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to the editor of the courier:

Dear Sir,—The frequent conventions held by the Associationists, in this city and in New-York, have attracted the attention of the public. to their doctrine. But the technology in which these disciples of Fourier generally express their principles, being itself very difficult, renders the understanding of their system almost impossible. Hence the common question, What are the Fourierists trying to do?

I think the lecture of Mr. Charles A. Dana, before the New-England Fourier Society, on "the connection of Association with Religion," will answer the question. Mr.-Dana is one of the best of the Fourierist writers, and his productions have the merit of being perfectly intelligible. Thinking that an exposition of the doctrine may be acceptable to your readers, I send you the following notice of the lecture in question.

Mr. Dana contends, if I understand him rightly, that man is endowed with native tendencies, or passions, which must be taken as guides in every true social mechanism. Whenever we wish to follow the ways of God, to arrive at the practice of justice and truth, we must refer to the passional nature of man as the rule of divine

and permanent interpretation. Men are now in such relations with each other, that it is impossible for one to follow the impulses of his nature, without interfering with his neighbor. This state of things creates disorder in society, and in the individual; and disorder is the cause of the present chaotic condition of humanity. Every one endeavors to act out his own impulses, to follow his own interests ; and the clashing of passion and interest which results, is the cause of the misery that now covers the earth. Competition is the root of all evil.

A true order of society would enable man to act out all his passional nature. Society should, therefore, be so arranged as to render it impossible for one man to act according to his own pleasure, without acting at the same time for the interests of all. We must find some means of so arranging society, that there shall be a harmony of interests—not a balancing of interests, but such an arrangement that no conflict whatever shall be possible. If there were a balancing of interests, there would also be conflict and compromise, which supposes the necessity of self-denial. But in a well-ordered society there can be no self-denial, no check upon the impulses and passions; for it is the chief end of man to follow always his own interest and inclination, and if any inclination or passion be checked, the end and aim of association is not attained. "We affirm," says Mr. Dana, "that the human passions are to be brought into harmony, that is, into unity with themselves, with universal laws, ad with the Divine will, not by outward restraint, but by entire freedom to act according to their own laws. Here let us not be misunderstood. We are as far from advocating the passions, in the midst of social institutions, founded either on chance or on arbitrary devices, as the most zealous of our opponents."

The cause of human misery is not, then, in man, but in the order of circumstances in which he is placed. "For once for all I deny that there is any innate and fixed evil in human nature. The human passions do not produce the horrible results we everywhere behold, the vice, the sin, and the misery that reign both without and within

control—in a word, this is but another way of denying that he has any liberty whatever.

The harmony of the passions is to be secured by giving to each man the power to act out his own inclinations according to the laws of his passional nature. Under a true order of society there must be, therefore, no law, no restraint, on the free action of the passions, All this is very. simple, but I still find one difficulty. Under the present evil system, the marriage relation is subjected to positive institution, Law pretends to govern. the indisciplinable wanderings of the passions, and binds one husband to one wife, no matter what his or her passional nature may happen to be. If we remove these positive-institutions, these laws, I see nothing but unlimited freedom of divorce, notwithstanding associational arrangements, which can save even a vestige of the marriage relation.

To pass now to.the purely religious application, I deny that what Mr. Dana calls "Unityism, or the passion for unity, is what in religious language: we call the Religious Sentiment." This passion for unity, for harmony in all the impulses of the soul, may, indeed tend to the completeness of the soul itself, but it brings man into no relation whatever with God. It commences, it has its progress and operation, entirely within the sphere of the soul itself., The Religious sentiment has been generally supposed to involve a feeling of duty, a sentiment of the relation of the individual soul to the Father of Spirits. But the doctrine of this lecture can give no place to the idea of duty, it can acknowledge no necessity for the being of a God—at least of a living, personal, and self-conscious God. The system, in short, gives us a religion without a God, a philosophy without human liberty, and an order of social organization without law, without any check whatever upon the action of the passions.

Yours very truly,

W. B. G.

us, by an inevitable necessity." 'Do you ask whence the discord? I shall not discuss that question, but simply reply that it is the force of growth, that it is the tottering of infancy." In a true order of society it would be proper and right for each man to give full play to his passions; but, under the present system, restraint must be inculcated; for the circumstances with which we are surrounded are evil, and, for this reasons, it is necessary to modify the action of the passional nature. Laws are made not on account of the wickedness of man, but to meet the evils in the organization of society. Man is holy, his passion and instincts are holy; the evils in this world result from the restrictions established by law and society, which force those passions into wrong directions.

