

## ENGLISH REFORMERS.

WHILST Mr. Sparks visits England to explore the manuscripts of the Colonial Office, and Dr. Waagen on a mission of Art, Mr. Alcott, whose genius and efforts in the great art of Education have been more appreciated in England than in America, has now been spending some months in that country, with the aim to confer with the most eminent Educators and philanthropists, in the hope to exchange intelligence, and import into this country whatever hints have been struck out there, on the subject of literature and the First Philosophy. The design was worthy, and its first results have already reached us. Mr. Alcott was received with great cordiality of joy and respect by his friends in London, and presently found himself domesticated at an institution, managed on his own methods and called after his name, the School of Mr. Wright at Alcott House, Ham, Surrey. He was introduced to many men of literary and philanthropic distinction, and his arrival was made the occasion of meetings for public conversation on the great ethical questions of the day.

Mr. Alcott's mission, beside making us acquainted with the character and labors of some excellent persons, has loaded our table with a pile of English books, pamphlets, periodicals, flying prospectuses, and advertisements, proceeding from a class very little known in this country, and on many accounts important, the party, namely, who represent Social Reform. Here are Educational Circulars, and Communist Apostles; Alists; Plans for Syncretic Associations, and Pestalozzian Societies, Self-supporting Institutions, Experimental Normal Schools, Hydropathic and Philosophical Associations, Health Unions and Phalansterian Gazettes, Paradises within the reach of all men, Appeals of Man to Woman, and Necessities of Internal Marriage illustrated by Phrenological Diagrams. These papers have many sins to answer for. There is an abundance of superficialness, of pedantry, of inflation, and of want of thought. It seems as if these sanguine schemers rushed to the press with every notion that danced before their brain, and clothed it in the most clumsily compounded and terminated words, for want of time to find the right one. But although

these men sometimes use a swollen and vicious diction, yet they write to ends which raise them out of the jurisdiction of ordinary criticism. They speak to the conscience, and have that superiority over the crowd of their contemporaries, which belongs to men who entertain a good hope. Moreover, these pamphlets may well engage the attention of the politician, as straws of no mean significance to show the tendencies of the time.

Mr. Alcott's visit has brought us nearer to a class of Englishmen, with whom we had already some slight but friendly correspondence, who possess points of so much attraction for us, that we shall proceed to give a short account both of what we already knew, and what we have lately learned, concerning them. The central figure in the group is a very remarkable person, who for many years, though living in great retirement, has made himself felt by many of the best and ablest men in England and in Europe, we mean James Pierrepont Greaves, who died at Alcott-House in the month of March of this year. Mr. Greaves was formerly a wealthy merchant in the city of London, but was deprived of his property by French spoliations in Napoleon's time. Quitting business, he travelled and resided for some time in Germany. His leisure was given to books of the deepest character; and in Switzerland he found a brother in Pestalozzi. With him he remained ten years, living abstemiously, almost on biscuit and water; and though they never learned each the other's language, their daily intercourse appears to have been of the deepest and happiest kind. Mr. Greaves there made himself useful in a variety of ways. Pestalozzi declared that Mr. Greaves understood his aim and methods better than any other observer. And he there became acquainted with some eminent persons. Mr. Greaves on his return to England introduced as much as he could of the method and life, whose beautiful and successful operations he had witnessed; and although almost all that he did was misunderstood, or dragged downwards, he has been a chief instrument in the regeneration in the British schools. For a single and unknown individual his influence has been extensive. He set on foot Infant Schools, and was for many years Secretary to the Infant School Society, which office brought him in contact with many parties, and he has con-

nected himself with almost every effort for human emancipation. In this work he was engaged up to the time of his death. His long and active career developed his own faculties and powers in a wonderful manner. At his house, No. 49 Burton Street, London, he was surrounded by men of open and accomplished minds, and his doors were thrown open weekly for meetings for the discussion of universal subjects. In the last years he has resided at Cheltenham, and visited Stockport for the sake of acquainting himself with the Socialists and their methods.

His active and happy career continued nearly to the seventieth year, with heart and head unimpaired and undaunted, his eyes and other faculties sound, except his lower limbs, which suffered from his sedentary occupation of writing. For nearly thirty-six years he abstained from all fermented drinks, and all animal food. In the last years he dieted almost wholly on fruit. The private correspondent, from whose account, written two years ago, we have derived our sketch, proceeds in these words. "Through evil reports, revilings, seductions, and temptations many and severe, the Spirit has not let him go, but has strongly and securely held him, in a manner not often witnessed. New consciousness opens to him every day. His literary abilities would not be by critics entitled to praise, nor does he speak with what is called eloquence; but as he is so much the 'lived word,' I have described, there is found a potency in all he writes and all he says, which belongs not to beings less devoted to the Spirit. Supplies of money have come to him as fast, or nearly as fast as required, and at all events his serenity was never disturbed on this account, unless when it has happened that, having more than his expenses required, he has volunteered extraneous expenditures. He has been, I consider, a great apostle of the Newness to many, even when neither he nor they knew very clearly what was going forward. Thus inwardly married, he has remained outwardly a bachelor."

