and other circumstances, she is not to be depended on, and therefore we have not sought her out, for the sake of any independent information, though, as confirming the statements of Isabella to Mr. Western, her evidence was of importance, especially as she could not tell what Isabella had previously said to that lawyer; for Isabella's testimony would take up several hours, and, as not reading or writing, she would take no notes of what she had said.—Catherine's confirmation of *all* the important facts in Isabella's narrative, in the possession of Mr. Western, is then important *white* evidence, which the public so much seek after: and yet, had Catherine told us this narrative, unsupported by other testimony, we would not have published it, for she wants both firmness and sincerity: but when she related what she had seen and heard, to Mr. Western, and gave the same narrative which Isabella had done, she could not have invented it, for the reason before given. Her testimony, we think, is good for nothing, but as confirming Isabella's, and as far as consistent with the nature of things: for Catherine returned, after some time, to Isabella, (still at Mrs. Whiting's,) and regretted that she had been to Mr. Western; she observed, "I am sorry I said to Western that I had Ben." The fact is, she had become again on friendly terms with Mrs. B. Folger.

The trial was again coming on. Mr. and Mrs. Folger did not know that Catherine had given her evidence to Mr. Western, and perhaps they will receive the first intimation of it in this book. Mrs. Folger was expected to give her evidence, and Catherine was perhaps tampered with to support that evidence. This, however, is only a conclusion from the facts of her regret, just expressed, and of her actu-

ally supporting Mrs. B. Folger's evidence at the trial; but more especially from the fact, that Mr. B. Folger frequently sent for Isabella before the trial, and was extremely anxious to suppress her information. We have now a letter in our possession, from Mr. Folger, sent to Mr. Whiting, with whom Isabella then lived, expressing a strong wish to see her, and ask about some few things. Mr. B. Folger also informed Mr. Whiting, that "the public began to believe what Isabella said." Catherine, too, told Isabella, that Mr. and Mrs. Folger wanted Isabella to join them against Matthias: Isabella, however, prudently resolved not to see either of them. Catherine had less firmness; and had the defence of Matthias been gone into, she must have been confronted with her own evidence; yet she probably only suffered herself to be persuaded.

The trial at length took place at White Plains, on the 17th of April, 1835, before Judge Ruggles and others; when Mrs. B. Folger and Catherine appeared arm in arm. The detail has been already given in the daily journals; but as we think the facts here related will become a matter of importance, from their peculiar character, we shall give a few particulars.

Matthias, in the very commencement of the trial, while the clerk was calling the jury, rose, in spite of the remonstrance of the judge, and addressed the court in the following language; which is characteristic of the man and his style, and therefore we give it, as a good illustration of both. In reply to the judge's reproof, Matthias exclaimed,—“I speak in reference to the proceedings of the grand jury—that is a secret institution—and I here proclaim, that all secret societies are dissolved—are dissolved—dissolved—and were five years ago! They were a curse! they have the curse of Almighty God upon them, and were dissolved five years ago! I say, they are dissolved!” This was uttered with great violence, and Matthias has a powerful voice. The court was utterly astonished at this proceeding; and thinking it might proceed from insanity, decided upon calling an official inquest: and after a proper examination of several medical men and others, the jury returned a ver-

dict, that " Robert Matthews, otherwise called Matthias, was not insane." He was then held responsible for interrupting the court, and awarded thirty days' imprisonment; and his trial for the murder of Mr. Pierson proceeded, on Friday the 18th of April, 1835. The district attorney, Mr. W. Nelson, assisted by Mr. H. R. Storrs, of New York, and by Mr. Voris, of Sing-Sing, acted for the prosecution. Mr. M. Western, assisted by Mr. N. Hall, of New York, and Mr. Mitchel, of White Plains, defended Matthias.

In support of the prosecution, Jesse Bishop, a neighbour, at Sing-Sing, proved the control of Matthias in the establishment, and gave an acknowledged fair statement.

Moses Cherry, a sexton, at Morristown, proved the exhumation of Mr. Pierson ten days after his burial, and also five or six weeks before the trial. Dr. Condit had carried away the stomach, and found *something* white in it, in quantity about eight or ten grains. He sent the contents of the stomach to Dr. Torry, of New York, to be examined. On March 21st, 1835, the body was again disinterred, and then the gullet (œsophagus) and intestines were carried away. How they looked was technically described, and an inference also drawn, that the various appearances were the effect of *some* poison. The examinations were made in the presence of Doctors Canfield, Johns, and the two Condit. Mr. Stone says, Dr. Condit is reported to have said, that they were unanimously of opinion, that the death of Mr. Pierson was not the result of natural causes. The two Doctor Condit only were examined; and their evidence afforded Mr. Western a fine display, in his able cross-examination; in which he very clearly showed the absurdity of learned physicians resolving that a body had been poisoned, without stating by what, and how; and stating that the death was unnatural, without showing in what.

The district attorney then admitted the evidence of Dr. Torry, to whom the stomach was sent, without examining him: his evidence showed that he had examined the stomach, and had discovered no poison.

Mrs. B. Folger gave the history of Matthias, and of the death of Mr. Pierson; and showed that Matthias, like some

of the European clergy, claimed the best of the property, as first-fruits, and governed in the house: she mentioned also the blackberry story, already considered. Catherine also went through the doctrines and practices of Matthias, in support of what Mrs. Folger had stated; and the district attorney brought proofs that the property at Mount Zion had been made over to Matthias.

On the close of the evidence in support of the prosecution, Mr. Western moved the discharge of the prisoner, without going into the defence, upon the ground that no evidence had been produced to convict him; and in this the court acquiesced, and instructed the jury, "that there was no evidence showing that the death of Mr. Pierson had been produced by poison, or culpable neglect, or ill treatment, and consequently advised an acquittal." The jury thereupon immediately returned a verdict of acquittal. Thus no defence was gone into, and the circumstances of the kingdom not exposed. Isabella was grievously disappointed in not giving her unsophisticated narrative in the court.

The decision of the court was evidently influenced by the nature of this evidence, of which they had a knowledge, and sought to suppress it, and the firmness of Mr. Western. One of the jury has since informed us, that he *wished* to find Matthias guilty. The court was evidently prejudiced against him, and the public feeling also. There was, too, a strong sympathy for Mr. and Mrs. Folger, who were regarded as unfortunate dupes. From these feelings on the part of the court, jury, and the people, and the general impression that Matthias had the property of Mr. Pierson, had he had a less able counsel, or could Isabella have been deterred from giving the truth, if wanted, Matthias might have been condemned. Mr. Western, expecting the result which took place, from an understanding between him, the court, and the district attorney, abstained, too, from drawing the facts of the narrative from Mrs. B. Folger or Catherine, in cross-examination: and yet, lawyer-like, he and the judge together, did enough to satisfy us of the leading fact, and that they knew the connexion of Matthias with

Mrs. B. Folger; for from this trial we drew that conclusion, and published it.

The vindictive character of the court, the spirit of the people, and that of the district attorney, suggested the trial of Matthias, immediately on the close of the former trial, for an assault on his daughter, before referred to, and acknowledged to be merely *fatherly* chastisement, and not given in anger; but she was then a married woman, and his conduct was neither proper nor legal: it was, however, not a subject for prosecution, especially as the daughter did not desire any such revenge: as a proof of which Mr. Western read the following note in court from her:—

“ I hereby acknowledge that I have received full and ample satisfaction for the assault and battery in this case, for which the defendant is indicted; and I respectfully pray the court to enter a *nolle prosequi* therein accordingly.

“ ISABELLA LAISDELL.

“ *White Plains, April 18th, 1835.*”

The court, however, vindictively resolved upon punishing Matthias, and therefore proceeded with this trial. The assault was proved, and Matthias convicted, under such an excitement; and a court of law was thus disgraced by turning out of its ordinary course to punish a man, whom they had tried in vain to convict of a capital crime.

Matthias made rather an affecting appeal to the court upon this conviction, which he properly styled a persecution; but the court sentenced him to three months' imprisonment, besides the thirty days for contempt of court.

We do not mean to say that Matthias might not have deserved this quantity, or any other quantity of punishment, and we know, too, that there are a great many pretenders to the knowledge of the will of God, who deceive the people and deserve the lash; but we must deprecate the administration of the laws under the influence of passion, for then it ceases to be the administration of justice.

