

CHAPTER XX.

GEORGE ELIOT.

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THESE TWO WOMEN.--MRS. STOWE'S FINAL ESTIMATE OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

It is with a feeling of relief that we turn from one of the most disagreeable experiences of Mrs. Stowe's life to one of the most delightful, namely, the warm friendship of one of the most eminent women of this age, George Eliot.

There seems to have been some deep affinity of feeling that drew them closely together in spite of diversity of intellectual tastes.

George Eliot's attention was first personally attracted to Mrs. Stowe in 1853, by means of a letter which the latter had written to Mrs. Follen. Speaking of this incident she (George Eliot) writes: "Mrs. Follen showed me a delightful letter which she has just had from Mrs. Stowe, telling all about herself. She begins by saying, 'I am a little bit of a woman, rather more than forty, as withered and dry as a pinch of snuff; never very well worth looking at in my best days, and now a decidedly used-up article.' The whole letter is most fascinating, and makes one love her." [Footnote: George Eliot's Life, edited by J. W. Cross, vol. i.]

The correspondence between these two notable women was begun by Mrs. Stowe, and called forth the following extremely interesting letter from the distinguished English novelist:--

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, May 8, 1869.

MY DEAR FRIEND,--I value very highly the warrant to call you friend which your letter has given me. It lay awaiting me on our return the other night from a nine weeks' absence in Italy, and it made me almost wish that you could have a momentary vision of the discouragement,--nay, paralyzing despondency--in which many days of my writing life have been passed, in order that you might fully understand the good I

find in such sympathy as yours, in such an assurance as you give me that my work has been worth doing. But I will not dwell on any mental sickness of mine. The best joy your words give me is the sense of that sweet, generous feeling in you which dictated them. I shall always be the richer because you have in this way made me know you better. I must tell you that my first glimpse of you as a woman came through a letter of yours, and charmed me very much. The letter was addressed to Mrs. Follen, and one morning I called on her in London (how many years ago!); she was kind enough to read it to me, because it contained a little history of your life, and a sketch of your domestic circumstances. I remember thinking that it was very kind of you to write that long letter, in reply to inquiries of one who was personally unknown to you; and, looking back with my present experience, I think it was kinder than it then appeared, for at that time you must have been much oppressed with the immediate results of your fame. I remember, too, that you wrote of your husband as one who was richer in Hebrew and Greek than in pounds or shillings; and as an ardent scholar has always been a character of peculiar interest to me, I have rarely had your image in my mind without the accompanying image (more or less erroneous) of such a scholar by your side. I shall welcome the fruit of his Goethe studies, whenever it comes.

I have good hopes that your fears are groundless as to the obstacles your new book ("Oldtown Folks") may find here from its thorough American character. Most readers who are likely to be really influenced by writing above the common order will find that special

aspect an added reason for interest and study; and I dare say you have long seen, as I am beginning to see with new clearness, that if a book which has any sort of exquisiteness happens also to be a popular, widely circulated book, the power over the social mind for any good is, after all, due to its reception by a few appreciative natures, and is the slow result of radiation from that narrow circle. I mean that you can affect a few souls, and that each of these in turn may affect a few more, but that no exquisite book tells properly and directly on a multitude, however largely it may be spread by type and paper. Witness the things the multitude will say about it, if one is so unhappy as to be obliged to hear their sayings. I do not write this cynically, but in pure sadness and pity. Both traveling abroad and staying at home among our English sights and sports, one must continually feel how slowly the centuries work toward the moral good of men, and that thought lies very close to what you say as to your wonder or conjecture concerning my religious point of view. I believe that religion, too, has to be modified according to the dominant phases; that a religion more perfect than any yet prevalent must express less care of personal consolation, and the more deeply awing sense of responsibility to man springing from sympathy with that which of all things is most certainly known to us,--the difficulty of the human lot. Letters are necessarily narrow and fragmentary, and when one writes on wide subjects, are likely to create more misunderstanding than illumination. But I have little anxiety in writing to you, dear friend and fellow-laborer; for you have had longer experience than I as a writer, and fuller experience as a

woman, since you have borne children and known a mother's history from the beginning. I trust your quick and long-taught mind as an interpreter little liable to mistake me.

When you say, "We live in an orange grove, and are planting many more," and when I think you must have abundant family love to cheer you, it seems to me that you must have a paradise about you. But no list of circumstances will make a paradise. Nevertheless, I must believe that the joyous, tender humor of your books clings about your more immediate life, and makes some of that sunshine for yourself which you have given to us. I see the advertisement of "Oldtown Folks," and shall eagerly expect it. That and every other new link between us will be reverentially valued. With great devotion and regard,

Yours always,

M. L. LEWES.

Mrs. Stowe writes from Mandarin to George Eliot:--

MANDARIN, February 8, 1872.

