

holiness, love of all humanity, love of nature, love of all heroic things and aspirations. To carry out the principles of this hopeful organization was no easy task. It required self-denial and faith and an endurance beyond that which falls to the common lot of man. An estate of about a hundred acres was secured. The spot was chosen for its picturesque beauty and pastoral simplicity. The long lines of purple-tinted hills, the pretty streamlets that flowed through the farm lands, the groves of nut, maple and pine trees, and the mossy dells near by, contributed to this Eden their choicest favors. Here the experiment was tried. Ten individuals, of whom five were children, formed the little circle. Work was begun immediately and a conscientious effort appears to have been made to bring the idea to a successful issue. A library containing the records of piety and wisdom was a marked feature of the scheme and to the members repaired in their hours of relaxation. The plan provided also for the culture and mental improvement of the inmates. The prosecution of manual labour was, of course, one of the primary objects, for Mr. Alcott had implicit faith in the co-operation of the head and hands. Every member worked with the utmost diligence and spirit. There was no shirking of duties. The inhabitants belonged to one family. All worked for all. Love for one another was the fundamental law which was respected and recognized and believed in. The project failed, however, and Fruitlands is remembered now as a chimerical experiment. It was never as important as the Brook-farm episode, or as lusty as Adin Ballou's solution of the culture and labour problem at Milford, but the founder never lost faith in the ultimate success of his bantling. He only thought when the fancy picture which his imagination conjured up had disappeared, that the members were not prepared to actualize practically the life he had been so careful to plan. He only postponed the fulfilment of his spectacular dream to a more propitious season.

As early as 1835, Mr. Alcott adopted the tenets of Pythagoras and the Italic School of Philosophy, and accepting the dietetic peculiarities, he became a strict vegetarian. He observed the rules of diet as he practised the teachings of his religion. He was as uncompromising in the one case as he was in the other. An authenticated story is told of an argument which once took place between him and a sagacious man of the world on the question of vegetables as articles of diet. The mystagogue put forward as his reason for abstinence from animal food that one thereby distanced the animal; for the eating of beef encouraged the bovine quality, and the pork diet repeats the trick of Circe, the fabulous sorceress, and changes, at will, men into swine. But, said the sapient man of the world, if abstinence from animal food leaves the animal out, does not the partaking of vegetable food put the vegetable in? I presume the potato diet will change man into a potato. And what if the potatoes be small? The philosopher's reply to this is not recorded.

The first years of Mr. Alcott's manhood were devoted to educational purposes. His best days, then, were spent in teaching small children. As a teacher he was an experiment—an exceedingly bold experiment. Pestalozzi, the Zurich philosopher, in his humble home—for he sprang from the people—laid the foundation of a system

