The question of association and of marriage are one. If, as we have been popularly led to believe, the individual or separate family is in the true order of Providence, then the associative life is a false effort. If the associative life is true, then is the separate family a false arrangement. By the maternal feeling, it appears to be decided that the co-existence of both is incompatible, is impossible. So also says some religious sects. Social science ventures to assert their harmony. This is the grand problem now remaining to be solved, for at least, the enlightening, if not for the vital elevation of humanity. That the affections can be divided or bent with equal ardor on two objects, so opposed as universal and individual love, may at least be rationally doubted. History has not yet exhibited such phenomena in an associate body, and scarcely perhaps in any individual. The monasteries and convents, which have existed in all ages, have been maintained solely by the annihilation of that peculiar affection on which the separate family is based. The Shaker families, in which the two sexes are not entirely dissociated, can yet only maintain their union by forbidding and preventing the growth of personal affection other than that of a spiritual character. And this in fact is not personal in the sense of individual, but ever a manifestation of universal affection. Spite of the speculations of hopeless bachelors and aesthetic spinsters, there is somewhat in the marriage bond which is found to counteract the universal nature of the affections, to a degree leading at least to make the considerate pause, before they assert that, by any social arrangements whatever, the two can be blended into one harmony. The general condition of married persons at this time is some evidence of the existence of such a doubt in their minds. Were they as convinced as the unmarried of the beauty and truth of separate life, the demonstration would be now presented. But might it not be enforced that the two family ideas really neutralize each other? Is it not quite certain that the human heart cannot be set in two places; that man cannot worship at two altars? Is it only the determination to do what parents consider the best for themselves and their families, which renders the old populous world such a wilderness of self-good as it is. Destroy this feeling, they say, and you prohibit every motive to exertion. Much truth is there in this affirmation. For to them, no other motive remains, nor indeed to any one else, save that of the universal good, which does not permit the building up of supposed self-good; and therefore, forecloses all possibility of an individual family.

These observations, of course, equally apply to all the associative attempts, now attracting so much public attention; and perhaps most especially to such as have more of Fourier's designs than are observable at Brook Farm. The slight allusion in all the writers of the "Phalansterian" class, to the subject of marriage, is rather remarkable. They are acute and eloquent in denouncing Woman's oppressed and degraded position in past and present times, but are almost silent as to the future. In the mean while, it is gratifying to observe the successes which in some departments attend every effort, and that Brook Farm is likely to become comparatively eminent in the highly important and praiseworthy attempts, to render labor of the hands more dignified and noble, and mental education more free and loveful.

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making much of it, for there is no end to the consequences of the act. That famous aboriginal push propogates itself through all the balls of the system, and through every atom of every ball; through all the races of creatures, and through the history and performances of every individual. Exaggeration is in the course of things. Nature sends no creature, no man, into the world, without adding a small excess of his proper quality. Given the planet, it is still necessary to add the impulse; so to every creature nature added a little violence of direction in its proper path, a shove to put it on its way; in every instance a slight generosity, a too much. Without electricity the air would rot, and without this violence of direction which men and women have, without a spice of bigotry and fanatic, no excitement, no efficiency. We aim above the mark to hit the mark. Every act hath some falsehood of exaggeration in it. And when now and then comes along some sad, sharp-eyed man, who sees how paltry a game is played and refuses to play, but blasphem the secret; how then? is the bird flown? O yes, the wary Nature sends a new troop of fairer forms, of lordlier youths, with a little more excess of direction to hold them fast to their several aim; makes them a little wrong-headed in that direction in which they are rightest, and on goes the game again with a new whirl for a generation or two more.

See the child, the fool of his senses, with his thousand pretty pranks, commanded by every sight and sound, without any power to compare and rank his sensations, abandoned to every bauble, to a whistle, a painted chip, a lead dragoon, a gilt gingerbread horse; individualizing everything, generalizing nothing, who thus delighted with everything new, lies down at night overpowered by the fatigue, which this day of continual prettyness has incurred. But Nature has answered her purpose with the curly, dimpled lunatic. She has tasked every faculty and has secured the symmetrical growth of the bodily frame by all these attitudes and exertions; an end of the first importance, which could not be trusted to any care less perfect than her own. This glister, this opaline luster plays round the top of every toy to his eye, to ensure his fidelity, and he is deceived to his good. We are made alive and kept alive by the same arts. Let the stoics say what they please, we do not eat for the good of living, but because the meat is savory, and the appetite is keen. Nature does not content herself with casting from the flower or the tree a single seed, but she fills the air and earth with a prodigality of seeds, that, if thousands perish, thousands may plant themselves, that hundreds may come up, that tens may live to maturity, that at least one may replace the parent. All things betray the same calculated profusion. The excess of fear with which the animal frame is hedged round, shrinking from cold, starting at sight of a snake, at every sudden noise or falling stone, protects us through a multitude of groundless alarms from some one real danger at last. The lover seeks in marriage his private felicity and perfection, with no prospective end; and nature hides in his happiness her own end, namely, progeny, or the perpetuity of the race.

But the craft with which the world is made runs also into the mind and character of men. No man is quite sane, but each has a vein of folly in his composition, a slight determination of blood to the head, to make sure of holding him hard to some one point which nature had taken to heart.