DEAR FRIEND,--It is two years nearly since I had your last very kind letter, and I have never answered, because two years of constant and severe work have made it impossible to give a drop to anything beyond

the needs of the hour. Yet I have always thought of you, loved you, trusted you all the same, and read every little scrap from your writing that came to hand.

One thing brings you back to me. I am now in Florida in my little hut in the orange orchard, with the broad expanse of the blue St. John's in front, and the waving of the live-oaks, with their long, gray mosses, overhead, and the bright gold of oranges looking through dusky leaves around. It is like Sorrento,--so like that I can quite dream of being there. And when I get here I enter another life. The world recedes; I am out of it; it ceases to influence; its bustle and noise die away in the far distance; and here is no winter, an open-air life,--a quaint, rude, wild wilderness sort of life, both rude and rich; but when I am here I write more letters to friends than ever I do elsewhere. The mail comes only twice a week, and then is the event of the day. My old rabbi and I here set up our tent, he with German, and Greek, and Hebrew, devouring all sorts of black-letter books, and I spinning ideal webs out of bits that he lets fall here and there.

I have long thought that I would write you again when I got here, and so I do. I have sent North to have them send me the "Harper's Weekly," in which your new story is appearing, and have promised myself leisurely to devour and absorb every word of it.

While I think of it I want to introduce to you a friend of mine, a most noble man, Mr. Owen, for some years our ambassador at Naples, now

living a literary and scholar life in America. His father was Robert Dale Owen, the theorist and communist you may have heard of in England some years since.

Years ago, in Naples, I visited Mr. Owen for the first time, and found him directing his attention to the phenomena of spiritism. He had stumbled upon some singular instances of it accidentally, and he had forthwith instituted a series of researches and experiments on the subject, some of which he showed me. It was the first time I had ever seriously thought of the matter, and he invited my sister and myself to see some of the phenomena as exhibited by a medium friend of theirs who resided in their family. The result at the time was sufficiently curious, but I was interested in his account of the manner in which he proceeded, keeping records of every experiment with its results, in classified orders. As the result of his studies and observations, he has published two books, one "Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World," published in 1860, and latterly, "The Debatable Land Between this World and the Next." I regard Mr. Owen as one of the few men who are capable of entering into an inquiry of this kind without an utter drowning of common sense, and his books are both of them worth a fair reading. To me they present a great deal that is intensely curious and interesting, although I do not admit, of course, all his deductions, and think he often takes too much for granted. Still, with every abatement there remains a residuum of fact, which I think both curious and useful. In a late letter to me he says :--

"There is no writer of the present day whom I more esteem than Mrs. Lewes, nor any one whose opinion of my work I should more highly value."

I believe he intends sending them to you, and I hope you will read them. Lest some of the narratives should strike you, as such narratives did me once, as being a perfect Arabian Nights' Entertainment, I want to say that I have accidentally been in the way of confirming some of the most remarkable by personal observation.

. . . In regard to all this class of subjects, I am of the opinion of Goethe, that "it is just as absurd to deny the facts of spiritualism now as it was in the Middle Ages to ascribe them to the Devil." I think Mr. Owen attributes too much value to his facts. I do not think the things contributed from the ultra-mundane sphere are particularly valuable, apart from the evidence they give of continued existence after death.

I do not think there is yet any evidence to warrant the idea that they are a supplement or continuation of the revelations of Christianity, but I do regard them as an interesting and curious study in psychology, and every careful observer like Mr. Owen ought to be welcomed to bring in his facts. With this I shall send you my observations on Mr. Owen's books, from the "Christian Union." I am perfectly aware of the frivolity and worthlessness of much of the revealings purporting to come from spirits. In my view, the worth or

worthlessness of them has nothing to do with the question of fact.

Do invisible spirits speak in any wise,--wise or foolish?--is the question a priori. I do not know of any reason why there should not be as many foolish virgins in the future state as in this. As I am a believer in the Bible and Christianity, I don't need these things as confirmations, and they are not likely to be a religion to me. I regard them simply as I do the phenomena of the Aurora Borealis, or Darwin's studies on natural selection, as curious studies into nature. Besides, I think some day we shall find a law by which all these facts will fall into their places.

I hope now this subject does not bore you: it certainly is one that seems increasingly to insist on getting itself heard. It is going on and on, making converts, who are many more than dare avow themselves, and for my part I wish it were all brought into the daylight of inquiry.