Mr. Greaves is described to us by another correspondent as being "the soul of his circle, a prophet of whom the world heard nothing, but who has quickened much of the thought now current in the most intellectual circles of the kingdom. He was acquainted with every man of deep character in England, and many both in Germany and

Switzerland; and Strauss, the author of the 'Life of Christ,' was a pupil of Mr. Greaves, when he held conversations in one of the Colleges of Germany, after leaving Pestalozzi. A most remarkable man; nobody remained the same after leaving him. He was the prophet of the deepest affirmative truths, and no man ever sounded his depths. The best of the thought in the London Monthly Magazine was the transcript of his Idea. He read and wrote much, chiefly in the manner of Coleridge, with pen in hand, in the form of notes on the text of his author. But, like Boehmen and Swedenborg, neither his thoughts nor his writings were for the popular mind. His favorites were the chosen illuminated minds of all time, and with them he was familiar. His library is the most select and rare which I have seen, including most of the books which we have sought with so ill success on our side of the water."\*

His favorite dogma was the superiority of Being to all knowing and doing. Association on a high basis was his ideal for the present conjuncture. "I hear every one crying out for association," said he; "I join in the cry; but then I say, associate first with the Spirit, — educate for this spirit-association, and far more will follow than we have as yet any idea of. Nothing good can be done without association; but then we must associate with goodness; and this goodness is the spirit-nature, without which all our societarian efforts will be turned to corruption. Education has hitherto been all outward; it must now be inward. The educator must keep in view that which elevates man, and not the visible exterior world." We have the promise

---

\* The following notice of Mr. Greaves occurs in Mr. Morgan's "Hampden in the Nineteenth Century." The gentleman whom he met at the school was Mr. J. P. Greaves, at that time Honorary Secretary to the Infant School Society, and a most active and disinterested promoter of the system. He had resided for three (?) years with Pestalozzi, who set greater value upon right feelings and rectitude of conduct, than upon the acquisition of languages. A collection of highly interesting letters, addressed to this gentleman by Pestalozzi on the subject of education, has been published. Among the numerous advocates for various improvements, there was not one who exceeded him in personal sacrifices to what he esteemed a duty. At the same time he had some peculiar opinions, resembling the German mystical and metaphysical speculations, hard to be understood, and to which few in general are willing to listen, and still fewer to subscribe; but his sincerity, and the kindness of his disposition always secured for him a patient hearing." — Vol. II. p. 22.

of some extracts from the writings of this great man, which we hope shortly to offer to the readers of this Journal. His friend, Mr. Lane, is engaged in arranging and editing his manuscript remains.

Mr. Heraud, a poet and journalist, chiefly known in this country as the editor for two years of the (London) Monthly Magazine, a disciple, in earlier years, of Coleridge, and by nature and taste contemplative and inclined to a mystical philosophy, was a friend and associate of Mr. Greaves; and for the last years has been more conspicuous than any other writer in that connexion of opinion. The Monthly Magazine, during his editorship, really was conducted in a bolder and more creative spirit than any other British Journal; and though papers on the highest transcendental themes were found in odd vicinity with the lowest class of flash and so-called comic tales, yet a necessity, we suppose, of British taste made these strange bed-fellows acquainted, and Mr. Heraud had done what he could. His papers called "Foreign Aids to Self Intelligence," were of signal merit, especially the papers on Boehmen and Swedenborg. The last is, we think, the very first adequate attempt to do justice to this mystic, by an analysis of his total works; and, though avowedly imperfect, is, as far as it goes, a faithful piece of criticism. We hope that Mr. Heraud, who announces a work in three volumes, called "Foreign Aids to Self Intelligence, designed for an Historical Introduction to the Study of Ontological Science, preparatory to a Critique of Pure Being," as now in preparation for the press, and of which, we understand, the Essays in the Monthly Magazine were a part, will be enabled to fulfil his design. Mr. Heraud is described by his friends as the most amiable of men, and a fluent and popular lecturer on the affirmative philosophy. He has recently intimated a wish to cross the Atlantic, and read in Boston, a course of six lectures on the subject of Christism as distinct from Christianity.