Great causes are never tried on their merits; but the great cause is reduced to particulars, to suit the size of the partisans, and the contention is ever hottest on minor matters. Not less remarkable is that over-faith of each man in the importance of what he has to do or say. The poet, the prophet has a higher value for what he utters, than any hearer, and therefore it gets spoken. The strong, self-complacent Luther declares, with an emphasis not to be mistaken, that “God himself cannot do without wise men.” Jacob Behmen and George Fox betray their egotism in the pertinacity of their controversial tracts, and James Naylor once suffered himself to be worshipped as the Christ. Each prophet comes presently to identify himself with his thought, and to esteem his hat and shoes sacred. However this may discredit such persons with the judicious, it helps them with the people, and gives pungency, heat, and publicity to their words. A similar experience is not infrequent in private life. Each young and ardent person writes a diary, into which, when the hours of prayer and penitence arrive, he inscribes his soul. The
We are encamped in nature, not domesticated. Hunger and thirst lead us on to eat and drink, but bread and wine, mix and cook them how you will, leave us hungry and thirsty after the stomach is full. It is the same with all our arts and performances. Our music, our poetry, our language itself, are not satisfactions but suggestions.

The pursuit of wealth, of which the results are so magical in the contest with nature, and in reducing the face of the planet to a garden, is like the headlong game of the children in its reaction on the pursuers. What is the end sought? Plainly to secure the ends of good sense and beauty from the intrusion of deformity or vulgarity of any kind. But men use a very operose method. What an apparatus of means to secure a little conversation! This great palace of brick and stone, these servants, this kitchen, these stables, horses, and equipage; this bankstock and file of mortgages; trade to all the world; countryhouse and cottage by the waterside; all for a little conversation, high, clear, and spiritual! Could it not be had as well by beggars on the highway?

No, all these things came from the successive efforts of these beggars to remove one and another interference. Wealth was applied first to remove friction from the wheels of life; to give clearer opportunity. Conversation, character, beauty, were the avowed ends; wealth was good as its silenced the creaking door, cured the smoky chimney, brought friendstogether in a warm and quiet room, and kept the children and the dinner-table in a different apartment. Thought, virtue, beauty, were the ends, but it was known that men of thought and virtue sometimes had the headache, or wet feet, or could lose good time whilst the room was getting warm in winter days. Unluckily in the exertions necessary to remove these inconveniences, the main attention had been diverted to this object; the old aims had been lost sight of, and to remove friction had come to be the end. That is the ridicule of rich men, and Boston, London, Vienna, and now the governments generally of the world are cities and governments of the rich, and the masses are not men, but poor men, that is, men who would be rich; this is the ridicule of the class, that they arrive with pains and sweat, and fury, nowhere; when all is done, it is for nothing. They are men who have interrupted the whole
conversa tion of a company to make their speech, and now have forgotten what they went to say. The appearance strikes the eye, everywhere, of an aimless society, an aimless nation, an aimless world. Were the ends of nature so great and cogent as to exact this immense sacrifice of men?

Quite analogous to these deceits in life, there is, as might be expected, a similar effect on the eye from the face of external nature. There is in woods and waters a certain enticement and flattery, together with a failure to yield a present satisfaction. This disappointment is felt in every landscape. I have seen the softness and beauty of the summer clouds floating feathery overhead, enjoying, as it appeared, their height and privilege of motion, whilst yet they appeared not so much the drapery of this place and hour, as fore-looking to some pavilions and gardens of festivity beyond. Who is not sensible of this jealousy? Often you shall find yourself not near enough to your object. The pine tree, the river, the bank of flowers, before you, does not seem to be nature. Nature is elsewhere. This or this is but outskirt and far-off reflection and echo of the triumph that has passed by, and is now at its glancing splendor and heyday, perchance in the neighbouring fields, or, if you stood in the field, then in the adjacent woods. The present object shall give you this sense of stillness that follows a pageant which has just gone by. It is the same among the men and women, as among the silent trees; always a referred existence, an absence, never a presence and satisfaction. Is it that beauty can never be grasped? in persons and in landscape is equally inaccessible? The accepted and betrothed lover has lost the wildest charm of his maiden in her acceptance of him. She was heaven whilst he pursued her as a star. She cannot be heaven if she stoops to such an one as he. So is it with these wondrous skies, and hills and forests. What splendid distance, what recesses of ineffable pomp and loveliness in the sunset! But who can go where they are, or lay his hand, or plant his foot thereon? Of they fall from the round world for ever and ever; glory is not for hands to handle.

What shall we say of this omnipresent appearance of that first projectile impulse, this flattery and baulking of so many good well-meaning creatures? Must we not suppose somewhere in the universe a slight treachery, a slight decision? Are we not engaged to a serious resentment of this use that is made of us? Are we tickled trout, and fools of nature? Unhappily, there is not the smallest prospect of advantage from such considerations. Practically, there is no great danger of their being pressed. One look at the face of heaven and earth puts all petulance at rest, and soothes us to wiser convictions. We see that Nature converts itself into a vast promise, and will not be rashly explained. Her secret is untold. Many and many an (Edipus arrives; he has the whole mystery teeming in his brain. Alas! the same sorcery has spoiled his skill; no syllable can he shape on his lips. Her mighty orbit vaults like the fresh rainbow into the deep, but no archangel's wing was yet strong enough to follow it and report of the return of the curve. But it also appears, and the experience might dispose us to serenity, that our actions are seconded and disposed to greater conclusions than we designed. We are escorted on every hand through life by great spiritual potencies, and a beneficent purpose lies in wait for us. It is not easy to deal with Nature by card and calculation. We cannot bandy words with her; we cannot deal with her as man with man. If we measure our individual forces against hers, we may easily feel as if we were the sport of an overwhelming destiny. But if, instead of identifying ourselves with the work, we feel that the soul of the Workman streams through us, that a paradise of love and power lies close beside us, where the Eternal Architect broods on his thought and project the world from his bosom, we may find the peace of the morning dwelling first in our hearts, and the fathomless powers of gravity and chemistry, and over them of life, pre-existing within us in their highest form.