

chill on the main body of youth and good spirits, though one may suppose that Charles Newcomb, who played successfully at æsthetic Catholicism, was something of a blight at times, and that the occasional appearance of the contentious Brownson was no signal for mirth. Emerson has given the lasting impression that Brook Farm was a continuous *fête champêtre*; he has even stated specifically that as the men danced in the evening, clothespins dropped from their pockets. Legendary as this no doubt is, it expresses well the outsider's conviction that merriment reigned at Brook Farm.

The wholesomeness of the life has never been seriously called in question, and nothing bears weightier testimony to its sanity than the simple and spontaneous character of the sports which found acceptance. Out-of-door life was a passion which, like all noble passions, absorbed into itself many less worthy emotions, and lifted very ordinary amusements out of the sphere of the commonplace. Even the uncommendable habit of punning, by which the entire community, led by the arch-punster Ripley, was at times infected, may perhaps be explained as one of the forms of effervescence induced by superabundant oxygen.

After meals, in the evening, and when it was possible to be in the open air, the Associates made happiness a duty, and their high courage

held them to harmless fun when fainter souls would have drooped at the whisperings of evil days ahead. Except in the dead of winter, the varied acres of the domain itself, as well as the surrounding country, served as a setting for the animation which the finished labors of the day had set free, and the younger members of the family, especially, walked and picnicked through the outlying regions; the great boulders forming "Eliot's pulpit" invited strolling feet; there were junketings at Cow Island, boating parties on the Charles River, the beauties of which at and near this part of its course have never had their deserts; and expeditions were made even to the distant woods surrounding Muddy (now Turtle) Pond, which at that time were felt to be full of mysterious dangers, but which now offer an uninteresting security through the efforts of a paternal state commission.

Sundays were naturally most favorable for the quieter of these amiable strayings, but church-going was not neglected. Some of the members would go to West Roxbury to hear Parker, while others of more persistent faith and sturdier legs would push on to Boston, where lay a larger field of choice for their unprejudiced tastes. Hawthorne has given the most charming descriptions of the places to be reached by walking, but inasmuch as his expeditions were taken on his own account, they lack the humanizing significance

which those of the wandering groups of less seclusive members seemed to have.

Although there would be, now and then, during the winter, a "fancy party," the true revels of this sort were reserved for warm weather, and were held in the still beautiful grove. Dancing was much in vogue, and was enjoyed by all who knew the art. Dr. Codman tells with conscious pride that he has seen five men who had been trained for the ministry engaged in this courtly pastime at one time. The fashion was to dispose of the supper dishes with astonishing rapidity, and then to clear the dining hall for the evening's pleasure. Youth was at the prow, as usual, but the elders were not discountenanced. Towering above the rest was the figure of "the General" (Baldwin) displaying more vigor than grace, but not less welcome because the room seemed smaller by his presence. Often the dance was less formal even than this, and consisted of half a dozen of the younger people who strolled into the Cottage after supper and took turns as players and dancers for an hour or so, dispersing, at the end of that time, to the real call of the evening.

If dancing was the froth of their life, conversation was the substance. Dr. Codman says Brook Farm was "rich in cheerful buzz." The talk ran from the heavy polemics, fortunately occasional, of Brownson, and the cheerful impetu-

osity of the high-souled Channing, down to the thinnest sort of punning. To revile this manner of jesting is almost as commonplace as to indulge the practice itself; but if we may trust to friendly memories, the habit was really a feature of the intellectual life. The certainty that the custom was rife would help to establish an impression that some high intelligences are devoid of nice perceptions of wit, as it is evident that they often lack the faintest relish for music or art. To have been present at one of these joyous gatherings, and to have heard the gay sallies, would have softened the hardest objector; but little thanks are due the painful diarists who have embalmed the persiflage in such a way as to remind one of that sorry humor at the *pension* in Balzac's "Père Goriot." Another frank touch of mediocrity was the constant iteration of phrases. For a long time, after one of Mr. Alcott's visits, a pie was always cut "from the centre to the periphery"; and Mrs. Howe avers that a customary formula at table was: "Is the butter within the sphere of your influence?" Mrs. Ripley declared herself at one time weary of "the extravagant moods of the young girls," and "sick of the very word 'affinity.'" "Morbidity" was a frequent reproach brought against exoteric civilization. But extravagance was a mood of the era and not of the place. A striking instance of this

excess occurs in an article on Woman, signed "V." and printed in the *Present*: "Throw your libraries into the streets and sewers on the instant that you find, as you will, all knowledge within yourselves."

In stormy weather a favorite diversion was an impromptu discussion in the Hive parlor. Several subjects were proposed, a vote was taken, and the choice of the majority decided the question to be debated. There is an account by Mrs. Kirby of a well-sustained argument on the query: "Is labor in itself ideal, or, being unattractive in character, do we, in effect, clothe it with the spirit we bring to it?"