One of the best contributors to Mr. Heraud's Magazine was Mr. J. Westland Marston. The papers marked with his initials are the most eloquent in the book. We have greatly regretted their discontinuance, and have hailed him again in his new appearance as a dramatic author. Mr. Marston is a writer of singular purity of taste, with a heart very open to the moral impulses, and in his settled convic-

tion, like all persons of a high poetic nature, the friend of a universal reform, beginning in education. His thought on that subject is, that "it is only by teachers becoming men of genius, that a nobler position can be secured to them." At the same time he seems to share that disgust, which men of fine taste so quickly entertain in regard to the language and methods of that class with which their theory throws them into correspondence, and to be continually attracted through his taste to the manners and persons of the aristocracy, whose selfishness and frivolity displease and repel him again. Mr. Marston has lately written a Tragedy, called "The Patrician's Daughter," which we have read with great pleasure, barring always the fatal prescription, which in England seems to mislead every fine poet to attempt the drama. It must be the reading of tragedies that fills them with this superstition for the buskin and the pall, and not a sympathy with existing nature and the spirit of the age. The Patrician's Daughter is modern in its plot and characters, perfectly simple in its style; the dialogue is full of spirit, and the story extremely well told. We confess, as we drew out this bright pamphlet from amid the heap of crude declamation on Marriage and Education, on Dietetics and Hydropathy, on Chartism and Socialism, grim tracts on flesh-eating and dram-drinking, we felt the glad refreshment of its sense and melody, and thanked the fine office which speaks to the imagination, and paints with electric pencil a new form, — new forms on the lurid cloud. Although the vengeance of Mordaunt strikes us as overstrained, yet his character, and the growth of his fortunes is very natural, and is familiar to English experience in the Thurlows, Burkes, Foxes, and Cannings. The Lady Mabel is finely drawn. Pity that the catastrophe should be wrought by the deliberate lie of Lady Lydia; for beside that lovers, as they of all men speak the most direct speech, easily pierce the cobwebs of fraud, it is a weak way of making a play, to hinge the crisis on a lie, instead of letting it grow, as in life, out of the faults and conditions of the parties, as, for, example, in Goethe's Tasso. On all accounts but one, namely, the lapse of five years between two acts, the play seems to be eminently fit for representation. Mr. Marston is also the author of two tracts on Poetry and Poetic Culture.

Another member of this circle is Francis Barham, the dramatic poet, author of "The Death of Socrates," a tragedy, and other pieces; also a contributor to the Monthly Magazine. To this gentleman we are under special obligations, as he has sent us, with other pamphlets, a manuscript paper "On American Literature," written with such flowing good will, and with an aim so high, that we must submit some portion of it to our readers.

Intensely sympathizing, as I have ever done, with the great community of truth-seekers, I glory in the rapid progress of that Alistic,\* or divine literature, which they develop and cultivate. To me this Alistic literature is so catholic and universal, that it has spread its energies and influences through every age and nation, in brighter or obscurer manifestations. It forms the intellectual patrimony of the universe, delivered down from kindling sire to kindling son, through all nations, peoples, and languages. Like the God from whom it springs, on whom it lives, and to whom it returns, this divine literature is ever young, ever old, ever present, ever remote. Like heaven's own sunshine, it adorns all it touches, and it touches all. It is a perfect cosmopolite in essence and in action; it has nothing local or liminary in its nature; it participates the character of the soul from which it emanated. It subsists whole in itself, it is its own place, its own time, nor seeks abroad the life it grants at home; aye, it is an eternal now, an eternal present, at once beginning, middle, and end of every past and every future.

\* In explanation of this term, we quote a few sentences from a printed prospectus issued by Mr. Barham. "*The Alist; a Monthly Magazine of Divinity and Universal Literature.* I have adopted the title of 'the Alist, or Divine,' for this periodical, because the extension of Divinity and divine truth is its main object. It appears to me, that by a firm adherence to the *το θεϊον*, or divine principle of things, a Magazine may assume a specific character, far more elevated, catholic, and attractive, than the majority of periodicals attain. This Magazine is therefore specially written for those persons who may, without impropriety, be termed Alists, or Divines; those who endeavor to develop Divinity as the grand primary essence of all existence, — the element which forms the all in all, — the element in which we live, and move, and have our being. Such Alists, (deriving their name from Alah — the Hebrew title of God,) are Divines in the highest sense of the word; for they cultivate Alism, or the Divinity of Divinities, as exhibited in all Scripture and nature, and they extend religious and philanthropical influences through all churches, states, and systems of education. This doctrine of Alism, or the life of God in the soul of man, affords the only prothetic point of union, sufficiently intense and authoritative to unite men in absolute catholicity. In proportion as they cultivate one and the same God in their minds, will their minds necessarily unite and harmonize; but without this is done, permanent harmony is impossible."

It is, I conceive, salutary for us to take this enlarged view of literature. We should seek after literary perfection in this cosmopolite spirit, and embrace it wherever we find it, as a divine gift; for, in the words of Pope,

"both precepts and example tell  
That nature's masterpiece is writing well."

So was it with the august and prophetic Milton. To him literature was a universal presence. He regarded it as the common delight and glory of gods and men. He felt that its *moral beauty* lived and flourished in the large heart of humanity itself, and could never be monopolized by times or places. Most deeply do I think and feel with Milton, when he utters the following words. "What God may have determined for me, I know not; but this I know, that if ever he instilled an intense love of moral beauty into the breast of any man, he has instilled it into mine. Hence wherever I find a man despising the false estimates of the vulgar, and daring to aspire in sentiment and language and conduct to what the highest wisdom through every age has taught us, as most excellent, to him I unite myself by a kind of necessary attachment. And if I am so influenced by nature, or destiny, that by no exertions or labors of my own I may exalt myself to this summit of worth and honor, yet no power in heaven or earth will hinder me from looking with reverence and affection upon those, who have thoroughly attained this glory, or appeared engaged in the successful pursuit of it."

