

CHIPS FROM MY STUDIO.

A FINE poem in Bayard Taylor's new book, "Home Pastorals," is entitled "Napoleon at Gotha." Especially noticeable are the opening lines:—

We walk amid the currents of actions left undone,
The germs of deeds that wither, before they see the sun.
For every sentence uttered, a million more are dumb:
Men's lives are chains of chances, and History their sum.

"In the Lists" also attracts my attention:—

Could I choose the age and fortunate season
When to be born,
I would fly from the censure of your barren reason,
And the scourges of your scorn:
Could I take the tongue, and the land, and the station
That to me were fit,
I would make my life a force and an exultation,
And you could not stifle it.

But the thing most near to the freedom I covet
Is the freedom I wrest
From a time that would bar me from climbing above it,
To seek the East in the West.
I have dreamed of the forms of a nobler existence
Than you give me here,
And the beauty that lies afar in the dateless distance
I would conquer, and bring more near.

It is good, undowered with the bounty of Fortune,
In the sun to stand:
Let others excuse, and cringe, and importune,
I will try the strength of my hand!
If I fail, I shall fall not among the mistaken,
Whom you dare deride:
If I win, you shall hear, and see, and at last awaken
To thank me because I defied!

I HAVE been entrusted with the following report of a late interesting occasion at the "Invisible Club":—

There was a breeze at the "Invisible Club" the other evening when it was announced that the distinguished gentleman from the far wilds of the West, Rev. Justinian Floorman, would take the place on the occasion of the regularly appointed essayist. The venerable Mrs. — immediately fumbled for her eye-glasses, while the ponderous head of the Plato of the club was seen slowly to raise itself from its usual resting-place on its owner's gold-headed cane. Two gentlemen and a lady holding an animated discussion in one corner of the room on the ill or good there might be in intoxicating liquors whisked violently to encounter the new sensation. In short, the commotion that suddenly displayed itself in all parts of the room was simply intense. The fact was that for a number of evenings — had been precisely as Miss —, a maiden lady of some — chambers, had described it, — "rather prosy." A disinterested spectator might not be able to discover any good reason why it should have been otherwise. Not that the club can be charged with a lack of brilliant talent, nor that genius even might not put in a valid claim for recognition. But the subject that had persistently been kept before the club for eleven long evenings by the committee in charge had been the by no means novel one of "Temperance." For a season the discussion ran high, there being marked and irreconcilable differences, which it was found impossible to confine, as a member had remarked, "within a purely intellectual consideration." The extreme temperance advocates were bent on making of it a personal and moral question. This so irritated the moderate members that angry feelings showed themselves, until it was observed that, in the whole history of the club, no such general and prolonged excitement had before occurred. The danger of an explosion came to seem imminent; but for the last three evenings discretion had got the better part of valor on both sides, and the effect of this had been to tame the discussion down to the merest commonplace. Hence, for these three evenings the interest in the club had waned measurably. Many had absented themselves purposely, preferring to wait until there should be a change in the programme. The radical element especially, on the occasion now referred to, was but sparsely represented. The conservative and Christian members were there in better force.

No sooner had it been announced that the Rev. Justinian Floorman, from the "far wilds of the West," would honor the club that evening with his presence, and would open the conversation with a few re-

marks on the great subject of the "If," than a small, rotund looking man, with sparkling black eyes and a radiant face, rose to protest that he feared the Committee had unwittingly sprung a trap on that portion of the club which only he and a few others had on this present occasion the honor to represent. He had all respect for the distinguished gentleman who was to address them, but he thought that, if he was to treat of the "If" before the club, the club ought to be fully notified of that fact: for he believed he understood pretty fully what kind of views lurked under the subject the gentleman had selected, and he felt sure those members who were absent, and who were so perfectly competent to oppose those views, would deeply regret their absence, and he appealed to the Committee, in all fairness, to know whether the distinguished gentleman could not postpone his remarks until the next evening, when they might have a special meeting and a full attendance.

After a brief conversation with the Rev. Justinian Floorman, the Chairman of the Committee announced that the Rev. Mr. Floorman had been caught on a flying visit to this Eastern country, and that his time was absolutely all preoccupied with lecturing engagements, so that it was "this evening or never." He would leave it to the club to decide. Several voices responding, "Go on" and "Hear him," the reverend gentleman was introduced once more. He came rapidly forward, and seated himself in a large arm chair almost in the very midst of his auditors. Then, spreading his hands over his knees, with a slight upward toss of his luxuriantly-robed head, he spoke as follows:—

"Gentlemen of the Invisible Club, — and Ladies, whom I now perceive with abounding gratification, — we are to discourse of the 'If.' Do you ever measure the vast possibilities that lie concealed in that all-fructifying word? I remember well when, one cold, wintry morn, I sat 'mid the wigwams of the red and ductile Indian on the banks of the Longtombigbee. It was the tribe of the Arrapahoos. Slowly raising his head, after long and thoughtful meditation, the great chief broke the solemn silence by saying, 'I fear my people are learning from the white man the "If."' I heard, and I was abashed. Gentlemen, in this Eastern land that 'If' was born; here, by the side of Plymouth rock; here, in the 'Cradle of Liberty.' What do you say? Shall it circumnavigate the globe; or shall it be strangled here in the land of its birth? [Visible sensation.] If I have any mission on this earth, I believe in the very deeps of the deepness of my soul that it lies solely and for ever in this, and only in this, one direction. We are menaced, gentlemen, on this most excellent globe of

ours by a modern revival of this all devastating and heaven-annihilating 'If.' Behind the sun, burning in yon blue azure, there is another sun, a sun of glory; behind the calm moon, silvering the darkness of the night, there is another moon, a moon of peace; but behind this 'If' there is — *nothing!* [A gathering applause, in which it was noticed that two of the out-and-out materialists, who had recently entered, generously joined.] Your applause is reassuring, gentlemen. I ask it not for my words because they are mine, but because I know that it is scientifically demonstrable that they are true. Walking one sultry day with the Sultan along the shimmering sands of the shore of the Bosphorus, I said to him, 'What is the limit of your majesty's knowledge?' His response, electric and supreme, caused me to hang my Christian head before the genius of the Infidel. Prostrating himself three and twenty times on the earth, he turned his eyes toward the heavens, and ejaculated, in tones musical as a summer breeze, these simple, all-inclusive, decisive words, '*Great is Allah!*' I said to myself, that people are invincible who stand thus on the luminous summit of the most scientific peak of the ages!"

