

entertaining. Of course, as in the case of Pestalozzi, there were many objections raised against Mr. Alcott's school. Some thought that one faculty was cultivated more than another, that the children were instructed far beyond their mental capacity, and that the body was weakened, and the brain was hurried on to the very verge of destruction. It was averred that so much study would ultimately ruin the children and render them unfit for the active duties of life. They would become mere intellectual monstrosities. But the teacher's faith in his system remained firm. He began a series of conversations on the gospels, and continued the lectures for some time with surprising results. The newspapers, however, were dissatisfied, and a furious onslaught was made on the school in many of the leading journals of New England. It was attacked religiously, intellectually, medically and systematically. Boston was aroused to white heat, old-time prejudices were shocked, and the narrow sectarian spirit openly rebelled against the teachings of the mystic philosopher. The school fell from forty pupils to ten, the receipts dropped from \$1,794 to \$343. The blow descended soon after, and in April, 1839, the furniture, library and apparatus were sold to pay the debts.

Miss Peabody, Mr. Alcott's assistant, has given in her volume, the Record of a School, full details of the plan and scope of the teacher's system. It is sometimes tedious reading. A more entertaining account of the school may be found in Miss Louisa Alcott's brilliant story of Little Men, the scenes of which were suggested by the Temple School.

Harriet Martineau was startled at what she called Mr. Alcott's strange management of children, and in the third volume of her society in America, she gives freely and dogmatically her opinion on the subject. On her return to England from America, she spoke to Mr. Greaves—a follower and early friend of Pestalozzi about Mr. Alcott, and enlisted the attention at once of that gentleman, who wrote a long letter, and actually meditated a visit to New England for the sole purpose of seeing Alcott and learning his views. He even gave the name of Alcott House to the school which he had established near London, on the Pestalozzian principle. Mr. Greaves died, however, before he could carry into execution his intention of visiting the United States.

In 1837 Mr. Alcott was the father of Transcendentalism, the moving spirit and friend of that remarkable movement. He regularly attended the meetings of the peripatetic club, which met at the private houses of the members from 1836 to 1850, and always gave it his warmest support and sympathy. In speculative thought he was a leader. In spiritual philosophy he was an earnest teacher. He had not the critical instinct of Ripley nor the wisdom of Emerson, nor the bright pictorial fancy of Curtis, nor the studiousness of Margaret Fuller, but he had great faith in, and loyalty to, the religion which was putting forth its buds and blossoms in every town and village of New England. He was stern and unyielding, and thoroughly saturated with his principles. Everything he did, he did with all his might, with all his soul. When William Lloyd Garrison asked him to join the American Anti-Slavery Society he held out his hand and said, "I am with you in that cause to the end." He also sympathized with the movement for the emancipation of women, and was one of the

reformers of 1840 who met to discuss plans of universal reform.

His early life in Concord provoked criticism in certain circles. He was regarded as a foolish visionary and an improvident man. For a while he supported himself during the summer months by tilling the soil, and in the winter time he chopped wood. It was at this time that he sent his series of papers to the *Dial*; the articles which bore the signature of Orpheus. They were looked upon with suspicion, however, and his Orphic sayings became a by-word. Dr. Channing loved Orpheus at the plough, but he cared little for him in the *Dial*. But Orpheus as a man or as a writer, was the same in heart, in feeling and in principle. He was honest and faithful through everything.

In 1843 he withdrew from civil society, and, like Henry Thoreau, four years later, refused to pay his taxes and was cast into jail. A friend interceded and paid them for him, and he was released, though the act gave him pain and annoyance. Shortly before this happened he went to England and became acquainted with a number of friends of "The First Philosophy." He was hospitably received, and his advent among the disciples of this faith was the signal for meetings for the discussion of social, religious, philosophical and other questions. The assemblies took place principally at the Alcott House, and were composed of Communists, Alists, Syncretic Associationists, Pestalozzians, Hydropaths, Malthusians, Health Unionists, etc. The proceedings were said to have been interesting and, doubtless, they were. The *Dial* printed a copious abstract of what was done. Papers on formation, transition and reformation—all of a most ultra stripe—were read and commented on. Mr. Alcott took scarcely any part in the discussion, but he was very much interested in what occurred, and listened with marked attention to the opinions which were advanced. His sympathies remained unawakened, however, and the radicals gained no new convert to their cause. He returned home soon afterwards, and established with what success we already know, the little colony of Fruitlands.

