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THE STEAM-SHIP.

Amid the thousand wonders of the vast unquiet sea,
That covers half this ponderous globe, there's nothing like to thee,
Oh Steam-Ship!—thou, who wakest, like a lion roused from sleep,
With heart of fire, and rushest forth across the angry deep!
Naught heedest thou the wind or tide; but onward, night and day,
Unwearied as the waves around, thou marchest on thy way,
Where mighty ships lie all becalmed, with sails that flap the mast—
What boots to thee their thousand guns?—thou smilest and walkest past.
They sail—and monsters of the deep are hovering in their train:
But the great Leviathan himself might follow thee in vain.
He looked up in wonder on thy strange mysterious flight,
And the rapid whirring of thy wings, fluttering in liquid light;
His mighty heart is struck with awe, and, sinking, dark and slow,
A hundred fathom deep, he seeks his rocky forts below:
And there, perchance, he dreams of thee within his coral lair,
Scarce hoping that a living thing may dwell in upper air.

Oh! thou art mighty on the wave: a fearful power is thine.
For good or evil art thou formed—infernal or divine!
'Tis thine to chase the pirate through his maze of hundred isles:
To mark with scorn his shifting sails, despair, and useless wiles;
'Tis thine to tear from him his prey, to beard him in his den—
Oh! thine might be a blessed power among the sons of men!
A vanguard leader, like the guide of Israel on their way,
A living fire to cheer the night, a moving cloud by day.
Could man's ambition know control, could angry passions cease,
Or, were thy venturous course confined within the reign of peace,
Swift in thy flight, from shore to shore, from dark to sultry skies,
Welcomed wert thou, in every port, with shouts and glistening eyes.
A pledge of amity renewed each voyage then would be,
As though the nations stretched and shook their hands across the sea!

'Tis sweet to stand upon thy deck, when the wind is right ahead;
To mark thy foaming, roaring keel, and think from whence thou'rt fed;
To feel thee rise upon the wave, breasting the dying spray,
Then downward plunge and rise again, rejoicing in the fray.
Of angry billows, gathering round, like foes to bar thy way.
While onward—onward—to thy port, thou stemst their dark array.
And oh! 'tis sweet, when all is calm, and blue the sky and main,
To be with thee in solitude upon the liquid plain—
To see the setting sun decline in the fiery glowing west,
Leaving all else to dreams and sleep but thee that need'st not rest.
How lovely glide the starry worlds all silently on high,
While thou liest o'er the dark blue wave, like an arrow through the sky!
The visions then of youth revive, and the wizard's wondrous tale,
As borne along, 'twixt heaven and earth, away we seem to sail!

A SABBATH WITH THE SHAKERS.

BY H. GREELEY.

I KNOW that it is now too late in the world's history for description; that for the narrator, this is a used-up planet. Men have scaled its precipices, dug into its bowels, fathomed its oceans, penetrated its caverns, traversed its deserts, threaded its wildernesses, and clambered over its icebergs, until the unknown has become a shadow; a sickly seething of the poet's brain. They have hammered its rocks, gathered its pebbles, dug up its bones, and afflicted its cuticle, until they have proved to a demonstration (but how, I am sure I don't know,) that the earth is a hundred thousand years old, and created by volcanoes; that Moses, with all his piety and potency, was a bit of a humbug, and that his deluge was, on the whole, rather a small affair. No wonder a world so old should be worn out; the real marvel is, that it should still be enabled to shuffle along at the rate of—I forget how many thousand miles an hour. It is high time that we poor superficial observers should stand back, and let the philosophers come, who can say something worth listening to. For myself, however, before making my bow, I would crave a word with you, reader, concerning the Shakers, and their singular worship. You have been bored with the subject a dozen times already; I know it, and will discourse to you so tamely, in such harmony with the spirit of modern literature, which should be popular, that you shall not be driven to the fatigue of thinking, from beginning to end of my brief narration.