Loud applause from a few members at this point caused considerable disturbance, and so broke into the flow of the reverend gentleman's remarks that a lady present timidly ventured to interrupt him merely that she might be set right in her own mind as to the precise force of his words, which, owing doubtless to the confused state of her own mind, did not appear to her to be as clear as a devotee of the strictly scientific method could wish. She begged to know if the speaker intended to say that the Sultan claimed that the limit of his own knowledge could only be discerned by measuring the extent of the knowledge of Deity? Several voices chimed in, "Hear, hear!" upon which the reverend gentleman remarked dryly, his manner indicating plainly that he was a trifle disgusted, "I have to regret if my language is not in range with the wisdom of a portion of this company. It must be very plain to every thoughtful mind that I only meant to say that this Sultan of all the Moslems affirmed the being of God. To him and his people the 'If' was unknown." Another round of applause greeted the speaker, and he was about to resume, when one of the materialists present, who had been showing unmistakable signs that he was eager for the fray, astonished the club with a further intrusion: "Professor Huxley says, 'If a little knowledge is dangerous, where is the man who has so much as to be out of danger?'" Now I would like to ask the gentleman, did the Sultan of all the Turks affirm the being of God from so much knowledge as to be out of danger of one day finding out his ignorance?" There was a defiant glance in

the eye of the reverend gentleman as he turned haughtily to confront his new assailant, and a perceptible movement of rising indignation on the part of the conservative members. But forbearing any direct response, the essayist continued:—

“Gentlemen, my purpose is to discourse of the ‘If.’ Do you remember the words of your Shakspeare’s Coriolanus:—

‘My soul aches
To know, when two authorities are up,
Neither supreme, how soon confusion
May enter ‘twixt the gap of both, and take
The one by the other?’

Gentlemen, I have turned my ardent gaze from the mere ‘If’ of theology to the ‘If’ of the scientific materialist. I was in radiant, all-penetrating earnest. I said, ‘My soul aches to know.’ When Socrates turned from all other authorities, he looked at the nature of things, and the radiance was dazzling. Try Christianity by this standard, and your ‘If’ goes out with the darkness you have dispelled. God, Immortality, the Atonement, the Triune Unity, the blessed state of all who go hence in peace,—in the Nature of Things are all these established.

“1. God—as a distinguished gentleman of your own city has remarked, speaking figuratively—wears on His finger Gyges’ ring, which, according to Greek mythology, makes the wearer invisible.

“2. Being invisible, how do we know, why do we affirm, His existence?

“3. We know, because it is scientifically demonstrable that matter is inert.

“4. Matter being inert, it is not living matter.

“5. Inert or not-living matter cannot produce life.

“6. We know that life is.

“7. Hence we know there is a power other than this inert, not-living matter.

“8. What power is God.”

There was breathless attention while the Reverend gentleman was thus proceeding in logical sequence with his bristling points. But the smile of deep satisfaction which for a time was visible on the faces of the orthodox and conservative members gradually wore away, and disappeared: settling, if I may so speak, into a calmly pictured sort of heroic intellectual weariness, as he followed on, point after point, with rapid utterance and unabated energy, until at last he reached the final and concluding one, which was—I am ready to vouch for it in any court—the

“172. Now, gentlemen, in the radiance of this demonstration, will any one presume to say that the chaos-bringing, power-annihilating ‘If’ is not cast for ever into the abyss?”

The club awoke as if startled from a long dream by the loud crack of a whip, as the reverend gentleman, with all the energy his ponderous, swaying physical frame could impart,—his face beaming with what Joseph Cook might describe as the “indecribable solar look,”—brought thus his—as he himself evidently deemed it—exhaustive illustration of the luminosity there is in the “nature of things” to a close. He had then, however, only just begun what he had proposed to say. Immortality; the Thirty-nine Articles; the “Te Deum;” and all that pertained to the vital character of Christianity as reinforced and reestablished by the scientific method, deriving its vast recuperative power from the Nature of Things,—all remained behind. It was more than reason or friendship could expect any one man to do, however, and so when he waived the further consideration of the subject, and invited criticism, there was loud and long-continued applause.

