

LIFE
IN
TWO SPHERES,
OR
SCENES IN THE SUMMERLAND,
BY
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[1836-1910]

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LIFE IN TWO SPHERES.

CHAPTER I.

THE INTRODUCTION.

If 'tis true,
As ancient said, we were two wandering halves
Until we found each other, then a whole
We've blended in a unit, which to part
Would be to crush us both.

Life's Passion Story.

True spiritual growth garners the present for future needs; enjoying the present life, because such is best for future welfare. This is the moral of this narration.

HOW baleful the light of passion! how it blasts! The human spirit is like a mirror, bright as burnished silver held in the hand of a child, reflecting every thought and deed, day by day. Day by day the Present overshadows the Past, and the outlines of the old become more dimly defined.

At times the mirror is beautiful when thoughts white as snow are written thereon, with pictures lovely as Eden. At other times the black cloud overspreads all its face and the demon eye of lightning stares baleful from the mist.

There are pictures of joy, of misery, of pleasure, of pain, of duties done and neglected, successes and defeats

of anticipations and regrets in wonderful kaleidoscopic changes; and the child and the man and the world think that the new writing, with its sharply drawn images, ever blots out the old, and that the fading outlines, disappear forever.

But there comes a day when the child, having ascended the pathway of life and descended, reaches the head-lands overlooking the Mystic Sea which laves with sullen waves the shores of life and death. The dawning light from the remote horizon is caught by the mirror and it becomes ablaze.

Every thought, every image which has beautified or darkened its fair face, appears in an ineffaceable panorama. The recording angel has allowed no erasure, and all the world may read the Open Book.

Leon and Hero were drawn together by the harmonious similarity and diversity which create and intensify the attractions of love and bind the spirit in eternal matehood. Their home was in a secluded vale surrounded by lofty mountains, yet near a great metropolis where civilization flowed at its highest, and they enjoyed the pleasures of retired rural life, and the benefits of a populous district. Wild and awe-inspiring scenes environed their retreat, while the retirement and secure ease were a source of pleasure and a means of elevation. Drawn together by the gentle gravitation of love; united by the ties of harmony; content with the little world of happiness each found in the other, and the never ending delight surrounding nature afforded, their cottage was a paradise where Eden was again revived.

Their home was really such as the children of the Orient picture in the land of dreams—such as cultured minds would be expected to create. Surrounded by overshadowing trees, tall oaks, graceful elms and drooping willows, entwined with tendrils of the loving vine, decorated with

a great variety of choicest flowers, the useful blended with the ornamental, until the embowered cottage seemed the residence of some sylvan goddess, who, weary with the cares of restless life, had employed all the means at her command to create a favorite seat.

They fully enjoyed the beauties lavished by nature and lived to learn and love, unmindful of the throbs of the great world. True, perhaps, there was a loss in this manner of life. Leon as a man of affairs acquired neither fame nor credit. On the contrary, he was regarded as an enthusiast, a mystic, a sentimental dreamer. This is the verdict of the worldly crowd on all those whom they do not understand, because withdrawn from their crude and ignoble ways of thought. Theirs was true marriage, the institution of nature, yielding untold pleasures, the perversion of which produces the most fearful misery the human heart can suffer. No sweetness like that of true spiritual marriage; no bitterness as bitter as false unions on the plane of convenience or desire. In the wedding of congenial souls, each blends with the other in mutual oneness of thought, feeling, sentiment and aspiration, while the individuality of both is intensified.

When the Creator had laid the foundation of the earth and reared the pillars of the heavens, over-arched with its splendor of stars, in an Eden of perfect happiness, amid the opulent bloom of flowers, making the air sweet with perfume, he united man and woman in marriage. They were to mutually support each other; to share each other's burdens, to enjoy each other's pleasures, and walk the paths of the new world hand in hand, and heart beating to heart, actuated by a common purpose. This ideal union has become more and more actualized with advancing civilization, with the refinement of intellect and purity of morals, until we can look forward to that grand civilization which will recognize perfect equality between man and

woman; the husband and wife, with perfect trust and exclusive love, walking the path of life, realizing the Eden of the dreaming past in the wreath of joy that ever the dull realities of the present give them.

Marriage is thus the foundation of social life, of the home, and all that word implies. There is no other in the language around which clusters such a host of delicate fancies which recall such a flood of memories! We remember the stories related by the blaze of the evening fire, by our dear old father; the songs sang by our sainted mother; the lullaby which hushed our infantile petfulness and the hymns which first lifted our souls to heavenly things. "A mother is more than a thousand fathers," and the sweetest of all words is wife, for it implies a world of blessedness from the day she was a blushing maiden, through the long years of devoted motherhood; to the tender care with which she gives her last kiss to the pale and silent lips of the companion of her life journey.

They had two children, bright, beautiful, joyous, the embodiment of health, now grown to the estate of manhood and womanhood, and gone out like fledged birds to seek what the great world had in store for them.

Well-developed minds have an intuitive belief in immortality. The pure spirit feels the prompting assurance of a glorious future, of which the present is a shadow; it cherishes the truthful conception that death will not sever the ties of affection. Fully recognizing this, Leon and Hero looked forward with joy to the hour of dissolution. Not that they wished to die, or leave the cares of this life, but they knew that the change would be for the better, and when their task was finished on earth, they wished to renew their lives in other scenes. Perfect happiness is limited amid the jarring scenes of earth. It rests shortly and moves often. There is but one assurance, that all

things will change; nothing will endure forever, and the poorest joy has its clouds.

They grew old together; not in spirit, for that never feels the pangs of decay; but the years fell on their physical forms, and the frosts whitened and paled. It should be a joy to grow old; to feel the ripeness and full fruition of years! What a glad fact it is, that as we approach the West the days shorten and time rushes with ever accelerated pace! The weeks are days and the days hours, all too short for the work we wish to crowd into them. In life's morning the day before us stretched out and away into the dim vista, and at night the morning seemed so far away we forgot its events. There was infinite time, and we wondered at people who had no time. What became of their time? How did they dispose of it when time to us was the most cheap and common? The steep ascent of the mountain of life was laborious, but we soon had burdens laid on us, and duties, which we were compelled to perform. Our pathway over the flinty rocks had to be hewn with our own hands, the way cleared, and day by day came new cares, and to do all that was required of us filled the measure of each day. Then the time shortened. Then we understood the necessity of haste. We reached the summit. The whole way had been up hill. The sun had come to the meridian and shines with increasing splendor. We can pause for a brief moment on the grand divide, and while the pass stretches down the slope into the grey east, to the west, away to the remote sky-line, is our future. If the sun low down casts lengthening shadows, we hurry and are hurried on to the nearing goal, feeling that though weary, there is not time remaining to perform all that there is for us to do. Such a vast amount of obligations, such intimate dependencies reach out near and remote, it seems we have done little else than contract alliances, and gather the sheaves for others to thresh the grain.

The sun passes into the golden glory of the West, and our journey is now not up a toilsome path, but descends by gentle inclinations. We have learned the grand lesson of doing, of sustained effort, and what were burdens become delights. We have double lives, a conscious present, and the delicious memories of the past. We stir the embers of recollection, and they flame with beauty, for even from our remembered pain there comes a sad pleasure, and life has many joys. If we have lived rightly, we have learned time is measured by actions, and have gained the meaning of the legend carved over the grand central entrance of the Cathedral of Milan: "That, only is important which is eternal." Religion has taught us with her silvery voice of charity to little purpose, if the affairs of this life do not begin to merge into the boundless realm that extends in mystery beyond the clouds of life's setting sun.

Age had rested lightly on those of whom we write, but the hour of the great transition came. Hero's gentle spirit was first to close her eyes on the scenes of this life, and awake to the eternal realities. Spirits of departed friends welcomed her to the higher sphere, and her love found sympathy in the hosts of resplendent beings who surrounded her. Joy of joys! No barrier separated her from her beloved, except that of invisibility. She could approach him when she wished, and when dark thoughts clouded his agitated heart, she soothed him with her gentle influence, changing his thoughts by turning them toward heaven. How cheering the belief in guardian angels! It lifts the soul above the mists of sorrow to feel the presence of the loved ones who have passed from earth—from mortal gaze, but who nevertheless live in a far brighter sphere amid the light of the source of love, and for the affection they bear their friends on earth, come and solace them in time of trial, and ennoble them with great truths. It is a blessed belief which purifies and intensifies the life.

The Angel of Death, who really is the Angel of the Resurrection, waited not long before he again visited the cottage. Leon is to cross the limits of the two worlds. There is nothing to draw him back from the threshold of the unseen land. Children, family, friends, and a thousand cares generally bind the striving soul to earth, but his children he had educated, and beheld them all rightly directed in life. The family tie was severed; nothing remained.

A spirit in this condition softly sinks away to sleep, but the agony caused by its striving to remain after death is inevitable and terrible. All his attractions are beyond the grave. His second self has passed through the "shadow and the vale" before him, and he must pass its mythic terrors before he can behold her angel purity. His being folds inward, and the deep sleep of the transition comes slowly on. Oblivion hovers over all things. All perception for the time is gone. Hours pass away, and he awakes from his dream-state to full consciousness, to hear his name spoken in endearing accents.

"Leon, it is *I*. Do you not recognize your Hero? I who went before you, and who now with your friends have come to welcome you to your new home! Take this robe, finer it is than the gossamer, setting to shame the purple of the East; wear it, it is your habiliment, similar to ours."

So suddenly and unexpectedly did the brilliant reality burst upon his vision that he stood in speechless astonishment. With an effort he called the name of Hero, as he threw his arms around her. Do spirits weep? Ah! there is a pain in joy itself which oftener forces tears to strong eyes than grief.

"Realization of my former fancies, am I eternally to enjoy such bliss as this? Can, *can* this be reality,? or is it delusive fancy which gives my *dreams* form and substance?"

"Leon, this is no hallucination. Our belief was true,

and all that you now see and feel is but a drop compared with the ocean of delight in store. You have yet to behold the groves and bowers; murmuring streams and dashing waterfalls; the rose-hued landscapes; the continual delight of our new home. Here, too, are the joyous and enlightened companions with whom I have passed my hours while tarrying for you. They have been my guides, instructors and friends, they are now yours. We have much to learn before we go onward, for my longer stay here has advanced me further than you in the ways of spiritual life."

"Then I am to detain you here until I become equally proficient! Ah! I cannot ask you to make such sacrifice. Go on in the ways of light, while I struggle on as best I may; some time I shall overtake you in the ascending ladder of light."

"Oh! speak not thus. Are not our destinies bound together by inviolable laws? Shall these ties be broken? In all that I have learned I will instruct you, and together we will go on in progress."

"But the sacrifice you make is too great, and I am not so selfish as to ask it."

"You will see it in a different light, for what I have acquired relates to the spirit's home, and in teaching you we shall journey through its vast domain, enjoying the sweetest pleasure."

"Where are we now? Oh! have I not quitted my own room yet! How long am I to remain?"

"No longer than you desire. Every spirit follows its own inclination; some go away immediately, while others are so engrossed in the cares of life as to remain around the old homestead or familiar places for years. You, having no such attractions, may at once depart to our new home, and become acquainted with your new associates."

Passing upward with the attendant spirits, Leon found

himself far, far above the Earth. Through the breaks in the clouds he saw the green fields and mountain slopes beneath him. With soul thrilled with pleasure he gazed on the gorgeous panorama which met his astonished sight His cottage with its garden became a mote and disappeared in the distance.

"Hero," he said, "are you not sad to leave that spot where we have passed so many happy days? I must confess it produces on me unpleasant feelings."

"Should the butterfly regret its Caterpillar state?" she responded. "Should it lament how many sunny days it passed in the shade of the old oak, and gnawed the acrid leaves? It has wings now and can swiftly fly from flower to flower. Its sunniest day in the oak was passed in eating the rough leaves; now it can sip honey from the flowers the day long, and the heavens are far brighter than before."

"Is the change I have undergone so great? Will the pleasures of this life so completely eclipse the enjoyment of my previous state, that all its happy hours will be forgotten?"

"Not forgotten, but surpassed. If you believe not my words, look around you and become assured. We are in the Sphere of Light."

He gazed about him, and beheld the Spirit-world in all its ethereal beauty.

"This the Spirit-home. Why the floor is of earth! The plants are true plants! I can grasp them; and yonder the far expanding ocean reflects the azure sky, while from its crested waves a zephyr comes to fan my brow! Am I dreaming? Such beauty and transparency can belong alone to the ideal!"

"My beloved, this is no fancy, but reality. This is land, that is water, these *are* plants. You are not deceived in the least. I do not wonder at your incredulity. I have seen those who for years thought themselves dreaming,

and no argument could persuade them that they were not. One I knew who kept a memorandum of every occurrence for a long time, that when consciousness returned he might relate all he had heard and seen to his friends. Remember that this world corresponds to the lower world, as a reflection in a mirror, and that spirits hold the same relations to spiritual substance that man holds to physical matter, and you will soon comprehend the reality of these scenes."

"You, I already accept as a reality! How am I to learn the ways of this higher life?"

"I am extremely glad that in your progress such desires should fill your mind. You would know from whence came this sphere, by what laws it is governed, and all the other mysteries of nature usually denominated spiritual. All this I do not feel capable of expounding. I might, through mistake or misunderstanding, lead you into errors. This is our first lesson in our renewed lives. It seems as though we were renewed or restored to each other, for, although much of the time after my departure from my earthly form I was near you, yet you did not seem to me as now. The impenetrable veil which concealed me from you, only rent by impressions often ill-understood, clouded my brightest hours. I am pleased with your inquiries. My first object is to lead you to the dwelling of one whose acquaintance has greatly aided me in my advancement. He is to aid you likewise in ascending the embowered pathway of the light."

"And who is this benevolent spirit who so interests himself in our welfare as to neglect himself to advance us?"

"Oh, he is an ancient sage, well known by his Portico and school. He taught erroneous doctrines then; he is right now. His name is The Sage."

CHAPTER II.

THE HOME OF THE SAGE.

Before us rolled an ocean's boundless blue,
A mirror of the ether's dazzling hue;
Green hills rolled from the shore like swelling breasts,
With willows clothed, oft by the wind caressed
And palms above their feathery foliage flung,
And round the orange stems the grape-vine clung.

The zephyr, drunk with fragrance, fanned our brows,
Or, playing on the sea, coy dimples ploughs.
High on a rolling hill a palace stood,
On either side embowered in fruitful wood
From pyramid of steps glass pillars sprang,
And high above the grove their cop'tal flung
Above, a crystal dome like azure hung.

THEY paused in a grove of beautiful trees and shrubbery which gave forth the most refreshing fragrance. Near by stood an exquisitely chaste and beautiful structure. The graceful palm, the pine, the elm, vied with the orange, fig, date, and vine to give the most lovely forms. It was the home of The Sage, who sat beneath the shade, and at their approach extended wide his arms, exclaiming: "Welcome, sister I welcome, brother I welcome, my children, for I regard you as such; yet are you my equals, deficient only in the centuries of life which have taught me wisdom. I understand your wishes, and will at once instruct you in the elementary science of our lives. Look below. Behold earth with her myriad forms. See those clouds of electrical matter continually arising from every plant and animal, every living, moving thing; even from the mineral masses of the earth itself.

"The spheres were not created until matter became ripened by the processes of world formation. With the death of the first living form began the agglomeration into spheres.

"To illustrate: Your earthly body was pervaded by a spiritual element. Your death was like the death of the animal, whose external body in the same manner as yours contains a spiritual element. When death severed the ties which united your spirit with your physical body, the component parts of your spirit had sufficient affinity to retain them together without the intervention of the gross elements of your body. Not so the animal. The death-struggle breaks the connection between its material and spiritual; and its ethereal atoms not retaining sufficient attraction for each other, they, as vapor, diffuse themselves into space until drawn to their appropriate spheres!"

"Does this account for the non-existence of animals after death?"

"Assuredly, for you observe that identity is like a complete arch. In man the keystone of that arch is supplied, and the structure is eternal, while it is wanting in animals, and consequently at death the incipient spiritual entity perishes.

"The process of ascension of ultimate particles commenced while the earth was in its morning days, and has gone on increasing ever since. The soil which supports these trees differs from earth only in the degree of its refinement, and consequently its productions are similar to those of earth; and as the exhalations from the earth differ as its development varies, so this soil changes continually in its character. Hence this world, in the variety of its forms, has imitated earth, copying in minutiae all its types from age to age. Thus says a spirit from a world breathed into existence long before ours, and his knowledge is from direct observation. Soon after the Saurian Age, our

sphere was inhabited by those reptile forms whose remains are buried in the permian and oolite rocks. The uncouth mammalia of the tertiary, alike, were all represented here. So has it been with all ages; their peculiar types and forms were all represented in this world until the present period dawned, when the refinement of atoms was so accelerated that spirits with highest intelligence alone can occupy this abode.

"Here is a shadow of the correspondence which has ever existed between the Spirit-world and earth. Matter is prone to take the form of its previous state; hence this grove, these beautiful plants, revelling in the light of their own spirituality. They have all lived on earth, and though the atoms which compose this orange tree never before united in this particular tree, yet all have existed in various orange trees before. Atoms thus modified have affinities to, unite in this peculiar form of tree."

"Then there are no animals here?" asked Leon.

"No, if you would view them, you must visit some other globe, or, as you journey from one world to another, you may behold all the innumerable types assumed by creative life. They existed here before the human spirit took up its abode in this sphere. They have passed away, as they ultimately will from the earth. This will take place when they have fulfilled their destiny and cannot longer subserve a useful purpose in its economy. There are none here now, not even the highest forms, the atmosphere here being too refined for their sustainment."

"I always rejoice at the song of the birds carolling amid the branches, and the busy activity of animal life; under this consideration, shall I not weary with the uninterrupted stillness which prevails? Will not my spirit cloy with the solitude of its home?"

"Men are fond of the notes of the birds, and become attached to animals and places, because they find nothing

better to love. Give them congenial companions, and they will not miss the loss of the lower forms. If this were your abiding-place, the weariness you fear would never come."

"And yet," said Hero, "in the earth-life well do I remember when my dear sister was taken from us, she who now is with us so bright in angel loveliness; how when the birds sang in the spring, it seemed like a sin for them to be happy while she could not hear their glad songs; and then it came to me like a beam of light, that if they could come, why not she? I went down in the orchard that April day and answered song for song.

"Again, dear bird, I hear your joyful note
 Through all the orchard and the meadows float;
 Again my heart is gladdened by your lays
 As in the well-remembered summer days.
 You went away in clouds and coming gloom,
 When wailing winds sighed over Autumn's tomb,
 And on the forehead of the dying year
 The damp was changed to snow; the brilliant sere
 To funeral robes; and over all the plain
 The Winter-King came down and held his reign.

You left us for a clime where never blow
 The harsh north blasts with blinding clouds of snow
 Where all the air is fragrant as in June;
 Where rose and lily shed their rich perfume,
 And rarest fruitage tempts the finest taste,
 Profusely scattered through the endless waste.
 And with you went away another one
 Whose life ebbed with the south-receding sun.
 Beside her grave, moistened by many a tear,
 We stood, and as her casket on its bier
 Rested the time, a snow-flake, like a star,
 A tear of angel bending o'er heaven's bar,
 Fell on the calls in the wreath which pressed,
 By pulseless hands, above her gentle breast
 As awn the snow on all the dessert field
 Spread an unbroken and protecting shield!

On that dear mound the storms of rain and sleet
 Have, like relentless spirits, ceaseless beat
 And in our hearts no bud of joy will bloom,
 Draped, as they are, with cypress of the tomb.
 Oh, bird that sings so sweetly, tell us why
 If you remember still our leaden sky!

To come again and from your swelling throat
Repeat the old-time love in every note,
Our child may not remember, and return
To her home altar, where loves deathless burn!
She did not die! I know the thickening cloud
Our vision binding is an earthly shroud.
I know her timid feet trod not alone
The pathway upward to the spirit's throne
That those we loved who walked the way before,
With tender hands ope'd wide the pearly door,
And bade her welcome to their home of bliss
With deep affection's all-assuring kiss.
Oh, if you, little bird, can come again
Across the trackless forest and the plain,
I know our darling finds not Heaven so sweet
As not to wish with us again to meet.
Across the dark abyss, however wide,
Her eager spirit on light wings will glide;
And if we listen we shall hear once more
Her voice of song in accents as of yore.

"Nature continually speaks to her children," replied the Sage; "let them roam where they will. Here are the changes of vegetation, the glassy ocean, the murmur of the brook, the roar of the cascade, no storms terrify or destroy, yet there are pleasant changes and constant variety. This is the home of the spirit. I stay here but a small portion of my time; the other portion I am visiting other groups. You will do likewise; but when weary with activity, it is pleasant to return to this retreat."

"I am then to choose a locality and call it home!" exclaimed Leon, in astonishment that his future life was to become such a simile of his past.

"That is as you please. When on earth you did so. Then you might have been a rover without a fixed habitation. The same applies here. You have a choice. This spot is *my* selection, and it is home to me. How strange you think of this! You still have a body; you have lungs, and must breathe; you have a stomach, and require nourishment. Here, above and around us, is our food. We toil and delve not to bring it forth, but these are all

spontaneous productions of a fertile soil. Partake! Is not the flavor unsurpassed? Who ever tasted an orange more juicy, a fig sweeter, or grapes of such choice flavor?

"Your speech is strange, but true. My taste is quickened, and these are splendid fruits, and as I stand here, partaking of them with Hero, I seem transported to our quiet garden. I once believed the spirit lost all animal propensities at death, but I see more plainly now."

"Your former belief has been a favourite dogma, without a shadow of proof" replied the Sage. "The existence of the spirit depends upon these; without them, it could not exist. Without a due degree of selfishness, all energy would be lost. Intellect, however superior, and coupled with the morality of a god, bereft of the stamina imparted by the animalities, is like the engine without steam. Like it, too, it must have its continual sustenance to urge it and keep it in motion. But, waving philosophy, how do you regard my Portico?—how fancy it as a home?"

"Excellent!" said both.

"Then may you find it a home satisfying all your desires, and a haven of rest whenever you return to it. After you have become accustomed to the new environments, and recovered from the weariness which always attends the transition, we will visit other localities where you will find that all scenes are not as lovely, and man spiritually expresses the conditions symbolized in the awful imagery of hell and sulphurous fire."

CHAPTER III.

THE HOME OF THE MISER.

The miser tottering and old
Takes up his eye-glass—old Opinion
And thinks he sees the paving gold
Has cracks enough for finger hold
Along the streets of heaven's dominion.
Emma Rood Tuttle.

A FEW days after this conversation, the Sage said to them: "I am to take a distant journey, and, on the way, if you will go with me, we will call on a selfish, miserly group who will interest you."

On their expressing their delight at this new experience, they at once took their departure, and soon paused before a group of beings clothed in rags. It were better to call them beings, for they merely existed without the high and noble aspirations which elevate man to the angels.

"I say, Morton," spoke one, "'twas no small job when I discovered that rich old mine of silver, from which the Incas derived their wealth. You had better go with me, and gather money that tells, than forever be picking up grains of sand."

The one addressed looked up; his glassy eyes seemed to light with fire; his nervous hand clutched the bag which contained his untold treasures.

"Ah! have you a mine of silver, and I only a bag of gold? Oh! how poor am I; I *must* work harder—*must* be up earlier and more diligent. Oh! poor me!" and the wretch groaned in very agony at the thought of his

poverty, of which, had his sack contained real gold, he would have had abundance, even could he have used it. But he had no desire or occasion for its use. He was in a sphere where material wealth was of no value. For a moment he paused, then commenced to gather glittering grains, and place them in his sack already heavy beyond his power to carry, and hence obliging him to remain and guard it. The first speaker intently watched him for a long time, then burst into a loud laugh.

"Why, fool," said he, "you are laboring under an hallucination; that is nothing but sand. Empty out the contents of your sack, and not keep it shut up from its true office of supporting vegetation. It is worthless, and you are a bankrupt, worth more for the rag-mill than anything else."

Then he laughed again, in which the others joined; some proposing to rob him of his mighty treasure; others jeering and scorning him, which made the poor victim of inordinate love of gain creep away, cursing in his bitterness.

"You, Wintle, need not put on such airs," said one, whose grey eye and iron visage proclaimed him an earthly tenant of Wall Street; "I mistrust your intentions, and suspect that you are not the wealthiest one among us."

"Wealthy! Wealthy, did you say? Not the wealthiest one among you, with all the untold riches of my newly discovered mine?"

"Yes, I said wealthy," replied the man of Wall Street, with a cold sneer. "You say you have done nothing but search for this mine for the last ten years. I fancy you would be worth little if it were gone."

"Not a farthing."

"A total bankrupt?"

"Yes."

"Well, I used to search a great deal for mines. I spent the first twenty years of my life here searching; and after being deluded many times, I came to the conclusion that

there were other methods of securing a fortune, sooner and easier, and with far more safety. I said, after being deluded, I *have* been many times, and almost every one I ever heard speak of thus employing their time has been disappointed, their mines of precious metal turning out but some worthless mineral.

"Where is this mine of yours located?"

"On the western slope of the Andes."

"Does a large tree grow close by—a pine tree, whose head is reared high above its neighbors?"

"All true."

"What mark is there upon this tree?"

"Long since it appeared to have been hewn on the north side."

"Well, then, it is the mine I discovered long ago."

"Did you? Well, then, it is rich enough for us both, for it contains more ore than you ever dreamed of."

"Why, how generous you are, and so well acquainted with the contents of this wonderful mine!"

"Truly I am acquainted with its contents. Wilder, the mineralogist, after a severe test, pronounced it silver."

"I do not blame you for being deceived. Many a poor fellow has been disappointed by that mine. Wilder! why, he knows nothing of his business; he is a pretender, and cannot tell silver from lead. You should have come to me. You saw nothing but the silver-colored mica of the granite!"

"Are you sure of what you say?" asked he, with fearful earnestness.

"I am. I once had the substance tested, and it proved valueless."

"Curses on my lot forever! Am I foiled again, and my ten years lost?" Then he wrung his hands in agony fearful to behold.

"You should not take it so hard; you have plenty of

time, and you had better give up this search after mines, and take up an honest calling."

"Give up? Never! never! I will search the world over, and will become as rich as any of your lordling crew;" saying which, he rushed away, fully determined on a new search, and in a far different wood than that in which he joined the group.

"What a fool! I can play high game better than he, yet I don't have to discover mines. I gave that up because fools will do it for me. I guessed a little, and got the remaining description from him, and persuaded him I knew all about it. He fully believes Wilder an ignoramus! Now I'll send one of my men to him to make the purchase; and as he thinks it worthless, if he receives anything for it he will think he is making a speculation. Yes, it is all mine, and worth more than New York City! I falsified a little—made him feel bad; but what is that to such treasure?"

An angel looked down from the upper spheres, and as its pure soul saw this moral degradation, whispered in sorrow:—

"What! is it nothing that you have lied?—nothing that you defrauded your fellow, and crushed your soul into a dollar?—nothing that you play the hypocrite and deceiver? No; you belong to the church; attend every Sunday, and read your long prayers under the high steeple. The blood of enslaved souls has made you rich. You are called to that church by the tones of a bell cast from the solidified tears of women and children crushed by your avarice. Nothing that you make property of your church, and refuse the poor man, whom you have made poor, a seat! All this nothing! But remember the great God enters not under the shadow of that steeple, and will not listen to your fine-toned bell, but shuts down your prayers within the ceiling. The righteous Judge goes into the

attic where you have driven the children of the soil, and patiently hears their prayers, and gives comfort to their souls. He tells them of the bright day coming, when all their wrongs will have ended. Slowly and silently, but surely and irresistibly, it approaches. Ah, foolish man! how much better are you with a million than with a thousand? Every dollar you accumulate more than a sufficiency is so much loss from your soul. You enjoy accumulation. Soon that path shall be closed, and from whence, then, shall come enjoyment to such a dwarfed and, contracted being? Are you more of a *man* for riches? Nay, less and less, dollar by dollar. Turn to the light, for angels weep for their erring brothers on earth."

A dark cloud closed down and concealed them and their errors from the angels' view. False to each other, they delighted in inflicting pain, and to aggrandize themselves on the ruin of others; forever striving, yet ever disappointed and unsatisfied. Will they ever escape the hell of their own selfishness? Is there hope for their emancipation from the bondage of desires? The spirit has the power of self-elevation, and however degraded may be redeemed.

A little boy reared in a luxurious home was stolen away by gypsies and was forced to lead their vagabond life. A waif thrown on his own resources, he was sent out as a chimney-sweep, and clothed in rags and blackened by soot he was a pitiable object. One day he swept a tall chimney; soon he came to a grate, and passed into a room. He gazed around on the beautiful paintings on the wall, the soft carpet, the bed with its lace curtains, and to the bewildered child it seemed as though he had entered Paradise. There was a strangely familiar appearance, as though he had once been there in a dream. He could not remember, nor had he quite forgotten. Tears started to his eyes, and worn out with his hard labor, he flung himself on the

snow-white bed and wept himself to sleep. The lady of the house entered the room after a time, and saw the poor sweep lying in unconscious slumber. She gazed intently at the pinched face, begrimed and furrowed by tears. There was faintly recalled the image of her child, who had been lost and mourned as dead. She drew closer, and her mother's heart knew its own. She clasped the boy in her arms and awoke him by calling his own name, and kissed his cheeks while in the eagerness of her recognition. Beneath the rags and grime she saw her darling child returned in answer to her prayers.

Oh! how many are wandering from home like the lost child! They are soiled with the stains of the world; blackened with the soot of selfishness; have forgotten their father's house, and their mother's love is as a dream; yet beneath all these accidents of life, its mistakes and blunders, when they reach their final home, the angels may find that with a baptism of love they may become purified and beautiful,

CHAPTER IV.

THE LOW SOCIETIES CONTINUED.

What clouds of mystery are hung
Around that one idea, Heaven!
And though forever songs have rung
Across its bare by angels sung,
The cloud which veils it is not riven.

Emma Rood Tuttle.

"WE are yet in the lower societies of the second sphere," said the Philosopher; "you will now behold examples wherein you will recognize the same passions which animate many of earth's children, plunging them into misery and woe. In the last scene, you beheld the influence of uncontrolled acquisitiveness; the desire for wealth which avails not. Here you see the action of combativeness and destructiveness resulting in quarrelling and dissension."

As the Sage ceased speaking, a wretched group appeared, all unprepared to be ushered into a higher state. Bad as their condition was previously, it was a paradise to this. They were discontented on earth, and often had wished for death. How little knew they of the change! The discontented, unfledged bird would fain skim the ethereal air, like its strong parent, but not being adapted to that element until mature, it falls from its happy nest, and receives many a bruise. The caterpillar would sport in the atmosphere among the gay flowers, sipping delicate nectar from gaudy corollas; spins its cocoon before its time, and, when too late, finds its food shut out, its life cramped, and if it live, at most makes an imperfect fly.