Let me hear from you if ever you feel like it. I know too well the possibilities and impossibilities of a nature like yours to ask more, but it can do you no harm to know that I still think of you and love you as ever.

Faithfully yours,

H. B. STOWE.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK, March 4, 1872.

DEAR, FRIEND,--I can understand very easily that the two last years have been full for you of other and more imperative work than the writing of letters not absolutely demanded either by charity or business. The proof that you still think of me affectionately is very welcome now it has come, and more cheering because it enables me to think of you as enjoying your retreat in your orange orchard,--your western Sorrento--the beloved rabbi still beside you. I am sure it must be a great blessing to you to bathe in that quietude, as it always is to us when we go out of reach of London influences and have the large space of country days to study, walk, and talk in. . . .

When I am more at liberty I will certainly read Mr. Owen's books, if he is good enough to send them to me. I desire on all subjects to keep an open mind, but hitherto the various phenomena, reported or attested in connection with ideas of spirit intercourse and so on, have come before me here in the painful form of the lowest charlatanerie. . . .

But apart from personal contact with people who get money by public exhibitions as mediums, or with semi-idiots such as those who make a court for a Mrs. ----, or other feminine personages of that kind, I would not willingly place any barriers between my mind and any possible channel of truth affecting the human lot. The spirit in which you have written in the paper you kindly sent me is likely to touch

others, and arouse them at least to attention in a case where you have been deeply impressed. . . .

Yours with sincere affection,

M. L. LEWES.

(Begun April 4th.)

MANDARIN, FLORIDA, May 11, 1872.

MY DEAR FRIEND,--I was very glad to get your dear little note,--sorry to see by it that you are not in your full physical force. Owing to the awkwardness and misunderstanding of publishers, I am not reading "Middlemarch," as I expected to be, here in these orange shades: they don't send it, and I am too far out of the world to get it. I felt, when I read your letters, how glad I should be to have you here in our Florida cottage, in the wholly new, wild, woodland life. Though resembling Italy in climate, it is wholly different in the appearance of nature,--the plants, the birds, the animals, all different. The green tidiness and culture of England here gives way to a wild and rugged savageness of beauty. Every tree bursts forth with flowers; wild vines and creepers execute delirious gambols, and weave and interweave in interminable labyrinths. Yet here, in the great sandy plains back of our house, there is a constant wondering sense of beauty in the wild, wonderful growths of nature. First of all, the

pinestrees--high as the stone pines of Italy--with long leaves, eighteen inches long, through which there is a constant dreamy sound, as if of dashing waters. Then the live-oaks and the water-oaks, narrow-leaved evergreens, which grow to enormous size, and whose branches are draped with long festoons of the gray moss. There is a great, wild park of these trees back of us, which, with the dazzling, varnished green of the new spring leaves and the swaying drapery of moss, looks like a sort of enchanted grotto. Underneath grow up hollies and ornamental flowering shrubs, and the yellow jessamine climbs into and over everything with fragrant golden bells and buds, so that sometimes the foliage of a tree is wholly hidden in its embrace.

This wild, wonderful, bright and vivid growth, that is all new, strange, and unknown by name to me, has a charm for me. It is the place to forget the outside world, and live in one's self. And if you were here, we would go together and gather azaleas, and white lilies, and silver bells, and blue iris. These flowers keep me painting in a sort of madness. I have just finished a picture of white lilies that grow in the moist land by the watercourses. I am longing to begin on blue iris. Artist, poet, as you are by nature, you ought to see all these things, and if you would come here I would take you in heart and house, and you should have a little room in our cottage. The history of the cottage is this: I found a hut built close to a great live-oak twenty-five feet in girth, and with overarching boughs eighty feet up in the air, spreading like a firmament, and all swaying with mossy festoons. We began to live here, and gradually we improved the hut by

lath, plaster, and paper. Then we threw out a wide veranda all round, for in these regions the veranda is the living-room of the house. Ours had to be built around the trunk of the tree, so that our cottage has a peculiar and original air, and seems as if it were half tree, or a something that had grown out of the tree. We added on parts, and have thrown out gables and chambers, as a tree throws out new branches, till our cottage is like nobody else's, and yet we settle into it with real enjoyment. There are all sorts of queer little rooms in it, and we are accommodating at this present a family of seventeen souls. In front, the beautiful, grand St. John's stretches five miles from shore to shore, and we watch the steamboats plying back and forth to the great world we are out of. On all sides, large orange trees, with their dense shade and ever-vivid green, shut out the sun so that we can sit, and walk, and live in the open air. Our winter here is only cool, bracing out-door weather, without snow. No month without flowers blooming in the open air, and lettuce and peas in the garden. The summer range is about 90°, but the sea-breezes keep the air delightfully fresh. Generally we go North, however, for three months of summer. Well, I did not mean to run on about Florida, but the subject runs away with me, and I want you to visit us in spirit if not personally.