As the excitement lulled and the club recovered itself, it was plain that the first response from the members was to come from the happy, unperturbed materialist who, in the beginning, had desired a postponement of the subject until another evening. He rose to his feet, a glance of confidence twinkled in his eye, and with a slight wave of his hand toward the President, he said:—

“I need waste no words at this hour of the evening in expressing what I am sure is the unanimous feeling of the club in regard to the remarkable discourse to which we have listened. Did I not think it able, I should not essay a reply. As we all know, it was able; I may say also, it was peculiar and brilliant. I come at once to the point. The gentleman says: there is a God. There is no longer any ‘If’ in the case. He has annihilated the ‘If;’ he has cast it into the abyss. Let us see. What are his main propositions? He admits, in the first place, that his God is invisible. We cannot see him. Neither can we hear him, feel him, taste him, or touch him. We are not able to do any one of these things. All our senses fail us. Nevertheless there is such a being,—a God who eludes our every ability to discover him. Now I say, ‘if’ there be a God like this, it is a piece of gross impertinence in us to be for ever following him up and striving to find him out. He has chosen to veil himself in obscurity, to hide himself and be alone. I, for one, have too much self-respect to insist on disturbing the desired privacy of so august a personage. Nay, I would not so molest and ill-treat the humblest individual. I apprehend, however, that this God, ‘if’ he exists, has not any fear of our ultimate success. He had the

thing all in his own hands. He might have given us another sense by which we could recognize him as he passed to and fro on his rounds through the universe. He did not choose so to do. He tests, we may suppose, serene in his knowledge that only his own creative power can add that he has not given, and so render our much seeking fruitful. But I see the gentleman is impatient with this strain of remark, and I will not pursue it farther. We are all agreed, apparently, that, by our five senses, a God is past finding out. How, then, is he discernible?

"The gentleman affirms:—

"1. God is invisible. But,—

"2. There are evidences which, in spite of his invisibility (I may add, his inaccessibility in every way), are proof beyond question of his existence. For instance,—

"3. There is living matter and not-living matter.

"4. Passing from not-living to living matter cannot be accomplished except by the intervention of some external power.

"5. That Power is God.

"I think I have restated the gentleman's positions fairly. My reply shall be brief.

"1. In not-living matter there begin to appear signs of life.

"2. What is the conclusion? That an external power was then first at work upon it?

"3. It is only rational to say that what we *supposed* to be matter *not-living* was, in fact, matter *living*. To suppose a power outside is gratuitous.

"4. Matter we know. All its powers we do not know. But it is fair to assume that, whatever manifestation comes of it, the cause of that manifestation inheres in it.

"5. By all analogy and experience we should hold this conclusion, until we discover some extra, outside cause, or being, whose office it is shown to be to produce the effect we witness.

"6. God must not be an inference.

"7. The illustration of the invisible player on the keys of an organ fails. For if it had been our uniform experience that an instrument constructed in a certain fashion would produce even the fifth symphony of Beethoven, we should not say, or even surmise, that an outside person, visible or invisible, was necessary to account for the music we heard.

"8. The phenomenon might be wonderful as we contemplated it, but we still should feel bound to account for it by natural causes, and not by supernatural ones.

"9. Hence the 'If' is *not* cast into the abyss."

The spiritedness and vim the speaker put into this little speech was quite refreshing, and it was evident that all the members felt a certain

membership-pride in the creditable manner in which he had acquitted himself. There were but two of them, however, who honored him with their applause, but they clapped in most approved, vigorous style. There was a momentary pause, no one seeming inclined to follow up the discussion; but just as the President was preparing to break the silence with some remark, a member, who, I was told, had never before at the club ventured upon any observation whatsoever, rose, and in a low, quiet tone said he had a few thoughts on the general subject before the club which he would endeavor to present. He spoke nearly as follows:—

"I approve the conclusion of the member who has just interested us. The distinction of not-living matter is purely arbitrary. Either all matter is alive, or all is dead. It is perilous to say that mind enters matter at any one point. It is perilous, for it is an assumption of which there is no proof. To rest the affirmation of God on evidence which is not evidence is to establish not God, but the 'If,' beyond controversy. For myself, I believe in mind. What we call matter is but the mind's expression. Matter in reality is illusion. Rather than the question whether there be any God or not, I query if there be any thing but God. The All-inclusive, the Infinite, is one with endless manifestation. I have not the gift to follow either of the gentlemen in their logical order. My view is rather a picture than a process of reasoning. I do not need to go delving in the mud with microscope to see where God begins. In doing so, I should violate my own integrity. Man himself is the highest expression. Why go from one's self, when all there is is there presented? I have been amused at seeing your men of science, with dark-lantern vision, go wandering over the earth, peering outwardly into 'first manifestations of Mind' to see where, if anywhere, the god appears. Why, the deadest matter you can imagine is his appearance. Dead will you call it, and yet his manifestation? Have you forgotten the old Scripture that the world was created out of nothing? What is the world? Nothing,—nothing but an appearance. I put no slight upon it for that reason. Let us not turn mere materialists,—fumbling for matter-facts, drawing conclusions, inferring. 'God is not an inference,' as my friend has well observed.

"I must confess my surprise that the reverend gentleman, who, by all just expectation, should support the spiritual view, is himself in his method as rank a materialist as our friend and fellow-member who, on the gentleman's own ground, has—let me say it—defeated him thoroughly. [Sensation.] Does he not, as he has charged the materialist, quoting another, 'swim with fins of lead'? He is weighed down

by the science of materialistic investigation and evidences. He and my friend, for instance, — what do they do? They both go to material phenomena, and they ask with eyes cast down, peering into the mud, 'Is there a god?' 'No, sir.' 'I say there is.' And from that day to the end of time they may discuss the point, and they will get no further, and the world will be no wiser. I would quote to the gentleman his own Scripture: 'Canst thou by searching find out God?' No, not by searching. God is known by *living*.

"I wish to be brief. Let me outline my own knowledge.

"I will say that I *know* God. It is not a belief, a speculation, a search: mud or no mud, God is. What is God? Ask yourselves this question: What dominates, what transcends, what controls your life? Whatever that may be, you are conscious that it is a supreme something in which, in very truth, you live, move, and have your being. What is your objection to calling the personality that is yourself, and yet other and vaster than yourself, God? *It and you!* And yet, one! Two there would be, but that *you* are illusion. This personality which you are is the equivalent of the all-beautiful, the all-true, the all-loving, the all-just. Whatsoever is supreme in your inner, pulsing heart, — that is God. Gentlemen, do you *know* this God? I aver that you do; that we all do. We are all not simply believers; we are *knowers*. Are not your disputes, then, as to the livingness or deadness of the mud supererogatory?