"These examples illustrate the condition of those who depart from the present to try the unknown future before full preparation. Man should live in the earth-life to a ripe, age, and die as the apple falls from its bough in autumn time."

"I fear extremely few thus mature."

"Alas! mankind have everything of their spiritual being yet to learn; everything—how to live, to breathe, to think the infinite lesson I know thyself."

They paused before a wretched group consisting of father, mother and children—an entire family. The Sage spoke, but his charity not allowing him to injure the feelings of the sufferers, aside to his companions:—

"I know this family well. Many years since, while passing over the earth, I encountered them, the same as now. The parents whom you behold, worn with care, were unhappily wedded. They falsified, and deceived each other into the belief that they were, adapted to each other. But marriage, as is too often the case, revealed the true character of each to the other. They United as a fearful majority unite, from selfish and passionate motives. One passion necessarily excites the others, hence, as this turned put, the fuel becoming exhausted, their bodies diseased, their minds irritable, attraction is complemented by disgust. The laws of attraction and repulsion, as sublimated in the realm of spirit, are as yet unknown to earthly science. Yet do they rule with the same adamantine inflexibility in the spiritual all in the physical world. Can you ask what the offsprings of such unions must be? the bad qualities predominating in their parents, descend and cumulate in the children. This is an ill-understood, but inevitable consequence. The Bible says truly of such: 'Conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity.' These children are an illustration. They hate their parents, and are kept together and in obedience by fear. The family circle,

instead of being a school to instruct them in practical goodness, has taught them nothing but evil. Here are ten children and a group of twelve persons (a contagion swept them all at once from earth), having as much affinity for each other as the lamb for the wolf. Ten children! No parent can rear during their short earthly life that number, and impart all the necessary vitality and instruction their natures require. And what right have parents to bring immortal beings into the world, if not prepared and qualified to sustain them?"

"Then you would have the parents instruct their own children?"

"Yes, every child has a right to be well born, and then the mother should instruct them in the sciences, teach them all they require to know, and point them the direct road to preferment and honor. This is her duty, and she obeys the voice of nature in proportion as she performs the task. Who teaches the young eagle to poise its untrained pinions, or to dart with unerring precision upon its prey? Who gives it its first lessons in the art of cleaving the airy tide, and then, and not till then, throws it upon its, own responsibility? Who but its mother?"

"But how is she to obtain time amid all the cares woman on earth is obliged to submit to?" asked Hero. "True, she might do it *here*, but *there* it seems impossible."

"Did you not educate *your* children? Did you not send them all directly to posts of honor? Do they not constitute the pride of your heart; for *can* a mother be indifferent to the success of her children? They are an honor to you and lights to the world; and to *you* they owe all that they are. Depend upon this, that just as a mother uses her child, so will the child use the world. How the children before us illustrate this! The words they utter are too low to be spoken or heard, being the language of unrestrained animalities."

"How they can do so, I cannot imagine; why do they not separate?"

"It is because they have not discovered that it is possible, but believe that similar restrictions prevail as, on earth. This they will soon find, and then they will dissolve."

"Oh, it is dreadful to see such confusion. Let us away!"

"Then, fair Hero, we will go, and not halt to provoke an outburst of their passions; but perhaps the next group we meet will be no less inharmonious."

* * * * *

"Can you smell the fumes of tobacco, or inhale the breath of those who drink wine that maddeneth? Nay, you cannot, but we now stand near those who fully believe that they in reality do.

"Have you ever entered a saloon? Have you ever watched the stupid stare of the inebriate when his eye grew less and less lustrous, slowly closing, the muscles relaxing, and the victim of appetite sinking over on the floor in beastly drunkenness? Oh, how dense the fumes of mingled tobacco and alcohol! Oh, what misery confined in those walls! If you have witnessed such scenes, then we need describe no further. If you have not, you had better not hear the tale of woe. Imagine to yourselves a bar-room with all its sots, and their number multiplied indefinitely, with the conscience-seared and bloated fiends who stood behind the bar, from whence they deal out death and damnation; and the picture is complete! One has just arrived from earth. He is yet uninitiated in the mysteries and miseries of those which, like hungry lions, await him. He died while intoxicated—was frozen while lying in the gutter, and consequently is attracted towards this society. He possessed a good intellect, but it was shattered by his debauches."

"Ye ar' a fresh one, ain't ye?" coarsely queried a sot, just then particularly communicative.

"Why, yes, I have just died, as they call it, and 'tain't so bad a change after all; only I suppose ther'll be dry times here for want of something stimulant."

"Not so dry; lots of that all the time, and jolly times too."

"Drink! can you drink, then?"

"Yes, we just can, and feel as nice as we please. But all can't—not unless they find one on earth just like 'em. You go to earth and mix with your chum, and when you find one whose thoughts you can read, he's your man. Form a connection with him, and when he gets to feeling good you'll feel so too. There, do you understand me? I always tell all fresh ones the glorious news, for how they would suffer if it wasn't for this blessed thing!"

"I'll try it, no mistake."

"Here's a covey," spoke an ulcerous-looking being; "he's c[sic] our stripe. Tim, did you hear what an infernal scrape I got into last night? No, you didn't. Well, I went to our friend Fred's; he didn't want to drink when I found him, his dimes looked so extremely large. Well, I destroyed that feeling, and made him think he was dry. He drank and drank, more than I wanted him to, until I was so drunk that I could not break my connection with him or control his mind. He undertook to go home, fell into the snow, and came near freezing to death. I suffered awfully—ten times as much as when I died."

* * * * *

Can these ever progress from their fearfully depraved condition?" asked Hero, in sorrowful accents.

"Yes," replied the Sage, "the lowest mind can progress, and ages hence we shall find these same degraded men on our present plane. The years of eternity are unnumbered.

In their duration there is time for the elevation of all. The capabilities of the human mind are infinite, and these degraded objects have the germs of all the faculties, ready to awaken into life under proper circumstances. There is no retrogression, but constant onward movement. The planets oscillate to and fro—so may the mind; but its retrogression is confined to narrow limits, and its real motion is forever one of advancement. These degraded beings will some day awake to the consciousness of their position and the relations they hold to their fellows, and arousing from their lethargy will renew their lives. The flame once kindled can never be extinguished, however loathesome the atmosphere in which it burns; and though for a time its light may be obscured, it will finally triumph over all difficulties, and blaze forth in immortal splendor. Once drawn within the verge of progressive movement, they will be propelled by the swift current."

CHAPTER V.

HADES.

He stood there desolate and lone,
Wealth, titles, honors all had flown;
Like oak o'er which the storm-winds sweep,
Around which lightnings busy leap
In lurid gleam, and thunders shout,
And echoing peal their laugh about.

AS they passed from the scene described in the last chapter, the Sage seemed wrapped in deep meditation. At length he gave utterance to his feelings.

"Here I behold minds equal in natural strength to my own, yet debased lower than the brute. This is the punishment for the many misdeeds of the body. Here you behold the reactive energy of those laws. They must work out their own redemption. Though not plunged into a fiery gulf of sulphur, smoke, and wrath, their punishment is a thousandfold more severe. If they feel this not now, the thousand cycles of the future will reveal their trespasses in all their deformities. The knowledge of what they have lost will force itself upon their minds."

As the Sage paused, Leon raised his eyes from pondering his words, and beheld a majestic yet mournful prospect. They were standing on a lofty eminence overlooking an and plane, interspersed with hills, valleys, and ravines, and oasis-like green spots would now and then break out like islands in the Sahara. The plane appeared boundless, and

on every side it lost itself in the thick clouds of vapor hanging over it. On every side appeared the scenes beheld by ancient clairvoyants, seers, and visionaries, and by their excited imagination wrought into a fiery hell of Jehovah's wrath. Oh, the loneliness of the prospect! The dim view of millions of human beings, all once of earth, wandering over the and waste, with hearts as stunted and souls as contracted as the stunted mimosa and dwarf acacia which grow in clumps here and there on the desert.

"Here have I often contemplated the scenes of spirit misery and woe," said the Philosopher; "woe beyond all possible conception—beyond all expression; for, while pursuing the ruinous course of error, they one and all think they are enjoying the fullest measure of happiness. Their minds, are hermetically sealed to the light. They can never progress until their mental vision is unshrouded from the thick veil of their present ignorance."

"This seems," responded Leon, "like a realization of earth. To appearances this is an earthly prospect, and the spirits I behold yonder are as busily engaged as man with all his cares. Have I not viewed this prospect before?"

"True, it is an earthly scene. This is earth. The lowest circle or plane of our existence is not removed above man's plane. Thus, a good opportunity is given the undeveloped to learn the laws which govern earth; and you well know that they must learn these before advancing."

"Then these shaded spirits who flit about and till the ground, and appear so busily employed, are yet in the flesh, though they scarcely differ from the others?"

"Yes, those are the inhabitants of earth toiling for food and raiment, which is right, and ten thousand useless luxuries which are hurtful. Here we find all classes and varieties of minds—the bigot, the hypocrite, the trader, the trafficker who used fraudulent and unlawful means,

deception, and scant measure—the narrow-minded, the selfish, and the sensual—all are here."

"For a long time I have watched them intently, but owing to the diversity of occupations I cannot satisfy my curiosity."

"They are variously employed. Yonder is a group who believe life created for to-day; that to 'drink and be merry' is the ultimate of existence. They have in consequence permitted their minds to run to ruin, and have prostrated all their energies in the cultivation of a lisping speech, and what they style grace of manners. Now they join in the dance—well enough in itself, it is true, when performed for exercise, but when made a chief employment of life, extremely bad in its effects. Hundreds of years since I passed this way on a mission similar to my present, and then I beheld this same circle employed just as you now see them. I say the same; it appears as if some are not here *now* who were here *then*, and that the number is augmented. Perhaps some have seen their folly in a new light, and arisen above the pursuit of mere animal gratification. Yonder is a group of sensualists, thinking, talking, and acting as on earth—sacrificing their energies on the altar of sensual desire. Think you on this spectacle! Let us drop the veil of modesty, remembering that these have their likeness on earth. Leon, do you recollect Marvin, the merchant prince, the speculating capitalist, the bigoted religionist?"

"I have cause to remember him. Many a time have we argued until he became angry, and condemned me to the infernal gulf of misery as an outcast and infidel."

"He has departed from his palace home. Can you see that dark spirit yonder? How wildly he gazes around him! He is bewildered and lost!"

"It is the one of whom you speak. There is the

churchman, the creed-fettered man—a strict observer of bigotry. How often have I heard him repeat, 'that one could tell Sunday from a week-day by its appearance!' How often has he cursed me from his Bible, and said I was elected for hell, and he for heaven! Why cometh he hither?"

While he was speaking, Marvin, attracted by the superior light issuing from the eminence, hastened up, wildly gazing around at every step. The moment he came within speaking distance, he recognised Leon, and exclaimed:—

"Leon of the hamlet! and your wife!—*you* here? What keeps you in this dismal place? What are you doing here? Where am I?"

"We came here to observe the lights and shadows of spirit-life. You are in the place where I once told you you would go, for which you scorned me."

"I remember, and believe none the more or less now. I am *not dead* yet"

"No, but you are dead to the world."

"Say not so; I am only dreaming a fearful dream."

"If You should behold your body conveyed to the tomb, your dreams would begin to put on form and substance."

"I should believe them reality," exclaimed he, still gazing with an insane stare, and startling at every sound.

"Follow, then," said Leon, who well knew the position of the stately hall that reared itself near by his humble cottage.

The group proceeded to the former home of Marvin, and entered its marble walls, furnished with the sumptuousness of untold wealth, proclaiming Marvin a prince in dollars and pride. In a mahogany coffin, on a marble table, rested the earthly remains of the great leader in commerce and religion, bloated with the ravages of disease. His spirit drew near, folded its arms, and with a fixed gaze

stood over the corpse. Not a limb moved nor a muscle vibrated, except a slight quiver would now and then run over the face. The view of his mortal form held him fascinated. Never will the earnest look be fixed upon his former self be forgotten. The bearers entered, and placed the coffin in the hearse, which began its measured movement towards the family tomb. Then, with a loud scream of agony, he appeared to wake to consciousness, threw himself on the coffin, hugging the corpse with all his energy—crying with might and main he was to be buried alive—he lived—he was to be murdered! He had seen too much beyond death already. He only slept. After lamenting in this manner for a while, he became aware that the spirits with him heard his voice through the vibrations of ether. His friends, whom he wished to hear, could not hear in the least. He then strove to move the corpse—to move the arm to make them know that he yet lived. All was vain! He had lost control over his own form, and knew not how to move matter. Frantic with fear and anxiety, he clung to the wreck of his mortality, and refused the request of the Philosopher to rise. When the coffin was placed away side by side with the previous generation, and with a lingering look the bearers were about to depart, he became alarmed for fear of being shut up, and followed them out into the free air, declaring all the time he was in a trance! or it was an awful dream!

"Nay," said the Philosopher; "your *body* is dead; *you* live, and are a spirit in the Spirit-world."

"In heaven?" exclaimed he in extreme surprise.—"I in heaven?"

"No, not heaven to you, but is to us."

"Why, this is no heaven, this is earth! Where is heaven?—I can't see it!"

"What kind of place do you expect to find heaven asked the Sage, with something of pity.

What kind of a place? I believe it is as the Bible describes. It says heaven is paved with bright gold, and walled about with precious stones, so that no sinner can get in through the narrow way which I have travelled, with now and then a slight transgression, which the Lord has forgiven me. Now you are sinners, for you are waylaying me, and declaring me dead while I live. Am I in all the heaven I shall ever find? If I *am* in heaven, where is *God*, to whom I have prayed three times each day all my life?"

"He is here."

"Where?" he exclaimed in terror.

"Here, around and within us."

"No; I see him not: and thus you have *proved* that I am not in heaven. God is in heaven; the Bible says so. If he were here, I could see him far plainer than I now see you. He sits on an ivory throne, with sceptre in his hand, dealing out laws and punishments to the nations. All around are elders and angels with golden harps, singing his praise. Where is all this? I hear nothing. Do you suppose such a concourse could escape my sight? No, I could see it across the universe."

"You hear them!—no, you never will."

"Oh, sinners, evil angels sent to tempt me from the path of right! Oh, that I could awake! Where *is* heaven? Don't stand pointing to your mind; I want to behold the *real* heaven, with its glittering pavement!"

"Many of earth's sons would rather see the 'glittering pavement' than heaven itself, but none will ever be gratified," calmly replied the Sage.

"Is there not such a place?" and again the storm of passion arose within.

"No local heaven. Heaven is a condition, not a locality."

"Do you deny the Bible?"

"No."

"That says heaven is located."

"Not if rightly understood."

"Yes it does, plainly. I have crucified my flesh, suffered everything, carried my grievous cross—all for nothing! Nay, nay, I'll find the place yet"

"Not yet."

"Never?"

"Never!"

"Are my sufferings of no avail?"

"None whatever, unless to depress you. The path of happiness passes not through suffering. Suffering is the consequence of infringed law; happiness, of obeyed law. To be happy is to enjoy all the pure pleasures of earth. You have always labored under a great mistake."

"But my prayers?"

"Prayer without action is worthless."

"Did not Christ die for me?"

"No."

"Why was he sacrificed then?"

He died because the Jews were angry at his reformation, and treated him just as all reformers have been—since time began—burned, crucified, murdered by the mob at the instigation of the priesthood."

"Can he not forgive sins?"

"No; every man has his own accounts to answer for. If he is debtor he is necessarily punished."

"Atonement false?"