My poor rabbi!--he sends you some Arabic, which I fear you cannot read: on diablerie he is up to his ears in knowledge, having read all things in all tongues, from the Talmud down. . . .

Ever lovingly yours,

H. B. STOWE.

BOSTON, September 26, 1872.

MY DEAR FRIEND,--I think when you see my name again so soon, you will think it rains, hails, and snows notes from this quarter. Just now, however, I am in this lovely, little nest in Boston, where dear Mrs. Field, like a dove, "sits brooding on the charmed wave." We are both wishing we had you here with us, and she has not received any answer from you as yet in reply to the invitation you spoke of in your last letter to me. It seems as if you must have written, and the letter somehow gone astray, because I know, of course, you would write. Yesterday we were both out of our senses with mingled pity and indignation at that dreadful stick of a Casaubon,--and think of poor Dorothea dashing like a warm, sunny wave against so cold and repulsive a rock! He is a little too dreadful for anything: there does not seem to be a drop of warm blood in him, and so, as it is his misfortune and not his fault, to be cold-blooded, one must not get angry with him. It is the scene in the garden, after the interview with the doctor, that rests on our mind at this present. There was such a man as he over in Boston, high in literary circles, but I fancy his wife wasn't like Dorothea, and a vastly proper time they had of it, treating each other with mutual reverence, like two Chinese mandarins.

My love, what I miss in this story is just what we would have if you would come to our tumble-down, jolly, improper, but joyous country,-- namely, "jollitude." You write and live on so high a plane! It is all self-abnegation. We want to get you over here, and into this house, where, with closed doors, we sometimes make the rafters ring with fun, and say anything and everything, no matter what, and won't be any properer than we's a mind to be. I am wishing every day you could see our America,--travel, as I have been doing, from one bright, thriving, pretty, flowery town to another, and see so much wealth, ease, progress, culture, and all sorts of nice things. This dovecot where I now am is the sweetest little nest imaginable; fronting on a city street, with back windows opening on a sea view, with still, quiet rooms filled with books, pictures, and all sorts of things, such as you and Mr. Lewes would enjoy. Don't be afraid of the ocean, now! I 've crossed it six times, and assure you it is an overrated item. Froude is coming here--why not you? Besides, we have the fountain of eternal youth here, that is, in Florida, where I live, and if you should come you would both of you take a new lease of life, and what glorious poems, and philosophies, and whatnot, we should have! My rabbi writes, in the seventh heaven, an account of your note to him. To think of his setting-off on his own account when I was away!

Come now, since your answer to dear Mrs. Fields is yet to come; let it be a glad yes, and we will clasp you to our heart of hearts.

Your ever loving, H. B. S.

During the summer of 1874, while Mrs. Stowe's brother, the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, was the victim of a most revolting, malicious, and groundless attack on his purity, Mrs. Lewes wrote the following words of sympathy:--

MY DEAR, FRIEND,--The other day I had a letter from Mrs. Fields, written to let me know something of you under that heavy trouble, of which such information as I have had has been quite untrustworthy, leaving me in entire incredulity in regard to it except on this point, that you and yours must be suffering deeply. Naturally I thought most of you in the matter (its public aspects being indeterminate), and many times before our friend's letter came I had said to Mr. Lewes: "What must Mrs. Stowe be feeling!" I remember Mrs. Fields once told me of the wonderful courage and cheerfulness which belonged to you, enabling you to bear up under exceptional trials, and I imagined you helping the sufferers with tenderness and counsel, but yet, nevertheless, I felt that there must be a bruising weight on your heart. Dear, honored friend, you who are so ready to give warm fellowship, is it any comfort to you to be told that those afar off are caring for you in spirit, and will be happier for all good issues that may bring you rest?

I cannot, dare not, write more in my ignorance, lest I should be using unreasonable words. But I trust in your not despising this scrap of paper which tells you, perhaps rather for my relief than yours, that I

am always in grateful, sweet remembrance of your goodness to me and your energetic labors for all.

It was two years or more before Mrs. Stowe replied to these words of sympathy.