"I have said, *mind is all*. Let me for a moment dwell on that proposition. What is our experience of mind? What is the nature of mind? The gentleman dwells on the *nature of things*. I ask a higher question: What is the *nature of mind*? How does it manifest itself? Is there more than one kind of mind? We may keep within the limit of our knowledge, and answer, 'No.' Then, each may study mind for himself; that is, mind may testify of mind. Look now, each one of you, at your own mind. I will report what I myself discover, and you shall say how it tallies with your own discoveries. I find *states* of mind: a conscious personality, and a conscious individuality. But the consciousness of the one differs from that of the other. My personality does not say 'I.' My individuality does. The former is a state of being, but without bounds; without form or shape; an infinite, not in the sense of greatness, but as not feeling limitation: in brief, it is existence emptied of individuality. And yet, it is the very bliss and energy of the perfect: perfect not by comparison, but as the all-content. This very day I have been surprised and greatly pleased at reading that Tennyson relates his own experience of how, "out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself

seem to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words, the loss of individuality seeming no extinction, but only true life." That is one state of mind. Do I err in calling it infinite? There is a state corresponding to this which precedes individuality or finite manifestation. I was about to speak of it as the impersonal infinite. But I should better express my meaning by saying the three states of mind may be enumerated thus: 1, unconscious personal; 2, individual unconscious and conscious; 3, conscious personal, — this last being that referred to by Tennyson. Now, to test this, take any new creative effort. First, individuality disappears; unconscious of self, what you see is a vision without form or color. — an outlying, shapeless glory: then, secondly, individuality of self and of vision as your effort brings order or shape out of the beautiful chaos. But never is this finite expression satisfying. What, then; do you give way to despair? No; in moments of bliss you float away, in a conscious personality utterly beyond words, into the very joy of life. I say conscious personality, but a very unlike state to conscious individuality. In the latter you are conscious of the *me* that is living; in the former you are so alive you cannot stop to think, or in leastwise to say, 'Me!' Self-reference does not lie in that state of boundless being. When you do say 'me,' you wake out of blessedness, as by a fall. Perhaps this is akin to what Bronson Alcott means by his doctrine of the 'lapse.'

"Now, have I stated the process of creative mind as we, by experience, may know it? Well, as we may not affirm that there are two kinds of mind, shall we not say, even so was the world made? Did the creative world-mind not lie in unconscious personality? Did it not pass into million-folded individuality, into conscious finite intelligence, most fully manifested in man? And, finally, in man does it not return again into itself with the added consciousness of personality which I have described? That which was and is and ever shall be is personality, boundless being; passing through individuality, unconscious and conscious, its gain is that it has added to personality-living personality-conscious-of-living. Hence I say God. Hence I say Immortality: for each soul is this living personality conscious of living.

"I know I have now only arrived at a point where questions thickly arise, but I have trespassed too far with my speech. I will close abruptly and at once."

As the gentleman took his seat there was a hush over the souls present, as though they were all illustrating the loss of individuality that had been spoken of. For two or three seconds, at least, there was a

silence as profound as there would have been had the members of the Invisible Club all, of one accord, turned into the not living substance from which the Reverend Mr. Floorman had declared only an outside, interfering Schemewhat could summon life. The revivification, however, was consummated by a very thin, yet penetrating, voice, coming from one of the most intensely orthodox ladies that belonged to the club. "I cannot say," quoth she, "that I have not been interested in the discussion this evening, but I should do myself great injustice, did I not add that I have felt, all through it, a pang of sorrow that no reference whatever was made to the atoning merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by whose blood alone we are sanctified and made fit for an inheritance of glory with God and his angels in the heaven of heavens." It would be impossible to describe the ludicrous effect of this remark. All at once rose to their feet, the Reverend Mr. Floorman foremost of any, as if by common, silent consent the club had decided that it had better avoid, by speedy adjournment, any further catastrophe that might be impending. It was high time, too, for the old-fashioned, tall, closet-like clock that stood in the corner, was just then striking eleven.

It has been said that we are "born believing." I take it that the race emerged from the abyss not with a negation, but with the joy of affirmation on its lips. This affirmation, however, must have been a blank negation to the bliss of the quadrupeds lurking behind. The new-born man opened his eyes rejoicingly, with his faith in the Unknown triumphantly fixed. Intellect became conscious of a destiny, — the liberation of the soul. In the new heavens, though no sun appeared, shone all the stars of promise. In man creation began consciously to believe in itself. The characteristics of man as a progressive being appeared, announcing a new, if far-off, millennium. He was filled with new and irresistible longings. From that time forth was he divided within himself into old and new, conservative and radical. The universe had borne in upon his soul the assurance of a possible new being. He could be born again, and many times. He was not cast, as a rock, to abide for ever firm. His human nature was set free to flow upward, and fashion itself anew for ever. This universe could not break faith with him. He could not break faith with it. He lived and moved and had his being in his faith. Faith led the way. Science followed, and must ever follow: for faith is not intellectual expression, but the condition of it. With growing intelligence the mind achieved

broader and yet broader interpretations. But it must have accepted the universe, or it had made no attempt to explain it; it must have accepted it in the spirit of reconciliation, or it never had had the heart to explain the mystery.

