



The Oneida Community by Allan Estlake

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from the Pacific Islands is preserved in the various cities he visited, and how this material was exhibited. A large proportion of the book is thus taken up with the enumeration of specimens, and this part need not here detain us. Special interest attaches to the criticisms which Professor Brigham has to make of the different establishments which he passes in review. Of the European Museums, that at Berlin naturally receives the highest praise, both for its extent and for its educational value; the Australian Museums are also deservedly commended. In speaking of our own national collections in London the writer is not unnaturally severe: one long gallery in a gloomy building subject to a London atmosphere is indeed inadequate to the needs of a maritime nation. "It is unfortunate for ethnology" says Professor Brigham "that so rich a nation as England should not find the means to build a palace worthy of the treasures her explorers have brought home, which are now laid aside for want of room in a museum where ethnology is of very secondary importance." A word of praise is given both to the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford and the Fijian Collections at Cambridge, but the author laments the scattering of the material in different centres which enhances the difficulties of students. Professor Brigham returned from his voyage convinced that American Museums are better installed than any others, the American Museum of Natural History at New York being almost beyond competition. He shows a legitimate pride in the arrangements and scientific advantages of his own museum, which was visited two years ago by a Fellow of the Institute and found to be all that its Director claims for it, and more. One cannot fail to be profoundly impressed by the energy and the resource which has produced such great results in the far Pacific. The American people are showing an interest in ethnology which is making even the Germans look to their laurels, and which should make us doubly deplore the apathy and indifference which still reigns in the British Islands. The report contains a number of interesting reproductions of ethnographical specimens, and views of the Bishop Museum, and the Museums of Berlin and Vienna.

O. M. D.

THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY. A Record of an attempt to carry out the principles of Christian Unselfishness and Scientific Race-Improvement. By Allan Estlake. Member of the Oneida Community. London: George Redway, 1900.

In most cases our knowledge of the history of Societies like those of the Mormons, the Shakers, or the Oneida Community is derived from writers like the late Hepworth Dixon, whose "New America," though written in a spirit so sympathetic as to bring forth some playful remarks thereon from Matthew Arnold in "Anarchy and Culture," was yet the work of an outsider. In this instance the author is a man convinced that the Oneida experiment is "the most valuable enterprise which has ever been undertaken since the foundation of Christianity," and that of the messengers of Christ John H. Noyes was the most important and central.

As a narrative this book is somewhat wanting in arrangement. Its interest lies in its presentation of the doctrines and practices of the Oneida Community from a staunch believer's point of view. The founder, John H. Noyes, originated the sect of Perfectionists, or Bible Communists, at Putney in Vermont in the year 1838. Leaving Putney in 1847, about 50 men of the sect, with as many women and children, settled at Oneida Creek. For thirty years the Community prospered in its new home. Then, in 1879, in deference to the public opinion of the people around them, they, on the advice of their founder, abandoned their communistic marriage system. In 1880 their communistic ownership of property was also given up, and Mr. Estlake tells us

that "the joint stock company (Oneida Community, Limited) which has succeeded to the businesses of the Oneida Community, is still in existence and prospering greatly."

We learn that in abandoning the practice of what outsiders called "free-love," but the Community "complex marriage," Mr. Noyes proposed a return "not to the *principle* but to the *practice* of monogamic marriage." Our author remarks that Noyes felt that "if a man cannot love a woman and be happy in seeing her loved by others, he is a selfish man, and his place is with the potsheds of the earth. There is no place for such in the Kingdom of Heaven." The departure from monogamy had been intended as a "dividing line between selfishness and unselfishness," not as an indulgence in licentious freedom. But we learn that many persons "knew so little about themselves, that while their great anxiety had been lest their wives should be unable to adapt themselves to the new relations, it turned out that they were themselves the first to become jealous and dissatisfied with the circumstances they had pleaded so hard and so long to get into." Then the extraordinary development of Criticism as a leading institution of the Community may have largely contributed to a backsliding towards monogamy. Our author remarks that only a man very earnestly desiring to improve his character welcomes criticism, and adds that "Criticism revealed all secrets, so that nobody was tormented with a skeleton in the closet; even lover's secrets that are usually considered too private for the light were freely considered in criticisms if they contained anything that shunned the light of truth Many well-meaning people, with the utmost consideration for others and the best of intentions, who through ignorance or innate obtuseness were unable to adapt their ways to the sensibilities of others, learned through criticism, much to their surprise and gratification, what they could not have acquired in any other way."