Orange-blossom time, MANDARIN, March 18, 1876,

My Dear Friend,--I always think of you when the orange trees are in blossom; just now they are fuller than ever, and so many bees are filling the branches that the air is full of a sort of still murmur. And now I am beginning to hear from you every month in Harper's. It is as good as a letter. "Daniel Deronda" has succeeded in awaking in my somewhat worn-out mind an interest. So many stories are tramping over one's mind in every modern magazine nowadays that one is macadamized, so to speak. It takes something unusual to make a sensation. This does excite and interest me, as I wait for each number with eagerness. I wish I could endow you with our long winter weather,--not winter, except such as you find in Sicily. We live here from November to June, and my husband sits outdoors on the veranda and reads all day. We emigrate in solid family: my two dear daughters, husband, self, and servants come together to spend the winter here, and so together to our Northern home in summer. My twin daughters relieve me from all domestic care; they are lively, vivacious, with a real genius for practical life. We have around us a little settlement of neighbors, who like ourselves have a winter home here, and live an easy, undress,

picnic kind of life, far from the world and its cares. Mr. Stowe has been busy on eight volumes of Görres on the mysticism of the Middle Ages. [Footnote: Die Christliche Mystik.] This Görres was Professor of Philosophy at Munich, and he reviews the whole ground of the shadow-land between the natural and the supernatural,--ecstasy, trance, prophecy, miracles, spiritualism, the stigmata, etc. He was a devout Roman Catholic, and the so-called facts that he reasons on seem to me quite amazing; and yet the possibilities that lie between inert matter and man's living, all-powerful, immortal soul may make almost anything credible. The soul at times can do anything with matter. I have been busying myself with Sainte-Beuve's seven volumes on the Port Royal development. I like him (Sainte-Beuve). His capacity of seeing, doing justice to all kinds of natures and sentiments, is wonderful. I am sorry he is no longer our side the veil.

There is a redbird (cardinal grosbeak) singing in the orange trees fronting my window, so sweetly and insistently as to almost stop my writing. I hope, dear friend, you are well--better than when you wrote last.

It was very sweet and kind of you to write what you did last. I suppose it is so long ago you may have forgotten, but it was a word of tenderness and sympathy about my brother's trial; it was womanly, tender, and sweet, such as at heart you are. After all, my love of you is greater than my admiration, for I think it more and better to be really a woman worth loving than to have read Greek and German and

written books. And in this last book I read, I feel more with you in some little, fine points,--they stare at me as making an amusing exhibition. For, my dear, I feel myself at last as one who has been playing and picnicking on the shores of life, and waked from a dream late in the afternoon to find that everybody almost has gone over to the beyond. And the rest are sorting their things and packing their trunks, and waiting for the boat to come and take them.

It seems now but a little time since my brother Henry and I were two young people together. He was my two years junior, and nearest companion out of seven brothers and three sisters. I taught him drawing and heard his Latin lessons, for you know a girl becomes mature and womanly long before a boy. I saw him through college, and helped him through the difficult love affair that gave him his wife; and then he and my husband had a real German, enthusiastic love for each other, which ended in making me a wife. Ah! in those days we never dreamed that he, or I, or any of us, were to be known in the world. All he seemed then was a boy full of fun, full of love, full of enthusiasm for protecting abused and righting wronged people, which made him in those early days write editorials, and wear arms and swear himself a special policeman to protect the poor negroes in Cincinnati, where we then lived, when there were mobs instigated by the slaveholders of Kentucky.

Then he married, and lived a missionary life in the new West, all with a joyousness, an enthusiasm, a chivalry, which made life bright and

vigorous to us both. Then in time he was called to Brooklyn, just as the crisis of the great anti-slavery battle came on, and the Fugitive Slave Law was passed. I was then in Maine, and I well remember one snowy night his riding till midnight to see me, and then our talking, till near morning, what we could do to make headway against the horrid cruelties that were being practiced against the defenseless blacks. My husband was then away lecturing, and my heart was burning itself out in indignation and anguish. Henry told me then that he meant to fight that battle in New York; that he would have a church that would stand by him to resist the tyrannic dictation of Southern slaveholders. I said: "I, too, have begun to do something; I have begun a story, trying to set forth the sufferings and wrongs of the slaves." "That's right, Hattie," he said; "finish it, and I will scatter it thick as the leaves of Vallambrosa," and so came "Uncle Tom," and Plymouth Church became a stronghold where the slave always found refuge and a strong helper. One morning my brother found sitting on his doorstep poor old Paul Edmonson, weeping; his two daughters, of sixteen and eighteen, had passed into the slave warehouse of Bruin & Hill, and were to be sold. My brother took the man by the hand to a public meeting, told his story for him, and in an hour raised the two thousand dollars to redeem his children. Over and over again, afterwards, slaves were redeemed at Plymouth Church, and Henry and Plymouth Church became words of hatred and fear through half the Union. From that time until we talked together about the Fugitive Slave Law, there was not a pause or stop in the battle till we had been through the war and slavery had been wiped out in blood. Through

all he has been pouring himself out, wrestling, burning, laboring everywhere, making stump speeches when elections turned on the slave question, and ever maintaining that the cause of Christ was the cause of the slave. And when all was over, it was he and Lloyd Garrison who were sent by government once more to raise our national flag on Fort Sumter. You must see that a man does not so energize without making many enemies. Half of our Union has been defeated, a property of millions annihilated by emancipation, a proud and powerful slave aristocracy reduced to beggary, and there are those who never saw our faces that, to this hour, hate him and me. Then he has been a progressive in theology. He has been a student of Huxley, and Spencer, and Darwin,--enough to alarm the old school,--and yet remained so ardent a supernaturalist as equally to repel the radical destructionists in religion. He and I are Christ-worshippers, adoring Him as the Image of the Invisible God and all that comes from believing this. Then he has been a reformer, an advocate of universal suffrage and woman's rights, yet not radical enough to please that reform party who stand where the Socialists of France do, and are for tearing up all creation generally. Lastly, he has had the misfortune of a popularity which is perfectly phenomenal. I cannot give you any idea of the love, worship, idolatry, with which he has been overwhelmed. He has something magnetic about him that makes everybody crave his society,--that makes men follow and worship him. I remember being at his house one evening in the time of early flowers, and in that one evening came a box of flowers from Maine, another from New Jersey, another from Connecticut,--all from people with whom he had no

personal acquaintance, who had read something of his and wanted to send him some token. I said, "One would think you were a prima donna. What does make people go on so about you?"

My brother is hopelessly generous and confiding. His inability to believe evil is something incredible, and so has come all this suffering. You said you hoped I should be at rest when the first investigating committee and Plymouth Church cleared my brother almost by acclamation. Not so. The enemy have so committed themselves that either they or he must die, and there has followed two years of the most dreadful struggle. First, a legal trial of six months, the expenses of which on his side were one hundred and eighteen thousand dollars, and in which he and his brave wife sat side by side in the court-room, and heard all that these plotters, who had been weaving their webs for three years, could bring. The foreman of the jury was offered a bribe of ten thousand dollars to decide against my brother. He sent the letter containing the proposition to the judge. But with all their plotting, three fourths of the jury decided against them, and their case was lost. It was accepted as a triumph by my brother's friends; a large number of the most influential clergy of all denominations so expressed themselves in a public letter, and it was hoped the thing was so far over that it might be lived down and overgrown with better things.

But the enemy, intriguing secretly with all those parties in the community who wish to put down a public and too successful man, have

been struggling to bring the thing up again for an ecclesiastical trial. The cry has been raised in various religious papers that Plymouth Church was in complicity with crime,--that they were so captivated with eloquence and genius that they refused to make competent investigation. The six months' legal investigation was insufficient; a new trial was needed. Plymouth Church immediately called a council of ministers and laymen, in number representing thirty-seven thousand Congregational Christians, to whom Plymouth Church surrendered her records,--her conduct,--all the facts of the case, and this great council unanimously supported the church and ratified her decision; recognizing the fact that, in all the investigations hitherto, nothing had been proved against my brother. They at his request, and that of Plymouth Church, appointed a committee of five to whom within sixty days any one should bring any facts that they could prove, or else forever after hold their peace. It is thought now by my brother's friends that this thing must finally reach a close. But you see why I have not written. This has drawn on my life--my heart's blood. He is myself; I know you are the kind of woman to understand me when I say that I felt a blow at him more than at myself. I, who know his purity, honor, delicacy, know that he has been from childhood of an ideal purity,--who revered his conscience as his king, whose glory was redressing human wrong, who spake no slander, no, nor listened to it.

Never have I known a nature of such strength, and such almost childlike innocence. He is of a nature so sweet and perfect that,

though I have seen him thunderously indignant at moments, I never saw him fretful or irritable,--a man who continuously, in every little act of life, is thinking of others, a man that all the children on the street run after, and that every sorrowful, weak, or distressed person looks to as a natural helper. In all this long history there has been no circumstance of his relation to any woman that has not been worthy of himself,--pure, delicate, and proper; and I know all sides of it, and certainly should not say this if there were even a misgiving. Thank God, there is none, and I can read my New Testament and feel that by all the beatitudes my brother is blessed.

