

[Rochester, Monroe Co.]

Sunday School Exhibition in Rochester

Br. Austin:—In accordance with previous notice, the Sunday School connected with the Universalist Church and Society in Rochester gave an exhibition in Corinthian Hall, on Wednesday evening last. It was really and truly a splendid affair. Of this you can judge, when I say that an audience of over *fifteen hundred* persons paid the most profound attention to the performance, which occupied nearly three hours. And as the exhibition progressed, a smile of satisfaction was visible upon every countenance, and all *seemed* to say, with joy and gladness, “it is good for us to be here.” The large platform was completely alive with the “little ones,” all anxious to perform their parts *well*—and they succeeded nobly and admirably. It was well worth the admission fee to *see* the children on that occasion, had no exhibition been given. The young masters made a fine appearance. The young misses, each with her snow white dress, a wreath of evergreen upon her head, and a bouquet of flowers in her hand, with the full light of the gas-burners glowing upon them, presented a scene of enchanting loveliness, and of surpassing beauty. “And as they sang and marched to and fro in their “Fairy’s Revel,” I thought it a fit representation of the vision of the Revelator, when he exclaimed—“I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all the nations and kindreds, and people and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, *clothed with white robes*, and palms in their hands.

The performance was varied and interesting throughout. I have not time to refer to them separately, but I cannot refrain from noticing one, entitled “A Good Time Coming,” a drama. It was well conceived and admirably executed. It was shown that in its progress the principles of our sublime and glorious faith should roll onward, till at last the bondman shall go free, the intemperate shall be reclaimed, and the widow and orphan shall be made glad with plenty. All these characters were represented on the stage, and when at last the chains of the bondman were cut asunder, when the inebriate, by the voice of kindness and sympathy was reclaimed, the widow and her orphan children returned clothed and fed, with a smile of gratitude upon their countenances, when all these united their voices in singing the “good time coming,” the effect was striking and impressive, and many eyes in that large assemblage glistened with the dew of sympathy and joy. There were a number of *tableaux* presented with fine effect. “Rebecca at the Well” was a beautiful scene. “The Guardian Angel” inspired me with devotion, and there were many others to which we cannot now refer.

There were other pieces of much merit, and what pleased me particularly was that the great principles of that sublime faith we profess were made to stand out prominently and boldly before that large audience. This is as it should be. A faith so comforting in its influence, and so desirable in its results, should be made prominent on all proper occasions. Our friends, and even our opposers, will look upon us in a more favorable light.

Much praise is due to Br. Tuttle and his amiable companion for their untiring devotion to the interests of the Sabbath School. Great credit is also due to the Superintendents, the teachers and scholars. May they find a reward in the contemplation that their efforts in this instance have been crowned with complete success.

Dec. 19, 1856

[Rev.] W[m.] B. Cook

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☞ The *Rochester Daily Union* introduces a very flattering account of the Exhibition in the following words:—

Last night was a cold one, and anything but favorable to leaving the warm fireside for a place of amusement; nevertheless an immense multitude gathered at Corinthian Hall to witness the exhibition of the Scholars of the Universalist Sabbath School. Before seven o'clock the hall was filled, and from that hour until eight, Mr. Reynolds and his assistants were packing in the people, upon stools, in the lobbies and aisles, and this process was continued until all available space was filled. After that many who were anxious to see the exhibition were compelled to go away. The audience was fully one half ladies, and a more respectable one never assembled in that hall.

In concluding its notice the *Union* thus speaks of Br. J. H. Tuttle, pastor of the Rochester Society:—

We understand that the most of the labor, so far as planning this exhibition, and instructing the children is concerned, has been performed by the pastor of the church, Rev. Mr. Tuttle. The success speaks well for him and all who participated. We congratulate the members of the Universalist society on their good fortune in possessing so able a pastor, who devotes so much attention to the improvement of the young of his flock. The Sunday School of the Universalist Church contains many fine children, who appear to be under excellent teachers.

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, 27 Dec 1856

Transcribed on 9 Jan 2007 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY