

THE LAST OF SIX HUNDRED.

It may perhaps be a matter of interest to many of the readers of the SPECTATOR who were at "Old Orchard House" at the zenith of its glory last summer, to learn how the last "Saturday Hop" of the season was celebrated. There were four ladies, but we could only muster three gentlemen. However, the 1.30 p.m. train from Portland brought us the needed reinforcement, in the shape of a solitary Canadian, who sauntered up the plank-walk, seemingly much puzzled by the air of desolation which brooded over the usually thronged piazza. His eyes lighted up for a moment, as he greeted the proprietor; but his countenance fell again, as he wandered through the empty ball-room, the deserted drawing-room, and the almost unoccupied dining-hall. We were content: our Lancers might now become an accomplished fact.

In the evening the stranger was found stretched on a sofa in the empty drawing-room in a state of profound depression. On being interviewed he expressed the utmost readiness to assist our efforts. After the usual introductions, we adjourned to the ball-room. The centre chandelier alone was lighted, and upon that dim point of illumination the surrounding darkness frowned gloomily.

Of the ladies we need not speak; the mere mention of their names would send regretful pangs to the hearts of many a bachelor, American as well as Canadian. Our gentlemen consisted of "the Diplomatist," two well-known Harvard men, and "the last of the Canadians," as we called him. But here a difficulty presented itself; we had no music. The Band that was wont to charm us with the liveliest of Canadian Lancers, and the most dreamy of Strauss's Valses, had gone weeks ago. What was to be done?

The inventive genius of Harvard came to the rescue; and an aged musical-box, hoary with the dust of many summers, was unearthed from some dark corner. We took our places. The proprietor "led" the Orchestra. Oh, what a falling off was there! But a few weeks ago, and hundreds throughout that Hall, and hundreds more as spectators, crowded the piazza. The Band plays its most inspiring strains, and the youth and beauty and fashion of Canada and the States vie with each other to make "the fun fast and furious." There go the "girls who are pretty and know it, and those who are pretty, but don't." Diamonds and dark eyes flash; the air is fragrant with flowers, and "through the mazes of the giddy dance the glittering throng is led." All is bright and gay and brilliant. But now!

That portly form, hitherto associated in our minds with electric-bells, peremptory orders, and hotel-bills, was seated on the Band-platform smilingly struggling with the handle of the asthmatic musical-box, and beating time with his heels against the boards. The "Diplomatist" moved through the figures with that stately grace which so well became him, his bald head gleaming fitfully, as the light from the solitary chandelier fell upon it. The two alumni of Harvard maintained the reputation of their University by an amount of acrobatic energy, which "the last of the Canadians" could hardly equal, though he did "his level best." The ladies strove to out-do one another in their efforts to make the last "Hop" of the season a grand success, and a grand success it was—of its kind.

"Darkness to right of them, darkness to left of them,
The vast Hall encumbered!
Their's not to question why, their's but their dance to try
Last of six hundred!"

Then followed valse, and gallop, and gallop and valse. There was something weird and ghostly in the way in which the couples glided out of the dark corners, flashed across the lighted centre of the room, and then disappeared into the "palpable obscure" again. Our voices sounded hollow, and echoed through the room and reached along the deserted corridors. An uncanny feeling of loneliness weighed upon our spirits in spite of all our efforts. The very musical box seemed conscious of the influence and its asthmatic paroxysms culminated, as "the Doctor" would have said, in a rapid decline. By 9.30 the Ball-room was empty, and the last "Hop" of the season of 1879 was numbered with the things that have been.

Old Orchard House, September 23, 1879.

"One Who Was There."

"CASTING OUT DEVILS BY THE PRINCE OF DEVILS."

A Sermon preached in Zion Church by Rev. Alfred J. Bray, Sept. 28th, 1879.

ST. MATTHEW xii., 22-30.

A few words in exposition of my text will be necessary perhaps. I spoke last Sunday night of the open hostility Jesus Christ met from the Pharisees, and to-night I am to dwell on one particular illustration of that. His conflict with them was gradually but surely reaching a climax. They had set themselves to undo Him in the eyes of the people; with a pertinacity worthy of a better cause they had dogged His steps, sneered at the stupendous assumptions made by so homely a man, and strove hard to fight down the growing popular conviction that a greater than Moses had come to the enslaved and disheartened people. Many were beginning to believe that a bright new day had dawned

upon them; that a new force had been projected into the life of man, which, if used, would elevate him from despair and wickedness into a region of purity and sobermindedness and truth. But the Pharisees were in open and earnest enmity to that peace of mind. They soon had an opportunity for avowing it.