His calmness, serenity, and cheerfulness through all this time has uplifted us all. Where he was, there was no anxiety, no sorrow. My brother's power to console is something peculiar and wonderful. I have seen him at death-beds and funerals, where it would seem as if hope herself must be dumb, bring down the very peace of Heaven and change despair to trust. He has not had less power in his own adversity. You cannot conceive how he is beloved, by those even who never saw him, --old, paralytic, distressed, neglected people, poor seamstresses, black people, who have felt these arrows shot against their benefactor as against themselves, and most touching have been their letters of sympathy. From the first, he has met this in the spirit of Francis de Sales, who met a similar plot,--by silence, prayer, and work, and when urged to defend himself said "God would do it in his time." God was the best judge how much reputation he needed to serve Him with.

In your portrait of Deronda, you speak of him as one of those rare natures in whom a private wrong bred no bitterness. "The sense of injury breeds, not the will to inflict injuries, but a hatred of all injury;" and I must say, through all this conflict my brother has been always in the spirit of Him who touched and healed the ear of Malchus when he himself was attacked. His friends and lawyers have sometimes been aroused and sometimes indignant with his habitual caring for others, and his habit of vindicating and extending even to his enemies every scrap and shred of justice that might belong to them. From first to last of this trial, he has never for a day intermitted his regular work. Preaching to crowded houses, preaching even in his short vacations at watering places, carrying on his missions which have regenerated two once wretched districts of the city, editing a paper, and in short giving himself up to work. He cautioned his church not to become absorbed in him and his trials, to prove their devotion by more faithful church work and a wider charity; and never have the Plymouth missions among the poor been so energetic and effective. He said recently, "The worst that can befall a man is to stop thinking of God and begin to think of himself; if trials make us self-absorbed, they hurt us." Well, dear, pardon me for this outpour. I loved you--I love you--and therefore wanted you to know just what I felt. Now, dear, this is over, don't think you must reply to it or me. I know how much you have to do,--yes, I know all about an aching head and an overtaxed brain. This last work of yours is to be your best, I think, and I hope it will bring you enough to buy an orange grove in Sicily, or somewhere else, and so have lovely weather such as we have.

Your ancient admirer, [Footnote: Professor Stowe.] who usually goes to bed at eight o'clock, was convicted by me of sitting up after eleven over the last installment of "Daniel Deronda," and he is full of it. We think well of Guendoline, and that she isn't much more than young ladies in general so far.

Next year, if I can possibly do it, I will send you some of our oranges. I perfectly long to have you enjoy them. Your very loving

H. B. STOWE.

P. S. I am afraid I shall write you again when I am reading your writings, they are so provokingly suggestive of things one wants to say

H. B. S.

In her reply to this letter Mrs. Lewes says, incidentally: 'Please offer my reverential love to the Professor, and tell him I am ruthlessly proud of having kept him out of his bed. I hope that both you and he will continue to be interested in my spiritual children.'

After Mr. Lewes's death, Mrs. Lewes writes to Mrs. Stowe:--

The Priory, 21 North Bank, April 10, 1879.

My Dear Friend,--I have been long without sending you any sign (unless you have received a message from me through Mrs. Fields), but my heart has been going out to you and your husband continually as among the chief of the many kind beings who have given me their tender fellow-feeling in my last earthly sorrow. . . . When your first letter came, with the beautiful gift of your book, [Footnote: Uncle Tom's Cabin, new edition, with introduction.] I was unable to read any letters, and did not for a long time see what you had sent me. But when I did know, and had read your words of thankfulness at the great good you have seen wrought by your help, I felt glad, for your sake first, and then for the sake of the great nation to which you belong. The hopes of the world are taking refuge westward, under the calamitous conditions, moral and physical, in which we of the elder world are getting involved. . . .

Thank you for telling me that you have the comfort of seeing your son in a path that satisfies your best wishes for him. I like to think of your having family joys. One of the prettiest photographs of a child that I possess is one of your sending to me. . . .

Please offer my reverential, affectionate regards to your husband, and believe me, dear friend,

Yours always gratefully,

M. L. Lewes.

As much as has been said with regard to spiritualism in these pages, the subject has by no means the prominence that it really possessed in the studies and conversations of both Professor and Mrs. Stowe.

Professor Stowe's very remarkable psychological development, and the exceptional experiences of his early life, were sources of conversation of unfailing interest and study to both.

Professor Stowe had made an elaborate and valuable collection of the literature of the subject, and was, as Mrs. Stowe writes, "over head and ears in diablerie."

It is only just to give Mrs. Stowe's views on this perplexing theme more at length, and as the mature reflection of many years has caused them to take form.