"Yes, Christ suffers not for your sins. He is not a scapegoat on whom you are to lay your burdens."

"Heretic! heretic! No wonder you have not seen heaven. I'll argue no more with you, but retire to my house, and show you I live there yet."

In a few moments Marvin rushed from his once lively halls with a frantic gesture, exclaiming:—

"Oh! they have buried me, and believe me dead, and have already divided my property, which I have strove night and day to accumulate, that in my old age I might enjoy it. They are quarrelling like wolves over a carcase. When they opened my safe, and I saw how determined they were to waste all my savings, I shouted right in their ears, and though: they must have *heard*, they gave not the least attention. I am dead, and why does not the good angel come to conduct me away? I'll go and search for heaven myself."

"How large do you think it to be?"

"Why, it is limited somewhere."

"A limited spot is uncertain to find in infinite universe. This globe is large—larger than you imagine heaven, yet one unacquainted with its orbit might search a million of ages and not find it."

"Is Now, truly, did you never learn of its locality?" asked he, in a supplicating tone.

"Yes, everywhere where there is a happy mind—where there is a mind capable of enjoyment, for heaven is happiness."

"Where, then, is the other place—the awful inconceivable hell, with the old master of iniquity? If that is everywhere too, I shall be haunted by evil spirits all my days."

"It is everywhere where there is an unhappy mind; and as for the devil, he cannot trouble you, for he exists only in the over-heated imagination of those trained in prejudice."

"You are all fully punished for your sinful thoughts while on earth. What an awful place!"

"True," said the Sage, "this is just as bad a place as can

be found. It is just as you make it—heaven or hell; and as for evil spirits, if you are good they cannot approach you, being repelled; and if bad, you will seek their company. To convince yourself that heaven is not a locality, you had better search until satisfied. It will then be a greater reality to you."

"That is what I mean to do, and am in no doubt that I shall be successful."

"Go! Meanwhile we will take our departure, with the humble wish that you will return to nature, and be guided by the light within you."

CHAPTER VI.

CHRISTMAS-TIDE IN THE SPHERE OF LIGHT.

Thou glorious Spirit-land! Oh that I could behold thee as thou art—the region of light and life and love, and the dwelling place of those whose being has flowed onward, like a silver-clear stream into the solemn-sounding main, into the ocean of eternity!"—*Longfellow*.

AGAIN it is Christmas-tide! So soon! So long! To some the years are hours; to others, centuries long. What a prophecy of the future life when time is measured not by waning moons or oft recurring suns, but by accomplishments! Not by the years; for they may nothing mean; the action done, the thoughts woven into life, the works of nobility, these count while the breath fades into pulseless air.

Nineteen centuries have almost passed since shepherds pasturing their flocks on the plains of Palestine, saw the flash of angelic light, and, enraptured, listened to the sweet voices from the heavens. Nineteen centuries since the wise men followed the star which led them to the mother of the divine babe. Is this a myth? It is too beautiful to be dispelled. Let us linger as in a dream, and do not awaken us. Nay, it is a symbol which is realized in the human heart. Was the babe of Nazareth divine? Yes, and all babes are divine. Artists with colors of light, inspired with heavenly vision, have painted countless dreams of the beatitude of Mary, celestial mother. They have represented all womanly excellence and beauty, and over these have thrown the aureole of inexpressible sweetness and joy, yet never have they equalled the radiant glory of

the mother's face when she folds the newborn to her bosom.

Dispel not the dream, for it has taught us not only the divinity of Jesus, but the divinity of every human soul. The wise men bowed before the symbol of what all mankind must reverence in the future—the Infinite Godhead concentered and expressed in man.

Let us adorn our homes, and weave the wreaths of evergreen. Let us spread the generous board, in family groups assemble, and for one day at least have perfect rest and peace. For these occasions will soon pass, and the family circle be broken. Nothing is certain in mortal life but uncertainty; the most pleasing picture has a background of clouds, and to wait for happiness is to lose it. How fresh in memory these Christmas hours remain, and how closely they weave the web of friendship around our hearts.

We remember these unions in the by-gone days, and the dear ones who set with us, who now are robed in light. Memory! blessed preserver of the past, fans the ashes of the years, and love and friendship blaze again, illuminating all the void. Not dead ashes is that past, but a treasure-house garnering even the fleeting shadows.

They who sat with us! And may they not sit again? Mortal eyes may not see, mortal ears may not hear, but mortal hearts can feel, and spiritual sensitiveness recognize the presence of the guests who are not announced. We open wide our doors for these invisible ones, and bid them heart-felt welcome.

They who went at the close of the autumn day, when the world was ripe for the harvest, and the reaper came like a messenger to bear the matured fruitage to the heavens; and they who were in the budding spring torn from our bleeding hearts, early blossoms gathered amid frosts, of a world too chill and cold; transplanted where

the angels might give them loving care under warmer skies, let them all come in and be with us this day, and cast over us the influence of their loving spirits.

We will forget the pain, the agony, the unutterable sorrow that was ours the last time we parted, in tears calling their dear names, answered only by the rattling clay; we will forget the clouds, and have only the sunshine of their spirit-presence. This day mortal guests shall not sit in these chairs consecrated to the departed who have never left us. We will talk of our dear ones who have tasted of the waters of death and life, if we cannot talk with them, that they may know that green as the holly which adorns our walls are their blessed memories.

A Christmas soon to come, will find the earthly circle, so rudely broken, united and complete where there are no broken ties, no pain, no partings forever and forever.

The gray mists which conceal that land, already are purple with the coming of morning, and we hear the voices in the dawning, of those who have put on the robes of immortality, calling us to come up through the gateway of devoted lives to the mansions where activity is rest.

* * * * *

There are gathered on the Portico a group of choice and sympathetic friends at Christmas-tide, for the ways of earth are lovingly preserved for memory's sake in heaven. As on earth so, in the spheres. The old year closes, the new year dawns, as young, as bright, as beautiful as countless years have dawned before. Our hearts may throb and break, or overflow with joy, yet the resistless march of the years go by. We look back into the mists slowly gathering over the yesterdays, regretful of the full measure of happiness they pressed to our eager lips, or with gladness that they are past, and no more the bitter cup of affliction they forced us to quaff to the dregs is ours.

What is gone, is gone forever; but oh, what a delicate perfume lingers in the sunny valleys, and what golden light is reflected from the mountain summits of the past!

The year has gone. Many gather at Christmas-tide, and the family circle has no break. There is happiness in the golden ties which weave the hearts of all into one great heart of love.

There are many, who, when the day of peace and gladness comes, will miss the dearest face of all. At the hearth will be a vacant chair; at the table no merry voice of laughter sweeter than music. The wind bearing the fleecy snow will tell how cold it is out under the cypress and trailing willow, where a headstone gleaming among the dark foliage bears the name of her who went away to dwell with the angels, taking all the light out of the world.

Other families gather, and the broken links will be filled with memories of the absent. A few years ago, all the merry children were together, and the fate the years had in store was unthought of. Now father and mother sit on Christmas-day with only one, or perhaps none, and in low voices of restrained feeling speak of the nestlings who have sought homes beyond wide seas and continents. With them life seems doubled in itself, and, often thirty or forty years, they sit by their hearth alone, as they did in the first year of their marriage. As they did! but now it is on the shore of a flood of memories.

The hands pointing the years cannot be turned back nor life be restored to the ashes of the past. The future is ours to do and dare, and gain higher grounds and breathe a purer atmosphere. In the olden time the angels came with glad tidings; so do they come to-day, but instead of pointing us to a child in manger lowly born, they appeal to mankind as possessed of divine heritage and equals of the angels.

For those who sit alone at their tables on Christmas-day,

there are heavenly guests who fill the vacant circle. Why care for gleaming headstones? The cypress may, sob in grief to the winter winds, the dead are not, there. Nothing is there but the shard, the worn garment, the broken bars which confined the freed spirit. And no suffering hearts, no bowers of paradise are as sweet as the sacred hearth of the old home!

One of the Fraternal Circle was noticeable for the assiduous attention given her by her companions, as they sat under an arbor formed of trailing vines laden with blossoms. The bright waters came up to their feet, and swept away to the remote sky line of purple mists. Over the waters rested a dreamy sky, flecked with soft clouds and redolent with perfume. The breeze fanned them with refreshing coolness, and mingled their sweet voices with the low whispers of the wavelets on the shore of amethyst. Above them towered the beautiful palace, fashioned as of all precious stones, polished in facets and angles, or rounded into domes, as though plastic beneath the touch of a master.

She sat, happy and joyous, her face radiant, yet with eyes dreamy and retrospective. A more charming group could not be imagined, for the divine radiance of perfected lives shone from every face. Had they ever been wrinkled by care, pinched by suffering, soiled by contact with sordid things, unselfish love had washed all away and left the shiny metal of spiritual excellence. They called her Mona, a name by which she was baptized into her new life at her second birth. Mona, whose heart was full of happiness, so full that the old life on earth seemed like a dream, and unsubstantial were those who had been nearest and dearest to her.

"You say" she said in soft accents, "that a year has passed since I came to you. A year, and I am scarcely awake yet? I expect every moment to arouse and find that this beauty and joy has vanished."

Then one of the sisters replied: "Your experience is like to ours. We pass through the gateway of death, and arise weak and helpless from the ruin of the physical body. The change is so great we are dazed by the transformation, and months and years must go by before we become accustomed to our surroundings."

"I remember well," replied Mona, "the days before my coming here. That means death, does it not? I remember how much I suffered, the nights and days of pain, but I do not remember in the least the departing moments. I must have slept, for when I awoke you were around me; and we floated away, away, until we came to this delightful abode."

"It is merciful, in the ordering of events, that pain places the cup of forgetfulness to the lips, and anaesthetizes the mind, that the great transition may take place in the calmness of unthinking rest. When the celestial body emerges from the terrestrial, when the terrestrial eyes are closed on earthly things forever, and the terrestrial ear is deaf to earthly sounds, then the celestial vision becomes clear; the celestial ear becomes acute to the sweet harmony of the spheres, and the spirit is fully awake to the new world around him."

"Ah, I know only too well! And as we talk of the old earth-life my thoughts go back, and I remember clearer the scenes of that stage of my existence. My heart yearns for those I have left. You know that I have a husband there and a little boy. He was such a sweet child of six summers. Say, my sisters, do you know that he thinks of me? Does he think of his mamma in the heavens?"

"He thinks of you," one replied; "he loves his mamma, and his voice ascends in every prayer that she may watch over him"

"And I have not heard!" she said, self-reproachfully. "I have not heard his prayers. Have any of you seen

him? Has he grown large and strong? Does he miss and grieve for me?"

"It would be natural for him to grieve," responded a brother who stood outside the circle; "but you must remember that in childhood happily new impressions efface the old, and the friendships of to-day are stronger than those of yesterday."

"Can I not return to them? Can I not, dear sisters, go to my old home? It was a pleasant home. The river stretched away over the plain, and our cottage, shaded with magnolia, was lovelier than our palace to me!"

"You can return now, because you are thinking so strongly of that home. Your thoughts produce the magnetic stream which will bear you thither. That you have not been there before was simply because you did not think with sufficient intensity."

"Can I go? Can I go?" cried Mons, with childish enthusiasm. Then, thoughtfully: "Alone? Will not some one go with me?"

"I will accompany you, sweet sister," replied Albreda, placing her arm around her waist and drawing her close; "I will attend, but, before we go, I wish to prepare you, so should we not find all things as you left them, you may not be disappointed. Remember, when you enter the earth sphere you will become subject to earthly influences, and grief and regret will take the place of the joy that now fills your soul."

"And will the grief remain? Can I not cast it aside?"

"When you arise out of its sphere it will depart, but it will wring your heart sorely while you remain."

"Then we will go, and I thank you, sisters, all; and, Albreda, how can I ever express my gratitude to you for your kindness?"

With the thought they arose, their arms still entwined, and glided as a beam of light, swift moving past the head

lands which overlooked the earth. No arrow from a bow ever sped with truer aim than they on the abaft of love, impelled by the attraction of its ardent desire. They reached the cottage overlooking the winding river, which, in the low October sun, reflected the rocky cliffs and woody shore of its further banks, and the fleecy clouds in the misty, sky. There was a hush over the world as though the winter's coming was felt with instinctive dread, as the sun circled lower in the autumn days. Gorgeous beyond expression was the forest in crimson and gold, and the frosts had not yet cut the stems of the rustling leaves for the gusty winds to whirl in fantastic play. Beautiful world, asleep in a veil of purple mist, intoxicated with the rich nectar of ripened orchards, and purple vine, forgetful that death comes again, and the tremulous music of the full-throated birds of song in groves aflame with the tints of carmine, will yield to the harsh caw of the crow flitting over the chilling fields of glittering snow.

There were children at play on the steps, and a sweet voice floated out of the open door singing an old song—an old song which comes from the heart and goes to the heart, as no new song may do, or can. Sweet old words, which once were heard falling in simple melody from lips curved with sweetness; they can never be displaced by the new which have no one so loved to sing them into our souls.

Children at play, talking of the goblins of the wood, or the wonder tales of fairy-land, as children have talked and wondered since time began, but her child was not there! Mona and Albreda passed through the doorway into the familiar parlor, which remained unchanged. The former threw herself in the arm-chair, in which she had rested during the early stages of her last illness, and the flood of memories came pouring in upon her. She was no longer a spirit, but bound to earth by its countless ties. She was

seized through her affections, her emotions, feelings and intellectual desires. Her bosom was torn with poignant regrets; her heart was bursting with the love which had been so long dormant. Here was her old home, fashioned and decorated with her own hands and replete with attractions which heaven, now dim and blotted out, could not furnish. She gave full sway to her bitter grief, which her attendant did not seek to assuage, for she well knew that it were—best for tears to fall on the blazing embers of earthly emotions, and thus bring to pass more surely their final extinguishment. She came and gently laid her hand on Mona's forehead with soft magnetic touch which spoke more eloquently than words of deep sympathy, and appreciative feeling.

"O Albreda, I cannot bear it! You told me, you told me, but I did not, I could not believe or understand, I saw that you all shrank from entering the earth-sphere; I did not know that it brought you pain."

"Ah, dearest, none of us escaped the burdens imposed by earth-life, and to re-enter its sphere is to take on again its conditions and feel the influence of old environments. If we come to earth, it is in fulfilment of some duty, on some errand of mercy, and not from choice."

"My husband and my child! I ought to find them here, had I not? They ought to come to meet me with kisses and smiles."

Then the lady whose voice had been heard entered and busied herself arranging the room, singing in a low, dreamy tone the time, and unheeding the guests whom she entertained unawares.

"Will she not think us rude to have thus entered her room unannounced?" whispered Mona.

"Nay, she cannot see us; she does not know, that we are here. I read from her mind, sweet sister, your husband is not here."

"Not here! Then where is he, and how shall I find him?"

"Be calm! it is not bad news. He has passed to our side."

"Is he dead—I mean, has he, too, been born a spirit?" she cried in joy, springing from the chair.

"Aye, he is now a spirit this half year past."

"For six months, and I have not known it! Why has he not come to us to the palace by the sea?"

"You knew it not because you have not been able approach this sphere, and he has not come to us because, I understand him, he was not of our sphere of thought."

"And shall I never behold him?"

"That depends on his attainments. If he is baptized in the light and truth, as you are, he will reach us; but if he is stained with earth-life, then he will not leave the scenes to which he is attracted, and here will remain."

"Forever?"

"Nay, forever is an endless time, and he may be led to the light in a year, a score, a century, some time, and then it will be blessed for you to meet. It would not be now, for he would fill your soul with the burdens of that life from which you have escaped and hold you on the torturing wheel of regret."

