

EDITORIALS.

WHAT IS INSPIRATION?

THE September-October, number of the *North-American Review* contains a discussion of the above question by six noted preachers and lecturers. They discourse very learnedly upon the subject, but do not give very satisfactory or direct answers to the question. They seem to have settled upon the notion that remarks in relation to the Bible will elucidate the whole matter, as though that book contained all the inspiration with which the human family has ever been favored. True, some of them accord a partial inspiration to a few of the heathen sages of antiquity, but this is denied by others, and the Bible is made the main object of the inquiry. We offer a few words to illustrate, in brief, the "Mormon" view of this important question:

Inspiration, in its general sense, is the in-breathing, or action upon the soul, of the spirit of light and truth. It is measurably enjoyed by all mankind of every creed and every race. The spirit of life is also the spirit of light. It is "in all things, and through all things, and round about all things, and is the law by which all things are governed." It is to the spirit of man what natural light is to the eye, the medium through which any principle or truth is discerned, as natural light is the medium through which are seen the physical objects of creation. Without light, nothing, either natural or spiritual, can possibly be perceived. "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." This is "the breath of life" which God "breathed into" man in the beginning, by which he became a living, sentient, perceptive and progressive soul. It is also the "true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." But as there are different capacities of physical sight, so there are of mental and spiritual vision. The spirit or light is always the same, but the receivers thereof are various.

This spirit comes from God and will lead to God. But it exerts no compulsory force. It illuminates, not compels. It suggests that which is good, but will "not always strive with man." Those who yield to its promptings are led in the way of truth and strengthened and fortified against evil. Those who habitually resist it become influenced by the spirit of darkness, which is of that Wicked One, and become prone to iniquity. This natural inspiration is the light by which grand and lofty thoughts are reflected. Sometimes several individuals far apart geographically, but similarly constituted mentally, bring forth identical ideas. Each claims originality and perhaps charges the others with plagiarism. But the real author is the Father of Lights, from whom the intelligence flows which manifests the principles of every invention, device or arrangement which is for the benefit and progress of humanity. The uses to which the intelligence is put, depend greatly upon the persons who receive it. The light is good, but bad men may pervert the information it imparts to the worst of purposes.

All men are accountable, because of that light, and in proportion to its reception and the opportunities therefor. The greatest condemnation is for those who obtain the greatest light. Everlasting, unswerving Justice will determine this. The heathen, the Pagan, the Moslem, the Christian, the Jew, the infidel, all have a portion of this natural inspiration, and the sages and oracles, philosophers and poets, reformers and philanthropists of ancient times, among all nations, who have impressed the ages with the stamp of their genius and godlike influence, have all been inspired by the spirit of light and truth, and have brought forth principles and precepts adapted to the period and people among whom they lived. The same spirit in the people bore record of the truth upon their inward nature, and by that light will they be judged according to their works.

In addition to this natural inspi-

ration, which is general, there has been at various times a special inspiration which God bestowed upon certain persons for special purposes. This is called in the scriptures the Old and New Testaments the Holy Ghost. It is a greater endowment of the same light, by which things pertaining to higher spheres can be perceived and understood. By this the Hebrew prophets wrote and spoke. By it the Apostles knew that Jesus was the Christ while the world comprehended it not. By it the word of the Lord has been declared to man from age to age. Without it, no man can possibly understand the things of God. It manifests the Father and the Son. It illuminates the past and unfolds the future. It is the highest light that man can enjoy.

But while it is a more powerful manifestation of divine enlightenment, it does not dominate the persons or faculties of its recipients. They are as free agents as others. It quickens their spiritual and intellectual faculties, but does not reduce them to mere human machines. It is the very antipodes of the "possession" by which people have been controlled in different ages, and by which they were convulsed, distorted, and impelled irrespective of their will. "The spirit of the prophets was subject unto the prophets," so far that they need not if they wished not yield to its influence. They were not "mediums," like modern spiritists, mere animated automata. Their ideas were divine, their language human. The same Holy Ghost inspired Isaiah and Ezekiel, Peter and Paul. Yet the style of their writings is peculiar to each, and Peter was seen to be ungrammatical and unlearned, while Paul's language had the polish of the schools.