Matthias went to prison, and Mr. Stone published his book during his imprisonment. When he came out of prison he called on us, being informed that we were writing

on the subject, and he confirmed the chief points in the narrative. Thus we get this narrative confirmed by the leading members of the kingdom—forming a perfect white evidence.

Matthias has since gone West; and is, we believe, now wandering about the country, preaching, and living on the hospitality of his hearers; his temperate habits enabling him to live on a little when fortune frowns.

Mr. and Mrs. B. Folger are living comfortably together in a handsome house at Sing-Sing. Mr. Mills is married, lives in great style, and is no longer a desponding Christian: his connexion with Mr. Pierson and Matthias has decidedly benefited him. Isabella is getting an honest living by work, and respected, for her services and integrity, by her former employers. Mr. Stone is repenting his late publication.\*

\* Mr. Stone scarcely named, or rather alluded to, a person in his work, that he did not belie, and consequently libel; except those in conjunction with whom he wrote the book, and whose faults the book was intended to cover. Mr. Latourette, fur-merchant, in Pearl-street and the Bowery, complains, that he is alluded to in Mr. Stone's book, pages 316 and 317. and that on *one page five falsehoods* are recorded: those we have promised to notice, on his account. Mr. Latourette, then, denies—"that he was *intimate* with Mr. Pierson—that he anointed Mrs. Pierson—that he was sent for on that occasion—that he ever practised anointing—that he encouraged the delusion of the resurrection—that a convalescent disciple of his *barked like a dog.*" He admits that some of his disciples dug for Capt. Kid's money, but maintains, (correctly,) that this was common to others. He admits the trance of the coloured woman, not for *three days*. but for *six*, which he says he can prove. Mr. Stone admits the sincerity of Mr. Latourette, and consequently his incapability of deliberate lying. When this gentleman, however, denied Isabella a character, during the time he knew her, he did it, we suppose, from an error in judgment; but one which ought to be reprobated, as the proper means of correcting such mischievous errors.

\* We promised to notice the numerous falsehoods stated in Mr. Stone's book in relation to the Mrs. "... rendered so conspicuous in that work; and that lady put into our hands a manuscript reply, with the means of testing the truth of the subject, from which reply we have taken notes. In relation to this, we have already proved, in the first part, a most atrocious falsehood, involving a most infamous charge, and which charge reverts to Mr. Stone's own friends. As we cannot again introduce this lady without involving Mrs. Stone, and as we have now reason to believe both ladies would rather avoid the notoriety of further public attractions, we shall decline a continued exhibition of Mr. Stone's errors; with the position, that he who could state an infamous falsehood, of great magnitude, could not be believed in the various minor points, allusions, and references, which run through the book; especially as we have shown, or rather, as Mr. Stone himself has shown, a personal feeling, or sensitiveness, between his lady and the Mrs. "...

## CONCLUSION.

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"HAD he been in the same atmosphere," said a medical man to us, in relation to a pious person, "he would have been one of the party;" the same remark applies to thousands, and in reference to other countries, and to past and future years, under every religion; and every form of religion, the remark may be applied to millions; for in every community there is a class prepared to run such a course, if circumstances conduce; and we are all, more or less, the beings of circumstances.

We have shown that Matthias did not contemplate the seduction of Mrs. B. Folger, till tempted to this act; and we think there are very few men who would have resisted such an application: we subscribe to the position of Lord Byron, that "there are a great many Potipher's wives, and but few Josephs." Matthias too, we think mad, from the appearance of the eye, and extravagance of conduct, when no interested design was apparent; we think him too, originally sincere in his piety and principles; but we think also, that he is cunning, and, in the progress of his career, that his sincerity declined, and his design amplified; yet the position which he takes is so near that which many clergymen take, that the District Attorney at once admitted that he could not disprove it, however ridiculous it was to admit that he had a Divine Revelation, and could best interpret the Scriptures: besides, Mr. Pierson took precisely the same ground.

