

had been cooped up for a hundred years within stone walls came out, wondering; and grey-headed men learned for the first time the smell of pine-wood, or listened, bewildered, to the rustle of the birches by the shallow Loire." Life in the quarrelsome Middle Ages was, in fact, only possible within stone walls, and the monastery was simply the safe retreat for the clergy in connection with the church to which it was attached. The monks were not shut up in any more special sense than were the inmates of castles or the inhabitants of walled cities. It was not until afterwards that immuring one's self in a monastery came to be regarded as in some way or other a meritorious act. Originally it was a social necessity for personal safety, and we know from Rabelais himself, who endured it for thirty years, that it was a dead failure. He satirised it in his "Abbey of Thelema,"—a fancy retreat in which everything was the reverse of romantic, and therefore those who dwelt in it were happy.

But the more common form of the dream of happiness is that of the Arcadia, or common community; and this has led of late years to many experiments in different parts of the world, and especially in the United States. There is room enough there for all kinds of lives to be led, and some of those attempted are most interesting. Nowhere else could Mormonism have been put on its trial on such a scale, and hardly anywhere did there exist the conditions under which it was possible to give effect to what is called Christian Socialism—that is to say, life on the Apostolic basis of "all things in common." Special interest attaches just now to one of these communities—that of the Perfectionists of Oneida—which, after having existed for thirty-one years, is being denounced by the clergy of New York, and will probably be broken up. The chief ground of objection is, that the "all things in common" principle is made to include the community of wives, and the United States cannot be induced to take a view of the wife question even so liberal as that of the Medians of old, who held it a reproach to a man to have less than seven wives.

Some most interesting facts respecting the Oneida Perfectionists have just been made public. They are two hundred and seventy-five in number, and own about one thousand acres of land in a beautiful part of the country out of the beaten track. They have orchards and vineyards, and their occupation is chiefly pastoral; but they have also a printing establishment, a silk factory, and a factory for "traps," which are so well made that they enjoy a celebrity all over the States, and some are even sent to Europe. Everyone entering the community deposits a sum of money to be added to the common fund. Should he leave, this is handed back to him without interest. Everyone is expected to work in some way or other, though the severer forms of manual labour are done by hired workers. The women attend to the households and to the children; but with regard to the latter, a peculiar system is adopted. From the age of eighteen months they are placed in nurseries, and there tended by women, who have entire charge of their diet, dress, and early education. The parents may visit them, and the children may pass certain times during the day with their parents; but these have no voice in their bringing up, physical or intellectual. The children go to school from the age of four to fourteen, or thereabouts, and education is a great point; for the Socialists read much, and throughout their lives aim at acquiring knowledge; and with this view they form classes to which one of their number lectures. Every evening they assemble for conversation, reading, and music. Occasionally an opera troupe gives a performance, and once the ubiquitous "Pinafore" was played to the great delight of the community. But the great feature of all is that they live apart from the world, contemplate it only from a distance, and have no desire to have part in its interests or ambitions.

This Socialist community of Oneida is one of the most remarkable instances of the strength of the ruling passion in men to create a world out of the world—to try the experiment of life on a pattern differing from that which civilization has adopted. It is by no means a solitary example of the kind to be found in the States. There are many such, and I have no doubt that the little colony of "Tadmor," described by Wilkie Collins in his latest novel, has a real original. It is curious to recollect that in 1794, a party of young enthusiasts, including Coleridge and Southey, the poets, had a project for sailing to America to form a social colony on the banks of the Susquehannah; they were to live in a state of Pantisocracy—as they called it—to have a community of property, and to "regenerate the whole complexion of society, not by establishing formal laws, but by excluding all the deteriorating passions— injustice, wrath, clamour, and evil-speaking, and so set an example of human perfectibility!" It was characteristic that they never reflected they would want money, which they had not, to get to the banks of the Susquehannah, and they had only selected that locality because it sounded well. The experiment afterwards made by Robert Owen in England, and its dire failure, and Brother Prince's more recent experiment, the Agapemone, also a failure, only seem to have taught that England is not the place for such schemes, and perhaps that if any community of the sort is to be held together, it must be by religious ties. These have kept the little colony of Oneida intact for over thirty years. How much longer it would have existed, it is impossible to say, but the marriage difficulty has destroyed it. Like

"The little rift within the lute,
Which slowly widening makes the music mute,"

polygamy, not to say polyandry, has proved fatal, and the social philosopher will, in all probability, be deprived of the opportunity of studying the further growth of one of the most vigorous and interesting of Earthly Paradieses.

Quevedo Redivivus.

