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CONTENTS.

THE HERO AS PROPHET —JOE SMITH.	THE WHITE HART INN. THE FAIR UNKNOWN. PASTIMES. ANAGRAMS. DECAPITATIONS, &C. ARITHMETICAL PROBLEMS. CHESS. TO CORRESPONDENTS. HOUSEHOLD RECEIPTS. SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL. WITTY AND WHIMSICAL.
HESPERUS. LITERARY GOSSIP. LIST OF NEW BOOKS. THE FAMILY HONOUR. THE SULTAN AND THE SAGE (Poetry). CATS AND MICE. BUT, AH! IT WAS A DREAM! (Music). CANADIAN BALLAD (Poetry.)	

Continued from week to week, the NEW STORY,
"THE SECRET OF STANLEY HALL."

By Mrs. J. V. NOEL.

THE READER.

As No. 26 will complete the first volume of the READER, it is the intention of the Publishers to provide covers in order that all who are desirous of binding the weekly issues may be enabled to do so at a low rate. The covers will be handsomely got up, and will be ready about the time the volume is complete.

THE HERO AS PROPHET:—JOE SMITH.

By A CARLYLEAN.

THE Great Master has demonstrated that Mahomet was a Hero and a Prophet; and I, that Master's humble Disciple, believe that Joseph Smith, also, was a Hero and a Prophet. Start not, astonished reader! but as the Sage of Greenwich sagely sayeth, beware of Cant; Cant, the baneful heritage of the present age from the fetid eighteenth Century, with its Encyclopedism, its Voltairism, its Rot-seauism, its Mesmerism, its Revolutionism, and all their murky brood, "of Erebus and deepest darkness born;" and to Erebus we must again consign them ere the Earth has peace, and rest, and light. Yes, O reader, beware of Cant! If Mahomet was a true Prophet, why not Joe Smith? I only claim for the Seer of New England what the Master claims for the Seer of Arabia. Speaking of his hero, Mr. Carlyle remarks: "He is, by no means, the truest of Prophets, but I do esteem him a true one." So say I, too, of mine; this and no more. But is his revelation from above? querulously demand Dryasdust and Smelfungus, in the hard spirit of these sceptical days. I answer not to such questioners, but to the intelligent few I reply—judge him by his works. Could a fabric such as he has erected be founded on the sandy foundation of falsehood? Could tens of thousands of thinking beings throughout the world believe in a lie? Again hear the Master: "A false man found a religion? Why, a false man cannot build a brick house! If he do not know, and follow truly, the properties of mortar, burnt clay, and what else he works in, it is no house that he makes, but a rubbish heap." The inference to be drawn from this sublime dogma, when applied to the Mormon teacher, is evident: Joseph Smith has founded a religion; therefore Joseph is a true man, and a true man's religion must be true. He cannot be true himself and his religion false. But he may have been a foolish enthusiast, who, being deceived himself, has deceived others? I again appeal to his works to rebut this objec-

tion. A fool never accomplished such work, no more than he could build St. Peter's or write Paradise Lost, or Hamlet. But a knave might, whines Smelfungus. Thus, O Smelfungus! I hurl the great Carlyle at thy noodle's head: "Our current hypothesis about Mahomet, that he was a scheming impostor, a Falsehood incarnate, that his religion is a mass of quackery and fatuity, begins really to be now untenable to any one. The lies which well-meaning zeal have heaped round this man are disgraceful to ourselves only," and he continues further on, "Are we to suppose that it was a miserable piece of spiritual legerdemain, this which so many creatures of the Almighty have lived by and died by. I, for my part, cannot form any such supposition. I will believe most things sooner than that. One would be entirely at a loss what to think of this world at all, if quackery so grew and were sanctified here." There! that finishes off Smelfungus, or his skull is impervious to mortal weapon. So let him go howling to his gods, of whom she of the Dunciad is the chief. It is plain then, that in strict accordance with the Carlylean hypothesis—and who dare doubt its correctness? I, of course, do not—that Joseph Smith, like Mahomet, has brought a message of truth to his followers and the whole world. But what is truth, growls Dryasdust—Smelfungus is extinguished, fled, lost in the gloom of night—What is truth? The question is an old one, and has never been answered until Carlyle answered it; in testimony whereof I might quote largely from his works, but especially his luminous life of Friederich the Great, who, he proves, was himself the incarnation of truth, as his greater father, Friederich Wilhelm, was before him. The father, having faith in the proverb which asserts that she is to be found in wine, sought her in numberless hogsheds of beer, and discovered her, as shown by Mr. Carlyle. She accompanied the son, we learn from the same trustworthy authority, throughout his ravages in Saxony, his appropriation of Silesia, and the partition of Poland. But this is a digression. We are informed by the ancient mythologists that Truth lies hidden in a well; and ordinary men, who explore her retreat, if they see anything at all, only see her shadow. It was only a few favoured mortals who were permitted to gaze upon her, face to face, and Mahomet and Joseph Smith were of that happy few.

