

THE LATE GEORGE RAPP AND THE HARMONISTS.*

It was my privilege, a third of a century ago, to spend a social evening in company with Mr. Rapp, the subject of this paper, drinking tea with him at the house of a common friend. The Harmonist chief, then an octogenarian, was dressed, I remember, in the quaint blue homespun garments peculiar to the society. In retrospect I can yet hail the old man's grand, Teutonic build and broad, dignified face, but more especially his large, dreamy blue eyes, that seemed most of the time to be looking at something far off,—a peculiarity which invested them with a preternatural expression not easily forgotten. After the fashion of the old German divines, he wore his hair (what remained of it) long, letting it drop in silvery ringlets over his coat-collar, while his patriarchal beard rested like a drift of snow upon his breast. The Harmonists who attended him—perhaps half a dozen men and women—watched him closely during the evening, anticipating his wants with the solicitude and reverence of children. He conversed in German, the society's physician (Doctor Teught) acting as interpreter for those present who were ignorant of that language. His manners were plebeian, showing no past acquaintance with the polite world, and his remarks, while often displaying originality, evinced but little intellectual culture. He was, of course, the cynosure of general observation in the room during the evening, and his table-talk, from a full consciousness on his part of that distinction, was delivered by him with loud precision and a dogmatism perhaps not unlike that which armed the old Pythian responses. He discussed chiefly religious topics, and seldom smiled. I remember he asserted that scholastic divinity should be regarded as exclu-

sively the professional property of the clergy. Laymen were prone to become vain and arrogant when they assumed to expound the abstruse problems of theology. The pastoral office was dishonored, and sound orthodoxy, he had observed, was always imperiled, by laic attempts at doctrinal exegesis.

The polity of the Harmony Society, during Mr. Rapp's life-time, was that of a thorough patriarchal despotism. His administration, as a rule, was lenient, but simply for the reason that his religious tact and great force of character on the one side, and the abject devotion to his will steadily observed by the members on the other, rendered it but seldom necessary for him to vindicate his authority by any harsh exercise of power. His word was law. "Father Rapp says it" was enough to settle all questions of duty, sacred or secular, and quiet controversy. He was regarded by the Harmonists as in a special sense the viceroy of the Deity, and the doctrines he taught were acknowledged as inspirations. Not only had the fundamental compact, upon which the society rested, been prescribed by him without consultation with others, but also its rules of government subsequently established, even down to the simplest details of its domestic economy. Said one of the members: "The laws and rules of the society were made by George Rapp according to his own arbitrary will and command. The members were never consulted as to what rules should be adopted; they had no voice in making the laws." It is true that Mr. Rapp, when the society was organized at Old Harmony, proposed to bestow some share of autonomy on its members. He instituted an Advisory Council, consisting of twelve elders, to be chosen by the people, and also elevated to the executive dais by his side a colleague ostensibly to share with himself the sovereign authority. That, however, was only a nominal concession, although sufficient to satisfy the modicum of democratic conception found there. His colleague from the very start was but a Consul Bibulus, and his official advisors were uniformly treated as figure-heads at the council-board; and not unfrequently, when his policy would gain by it, their official rank was travestied without scruple. In fact, they degenerated

* The Harmony Society was organized February 15th, 1805, at what was subsequently called Old Harmony, on the bank of the Connoquenessing Creek, in Butler County, Pennsylvania. After a ten years' residence there the Harmonists sold their lands, with the improvements, and migrated in a body to the state of Indiana, where they founded, in 1815, on the bank of the Wabash, the town of New Harmony. They remained in Indiana during a second decennary, and then, in 1825, having disposed of their estate to Robert Owen, the Socialist, returned to Pennsylvania and built the town of Economy (their final location), on the north bank of the Ohio, eighteen miles below Pittsburg.

insensibly into a useful police for the enforcement in the society of distasteful measures. It must be conceded, however, that Mr. Rapp administered that irresponsible power throughout—if we except the enforcement of celibacy—with singular fidelity to the well-being of the society. That grand-looking, blue-eyed old man embodied for its members an ever present, tutelary Providence. He watched over them with kind, proleptic concern in all their ways, regulating their hours of labor and of recreation, and assigning them their work in the factory or in the field. He provided bountifully for their comfort in health, and by his dual ministry, as ruler and priest, always lightened the burden of their troubles in seasons of infirmity.

During his life-time, as was generally known, Mr. Rapp was a Millenarian. He held the doctrine of an approaching personal reign of Christ on earth, which would be visible and glorious. Few knew of the paramount influence exercised by that tenet upon his communistic policy. From an early period indeed it had become the lodestar of his faith, by which his whole career in after life was guided. This inspiration must be kept in mind in order to comprehend the full design of the Harmony Community, while we contemplate the phenomena its history presents.

George Rapp was born in 1757, in the petty kingdom of Würtemberg, that prolific nursery of German pietism. Some fifteen years after he had reached manhood he abandoned his small patrimonial estate and the culture of the vine, that he might exercise more effectively the rare native gifts he possessed as an exhorter or lay preacher. During his early ministry he advocated "supernaturalism" and spiritual Christianity. In his humble sphere he inculcated with enthusiastic devotion the old thermic pietism of Spener and Francke; for that only, he felt, was the church's tower of strength in its conflicts with the aggressive neology of Dr. Paulus and the rationalists. Ignorant as Mr. Rapp then was of scholastic theology, and a stranger to the professional training of the university, his simple homiletics fitted him only to address the illiterate masses. But his native eloquence, heightened by enthusiasm and sublimated by a certain accompaniment of mysticism, redeemed the want of learning and drew to his lectures admiring crowds, many of whom soon became his disciples. Very soon the rustic vine-dresser, by the glamour of his

fervent oratory, became transfigured to the minds of his superstitious followers, and stood before them endowed with the credentials of an inspired prophet. One of the most intelligent of the Harmonists, many years after, thus confessed the religious power of his speech as felt during that early period of his ministry: "Of all the preachers we had ever heard there was none whose words had power to touch our hearts like those of Father Rapp."

As might be supposed, Mr. Rapp's intensely devout temperament soon rendered him an extremist in his religious opinions. His theology, while elevated somewhat by the study of Oetinger and the eccentric Jung-Stilling, had through the influence of those writers become thoroughly impregnated with the elements of mysticism. Michael Hahn, the Swabian theosophist, was for some years his bosom friend. No wonder then, with a constitutional temper so happily accordant, he was early led, in the wake of those evangelical magnates, to embrace and count as the richest gem in his creed the thrilling conviction then cherished in Germany concerning the near approach of Christ's second advent. From that time, his life, all unsuspected by himself, became a pure, chiliastic romance. His project of a communistic association was then first conceived—an association that should be patriarchal and somewhat theocratic in its polity, in which the highest psychical development of his adherents might be obtained against the coming Messianic epiphany. The loose, popular impression that Mr. Rapp was nothing better than a shrewd, saintly adventurer who, in entering upon his communistic scheme, had followed only the beckonings of ambition, does grave injustice to his character. By taking as our clew the millennial inspirations, just noted, we shall find that his career, in the main, was marked by unselfishness and sanctity of purpose. At home, in Protestant Germany, the established (Lutheran) church had lost for him its venerable prestige. The neological party had engrossed its pulpits, and had secularized its public worship by the adoption of a mongrel service, borrowed chiefly from the literature and art of the day, and which Mr. Rapp and his pietistic brethren held was but a semi-pagan travesty of the grand old liturgy, whose vital doctrines and rich devotional sentiment it grossly libeled. "The oratorios and cantata of the beer garden," wrote the indignant Hurst, "were the Sabbath accompaniments

of the sermons. Literature with its captivating notes had well-nigh destroyed what was left of the old pietistic fervor. The poets of the day were publicly recited in the temples where the reformers had preached. The peasantry received frequent and labored instructions from the pulpit on the raising of cattle, bees and fruit."

His recoil from that desecration placed Mr. Rapp in the ranks of the "separatists." However, his doctrinal dissent from the old Lutheran symbol, in relation to his idolized conviction of a literal millennial reign, antecedent to the general judgment, and also to the belief he entertained of the final restoration of all mankind to happiness,—tenets jointly condemned in the morning of the Reformation (Augsburg Confession, Article 17),—served materially to reconcile him to his action in breaking with the establishment. But now his unwonted zeal as a dissenting preacher, and the wide-spread religious excitement which followed on his sermons, soon aroused the jealousy of the neighboring parochial clergy, and drew upon him the frown of the civil government. Foreseeing too how utterly hopeless any attempt must prove to found a communistic association in the densely peopled Fatherland, he at length turned his eyes toward the United States in quest of a location for his projected enterprise.

The spot chosen for the first Harmonist settlement in this country was singularly adapted to further the ends Mr. Rapp had pictured to himself, by reason of its rich, virgin soil, its local isolation and withal its proximity to the market towns of Pittsburg and Beaver on the Ohio. The tract of land purchased by the immigrants (embracing 5000 acres) lay in Butler County, Pennsylvania, and extended several miles along the meandering course of the Connoquenessing Creek. When the society was founded, in 1805, the whole region about was still a wilderness. Primeval forests shrouded the adjacent hills and waved luxuriantly up and down the winding, romantic valley. Antlered deer not unfrequently were seen browsing in fellowship with the young cattle and sheep under the green covering of the adjoining timber. Wild turkeys roamed fearlessly among the chestnut-trees along the borders of the initial clearings; and ruffed grouse came whirring every morning from their laurel coverts by the creek into the society's new barn-yards to feed with the domestic fowls.

