

in whom her enthusiasm had kindled a deep response, is especially dedicated to the training of the children of the poor by kindergarten methods.

Miss Peabody was the original of Miss Birdseye in "The Bostonians" of Henry James — the charming old lady who "would smile more if she had time"; and she was in her later life known among her friends as "the Grandmother of Boston," because she once filled the character in an exhibition of Mrs. Jarley's Waxworks. For some years before her death she was totally blind, but this affliction hampered her less than would be supposed. One incident of the sessions at the Concord School of Philosophy shows the respect in which she was universally held. Two young reporters who were sent out to write up the proceedings of one day were instructed to make all the fun they chose of anybody but Miss Peabody — a creditable restraint in the annals of the daily press. When she died, on January 3, 1894, in her ninetieth year, it was with her mental power almost undiminished, and her childlike and effusive spirit unchanged.

CHAPTER VI

THE CLOSING PERIOD

THE principal factors of the latter days were two. One was the introduction of ^{The "Har-} a form of Fourierism, as modified by Mr. ^{binger"} Albert Brisbane; the other was the *Harbinger*, which was not only the official organ of Fourierism in this country, but a literary feature in the annals of Brook Farm, so important as to deserve special attention, both on its own account and in connection with the *Dial*. The *Dial* and the *Harbinger* had few points of resemblance, but they belonged to the same intellectual family. Neither of them espoused directly the cause which it represented. The *Dial* was edited and conducted by the Transcendentalists of Boston and Concord, but it contained no direct advocacy of the cult. This proved a source of strength, and has made the *Dial* an integral fragment in the history of American letters. The *Harbinger* devoted itself to the cause of Association and Fourierism, neglecting almost wholly the immediate and urgent interests of Brook Farm. This policy, which

was deliberate, turned out to be a mistake, for it would have been legitimate for an "organ," such as this paper unquestionably was, to inform its friends and the public generally regarding matters in which much interest, to say nothing of curiosity, was constantly manifested.

The affinity between the *Dial* and Brook Farm alone may here claim attention. When the *Harbinger* was born, the older magazine was already dead; but almost all who had written for the *Dial* wrote also for the new journal. Several of the contributors to the transcendental quarterly became active Brook Farmers. In volume two of the *Dial* appeared three papers: one, entitled "Prophecy, Transcendentalism, Progress"; the second, "A Glimpse of Christ's Idea of Society"; the third, "Plan of the West Roxbury Community"—the last two by Miss Peabody; in volume three, one paper entitled "Fourierism and Socialism," introducing another by Brisbane; and in volume four a paper on "Brook Farm" by Charles Lane, and one on "Fourierism" by Miss Peabody—all important contemporary matter bearing directly or indirectly on the history and the conditions of the Association, from a friendly but not always approbative source, and constituting the only powerful influence outside itself, except the *Tribune* in New York, which Brook Farm ever had.

The ceasing of the *Dial* and the *Present* left a clear field for the *Harbinger*. In a little less than fifteen months later, on June 14, 1845, appeared the first number. The new paper could not have been started during the life of either of these precursors, for the reason that there would have been no room for it; it could only have paralleled the philosophical and literary attempts of the one, and the reform spirit of the other. Ripley did, however, seize one advantage in making the *Harbinger* a recognized organ of a far larger purpose than the financial welfare of a single and local experiment. There was some reason to hope for a moderate success in advocating the cause of Association. The country at large was taking an uncommon interest in this, one of the absorbing questions of the time. If there were journals already devoted to social reform, no other had so wide a programme, so able a corps of writers, or so good a vantage point. The *Harbinger* was also to occupy the field left open by Brisbane's paper, the *Phalanx*, which ceased to appear in 1845.

With number one of the fifth volume, in June, 1847, the *Harbinger* was transferred to the American Union of Associationists, and continued to be published in New York until February, 1849, when it died. Its successor was Channing's *Spirit of the Age*, begun in July of that year and ended in April, 1850. The *Har-*