Manifold the interpretations, but it were rash to say the solvent word has yet been spoken. One achievement is to be celebrated, however, — the weaning of the world from dependence on the belief in the fatherhood and care of a Supreme Mechanic. Not wholly passed away, but passing, is this natural, early conception. All things are still possible with God, but God now dwells not apart from human life and activity.

A somewhat embittered controversy is pending between Dr. Carpenter and Mr. Alfred R. Wallace in regard to the phenomena of spiritualism. Dr. Carpenter has stated his opinion that Mr. Crookes and Mr. Wallace are "typical examples of men suffering under an epidemic delusion comparable to the witchcraft epidemic of the seventeenth century." Mr. Wallace replies that Dr. Carpenter is a "curious example of fossilized scepticism." He says: —

"To refuse belief to unsupported rumors of improbable events is enlightened scepticism; to reject all second-hand or anonymous tales to the injury or depreciation of any one is charitable scepticism; to doubt your own prepossessions when opposed to facts observed and reobserved by honest and capable men is a noble scepticism. But the scepticism of Dr. Carpenter is none of these. It is a blind, unreasoning, arrogant disbelief, that marches on from youth to age with its eyes shut to all that opposes its own pet theories; that believes its own judgment to be infallible; that never acknowledges its errors. It is a scepticism that clings to its refuted errors, and refuses to accept new truths."

It is clear to an observer that neither of these gentlemen is in a mood to repeat Burns' lines, —

"O wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see oursel as others see us, —"

as respects each other. Dr. Carpenter, so far from accepting his opponent's estimate of himself, "honestly believes" that he has "unusual power of dealing with this subject;" and Mr. Wallace thinks it strange indeed that he and his friends should be pronounced "psychological curiosities" because they rely upon what philosophers assure them is their "sole and ultimate test of truth, — perception and reason."

Whatever one may think of the results of Mr. Wallace's "perception and reason," it is not possible to doubt his entire honesty of purpose. It is probable that the same may be said of Dr. Carpenter; but his opinion would carry more weight if he confined himself to the legitimate business of investigation, and withheld his gratuitous arraignment of such men as Wallace, Crookes, and others as men afflicted with an "epidemic." It is not a personal controversy that is desired, but a close sticking to the facts and the argument.

Among some old manuscripts written a year or two since I find a little statement of my own impression of spiritism, which I do not feel the need of now revising. Perhaps it may be of enough interest to warrant me in giving it space below.

There is an apparent lull in the discussions of mediumistic power, so far as the daily press is concerned; but it would be a mistake to suppose that the number of believers in the phenomena of spiritualism is therefore decreasing. The interest survives, seemingly, all "exposure." The vitality which the new, or old, doctrine—whichever it may be—displays, renders it not a little difficult to pass it all by as sheer delusion. Of one thing there can be no question: the great body of believers in spiritualism are as sincere in their faith as are believers in whatever other or contrary doctrine. They have won this title to respect, if no other. Still I am at loss to understand why they persist in calling their ism a science. To be a science the proofs must be universally accessible. But in all the manifestations I have been able to witness, or in any way become acquainted with, the only approach to certainty is enjoyed exclusively by the medium himself. Verification by others is cut short at a certain point, where it must be eked out with faith in mediumistic truth-telling. "The word of the medium is entitled to some respect," we are told. Yes, if it be a matter of personal faith; no, if we are studying a science.

It is true, the "word of the medium" predisposes to investigation. Did he advertise a "trick," it would pass for that; but by saying it is no trick, serious attention is challenged, and should be met in return with solicitation unreserved and fearless. If there is truth to be obtained in this way by scientific methods, as the mediums claim, however marvelous it may seem in our eyes, let us rejoice in and possess it. Let it become fact of common experience. Its marvelousness will simply be its newness. The universe we know is a succession of wonders to the discovering mind of man. Nothing is so incredible that it is to be banished ere its claims are sounded. And yet, 'tis no part of liberality to stand open mouthed, ready to swallow all that fills the air. A

little unperturbed steadfastness in adhering to the old conception of the nature of things is prudentially wise.

To establish spiritism as a science, it is not enough to say that disbelievers are unable to furnish any other explanation than the one the believers insist upon. Science rests not on what we *can't*, but on what we *can*, do. There is no veiled secret accessible only to the few. Universality is its chief factor. There is no caste: it is wholly democratic. We may accept the word of the scientific *savant* as authority, but there is no obstacle to our own full verification of all that he affirms.

As to many of the "conditions" mediums insist upon, they may be, for excellent reasons, unavoidable; but the fact is certainly unfortunate. It serves to keep alive suspicion. Conviction halts, and awaits a more opportune occasion. It puts the performance on a level with wonderful tricks of jugglery, with the one difference already noticed,—that of the medium's contrary profession. The most one can fairly say is that he does not see how it was done. If he believes it was not jugglery, he does so on *faith* in the medium, and not as the result of investigation. The natives of Hindostan will allow you quite as favorable conditions, and puzzle you even more effectually. For instance, they will place a wicker basket on a gravel walk in your own door yard. You see into it and through it. A boy gets into it. He is enveloped in a coarse net, which is securely tied at the end. He lies down, and the cover is shut over him and fastened well on the outside. You see him lying there in the basket. They cover the basket with a blanket. They retire some distance, and play upon their viols and stringed instruments. This done, they return, and thrust swords through every portion of the basket. The cover is then lifted. No boy is seen. He has vanished, leaving only the net in which he had been tied. Where is he? Presently he comes dancing up the road. All this is done out of doors in broad daylight, and was witnessed recently by a party of Englishmen traveling with the Prince of Wales.