In reference to professional mediums, and spirits that peep, rap, and mutter, she writes:--

"Each friend takes away a portion of ourselves. There was some part of our being related to him as to no other, and we had things to say to him which no other would understand or appreciate. A portion of our thoughts has become useless and burdensome, and again and again, with involuntary yearning, we turn to the stone at the door of the

sepulchre. We lean against the cold, silent marble, but there is no answer,--no voice, neither any that regardeth.

"There are those who would have us think that in our day this doom is reversed; that there are those who have the power to restore to us the communion of our lost ones. How many a heart, wrung and tortured with the anguish of this fearful silence, has throbbled with strange, vague hopes at the suggestion! When we hear sometimes of persons of the strongest and clearest minds becoming credulous votaries of certain spiritualist circles, let us not wonder: if we inquire, we shall almost always find that the belief has followed some stroke of death; it is only an indication of the desperation of that heart-hunger which in part it appeases.

"Ah, were it true! Were it indeed so that the wall between the spiritual and material is growing thin, and a new dispensation germinating in which communion with the departed blest shall be among the privileges and possibilities of this our mortal state! Ah, were it so that when we go forth weeping in the gray dawn, bearing spices and odors which we long to pour forth for the beloved dead, we should indeed find the stone rolled away and an angel sitting on it!

"But for us the stone must be rolled away by an unquestionable angel, whose countenance is as the lightning, who executes no doubtful juggle by pale moonlight or starlight, but rolls back the stone in fair, open morning, and sits on it. Then we could bless God for his

mighty gift, and with love, and awe, and reverence take up that blessed fellowship with another life, and weave it reverently and trustingly into the web of our daily course.

"But no such angel have we seen,--no such sublime, unquestionable, glorious manifestation. And when we look at what is offered to us, ah! who that had a friend in heaven could wish them to return in such wise as this? The very instinct of a sacred sorrow seems to forbid that our beautiful, our glorified ones should stoop lower than even to the medium of their cast-off bodies, to juggle, and rap, and squeak, and perform mountebank tricks with tables and chairs; to recite over in weary sameness harmless truisms, which we were wise enough to say for ourselves; to trifle, and banter, and jest, or to lead us through endless moonshiny mazes. Sadly and soberly we say that, if this be communion with the dead, we had rather be without it. We want something a little in advance of our present life, and not below it. We have read with some attention weary pages of spiritual communication purporting to come from Bacon, Swedenborg, and others, and long accounts from divers spirits of things seen in the spirit land, and we can conceive of no more appalling prospect than to have them true.

"If the future life is so weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable as we might infer from these readings, one would have reason to deplore an immortality from which no suicide could give an outlet. To be condemned to such eternal prosing would be worse than annihilation.

"Is there, then, no satisfaction for this craving of the soul? There is One who says: "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of hell and of death;" and this same being said once before: "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself unto him." This is a promise direct and personal; not confined to the first apostles, but stated in the most general way as attainable by any one who loves and does the will of Jesus. It seems given to us as some comfort for the unavoidable heart-breaking separations of death that there should be, in that dread unknown, one all-powerful Friend with whom it is possible to commune, and from whose spirit there may come a response to us. Our Elder Brother, the partaker of our nature, is not only in the spirit land, but is all-powerful there. It is he that shutteth and no man openeth, and openeth and no man shutteth. He whom we have seen in the flesh, weeping over the grave of Lazarus, is he who hath the keys of hell and of death. If we cannot commune with our friends, we can at least commune with Him to whom they are present, who is intimately with them as with us. He is the true bond of union between the spirit world and our souls; and one blest hour of prayer, when we draw near to Him and feel the breadth, and length, and depth, and heighth of that love of his that passeth knowledge, is better than all those incoherent, vain, dreamy glimpses with which longing hearts are cheated.

"They who have disbelieved all spiritual truth, who have been

Sadduceeic doubters of either angel or spirit, may find in modern spiritualism a great advance. But can one who has ever really had communion with Christ, who has said with John, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and the Son,"--can such an one be satisfied with what is found in the modern circle?

"For Christians who have strayed into these inclosures, we cannot but recommend the homely but apt quotation of old John Newton:--

"What think ye of Christ is the test
To try both your word and your scheme.'

"In all these so-called revelations, have there come any echoes of the new song which no man save the redeemed from earth could learn; any unfoldings of that love that passeth knowledge,--anything, in short, such as spirits might utter to whom was unveiled that which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered the heart of man to conceive? We must confess that all those spirits that yet have spoken appear to be living in quite another sphere from. John or Paul.

"Let us, then, who long for communion with spirits, seek nearness to Him who has promised to speak and commune, leaving forever this word to his church:--

"I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you."