The winter amusements were varied. Skating took the place of boating, and proved especially alluring to those of Southern birth. Sometimes a party, including the children and elders as well as the young men and women, would visit the river with sleds and skates, and maturity and youth would run a very even race for the prize of pleasure. Coasting was not neglected, although the opportunities for its indulgence were meagre. One of the few accidents which have been thought serious enough to be remembered resulted from one of these revels.

There was naturally much in-door recreation during the winter. Literary societies and reading clubs flourished; Shakespeare received due attention, and the readings in connection with

the study accorded him were enlivened by occasional happenings not recorded in the text, as in the case of a failure of one of the best readers to give a satisfactory rendering of Romeo for the inartistic reason that the Juliet did not suit his taste. Cornelia Hall, who boarded for periods of varying length at the Farm, used to give remarkable dramatic readings, which attracted attention from the outside world. Father Taylor esteemed it a high privilege to go out to hear her read the "Ancient Mariner." On Sunday afternoons, during the earlier years, Ripley elucidated Kant and Spinoza to those who cared to listen, and there were often lectures by such gifted friends of the community as Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Alcott, Brisbane, and Channing. George Bradford and Mrs. Ripley were members of a class which read, without an instructor, the greater part of Dante's "Divina Commedia" in the original, the students reading aloud in turn. In summer this coterie held its meetings out of doors. No serious intellectual work engaged the community as such, even in its first freshness; most of the people were too young, life was too radiant, and the daily routine was sufficiently exhausting to make the hours of recreation welcome. A consociation of mental effort could hardly expect to accomplish the highest results—these are for the lonely and strenuous individual.

Impromptu tableaux, dialogues, and charades were in good repute, but the best talent of the Association found expression in an occasional play, sometimes of the most ambitious character. Good material for acting existed, although no one in later life seems to have developed his or her capacities in the direction of the stage. Whenever an elaborate dramatic entertainment was taken in hand by the Amusement Group, the lower floor of the workshop was called into service in place of the Hive dining room. In the shop, Chiswell, one of the carpenters, had built a portable stage which could be set up for rehearsals and removed afterward with very little trouble. Dr. Codman gives an account of the attempt instigated by John Glover Drew, an ardent admirer of Byron, to produce scenes from the "Corsair"—an effort which the community and the visitors from the neighboring village frankly set down as a melancholy failure. Sheridan's "Pizarro," too, was undertaken, and much merriment was caused by Rolla's fall under a shot which was fired several minutes after he had been disabled by it. The visitors, including Parker, on this occasion, gently withdrew long before the play was over, and the Associates had the good sense to accept this courteous hint that they were not at their best in this field of histrionics.

Card-playing never seems to have kindled a

wide interest, though Codman speaks of "con-chas and euchre," for which Baldwin had a passion. A story is extant of a "Hive" youth who was discovered by Dana, a firm disciplinarian, playing whist at the Cottage after ten o'clock (the hour at which the pupils were expected to be in their own rooms). "And how do you expect, sir, to enter the house, when you know the doors are locked at ten?" "Oh, I always get in at the pantry window!" This "early closing" regulation was apparently hard and fast; but on two occasions it was broken,—at one fancy ball, and at one of Brisbane's lectures.

Music there was at all times. Some of the Associates had good voices, and musical visitors were common. To have heard those splendid youths, George and Burrill Curtis, sing the "Erl-King" was something to recall with tenderness. The younger brother had a way of amputating the weak or silly words from some old tune, to which he would then add good modern poetry with delightful effect. Two charming women, Mary Bullard and Frances Ostinelli, came to be well known at the Farm, and their graceful compliance with requests for their songs has been gratefully remembered. Frances Ostinelli, better known as Signora Biscaccianti, appeared during the first summer after the change. She was then seventeen years old, and possessed a voice of unusual sweetness and strength. It is

said that people living on Spring Street in West Roxbury, three-quarters of a mile away, could hear her singing in the open air. When Christopher Cranch came, the young people were full of glee, for they knew that he could provide many varieties of entertainment, musical and literary. Miss Graupner's piano-playing, too, was heartily sanctioned, and the occasional quartettes which Mr. Dwight imported from Boston gave deep satisfaction. The Hutchinson family, consecrated to the cause of antislavery and temperance, but naturally interested in other phases of social reform, drifted in time to Brook Farm, where everybody was moved by their perfect singing of indifferent music, which probably seemed less than mediocre to ears and tastes which had been trained by John Dwight. Abby Hutchinson, whose name is a synonym to most of us for a scarlet velvet bodice, was only thirteen at this time, and here as everywhere was the centre of much sympathetic interest. This famous group of radicals went forth from their visit much refreshed by what they found, and even sought to turn their own home at Milford, New Hampshire, into a miniature Brook Farm.