Mr. Rapp's golden opportunity had come

at last. Intrusted alone in the wilderness with the fortunes of his followers, and left in the formation of his plans to be wholly a law unto himself, unmolested by civil magistrate or parochial parson, he joyously applied himself to the realization of his communistic ideal. He was at that time in the mellowed glory of his manhood, being forty-eight years old. It happened that the foreign speech of the immigrants fortuitously conspired with the solitude of the place to further the exclusive, dissocial policy which he hastened to establish in the embryo community. The few bold hunters and settlers sprinkled around through the great forest, being generally of Scotch-Irish extraction, were effectually debarred by the society's alien vernacular from all dangerous social communication with its members. So highly indeed was that providential circumstance valued by Mr. Rapp that, to perpetuate the advantage it afforded him, he early established some severe rules: "The members of the society," testified one of his followers, "were not allowed to learn the English language; never were allowed to have intercourse with persons who spoke English, except those whose business required it, that is, those engaged in the mechanical and commercial affairs of the society. For that reason members were not permitted to walk outside the lands of the society; they were forbidden to do so by Mr. Rapp."

Thus, Mr. Rapp raised a wall around the society at the beginning, over which its members might not pass; and by an authority supported throughout, certainly not by evil or forbidden arts, but by the profound conviction superstitiously cherished of his superhuman wisdom and virtue, both Rapp and his successors have ever held the community—one notable secession excepted—spell-bound and content within the magic inclosure. For seventy years the Harmonists have dwelt alone, wholly segregated at each of their successive locations from their fellow-men, and indifferent to the industrial, social and political changes which have illustrated the time. They have never adopted American ideas, nor learned to estimate things by other than their Old Country standards, now obsolete. Although closely approached on every side, in their present location, by the advanced lines of American enterprise, and for half a century almost within hearing of the tilt-hammers of Pittsburg, few of them, besides their leaders, have seen more of the world than was visi-

ble from their church tower. They have consequently failed to draw inspiration from our free institutions, and have never aspired to cherish political convictions.* To-day, the stranger who visits Economy is confronted by the paradox of native American citizens (born at Old Harmony before the adoption of celibacy), men and women now of three score and ten, to whom the vernacular of their country, wherein every moment of their long lives has been passed, is totally unknown.

Some will insist, however, that the Harmonist system has made an atonement for political nonentity by the industrial and ethical contributions it has added to the country's sum of practical good. The Harmonists, it is true, taken collectively, have always shown themselves docile, good-tempered and honest. But their morality has ended there. Resting with the recognition of brotherhood among themselves, no sense of a common manhood has ever bound them to other men. Without the charmed boundaries of the society lay a world from which they have, as a body, been utterly isolated. As to material results, the community, it must be acknowledged, was for a time a brilliant success. Mr. Rapp's predilections were agricultural. He looked on the society's splendid landed estate, and its tillage, with special favor; for out-door employment, in fellowship with nature and the changing seasons, he held, predisposed the mind to meditation on the after life, and to general purity of thought. So the culture of the fields was raised into a sacred obligation. That preference, while accepted generally by the Harmonists as beneficial to the society, was met on more occasions than one by an angry, though covert, protest from Frederick Rapp, his adopted son and titular colleague in office. Was it for their moral exaltation (!) that the society's younger females were frequently required to toil in

the fields,—hoeing corn, raking hay, or burning brush?

Forty years ago the society's domain at Economy, then at its culmination of culture, furnished a model of superior tillage to all the farmers around. At midsummer, the prospect viewed from one of the neighboring heights was, indeed, inspiring to one familiar with good tilth, combining carefully pruned orchards, pastures flecked with superb cattle, and endless fields—square, oblong and triangular—glowing in the sun with parti-colored crops of clover, wheat and young maize, that stretched four miles along the broad river-bottom. But that miracle of culture, which thus enchanted the spectator, I am sorry to add, was not accomplished by labor-saving machinery or improved modern methods of farming; it was the costly product of plodding, manual toil, perfected in its glory by old-fashioned, slavish drudgery, to which communists, male and female, were marched in strong detachments every day.

Mr. Rapp's socialism was essentially Scriptural. He, indeed, knew but little about anthropology and social science, and would as soon have looked to the devil for suggestions touching his communistic scheme as to the deistic theories of Bernardin de Saint Pierre or Rousseau. He found his model in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter iv., verse 32: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." Upon that sacred example as a ground-plan he constructed the society's fundamental compact at Old Harmony. Its leading article read: "The members agree with George Rapp and his associates for themselves, their heirs and descendants, to deliver up all their estates and property—cash, lands and chattels—as a free gift or donation for the benefit and use of the association, binding themselves, their heirs, executors and administrators to do all such other acts as may be necessary to vest a perfect title to the same in said association." The newly arrived Harmonists were generally poor, and the ocean passage had consumed their scanty savings of the past. But among them were found some immigrants who were possessed of moderate wealth. These latter would hardly have consented to their leader's proposition of a community of goods simply through exalted conceptions of Christian brotherhood. The German immi-

*The Harmonists at an early day were duly naturalized and they occasionally voted by Mr. Rapp's orders, and under his direction at the general elections, down to the year 1840. During the exciting presidential canvass of that year, several anonymous letters were received by the society, in which the writers threatened to burn the town at night, if Mr. Rapp should cast the solid Harmonist vote—some three hundred ballots—for the Whig or Harrison electors, as it was given out he proposed to do. Apprehensive of trouble, Mr. Rapp kept his people away from the polls on the day of election; and ever since, I believe, they have declined to exercise their right of suffrage, save at elections for township officers.

grant's phlegmatic nature recoils instinctively from those sacrifices, to render which men are prompted merely by romantic sentiment or high-wrought devotion. But Mr. Rapp possessed in his millennial budget a talisman by virtue of which he became master of the occasion. "It was our expectation of the Lord's coming," said a venerable Harmonist recently, "that made us ready to enter into a mutual covenant of community of goods. We could have no wish for accumulation; we would have enough, we knew, in common for our wants, and would have no heirs to lay up for." But all this—the society's social isolation and apostolic communism—formed but the lower elevations upon which Mr. Rapp led his followers up to the lofty summit of meritorious self-denial attained in a state of celibacy. That monastic element of the society deserves prominent notice here, both for its bearing on the millennial preparations of the Harmonists, and because the phenomenon it disclosed has given them a world-wide, unenviable notoriety, having furnished for two-thirds of a century a prolific theme for ribald jests in low saloons and country taverns, and even supplied sometimes a clever mark for the polished shafts of transatlantic genius and wit, as in the cynical lines in Don Juan :

"When Rapp the Harmonist embargo'd marriage
In his harmonious settlement, * * *
Why called he "Harmony" a state sans wedlock?
Now here I've got the preacher at a dead-lock."

Some years ago, during a summer afternoon, I drove into Economy in company with Professor F——, late of the State University of Kansas. After we had gone through the time-honored curriculum of sight-seeing established for visitors, which culminated at the novel grotto in "Rapp's garden," we entered at length the society's store, where the late R. L. Baker, then the principal trustee of the association, kindly received us. He presently invited us into a side room or private office, and treated us to some of the society's celebrated domestic wine. Finding our host in a highly genial mood, the professor improved the opportunity to get some information respecting the society's practice of celibacy. Mr. Baker frankly gave us a brief account of the circumstances attending its introduction. The celibate ordinance was adopted during "a fresh religious revival," which the society enjoyed in 1807, two years after its organization. "Father Rapp," said he, "suggested the measure at one of our

meetings, during the height of the religious excitement. The immolation of endeared family ties on the altar of religion which the step would require, at first startled our adult members, but as we looked on our venerated leader and saw, as we thought, the light of holy inspiration on his face, we felt re-assured, and resolved almost unanimously to take up the cross. A covenant-bond embracing the ordinance was signed by the members, which from that time became a part of our constitution."

"What arguments did Mr. Rapp offer in behalf of the measure?" inquired the professor.

"He told us," replied Baker, "that through special illumination, as he believed, from above, he now saw that the marriage relation, even in its purest form, was incompatible with that penance of the flesh and perfecting of the moral nature, which were required of the elect in view of the approaching advent of Christ. But," continued Baker, "we needed no arguments: the celibate ordinance was adopted voluntarily by our people."

"That being so, let us suppose," queried the professor, "that some of your people, husbands or wives or betrothed lovers, had objected to the measure and refused to sign the bond, would they have been suffered to remain still within the association?"

"Well, sir," he replied, "your supposition happily was not put to the test; indeed it was morally impossible it should have been. Some few worldly minded members, it is true, who had never been with us in spirit, did then refuse their assent to the new ordinance; but of their own accord, after the manner of Demas, they forsook the association. No true Harmonist at the time questioned the wisdom and beneficial intent of Father Rapp's recommendation; we felt that 'his counsel was as if a man had inquired of the oracle of God.' And so you see, with the millennium, as we thought, just before us, it was morally impossible, as I have said, for any of us to have rebelled against the measure."