Now, suppose those jugglers had asserted that there was no trick in the case. The boy was a medium able to dematerialize his body and so escape his confinement, materializing it again somewhere down the road. Would it not be a case parallel with many reported here in America, which we are asked to accept as genuine manifestations of spirit power? I read, not long since, something very similar in a leading spiritualist journal.

Suppose, again, that the request had been made that no blanket should be thrown over the basket, the investigators desiring to see the boy as his form dissolved or passed into invisibility. Such a request, in all probability, would be refused there as here. The blanket must

rest on the basket as the sole condition under which spirit influence could work, light being too positive, etc.

It is plain that the position of the investigators would be one of some embarrassment, at least. If they could not affirm that the boy had not escaped from the basket by a dematerializing process, neither could they abandon their uniform experience that caused them to believe such things impossible. What would convince? Not the Hindostani boy-medium's testimony. Mere lookers-on would be obliged to remain "sceptics" until ample daylight had been let in upon such mysterious doings, and even then conviction absolute would be reached only after accumulative experience had tested and established the phenomena as indisputable fact.

I may add to the above that personally I have not the slightest objection to any new discovery which anybody is able to make in the worlds visible or invisible. I have no pet "faith" or theory of any sort which I care for in the least as weighed against the truth as it is in the universe. I may almost say that I believe more in what I don't know than in what I do know, — so much, I am sure, remains behind yet to be revealed. But this also appears certain: the fruits of this universe, so far as they are to become our possessions, are all capable of rational interpretation.

SOME twelve years ago there had grown up within several of the leading Unitarian parishes of this country a feeling of dissatisfaction with what was called the "denominational life." Eminent preachers who had the popular ear discoursed of the "deadness" and "inactivity" of the liberal churches, — of their lack of coöperative sympathy and unity. There was really no "denominational life," but only isolated societies holding occasional conferences, having a sort of a good time socially when they met; the injunction, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel," was but poorly heeded. The time seemed to these liberal preachers and many of the laity to be especially propitious for a grand liberal movement. The future was theirs, if they did but bestir themselves. The war just closed had had a strong liberalizing influence. On the battle-field and in the hospital men of all creeds and of no creed had met and fraternized; they had fought side by side, suffered together, and vast numbers had died. Converted and unconverted lay slain and piled together. Theology was at fault. Could it be that a just and impartial judge would separate these fallen heroes as goats and sheep to go to the left and to the right on the great "last

day," — some to hell, and some to heaven? Human nature shrank from such a catastrophe. Indeed it was too horrible. If the unrepentant slain had not been "washed in the blood of the Lamb," they had gone down to their graves shedding their own blood, — blood quite as precious to loved ones as any blood else, — and freely, that their country might live. Well, would God damn such as these? Whatever theological champions might say in the pulpit, the response of comrades and of mourning friends at home gave no uncertain sound. In brief, more potent than all Universalist preaching since the days of Murray was this face-to-face encounter with God's justice on the battle-fields of the nation. It might almost be said that America ceased to believe in "eternal damnation" from that day. Throughout the country evangelical churches are just awakening to the fact that the dogma is obsolete.

Hence it was that Unitarian leaders felt that, taking the country in the temper in which it issued from the war, liberal ideas had a great advantage. Their new and zealous endeavor to avail themselves of this providential ally may be stated as follows:—

The first word was *organization*. The liberal churches must come together, and for all purposes of missionary enterprise must become one body. The denomination, so only in name, must become so in fact. In the spring of 1866 a grand council was held in New York City, with delegates from all churches choosing to send them. The avowed purpose was a closer union for the work of liberalizing the country. It was urged that a vigorous denominational life would supplement and reinforce local parish life. These local churches — weak and struggling, many of them — would acquire new importance at home when the victories won by the denomination at large should be reflected back as a part of their common work. Then, there were those who were not without hope that some common statement of belief might be agreed upon, so that it would no longer be so difficult a thing to answer the pertinent question often asked, What do Unitarians believe? To tell inquiring souls to believe what they pleased, or what they could believe, was not, to say the least, the most successful method of proselyting. People accustomed to definiteness and authority in their old beliefs were not prepared to find these both lacking in a — they could hardly say new *belief*; for was it, after all, more than a speculation? To be sure, the local minister might be supposed to know what he believed; but he spoke with no authority, and his successor might, and probably would, on some vital points, teach wholly different doctrine. There needed to be discovered some common ground for the whole denomination to give liberal ideas authority and inspire respect for them.

Thus was developed a state of affairs within the liberal fold, if I may so speak, for which the leaders in the new movement were scarcely prepared. That there was a "right" and a "left wing" to the denomination was no secret; but that the "left" could show so strong a front, or had any such vitality as was afterwards displayed on due occasion, was not realized. It required but this attempt to organize and state the denominational faith to bring out the whole truth. Unitarianism was all adrift. "The Drift Period," as a keen observer had already pointed out in the columns of "The Examiner," had been going on quietly for a long time; and this "drift," singularly enough, had been away from rather than towards the very dogma it was proposed to set up for general acceptance,—namely, the "Lordship of Christ." That was the very pith and marrow of the radical protest. In the Convention, however, the radicals were largely outnumbered. The obnoxious resolution was voted. It may be said that it was carried with a rather high hand, or head,—a prominent speaker declaring amid great applause that he would rather turn back to Rome than go forward with a body that refused to confess the leadership of Christ. It was said that this was no creed adopted to be enforced; that it was only the expression of the majority, and those who disliked it need not feel at all bound by it; or, they might, as they perhaps could, interpret the Lordship of Christ in a way not at all to conflict with their own cherished views. But the cardinal point with all radicals had been the placing of loyalty to truth before any personal claim whatsoever. They could not call Jesus "Lord and Master" without doing violence to this their profoundest conviction. What they asked was simply a united effort of the churches to liberalize public sentiment and free the land from superstitious and old-time ignorance, leaving both conservative and radical unembarrassed by any seemingly authoritative outline of creed or faith on the part of the general convention. Failing in this, a number ceased from that time to hold further relations with the Unitarian body. Others determined on an effort at repealing the obnoxious clause in a convention to be held at Syracuse two years later. They tried what they could do, and failed. The prime movers in this effort at repeal then withdrew from the association, renouncing not only Unitarianism, but Christianity itself. A curious fact here to be noticed is that, in the opinion of the leader of this repeal-movement, Christianity was then and there put upon the stand to decide for ever whether or no it could be harmonized with liberty. The vote of that Convention settled the case adversely and for all time, thereby determining that all liberals must henceforth range themselves in opposition as anti-Christian. As though the antagonism of Christianity to liberty