Partly from necessity, partly from choice, it was customary for the young people to sit on the floor or on the stairs during evening entertainments at the Eyrie, and the habit produced

a variety of comments: George Bradford thought it very pretty; Margaret Fuller found it very annoying. When the washing and wiping of dishes was going on, often the group employed would ease the task by singing "O Canaan, bright Canaan," or "If you get there before I do," or some other secularly religious song, dear to the "Elder Knapp" period. Attendance at concerts and lectures away from the Farm was comparatively of infrequent occurrence; there was so much that was interesting, absorbing, and high in quality at home, that there was no particular inducement to seek diversion abroad. Whenever such excursions were taken, the motive was usually something more serious than a search for pleasure. Nothing better evinces the fine zeal of these Brook Farmers — some of them simple folk enough — than their journeying to Boston to hear good music, and then walking back a good nine miles under the stars and in the middle of the night, with an early morning's work before them. This same warm interest attached to the Associationist meetings in Boston in which Mr. Ripley usually took a leading part. Antislavery gatherings in Boston and Dedham were attended by large numbers who went in farm wagons. Only one or two of the Association were zealously committed to this cause, but it would have been impossible for so humane a company to remain untouched by the

call for sympathy which was sent up all about them. One woman (Mrs. Leach?) was so deeply imbued with antislavery feeling that she discarded the use of the linen collar until the slave should be paid for his work. It is not quite certain whether she confounded cotton with flax; but her reasoning was less direct than that of Charles Lane, who decided that linen was the only fabric which a moral man could conscientiously wear. The use of cotton, he held, must certainly be discouraged because it gave excuse for the employment of slave labor; and he further argued that in our choice of wool for clothing we rob the sheep of his natural defences. Another Brook Farmer, a woman, scoffed at amenities of clothing by quoting:—

“And the garment in which she shines
Was woven of many sins;”

but as regards dress the majority of the family, while they sought first comfort and suitability, had a normal regard for the beautiful and artistic. When about their work the women wore a short skirt with knickerbockers of the same material; but when the daily tasks were ended, they attired themselves after the simpler of prevailing fashions. There was a fancy for flowing hair and broad hats; and at the Hive dances there might be seen wreaths woven from some

of the delicate wild vines and berries found in the woods, twined in waving locks.

It is said that the motive of economy was responsible for the adoption, by the men, of the tunic in place of the “old-world coat.” This favorite garment was sometimes of brown holland, but often blue, and was held in place by a black belt; and for great festivals some of the more fortunate youths possessed black velvet tunics. Such an unusual article of raiment excited as much dismay in the outer world as the idiosyncrasies of other reformers, and has been described as a compromise between the blouse of a Paris workman and the peignoir of a possible sister. Colonel Higginson speaks of the “picturesque little vizzorless caps” worn by the young men as being “exquisitely unfitted for horny-handed tillers of the soil.” Economy of labor may have been accountable for the unshorn face, but the beard was certainly in high favor at Brook Farm, and a predilection for long hair was also current. One of the residents, probably Burrill Curtis, who had been a model for a portrait of Christ, is described by Mrs. Kirby as a “charming feature in the landscape,” while the quality of his temper was attested by the serenity which he showed when stoned by some boys on a pier for daring to leave his hair unclipped in the presence of wharf rats and other good tories.

Miss Russell was at first conscious of a sense of the ludicrousness of the place, but found that this soon wore away; on the whole, excepting always the jejune effect of over-enthusiasm, there was singularly little display of bad or inaccurate taste. There may have been exaggerations, but there was no loudness. The radicalism of the Farm was as little offensive as that of Edmund Quincy and Samuel Sewall in their sympathy with the antislavery movement. It tended toward beauty in appearance, action, and thought. The pose of arrogance toward "civilisées" betrayed a slight lack of humor—a common deficiency in reformers—and a little dulness of perception; but the balance of good manners was restored by a more considerate tone toward the socially less favored. A theoretical equality never seems to have entered anybody's head.

"The symbol of universal unity" was made on a number of solemn occasions,—as at John Orvis's marriage to Marianne Dwight, and at the close of one of Channing's sermons in the grove. The entire company would rise, join hands, thus forming a circle, and vow truth to the cause of God and humanity. One such outpouring of emotional sincerity, which occurred after four years of community life, attests the solid basis of an expression of feeling which earlier might have seemed hysterical.

It is always to the credit of a reformer that he is willing to look into schemes proposed by other reformers, and Brook Farm was liberality itself toward new ideas outside its own field. The water-cure and the starving-cure both received due attention at the hands of some of the members of the household. Mrs. Kirby's account of the treatment at a cold-water cure a few miles from Brook Farm is vivid, but not alluring. Thirteen barrels of ice-cold water were yielded up daily by a natural spring, and this supply was dammed until a patient was ready for it. Then the sluices were opened and the water allowed to pour down an inclined plane and fall a distance of twenty-five feet upon the back of the shuddering victim. The sensation is said to have been that of pounding by glass balls. "Umschlag," or wet bandaging, was a treatment reserved for the following day. Strict prohibition was put on visits to the Farm in the intervals between douches, for the reason that all excitement must be avoided, in order that the cure might be efficient. The starving-cure had an ardent follower in a young Hungarian, Count G— (possibly Gurowski though not probably), who, for a time, shared the fortunes of the Farm; but the simple menu of the community removed any pressing need for the general application of this treatment.

Of sport, in the restricted and technical sense,