

to hold parlor meetings during the winter for the purpose of exchanging views, gathering facts, and increasing the fund of information bearing on the laws of human propagation.

### The Proceedings.

At 11.20 the convention was called to order by Mr. Loring Moody, the Secretary and Treasurer of the Institute. On motion of Dr. Foote, Sr., G. Storer Cobb, LL.D., was called to the chair. This gentleman, on taking his place as presiding officer, remarked that he had given but comparatively little attention to the subject, and asked Mr. Moody to present the objects of the Institute of Heredity.

Mr. Moody, taking the platform, said he had been for nearly half a century engaged in reforms and that while some of them had succeeded many more had failed for the want of good material. We have, he added, undertaken to build our entire social fabric of material utterly unfit for the purpose. He believed that many of the moral and physical diseases which afflict humanity are congenital, and are transmitted from generation to generation through ignorance and disregard of the natural laws of descent. For the purpose of acquiring and promulgating a knowledge of these laws, and urging such obedience to them as will bring posterity into mental and physical health and right moral action, and so eradicate much of the disease, vice, and crime with which civilized society is burdened, the Institute of Heredity had been organized. The stock-breeder knows that he cannot convert the clumsy dray horse into a fine racer by putting him into a good stable and feeding him on oats; nor can a clumsy fowl be changed into a nimble gamecock by putting him in a nice coop and feeding him well. It is an old English saying:

You can dress out a gang of thieves  
In mitres, gowas and long sleeves;  
You'll find, disguise it as you will,  
That villains will be villains still.

You cannot make good men out of bad men placed under favorable circumstances. There is an evolutionary force at work among us that has been working for centuries, but it has never been helped. We have been drifting along, and have been ever drifting onward and upward. It is now proposed to give these evolutionary forces some intelligent assistance or at least a better opportunity, and it is fitting that this movement should be inaugurated in America, where we are free from many of those fetters, which in other lands bind the people down to old usages. We must, said Mr. Moody, carry on this movement without controversy with Christians. We must, however, conduct it as scientists. Adam represents rude, primeval man, struggling for mere subsistence with the wild beasts around him—ignorant of everything calculated to refine and elevate—ignorant of physiology and the laws of true living. But the predominance of good in human character is acknowledged. We are drifting onward and upward, slowly. Christ represents the highest form of goodness, culture and obedience and all those moral forces which are being employed for the elevation of the human family. The great problem before the Institute is how to set and continue in motion such prenatal influences as shall make the hereditary tendencies of future generations wholly good, so that little will be required from the environment or surrounding conditions to keep posterity entirely in the line of spiritual and physical health and right moral action. As a practical solution of the problem the Institute proposed to set in operation a movement that will aim to put an end to disease, vice, and crime in offspring and fill the

generations of the future with health, virtue, and trustworthiness. The Institute would endeavor to educate and train the public conscience and moral sense, so that parents and teachers will impress upon the young of both sexes, and especially upon those contemplating the relation that marriage involves, the weightiest responsibilities. When a child came to a father or a mother with curious questions about his origin he was silenced, and went away wondering and questioning all the more. This was all wrong. A beautiful, lovely and noble race would be the result, if the principles of the Institute could only be impressed upon the public mind.

### MARRIAGES.

The marriage question, said the speaker, is one of great importance. We do not, however, propose to assail the institution, but to investigate it. If our marriages are inharmonious, promoting vice and suffering instead of administering to the real growth and happiness of the people, we must inquire how the evils can be corrected. Whatever obstructs must get out of the way. We have engaged in a far-reaching movement in which it will require the efforts of many generations to produce appreciable effect. Some people may say—"Mr. Moody, you have taken a large contract in hand," but, said the earnest old man, we will carry it out.

### COMSTOCK AND BARBARISM.

When he prepared his first circular, Mr. Moody carried it to Mr. Longfellow, to Mrs. Horace Mann and some others, all of whom approved of its matter. Hon. Samuel E. Sewall took it home and gave it thoughtful perusal. He liked it, and the Hon. John Cummings and a few others helped him to issue and circulate the address. From the remotest states and territories and from New Foundland and everywhere else came the most cordial responses. Then followed several meetings of the friends of the cause and, finally, the convention in May, at which all agreed as to the necessity of the movement, and joined in the inquiry—"How can we improve the race?" We are now but little better than barbarians. In the ornamentation of the Harvard Memorial building was a huge and ugly mouth. The same indications of a savage instinct lurking in us are apparent in the architectural decorations of our churches and public buildings—savage jaws, projecting teeth, and glaring eyes, shocking the finer sensibilities of those who have wholly or partly outgrown such tastes. Mankind still, in various ways, exemplifies the fact that he retains traces of a barbaric origin; that he has not yet overcome false feelings of delicacy in discussing sexual subjects, which young as well as old should be informed about. Hence we have a Comstock among us pitching into everybody who dares to use the word sex.

Mr. Moody's address was listened to with close attention and his well-merited thrust at the agent of the vice society was greatly appreciated. The founder of the Institute of Heredity is an impressive speaker, because every word he utters is the expression of a deep conviction carrying the weight of the greatest sincerity.

### MARRIAGE RESTRICTIONS.

The Hon. Warren Chase, a member of the California Senate, being present, was next invited to take the platform. He said he had studied this subject for many years and had concluded that the survival of the fittest does not obtain in the intellectual domain, under existing conditions. Colleges, he said, do not make great men. A deficiency in the brain could not be supplied by a good education. "A whistle could not be made of a pig's tail." We must improve the stock. We want to see what can be done to produce better men and women.