

in 1843, was impending, and threatened that territorial division of sessional authority upon which Dr. Chalmers's scheme had depended for an unmolested field of operations. The tide of English invasion rose higher and higher, until, in 1845, the English method of poor-administration became the law of Scotland.

But the Chalmers plan fell as premature. Another generation has added its chapter of failure to the sad record of pauperism. Chartism came and passed away, convincing men that acts of Parliament were not a panacea for social wrongs. Men now survey the field with more experienced eyes, through a purer atmosphere and from better vantage-ground.

The essential features of Dr. Chalmers's plan are matched in the renowned system of Elberfeld and Barmen; they appear in the poor-administrations of

Leipsic and Berlin. And when the lamented Edward Denison, with Sir Charles Trevelyan and other promoters of charity organization, called the humane spirits of England to wiser and more hopeful methods of encountering the destitute and depressed, they were not compelled to ask for patient faith in new experiments, but they pointed to Chalmers's ministry in St. John's Church, Glasgow, for a demonstration that society can deal effectually and beneficently with the souls and bodies of those whom misfortune and neglect have overcome.

As such a demonstration this history is vital still, and it will remain vital until his beautiful conception of lowly life dignified by independence and thrift, and sweetened by the free play of natural affection, shall be realized in many a district now the home of deceit, depravity, and disorder.

D. O. Kellogg.

THE CHRISTENING.

In vain we broider cap and cloak, and fold
 The long robe, white and rare;
 In vain we serve on dishes of red gold,
 Perhaps, the rich man's fare;
 In vain we bid the fabled folk who bring
 All gifts the world holds sweet:
 This one, forsooth, shall give the child to sing;
 To move like music this shall charm its feet;
 This help the cheek to blush, the heart to beat.

Unto the christening there shall surely come
 The Uninvited Guest,
 The evil mother, weird and wise, with some
 Sad purpose in her breast.
 Yea, and though every spinning-wheel be stilled
 In all the country round,
 Behold, her prophecy must be fulfilled;
 The turret with the spindle will be found,
 And the white hand will reach and take the wound.

S. M. B. Piatt.

AN OLD WAR HORSE TO A YOUNG POLITICIAN.

[PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.]

WASHINGTON, D. C., *April*, 1884.

MY DEAR NEPHEW, — Four years ago, shortly before the presidential conventions were held, I addressed you a letter containing a number of practical hints of a political nature.¹ They were drawn from the commodious and well-filled storehouse of my own experience, and if, like Dean Swift's servant, you are good at drawing inferences I may have given you all the advice you need on this head; and yet, such is my consuming desire to see your own public career prove a conspicuous success that I am constrained, on the inspiring eve of another of our great quadrennial campaigns, to place a few more suggestions at your service.

Some months ago I made the acquaintance of an intelligent foreigner, who manifested a great deal of curiosity in regard to the workings of party machinery in our republican system. He had traveled extensively in the United States, seen a good many nominations made, and spent a fortnight in Washington while Congress was in session. Finding that I was a veteran American statesman (I heard the landlord tell him I was, while we were cementing our friendship with something hot), he plied me with questions, a good many of which were decidedly leading. First premising that all I had to say was to be regarded as well under the rose, I answered him fully and freely, and the more salient portion of our conversation I now reproduce for your benefit. "I. F.," you will understand, is the short for Intelligent Foreigner, and "Y. U." for Your Uncle.

I. F. Are not the majority of your conventions called to disorder rather

¹ See *Atlantic Monthly* for June, 1880.

than to order? Is not discord the rule, and accord the exception?

Y. U. Decidedly not. An experience extending over well-nigh half a century enables me to assert, without fear of successful contradiction, that generally unanimity and what our newspapers neatly style the best of good feeling prevail at such gatherings of representative Americans. The opening exercises of a convention are commonly inclusive of a resolution referring memorials of the temperance and woman's rights people and cognate combustibles, along with everything else that cannot conveniently be cut and dried beforehand, "to the appropriate committee when appointed," — that's the usual phrase. This expedient goes far to secure the best of good feeling. When the political waters are unusually troubled and troublesome, a brand of sweet parliamentary oil, known as "the previous question," is of great assistance in calming them. Do you follow me?

I. F. You interest and enlighten me exceedingly. Pray proceed.

Y. U. I recall just here a remark of my friend the late lamented Colonel Smith. The colonel is not, perhaps, as well known in foreign political circles as he deserves to be. He once said to me, when this topic was on the carpet, "I regard it of such vital importance that there should be naught but the best of good feeling at a convention that, by Gad, sir, I'll have it, if I have to fetch it with a club." There you have the colonel, — a natural born political leader.

I. F. The colonel must have been a statesman who possessed in a marked degree the courage of his convictions.

Y. U. Yes, indeed. And if I say it, who should n't, I myself am of his sort.