Revelation may be given by angels, by the voice of God, by divine visions and dreams and by the manifestations of the Holy Ghost in the soul. But though the last named is different to the former it is needed for the comprehension of either and all. If an angel were to speak the word of God or a vision of heavenly things were opened to human view, without the inspiration of the Holy Ghost the significance of neither the word nor the sight could be properly comprehended. Those who have the Holy Spirit in the same manner and degree as Isaiah, can understand every truth revealed through him; so with the writings and sayings of other prophets and divinely inspired teachers.

The higher inspiration is not confined to any particular age. It is as attainable now as at any former period. It is always the same. There are laws and conditions pertaining to its reception which must be observed by all who wish to obtain it. Faith, repentance and baptism precede its bestowal upon or development in the human being. It is conferred by the laying on of the hands of persons appointed to administer it. Then it is enjoyed, unequally because it must be sought after, invoked, obeyed and delighted in. As different recipients vary in their efforts, so they vary in their enjoyment of its benefits.

Inspiration is not authority. A man may be inspired of God to understand the most exalted principles; and yet have no authority to act in the name of the Lord. Paul saw Christ in His glory. The sight struck him blind, and he was healed of his blindness by divine power. But he had no authority to preach or act in the name of Christ till he was called and ordained for that purpose. But no one in that authority can properly officiate without inspiration. It is necessary for the proper preaching of the word and to sanctify all ordinances, ceremonies and observances in the Church of Christ.

Our limited space forbids further present enlargement on this subject. The light of God is universally diffused like that of the sun. But men may close their eyes to the latter, and shut the windows of their souls against the former. It exists all the same. But as natural light is sometimes latent, so spiritual light is often dormant to us. But when the conditions are right it shines forth in the midst of the darkness, and guides always aright. And those who will be led by the glimmerings of the light of nature, and lay hold upon the truth can, by obedience to the ordinances, come up into the heavenly effulgence of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and

be made partakers of the higher inspiration, the best boon of Almighty God to mortal man amid the gloom and darkness of this fallen world.

THAT "EMBRACERY" CASE.

THE Hodgdon trial, with its unprecedented incident of the exposure, by the counsel for the defence, of a juror who solicited a bribe as payment for "hanging" the jury, the particulars of which we related in our issue of the 16th instant, was concluded in the Fourth District Court of California on Monday last. Husselman, the perjured juror, was in his seat with the rest of the panel.

The Court announced that on examination of the peculiar case he had come to the conclusion that the jury might be discharged, by the consent of the defendant. Judge Campbell declined giving consent, protested against the continuance of the case, on the ground that one of the jurors was disqualified to act, and that a juror could not be brought from jail to sit on a case, he was not a free agent; and moved that the jury be dismissed and the defendant discharged. The District Attorney held that the jury could be discharged and the defendant again put on trial, as the plea could not be made that she had been placed in legal jeopardy.

The Court overruled the motion to dismiss the jury and discharge the prisoner. Judge Campbell excepted, and announced that he should introduce no evidence nor any plea for the defence, as he considered the whole proceedings, after what had transpired concerning the juror Husselman, nothing but a mockery of justice. The jury brought in a verdict of murder in the second degree against Mrs. Dr. Cynthia L. Hodgdon, whose malpractice in effecting an abortion caused the death of Mrs. Emma Downes. Judge Campbell moved for a new trial, and the time was set for hearing arguments on the motion.