The professor next wanted some light on the society's subsequent domestic story, and inquired what remodeling of the family constitution was found necessary at the time to carry out practically the celibate law.

"Husband and wife," said Baker, "were not required to live in different houses, but occupied as before the same dwelling with their family, having separate sleeping apartments—the husband's in the upper story

and the wife's in the lower—and treated each other as brother and sister in Christ. It was easier to bear because it was general through the whole community, and all bore their share alike."

Such in substance was Mr. Baker's statement. We must look behind the drawn curtain, however, to find the efficient cause of the celibate resolve. The predominance of the mystic element in Mr. Rapp's temperament has been mentioned already. He had found in the writings or reported lectures of Jacob Böhme, which he held in great reverence, abundant aliment for the dreamy longings of his spirit. The "Hirten Brief," a work which unfolds much of Böhme's system of theosophic mysticism, was under his direction republished by the society, and may be found to this day lying side by side with the Bible in every house at Economy. The story of our great forefather, Adam, in the garden of Eden, as given in its pages, might be readily accepted as a waif from the beautiful mythology of ancient Greece. It was here Mr. Rapp found his convincing argument in favor of celibacy.

According to Böhme's theory in the "Hirten Brief," Adam was created a divine being, subordinate in station only to the Creator himself. He possessed in his person in a mystical manner both the sexual elements, which were designated by the terms "Fire-tincture" and "Light-tincture." When he beheld God's lower creatures all in pairs, so beautiful in their fellowship, he was led, through promptings of the Satanic Shade lurking behind him, to murmur because "there was not found a helpmeet for him." This was the true original transgression. For that he forfeited his godhood.

It is known that during the early part of the present century the more enthusiastic of the German chiliasts confidently believed that the millennial era was just at hand. The appalling emblems employed in the millennial prophecies to depict the moral and political convulsions that would immediately precede the opening of the Messianic reign, such as "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven," were thought to have been amply verified by the Reign of Terror, and the subsequent international wars which had crimsoned the plains of all Europe with human blood. Mr. Rapp sympathized profoundly with that belief. He had warmly espoused Beng-

el's and Jung Stilling's rendering of the prophecies, which assigned to the year 1836 the inauguration of the Messianic sovereignty, and designated Palestine as the favored land where the Messiah's earthly throne would be established. And so it was in pursuance of his glowing convictions on the subject that he enjoined, so soon after the formation of the society in this country, a life of celibacy upon its members. His people, he fancied, during the years of probation still remaining before our Lord's advent, might not only find an antidote through that penance to the moral distemper entailed on the race by Adam's unhallowed prurience, but through its virtue might rise into the sunlight of a higher life, and, perhaps, cleansed from the old carnal stain, might almost attain to the perfection of the primal man,

"As in the golden days before that sin."

Mr. Baker, for his part, was a cool-headed, sagacious business man with frank manners, which atoned for a certain bluntness of speech and coarse mother-wit. It sounded strange that afternoon to hear a man whose temper was so little leavened with religious exaltation extolling celibacy and citing the morals of the Harmonists in proof of its goodly fruits. I remember pleasantly the triumph that beamed in his honest brown eyes while he took from a drawer and proceeded to read the following declaration on the subject in hand: "Convinced of the truth and holiness of our purpose, we voluntarily and unanimously adopted celibacy, altogether from religious motives, in order to withdraw our love entirely from the lusts of the flesh, which, with the help of God and much prayer and spiritual warfare, we have succeeded well in doing now for more than fifty years."

Infractions of the celibate ordinance, even such as were of honorable conception, were held by Mr. Rapp to be cardinal sins, which could only be expiated by millions of years of suffering. A casual incident lights up the exceptional austerity of his convictions on this point. Jacob Sheaffer at one time was arraigned before him to answer to the indictment of "having talked to one of the girls about marrying her." The young man was penitent and asked pardon, yet for all that Mr. Rapp berated him with all the ferocity of a Jeffreys; he threatened (according to one who witnessed the scene) "that if ever he should talk to the girl again he would have to take his bundle and

go, and that he (Rapp) then, as the priest of the society, would heap all the sins he had committed upon him, for which he would be damned for millions of years. He then told him he would give him grace or pardon once more, but if he should get to hear that he had any conversation with the girl, he would let his power or violence loose against him, and would mash him up to a hundred pieces himself and tramp on him with his feet." It was doubtless that infirmity of temper, whose existence was betrayed only when the celibate statute stood in peril, which suggested the scurrilous rumor, set on foot at an early day, respecting the alleged mutilation by the old chief of his only son, John, whose premature decline and death, it was said, had resulted from the unseemly outrage. It is hardly necessary to say that the rumor throughout was a cruel fiction.