Whether a man's action shall be good or evil, depends not upon himself, but upon the organization of society. When the organization is perfect, man acts out his whole passional nature in its full harmony—when it is imperfect, his action is disordered, evil. There is no hope, therefore, of reforming tho individual man, the cause of the evil is not in him; if we wish for reform, we must commence at once with society itself, When we have once given the true organization to society, all individuals will be what they should be. "Besides," says the lecturer, "the end of Christianity is not the salvation of individuals, but the transfiguration of Humanity; it cannot be accomplished in you and me, but only in the whole race." "While there is disease and imperfection in any part of the human body, there cannot be perfect health in any individual, Perfect men and women are possible only in a perfect society."

The radical impulses 'of the soul are of three sorts,—sensitive, social, intellectual. That which is of primary importance, that which ought first to attract our study when we investigate the nature of man, is the passional nature. The intellect is merely an instrument in the hands of the passional nature, "When we have discovered the laws of the passions, and the conditions of their harmonious development and action, we may fitly enter into the study of the intellectual or instrumental faculties. For it is plain to the dullest percep-

tion, that the latter are as much the servants and instruments of the former, as are the hands or the feet." The will evidently shares the fate of the intelligence ; it is the result of passional action. Philosophers have been accustomed to speak of three primary. modes of operation of the human soul—sensibility, intelligence, and volition. But this is an unnecessary complication; there is but one fundamental function of the soul, and that is sensibility—the passional nature. Intelligence is a mere instrument in the hands of the passions; volition is the mere result of their operation.

Man is an instrument well tuned, upon whom external circumstances play whatever music they will. Hunger, thirst, misfortune, the ingratitude of friends, draw from him the harmonies of desire, feeling, apathy, &c.; a music far otherwise wonderful than that of the harp or organ. There is for man an outward necessity, over which he has no control until he has been modified by it; he is the victim of circumstances. There is for him also an internal necessity, the original constitution of his passional nature. The infinite variety in a man's life is never the result of internal changes, operated by his own causative energy, but is occasioned by the variety of external circumstances in which he may be placed. For the tendencies of his nature are implanted in him from the beginning; they are mere passions, and have no operation upon themselves, and must, therefore, be permanent and unchanging. They have one direction in the beginning; they have one manner of operation, and this they preserve to the end. If there be any other faculty of the soul, it can have no effect in changing the passional nature; for this faculty, be it intelligence or will, is but a mere instrument under the control of the original tendencies.

We come now to the bearing of the doctrine upon Religion, to the definition of the Religious Sentiment. As society is in its true state when the passions and interests of each man are in harmony with those of all men, and these of all men are in harmony with those of each individual, so the soul is in its true state when the passions develop themselves in harmony with each other, when

they operate without discord, in a perfect unity. And, that this harmonious development should be possible, it is necessary that there should be in the soul a radical impulse, belonging alike to all the impulses, which tends to bring them into harmony, into unison. "This is not," says the lecturer, "an individual and separate impulse, but a tendency existing in all the passions, modifying, controlling and connecting all, and forever seeking to bring them into unison. It is, if I may say so, the soul itself acting in all its members. This, then, which in philosophical or technical language, we call Unityism, or the passion for Unity, is what, in moral language, we call the Conscience, and in religious language, the, Religious Sentiment. The great office of this passion is to bring man into Unity with God, which is his Universal or Religious Destiny."

Having endeavored to give a fair statement of the lecturer's doctrine, I shall make a few remarks in relation to its nature, and probable tendency. Firstly, the doctrine is one of unmitigated necessity. Mr. Dwight, in a lecture bound up with the one under consideration, says that "the word necessity will acquire an altogether new and pleasanter meaning" when the productive industry of man is reconciled with his natural tendencies, of "passional attractions." But nothing in either of the lectures has tended to convince me of the correctness of his remark. It is useless to dwell longer on this feature; every man's consciousness asserts human freedom, and protests against the doctrine of absolute necessity.

I will admit with the lecturer that "it is plain to the dullest perception that the intellectual faculties are as much the servants and instruments of the passions as are the hands or the feet;" but, may I be permitted to ask, is this plain to any other than the the dullest perception? I can understand why this position should find a place in the lecturer's system; for, if the intelligence were a mere instrument, there would be no such thing as human freedom. Man is free because he is a reasonable being, and, if we place his reason under the control of his passions, we place his liberty under the same