In stature Mr. Alcott was tall and stately. He was as straight as an arrow and walked with a quick and firm step. Louise Chandler Moulton said that his face was a benediction, and his mild and persuasive voice never spoke one harsh or ungenerous word in all the many years he had spoken to his fellows. And Lowell in his Fable for Critics says:

"Yonder, calm as a cloud, Alcott stalks in a dream,  
And fancies himself in thy groves, Academe  
With the Pantheon nigh and the olive trees  
o'er him,  
And never a fact to perplex him or bore him.

\* \* \* \* \*  
For his highest conceit of a happiest state is  
Where they'd live upon acorns and hear him  
talk gratis.

\* \* \* \* \*  
When he talks he is great, but goes out like a  
taper,  
If you shut him up closely with pen, ink and  
paper;  
Yet his fingers itch for 'em from morning till  
night,  
And he thinks he does wrong if he don't al-  
ways write;  
In this, as in all things, a saint among men,  
He goes sure to death when he goes to his  
pen."

A better description of Alcott has not been written. It is true to the life and represents him as he always appeared to his friends. His place was not on the platform or in the pulpit; but he made a name in another department of mental activity. He was a talker of remarkable power and skill. Coleridge was probably unequalled in the art of graceful conversation, and his talks were frequently more interesting than his books. So it was with Alcott who was at his best in the drawing-room. For many years, every winter he used to visit the western and eastern cities of the United States where his conversations were recognized and popular institutions. He attracted learned and select audiences. The meetings were held in a large room and the guests ranged themselves around the speaker who occupied a central and commanding position. A topic of general interest would be started, and if not interrupted Mr. Alcott would talk for an hour or more elaborating his thought as he went along, now speculating with this fancy, now with that, but always saying something worth hearing. His talk was ever rich in quotation and in allusion. The wit was refined and delicate, the language admirable in its strength and beauty, and the melodious voice of the speaker charmed and impressed everyone who heard it. The last years of his life were shattered by disease. In 1882 he was stricken with paralysis, from which he never recovered. He lingered on until March, 1888, when he finally succumbed, preceding to the grave by a day or two, his more famous daughter Louisa.

GEORGE STEWART.

## SUMMER.

Summer looked out from her brazen tower,  
And the sun flashed deep from her golden  
hair,  
And she gazed to the North through many an  
hour,  
As her mild eyes filled with a maid's des-  
pair.

For Autumn, her strong-armed lover of old,  
Had wandered for long from her lovely side;  
And her young heart aged and her breast  
grew cold  
As she looked o'er the fields and the wood-  
lands wide.

And her eyes, once soft with a tender blue,  
Were dimmed with the grey of her silent  
tears;  
And her gold hair in from the tower she drew,  
And down from the wall fell the brazen  
spears.

But her sweet face turned to the South again,  
And her eyes in their wistful depths flashed  
blue.  
As she looked on the sleeping fields of grain  
And the fruit of the earth as it sun-flashed  
grew.

And the golden fields and the dreaming wheat  
Lay long in the arms of the Summer in  
sleep,  
And the heat of her lip on their cheek grew  
sweet  
As the grain swayed down with her soft  
breath's sweep.

But the strong-armed wooer came over the  
hills,  
And the maiden of dreams is drawn to his  
side;  
And Summer shrinks close and her warm heart  
fills  
As they wander away to the Northlands  
wide.

ARTHUR J. STRINGER.