Mrs. B. Folger is no doubt a woman of a very warm constitution, and if this was not exhibited in youth, the restraints of education, and a religious bringing up, and her religious connexions, will explain it: we do not think constitution a crime; this, indeed, may enhance enjoyment

under favourable circumstances: when she received Matthias into her house, as a person possessing divine favour, with new doctrines and new interpretations of Scripture, she was placed in peculiar circumstances; the affection generally shown by women towards their religious teachers, betrays their weakness,—and we believe there is not a popular clergyman but could triumph over a number of his devotees, could he be base enough to apply the arts of seduction. Mrs. Folger, warm in constitution, absent from her husband, and present with Matthias, who, from his character, enjoyed every opportunity, was daily approaching an important crisis: her previous opinions about matched spirits, and his previous opinions about marriages, would easily mislead a weak woman, under the influence of strong passions. We are not then surprised, that in the absence of Mr. Folger, that Mrs. Folger should think, dream, and have visions about Matthias; other females, similarly constituted and situated, would have done so too: and it was unfortunate that her religious belief admitted of communicating these thoughts and feelings to Matthias, as emanating from divinity. We think it possible that these feelings, natural in such circumstances, should be mistaken for divine communications, for even the Scripture will admit of a similar interpretation in the cases of Sarah, Elizabeth, and Mary. That Mrs. Folger should have undertaken to induce her husband to give her up to Matthias, is, we believe, the most extraordinary circumstance in the narrative; we do not pretend to explain it; it is altogether out of character with a weak woman, and is rather a trait of an extraordinary being, who bounds over ordinary rules and customs in society, and takes a peculiar stand, not applicable to other mortals: yet this extraordinary character we cannot accord to Mrs. B. Folger, and, therefore, we must seek an explanation in the joint characters of Mr. and Mrs. Folger, Matthias, and Mr. Pierson, which in a wonderful way conduced to this most extraordinary fact. Her sincere piety is not disputed previous to her acquaintance with Matthias; and the probability is, that she was sincere, and continued so with a gradually increasing

**alloy.** Her failing was a love of distinction, without superior abilities: superior piety, and the assumption of the character of Mother, was within the compass of ordinary capacity; just as a man who cannot be a poet, a statesman, an orator, or a philosopher, may excel in the knowledge of horses.

Mr. B. Folger can best be explained by his deficiencies; he is marked by his want of character; Nature has given him a handsome face, a good temper, a kind heart, and he has added a great suavity of manners, and extreme politeness: but here nature has left him, and art, or education, has not supplied the deficiencies—he is, more than any other of the party, the being of circumstances, without resolution or sound principles: and while yielding to influence effecting an under-plot, cunning but simple.

Mr. Pierson is a complete character; a man of strong mind, considerable information and experience of men and things; extremely conscientious, and a firm believer in the Bible; with strong passions, but under the control of reason when in health. He adopted the opinion that God would give him the true interpretation of Scripture, as an answer to prayer. His prayers were fervent; and having faith, he received the various impressions on his mind as the will of God communicated to him. He discovered some errors in Christian practice, and this confirmed him in his belief that his impressions were from God, and true. In the vividness of his imagination, he thought that God spoke to him: but this was not peculiar to him. Isabella, when a mere girl, a slave, and totally ignorant, had the same impressions; she used to talk to God, and supposed that God talked to her: thousands of people have the same impressions. The peculiarities of Mr. Pierson were not the freaks of a madman; they were systematic, and arose from what he thought to be the will of God, as revealed in Scripture, or to him, in answer to prayer: and these opinions he would well defend, upon the acknowledged principles of answer to prayer, and the true interpretation of Scripture. If Mr. Pierson was insane, there are thousands at this moment affected with the same kind of madness, if not to the same

degree; these, in the circumstances of Mr. Pierson, would do as he did.