binge was a generous quarto, with three columns to a page, of no beauty of type or paper; it was less attractive than the *Dial*, although it was reputedly and clearly printed. It appeared weekly, and its subscription price was two dollars a year in advance, and one dollar for six months. A single copy could be bought for six and a quarter cents. There were several agents at various times, particularly in New York, Boston, and Cincinnati. The advertisements were very few. Ripley's introductory notice in the first number was marked by great moderation, without a word relating directly to Brook Farm. The good of all mankind was the keynote: "our motto is the elevation of the whole human race, in mind, morals, and manners, and the means . . . orderly and progressive reform. . . . We shall suffer no attachment to literature, no taste for abstract discussion, no love of purely intellectual theories, to seduce us from our devotion to the cause of the oppressed, the down-trodden, the insulted and injured masses of our fellow men." In regard to the constituency Ripley closes: "We look for an audience among the refined and educated classes . . . but we shall also be read by the swart and sweaty artisan." The artisan and the cultured were ready to hand at Brook Farm, not so much to read as to make the *Harbinger*, which owes its existence to this combination. It was a necessity, in fact, that

some such project be undertaken to provide work for the incoming members, skilled to what they had already learned to do, and of little use in the farm work. The Association could have furnished intelligence, but the Phalanx alone provided technical skill; and there was enough literary capacity left over from the early Associates to furnish copy for the Printers' Group. So far, then, it was not an unwise business undertaking, but its results were more far-reaching than was anticipated. It not only gave immediate work to compositors and pressmen, but it brought forward in a definite way literary aptitudes which needed soil for a start, and which grew sturdily after the paper had stopped.

It is not safe to say how many copies of the *Harbinger* were disposed of. In number five of volume one it is stated that a circulation of one thousand had been reached, and that new names were "coming in every day." There is little probability that a distribution of two thousand copies was ever attained. Ripley was editor-in-chief, and even after the paper was transferred to New York, he continued in his position, at a salary of five dollars a week, while Dwight and W. H. Channing were retained as Boston contributors. The list of writers was strong: from New York were eight men,—Brisbane, Channing, Cranch, Curtis, Godwin, Greeley, and Osborne Macdaniel; from

Brook Farm, five, — Ripley, Dwight, Dana, Orvis, Ryckman; from Boston, six, — Higginson, Story, Otis Clapp, Dr. Walter Channing, W. F. Channing, and James Freeman Clarke; also Lowell from Cambridge, Shaw from West Roxbury, Whittier from Amesbury, J. A. Saxton from Deerfield, A. J. Duganne from Philadelphia, and E. P. Grant from Ohio. There were other contributors, among them Allen and Pallisse of Brook Farm, W. E. Channing, the poet, Hedge, Stephen Pearl Andrews, S. D. Robbins, and a few more.

The heaviest articles and editorials came from Ripley, Dana, and Brisbane; and now and then Dwight would write something on Association or an allied topic, which seemed a little more luminous than the downrightness of Ripley, or the fierce, polemic tone of Dana, who, besides these serious efforts, did many book reviews, spoken of elsewhere, and a number of poems which had force and earnestness, though little sweetness. Dwight naturally confined himself mainly to musical criticism and the extolment of the art which he loved so devotedly. Mr. Cooke goes so far as to say that the *Harbinger* "became one of the best musical journals the country has ever possessed."

A valuable addition to the musical feature was the correspondence of Curtis from New York. The poetry was mainly furnished by

Cranch, Lowell, Story, Higginson, Duganne, Dana, and Dwight — the two latter also translating some poems from the German. Translations were an important feature. George Sand's "Consuelo" and her "Countess of Rudolstadt" were admirably put into English by neighbor Francis G. Shaw. To think of the *Harbinger* is to recall Shaw's translations. There were occasionally anecdotes of a humorous nature. It would even be profitable for one hunting for early specimens of American wit to run through the few volumes of the *Harbinger*. Boston and its vicinity was not then so radiant with jocularity and spontaneous joy that this feature of the *Harbinger* should be passed by. These amenities grew scarcer as the faces at Brook Farm grew longer, and the later pages are wholly given over to serious things.

Of the articles, Dwight wrote three hundred and twenty-four, Ripley three hundred and fifteen, Dana two hundred and forty-eight, and Channing thirty-nine. The printers of the *Harbinger* deserve a word. One was Butterfield, who married Rebecca Codman. He was a tall, handsome man, and was familiarly known as "Hero." The other was "Grandpa" Treadwell.

There are published to-day, where once the *Harbinger* had its home, three Lutheran church papers: one, fortnightly, in the Lettonian lan-

guage, one in Esthonian, and one in German. Thus the literary traditions of Brook Farm are still locally maintained.