P.S.—Since the above was written, a little bird tells us that Father Noyes, the director of the Oneida community, counsels the giving up of the "complex marriage" principle, thus meeting the requirements of the age so far as the idea is concerned, that one wife is enough for a man. With deference to my esteemed *colaborateur*, "Argus," I am inclined to believe that unfortunate printing press at Oneida was the root of this progressive step.

Q.R.

ARE NARCOTICS A NECESSARY EVIL?

Though doctors proverbially differ, the weight of medical testimony has for some time past decidedly preponderated against the habitual use of alcoholic drinks. Even Sir Henry Thompson, as we recently remarked, who does not frown upon the use of wines, &c., as an occasional luxury, agrees with Sir William Gall that in ordinary circumstances their *habitual* use is no benefit to persons in health, but often the reverse. Dr. B. W. Richardson now adds his most decided testimony to the same effect in discussing, in the *Contemporary Review*, the still wider question of narcotics in general, including alcoholic beverages. His article, or lecture, deals in the first instance with the growing use, or misuse, of chloral-hydrate, and then enters into the general question of narcotics and their influence on the human *physique*. Everyone has heard the argument which is used with considerable effect against repressive temperance measures,—that the very general use of narcotics shows that they meet a real need of man, and that, if restrained from using one of these agents, they will only substitute others. Dr. Richardson dismisses this question at some length, and gives it as his opinion that it is *not* necessary that because one devil is cast out of a man, another should enter that is worse than the first.

Chloral-hydrate, at first used only as an anæsthetic, is, according to Dr. Richardson, already doing much mischief among many of the literary, professional and commercial classes in England, who use it in the place of opium as a narcotic. It has already developed a new malady with distinctive symptoms, to which Dr. Richardson has given the name of *Chloralism*; and the evils produced by this and by the foreign drink known as Absinthe are so serious as to call for urgent warning.

From this warning it is natural to pass, as Dr. Richardson does, to the discussion of the question: Are narcotics *needed* by man at all? Those who maintain that they are will do well to read his thoughtful and scientific discussion of the subject. He thus puts the question as to whether the craving for their use is a normal and legitimate one or artificial and morbid: "Does the use of these agents spring from a natural desire on the part of man, and of animals lower than man, for such agents, or does it spring from a perversion or unnatural provocation acquired and transmitted in hereditary line—a toxicomania, in plain and decisive language?" That this last alternative is the true one he decidedly maintains, on the following grounds:—

First, he reminds us that though the craving for their use can easily be developed in man, and even in some of the lower animals, yet this craving arises only when the taste has been first acquired, and that life can be quite healthful and happy when they are entirely absent. That the taste is an acquired one, except when in special cases inherited, is shown by the fact that neither children nor animals, nor men educated without them, crave for them until first educated to the taste, which, says Dr. Richardson, "looks strangely like an artificial pleading for an artificial as apart from a natural thing."

Next, Dr. Richardson observes that while everything actually needful for man's healthful existence has been provided for his use, narcotics and stimulants have been discovered only by degrees, and have required to produce them "human ingenuity, skill, knowledge, science, and, in some cases, as in the case of alcohol and alcoholic beverages, a very considerable degree of skill and an enormous amount of skilled labour." The only exceptions—absinthium and opium—which, in their natural state, were within the reach of animals or savage man, seem to have been avoided by animals, and unused by man, until, by art or accident, he had discovered at last a particular mode of use. Of course the case is the same, with many beneficent discoveries, but in their case there are not the injurious results arising from narcotics, nor does any one pretend that their use is the outcome of a natural craving of humanity. Dr. Richardson, at least, avers that to his mind, with the wish to be entirely open to conviction, he "fails to discern a single opening for the use of these lethal agents in the service of mankind, save in the most exceptional conditions of disease, and then only under skilled and thoughtful supervision, from hands that know the danger of infusing a false movement and life into so exquisite an organism as a living, breathing, pulsating, impressionable human form."

As may be supposed, he has little respect for the argument that "these lethal agents are necessities, instinctively selected and chosen to meet human wants. This he avers to be "all confusion, assumption, apology for human weakness, sanction of temporary and doubtful pleasure, compromise with evil and acceptance of penalties the direst for advantages the poorest and the least satisfactory." Their real effect is, he says, to induce a physical and mental aberration which they afterwards perpetrate, in other words a *toxico-mania*, or mania for *poison*. For their effect is not to maintain the uniform and natural law of life, but impart aberrations which prematurely wear out the physical powers, just as a quantity of brandy poured into a steady-going locomotive will indeed impart a temporary increase of action, but will tend to wear out its powers prematurely. The character of the craving itself differs from that of the ordinary needs of life by its very intense and insatiable nature, although it is, in the first instance, either acquired or inherited from a degenerate parent in whom the craving has already been developed. Both the intensity and the hereditary nature of the craving increase its resemblance to other constitutional