Mr. Rapp's ideas of communism centered wholly upon the benefits it promised him in his preparations for the Second Advent. The towns he built were, in his mind, but training camps, in which his followers might be aptly drilled for posts of special honor in the millennial kingdom. His policy throughout was formed to impress on the Harmonists the biblical sentiment that they were only strangers and sojourners here. And yet Economy, forty years ago, might have sorely tempted with its venerable attractions the saintliest of German saints, and its chieftainship have more than countervailed, the world would think, the brightest honors of a problematical future. It lay in a beautiful expansion of the great valley of the Ohio, and resembled, as a Heidelberg professor once told me, a fine Rhenish village left behind intact from the eighteenth century. The intelligent visitor was sure to find himself transformed into an interested antiquary when he entered the town and saw around him the blue, square-cut garments and heard the guttural vernacular of a by-gone Fatherland. Suggestions of a departed past were constantly raised by his surroundings as he traversed the streets,—by the quaint-looking dwellings so uniform in appearance and appointments, with doors opening on side yards and windows fronting only on the pavements; lattice frames covered with vines attached to all the house-fronts high above the pedestrian's reach, supporting in season an abundance of grapes and closing in the streets with walls of living green; aged men seated on the half-concealed door-steps within the

palings, dreamily puffing their meerschaums, and stout washerwomen bearing tubs of water from the town pumps along the pavements, poised steadily on their heads.

True, strangely combined with that perpetuation of a social past, Economy had its symbols of modern enterprise,—its large cotton mill and its woolen and silk factories, one of each. For a short time indeed its looms had obtained more than a local celebrity. The fabrics produced there—broadcloths, muslins, satins, and velvets—actually commanded at one time, I remember, a premium over similar eastern goods in the Pittsburg market. That industrial anomaly in the affairs of the society, however, was wholly due to the enterprise, and was wholly sustained by the resolution of, Frederick Rapp. Accordingly, after his untimely death in 1833, the society's manufactures began at once to decline. The English and French overseers, procured by him, were soon discharged, and the mills were permanently closed.

Near the center of the wealthy, somnolent town, opposite to the church, stood Mr. Rapp's exceptionally spacious mansion, where he maintained his court, and exercised a mingled civil and sacerdotal authority fully as absolute as that of the Mormon prophet. Yet, notwithstanding his enviable fortune, he felt there as "a wayfaring man who should tarry only for a night." His eyes were bent wistfully upon the orient, waiting and watching for the Messiah to "come in the glory of his father with his angels." "It was still his custom," said an elder, "as the year of promise (1836) approached, to counsel us to be getting ready, with the women, the old and blind, the lame and crippled, to set out for the Holy Land." And long afterward another remarked, referring to that period: "For a number of years he (Rapp) kept everything in readiness which the society would have needed for the journey to the land of Israel." Among administrative arts employed by him to tone up the minds of his people into harmony with his earnest life-aim, was a novel police regulation. The solitary night-watchman was required to call out hourly, as he patrolled his beat: "A day is past, and a step made nearer the end: our time runs away, but the joys of the kingdom will be our reward."

The only critical period that has occurred in the society's quiet annals, was due to the memorable Count Leon imbroglio. As early as 1829, a letter from Germany came to hand, addressed to Mr. Rapp, ostensibly

written by a certain John George Gontgen, who styled himself "private secretary of Count Maximilian de Leon," also "chief librarian of the free city of Frankfort, and Doctor of Philosophy and Theology." The letter abounded in studied mysticism, and was interlarded with phrases which would have rendered their author liable to an indictment for blasphemy, had they been submitted to an American grand jury. The count was termed "the great Ambassador and Anointed One of God"; his descent was traced from "the Stem of Judah and the Root of David"; and his mission, like that of John the Baptist, was to prepare the way for the coming beatific kingdom of Christ. The Harmonists were complimented on their advanced chiliastic stand, and promised, should they yield themselves to the guidance of his chief, the new legate of heaven, a post of signal honor at the Messiah's grand levee in Palestine. With that ominous missive dispatched, Gontgen would seem to have withdrawn from the proceeding, having apparently, like John Doe of legal renown, fulfilled his part by bringing the principal in the case upon the stage. After some interchange of letters, the count was invited to join the society; and accordingly, during the autumn of 1831, he arrived at Pittsburg, accompanied by a small escort of German visionaries. From that city he sent before him to Economy two of his attendants, to herald his advent. It was during the beautiful season of Indian summer, and Nature, in her latter-day glory, seemed to be in sympathy with the temper and expectations of the Harmonists.

