

A PSALM OF MONTREAL.

We find the following in the London *Spectator* of 18th May, and as it may be interesting to the inhabitants of our fair city, we give it as we find it:

[The city of Montreal is one of the most rising and, in many respects, most agreeable on the American continent, but its inhabitants are as yet too busy with commerce to care greatly about the masterpieces of old Greek Art. A cast, however, of one of these masterpieces—the finest of the several statues of Discoboli, or Quoit-throwers—was found by the present writer in the Montreal Museum of Natural History; it was, however, banished from public view, to a room where were all manner of skins, plants, snakes, insects, &c., and in the middle of these, an old man stuffing an owl. The dialogue—perhaps true, perhaps imaginary, perhaps a little of one and a little of the other—between the writer and this old man gave rise to the lines that follow.]

Stowed away in a Montreal lumber-room,
The Discobolus standeth, and turneth his face to the wall;
Dusty, cobweb-covered, maimed and set at naught,
Beauty crieth in an attic, and no man regardeth.
Oh God! oh Montreal!

Beautiful by night and day, beautiful in summer and winter,
Whole or maimed, always and alike beautiful,—
He preacheth gospel of grace to the skins of owls,
And to one who seasoneth the skins of Canadian owls.
Oh God! oh Montreal!

When I saw him, I was wroth, and I said, "O Discobolus!
Beautiful Discobolus, a Prince both among gods and men,
What doest thou here, how camest thou here, Discobolus,
Preaching gospel in vain to the skins of owls?"
Oh God! oh Montreal!

And I turned to the man of skins, and said unto him, "Oh! thou man
of skins,
Wherefore hast thou done thus, to shame the beauty of the Discobolus?"
But the Lord had hardened the heart of the man of skins,
And he answered, "My brother-in-law is haberdasher to Mr. Spurgeon."
Oh God! oh Montreal!

"The Discobolus is put here because he is vulgar,—
He hath neither vest nor pants with which to cover his limbs;
I, sir, am a person of most respectable connections,—
My brother-in-law is haberdasher to Mr. Spurgeon."
Oh God! oh Montreal!

Then I said, "O brother-in-law to Mr. Spurgeon's haberdasher!
Who seasonest also the skins of Canadian owls,
Thou callest 'trousers' 'pants,' whereas I call them 'trousers,'
Therefore thou art in hell-fire, and may the Lord pity thee!
Oh God! oh Montreal!

Preferrest thou the gospel of Montreal to the gospel of Hellas,
The gospel of thy connection with Mr. Spurgeon's haberdashery to the
gospel of the Discobolus?"
Yet none the less blasphemed he beauty, saying, "The Discobolus hath
no gospel,—
But my brother-in-law is haberdasher to Mr. Spurgeon."
Oh God! oh Montreal!

PARABLES OF THE TIMES.

I.—TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD.

A knight had been fighting for weary hours upon the battle-field of Thought; many were the slain around him, and he leant upon his sword to rest. And looking up, he saw the leafless trees waving their slender, sunlit branches against the blue sky; and there was such exquisite beauty in the contrast, that he dimly recognized an unseen presence, and, though worn with conflict and bleeding from many wounds, he smiled. But as he gazed, listening eagerly, as though some golden wave of harmony would flow to him out of the infinite, across the battle-field there loomed a mighty shadow, and two figures stood beside him. Then the knight turned, almost with a groan, at sight of these fresh foes, for his strength was well-nigh spent; and to the knight's query the first gave a scornful smile, and answered:

"I am Falsehood."

He shook his right arm with a strength terrible to imagine, and beside his trailing robe the shades of night would look white. But the knight asked not the other's name, for lo! the figure had faded away into a dim mist. And the knight cried out in agony:

"Oh, Truth, where art thou?"

But so far off that it seemed to come from the depths of his own heart, came the whisper, "Ever near."

Then Falsehood cried, "Believe it not; it is but an echo that thou hearest, for I alone am here."

And, even as he spoke, the mist grew fainter, and the sky grey again.

"And wherefore this warfare?" continued the false one; "the world's God is 'gain, and its motto, 'I want to.' Deny it if thou canst. Thou wouldst worship something higher, but the desire is vain, and its fruit this endless conflict upon the field of Thought, in pursuance of a phantom men call Truth."

"Not so," returned the knight, in answer to these words; "there *must* be something nobler than thyself, oh Falsehood, which though I cannot see, I feel."

Then the foe waved his hand mockingly towards the mist that enshrouded Truth, and answered, "Is it there?"

Then a dim perception waking within him, made the knight to cry, "Oh, Truth, speak! is there not a nobler God than gain, and a higher aim than selfish inclination?"

But there was silence still, only he saw raised to heaven a shadowy hand.