Isabella—hers is a peculiar and marked character. Nature has furnished her, not with a beautiful, but with a strong body and mind. Born a slave in this state, and brought up in ignorance on a farm, her early religious impressions were extremely gross; and her supposed communications with God, like those of Jacob, were a sort of bargain. Her ideas were of this class—"Now, God, if you will do so and so, then I will devote myself and doings to your service." Her impressions were, that she was under God's care, and that he, by her exertions, secured the freedom of her son, and led her in all her ways. As a Methodist, at a later period, her strong body and mind had room for exertion; she out-prayed and preached her compeers, and received without doubting what was taught. Her acquaintance with Mr. Latourette, effected a very easy transition, it was merely Methodism in the extreme, and exactly suited her excited and active state of mind and body. But when she went to Mr. Pierson, and found in him a close student of the Bible, and ready to give an answer to every one, in a free but gentle manner; and when she heard him advance other doctrines than those of Methodists, her faith and confidence left her; and, perhaps for the first time, she doubted that men could be sincerely in the wrong. Mr. Pierson was a man superior to any she had met with, and she readily received his interpretations, and became an inquirer. Afterward, finding that Matthias and Mr. Pierson agreed, she readily became the disciple of Matthias also, and received his interpretation of Scripture: nor was her faith disturbed, till human passions mixed in undue proportion with religious principles. Scripture, however, for a time, supplied an excuse, and Matthias was compared to David. What her fixed religious opinions now are we know not. Her ancient faith is shaken; she is not a believer in the supernatural character of Matthias, but still regards most of his interpretations as more rational, and probably true, than that of any other teacher of religion; she compares him too with the clergy, with a tact not to be

overcome, and draws a conclusion in his favour. Her moral principles are the same as formerly; she is still faithful, attached to truth, industrious, and consequently independent; with a ready perception of right and wrong, and with an uprightness and energy of character not apparently very common among the class from which she originated: and these moral principles were awakened in favour of Matthias when his life was sought by those who had nourished his delusions.

The other members of the kingdom have been sufficiently exhibited during the work, to mark their characters. Thus Catherine, a weak woman, believing by accident, and good or bad according to circumstances, is precisely what thousands of women in her situation are, each of whom would have played her part if similarly situated.

Of Mr. Mills sufficient has been said; his timely retreat renders it doubtful whether he should now be regarded as one of the kingdom or not. Of a number of persons who were at Sing-Sing for short periods, as visitors, and who manifested a similar creed, or nearly so, but where circumstances prevented their complete amalgamation with the party, we shall say nothing, because we do not know that their abstract opinions affected their moral conduct; yet these persons owe their safety chiefly to their distance from the scenes of pollution.

Our object is now accomplished, that of laying before the public a correct account of the source and effects of fanaticism, as illustrated by the followers of Matthias: we shall, however, notice the fact, that while there were some peculiar traits among the deluded in the kingdom, so peculiar as to meet with no parallel—as the voluntary surrender of Mrs. Folger to Matthias, by her husband, himself a believer, in good repute in the world, and attached to his wife—and the abduction of Mrs. Laisdell, and *peculiar* and early amalgamation with her, who was not then of the kingdom; and her forcible detention afterward; and her solemn union with Mr. B. Folger, by the authority of her father, Matthias. While, we say, these transactions are peculiar to this party, and therefore deserve to be recorded and well authenti-

cated; yet we are compelled to say, that the machinery by which these things, with others which have parallels, was common to every individual who has set up Divine pretensions, or affected to establish a new sect; and this has not been fully illustrated in the preceding pages, which were intended more to show the effects of fanaticism on the disciples, than the means used. Matthias was *mysterious*; he affected it in his appearance; he was so in language and conduct; and, when most unintelligible, affected the most wisdom, and had it ascribed to him. When he told Mr. Folger, at an early interview, on seeing a part of a sheet of paper hanging from a drawer, "You see a part only, I see the whole:" and then applied it to their different states of knowledge of the Divine will, this trait was fully illustrated in him; and Mr. B. Folger became the dupe. But Matthias affected miracle and prophecy: his prophecies were indeed extremely bold, and often fortunate. When on the road to Bedford, a ponderous piece of rock fell from a neighbouring cliff, and rolled near the carriage. Matthias, then a prisoner, begged permission to get out and examine it; he was permitted: and having done so, with much mystery in his look, he stuck his stick into the ground, and solemnly exclaimed, "By my order the Judge will not attend!" The Judge did not attend, and the trial was put off to White Plains—thus claiming a miracle and mysteriously announcing a fortunate prophecy at the same time. To these means were added, his peculiar explanation of Scripture—and these are precisely the instruments which have always been used by those who have established new sects.

*Note.* The story of the rock falling is given on the authority of Mr. Drake, who reported and published the trial of Matthias. Isabella knows only of a piece of rock falling while Matthias was preaching.

PINIS.

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*Just published,* A REVIEW of the DISCLOSURES of MARIA MONK, in which the facts are all fairly stated and candidly examined.

BY G. VALS.