The count and his suite entered the town in coaches, and were welcomed by the Harmonists along the street with floral offerings and laudatory anthems; while at the same time the brass band, under the leadership of Frederick Rapp, poured forth from the church-tower strains of greeting that filled the great valley with prolonged reverberations. The carriages stopped in front of the church, where the party alighted. The count at once entered the building, preceded by his "minister of justice,"—a quasi-official wearing a sable gown lined with ermine, and having a gold-hilted sword attached to his belted waist. At that juncture, Mr. Rapp appeared in the scene, appareled in a robe of dark, embroidered silk,—a costume only assumed by him on important state occasions. He conducted his distinguished guest into the pulpit, and formally introduced him to the assembled society.

What golden moments of expectation followed then! "The whisperings of the dawn" entranced, for the instant, eight hundred waiting souls!

Soon the count arose, and, taking from his pocket a small, richly bound volume, placed it on the desk, remarking that it was the "Golden Book," or gospel of the approaching dispensation. He first read some passages from the volume, and then varied the service with an apparently off-hand exposition of the text. Even then, in that glad hour of reception, Mr. Rapp and the Harmonist elders became somewhat alarmed at the "strange doctrines" they detected in the selections read. Their apprehensions were presently shared by others, and soon a vague, unpleasant revulsion of feeling followed throughout the entire assembly. Disappointed, and wearing a despondent air that contrasted strangely with the brightness and hope of their welcome given an hour before, the Harmonists moodily withdrew from the inaugural ceremony. Before many days the count's strange doctrines were fully divulged. According to the Golden Book, the Lord's elect might anticipate the Messiah's advent, and begin from the present, in token of their divine birthright, to enjoy the bounties of the land to their heart's content. The time had come, the count oracularly affirmed, for the Harmonists to adopt an improved style of dress and living. Matrimony should be restored in the society, and, according to divine appointment, "the solitary be set in families." Thus it appeared that the views of Mr. Rapp and the new legate, on leading communistic questions, were radically antagonistic; and, besides, the imperious temper of the former, ordinarily quiescent for want of provocation, could ill brook the tone of superiority now assumed by the latter. Worst of all, letters soon followed from Germany, disclosing the fact that the count was but a crack-brained adventurer and cheat, who had been known at home only as plain Bernhard Müller! To the Harmonists, this transition of the Apostle of the Millennium, from whom they had looked for the "New Revelation," into a demented, sensual impostor, proved indeed a bitter disappointment. An open rupture ensued, and social intercourse with the strangers was suspended. Separate, but comfortable, quarters in the town were, indeed, conceded to them, as the winter was now imminent; but only upon their solemn pledge that, with the opening spring, they would depart from the place. It was

not, of course, to be expected that the famous amity recorded of "the two kings of Brentford" would be revived between the independent chiefs in Economy. The count's disappointment and fancied wrongs had produced a deeper impression on his disordered intellect than the hospitality so grudgingly extended to him. Resentment and interest conspired to override in his mind the dictates of honor, and to justify treachery that was employed to avenge supposed injustice. In that temper he improved his time and eccentric powers, during the winter, Absalom-like, in sowing the seeds of discontent and fostering dissension throughout the society, and to such purpose that, before the snows were gone, he had "stolen the hearts" of fully one-third of the members. Then, for once, the euphonic title of the society became a misnomer. The angry factions mustered around their respective chiefs, and for a time the dissolution of the association seemed imminent. The malcontents claimed "certain rights and privileges," and scoffed at Mr. Rapp's menace to dismiss them, as beggared apostates, from the society's magnificent free-hold. Civil and criminal suits were entered by both parties in the county court at Beaver. Finally, however, through the good offices of eminent legal counselors called in from Pittsburg, a compromise was effected, and articles of agreement setting forth the terms were signed March 6, 1832, which closed—at least for a time—the perilous controversy. Mr. Rapp and his associates engaged to pay the seceding members the sum of \$105,000, in consideration of which the latter agreed to relinquish all their right and title in the society's property, and to withdraw from the place within three months. The sixth article tersely stipulated that: "The Count de Leon and his suite shall, on or before the expiration of six weeks from this date, leave Economy."*