Yet the knight felt nerved for the fight, and thrust out his sword to the advancing foe. Then for hours the battle waged fiercely; and the raiment of Falsehood was so rent by the knight's good sword, that it hung around him in tattered rags. But it chanced that the knight dropped his shield, and, ere he could recover it, was felled by his powerful foe. Then, as Falsehood was about to crush him, Truth, who had been standing afar off, drew nigh to the wounded knight. But his eyes were so dim that he could not distinguish between friend or foe, though he still faintly whispered her name. The which hearing, Truth smiled. In the glory of that smile, no longer the robes of Truth seemed misty, but shone forth white as the day, whilst the name upon her forehead burned like fire. And, at the glance of her clear eyes, the form of Falsehood no longer towered like a giant's, but shrivelled up into a hideous dwarf, and, turning, fled affrighted.

Then the knight lifted his pallid face, as one who from a woeful dream has found a rapturous awakening. The sun had long set, but he thought he heard the stars singing, in the far skies. Truth stooped, and touched him; he rose in haste to follow her. Then she flung around his brow garlands of victory, and led him by the hand for ever and ever.

MAPLE LEAF.

CORRESPONDENCE.

IS THERE A PERSONAL DEVIL?

Your correspondent "Quartus," if one may judge from his last letter, seems concerned for the personal identity of His Satanic Majesty. Still he does not seem to show very clearly the *usefulness* of such a belief, except that the Bible says so, and that to give credence to what is there stated must necessarily be right. In that I am at one with him. But does the Bible really teach it? It appears to me that reason is at one with Scripture on this as on all matters. Judging from what we see around us in this life, where we find that though there are many ring-leaders in evil, there is no one central chief who controls and directs the whole world's wickedness, we would rationally conclude that in the real life which succeeds this, when such men leave the body, similar rivalries in evil will continue to exist, preventing one from having complete control over all others. In diversity of evil lies safety to the evil themselves. The Bible seems to be quite in accordance with this. True, it speaks in the *literal* sense of a devil by name; but in order to bring out the full inner meaning of all such passages it is essential to substitute in our thought for the idea of a personal power outside of ourselves, evil as an abstract quality within ourselves, i.e., perverted life. This is especially necessary where the term "devil" is used. Falsity or perverted truth is meant where the term "Satan" is used. The Bible does teach both in the literal sense and inner meaning that there are many devils—many qualities or types of perverted life, and many Satans—many sorts of falsities; but that there is one grand self-existent Being who causes and dominates them all, it does not teach. Take, for instance, some of the words "Quartus" quotes. "The Devil and his angels" means simply evil and its messengers, or the evil perverted will of a man using all his faculties as messengers to work out its evil. "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat," cannot clearly be taken literally, but rather as meaning "falsity is desirous to appropriate and pervert all the good seed of truth in you." No doubt "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" is evil. The disobedience shows the will to be evil, tending to disorder, and perverted life.

Then take the quotation from St. Jude's Epistle, on which most stress has always been laid in proving the existence of a personal devil. Michael the Archangel is a messenger powerful in quality of celestial good (hence he is called *archangel*) and in contending with evil as regards the mere externals of the Mosaic Law (the *body* of Moses) brings no railing or scornful accusation, but in the words "the Lord rebuke thee" seems to say, with a gentleness born from above, God give thee light to see what is hidden within these mere externals, which you are bending to the service of your own evil.

Your correspondent "Quartus" may perhaps take exception to this free method of interpreting Scripture. Let me simply ask which is the more rational interpretation of a passage he has not quoted, viz., "resist the devil and he will flee from you." Is it more rational to believe that this is meant to teach that if we resist a certain powerful personal wicked spirit who rules all others he will run away: or will it have more practical effect on our lives and conduct to take it to mean: Shun evils in yourselves and you will be enabled to drive them out?

It is painful, no doubt, to many of us, sinful and erring as we all are, to have our faith in a personal devil rudely shaken. Once give up that and no longer can we say as Eve did long ago when her sensual appetites and desires tempted her, because she loved them, as ours do now for the same reason, "the serpent beguiled me and I did satisfy my craving." Give up the devil! and we have no one to blame for our evils but ourselves. For God only gives us good life, which we too often pervert to evil uses. Still it is perhaps well that this flimsy excuse for our misdeeds should be taken away from us, that the veil should be withdrawn from our eyes that we may be the better able within the boundaries of our own nature to discern and drive out, by the power of God-given regenerating life, that love of evil which is

DIABOLUS.

"THE FUTURE LIFE."

SIR,—There are some good things, well said, in the article signed "Charity," in last week's *SPECTATOR*, but it would, I think, have been better if it had been headed the *present* instead of the *future* life, as I could not find in it any argument for future life at all, and indeed it might have been written by Frederic Harrison himself. "Quartus" did not ask for information on the subject of the future life on his own account, but for the many who are known to be longing for more light on that subject, especially young men. He