"But my child! He lives, or, if he is a spirit, will he also be kept from me by this iron wall of repulsion?"

"A child can have no such repulsion for its mother. Your child lives in earth-life, but not here."

"Then I am not to see him? All this pain for nothing, and not see Lars, my own and only child!"

"You shall see him; and I will say to you, poor sufferer, that you must bind tight your heart, for it will ache and be sorely premed. The sad story is not told in its saddest part."

They glided out into the day. The sunlight fell in long

lines over the hills, from the low reclining orb, folded in crimson clouds and fleecy mists. They passed out, and the lady of sweet voice, singing the old songs, knew not that angel guests had been with her and listened to music which had brought back floods of earthly memories.

They passed to a city, where greed crushed the children of toil beneath the wheels of its chariot as the wheels of Juggernaut the suppliant devotee, and they heard a child's voice utter a plaintive cry above the turmoil of the jostling crowd. They saw a little boy in rags, with thin, pinched face, and great dark eyes, sad as death, crying a bundle of papers for sale. How few purchased; how many went by in silence or glanced with scorn on the begrimed face and hands. No one saw through the outer appearance the soul of the boy or thought of him other than a street gamin, to be jostled by day, and at night to sleep in the street or under the shelter of an empty box.

Not one? Nay, there was just one—his mother! She rushed to him, and, throwing her arms around his neck, she called his name over and over and kissed him a thousand times. He felt her embrace less than the bending corn feels the softest south wind's breath. He called his papers and received his pay, nor knew that the mother to whom he had called in the one little prayer she had taught him was so near.

To Mona the shock was terrible. She could not endure the thought that her child did not know that she was with him, and this all-absorbing thought prevented her from realizing his forlorn condition. Weary of her unavailing efforts, she threw herself into the arms of her companion, the only one who could respond, and passionately wept partially restored to self-possession, she gazed on her boy, and then perceived the marks of poverty and suffering one short year had stamped on his face.

"Lars! Lars!" she cried, "how came you here? Have

you nothing to eat? Nothing to wear? Are you without home or shelter?"

Then Albreda spoke soothingly, explained to the stricken mother, and gently drawing her away, by the force of her will, for she knew that no good could come from prolonging this painful experience. She moved toward the headlands beyond which the palace was situated, and they soon found, themselves in the delightful circle of their friends. Having passed out of the earth spheres, Mona no longer suffered the torture of her wounded affections, but as she sat in the midst of these loving hearts, her face reflected the emotions she had experienced. She remembered her boy in the streets, pale, hungry, and friendless; remembered as in a dream, and she turned with a sad smile to those nearest, and said:—

"Would it be wrong for me to pray?"

"Wrong? To pray is to express the heart's desires, and we all pray to each other and to the higher courts of light for guidance, for counsel, for assistance. Pray, oh, sister, if thy heart is of prayer, for it is the expressed perfume of homage the finite pays the Infinite."

"I may pray? It is not wrong, but if my prayer is selfish—if it be the cry of a selfish soul, for a selfish object?"

"Then it will receive no answer, or defeat itself."

"It may appear selfish to you, and not appear in that light to the angels."

"I know it is selfish," replied Mona. "My boy! He is suffering. The earth-life for him is dark and starless. I would pray that he might come to me."

"The Father only can judge. Perhaps it may be for the best, for his life might be stained with crime, and his years blackened with a record of misdeeds."

Thus encouraged, Mona voiced her soul in prayer.

Lars! Lars! from the shadow of earth, from the life of

blasting sorrows, my own boy, dear Lars, come up to me! Infinite Father, grant my request, as thou has given me life in heaven bring him to me!"

A sweet peace filled her soul with unspeakable gladness, and she knew somehow, some time her prayer would be answered.

Every fibre of her heart grew tense, and, thrilled with strange vibration, she turned, and by her side stood her boy, as a beautiful spirit. His eyes were filled with the remembered love-light; his flaxen hair fell over his white forehead, and stretching out his hands he rushed into her arms with the glad cry of "mamma," uttered in the tones she well remembered.

Her prayer had been answered. One who had foreseen and watched the child, received its emancipated spirit, and brought him safely to his mother's arms.

After this reunion, the thoughts of the circle turned on the tasks at which they were engaged. "Our poet Brother," said the Sage, "has set his muse to express the higher truths of philosophy. In this he has the advantage, for true poetry is the crystallization of thought."

Soft and low the poet recited the following lines:—

"Into the wild the savage man was born,
 Against the world to fight like knight forlorn.
 His axe he fashioned from the flinty stone
 His spear and arrow tipped with pointed bone;
 He spread the net, and laid the skilful snare,
 With craft with which no instinct can compare.
 He fought the bear within his cavern hold,
 Pursued the Mastodon across the wold,
 The Mammoth slew with stones or barbed sow
 And through the marsh-lands chased the giant deer.

He caught the lightning as it smote its way
 From heaven to earth, and held its power at bay.
 Piled high the fagots that this spirit fire
 Might warm his cavern with its flashing ire.
 He feared the spirit he had thus evoked,
 And trembled lest his house-fire be provoked.

The finest fruits, the flesh of choicest game,
 He throw as offering to the living flame,
 And round the blaze that gave him day for night,
 Danced in the fragrant smoke in wild delight,

And when the clans, engaged in constant fight,
 Were forced in banded nations to unite,
 The chief who had most scalp-locks at his belt;
 Who swung the heaviest club the foe bad felt;
 Whose brawny arm the strongest bow had bent;
 Who drank the blood from quivering bosoms spent,
 Became the priest and ruler of the horde,
 Who feared his power, and trembled at his word.

Most terrible event to man is death.
 The cry of mortal pain, the gasping breath,
 When sullenly the gates of silence close,
 The body falls into that deep repose,
 So soon to feel the touch of swift decay,
 Which bears dissolving elements away.
 Gone like the deer his arrow overthrew,
 Gone as the sun from out the heavenly blue.
 And yet man solved this problem of all time,
 Against his senses awfully sublime.
 Because immortal thus he came to know,
 That at the dusk he with the gods would go.
 Immortal life, not by belief bestowed,
 Not by a form of faith or creedal mode,
 But as the birthright of the human soul,
 With endless progress for its shining goal.

Immortal life!—the balm which heals the sting
 Of death itself; that gives the flowers of Spring
 For Winter's chilling frosts, on which are based
 Religion's sunlit towers; and trusting placed
 Sustaining faith that in a home above
 The wrongs of time will be effaced by love
 Was made a curse, an engine to destroy
 And rob mankind of hope, of peace and joy.
 For quick the priesthood seized the mystic dower,
 Which gave the future to their selfish power;
 Who ruled the spirit-realm beyond the grave,
 Might hold the mortal as a cringing slave.

Religion thus of craven fear was born;
 Cradled by ignorance from its natal morn,
 And nursed by priests most wise in subtle art
 To hold the gods and common men apart,
 That they might stand vicegerents by the throne
 Divine, and make the trembling world their own.
 Worship the gods! they cry on bended knee;
 Bow in the dust in prone servility!

The gods may be appeased and half relent,
 And take the sacrifice by mortal sent.
 What give? The best, and that thou lovest most
 The choicest, dearest, sweetest of thy boast.

Give of your game, the firstlings of your flocks,
 A finger, or a tooth, or flowing locks;
 Or, if by these, gods wrath be not beguiled,
 Place on the alter wife, or first-born child,
 Or bring your captives from the battle spared,
 And let them know with none our gods are shared!

Thus spake the priest, and spoken it was done;
 Bound on the altar was the first-born son;
 With knife of stone the high and holy priest
 Plucked out the quivering heart, the soul released,
 And called the gods to witness as he spoke
 The sacrifice beneath the curling smoke.

The gods grew jealous, and their plotting priests
 Saw gain in plunder, and from sin released
 Those who of pillage laid the greatest store
 Of wealth and captives on their temple's floor.

Go forth, the god unto his chosen said,
 Seize on the lands with plenty overspread
 Slaughter the men, the women take as thine,
 But spare no child to desecrate my shrine.
 Fear not, for I will go with you to the fight,
 And if need be will stay the solar light;
 Will hold the moon and guide the flying darts
 Swift in their course to my foemen's hearts.
 I am the god of battles, and alone
 Have trod the grapes from which the blood has flown;
 I smite the people in my wanton wrath,
 And guide the earthquake in its muttering path;
 And pestilence that rots the melting flesh,
 I on my foes can slip the holding leash.
 Go then, I say, but if your hearts relent,
 And ere 'tis done your taste of blood be spent,
 Woe be to you when from the field returned
 My wrath has kindled and my hatred burned.

The earth became a hunting field, where man
 Pursued each other to the death, and then,
 Instead of scalp-locks, brought the captives bound
 In triumph to the sacrificial mound.
 And waiting gods were with the crimson tide
 From smoking altars poured, well satisfied.

O poor humanity! fearful has been thy lose,
 O poor humanity! nailed to the cross!

Pressed to the rack by priests who in God's name
Gave to thy lips the gall, thy flesh to flame!
The day of thy revenge has come at last!
The age of priestly rule with ignorance, past.
The gods are dead! From mighty Bel, whose tower
Mocked at the flood, and time a destroying power
Ormuzd, who sat upon the dazzling throne
Of highest heaven and called mankind his own;
Osiris, Isis, Horns, Troth, and Ra,
Rulers of earth and heaven, of night and day!
With her who wrote above her temple's door,
'I'm all that is, will be, or was before;'
And him who trod the reeking path alone,
And smiled to hear the nation's stifled moan.
All dead! All dead! And on the blasted plain
A vestige of their shrines alone remain."

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTMAS-TIDE AND THE GOLDEN GATE.

"Oh, that thou didst look forward to the great hereafter with half the longing wherewith thou longest for an earthly future!

"This a few days at the most will bring thee. Look forward to the meeting of the dead, as to the meeting of the absent."—Longfellow

AFTER the poet had finished, a sister whose face had been chiseled into expressive beauty by the hand of Duty, and ennobled by adverse experiences bravely met and overcome, said there was one chapter in her own life that might be of interest. The group awaited her story with a silence which more eloquently than words expressed their desire and attention.

My boy, my only child, was an idiot. I strove to believe otherwise; I nurtured fondly the least ray of hope, and flattered myself that his development was tardy, and after awhile he would be as other children. I did not know it at first, for all infants are nearly the same. They have their instinctive wants, and satisfy them in similar manner. I did not know, but I felt there was something at fault. How it dawned on me! At the time a child should stretch out its arms, and clutch at its mother's tresses, mine threw his aimlessly, and there was no recognition in his eyes, no sparkle of love, or tears of distress. They were blank, soulless eyes that made me shudder to look into. He grew in body, became strong, but walked uncertainly, unsteadily, as though objectless. At three he ought to have

been able to talk—other children do—but he could only say "Mamma," with a pitiful sound like a bird's note.

I knew—I knew from the first, and I also knew that through me a sin had been incarnated, and that I must for life bear and suffer. My boy was an imbecile; the boy I had with a mother's fond dream expected with joy, and proudly fancied his future nobleness; imbecile to mantle my cheeks with shame, to need my constant attention, to be a thorn in my heart which could not be extracted.

And yet for no sin of mine—no wrong I had committed—was this affliction borne. No sin, unless it be a sin to love one who was my ideal of manliness; a promise of all a woman's heart most earnestly craves. Everything? I knew not that all his excellence of character was conquered by one habit, and at times he gave the rein into the hands of drink. I learned too soon his fatal thirst, but reckoned not that it would stamp its terrible impress on our child. I thought I should gain in my boy that which I lost in his father. I should have his society, enjoy his pleasures, and be proud of his success in the great world when he entered active life. It was all gone by. I sat down by the ashes of hope. I moaned as for one dead. Worse than dead, a thousand times worse than dead! A body that ate to live, not to think; a maw of flesh without a soul! O God! have mercy on me and my child! It was cruel and unjust to afflict him for his father's sake. It made me doubt the existence of God and right.

My boy grew with handsome face, but soulless. He reeled and staggered when he walked, and as he clung to my dress would look up with such a besotted leer—I could not help it—it made me creep and shiver. Men drink and become intoxicated; my poor child was born intoxicated. He knew not what soberness meant. His brain reeled and was benumbed and clouded. There were only despair and the bitter sadness of regret for me.

At ten years he was a tall lad, and by incessant labor I had taught him other words than mamma. He had begun to receive and express a few ideas, not complex, but of most simple form. He distinguished objects, and went on errands and was pleased to do so.

However aimless his other actions, his love for me was most fervent, and through his love I educated his sluggish faculties. As I toiled on, beating into his mind by painful repetition the simplest thoughts, I envied the mothers of the bright urchins who passed on their way to school. No words can express my sorrow, my remorse, my disappointment; the deep pity I felt, which nerved me to untiring effort for his improvement.

He was ten years old that autumn. We went one afternoon to the lake, a long blue expanse of water, reflecting every tint of the environing shore, as in a mirror. The frosts had touched the forests, and the trees were clothed in the fantastic glory of gold and carmine. A fine purple haze softened the distance, and fell like a veil over the remote hills and mountains. I talked of the trees and the flowers, and we listened to the songs of the birds yet delaying their flight to sunnier climes.

Time passed, and the sun was low in the west. Magnificent clouds, like vast robings, seemed to grow out of the purple sky, and across the fields of light were crimson bars and streaks of flame through which the sun sank like a great red globe on which the eye could undazzled rest. The splendid scene touched even the stolid nature of my boy. His face glared with childish delight, and he cried:—

"Mamma, mamma, see!" "Yes, my dear Archie," I said, "I see. It is indeed beautiful. It will soon, like all bright things, turn to gloom. The night will come only too soon, and we must go home."

"The night," he repeated. "The night! Then it will be dark. Will the night come?"

"Very soon it will come. The Golden Gate of Day will close on the sun, and then it will be dark."

"The Golden Gate," he repeated musingly; "the Golden Gate! I see the bars, but not the gate. Mamma, who shuts the gate?"

My child never before had expressed an inquiry. My heart gave a great bound at this awakening of his intellect, I clasped him to my heart and wept for joy. "At last," I cried, "at last he is awaking from his stupor, and I shall see him day by day grow mentally stronger." Brief was my moment of enjoyment, for with this one gleam of thought, like a star momentarily seen through a rift of cloud, he relapsed into stolidity, and when I took his hand to lead him home, he passively yielded, and, half supported, walked with the pitiful, uncertain step that made my heart quiver to see.

That night I was awakened by a low moan from the bed where Archie slept. It was like and yet unlike his voice. I hastily arose, and went to his side. He had thrown back the coverings, and his face was flushed with fever. He was ill, very ill, and it was useless to relate how rapidly he grew worse. How I watched and wept, and wept and prayed, and the disease advanced, until Hope closed her wings, and darkness brooded over me. Sitting by the side of my dying boy, justice and love seemed ruled out of the world, and life given only to bear the sting of pain.

It was midnight. The soft autumn days had been succeeded by the days of storm, and the winds lashed the trees, and the rain beat against the windows with angry dashes. Midnight, when the great magnetic tides of the earth are in negative ebb, and the life forces are most depressed. I sat listening and thinking, in the half conscious, yet acutely sensitive mood induced by the torture of grief. The clock struck twelve; it seemed to me faster

and harder than wont, and as its vibrations died away, I was startled by a call from my boy:—

"Mamma!"

"Yes, darling."

"The Golden Gate!" He had raised himself on his arm, and looked above my head with a wrapt and intensely excited gaze. His expression had changed from stolidity to one of refined spiritual intelligence. His eyes were penetrated by a clear, angelic light, and his wavy hair framed his white face like an aureola.