Mr. Barham proceeds to apply this sentiment as analogous to his own sentiment, in respect to the literatures of other nations, but specially to that of America.

The unity of language unites the literature of Britain and America, in an essential and imperishable marriage, which no Atlantic Ocean can divide. Yes; I as an Englishman say this, and maintain it. United in language, in literature, in interest, and in blood, I regard the English in England and the English in America as one and the same people, the same magnificent brotherhood. The fact is owned in the common names by which they are noted; John and Jonathan, Angles and Yankees, all reëcho the fact.

Mr. Barham proceeds to exhibit the manifold reasons that enjoin union on the two countries, deprecates the divisions that have sometimes suspended the peace, and continues;

Let us rather maintain the generous policy of Milton, and with full acclamation of concord recite his inspiring words;

"Go on both hand in hand, O nations, never to be disunited. Be the praise and the heroic song of all posterity. Merit this, but seek only virtue, not the extension of your limits. For what needs to win a fading triumphal laurel out of the tears of wretched men, but to settle the true worship of God and justice in the commonwealth. Then shall the hardest difficulties smooth themselves out before you, envy shall sink to hell, and craft and malice shall be confounded, whether it be homebred mischief or outlandish cunning. Yea, other nations will then covet to serve you; for lordship and victory are but the pages of justice and virtue. Commit securely to true wisdom the vanquishing and uncaging of craft and subtlety, which are but her two runagates. Join your invincible might to do worthy and godlike deeds, and then he that seeks to break your union, a cleaving curse be his inheritance throughout all generations."

Mr. Barham then proceeds to express his conviction, that the specific character, which the literature of these countries should aim at, is the Alistic or Divine. It is only by an aim so high, that an author can reach any excellence.

"He builds too low who builds beneath the skies."

But our limits forbid any more extracts from this friendly manuscript at present.

Another eminent member of this circle is Mr. Charles Lane, for many years manager of the London Mercantile Price Current; a man, of a fine intellectual nature, inspired and hallowed by a profounder faith. Mr. Lane is the author of some pieces marked with his initials, in the Monthly Magazine, and of some remarkable tracts. Those which we have seen are, "The Old, the New-Old, and the New;" "Tone in Speech;" some papers in a Journal of Health; and last and best, a piece called "The Third Dispensation," prefixed by way of preface to an English translation of Mme. Gatti de Gamond's "Phalansterian," a French book of the Fourier School. In this Essay Mr. Lane considers that History has exhibited two dispensations, namely, *first*, the Family Union, or connexion by tribes, which soon appeared to be a disunion or a dispersive

principle; *second*, the National Union. Both these, though better than the barbarism which they displaced, are themselves barbarism, in contrast with the *third*, or Universal Union.

"As man is the uniter in all arrangements which stand *below* him, and in which the objects could not unite themselves, so man needs a uniter *above* him, to whom he submits, in the certain incapability of self-union. This uniter, unity, or One, is the premonitor whence exists the premonition Unity, which so recurrently becomes conscious in man. By a neglect of interior submission, man fails of this antecedent, Unity; and as a consequence his attempts at union by exterior mastery have no success." Certain conditions are necessary to this, namely, the external arrangements indispensable *for* the evolution of the Uniting Spirit can alone be provided *by* the Uniting Spirit.

"We seem to be in an endless circle, of which both halves have lost their centre connexion; for it is an operation no less difficult than the junction of two such discs that is requisite to unity. These segments also being in motion, each upon a false centre of its own, the obstacles to union are incalculably multiplied.

"The spiritual or theoretic world in man revolves upon one set of principles, and the practical or actual world upon another. In ideality man recognizes the purest truths, the highest notions of justice; in actuality he departs from all these, and his entire career is confessedly a life of self-falseness and clever injustice. This barren ideality, and this actuality replete with bitter fruits, are the two hemispheres to be united for their mutual completion, and their common central point is the reality antecedent to them both. This point is not to be discovered by the rubbing of these two half globes together, by their curved sides, nor even as a school boy would attempt to unite his severed marble by the flat sides. The circle must be drawn anew from reality as a central point, the new radius embracing equally the new ideality and the new actuality.

"With this newness of love in men there would resplendently shine forth in them a newness of light, and a newness of life, charming the steadiest beholder."—*Introduction*, p. 4.

