HEALTH OF THE ASSOCIATION.

The general health of the Association has been remarkably good. In the latter part of summer, most of the adults were seriously attacked by dysentery; but faith and cheerfulness, without medicine, soon prevailed over disease. One death only occurred—that of an infant, previously very feeble; and this loss was compensated by the birth of a pair of twins. In no case has the Association had occasion to employ the services of a physician. A more extended expose of the condition of the Association, as to health, will be found in the latter part of this report.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE HOUSEHOLDS.

Previous to the completion of the Mansion house, no special classification was attempted in the arrangement of the households, but the several families, composed as usual of parents and children together, were distributed to the four houses of the Association, as convenience and natural affinities from time to time seemed to dictate. In the course of the months of November and December, however, when the Mansion house came to be occupied, the following classification took place. The best of the ordinary houses, that nearest the Mansion house, was converted into a nursery, and all the children between the ages of two and twelve, (seventeen in number,) with the necessary housekeepers, and teachers, were established there, by themselves. The other principal dwelling house, previously occupied by Mr. Burt, was also converted into a nursery, and given up to the infants (six in number) with their nurses and housekeepers. This arrangement proved to be very favorable to the comfort and good-breeding of the children, and at the same time, saved the main household of the Association from much noise and confusion. The women serving as attendants of the children for short periods only, and in rotation, (except in cases of special taste and qualification,) found the business not a burden, but a pleasure. By systematic, but kindly discipline, in connection with religious instruction, good order was easily established in the household of the older children; insomuch that it was affirmed by all witnesses that there was less turbulence and confusion in that family of seventeen, than there had been under previous arrangements in families of only four or five children. The natural apprehensions which arose against the idea of separating infants from their mothers, and breeding them together, vanished before the demonstrations of experience; and it was found to be altogether a more comfortable task to take care of six in the new way, than it had been to wait on one in ordinary circumstances. The novelty and beautiful results of these arrangements for managing children, attracted much attention and admiration from visitors and the community around. The only drawback on the operation was the temporary distress of the mothers in giving up their little ones to the care of others, which made occasion for some melodramatic scenes; but the wounds of philoprogenitiveness were soon healed, and the mothers soon learned to value their own freedom and opportunity of education, and the improved condition of their children, more than
the luxury of a sickly maternal tenderness. And then the periodical visits of the mothers to the nurseries, and of the children to the Mansion house, were found to be occasions of more genuine pleasure, than could ever be derived from constant personal attendance. Mrs. Mary E. Cragin, a woman who had proved herself, both at Putney and Oneida, specially qualified by nature and attainment, for the care of children, in connection with Mrs. Harriet A. Noyes, had charge of that department, and superintended the above arrangements.

...  

SHORT DRESSES.

In connection with this new fashion of making rooms it will be appropriate to allude to one or two novelties which the Association has fallen into by free-thinking. Early in the summer, in consequence of some speculations on the subject of women's dress, which will be presented in a subsequent part of this Report, some of the leading women in the Association took the liberty to dress themselves in short gowns or frocks, with pantaloons, (the fashion of dress common among children,) and the advantages of the change soon became so manifest, that others followed the example, till frocks and pantaloons became the prevailing fashion in the Association. The women say they are far more free and comfortable in this dress than in long gowns; the men think that it improves their looks; and some insist that it is entirely more modest than the common dress.

CHANGE IN HAIR-DRESSING.

Another new fashion broke out among the women in the following manner. The ordinary practice of leaving the hair to grow indefinitely, and laboring upon it by the hour daily, merely for the sake of winding it up into a ball and sticking it on the top or back of the head, had become burdensome and distasteful to several of the women. Indeed there was a general feeling in the Association that any fashion which requires women to devote considerable time to hair-dressing, is a degradation and a nuisance. The idea of wearing the hair short and leaving it to fall around the neck, as young girls often do, occurred frequently, but Paul's theory of the natural propriety of long hair for women (1 Cor. 11) seemed to stand in the way. At length a careful examination of this theory was instituted, and the discovery was made that Paul's language expressly points out the object for which women should wear long hair, and that object is not ornament, but 'for a covering.' In this light it was immediately manifest that the long hair of women, as it is usually worn, coiled and combed upward to the top of the head, instead of answering to Paul's object of covering, actually exposes the back part of the head, more than the short hair of men. It then occurred also that Phrenology, in pointing to the back of the head and neck as the seat of amativeness, has given a rational basis to Paul's theory of the propriety of women's making their hair a covering. It was evident moreover that the hair is not needed as a covering where the person is covered by the dress. These considerations seemed to establish satisfactorily the natural and scriptural propriety of women's wearing their hair in the simple mode of little girls, 'down in the neck.' Accordingly some of the bolder women cut off their hair, and started the fashion, which soon prevailed throughout the Association, and was generally acknowledged to be an improvement of appearance, as well as a saving of labor.