"What will come now?" I involuntarily asked, as my fever-stricken boy was transformed into this vision of loveliness. His lips parted, and he made several efforts to speak without my being able to hear even a whisper. He threw up his arms; his hands seemed to clasp invisible ones, and then every vestige of the old stolidity vanished from his face. Through every feature, as though crystal, radiated the spiritual light of thought, animation, emotion, and affection.

"O mamma!" he cried in a voice softly inflected, unlike his old monotone. "O mamma! the beautiful lady will lead me away to the hills overlooking the lake, where we were at sunset. She says she will show me the golden gate where the sun passes through, and it will open for us, and we shall follow, and the spirits of the air will bring it together noiselessly. We saw the ban, dear mamma; the gate was closed. It will open when the lady leads me through the path from the hills along the edges of the clouds and down to the place where the sky kisses the sea. Is it not beautiful? And she says there is a group of children waiting for me, and we shall play the day long, and I shall learn from dear teachers who will come there, and no one will laugh at me, for I shall be free from the foolishness of this body."

His hand unclasped, and he fell back on his pillow exhausted.

I placed my hand on his forehead, and my heart was so full I could only caress the wet brow.

After a few minutes he opened his eyes and gazed wistfully at me for a long time.

"Mamma," he at length said, "your eyes are red and you have been weeping. You must not. I have been a great trouble to you. I have from pity received your lavished love. I gave you hope because I was preparing to die, not because I was outgrowing my deformity. Preparing to die, and the fool body loosened its hold on me. That is what the beautiful lady says. She approaches!" He again reached up his hands. He seemed lifted from the pillow. "I am going now, dear mamma. I do not know when I shall come back; where the lady chooses to lead I am going; to the sunset, through the golden gate, to the happy children—I love you, mamma—you must come to me—to the gate; its bars will open—and we shall—"

He did not finish, but fell on his pillow, leaving the sentence uncompleted. There was a slight sigh, and the radiance slowly faded from his face, which settled into an expression of sweet repose, as the flush went out of his cheeks and the whiteness of death stole over the waxen features.

I uttered no cry of grief. I am in doubt if I grieved or rejoiced. If the angels, gladly received him I ought not to mourn. He was still my child, refined, purified, spiritualized, with the dreadful taint of hereditary sin washed away. I had prayed for his restoration, and he had been restored; not after the manner of my desires, but perhaps in a better way!

I knew he was an angel with angels, and though I wept, my tears were like the drops the clouds let fall to reflect the rainbow's perfect glory.

Kind hands assisted to prepare the body for its final rest I combed his wavy hair, and placed a wild aster with

mosses, such as he loved, on his breast. Some unknown friend lined the grave with evergreens. It was very thoughtful and kind, and the casket was placed gently in the prepared couch of leaves and flowers.

I heeded not the words of the preacher, "dust to dust," for I knew that here rested only the broken cage; my bird of song had escaped. I wept, for that body was all that was tangible to my senses; wept over the ashes of my earthly castles, but I had seen through the bars of the sunset, and knew that the clouds so black on one side were aflame with light on the other.

As time went by, I thought anxiously of my boy. Where was he? Did he return, or remember me? love me? Would I recognize him when we met? Or would we ever meet? Perhaps God's universe is so vast we might never meet! Never find each other, for he would be beguiled into new paths, the brightness and joy of which mortals cannot comprehend, and he will not wait for me. He will have traversed a long distance, that to me will be insurmountable, because I shall go in another direction! Thus I distressed myself with doubts and fears until the end came, and over the world darkness came like a veil. I fell to sleep that was not sleep; more profound, more absorbing. When I awoke a new light illuminated the world. It was with spiritual eyes I saw by rays of spiritual light, by spiritual ears I heard sounds in the spiritual atmosphere, and feeling became a refined consciousness, receptive of a thousand waves breaking on my being from the spirit ether.

I perceived a group of radiant beings, in the midst of whom was my boy, my Archie, matured in stature as in mind, as he would have been under the most favorable conditions of earth-life. He came and took my hands, and with a thrill of delight I arose out of the earthly body with a glad bound, and received the congratulations of the attendant angels. There came music from afar, like the

sighing of winds among pines, with distant falling water and faint notes of birds, for the ether was tremulous with sweet sounds.

My Archie folded me in his arms and kissed my cheek, and said: "You are by the shadows, dear mother, and we will conduct you along the archway, through the Golden Gate, which allows joy to pass, but admits neither care nor sorrow."

I will supplement your heart story with an episode of yesterday, said a sister, who had before kept herself in retiring silence I was with my class of beautiful children, and describing to them the scenes of earth-life, and how in the coming Christmas-day the broken family circle would be reunited under the old home-tree, and around the warm hearth or social board the recollections of childhood would again be revived.

Of that group there were two who had no recollections of Christmas, for they had been transplanted in the earliest hour, and two others who only remembered the gifts of that time. Then spoke one, a slender girl, whose eyes were crystalline in the purity of thought they expressed: "If the family circle is to be reunited in my dear old home, then I ought to be there. Brother Ben will come from the West and sister from the East, and, oh! would it not be sweet to see the welcome they will receive!"

"And I, too, long to go," exclaimed another, "for it has been a whole year since I met the friends I left."

There were others who desired to go and others who did not, for the earth with its shadow and light had passed from them, and there was nothing to call them from their present uninterrupted delight.

Then the teacher said to the two anxious ones: "You may visit the earth and remain as long as you desire with your friends, but, while there you must record the most

meritorious action you observe, and report when you return."

"How shall we find the earth and our homes?" asked the gratified angels in one voice.

"I will lead you," replied the teacher, and taking them by the hands the three passed away over the headlands and down the glittering way to the earth, which spread out like a vast map, with its green continents and dark seas beneath. Before they were aware, each one found herself in her old home, and tears wet their glad eyes at the sight of the familiar scenes. They mingled with their friends, but no one knew or recognized them; and they wearied, and went out into the street to observe the good deeds, the records of which they were to bear like a priceless treasure. After long wanderings they returned and bade their homes good-by, and impelled by volition, passed the ether like a flash of thought, and appeared before their teacher. They gave and received a hundred kisses, and the mellow voices of welcome floated out on the ambient air, where the flowers listened in their loveliness.

Then the eldest and tallest, whom they called Azalia, said, softly: "In the city were a great number of orphans, who had no one to give them food or care for them, and when all the world were happy on Christmas, they were cold and hungry. A good lady heard of this, and in a large hall, where for once these orphans could be warm and comfortable, she brought them, and gave them a splendid dinner, like the best in the land."

"A noble deed of charity," replied the teacher, "and earth would be the better if there were more like her." Turning to the other, who was white as a white rose, she said: "What has our darling Camile to relate?"

"Of little importance to the deed of the great lady," replied Camile. "At the feast was a little boy, pale and ill-clad. He ate not the viands given him, but carried them to

his mother, who was prostrated by overwork and famine in a cold and darksome attic, and although himself famishing, tasted not until she had satisfied her hunger."

The teacher threw her arms about her, drew her close, kissed her white forehead, and in a voice of sweetest melody said: "The deed you relate is worth ten thousand such as the great lady performed; for out of her abundance she gave, nor felt the loss or deprived herself of a single pleasure; she gave as a means of enjoyment; but the boy sacrificed himself for the good of another. He gave all he had, and that without expecting return, It is such deeds of love which make the night of earth hopeful of the brighter day."

"If mortals only knew," said Hero, sadly; "only knew the future, how much joy would come to their cup of sorrow! Death, the complement of life, and its extension to fields of vastly broader opportunities, did mortals know, would have no terrors, and the habiliments of woe would be exchanged for the flowers of gladness." She continued:—

"I saw a mother sitting by the bedside of her dying child. It was on a dark, tempestuous night. The icy garb of winter wrapped the cheerless earth. Nature seemed dead—all but the wild wind that roared through the sounding darkness! Oft there would be a pause, dull and sullen, in which the distant booming of the far-off forest could be heard like the ocean; then the next blast came on, gathering strength to dash in one terrific burst, pass on, and die in a long, fiendish wail. To the young mother, holding the hand of her dying child, it seemed like the revel of legions of troubled spirits. Closely she bent over the little pale face. She wrapped the clothing around the cold form, and clasped it with her arms.

Juline was a fond and devoted mother. So far her life had been one of unalloyed bliss. She, in youth, had been

the idol of her parents. She was loved and loved in return the husband now sharing her grief beside her. Their darling boy was the great light of their hearts. He was the first and only representative of their unchanging love, and on him was poured without measure their parental affection. Never had a thought of separation from him occurred to them. They never dreamed of his dying. They lived in the present, and the future was begirt with bows of promise. How can parents otherwise than anticipate when their children bear their united lives to remotest future, and if their children are truly noble, how can they resist an adoring affection?

Diphtheria was abroad. Here it had broken an idol: there torn a beautiful vine ruthlessly from its trellis. But Juline was not alarmed; her boy was too healthy to be in danger. "It is only the frail who are taken," she said, "or those who have not proper care." She was not fearful of its approach. O mortal how easily allured by the phantasma of Hope! How duped by a wish which becomes not a reality!

October's haze had fallen in the month of November. Day after day, soft, mellow, dreamy, visited the earth, beautifully, sadly sweet, with the consciousness of age and winter of death. The frost yet spared the late flowers of autumn, and the hills were still green with maturing grasses. Suddenly the Snow King rode down from the North, faster than the fleet reindeer can travel. Around him rolled black clouds, and beneath him gathered the white snow. All the lingering souvenirs of summer were buried in a common grave. Many a bird of passage, beguiled into tarrying by the warm smiles of autumn, was buried with them.

Far more dreadful, the Snow King brought the fearful malady to many hearts, and only manifested his sympathy for the suffering in wailings. At night, Juline discovered

her Albion unwell. His little frame felt the first scorch of fever. The next day he became hoarse and refused to swallow his food. At night the physician pronounced him beyond hope.

Juline spoke not a word when she heard his doom. She only took his little hand in hers. Oh, it was too much for so young a creature to combat with death! Death, old as Time, strong as Omnipotence. The little sufferer threw his hands upwards, and a smile, pure and sweet as the gleam of a star, flashed over his before agonized face. He raised his head from the pillow and cried, "Grandma! grandma!" and fell back dead. But the smile remained, as the light of the sun already set gilds the mountain top. Just on the threshold of the Spirit-world all its divine beauty flashed on the spirit, and as it departed from the body it stamped it with its joy.

Juline uttered no wild cry, but with dry eyes she said like one in a dream:—

"I will not yield him to the grave! He shall not die and grow cold!"

"Oh! the darling," she moaned, "why should you be taken from me? I would pray to God, but there can be no God, else in his love and justice this would never have come! My darling, who never thought of wrong, suffering such cruel pain and burned by the fever till his precious life went out! Oh! I would have suffered a thousandfold, I would die so willingly if he would only breathe and speak again."

She bent over the sweet face, cold and still, as wax, yet reflecting a smile of angelic sweetness; his little hands over his breast holding flowers, callas, and tuberoses, which seemed plucked from some blooming garden in the angel land; the silky hair shaded the forehead; the blue eyes were as in sleep, they opened not at her call, nor would they ever open with the glad surprise that warmed

her mother's heart. She bent over her babe and kissed the lips which gave no response. "A year old to-morrow!" she murmured; "a year which has been too full of joy. I ought to have known it could not last. If I thought it was my fault, my neglect, my sin for which my babe suffered, I could not endure it a moment. It is wrong, it is cruel, it is unjust! and to-morrow the sun will shine and the birds sing as though no life had gone out, no heart broken. The sun ought never to shine again, nor the silver moon, nor the birds sing."

She bowed low her head on the pillow by the side of that of the dead child, and her stifled sobs told of a sorrow such as only a mother can know. It was storming without, and the rain drifted against the window panes, and the wind wailed and moaned as it went by; a sad, sad night of storm as though nature wept, at the great wrong she had wrought.

The sobbing ceased. Did the worn watcher sleep? No, she did not sleep and yet she was not awake. She felt a sweet calm fall over her, and a balm was poured into her lacerated heart. After a time an angel stood by her side. She could see the radiant features of that angel, and the resplendent garments which draped her lovely form.

"Do not weep till you see the end," sweetly spoke the angel. "Do not say there is no love or justice until you know whereof you speak."

Then there came a series of pictures or a panorama moving before her, and the panorama was the life of her child, had he remained on earth. She saw him as a child, as a youth at school, as grown to manhood. As the scenes unrolled the background grew darker and more obscure, she became impressed with a choking grief, disappointment and despair mingled with hopelessness. The young man before her was handsome, and in his coarse outline could be traced the features of the babe, but how changed!

Desires and appetites and fiery passions had gained unbridled sway. She felt her influence had given way to stronger forces and he had drifted away from her.

She shuddered as she saw him yield to the persuasions of companions and lose his self-respect, his pride, his sense of right, and slowly the shadow of crime darkened the scene. Then came the overwhelming sense of remorse and the gnawing of regret, and the resolve for a better life; a resolve scarcely uttered until broken.

The last terrible scene was an interminable stretch of hills over which the fires had swept, leaving ashes, with here and there trunks of trees once green, but now shattered and blackened. On the gnarled roots of one of these sat an old man, with thin white hair, an unkempt beard, his face wrinkled, not so much with age as by the incisive chisel of depraved appetites. His tattered clothing afforded scant protection, and there was no one near to give the water and the food he craved. Night came and death at last, but the mother was spared the increasing sorrow of a view into the beyond. A profounder sleep came, and she saw her child borne in the arms of an angel and its eyes beamed with inquiry and surprise, for it comprehended not the change mortals know as death. A widening vista opened before her, and in the distance she saw an angel radiantly beautiful, wise and pure as the spotless raiment he wore, and like a refrain of sweetest music she heard his voice calling, "Mother."

Juline raised her eyes and saw the angel; her mother whom the child beheld in the last agony of death.

"And thy mission here, oh, mother?"

"To bear thy child to the sphere of purity."

Conscious that all was well, she awoke, smiling, weeping, sighing:—

"It is best—it is best. I resign him without a murmur to the care of those who are better than I."

The neighbors who kindly came to perform the last Offices of the living for the dead were surprised at her cheerfulness, and many cold hearts spoke of her indifference. Ah, they knew not that an angel had been with her, and opened her soul to a knowledge of heavenly things.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE UNHAPPY MARRIAGE.

Oh! how yon spirit quivers at his fate,
As trembling aspen in the wind-swept grove!
I to his rescue fly before too late,
And by my virtue will his vice reprove.

AS the Society were thus engaged, a stranger approached and paused near the Portico. Feeling the current of invitation, he drew near and mated himself with the members.

"Welcome," mid the Sage. "Welcome, even if you come with grief darkening your heart. You am free now, earth and its sorrows have passed away in part; and you ought not to allow recollections of the past to disturb your peace."

"I am sad when I think of what a paradise earth might have been for me, had it not been for one false step, which made me forever miserable."

"Not forever! If you are not stained by a great crime it will yet be well for you."

"I am not a criminal fearing justice. Justice—that is what I want. I am a victim of false marriage."

"Then as you are released from its bonds you ought to be happy.",

"Yes, I might be happy, for I am free, if I could forget my brothers, and their ignorance and misery."

"Then it is your manifest duty to go to the earth and instruct them, and you cannot advance until you have fulfilled the demands thus made upon you."