When at length the prophetic year of 1836, long singled out for the Redeemer's

return in glory to the world, had come and gone, Mr. Rapp, notwithstanding a feeling of intense disappointment, maintained still unshaken faith in the chiliastic promises. He declined, however, after that to fix the date of the expected advent. Yet when the society, during the winter of 1844-5, was blest with a notable religious revival, its venerable chief discerned in the event a sure prognostic of the approaching era, and, although on the verge of ninety, buckled himself to the work of preparation for the saintly march to Jerusalem with all the enthusiasm of youth. Two years later he was laid on his death-bed; and then, last of all the Harmonists was the old prophet of the society to recognize his impending mortality. He was taken by surprise, and was only disenchanted in the end from the beatific spell of half a century by the cold touch of the angel of death. One of his elders, who watched at his bedside through the last night of his life, put on record the following memorandum, descriptive of the final scene: "Father Rapp's strong faith in the literal fulfillment of the promises concerning the personal coming of Jesus Christ, and the gathering of the whole of Israel, remained unshaken to his last moments, as was shown by his last words, when he felt the strong gripe of the hand of approaching death, saying: 'If I did not so fully believe that the Lord has designed me to place our society before his presence in the land of Canaan, I would consider this my last.'" He died August 7th, 1847, aged ninety; and, with no deviation from the ordinary mortuary custom of the Harmonists, his remains, inclosed in a plain coffin, were borne during the evening twilight to the orchard, and interred among his departed associates, under the apple-trees.

The Harmony society, at present, has apparently reached its last stage of senile decadence. Economy presents to-day an aspect of desertion, reminding one of a plague-stricken town from which the people have generally fled. Its grass-grown avenues have become favorite feeding-grounds for the society's poultry, where Polands and Brahmas pursue unmolested rising clouds of winged grasshoppers. A quiet solemnity, like that of a Puritan Sabbath, reigns not only through the purlieus of the village, but also about the old central resorts,—hotel, store and town-hall. Old people, who knew the society in its days of glory, now come back only to find desolate memorials at every turn in the silent streets.

* The count, like his namesake, St. Leon, of William Godwin's story, claimed to have found the elixir of life, and assured his dupes of his power to transmute not only the baser metals, but even common rocks, into gold. He exhibited some red powder in his possession, which he told them was the veritable *lapis philosophorum*. At Phillipsburg,—ten miles down the river from Economy,—where he had established himself with his adherents, he constructed a laboratory, providing it with furnace, crucibles, etc.; and when at last urged by his poverty-stricken followers to redeem his promises, he actually attempted some futile experiments with stones gathered from a neighboring quarry.

About seventy Harmonists, men and women, still survive in the society, secluded within their quiet homes, awaiting their time. No parental concern or magnetism of kindred blood exists to draw them out toward the pragmatism of to-day. They "have no heirs to lay up for." Generally the brethren have passed into their second childhood. For all that, they still retain our homage as the personified memory of herculean powers no longer possessed, by which, in the morning of this century, they produced to order, one after another, the three goodly towns of Old Harmony, New Harmony, and Economy, and caused the primeval wilds around them to blossom as the rose. The sisters of the society, too, generally have no longer active use of their faculties, and only challenge attention by their quaint, unmodish dress, and the vacant amiability of their wrinkled features. The present trustees are Jacob Henrici and Jonathan Lentz. The former, who sat during his youth as a divinity student at the feet of Mr. Rapp, now officiates as the religious

pastor of the society. Poor old Joseph, so well known as the purveyor and landlord of the historic hotel for half a century, and remembered by thousands of good people over the land as the Matthew Bramble of the society, was "carried to the orchard" a few years ago. The society is dependent on hired labor for the culture of its fields, and its great capital is now employed through agents away from home, chiefly in extensive manufacturing works at Beaver Falls. The Harmonists now left, as might be expected, continue faithful to their millennial indoctrination. These ancient celibates, with their hearts set on the advent and the after life, entertain no dread whatever of death. Their career is now in its closing scene; and little do they care whether it shall turn out their lot to be found yet lingering incarnate above the mold, or sleeping low in the orchard beneath it, on that glorious morning soon to come, when Father Rapp shall summon by roll-call his loyal Harmonists, both the living and the dead, to fall into line for the triumphal march to the Holy Land.

SUCCESS.

Oft have I brooded on defeat and pain,
 The pathos of the stupid, stumbling throng.
 These I ignore to-day and only long
 To pour my soul forth in one trumpet strain,
 One clear, grief-shattering, triumphant song,
 For all the victories of man's high endeavor,
 Palm-bearing, laureled deeds that live forever,
 The splendor clothing him whose will is strong.
 Hast thou beheld the deep, glad eyes of one
 Who has persisted and achieved? Rejoice!
 On naught diviner shines the all-seeing sun.
 Salute him with free heart and choral voice,
 Midst flippant, feeble crowds of specters wan,
 The bold, significant, successful man.