which obtains largely in our day in the Normal Schools of Europe and in many of the scholastic establishments in the United States. He treated everything in a concrete way. He originated object teaching. He taught the child to reason, and he introduced moral and religious training as a part of his plan. But the Swiss professor was too far advanced for his day. His school languished, and after it had involved him in financial ruin, he was forced to give it up for want of means to carry it on. In America, Mr. Alcott founded a school which boasted of similar principles. Strange as it may appear Alcott had never heard of Pestalozzi, nor did he know anything of his methods. The idea was original with him, so far as he knew. He thought it all out, and it was some years afterward when he had put the system into active and practical operation, that he heard of the Zurich School. Pestalozzi, at that time, was in his grave. Alcott opened his school in Boston. Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Peabody, the famous apostle of the kindergarten system, Mrs. Nathaniel Hawthorne and other distinguished people took a warm interest in the proceedings. The school was held in the Masonic Temple. The room was very tastily furnished and appointed. There were busts of Socrates, of Shakespeare, of Milton and of Scott, pieces of statuary representing Plato, and the image of silence, with outstretched finger, and a cast in bas-relief of the Messiah. Several pictures and maps hung on the walls and the interior furnishing was of a class likely to interest and encourage the aesthetic tastes of the smallest children. The pupils ranged in age from three to twelve years, and the progress they made in their studies was simply amazing. The strictest discipline was enforced, and on certain aggravated occasions the teacher himself endured the punishment at the hands of those who had transgressed the rules. Mr. Alcott insisted on the individual attention of his pupils and permitted no idle or careless moments. The replies to his questions were never given parrot-like. They were the result always of a liberal and conscientious exercise of the reasoning faculty. The children were taught to think for themselves, to reason and to give their own impressions of a subject. Some of them, scarcely four years of age, returned answers to questions which would put to the blush many boys of sixteen or eighteen years old. The replies showed extraordinary familiarity with philosophical, literary and religious topics. Nor were the ordinary branches, as taught in the public schools, neglected, drawing, mathematics, penmanship and the dead languages receiving, also, due attention. Miss Peabody's especial care was the Latin class. The children, apparently, were not crammed. Their progress was but the natural result of the peculiar system in operation. We may count on our fingers the precocious tots who could read books at four and five years of age, but these are the Johnsons, and Chattertons, and Macaulays and Whipples. Mr. Alcott had in his school no fewer than thirty children who could not only read and understand such books as Bunyan's Allegory, Krummacher's Fables, Æsop's Fables, Wordsworth's poems and many others, but they could criticise the thoughts and meanings of these authors with remarkable perspicacity. Here is an example. Reading one day Wordsworth's great ode—the Lakeside poet's masterpiece, which will outlive all his other work, as Tennyson's

Idyls of the King will survive his dramas and other poetry—Mr. Alcott stopped at a verse and asked the little group before him what effect the rainbow, the moon and the waters on a starry night had on ourselves. "There are some minds," he went on, "which live in the world and yet are insensible; which do not see any beauty in the rainbow, the moon, and the waters on a starry night." And he read the next stanza, that glorious burst which tells of the animation and beauty of the spring, and, pausing at every line, he asked questions. "Why are the cataracts said to blow their trumpets?" said he. A little girl replied, "Because the waters dash against the rocks." The echoes thronging through the woods, led out to the recollections of the sound in the woods in spring; to echoes which they had severally heard. "What a succession of beautiful pictures," exclaimed one very little girl rapturously. The pupils held their breath as Mr. Alcott read:—

"But there's a tree, of many, one,
A single field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The pansy at my feet

Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?"

When he ceased reading the verse, he waited a moment, and then said, "Was that a thought of life?" "No, a thought of death," said several.

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting"—

"How is that?" asked the teacher. After a pause, one of the more intelligent lads, eight years old, said he could not imagine. The two oldest girls said that they understood it but could not explain it in words. "Do you understand it?" said Mr. Alcott to a little boy of five, who was holding up his hand. "Yes sir." "Well, what does it mean?" "Why, you know," said the little fellow, very deliberately, "That for all that our life seems so long to us, it is a very short time to God." This was not an unusual occurrence. Every day the exercises were carried on in the same way, and the most interesting things were developed. Great latitude of expression was encouraged, and pains were taken to make the pupils speak out without hesitancy or fear. Conscience was made a study. The general conscience of a school, Mr. Alcott was frequently heard to declare, was the highest possible aim. The soul, when nearest infancy, was the purest, the noblest, the truest and the most moral. The very artlessness which children possessed led them to express their convictions with strongest impressions. The moral judgments of the majority, urged the teacher, would be higher than their conduct, and the few whose conduct was more in proportion to their moral judgment would keep their high place. The innocent he sometimes punished alike with the guilty, justifying the correction administered on the ground that it tended to enlist the sentiment of honor and noble shame in the cause of circumspect conduct and good behavior.

The intellectual influences which were brought to bear, were in nearly all cases, and in all respects salutary. Investigation and self-analysis also formed part of the plan. Mr. Alcott read and told stories to the children, and related incidents which were calculated to arouse within them various moral emotions, enquiry and intellectual action. Journal-writing was another feature in the school, which was prosecuted with good effect, and lessons in English composition were made very useful and