When Charles Fourier, the son of a French linen-draper, died in 1837, at the age of sixty-five, his theories were not well known in this country. In an article on Fourierism, which appeared in the *Dial* for April, 1844, Miss Peabody wrote that the "works of Fourier do not seem to have reached us," and that she had entertained "remembrances of vague horror" connected with his name. To criticise or to elucidate Fourierism now is unnecessary. Admirably did Emerson penetrate the mesh when he said that Fourier "had skipped no fact but one, namely, Life," and that he "carried a whole French revolution in his head, and much more." The single point of interest is to understand how such a theory could have found even partial acceptance with Horace Greeley, Parke Godwin, Margaret Fuller, George Ripley—all possessed of sound mind and disposition—to say nothing of the lesser known Fourierists, like Byllesby, Skidmore, and others. Even in London, where men are hard-headed, the *Phalanx*, under the editorship of Hugh Doherty, was making good headway, first as a weekly, then as a monthly journal. To Albert Brisbane belongs the responsibility of importing the Frenchman's doc-

Albert Brisbane and Fourierism

trine to this country, and of infecting the shrewd Yankee intelligence with its allurements. Horace Greeley was the ablest and easiest victim; but it was not long before the staff of the *Tribune*, which first appeared in April, 1841, was well infused with Fourierism.

Brisbane was born in 1809, at Batavia, N. Y., and spent his early manhood in study in various parts of Europe, and in travelling extensively there, as well as in Turkey and Asia Minor. Of sound education and good intellectual training, he was also of an honest, kindly, and rather innocent character. Sympathetic by nature, he was impressed by what he believed to be the unnecessary sufferings of humanity, and was deeply stirred by the injustice of the social system. In this mood it was easy for him to become profoundly attracted by Fourier's Association and Attractive Industry, which promised all that the fondest dreamer for better days could hope. His interest expressed itself through his "Social Destiny of Man, or Association and Reorganization of Industry," published at Philadelphia in 1840, when he was about thirty years of age. This was followed by "A Concise Exposition of the Doctrine of Association," which, it may be supposed, had the most immediate effect on the members at Brook Farm. He was in moderate but not dependent circumstances, and would prosecute no business for merely personal

gain. Though scornful of trivial discussions, he was devoid of fanaticism and intolerance. It was his opinion that America, not France, was the true field for this gospel; though an American, he lacked the national quality of humor, the possession of which would have saved him some Gallic extravagances. Emerson was amused to see that Brisbane in his earnestness made everything reducible to order,—even “the hyæna, the jackal, the gnat, the bug, the flea, were all beneficial parts of the system”; but it took “1680 men to make one Man.” Respecting Brisbane’s seriousness, Arthur Sumner tells of a group of Brook Farmers lying out in the moonlight. “What a heavenly moon!” said one. “Miserable world! Damned bad moon!” was poor Brisbane’s reply. The “Ay, it’s a sad sight,” of the dyspeptic Carlyle as he looked with Leigh Hunt at the starry heavens hardly equals this cosmic despair.

Distrusting with Fourier all cant regarding the “progress of humanity,” Brisbane fell back, like the Master, on the perfection of nature. He confined himself in his writings to the elucidation and modification of the social schemes of Fourier, leaving superterrestrial regions fairly well alone. “Philosopher Brisbane,” as the *New York Herald* was pleased to call him, was sincere, but he had certain dangerous mental qualities. Miss Russell, who was never con-

verted, says that he had the power to answer objections, but not to convince. He dealt in futures, and could, by his eloquence and sense of expansion, make listeners fancy that the great reformation had already begun. That he could have thus influenced unemotional Ripley is strange indeed. One gets the impression that Brisbane was not an “interesting” personality, though he had an intellectual face and forehead. He wore a closely trimmed beard, and was of good height. His voice was rapid and not soothing, though full of earnestness. He died on May 1, 1890.