"But, ah! great Sage, what shall I teach? I cannot approve the doctrines of free love as commonly understood, and yet I feel that there should be freedom in love. As soon as, love is confined, it is love no more. But if freedom is given, I fear the consequences."

"Earth is not yet prepared for the doctrine of which you speak. It will be true for them when they become as the angels in purity. In the abstract, it is true; in the practical application of *to-day* it is false. It is not the doctrine you should teach. Rather go to earth and teach man the laws which govern the mind, that they may know each other's character, and not be deceived by appearances. Teach them that purity is worth all else."

"Ah! it is a great task—one I shrink from with fear and trembling. Something *must* be done to relieve me, for my mind is lacerated with a dreadful lash; I cannot bear it long. Great God, give me strength to perform the task before me with energy and success! Give me patience and perseverance to grapple with the work successfully."

"If you act as earnestly as you pray, you will be successful. But why so troubled? Does it all result from your philanthropy and the love you bear your race? If so, that alone will place you above us all."

"I am selfish, I fear. Perhaps regret for what I *might* have enjoyed causes my sorrow. I was a happy youth. Educated at college, and enjoying all the facilities the latter afforded, I climbed rapidly up Wisdom's mountain. As I arose higher and higher, the prospect sped further and further away, lost in the dim distance. The far off objects came forward to meet me as I advanced, until beneath me spread a glorious view to ennoble my life, and give me a position of honor among men. The rosebud, half-expanded, when just about to bloom in fragrant beauty, may be crushed forever. A rude blast may freeze its delicate petals, or change to disgusting odor its fragrant

beauty. I was, like the bud, just opening to the beauties around me. My heart yearned for congeniality—for sympathy of a kind I could not express. I could only catch a glimpse now and then, go bashfully it approached me. The cold selfishness of the world galled me. I shrank from its rude breath. I wanted a cottage in the wild woods, far, far from the haunts of man, that *there* I might employ the learning I possessed in diving into the depths of mysterious nature—exploring her laws, and journeying through her labyrinths with the torch of reason to light my path. I desired a kindred mind to journey with me—to become one with my thoughts—whom I might love with unsurpassed affection, and who would love me with a love that would never die. This was a rude effort of dawning love to picture the ideal of my dreams an effort of mind to reach out into the undefined future, and make fancy a prophecy of my destiny.

While in this state of mind, I saw one who appeared to be the ideal of my dream. In her I saw all my fancy had adored. Ah! how beautiful she appeared! Poets might strive in vain; the pencil would be a useless instrument; the pen of the novelist, in its wildest flights, is inadequate to convey the dimmest shadow of her beauty. So long had I dreamed over my ideal, that the object which represented it was mine. Shall I give a particular description? No, I will not—I cannot, for they are only for the lover! Ah, why did not the angels who weep in heaven for the ignorance of man, come down, and by some means make me sensible of the gulf on whose fearful brink I stood? With all my learning I was ignorant. My knowledge was theoretical, and not in the least; adapted to the demands of life. It was useless to me when most needed—rather worse than useless, for it gave me a confidence in myself which it did not support. I knew nothing of the laws of life, or how I might arrive at the

knowledge of another's character. *Why* I loved I knew not; I only recognized the fact. I was led on by the blind instinct of a misdirected love, or rather an instinct wholly undirected. I had heard of affinity and attraction of spirit, but it served only to involve me more inextricably, for I supposed, if attracted, I should follow that attraction, and that it was an instinct pointing out my proper companion.

"She loved me, or so pretended; and, when I was *near*, to all appearances was an angel in goodness and love. How philanthropic was she! How she desired seclusion from the wide, wide world! How she hated selfishness, and how disgusted was she with the passions! She made herself the ideal I sought. I loved that ideal, for it was, the offspring of my childish dreams of my youthful heart, my dawning manhood's thoughts. I will not say I loved *her*, but I *did* love the attributes I supposed she possessed—her apparent beauty, goodness, and gentle affectionate spirit. How fancy flew then! What would I not have done to gain her applause? I strove for a name for her sake!

"Shall I tell you that we united our destinies? Nay, you know that already. Oh, how the bright vision faded away! How feels the famished traveller on the desert, when groves of palm, and lakes of clear blue water, spread out in all loveliness on the brim of the horizon. He urges on his camel with renewed pace, that by nightfall he may slake his feverish thirst. The sun sets in the western sky, and, with its last crimson blush, the glorious palms and blue waters all vanish away, and are seen no more. So I felt when that glorious vision of happiness seemed just within my grasp; but the moment I reached forth my hand, it vanished away.

"We put on smiles and politeness and are ever so communicative, benevolent, and unselfish in company, just as we would a garment, to be packed in the closet when at

home. It was her *exterior* garment I loved; and when we soul revealed itself joy fled forever!

"I had never seen—I was totally unacquainted with the being who now revealed herself to me. I loved her not, but hated her for her selfishness and affectation, and for the deception she had played me. My angel was not an angel. My ideal had faded into a low actual. How, then, our minds antagonized! She feared the wide, wide world no more, but wished for show and popularity, and she told me plainly that she sold herself for my wealth. May the great God blot from my memory the years—long ages they seemed—during which I suffered the penalties for my ignorance of the laws of the relations of mind. Let me pass them by; I am there no more. I am transported from misery to regret. I would live longer on earth to plant a little monument in the minds of men, to tell them I have existed. The desire for the wide influence I wished to exert has vanished. I have lived so far to no purpose but misery in the end. Is there no balm in Gilead? Shall the weary find no rest?"

"Be calm and reason," said the Sage. "Misfortunes are necessary to undeveloped beings. If you were ignorant then, you can inform yourself now. If a few years are lost, remedy the fault by intenser application. You are only one in millions who have suffered in a similar manner. In fact, you have given a perfect description of earthly marriage, where each deceives the other into a belief that they are what they are not; and after union, the two unhappy beings find each other not the ones they loved, but strangers, who have by some jugglery slipped into the places of the lovers."

"This is the cause of my grief—because so many are going to the banquet of woe with garlands of roses on their brows, all unconscious of the suffering in store. And is there no remedy?"

"Yes, a remedy is at hand. That remedy is education. Laws are not often violated wilfully, but through ignorance. Man must be taught the distinction between animal instinct and love. Where the spirit leads follow. Magnets have no surer attraction than souls, but that attraction must be understood, or it may of itself lead to ruin."

"Go! What shall I teach?"

"That marriage is more than the means of gratification of animal instincts; an eternal relation of two immortals, fraught with vast and far reaching consequences, which even death cannot annul, remaining strengthened and purified from every impulsive instinct."

"But what of the mistakes? What of the ignorant and suffering?"

"In the present transition state, laws which are compromises And expediences are man's reliance. The pathway to all great truths is hedged with suffering, which in its own stern way is an educator. With knowledge comes light, which will lead out of darkness. Life is a discipline, wherein the dominant instincts are taught obedience to the eternal spiritual faculties."

"But how, O Sage, am I to teach such lofty doctrines? I shall be scoffed by those who would be reprov'd."

"The truth is superior to all conventionalities. Go to some sensitive mortal and write. Your thoughts may be ridiculed to-day, but to-morrow will be treasured, and future generations become your earthly monument."

"Oh! speak not thus; I feel like the mystic Jonah; I cannot go!"

"Go," repeated the Sage in cheering accents. "You have been a fellow sufferer and can address their feelings. We all have our work and this is yours."

"The prospect of doing good makes me happy, I am satisfied and will depart."

CHAPTER IX.

EASTER-DAY AT THE PORTICO OF THE SAGE.

Lo, in the golden sky
We angel forms descry,
Celestial hosts descend to-day.
The friends of early years,
From their exalted spheres,
Walk with us on our earthly way.

"TEN years ago to-day," said Leon, "I wrote a monody of a sad heart, sorely tried, which ran as follows:—

AN EASTER MONODY.

To-day is Easter. Yesterday was our day of sorrow; the forty days of Lent crowded into one. Now the whole Christian world is rejoicing over the Arisen One; for the triumph over death; for the assurance that beyond the clouds of grief shines the eternal sun of life.

To us the weeping of Egyptian mothers for Horus, blessed infant lost, and their rejoicing, in flowery processions when he was restored; the weeping at, the sepulchre of a later Saviour and his appearance in the glory of light of an ascending spirit have been as beautiful myths sharply defined against the poetic background of history. Now they have become reality. We mourn with those who weep, refusing to be comforted. Our Horus, our babe, is lost! The bright Easter-morn has no brightness for us. Why does the sun rise glorious, with no sympathy for grief? Why sing the birds so sweetly when the house is dark with woe? It seems wicked to have the day so

bright, such music in the air, such fragrance of budding leaf and flower, and one dead!

From the far West she came to visit us, bringing so many winsome ways, such sweet smiles and rippling laugh that was the spirit of all melodies, that we loved her with all our heart; our one-year-old first grandchild, and as our own child, was she the light of our household.

O heart! be still while I write how this beautiful vision, this embodied prophecy of grace, purity and nobility; this blessed child, so little yet so much, of whom we were so proud, around whom every fibre of our hearts clung, faded as a flower touched by the rude breath of frost and disappeared! Her cheeks, soft as the blush rose, faded, her lips paled, and her mother, quick to detect the coming shadow, cried in agony, "She is dying!" How we chafed the chill hands, how we sought to force the stagnant blood to move in its channels; how implored the overruling forces of the world for aid! And while we held the little hands tightly clasped, as though to save her from a flood which laved our very feet, and whose sullen waves we heard breaking on the receding coast line of oblivion, to drag her back despite the power of fate and wrench her even from the hand of God, without a pang, a sigh, a quiver, even as of a wave that vanishes on the shore, she passed out of our hands into the voiceless sphere of death and night. With a suppressed shudder while beaded drops gathered on our foreheads, we listened for the breath which came not, and looked into those blue eyes over which a mist had gathered, to find the soul no longer looking through them into the world.

"Come back, oh, babe of mine!" the mother cried. What have I done that you must die? Is the sin mine? Then bind me to the rack and make me live an age on the confines of deathly pain, but spare this blessed innocent one who has no sin or evil thought!

Is there a God, and does he suffer such injustice, wrong, and cruelty to exist? Has he strung our hearts with the chords of love, vibrant to such tender sentiments, such profound emotions, that he may, with rude hand break them asunder and leave us helpless, hopeless victims of infinite torture? No! If such be God, there is no God, better, far better, blind chance than a demon God. Better the inflexible, iron hand of fate as expressed in the laws of the world, loveless, feelingless, heartless, unavoidable in their dire consequence.

Dead? no, no, she cannot be! Look again! Listen for the breath! The heart must still beat. We cannot hear it; our hopes blasted, our dreams dissipated, our aircastles vanishing, and in the place of love the blackness of regret, merciless, cutting through our hearts.

Had we known; oh! had we known with infinite prescience, then would we have laughed at fate and defeated the decree of destiny. Ah! are we sure that had we known the result and acted differently, the end might not have been still more deplorable? Can we do more than use our infinite powers to the best of our knowledge? Who can ask more?

Why should we regret? Life is the complement of death, and death a necessity of life. Death unlocks the gate of eternal life and swings it open wide for the ascending spirit. True "out of our hands she passed," but into gentler hands than ours. The waiting angels received her in their tender arms, arrayed her in new robes of their sphere of light, and she knew not of the change. She received her angel-mother as her own, and after the pain of the second birth had passed, her life became a constant joy. She will perfect herself in the future life, as she would have done here had she remained, and if our spiritual perceptions are sufficiently quickened, we shall see her from day to day and year to year in her

ascending course. We shall am her sweet spirit taken from earth unsoiled and spotless as the Calla's bloom, mature so delicately and spiritually that we shall be glad her feet were not called to press the flinty pathways of earth-life; that she was not called to drink its bitter cup of pain, nor bear its heavy burdens of cares.

If we could see! but, oh, we do not, for it is dark! How, when we have sailed between two coasts of stars, the heavens above reflected on the pulsing Bea, a breath of storm has blotted out the reflection—so within our hearts that mirrored all this heaven, a breath has changed to darkness; yet as in storms, we gazed far more above than in the blackened depths, we turn not to the lower world of mortal life, but to the heavens of light, where shine the stars of Hope, Faith, and Promise, who with knowledge, keep their watch. Oh, how this thought doth purify our lives! Around and very near are our departed friends! Our child is with them and with us. The casket with its flowers contained another casket from which the jeweled soul, immortal fled. It was a garment cast aside; a cage deserted by our bird of song.

Mother of an angel, weep no more. The time will come when your regarded loss will count as gain. We will unite around our hearth, not with bowed heads and bleeding hearts, but with rejoicing of the men of old when he who made the Easter what it is, before them solved the problem of immortal life, upspringing from the wreck of death! Not with the crape, the sackcloth of despair, but cheerful that we win the presence of our friends, nor on them turn the shadows of our sorrow and lives as ordered under the eyes of these dear ones, until this pilgrimage is over, and at length we reach the shore, beyond which lies the country for which we have in all our dreams been longing. Then will come a sleep and we shall awaken, glad, greeted, and happy in the consciousness that at last,

after the long journey over the quaking bogs and hidden quicksands on which life's firmest structure find their base, we have the certain world, the world of fact, the real of the shadow.... There our love shall know no blight, our hopes no disappointments, our aspirations no rude rebuff, our friendships no frosts, and there shall be no parting there.

"You had a very, very sad beginning," said Hero, "and to mortals who accept not the truth of immortality, dark, indeed, must be the night which closes over the grave. I will sing you a song appropriate to this day, which commemorates the resurrection of life from death; the return of the sun, with the joyous spring to roll the stone from the grave of winter."

Low hung the sickled moon adown the west,
As to the garden gate they slowly came
"You pledge to love me true, to love me best,
I pledge to you a heart fore'er the same."

Then plucking immortelles of beauty rare,
Bright garnet mixed with purest gold,
He placed them lightly on her bosom fair,
And aid, "By this my constant love is told."

After a weary waiting he returned
To find in bridal garments she was dressed,
Pales immortelles upon her waxen brow,
And snowy callas on her pulseless breast.

Then from the grave he plucked an immortelle,
Upon his heart its fadeless bloom enshrined
The angel Death had rang their wedding bell,
And their twin souls eternally combined.

Thus faithful hearts, the dreary years are past,
When softly rung the golden wedding bell
He heard, and closed his weary eyes at last,
To waken greeted by his immortelle.

"You are all too sad," exclaimed a sister who had just returned from a visit to the earth. "To-day is for joy, for mirth, for flowers, not for reflection. I have been unusually interested in my reunion with mortal life, and the narrow conceptions formed by the most susceptible minds

of the realm of spirit. They are like the canary bird that having been born and bred in a cage, has received all ideas from the standpoint of his cage."

"The world," exclaimed a canary from his perch, "is no great affair. The difference between my cage and the parlor in which it is hung, is not much. My mistress has one, I the other, and she sighs the most."

Then he hopped up on his perch and looked about, and nodded his head on one side like a philosopher.

"The world is square," he said sententiously; "that is self-evident, for my senses unmistakably say so; square, and about fifty times taller than I. Above is a ceiling, with a big lamp hanging from the centre. The sides rest on a brown and green carpet. There appears to be a strip of something outside, bright and green, which I can see through a clear spot in the side of the room, which my mistress calls a window, and I have seen moving things there, like men and birds, but as they are continually coming and going, this spot I think I see out of, evidently is only a fancy, and I have ceased to look out—to do so, regarding it as a waste of time. Really, I pity her as she sits there gazing out, not knowing how supremely foolish she is in accepting the hallucination. People come in and go out of this room, so there must be another room like it, and these two rooms make what they call the world."

