

strain, more delightful perhaps, than its fellows, floats through the air, you resign yourself in reckless abandon to the intoxicating impulse of the moment, and the calm and graceful soliloquy of the speaker still goes on. You take in his words and listen with amazement to the glowing, flowing diction, and the happy expression of idea, and you wonder at the fecundity of thought, and the charming variety and manner of the talk. Every winter Mr. Alcott takes the field and goes to the western and eastern cities of the United States, where his conversations are recognized and popular institutions. His audience is composed of cultured ladies and gentlemen, generally persons of kindred tastes and feelings. The meetings are held in a large room, and the guests are ranged round the speaker, who occupies a central and commanding position. When circumstances admit of it, the parlour is decorated in a manner which is calculated to lend an additional charm to the evening's entertainment. This is all very pleasant, and enhances quite considerably the interest of the occasion. Flowers, softened lights, pictures, pieces of statuary, a bit of bronze here and there, pretty carpets, and tasteful furniture add spirit and life to the performance, and gratify, always, the æsthetic in our nature. A topic of general interest is then started by Mr. Alcott, and his talk is framed in such a way that those who wish to take part in the conversation may exchange thoughts with the speaker. If none respond he goes on and talks for an hour or more. He instructs as he goes along. He creates enthusiasm in his theme. He delights, amuses and teaches his hearers. Sometimes his soul is so filled with ideal figures that he forgets he is not alone, and he talks on, elaborating and building and perfecting the thought which is uppermost in his mind. Pythagoras, Plato, Socrates, Swedenborg, Plotinus, Fludd, and curious old John Selden, whose bits of philosophic raillery delighted our forefathers two hundred and fifty years ago, comprise the famous group at whose feet Alcott loves to sit