Brisbane’s first important proselyte was the radical editor of the *Tribune*. The outward appearance of Horace Greeley was that of some wondering Moses at the fair, ready to be duped by any fakir; but he was in most concerns shrewd and cautious. Had there not been within him a heart quick to respond to suffering, perhaps he would not have embraced the doctrines of Brisbane so readily. While serving laboriously on one of the committees appointed in the city of New York to relieve the hardships of the winter of 1838, he fell in with much distress, for which he felt, like Brisbane, that there must be an alleviation if not a remedy. To bring this about he wrote some articles for the *New-Yorker*, which attracted the notice of Brisbane, who was then bringing

back with him from abroad a plan for the rehabilitation of the universe, and who found Greeley ready to listen even to news from the moon. By lectures and conversations Brisbane began to make headway. Six months after the *Tribune* appeared there was a formal notice of one of Brisbane's lectures, followed a few weeks later by warmer commendation. Early in the next year a column on the first page of the *Tribune*, the daily and weekly circulation of which then exceeded twenty thousand copies, was purchased by a few votaries with the understanding that it was to be filled by the productions of Brisbane's pen, pushed, as the *Dial* says, "with all the force of memory, talent, honest faith, and importunacy." This column was faithfully employed, though not always daily, until the middle of 1844, when the writer revisited Europe. Like the rest of Brisbane's writings, these contributions make hard reading to-day; they were doggedly sincere, never by accident brilliant, and they finally did win attention. Fourierism was at last in the air, and it was known that Greeley was infected by it. Not that he or his paper really indorsed Fourierism, but they encouraged it. Greeley was too radical to trust any scheme absolutely. It is corroborative of the progress which Fourierism was really making, particularly in the city of New York, that the Society Library, a highly

conservative institution, should have opened its rooms in 1844 to lectures by Godwin, Greeley, and W. H. Channing.

There soon began attacks, personal and general, from certain papers, in particular from the *Rochester Evening Post*, the *New York Express*, and from the *Courier and Enquirer*, the most powerful of all antagonists. In the fall of 1846, when about two hundred thousand Americans are said to have acknowledged the name of Fourierists, there was opened a battle royal between the quills of Horace Greeley and Henry J. Raymond, formerly on Greeley's staff, and then writing for Colonel James Watson Webb's *Courier and Enquirer*. It was occasioned by a letter written by Brisbane on his return from Europe in 1846, to the *Courier and Enquirer*, but printed in the *Tribune*. For six months and in twenty-four articles, afterward gathered into book form, raged this spirited and able controversy. Parton, who never wrote a dull line, has, with all his best vivacity, condensed the debate into a few pages of his campaign life of Greeley. The contest ended with a generally admitted triumph of skill on the part of Raymond over Greeley's earnestness. The *Tribune* acknowledged no defeat, except by a sudden silence after the last argument by Raymond on May 20, 1847. There were occasional, and not unfriendly, allusions to Fourierism, but the *Tribune*, as an

active journal, withdrew its approval. If, however, Greeley no longer waved the banner of Fourierism, he did not relinquish his efforts for social amelioration. As late as 1868 he reaffirmed a faith in Association and rejected Communism as at war with one of the strongest and most universal instincts.

Greeley took a deep and practical interest in Brook Farm; several of his intimate and trusted friends were there, and he was glad to sustain them by kindly encouragement in the *Tribune*, and by an occasional visit. Miss Russell relates amusingly the coming of an apparition which proved to be Greeley, not in disguise, but simply his astonishing self. "His hair was so light that it was almost white; he wore a white hat; his face was entirely colorless, even the eyes not adding much to save it from its ghostly hue. His coat was a very light drab, almost white, and his nether garments the same." This Apostle of Light, however odd his personality, was welcome to the community to which he was never disloyal, though his heart was more with the North American Phalanx, a visit to which was easier for so busy a man. Little as they saw of him, Greeley's good will was valued by the Brook Farmers, none of whom is known to have held Emerson's opinion that he was both coarse and cunning. Through no fault of his own, Greeley

was probably an injury to the West Roxbury community. It was his misfortune—a misfortune which followed him to his tragic end—to excite marked political antagonisms, and it was natural that such interests as he espoused should come also under the ban.

How happened it that Brook Farm, after two years of institutional life, which gave no distinct outward evidence of failure, came to change from an Association of individuals into a Phalanx modelled in part after the plan of Fourier? The various recollections say only in a dim way that at about this time there was much talk of a change, and that finally it was effected, principally through the influence of Brisbane. Brisbane was welcomed with the heartiness so generally shown at that time by each phase of reform to every other. Even the *Dial* for July, 1842, opened its columns to Brisbane, whom it greeted as an honest man in "a day of small, sour, and fierce schemes." In the *Present* for October, 1843, Channing held out a generous hand to him, though saying with his wonted frankness that Fourier must be held fallible in many things, and that a "science of Universal Unity is not for this generation." This is curious when we consider how often the phrase was subsequently on Channing's own lips. In the same number of the *Present* there is announced a call,