Thus it happened that "Many were ready to give up everything but the petty authority that they had been accustomed to exercise in their family circles; one may have been ready to have an enlargement of affectional happiness himself but could not concede the same freedom to other members of his family. Another could not cease to be the little autocrat and listen to his wife while, with others, she joined in criticising him."

Tobacco was tabooed in the Community in any form. Women did not like it as the "flavour of tobacco in any form was not conducive to the magnetism of a kiss." The alternative, that women also should smoke, was regarded as "not to be tolerated." Thus it becomes obvious that to many male members of the Community a return to monogamy would seem to have its compensation. For, as our author remarks (p. 42), "Criticism, which was the bulwark against the influx of selfishness, would become unavailable with the introduction of worldly marriage, for the wife would no longer feel free to criticise her husband publicly, nor would she tolerate his being criticised by others. The difficulties of the changed conditions may be enlarged upon almost indefinitely; suffice it to say that criticism must die when worldly marriage begins, and that it ceased under the changed conditions of the Oneida Community."

We do not gather from Mr. Estlake that the women of the Community were prominent in opposing the change from "complex marriage" to monogamy, though the first-named state "constituted each male member of the family husband of all the females, and each female the wife of every man," and women were permitted, and almost expected, to take the initiative in love-making. We have the following attractive picture of the complex marriage period:—

"Where women were left free to accept or decline approaches from men, life became a state of continuous courtship, both seeking to attract each other by

commending themselves to the highest ideal of the other by loyalty to truth and to community principles" (p. 90).

Possibly, however, the women who more or less appreciated the above state of things when the Community was founded, felt, twenty to thirty years later, that more was to be said for monogamy than they had once thought possible. It would seem indeed probable—to an outsider—that, as a rule, the privileges of complex marriage would be more appreciated by the elderly men than by the elderly women, where they were not a matter of indifference or of aversion to both.

Mr. Estlake thinks that the history of the Oneida Community will one day be studied "as a handbook and guide to communism, and the pages of history will portray John H. Noyes as a prophet of the new dispensation." No communistic scheme can succeed, he remarks, in which selfishness in any form appears, and he adds that:—"The sexual relationship of communists being pregnant with influences that are antagonistic to the first principle of communism, it should be one of the first subjects to be most carefully canvassed and satisfactorily disposed of before attempting to launch a socialistic enterprise." Those who do not "fearlessly follow the sexual problem to its logical solution deceive themselves and their followers while seeking to form a community with communism left out."

In short, this book is of unquestionable interest to anthropologists as the honest account of a thorough believer in the soundness of the principles on which the Oneida Community was originally based. This gives it a value of a somewhat rare kind, and one which the work of a much abler outsider could not possess.

T. V. H.

THE ROYAL PUBLIC LIBRARY OF MALTA: a brochure by Dr. A. A. Caruana. Printed by authority of H.E. the Governor. Fcp. 15 pp., price 3d. Malta Government Printing Office, 1898. (Presented by the Author.)

This is a brief account of the historic buildings and collections of the Royal Public Library of Malta, which was founded in 1555, and continuously developed under the administration of the Order of St. John. The following extracts are characteristic: from 1800—the date of the British Occupation—to 1812, "the new edifice," built for the library and museum by the Knights of St. John, "was employed as a public coffee room for the British Officers," while in 1809 "several thousand volumes, belonging to that valuable collection, were rotting from want of accommodation" (p. 7), with the result that whereas in 1798 there were 60,000 volumes, there were only 30,000 left when Sir Henry Oakes, the Civil Commissioner, succeeded in installing them in their own building in 1812. The present collection contains some 53,000 volumes, including a considerable number of manuscripts. There is an interesting collection of local antiquities which is well worth a visit, as it includes the results of excavation in the prehistoric buildings of Hagiar Kim, etc., and the contents of a number of tombs of prehistoric, Græco-Phœnician, Roman, and Romano-Christian periods.

J. L. M.

ANCIENT PAGAN TOMBS AND CHRISTIAN CEMETERIES IN THE ISLANDS OF MALTA, explored and surveyed from the year 1881 to the year 1897; by Dr. A. A. Caruana (late Director of Education and Librarian). Printed by order of H.E. the Governor. Fcp. 4to, pp. 129, many lithographed plates, price 8s. Malta Government Printing Office, 1898. (Presented by H.M. Secretary of State for the Colonies.)

Dr. Caruana is well known for the devoted study which he has given to the antiquities of the Maltese Islands; and he is greatly to be congratulated both on the appearance of these monographs, in which the results of some part of his work are