Joseph was born in the land of the Puritans, though he was never a strict observer of the habits of that austere race. His family was long famous in New England for the ingenuity with which they manufactured wooden nutmegs, and they trafficked largely besides in tinware and razor-strops. Hero is another curious coincidence. The family of Hashem, of the Karcish tribe, of which Mahomet was a member, dealt extensively in merchandize, making frequent journeys, for that purpose, to the fairs of Syria, in which the Prophet, when young, accompanied them. But neither of these extraordinary men was destined to pass his life in the labours and toils of commerce; indeed Joseph never took kindly to labour of any sort. Both were dreamers of dreams; the elder Prophet cogitating in his mind the high doctrines of which he afterwards became the inspired teacher, while slowly wending his weary way over the sandy desert; the younger, similarly employed, lolling on the bench of a New England tavern. We gather from undoubted sources that Mahomet was accused by his enemies of having been, at one period, an idler and a vagabond,—a slander of course; Joseph was called a loafer, by the profane, a slander, too, equally of course. There is, indeed, one point in which they differed:—the one pro-

hibited to his followers the indulgence in intoxicating liquors; the other was reported to have been fond of gin-slings. Yet, even on that point, the resemblance between them does not altogether fail. Many insist that Mahomet's ecstatic visions owe a portion of their rich colouring to the large doses of opium with which he consoled himself when he retired, in solitude and silence, to the cave in Mount Hara; an indulgence still practiced by the believers in his creed. So that objection may be disposed of, as amounting to little or nothing.

On the whole, then, I contend that if Mahomet be a true Prophet, there is no reason why Joe Smith should not be one as well. They both claimed to be divinely inspired; both found enthusiastic believers in their doctrines, believers to fanaticism; both permit or inculcate a plurality of wives on earth and in heaven, the one being provided with his hours in the next world; the other, more provident, making sure of the commodity in this, and carrying them with him. Nor, as Mr. Carlyle argues, and as others I allow, have argued before him, are these Prophets without venerable examples in their polygamic views. They only taught what Prophets and Patriarchs have taught and practiced of old. I must not omit to mention that Joe Smith's religion has this superiority over that of Mahomet; he never pretended that it was right to propagate it by the sword; and moreover he died for his faith.

Dryasdust and similar "Devil's Advocates," as they are called at Rome, may protest against our conferring the honours of Prophethood on Joe—a familiar and endearing appellation, evincing his great popularity among his own people—by pretending that some of his acts were not of a saintly character. I might deny these charges altogether, or extenuate them; but it is unnecessary for me to do so, as the Master again comes to the rescue: Mr. Carlyle thus discourses on Mahomet's faults: "On the whole we make too much of faults; the details of the business hide the real centre of it. Faults? The greatest of faults, I should say, is to be conscious of none. Readers of the Bible above all, one would think, might know better. Who is called there the man after God's own heart? David, the Hebrew King, had fallen into sins enough; blackest crimes; there was no want of sins. And, thereupon, the unbelievers sneer and ask, is this your man, according to God's heart? The sneer, I must say, seems to me at best a shallow one. What are faults? what are the outward details of a life; if the inner secret of it, the remorse, temptation, true, often-baffled, never-ended struggle of it be forgotten," and so on. In short, Mr. Carlyle contends that David and Mahomet were all the better for their faults, and I demand the same judgment for Joseph Smith.

With one more quotation from the Great Master I shall, for the present, conclude my remarks. He speaks of Mahomet, but his words no less answer my Prophet. "We will in no wise, consider him as an Inanity and Theatricality, a poor, conscious, ambitious, schemer; we cannot conceive him so. The rude message he delivered was a real one withal: an earnest, confused voice from the unknown Deep. The man's words were not false, nor his workings here below; no Inanity and Semilacrum: a fiery mass of life, cast up from the great bosom of Nature herself."

Am I not justified in demanding for Joseph Smith a seat beside the prophet Mahomet, where, judging by Mr. Carlyle's classification, they will be in most worshipful company? C.

(Note by the Editor.—The above *jeu d'esprit* may not be inapplicable to some of Mr. Carlyle's more extreme views; but the writer ought, at the same time, to do justice to the better qualities of that celebrated author.)