was not as much a fact two years before at New York as then at Syracuse! If it could be allowed two years of grace, why not forty? The fact is, the vote had no great significance for or against liberty, so far as regards the country at large; but it helped dispel the illusion that there was, or could be, a Unitarian *body*; and if no body, then how could there be *wings*? From that time there has been very little said about the "two wings," and the "body," for great missionary effort or otherwise, has given no sign. The old disturbing resolve has fallen into neglect. Perhaps there are a few among the clergy and more among the laity in country towns who would still defend it with old time zest; but the majority seem now to have passed on to new positions, so that, if one were an entire stranger, it might be puzzling to tell whether he had got into the midst of a Unitarian or Free Religious festival. The same general air of respectability would be observed in either, and the utterances of the speakers would mostly harmonize, save where in the latter some zealous anti-Christian might be holding forth. The Unitarians have not become a great denomination, but they have become vastly more liberal in spirit, and have advanced, as I believe, to much more reasonable and truthful convictions. Their pulpits are in a great measure radicalized, and their only remaining organ,—if I may so speak of it,—"The Christian Register," is certainly not in the hands of one who belonged to what was formerly known as the "right wing." Organization has failed. Liberality—not that kind once scoffed at as a "mush of concessions," but the liberality of free minds unwilling to be enslaved or to enslave—has grown.

THE recent trial of E. H. Heywood on the charge of sending through the mails two publications alleged to be "obscene," brought by the United States Government Agent, Anthony Comstock, attracted much attention. The court-room was crowded by a remarkably intellectual and intensely interested audience. There seemed to be a general appreciation of the importance of the issue. The case furnished a test of American intelligence in discriminating between that sort of publications designed to corrupt and deprave by appealing to the passions of young people, and the free expression of opinion, however obnoxious, when addressed to the reason of mankind. Large numbers of Mr. Heywood's personal friends and sympathizers were present, but much the larger portion of the audience was made up of the general public, brought together not by mere curiosity, but in all seriousness of purpose. The verdict of the jury by no means echoed the opinion

of these unprejudiced lookers-on. In the *first* place, it was manifest that almost every thing like fair play was, from the beginning of the trial to its close, set aside. The rulings of the Court swept from the defendant his whole line of defence. Nothing concerning his character, his manner of conducting his business of publication, or the character of his works as distinguished from ordinary publications conceded to be obscene, or as compared with standard works of a recognized moral character, was permitted. The Court allowed but the two simple questions: 1, Were the two books specified in the indictment sent through the mails by Mr. Heywood? 2, Were they obscene,—the Court charging the jury as to the interpretation of obscenity? The jury decided that "Sexual Physiology" was not an obscene book, but that "Cupid's Yokes" was, and on the latter count rendered a verdict of "guilty." The case was thus narrowed down to Mr. Heywood's own work, the *tenor* of which this jury, under charge of the Court, felt authorized to declare to be *demoralizing*, and therefore obscene.

In the brief space at my command I can but touch upon the remarkable features of this trial, and express the hope that it does not in any sense represent the final determination of American society to defend its liberties and render justice.

A true record of the facts in the case as they have thus far transpired would appear to run about as follows:—

1. Mr. Heywood publishes the pamphlet entitled "Cupid's Yokes," in which he sets forth his views on the true relation of the sexes. He has positive opinions; he makes bold to tell the world what they are.

2. Anthony Constock reads this book, and pronounces it immoral in its tendency, and as coming within the kind of publications the law classifies as obscene. He arrests Mr. Heywood, and this is the issue made up by the District Attorney, and presented to the jury: the whole doctrine of the book from beginning to end is foul and degrading, proposing, as it does, the abolition of marriage, etc., etc. Various passages are read and commented on in a manner, to say the least, not calculated to impress the jury with a fair idea of its author's spirit or the meaning of his words. The point, however, is sufficiently made out that the intent of the book is to present the "free love" doctrines as Mr. Heywood understands them. The whole force of the Attorney's argument is directed to showing that such doctrines have an immoral tendency, and for that reason he pronounces them obscene, etc. He gets the *obscenity out of their tenor*, rather than their *tenor out of their obscenity*. In other words, the whole objection to the book is that it advocates ideas which the District Attorney does not conceive to be moral and sound.