The remedy, which Mr. Lane proposes for the existing evils, is his "True Harmonic Association." But he more justly confides in "ceasing from doing" than in exhausting ef-

forts at inadequate remedies. "From medicine to medicine is a change from disease to disease; and man must cease from self-activity, ere the spirit can fill him with truth in mind or health in body. The Civilization is become intensely false, and thrusts the human being into false predicaments. The antagonism of business to all that is high and good and generic is hourly declared by the successful, as well as by the failing. The mercantile system, based on individual aggrandizement, draws men from unity; its swelling columns of figures describe, in pounds, shillings, and pence, the degrees of man's departure from love, from wisdom, from power. The idle are as unhappy as the busy. Whether the dread factory-bell, or the fox-hunter's horn calls to a pursuit more fatal to man's best interests, is an inquiry which appears more likely to terminate in the cessation of both, than in a preference of either."

Mr. Lane does not confound society with sociableness. "On the contrary, it is when the sympathy with man is the stronger and the truer, that the sympathy with men grows weaker, and the sympathy with their actions weakest."

We must content ourselves with these few sentences from Mr. Lane's book, but we shall shortly hear from him again. This is no man of letters, but a man of ideas. Deep opens below deep in his thought, and for the solution of each new problem he recurs, with new success, to the highest truth, to that which is most generous, most simple, and most powerful; to that which cannot be comprehended, or overseen, or exhausted. His words come to us like the voices of home out of a far country.

With Mr. Lane is associated in the editorship of a monthly tract, called "The Healthian," and in other kindred enterprises, Mr. Henry G. Wright, who is the teacher of the School at Ham Common, near Richmond, and the author of several tracts on moral and social topics.

This school is founded on a faith in the presence of the Divine Spirit in man. The teachers say, "that in their first experiments they found they had to deal with a higher nature than the mere mechanical. They found themselves in contact with an essence indefinitely delicate. The great difficulty with relation to the children, with which they were first called to wrestle, was an unwillingness to

admit access to their spiritual natures. The teachers felt this keenly. They sought for the cause. They found it in their own hearts. Pure spirit would not, could not hold communion with their corrupted modes. These must be surrendered, and love substituted in lieu of them. The experience was soon made that the primal duty of the educator is entire self-surrender to love. Not partial, not of the individual, but pure, unlimited, universal. It is impossible to speak to natures deeper than those from which you speak. Reason cries to Reason, Love to Love. Hence the personal elevation of the teacher is of supreme importance." Mr. Alcott, who may easily be a little partial to an instructor who has adopted cordially his own methods, writes thus of his friend.

"Mr. Wright is a younger disciple of the same eternal verity, which I have loved and served so long. You have never seen his like, so deep serene, so clear, so true, and so good. His school is a most refreshing and happy place. The children are mostly under twelve years of age, of both sexes; and his art and method of education simple and natural. It seemed like being again in my own school, save that a wiser wisdom directs, and a lovelier love presides over its order and teachings. He is not yet thirty years of age, but he has more genius for education than any man I have seen, and not of children alone, but he possesses the rare art of teaching men and women. What I have dreamed and stammered, and preached, and prayed about so long, is in him clear and definite. It is life, influence, reality. I flatter myself that I shall bring him with me on my return. He cherishes hopes of making our land the place of his experiment on human culture, and of proving to others the worth of the divine idea that now fills and exalts him."

In consequence of Mr. Greaves's persuasion, which seems to be shared by his friends, that the special remedy for the evils of society at the present moment is association; perhaps from a more universal tendency, which has drawn in many of the best minds in this country also to accuse the idealism, which contents itself with the history of the private mind, and to demand of every thinker the warmest dedication to the race, this class of which we speak are obviously inclined to favor the plans of the Socialists. They appear to be in active literary and practical connexion with Mr. Doherty, the intelligent and catholic editor of the London Phalanx, who is described to us as hav-

ing been a personal friend of Fourier, and himself a man of sanguine temper, but a friend of temperate measures, and willing to carry his points with wise moderation, on one side; and in friendly relations with Robert Owen, "the philanthropist, 'who writes in brick and clay, in gardens and green fields,' who is a believer in the comforts and humanities of life, and would give these in abundance to all men," although they are widely distinguished from this last in their devout spiritualism. Many of the papers on our table contain schemes and hints for a better social organization, especially the plan of what they call "a Concordium, or a Primitive Home, which is about to be commenced by united individuals, who are desirous, under industrial and progressive education, with simplicity in diet, dress, lodging, &c., to retain the means for the harmonic development of their physical, intellectual, and moral natures." The institution is to be in the country, the inmates are to be of both sexes, they are to labor on the land, their drink is to be water, and their food chiefly uncooked by fire, and the habits of the members throughout of the same simplicity. Their unity is to be based on their education in a religious love, which subordinates all persons, and perpetually invokes the presence of the spirit in every transaction. It is through this tendency that these gentlemen have been drawn into fellowship with a humbler, but far larger class of their countrymen, of whom Goodwyn Barmby may stand for the representative.

