

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

We have received several communications, in reply to our request for further information about the Society of Friends in Canada, and all of them confirm the statements furnished us, last week, that the settlements are mostly confined to Ontario. Thus, Mr. Henry W. Way, of St. Thomas, Ont., who is an authority, as he belongs to the body, kindly gives the following localities: Bloomfield, P.E. Co.; Pickering, Ontario Co.; Bertie and Pelham, Welland Co.; Norwich, Oxford; Lobo, Middlesex; Bosanquet, Lambton Co.; Yarmouth, Elgin Co. Mr. Way states further that his co-disciples of Fox are to be found in Genesee, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. While thanking our correspondent for his information, we are surprised that he should suspect us of any disrespect or even levity toward the Friends, and as to the good English word "Quaker," we thought it was popular with them. The original text of our paragraph was taken, as it stood, from a Philadelphia paper, and we added only the line about Canada.

A Lindsay paper likewise informs us that if we visit Pickering in Ontario County, Linden Valley in Victoria County, or parts of Hastings and Prince Edward County, "there will be found many old style Quakers." West Victoria's worthy M.P.P., Mr. John S. Cruess, is a splendid sample of that independent race. Other settlements still exist in York and Simcoe Counties. This is akin to the surprise created recently on learning that Mormons after the doctrine of Joe Smith, i.e., "Latter Day Saints," were living in Ontario. Why, for years a colony are settled at Cameron, a few miles north of this town, have a church of their own, are decent well-to-do people who mind their own business. They are as harsh on polygamy as anyone can be. They do not intrude their belief on others and therefore are entitled to it."

An Ottawa correspondent sends the following interesting letter, with one or two new points and a neat little story. He says:—

"In your issue of Saturday, I notice that you state you are not aware of any settlement of Friends in Canada. There was, and I fancy still is, a considerable settlement of them near Bloomfield, in Prince Edward County, a few miles from Picton. There they not only had a substantial meeting house, but a large school, the latter founded by a wealthy English member, whose name I forget. I have been present at many of their meetings. One of them, a "silent meeting," I shall not easily forget. It lasted two hours, and not a word was spoken during the whole time. Though the older members of the Society stuck to the phrase and dress of that body, the younger ones did not, and the girls were as gaily dressed as their more worldly sisters, and indulged in dancing. The period I speak of was the last year of the American Civil War. At that time, in the *Waverly Magazine*, used to appear notices from parties asking correspondence to wile away camp life. To one of these a pretty Quakeress of Bloomfield, a Miss S—, replied. The young man was a captain in a U.S. cavalry regiment. Several letters passed between the parties, photos were exchanged, and, to the surprise of the young lady, one day the young soldier turned up at the farm. The old folk were astonished on learning of the correspondence, and still more that the stranger had come on matrimony bent. The damsel herself was by no means averse to the proposition, but her father at first would not hear of her wedding "a man of blood." He finally gave way, and the young soldier, at the end of his furlough, returned to the States, taking his bride with him. As to your remarks about the Society of Pennsylvania observing the tenets as laid down by George Fox, you will find there are two branches of Quakers there—"Orthodox" and "Hicksite,"—who differ on some points as widely as Ultra Low Church and Ritualistic Anglicans, the Hicksites conforming to the way of the world in many matters of dress and speech."

THE POET'S RAPTURE.

On these nights of Christmas tide, when the December air is lighted by strange fires, and voices of spirits are heard sounding from heaven to earth a burden never heard before:—

Glory to God unto the Highest and
Peace to good men upon the sea and land,

It is meet that we should dwell upon a revelation just made of the unbidden cosmic insights of the greatest of modern poets.

Some of our readers have doubtless read, within the last few days, of a letter, written by Lord Tennyson, which has come into the possession of the *Chicago Tribune*, and which shows that he holds the conviction that consciousness may pass from the body and hold communion with the dead. This is essentially spiritualism, but in Tennyson's case he is his own medium. The letter is in the poet's handwriting, and is dated "Farthingford, Freshwater, Isle of Wight, May 7, 1874." It was written to a gentleman who communicated to him certain strange experiences he had had when passing from under the effect of anæsthetics. Lord Tennyson writes: "I have never had any relations through anæsthetics, but a kind of waking trance (this for lack of a better name). I have frequently had it quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has often come upon me through repeating my own name to myself silently, till all at once, as if it were that of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state, the clearest of the clearest; but the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction but the only true life. I am ashamed of my feeble description. Have I not said the state is utterly beyond words?"