The morning was deliciously cool and bracing, for the season, the last Sabbath in May, as my friend and I rolled over the sandy and rather uninteresting country between Albany and Niskayuna. It was just on the heel of a violent and long-continued rain-storm, which had brought the Hudson over the Albany docks, and put the sandy roads of the surrounding country in the best possible condition. The late foliage of the spring-time seemed just commencing to lend the pines its countenance in repelling the too violent or inquisitive sunshine; the fields of the husbandman looked still bare or backward, even on that warm soil; the rich unfolding blossoms of the apple-tree were all alone in nature, save that the humble yet gay dandelion spread every where its petals beneath. It seemed rather the first than the last of

May. No matter: 'June with its roses' could hardly have afforded us an air so pure and yet fragrant; she could not have given us an hour so cool and yet grateful. The forest minstrels seemed to have just found their voices, and to be determined to make the most of the acquisition.

The first token we had of the vicinity of the Shakers, was on the whole prepossessing—a row of venerable willows on each side of the road. They would have shown better taste by planting elms or maples: but they make little pretension to that quality, and philanthropy is nobler than taste. It was something in their favor, moreover, to find the roads visibly improving, as we neared their settlement—as any man who has been dragged over a western 'corduroy' in its dotage, or forded a southern creek, in a leaky stage-coach, will cheerfully testify. But the village itself is at length in sight, its few modest but comfortable dwellings situated upon a smooth and velvet-lawn, which a monarch might envy. A monarch? And why not a democrat? Here are no pampered and purse-proud nobles—no famished and pining beggars. Here no widow clasps in anguish her shivering babes, and looks despairingly to her empty cupboard and fireless hearth; no slave of business, scarcely less to be pitied, hurries from hollow friend to friend, imploring, in a perspiration of agony, for the means of taking up the note which must be met before the inexorable three, or he is a bankrupt. Here experiments have no potency, lawyers no business, sheriffs no terror. Happy, happy community! Who shall say that Arcadia is but a reverie, and the Golden Age a fiction of the poets—those brethren in veracity to the terrible-accident makers?

Trees reared their verdure above, thick grass spread its carpet beneath, as we walked to the house dedicated to the worship of the Father of All. A wicket admitted us to the enclosure within which the houses are situated; and here a neat flagging conducts to the door of the temple. I may as well mention our meeting three of the sisters conducting a fourth female, who, as we were informed by the young girl in advance of the others—with perfect modesty and propriety, but without a particle of that shrinking diffidence with which a maiden elsewhere would have voluntarily accosted two total strangers—was a strange woman, whom they were inducing to leave the tabernacle, but who was evidently deranged, and pouring forth incoherently such snatches of sacred melodies as were uppermost in her wreck of mind. We passed them, and entered. But few of the brethren had assembled, though the seats allotted to the profane were already full. They did not serve for half who came, but that mattered little, since those who had been seated got upon their feet, and eventually upon the benches, to look over the heads of those standing in front; and the number was so great, that we rather trenched upon the portion of the house reserved by the worshippers for their devotions.

At length all were assembled, and the exercises began. A brief address was delivered by one of the brethren—very sensible and proper. Then a hymn by all the faithful—animated, stirring, devotional. The execution of this and the two or three succeeding, might have been better. The vile nasal twang that too many better instructed persons contrive to throw into music of this cast, is insufferable. And yet if ever I feel strongly the impulse of devotion, it is when I hear one of these quick, unstudied, home-bred songs pealed forth by a whole congregation. In a camp-meeting or a Methodist Conference—ay, or a Shaker gathering—these are the airs, if any, to bring the warm tear to the eye of manhood. The homeliness of the whole affair is just what renders it irresistible. A hundred instruments and educated voices, trilling some harmony of Handel or Beethoven, might better please the taste; but that very pleasure would be purchased at the expense of the heart. You could perceive how the whole thing was made up; how the effect was produced by the organ here, the viol there, and the prima donna next. The idea of human beings engaged in the fervent and engrossing worship of their Maker, is the last to enter the mind. I confess I labor under so utter a want of taste, as to like a lively, homely, spirited, unsophisticated hymn, gushing straight forth from the heart, better than a scientific performance.

'Absurd!' says the cynic; 'a handful of miserable fools and bedlamites making themselves ridiculous in a Shaker meeting—what has that to do with exciting devotional feelings in the breast of any rational being!'