A man blind and dumb and mad, from those strange unaccountable influences which the universal belief attributed to demoniacal possession was brought to Christ. And He whose soul was filled with pity for every kind of sin and suffering, could not turn away from this example of its wildest and most terrible form. By a word and a look He released the miserable sufferer from the horrible oppression—calmed, healed, restored him—insomuch that the blind and dumb both saw and spoke. The breaking of so hideous a spell as that which had bound this man; the power to pour light on the filmed eyeball, and to restore speech to the cramped tongue, and intelligence to the bewildered soul was something the people had never seen before. The miracle produced a thrill of astonishment, a burst of unconcealed admiration. With eager earnestness they began to debate whether He who had such marvellous power could be any other than the long-looked for King. "Can this man," they asked, half in wonder, half in faith, "can this man be the Son of David?" His enemies could not deny that a great and notable miracle had been performed; and the sight of it, and of the impression it had produced on the multitude maddened them. But how could they dissipate that impression from the minds of the amazed spectators? The Scribes—always ready with a device to bolster up the failing cause of the traditional Church, offered a solution: "This fellow hath Beelzebub," they said, "and it is only by the prince of devils that He casteth out devils." The credulous, but bewildered people, were impressed with this insolent solution of the difficulty, of course, for those grave and reverend inquisitors from the Holy City possessed an immense and hereditary influence over their simple understandings. The eager bound of their heart toward the tender healing Christ and the new heaven of hope and truth which seemed opening before them was cruelly repulsed by the cold, insolent, blasphemous rejoinder of those who were their natural, and as they believed, divinely appointed teachers—"He casteth out devils by the prince of devils."

How came it about that the Scribes could state such a theory and make the common people believe it? To us it seems monstrous, and we marvel that the quick reply did not come as it came at one time afterward—"These are not the words of one that hath a devil." How came it to pass that even ignorant and credulous people could allow themselves to become the victims of that horrible, but authoritative falsehood? For evidently it did not break upon them as a surprise—as a new theory in the way of accounting for marvellous acts; it seemed a natural solution of the problem of Christ's personality and mission.

In trying to account for this we must remember that while some of our doctrines are unquestionably the result of Divine revelations made to the soul of man, some others are the outgrowth of our common experience in life. From the facts of ordinary life—the regularity of seed-time and harvest, the different fruits that grow and are fit for human food, the great ministries of joy and pain, the educational forces which are brought to bear upon man—we argue to the conclusion that there is a Divine Providence overarching mankind, like the blue vaults of heaven, shining with strong and tender power of life upon the varying landscapes of the world. We need no Bible to tell us that; we spell it out for ourselves; it becomes a fact of consciousness; we are led to it by a resistless instinct. There is an eternal principle in us all which insists upon a method of reasoning with regard to objective things, which leads to the idea of God. Man's body is connected with the world of matter—is rooted in it—has senses to which only matter can minister. And also man's soul is connected with the Spirit—is rooted in God; has spiritual senses to which only the spiritual can minister,—and as it is sure of the one, it is sure of the other. But man has no sooner formulated the theory of a Supreme Supernatural Benevolence—a Providence—than he is confronted with facts of life and experience which seem to stand outside the range of the operations of goodness. Man at his wisest is being continually baffled; man at his best, when most earnest in the endeavour to live in harmony with the laws of his being, suffers in every nerve of his body, in every faculty of his mind, and in every interest of his life; his lot is sown with the thistle and the briar. And just as humanity cannot bring itself to believe that what is good is accidental, so neither can it bring itself to believe that evil is only blind misfortune. Can good and evil come from the same source then? No, is the answer,—no more than bitter water and sweet water can come from the same fountain-head. To formulate the theory that there is a spirit of evil that works mischief to men, bringing pain and sorrow and woe, was easy—perhaps natural. Heathendom flung out its thoughts in real forms. The Jews, taking something from revelation and the rest from heathendom, produced a prince of the power of the air,—a very chief of all devildom. A chief of devils he must be; for just as we cannot think of a beneficent God dwelling in a vast solitude, so neither could we think of a supreme spirit of evil as alone. The imagination pictures him as surrounded by a host of subordinates, rendering sometimes a willing and sometimes a forced obedience. But the theory that devildom may at times work against itself must have been the result of observation. The Jews saw