This is not a vulgar table tipping spiritualism, as the *Tribune* rightly says. It is the most emphatic declaration that the spirit of the writer is capable of transferring itself into another existence, is not only a real, clear, simple, but that it is also an infinite invision and eternal induration, for he continues that, when he comes back to sanity, he is ready to fight for the truth of his experience, and that he holds it the spirit, whose separate existence he thus repeatedly tests, will last for æons and æons.

Very naturally this production has created a stir among thoughtful men, and, as naturally, inquiry was made whether anything in the writings of the poet could give a clue to this evolution of mind. Professor Thomas Davidson, of Chicago, on seeing the letter, at once pointed out that the same conviction, if not the same experience, only with another, is described in "In Memoriam," xcv. The stanzas are generally passed over as referring to a mere frenzy of grief, but reading them in the light of the calmly penned prose, puts an entirely different aspect on the incident contained in the lines referred to.

Perhaps the reader would like to go over that number of the poem, made doubly interesting now in the glare of this new discovery. The poet begins by preparing the drapery of the scene in the dismal hour of gloom:—

By night we lingered on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry;
And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn.

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering; not a cricket chirred;
The brook alone far off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn.

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheeled or lit the filmy shapes
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes,
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes.

While now we sang old songs that pealed
From knoll to knoll, where, couched at ease,
The white kine glimmered, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
Withdrew themselves from me and night,
And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone.

A hunger seized my heart; I read
Of that glad year which once had been,
In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,
The noble letters of the dead.

Here we have all the surroundings needed—darkness, stillness, the hunger of the heart, and the vocal presence of the dead. Then follow the verses which bear out the poet's American letter:—

And strangely on the silence broke
The silent-speaking words and strange
Was love's dumb cry defying change
To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell
On doubts that drive the coward back,
And keen thro' wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touched me from the past,
And all at once it seemed at last
The living soul was flashed on mine.

And mine in this was wound, and whirled
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world.

Æonian music measuring art—
The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—
The blows of Death. At length my trance
Was cancelled, stricken thro' with doubt.

The three last stanzas embody the whole story, and hold the secret of the inner sight. The dead man touched the poet first by word and line and then, at once, the living soul was flashed on his. The human spirit was given wings, and guided as Dante of old, it soared into the infinite, caught the cosmic pulses of the unseen, and heard the Music of the Ages—Æonian—beating out the problems of Time, Chance and Death.

Then the night gradually wore away, the breeze trembled over the large leaves of the sycamore, until the East and West mixed their lights, like life and death, and broadened into boundless day. Next come the perplexities of faith, and honest doubt that has more faith than half the creeds. But this shallow scepticism does not last. The poet fights it and gathers strength. He faces the spectres of his mind and lays them, till he comes at length to find a stronger faith his own. This is the victory, and Tennyson shall never be ranked with the unbeliever, as he himself tells us in the bugle call which closes this whole psychological event:—

Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness in the light,
And dwells not in the light alone.
But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinai's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of gold,
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud!

JOHN TALON-LESPERANCE.

MILITIA NOTES.

The death is announced in Quebec of Arthur Gingras, aged 93, one of the last survivors who participated in the battle of Chateaugay.

An Order-in-council has been passed awarding a pension of 55 cents a day to Private Hurrell, of the 90th Battalion, for disease contracted during the Northwest rebellion.

Daniel Wilson, formerly of the 11th Hussars, and who was one of the six Hundred who made the famous charge at Balaklava, the only one now left in Canada, is at the point of death in this city.

It is denied that there is any intention of removing the St. Johns School of Infantry to Montreal. Montreal has no place suitable for such a purpose, while there is splendid barracks accommodation at St. Johns.

The new drill book now being prepared by the Imperial War Office authorities will be adopted by the Canadian force as soon as it is ready. Gen. Middleton said that he hoped the new volume would be ready for use next summer.

The report of Lieut.-Col. Smith, D.A.G., of the London military district, relative to the condition of the 7th Battalion, has been received at the Militia Department. It is understood that Col. Smith's recommendation to the Minister is that the battalion be disbanded and afterward re-organized.

The annual rifle meeting of the National Association, hitherto known as the Wimbledon meeting, will, after all, be held on Wimbledon Common next year. A new Wimbledon has not been secured. The time at the disposal of the National Association will not allow of new ranges elsewhere, and the Duke of Cambridge is, therefore, to be asked to allow next year's meet to be held on Wimbledon Common.

The six breeds of turkeys in the United States are known as, 1, the bronze; 2, the Narragansett; 3, white; 4, black; 5, buff; 6, slate. The largest of the bronze turkeys, raised principally in Connecticut, attain forty-five pounds in weight when two years old. The yearlings, more tender, usually weigh about twenty-five pounds. The Narragansetts are nearly as large.