Mr. Barmby is the editor of a penny magazine, called "The Promethean, or Communitarian Apostle," published monthly, and, as the covers inform us, "the cheapest of all magazines, and the paper the most devoted of any to the cause of the people; consecrated to Pantheism in Religion, and Communism in Politics." Mr. Barmby is a sort of Camille Desmoulins of British Revolution, a radical poet, with too little fear of grammar and rhetoric before his eyes, with as little fear of the Church or the State, writing often with as much fire, though not with as much correctness, as Ebenezer Elliott. He is the author of a poem called "The European Pariah," which will compare favorably with the Corn-law Rhymes. His paper is of great interest, as it details the conventions, the counsels, the measures of Barmby and his friends, for the organization of a

new order of things, totally at war with the establishment. Its importance arises from the fact, that it comes obviously from the heart of the people. It is a cry of the miner and weaver for bread, for daylight, and fresh air, for space to exist in, and time to catch their breath and rest themselves in; a demand for political suffrage, and the power to tax as a counterpart to the liability of being taxed; a demand for leisure, for learning, for arts and sciences, for the higher social enjoyments. It is one of a cloud of pamphlets in the same temper and from the same quarter, which show a wholly new state of feeling in the body of the British people. In a time of distress among the manufacturing classes, severe beyond any precedent, when, according to the statements vouched by Lord Brougham in the House of Peers, and Mr. O'Connell and others in the Commons, wages are reduced in some of the manufacturing villages to six pence a week, so that men are forced to sustain themselves and their families at less than a penny a day; when the most revolting expedients are resorted to for food; when families attempt by a recumbent posture to diminish the pangs of hunger; in the midst of this exasperation the voice of the people is temperate and wise beyond all former example. They are intent on personal as well as on national reforms. Jack Cade leaves behind him his bludgeon and torch, and is grown amiable, literary, philosophical, and mystical. He reads Fourier, he reads Shelley, he reads Milton. He goes for temperance, for non-resistance, for education, and for the love-marriage, with the two poets above named; and for association, after the doctrines either of Owen or of Fourier. One of the most remarkable of the tracts before us is "A Plan for the Education and Improvement of the People, addressed to the Working Classes of the United Kingdom; written in Warwick-Gaol, by William Lovett, cabinet-maker, and John Collins, tool-maker," which is a calm, intelligent, and earnest plea for a new organization of the people, for the highest social and personal benefits, urging the claims of general education, of the Infant School, the Normal School, and so forth; announcing rights, but with equal emphasis admitting duties. And Mr. Barmby, whilst he attacks with great spirit and great contempt the conventions of society, is a worshipper of love and of beauty, and

vindicates the arts. "The apostleship of veritable doctrine," he says, "in the fine arts is a really religious Apostolate, as the fine arts in their perfect manifestation tend to make mankind virtuous and happy."

It will give the reader some precise information of the views of the most devout and intelligent persons in the company we have described, if we add an account of a public conversation which occurred during the last summer. In the (London) Morning Chronicle, of 5 July, we find the following advertisement. "Public Invitation. An open meeting of the friends to human progress will be held tomorrow, July 6, at Mr. Wright's Alcott-House School, Ham Common, near Richmond, Surrey, for the purpose of considering and adopting means for the promotion of the great end, when all who are interested in human destiny are earnestly urged to attend. The chair taken at Three o'clock and again at Seven, by A. Bronson Alcott, Esq., now on a visit from America. Omnibuses travel to and fro, and the Richmond steam-boat reaches at a convenient hour."

Of this conference a private correspondent has furnished us with the following report.

A very pleasant day to us was Wednesday, the sixth of July. On that day an open meeting was held at Mr. Wright's, Alcott-House School, Ham, Surrey, to define the aims and initiate the means of human culture. There were some sixteen or twenty of us assembled on the lawn at the back of the house. We came from many places; one 150 miles; another a hundred; others from various distances; and our brother Bronson Alcott from Concord, North America. We found it not easy to propose a question sufficiently comprehensive to unfold the whole of the fact with which our bosoms labored. We aimed at nothing less than to speak of the instauration of Spirit and its incarnation in a beautiful form. We had no chairman, and needed none. We came not to dispute, but to hear and to speak. And when a word failed in extent of meaning, we loaded the word with new meaning. The word did not confine our experience, but from our own being we gave significance to the word. Into one body we infused many lives, and it shone as the image of divine or angelic or human thought. For a word is a Proteus that means to a man what the man is. Three papers were successively presented.



## I. REFORMATION.

"Old things shall pass away."

That an integral reform will comprise, not only an amendment in our (1) Corn Laws, (2) Monetary Arrangements, (3) Penal Code, (4) Education, (5) the Church, (6) the Law of Primogeniture, (7) Divorce; but will extend to questions yet publicly unmooted, or unfavorably regarded, such as (1) that of a reliance on Commercial Prosperity, (2) a belief in the value of the purest conceivable Representative Legislature, (3) the right of Man to inflict Pain on man, (4) the demand for a purer Generation in preference to a better Education, (5) the reign of Love in Man instead of human Opinions, (6) the restoration of all things to their primitive Owner, and hence the abrogation of Property, either individual or collective, and (7) the Divine Sanction, instead of the Civil and Ecclesiastical authority, for Marriage.