3. The Attorney is fully supported by the presiding judge, both in his rulings and in his charge to the jury. The undisguised partisanship of the Court is commented on by nearly all present. To specify one or two instances: What can be said in defence of the exclusion of all comparable publications which would tend to illustrate or interpret the real meaning of the law? What of the Court's telling the jury that "such doctrines" would turn the State of Massachusetts into one great house of prostitution? Such might indeed be the private opinion of the eminent judge, but that it had ought to do with the question of "obscenity" no unprejudiced mind can for a moment affirm. Then, by what authority did the Court instruct the jury in words to this effect: You have been told by the counsel for the defence that you are to consider the influence of this book over yourselves, whether it would tend to corrupt or demoralize you; but I charge you, you are to consider its effect on the happy homes of this Commonwealth: *it was not designed for such as you*, but for the young, etc.? Now, what source of knowledge had the Court to draw upon in making this assertion? There was not a particle of evidence introduced as to the class of persons the book had been sent to, but every thing that would throw light on that point was carefully excluded. The whole charge was gratuitous and baseless, unsupported by any fact proven in court. Other points equally irrelevant and improper helped to furnish and complete the most extraordinary charge twelve jurymen probably ever listened to.

4. The defence admits the anti-marriage doctrines of the book, but denies that they are in any sense "lewd, lascivious, or obscene," either in their spirit or presentation. They are calm statements addressed to the reason of the people, and made within the clear right of the defendant as a free citizen.

Whatever may be the present issue of this case,—a question of the constitutionality of the law is pending while I write,—I am clearly convinced that the final result will be all that it should be. A verdict against the free discussion of all topics important to public welfare cannot in this country be permanently enforced. It stands to reason that if a custom may be supported it may also be opposed. No one is bound to be right in the estimation of others before he utters his opinion. He may oppose prevailing opinion; he may urge the repeal of the laws; he may use the platform and the press in the dissemination of all his convictions, whatever they may be. He may even advocate "treason" in security from any legal penalty. We have got to take the risk in this country of all the errors the human mind is heir to. It is our one faith that error may be tolerated safely where reason is left

free to oppose it. Jesus made no greater contribution to his kind than this saying: "Even the *spirit* of truth shall lead you into all truth." Who is wise to sit in judgment and abolish error with a scourge? Let him that is without error rise and proclaim himself!

I am free to say that I do not accept, or at all believe in, the general doctrine set forth by Mr. Heywood in "Cupid's Yokes." But I am wholly persuaded of his perfect right to express his own convictions. I should say that his ideas, if generally accepted and put into the world's life, would prove by no means to the world's be left. But I say also that he has a clear right to propose them to the world, and the world, if it chooses, has a clear right to adopt them. I do not fear. The world has much to learn. It will not be dictated to by judges or juries; it will grow into its own convictions of propriety and duty, of truth and right, and never be satisfied with hearsay or authoritative egotism.

But all in good season.

Mr. Heywood is testing the faith of Americans in their own principles of freedom more stoutly than they have ever been tested before. The subject is a new one comparatively, and one which awakens great prejudice and feeling. But there is but one way to meet him, as they finally will become convinced, and that is with their abundant reason and good sense. We, as a race, think we have won some important victories over ourselves for religious toleration and freedom. In a similar way may I not say we have victories to gain for moral toleration and freedom?

Meantime the cause will have its martyrs.

Mr. Heywood in Charlestown prison emphatically may be regarded as one of them.

There are those who think the doctrine of universal salvation has a demoralizing tendency. But the time has gone by when any one would propose the imprisonment of all Universalist preachers.

There are those who believe the doctrine of the atonement has a demoralizing tendency. But who thinks of forcibly exterminating Orthodoxy by the aid of a penal statute?

So there are those — most people, apparently — who believe anti-marriage doctrines pernicious and demoralizing. Very many of them seem to be of opinion that the rule they apply to other cases should not hold good in this. They would cast free-love preachers into prison, and thus root out the "heresy" once and for all.

They have yet to learn their own lesson better.

Such a determination would not only be wrong in principle, but equally foolish and vain. Do they forget that persecution is the scat-

tering of firebrands? Mr. Heywood has twenty readers to-day where yesterday he had one.

The aged postmaster summoned by the Government from Princeton testified that he had known Mr. Heywood from his boyhood, and that, so far as he knew or had ever heard, his private character was irreproachable.

It is best to let all such men have their say on whatever topic. They cannot be choked off, even from the proclamation of grossest error, with profit to society.

Emilio Castelar declared in the Spanish Cortes: "If the Roman Catholic creed be true it will prevail by force of truth; if Protestantism be true, it will prevail, and you cannot crush it. If liberty of conscience be of God, you cannot crush, if of man, you need not crush it."

How excellent is this doctrine, and how wide its application!

Most opportunely the following lines, written by John Hay and published some years since, come to my hand. Heartily I commend them to my readers:—

LIBERTY.

What man is there so bold that he should say,
 "Thus and thus only would I have the sea"?
 For whether lying calm and beautiful,
 Claspings the earth in love, and throwing back
 The smile of heaven from waves of amethyst;
 Or whether, freshened by the busy winds,
 It bears the trade and navies of the world
 To ends of use or stern activity;
 Or whether, lashed by tempests, it gives way
 To elemental fury, howls and roars
 At all its rocky barriers, in wild lust
 Of ruin drinks the blood of living things,
 And strews its wrecks o'er leagues of desolate shore;—
 Always it is the sea, and all bow down
 Before its vast and varied majesty.

And so in vain will timorous men essay
 To set the metes and bounds of Liberty.
 For Freedom is its own eternal law.
 It makes its own conditions, and in storm
 Or calm alike fulfills the unerring Will.
 Let us not then despise it when it lies
 Still as a sleeping lion, while a swarm
 Of gnat-like evils hover round its head;

Nor doubt it when in mad, disjointed times
It shakes the torch of terror, and its cry
Shrills o'er the quaking earth, and in the flame
Of riot and war we see its awful form
Rise by the scaffold, where the crimson ax
Rings down its grooves the knell of shuddering kings.
For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee.

SIDNEY H. MORSE.



NEXT

BOOK