This is a very singular case, and for this reason we have given so much space to its history. The crime with which the prisoner was charged is common enough; there is reason to believe that the offence of the juror—embracery—is not of great rarity, but the course of the counsel for the defence in giving information of the juror's offer to his client, and the exposure and punishment of the offender, also the trial of a prisoner by a jury one of whom was himself a prisoner, under sentence from the same court, sitting in judgment of the cause at issue, are all out of the general course of criminal jurisprudence, and interesting by way of variety. The motives which prompted Judge Campbell, in the light of his proceedings on Monday, look a little more like legal craft than the genuine honor which seemed to distinguish them when he exposed the guilty juror. He saw that the jury would be rendered incomplete by the committal of the offender, and, justly, incompetent to try the defendant, and that thus a loophole would be opened through which he might conduct his client to liberty.

We think that the best course would have been to discharge the jury, holding the prisoner for trial, for which the Court could have found precedents in the reports of other States if not in the judicial annals of California. The defendant now is justly entitled to a new trial, by a jury against which such a glaring fault cannot be found as that which damaged the first in this case, through the infamy of the perjured Husselman. We will chronicle the issue.

AN ANCIENT MONOLITH.

AT last London has set up its Egyptian monument, and the monolith which for ages graced the soil of the Pharaohs now points to the murky skies which overhang the modern Babylon. Moses from the Minories and Beaconsfield from the House of Lords can gaze upon a stone whose shadow has fallen upon the ancient lawgiver of their race, and should prize the liberty they now enjoy compared with the

bondage from which the "meek man" rescued their ancestors, and remember that Jehovah who brought them forth with a mighty hand and gave them the land of Canaan.

This was one of the monuments which was set up at Alexandria, before the temple of Augustus Caesar, in the first century of our era. It was brought from Heliopolis—called On in the Bible—where it had stood the storms and changes of time for at least sixteen centuries. It is called Cleopatra's needle, after the last Queen of Egypt and the last monarch of the dynasty of the Ptolemies. Another of these obelisks adorns the *Place de la Concorde* in the beautiful capital of France. The latter was taken to Paris at the expense of the French government and at a cost of about \$4,000,000, while the former, which was presented to England in 1819, but suffered to remain because of the great outlay which would attend its removal, was rescued from its recumbent position on private ground and conveyed to London by the munificence of Dr. Erasmus Wilson, the celebrated writer on cutaneous diseases, at a cost of \$75,000, which shows the difference between public contract and private enterprise.

The London acquisition has met with an adventurous career since it was brought out of its undeserved obscurity. It was put to sea in a vessel constructed for the purpose, and floated in tow of the steamship *Olya*, Sept. 21, 1877. But when reaching the Bay of Biscay, a violent storm arose and it was cut adrift on the 17th of October and left to sink or swim as fate might decide. But it was found by the *Fitzmaurice*, and taken into Ferrol, Spain, where it was held for salvage. The sum of \$10,000 effected its release, it was safely towed into the River Thames, and on the 12th inst., was erected on the Victoria Embankment, facing the Temple Gardens, between Blackfriars and Waterloo Bridges.

It is eighty feet high and six feet square at the base, and is mounted on a handsome pedestal. Its companion needle still stands at Alexandria, and should the ambition of *Beaconsfield* be gratified and Egypt pass into the dominion of Great Britain, the monoliths named after the ancient and dissolute Cleopatra will both belong to the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India, and may be known in future history as the virtuous monarch Victoria's needles.

THE FRUITS OF FICTION.

ANOTHER case of the pernicious effects of the Dime Novel style of juvenile literature, which disgraces our book stores and pollutes many households, was developed in Philadelphia, a few days ago. Two New York boys aged, respectively, twelve and fourteen years, on their way west, were arrested by the police at the Pennsylvania Railroad depot, in the first named city, where they had bought tickets for their journey. They were each armed with a big revolver and carried two boxes of cartridges and a bowie knife. They confessed, after conversation, that they intended to "kill Injuns and rob stage coaches," in the style they had read of in yellow covered story books. Their cash capital amounted to \$13. The money for their journey they had stolen from a milk dealer in Williamsburg. They were forwarded to the police at New York.