Who shall decide that this which I now see is mockery? Who shall pronounce these actors hypocrites? Nay, who shall say that their worship is all displeasing to the Great Being to whom words

are nothing, and who knows no other offering than the broken and contrite spirit? We will worship according to the dictates of a more rational but colder sentiment: let us not too rashly nor too loudly condemn what we esteem our brother's error. He has made little progress in the path of righteousness, who has not learned the exercise of that charity which covereth all mistakes, and some transgressions.

'Peace be with all, whatever their varying creeds—
With all who send up holy thoughts on high.'

I am sadder if not wiser than when, some five years since, I attended a Shaker meeting. To day is my second visit, but to another society. Then, it may be, I smiled with the rest at the eccentricities of Shaker devotion. Now a blush for human nature is prompted, when a grave elder addresses the gentiles to remind them of the obvious truths, that this a house and an occasion of public worship; that those who do not like the mode, may stay away; but that there can be no excuse for merriment in those who voluntarily intrude upon such worship. This is pertinent—unanswerable. And yet, to the unthinking, there is a spice of the ludicrous in the look of things; when, after half an hour's intermingled exhortation and singing—the whole congregation of the chosen not only joining in the latter, but keeping time to it with their hands—the suggestion 'let us begin to labor' is made, and the brethren proceed to divest themselves of their drab frock-coats, as though the work were just commencing in earnest. I should have stated before, that the brethren and sisters come in at separate doors, and take seats at the opposite ends of the hall, facing each other. When they rise to engage in worship, the seats are all removed and piled against the walls. The two parties are now formed, each in a sort of half-moon, the right line within two or three feet of each other. The men have at first laid away their wide-brimmed drab hats, which could not be kept on during service; the women have put away their nice elphinstone bonnets, and appear in close-fitting caps, of snowy purity and whiteness.

And now, at a signal, the music strikes up, to a wild, irregular chant, and the 'labor' begins. The first movement is very simple, consisting of a lively dancing march by the whole company; up to the farther wall of the temple, and then back to the close vicinity of the spectators. The evolutions are performed with extreme regularity and dexterity. I would have said 'surprising,' but it is not surprising that people do that to perfection which they have been doing every week, and perhaps every day, of their lives. We all know that habit gives great dexterity to the artist and the mechanic, as well as the juggler and the sharper. But I, who have none of this skill in Shakerism, may better spare myself the attempt to describe all the doings of which I was a patient and deeply-interested spectator.

The only thing strongly provocative of the ludicrous, was the disparity of age among the performers. To see ponderous and solemn three-score-and-ten executing a vigorous and quick gallopade, or double-shuffle, for the glory of God, side by side with sedate fifty, athletic thirty, nimble sixteen, and the tender disciple of but eight or ten years—all in perfect time and exact accordance with the movements of matrons—no, maidens is the legitimate presumption—of discreet fifty, mature six-and-thirty, and damsels of winning sixteen—was a spectacle at which to smile or sigh, as the heart should dictate. I may have smiled once or twice, but I am sure I sighed much oftener. They tell me (for I did not look that way) that the daughters of men who were there as spectators, indulged to excess their constitutional propensity to giggle, at what they esteemed the absurdities of Shakerism. Let me assure you, damsels, that this evinced neither good taste nor right feeling. It puts you, beside, in very undesirable company. I have seen blockheads so dull, so gross, so wholly animal, as to aggravate their uncouth features into a grin, at the spectacle of a water baptism.

Wild and louder swells the music; quicker and more intricate becomes the 'labor.' Now all are prancing around the room, in double file, to a melody as wild as Yankee Doodle; now they perform a series of dexterous but indescribable manœuvres; now they balance; now whirl one another round in a fashion that I could describe, if I knew anything of our Pagan amusement of dancing. But here is a hiatus in my education. I only know that some of the 'labor' here performed, would do no discredit to the few ball-rooms I have glanced into; far exceeding the performances in those, in point of regularity and precision, and not falling short in grace. The ball-dress is of course rather in contrast; but the unmistakable earnestness and devo-