That the obstacles encountered, in any endeavor to secure the smallest proposed public reform, are not to be taken as a measure for the difficulties in realizing those of a deeper character, as above enumerated; for as the latter are more vital and real, so are they less dependent on public concurrence, and need rather an individual practice than an associative appeal.

That while the benevolent mind perceives and desires the entire reform which should be accomplished, the practical reformer will bound his aims by that which is *possible* at the moment; for while a twenty years' agitation is insufficient to procure the slightest modification in the Corn Laws, of little value when attained, and fifty years' advocacy shall not accomplish a reform in parliament, declared worthless and delusive as soon as it is conceded, the abiding, and real, and happy reforms are much more within our own power, at the same time that their value is, under every consideration, undoubted.

That however extensive, grand or noble may be the ultimate measures proposed, it is thus the imperative duty of the sincere reformer at once to commence that course of conduct, which must not less conduce to his own than to the universal good.

That a reform in the relation of master and servant, in faith in money, in deference to wealth, in diet, habits of life, modes of intercourse, and other particulars, almost or entirely under the control of each individual, is the first series of practical measures to be adopted, at once the proof of sincerity, and the earnest of future success.

That a personal reform of this kind, humble as it may ap-

pear is obviously the key to every future and wider good. By reformed individuals only can reformed laws be enacted, or reformed plans effected. By him alone, who is reformed and well regulated, can the appeal fairly be made to others, either privately or publicly, to submit to a superior rule. By such as have themselves become somewhat purified must the purer life and measures be indicated. The greatest Apostle of Reform is the most reformed.

The speaker added as a comment on this paper, Human institutions and human habits are but the histories of men's natures, and have in all times disclosed the heaven-wandering attributes of their projectors. At present, institutions are extremely complex, and so wreathed together, that one reform compels a hundred, and of course every attempt to reform in one part is resisted by the establishment in all parts. But the divine thought permits us not to remain in quietude. That, which we are not, rises before us, as that which we are to be. Our aspirations are the pledge of their own fulfilment. Hope drives forward with the speed of wind, and affirms that the unallowable of to-day shall be to-morrow within our reach; if that which is to-day only attainable shall to-morrow be a realized fact.

Beneath the actual which a man is, there is always covered a possible to tempt him forward, and beneath that an impossible. Beneath sense lie reason and understanding; beneath them both, humility; and beneath all, God. To be Godlike, we must pass through the grades of progress. We may make the experiences of the rational the humane life, and at last the life of God. But our precessions are not so much of time as of being. Even now the God-life is enfolded in us, even now the streams of eternity course freely in our central heart. If impelled by the spirit to intermingle with the arrangements of politics of the world in order to improve them, we shall discover the high point, from which we begin by the God-thought, in our interference. Our act must be divine. We seem to do; God does. God empowers legislators, and ennobles them for their fidelity. Let them, however, be apostles, not apostles' representatives; men of God, not men of men. Personal elevation is our credentials. Personal reform is that which is practicable, and without it our efforts on behalf of others are dreams only.

After this had been considered and approved, another of our friends offered the following scripture.

## II. TRANSITION.

"Bring no more vain oblations."

As men sincerely desirous of *being* that which we have *conceived* in idea, earnestly longing to assert the transcendency of divine humanity over all creeds, sayings, and theories, the question occurred to us, "How shall we find bread for the support of our bodies?" We proposed reducing our wants to nature's simplest needs; but on due consideration, we perceived that the restrictions on food precluded our obtaining it, and we learned with dismay that the spirit, which monopolizes bread and other constituents of life, denounced from the bosom of society, "You shall not live a conscientious life."

Not abashed, however, by this decree, we resolved to press our investigations, and we asked who had uttered this practical blasphemy in the face of high heaven? And all voices answered, that "the men trusting in property had done it." We took up this question of property, and asked, "By what tenure is it held?" And society answered, "On the tenure of might and immemorial custom." But when we interrogated our own hearts, and asked, "Did Divinity ever thus sanction possession?" our hearts, indeed, answered not; but the God within spake plainly, that "Pure Love, which is ever communicative, never yet conceded to any being the right of appropriation." But when society urged further, that government had legitimated possession, we began to inquire on what authority government itself rested. And the government's answer was immediately proffered, "We protect the rights of property, and devise means for the accumulation of more. We shield the good from adversities, and we punish the evil-doers." Is this true? we thought. . . . No; government had not redeemed its promise to us, and we would no longer care for its provisions. The first law, too, of Heaven is Love, and government is founded on force. We were not believers in force; we believed that moral majesty was far more protection to man than the shield of a mighty empire;—we believed that a man encased in his own humanity was more secure, than he who was protected by a thousand bayonets. Our faith was in moral uprightness, and not in the prowess of armies. We would be established in love, and not in fear; and government is, in all these respects, infidel to the good. We asked, "Whether domination was of God?" and God answered, "No."

But we thought that the religious institute would do something for humanity, that the priest would succor the oppressed, and loose the burdens of the heavy laden. But the priest told us, he too loved, above all things, domination and homage.