Parents and guardians of the young cannot be too careful in their inspection of the reading matter which comes into the possession of boys and girls under their charge. Large quantities of magazines, novelettes and illustrated papers are imported into this Territory which are a disgrace to those who deal in them, and cannot have anything but the most pernicious effects upon the young people who read them. Such publications are fit only for the flames. They should be destroyed without hesitation, as mental poison and moral corruption.

It may be claimed that it is impossible to stifle the desire for light reading which is felt by many of the young and the old in every part of the civilized world. Granting this, and also the proposition that it is better for people to read works of fiction than not to read at

all, would it not be wise to select for the young and point out to the old, such works, by good authors, as present true pictures of social life and facts in history, and which tend to refine and ennoble, rather than to degrade and animalize?

There is no more real harm in reading a book which is merely a representation of occurrences, but not of actual facts, than there is in looking upon a picture which was drawn from the imagination of the artist, or in witnessing the performance of a drama, which is nothing but a novel personified and made more realistic. The injury done, if any, arises from the unnatural exaggerations and false coloring in the baser sort of either, and the cultivation of the lower passions which those classes of written, pictorial, and acted fiction tend to promote.

The parables of Christ, the imagery of oriental writers scriptural and secular, the illustrations of preachers and orators, all partake of the imaginative, but are employed to present truth in a striking and attractive form. This is the object of the works of such authors as Dickens, Bulwer, Scott, Thackeray, Hugo, Eliot, Bronte and many others, the standard poets and the most cultured dramatists. There are minds which cannot be approached with a sermon or a lecture, that may be deeply impressed with an interesting story conveying the very same moral as intended by the oral instruction. Others can be touched with a play or a poem, others still by the glowing tints on the canvass. If either method is successful in creating or cultivating a love for virtue and a hatred of vice, the main object in view is attained; and many who could not in the first place be attracted by religious influences, may be led to submission to them in the end through agencies which some people incorrectly view as irreligious. To be consistent, if no writings must be read but those of absolute fact, no paintings should be looked upon but these which depict realities, nor plays be witnessed but those which represent actual occurrences.

In our view, the popular and juvenile taste should be cultivated and the mind led to discriminate between the good and the evil in literature, science and art, so that the gross exaggerations and gaudy colorings of either will come to be despised, and their false teachings or insidious suggestions become abhorrent and disgusting. There is as much harm done by the horrible "outs"—which ought to be cut to pieces—in such magazines as "The Boys and Girls Weekly," "Boys and Girls of America," "Police Gazette," &c., as by the reading matter which accompanies them, and is to be found in other trashy weeklies and in what is called "yellow covered literature." Yet these abominable works are posted up with their flaring horrors in shop windows in Zion, and volumes of such monstrosities are occasionally brought to the NEWS Office to be bound. Shame on the parents of children who devour this species of literary garbage! The fault is chiefly theirs, and much of the responsibility for the vile fruits which will grow out of such culture, will devolve upon those parents.

Great evils result from over-indulgence in the very best of light reading. The chief of these is the resulting incapacity for studying works requiring deep and steady thought. Little effort is necessary to follow and catch the meaning of a writer of fiction, unless it be the chief works of philosophical and metaphysical authors. Those, therefore, who make fiction their common mental pabulum, lose their power to grasp ideas that are only reached through a process of reasoning, and consequently remain shallow, superficial, small-minded, and often small-souled.

Light reading should only be indulged in by way of recreation, and then very temperately, and the young should not be permitted to peruse anything of the kind which has not been selected for them by older and wiser persons. We believe that judicious discrimination, pointing out the good and discarding the evil in works of fiction, would accomplish more than their wholesale denunciation and general condemnation. And we hope that this brief article may prove the means of awakening reflection on this subject, and inducing some of the natural guardians of our youth, who heretofore have been thoughtless and negligent in this particu-