signed by J. A. Collins, N. H. Whiting, John Orvis, and J. O. Wattles, for a meeting at the Community in Skaneateles, New York, on October 14 and 15, 1843, in the interest of a reorganization of the social system by a community of property and interest throughout the country. This was hardly more than a straw; but in the December number of Channing's journal there was a call for a convention of the friends of Social Reform in New England and elsewhere, to be holden in Boston, on December 26 and 27, 1843. Among the signers of this call were three members of the Northampton Association; five persons from Lynn, Massachusetts; seven from Boston one from Lowell; F. S. Cabot, John Allen, George C. Leach from Roxbury, Massachusetts (all Brook Farmers), and L. W. Ryckman, Brook Farm. It was felt that the time was ripe for testing Fourier's theory of Attractive Industry and of Passional Harmonies. Channing warmly commended this call; while admiring Fourier's accuracy, "gorgeous and stupendous imagination," conscientiousness, and other brave virtues, he sent out a word of warning against his sweeping censure of society, his arrogance toward criticism, and his "morbid impatience with what he thought error, hypocrisy, or pretension." Evidently on December 15, 1843, neither Channing nor the more prominent members of Brook

Farm were committed on paper to Brisbane and Americanized Fourierism. In the next number of the *Present* (January, 1844) is a full story of the convention, which lasted over from the last week of December into the first week of January, and marked, in Channing's words, "an era in the history of New England." It proved to be a veritable love-feast of the associations at Northampton, Hopedale, and Brook Farm; it was plain that the drift of the convention as a whole was Fourierward. Not forgetting his former strictures, Channing said that it at last seemed to him that Fourier had "given us the clew out of our scientific labyrinth and revealed the means of living the law of love." Association was upheld, but there was some passing friction between the communal and associative ideals. The resolutions indorsed Fourier and hoped to see a "test of the actual working of his principles."

On January 18, 1844, appeared a second edition of the constitution of the Brook Farm Association, printed in the March issue of the *Present*, and prefaced by an important statement signed by Ripley, Pratt, and Dana. After summarizing the existing conditions and advantages of the Farm, they continued as follows: "With a view to the ultimate expansion into a perfect Phalanx, we desire without any delay to organize the three primary departments of

labor, namely, Agriculture, Domestic Industry, and the Mechanic Arts." This change, so radical and so fateful, was thus definitely announced. A decision was certainly reached with remarkable promptness after the December convention, but there is reason to suppose that it had been for some time slowly forming in the minds of the real leaders.

Brisbane was deeply interested in this change, which his influence, no one knows how directly, did so much to effect. He lectured and visited at Brook Farm, and at one time remained there for several months. He showed a deep solicitude for a risk in which, indeed, so much of his own reputation was practically invested. Letters exist which show his concern for the financial condition; he offered practical suggestions in regard to securing capital and placing stock; notwithstanding this desire to be of service among the friends of Brook Farm in New York, he, like others there, was then deeply immersed in the affairs at Red Bank, and was in no position to shoulder actual responsibility. It is evident that his main usefulness was confined to giving advice and to supplying moral fervor.

In two years more the tide of Fourierism had begun to ebb, and it carried out with it Brook Farm. But two vestiges were left on seemingly sure foundations,—the North American Phalanx, which lasted fourteen years, and of which

Greeley said "if it could not live, there was no hope for any other," and the Wisconsin, or Ceresco Phalanx. These too went soon. The assaults of some of the New York papers have already been mentioned. These secular papers were joined by the powerful *Observer*, which headed the outcry that the reform wished to "disorganize" society. The charge made against Fourier's views of sexual morality was damaging, and probably tended to injure Brook Farm to some extent. Even the American Union of Associationists, at their meeting of May, 1846, in Boston, felt constrained to protect themselves by asserting "*Fourierists* we are not and cannot consent to be called, because Fourier is only *one* of the great teachers of mankind."

Brisbane's own career as a doctrinaire properly closed with the ominous silence of Greeley and the ineluctable misadventure at West Roxbury. It is profitless to speculate as to whether too much system killed the Phalanx, or whether the simple cohesion of the first Association might have averted any serious trouble. There is little doubt, however, that Albert Brisbane, despite his lofty and disinterested character, proved to be the evil genius of Brook Farm.