. . . . He laughed at human perfectibility. He declared, that loyalty to the prince, and pecuniary reverence to the church, were his only hope of salvation.

We, therefore, ignore human governments, creeds, and institutions; we deny the right of any man to dictate laws for our regulation, or duties for our performance; and declare our allegiance only to Universal Love, the all-embracing Justice.

In addition to this statement of his thought the second speaker asked, Why does a man need an outward law? Simply because the law of love has been hidden. Men, are they not bankers and capitalists, whose Bank and Capital is God? Why should they borrow of men? Why should the all-wealthy seek the substitutes of riches? If we assert our manhood, what do we need of learning, precedent, or government? Let the impoverished seek for notes of hand; let the timid and lawless ask protection of the arm of power. Let the foolish still dream, that the vanity of book-miners will be their wisdom for us, we claim wealth, love, and wisdom, as essential informations of the Divinity. Besides, human institutions bear no fruit. If you plant them, they will yield nothing. Prohibitions and commands stand for nothing. "Thou shalt not kill," which is a history recording to sense what the divine law of purity suggests in every unperverted heart, is held binding by none. What shall I not kill? asks the butcher, the poulterer, the fishmonger, and he answers, All things in which I do not trade. And what shall the soldier not kill? All men, except his enemies. These exceptions make the law nugatory. The command is universal only for the pure soul, that neither stabs nor strangles. The laws of men inculcate and command slaughter. Nor will they exculpate rebellion on the ground, that holiness has rendered obedience impossible, But we must ignore laws which ignore holiness. Our trust is in purity, not in vengeance.

A third person had written down his thought as follows.

## III. FORMATION.

"Behold I make all things new."

That in order to attain the highest excellence of which man is capable, not only is a searching Reform necessary in the existing order of men and things, but the Generation of a new race of persons is demanded, who shall project institutions and initiate conditions altogether original and commensurate with the being and wants of humanity.

That the germs of this new generation are even now dis-

coverable in human beings, but have been hitherto either choked by ungenial circumstances, or, having borne fruit prematurely or imperfectly, have attained no abiding growth.

That the elements for a superior germination consist in an innocent fertile mind, and a chaste healthful body, built up from the purest and most volatile productions of the uncontaminated earth; thus removing all hinderances to the immediate influx of Deity into the spiritual faculties and corporeal organs. Hence the true generator's attention will be drawn to whatsoever pertains to the following constituents of Man and of Society:—

Primarily, Marriage and the Family Life, including of course, the Breeding and Education of Children.

Secondly, Housewifery and Husbandry.

Thirdly, The relations of the Neighborhood.

Fourthly, Man's Relation to the Creator.

It is obvious, that society, as at present constituted, invades all and every one of these relations; and it is, therefore, proposed to select a spot whereon the new Eden may be planted, and man may, untempted by evil, dwell in harmony with his Creator, with himself, his fellows, and with all external natures.

On a survey of the present civilized world, Providence seems to have ordained the United States of America, more especially New England, as the field wherein this idea is to be realized in actual experience; and, trusting in the faith which inspires, the hope which ensures, and the power which enacts, a few persons, both in the new country and the old, are uniting their efforts to secure, at the earliest possible moment, and by the simplest possible means, a consummation so sublime, so humane, so divine.

After reading this paper, he added words to this effect. Reformation belongs not to us, it is but a chimera. We propose not to make new combinations of old substances, the elements themselves shall be new. The great enigma, to solve which man has ever labored, is answered in the one fact, Birth. The disciplines, the loves, the wishes, the sorrows, the joys, the travail of many years, are crowded into conception, gestation, and Birth. If you ask where evil commences, the answer is, in Birth. If you ask what is the unpardonable sin, the answer is an unholy birth. The most sacred, the most profane, the most solemn, the most irreverent, the most godlike, yet possibly the most brutal of acts. This one stands as a centre to all extremes, it is the point on which God and Devil wage most irreconcilable warfare. Let Birth be surrendered to the spirit, and the results shall be blessed.

Together with pure beings will come pure habits. A better body shall be built up from the orchard and the garden. The outward frame shall beam with soul; it shall be a vital fact in which is typically unfolded the whole of perfectness. As he who seizes on civil liberty with the hand of violence would act the tyrant, if power were entrusted to him, so he whose food is obtained by force or fraud would accomplish other purposes by similarly ignoble means. Tyranny and domination must be overcome, when they first take root in the lust of unhallowed things. From the fountain we will slake our thirst, and our appetite shall find supply in the delicious abundance that Pomona offers. Flesh and blood we will reject as "the accursed thing." A pure mind has no faith in them.

An unvitiated generation and more genial habits shall restore the Eden on Earth, and men shall again find that paradise is not merely a fable of the poets.

Such was the current of our thought; and most of those who were present felt delight in the conversations that followed. Said I not well, that it was a happy day? For though talk is never more than a portraiture of a fact, it may be, and ours was, the delineation of a fact based in the being of God.