Poor little canary, with a head full of philosophy, and a good reasoner from the scant data of his observations, but the little he knew made him proud and arrogant, and having settled the problem of the world, he took no further thought. He would sing, and with a flutter of wings, and a shake of feathers he began his sweetest refrain. He was an excellent singer, far better than philosopher, and he became infatuated with his own music until he sprang from perch to perch, setting the cage to swinging so violently that in the middle of one of his most charming

passages its support broke, and down it came to the floor with a crash. The bottom fell off, and wild with fear, he flew up into the room and through the open window out into the garden. If he was frightened before, he was now unspeakably so. He flew up into a tree and perched on one of the branches. The sun was shining brilliantly, and the garden was ablaze with gorgeous hued flowers. The wind was rocking and swaying the trees, as though an invisible hand was moving them. A great many birds, some large, and others even as small as himself, were flying here and there, singing gaily. What did it all mean? What were the clouds, and the sky, and the birds?

When he had somewhat recovered his self-possession, he said:—

"This is the greatest hallucination I have met with; I was mistaken about the world being a room; it self-evidently is a large garden, lighted by a lamp from a round ceiling. The birds seem to fly with ease, and to be happy, but it is after all so wide and high she will be sure to get lost. I'll fly over to the other side, and see how it appears from there."

He spread his wings, and by great effort sustained himself until he reached, or rather fell into a tall rosebush. Cage life had not given him strength of flight, and panting for breath, he exclaimed:—

"This may be delightful for those other birds but it is in nowise so to me. I wish I were in my cage, where it is not so wide, and one can see to the end, to the top and the bottom."

Just at this moment he saw his mistress at the window, heard her calling to him. His heart fluttered with delight and he flew towards her. It made even the sparrows laugh to see him go from side to side, now up, now down, and beating the air with rapid wings, now scarcely moving them enough to prevent his falling. His full song was now

only a pitiful yelp, as he neared his keeper and fell exhausted at her feet. She took him gently in her hand, and with tender words of assurance placed him in his cage.

There he swings now, happy and contented, singing rapturous songs, but occasionally he will become thoughtful as the memory of his brief experience is revived, and he says to himself: "I wonder what it could have been? Was it real? Is there such a vast place outside? Oh! there cannot be; evidently. I had indigestion from my supper of hard-boiled egg, and that gave me a dreadful dream."

"A most instructive story," interposed a sister whose name was Maimie, "instructive as showing us how we misjudge because we do not know. My own story illustrates how we all have a good and evil genius, speaking allegorically, and how the latter casts us down, and death only can sever us from the burdens of the flesh. As I rejoice at my freedom from the weight which dragged me down, so all spirits ought to be thankful for their escape from the physical body, which casts its selfish reflection on their best intentions. My story however is long, perhaps too long."

"We wait and listen," said they all, "to learn how light wedded to darkness was separated therefrom."

Then in a voice often broken by painful memories she recited the following strange story:—

We were known as the Weinsberg Sisters. Her name was Maimah and mine Maimie. Nature in sportive humor, after making us two distinct beings had bound us together with a fetter stronger than steel. Her left side and my right side were united by a band of flesh, through which the blood pulsed in commingling streams. We ought to have been alike, similar in appearance, tastes, temper and disposition, but, alas! we were not. Nature carried her sport to the unkind limit of making us opposites. This antagonism was even manifested when we lay helpless in

our mother's lap, and strengthened with our years. While I was gentle and winsome, my mate was cross, fretful, restless, and constantly angry with me, as though I were the cause of her discomfort, and undoubtedly I was an annoyance, preventing the free motion she so much desired. As we grew older, this animosity increased, and nothing could say or do appeased her.

Well do I remember the first time I realized the terrible burden attached to me, which made me so different from others. I was still a child when the knowledge dawned on me. Mother said to us in a laughing way that her four-handed girl should assist her in some household duty. I enjoyed the task, but Maimah was provoked at being called four-handed, and sulkily refused. When mother spoke again to her she became uncontrollably angry, and accused me of being the cause of her misfortune. Then by a strange interchange of thought she awoke the same idea in my mind, and I found to my sorrow afterwards that she had the power of introducing within me evil thoughts "Why do you blame me? Are you not as much to blame as I?" I asked. Then she burst into most violent language, and turning her red face to mine, her eyes scowling with rage, she fastened her teeth in my cheek, and would not let go her hold until our mother choked her away and held her fast. The hurt was slight, though the blood came freely, but the mental effect no words can describe. I had felt inconvenienced before, but never bound. I realized, young as I was, that there was no escape, and I was wild with fear. At any moment she might become angry, and as she was the stronger, I would be compelled to receive her blows or bites, being incapable of resisting or running away. In the silent hours of the night I thought of my sad lot, and bitterly wept. Our mother, my strength and reliance, was taken away. By her coffin I gained my first idea of death. My sister looked stolidly on the pole face

of the loved one, and rudely rebuked me for my grief. That night I thought of death. We all must die, the preacher had said. What if Maimah should die? Then, she being a part of me, I would be buried with her! I trembled at this dreadful possibility, and wearied myself to sleep, only to dream of being buried alive.

What a fate was mine, to be thus bound by a band of flesh to one utterly unlike myself! As I older grew, I felt the chasm between us widening and deepening, and the hatred and malice she bore toward every one was vented on me. We were inseparable companions, yet without the least sympathy of feeling. My likes and dislikes were not in accordance with hers. I delighted to sit down quietly and read, to enjoy music or works of art, or the conversation of friends, while she being dull of understanding and unable to learn even the rudiments of knowledge, would allow me no rest or quiet anywhere. When in one place she wanted to be in another, and if I refused to go she dragged me with her. Her conversation was unpleasant, and it depressed and stifled me, as she talked incessantly of the most trifling subjects. When I spoke of things dear to me—my studies, reading, or observations—she would remain silent, or answer with contempt. Of course, we were subjects of interest, were constantly invited out by friends, and were recipients of unusual attention. My sister greatly enjoyed this while I, more sensitive, shrank from publicity. We were related as the bad and good sides, and while most people are capable of concealing the bad by the good from superficial observation, mine represented by my sister was ever present as my shadow. She at any moment was liable to utter coarse expressions, angry words, or scowl her hate. What to me was still more fearful, was her power of impressing on me her most intense wishes, and awakening in me the desire to do wrong; to take that which was not mine; to speak

falsely and commit greater crimes, and my tongue would utter words not mine; and thus place me in unhappy situations; at other times, when I saw some desirable object she would urge me to take it, and my being seemed torn asunder by the conflict between these contending influences. The bad at times actually triumphed, and after I recovered self-mastery, conscience would drive me to despair. I would turn to her, saying: "How I wish you could appreciate the glories of the day and the beauties of the night, and feel the thrill of poesy in your soul! How I wish we could talk together of the books I have read, and the charming scenes around us!" Then she would look at me with her dull eyes, and sneeringly say that it was fine talk, but she would rather have a nice dinner; a dinner was the height of her aspiration, and the chief topic of her conversation.

The crisis of our lives came when we were eighteen. I was said to be handsome, except being too pale, and the mirror told me the same. By the side of my reflection was another that was not handsome. Even to my eyes that constantly saw it, that face was repulsive. It was a strange contrast with mine. The lips were thick, the eyes large and round, with a dull and stony gaze, which absorbed without reflecting light; the cheeks were of dull red, and neck short and heavy. She was sensitive of her personal appearance, and would turn from the glass with horrid imprecations on my head.

Did I love? Did ever woman live who loved not? I was abnormally sensitive and lonely. Those with whom I conversed spoke not as to an equal, but in tones of pity or condescension. I had no companionship, and yearned for some one in whom to confide, who would understand my trials, my wants, and aspirations. I idealized a, hero I had not seen, nor even expected to meet. I said to my heart,

"Your hero must not be a reality. Your love must be a dream, for do you not see your fetters hold you fast and make the fulfilment impossible?" Thus I dreamed, when suddenly the reality came. A young physician, from a celebrated university, was introduced by a friend, and he became deeply interested in us. He was the ideal of my dream. From the first time I saw him I loved him as I would a remote and inaccessible star, never for a moment hoping for a return of my affection. As the days went by, and we often met, he expressed the first words of sympathy that I had ever heard, coming from an understanding of my situation. He appreciated the bondage in which I was held, and yet his words were so delicate he did not offend my sister. On the contrary, she accepted them as addressed to her, and with all the uncontrolled earnestness of her nature, she became in love with him. While I shrank from an expression which might indicate my sentiment, she boldly gave hers utterance. After these interviews what a burning sense of shame I felt; how exasperated at the cruel fate which bound me to a form of flesh, actuated by desire rather than reason.

One day we accidentally met the physician, and he spoke so low and earnestly, and there was such a strange new light in his eyes, I questioned my heart, and while I held my breath I dared to believe he thought of me as I of him; but with that light I saw also the sign of despair Love admits of only two; there were three, for I was already united with my mate, and terrible as it was, so must I remain. Out of the depths of regret I was called by the amazing words of Maimah, who by an unerring instinct caught the sentiment of the physician, her egotism changing it to herself. With startling vehemence she replied: "I know you love me, but you know not how much I love you. Yet," she added, turning fiercely on me, "what is the good as long as I am a part of you?"

Deeply chagrined, I said: "Pardon me, dear sir, and do not hold me responsible for these words!"

"Who holds you responsible?" she cried in anger.

"If I am attached to you by this band of flesh I am not in any other way and my words are my own."

"Be assured," said the physician soothingly, "I understand." Each of us could interpret this to suit herself. Then he added: "You are two souls holding two bodies in partial community. I think the recent progress of knowledge makes it certain that your union is not indissoluble, and that a skilful surgeon might easily sever it, and free you from each other."

"Do you mean it is possible to out the band of flesh which unites us?" we both exclaimed.

"It is quite possible," he replied.

"Would you undertake the task? I asked, feeling as though my hope of life depended on his answer."

"Yes," he replied, "under certain circumstances. The risk is great, but I think you do not place a priceless value on life under present conditions?"

"Priceless value! It was irksome, and I almost daily prayed for death. Never before had I thought separation possible. Here was an offer of liberty, and with it every thing which would make life worth the living. My heart was expanding under the influence of a new-found delight. The heavens had become of softer hue and the dull past was vanishing. Separation and freedom! The cutting off of this lower self, this oppressive self; this wearisome, aggressive, asserting self; with its coarse thoughts, unbidden word and suggestions of evil!—would I accept the risk? What folly to ask. What risk would I not take to be free; enabled to go where I pleased, do as I pleased without trembling with apprehension that there would come a storm of abuse or blows from which I could not defend myself?

While these thoughts flashed like flame through my mind my sister applying the words to herself, at once voiced her feelings: "Cut us apart! Glorious! Can you do it? Will you? Did you ask if I was willing? You may this moment. I have been a slave long enough. Every enjoyment or pleasure has been denied me. I am checked in eating and in drinking; I am wrong in my desires. I am made to understand that I am lower and meaner, and of coarser stuff than Maimie. What a delight to be free from her constant talk of right and duty, and what I ought, or ought not to do!"

Consulting with our father, as we urged with one mind, he reluctantly consented that the operation be performed. At the appointed time the physician with an assistant came. I know I was very pale, for I could not free myself from dread, and had any one else been the surgeon, my strength must have failed, but I knew by the tender tones of his voice and gentleness of his manner, that to cut my flesh would be to him like cutting his own, and that not an unnecessary nerve would be severed. I could bear the pain at his hands, and if he succeeded, greater and more priceless than freedom was the love I might claim for which now it was a sin to ask. Maimah had constantly talked of the operation, her love for the physician and what happiness freedom from my restraint would bring her. Now the time had come, she was seized with one of her sudden impulses, such as unreasoning or instinctive beings have. "If I have this band cut," she said to the physician, "I do so because I love you and because you love me; and because I cannot be your wife so long as I am tied to another. You promise to marry me when my bondage is over?"

To this unexpected demand made in a tone of authority, he was so astonished he could make no reply, but stood as one overwhelmed, blushing deeply, and then becoming as

pale as death. Recovering his self-possession he replied in his usual low voice, but with a firmness and distinctness I had not heard: "This is a grave matter and we ought not to lay plans or make promises when the result is so uncertain. First let us attend to the operation, and then we can talk on this subject."

Had the solid earth given way beneath my feet, I should not have been more overwhelmed. Her first words gave me the key to what would follow. Her rude breath blotted from the heavens every star of hope, and left me helpless and despairing. He would not promise; I prayed he would not, for had he, the strength which sustained me would have departed. The hasty glance I gave him must have opened to him the complete volume of my heart, and I saw in his eyes pity and that which to me was infinitely more.

Our father spoke kindly and assuringly, saying to Maimah that it was folly for her to require promises when she ought to wait until restored. This inflamed her the more, and she reiterated what she had said, adding: "Unless the promise is made I will not allow you to be separated. Now I have you and can keep you, and who knows if I let you go he may marry you.

I was inexpressibly frightened, and forgetting that under such circumstances my interference always increased her anger I said: "Do not, Maimah, insist on this, but wait until the operation is over." She turned on me with the fury of a tiger. Her cheeks and lips were purple, and her eyes red as blood. "It is all you," she hissed; "you, with your arrogance, dictating to me." She struck me in the face with her clinched hand, and turned to bite me. Our father caught her in time to save me and held her head and hands, while she screamed in impotent rage. I was overcome by the shock, and lost consciousness. When I recovered I was lying on couch and heard strange

words. My father was standing on one side and the physician on the other, The voice of the former was choked and scarcely audible: "O God! why was this infliction mine? Must both die? Must Maimie die because Maimah is dead?" Then the horrible truth flashed on my mind. My sister, more than sister, a part of myself, was dead! By my side was her corpse. The hour had come, the possibility of which I had often thought of with a shudder. It was a question only of time, how long I should live. I placed my hand on the band of flesh, and found it ligatured. On one side of that tightly drawn cord was warmth and life; on the other side coldness and death'. The physician spoke to my father and I learned that my sister had ruptured a blood vessel in her brain by her violent anger, and that he had as soon as possible ligatured the band between us, so that her blood might not mingle with mine. "I only fear," he said, "it was not soon enough. Some of the changed and therefore poisonous-blood must have, passed into her system. We now have but one alternative, to sever the band, and if the tissues have not become affected from the other side we may yet hope."

Oh! merciful Heaven, I may yet be free! I opened my eyes and they met his. He understood my thoughts and aid, "Yes, yes, your wish shall be gratified. It will not pain you now. I wish for your sake, for both of us, it would be more painful."

How still I remained! There were twinges of pain as the knife went through, but I thought of his words and wished it were more acute. It was finished. For the first moment in my life I was free, and felt a new desire to live, for the happiness that was mine, and to be mine. My mind was intensely active, and pictured the future in brilliancy of coloring, the realization of my dreams. Now I no longer was borne to earth by my heavy burden.

My father wept and laughed by turn for joy. I looked at the physician, expecting to see unbounded satisfaction, but was surprised at his sad expression. He took my hands in his, how warm they were, and said distinctly, as though each word caused him pain: "Maimie," it was the first time I had heard him speak my name, and it sounded sweet to me; "Maimie, you have read the secret of my heart, and I need not tell you that I would cheerfully give my life to save yours, but fate has decreed against us. My feeble hands could not place a barrier between you and death, for he had already entered before my resistance began. While we can, let us say good-by!"

While he was speaking I felt a whirling in my brain, and there was growing darkness, and when I attempted to reply I could not move my lips. I saw his face, and knew by its expression I was understood.

What rushing of strong winds broke on my ears and flashes of flame changing color. A sinking down, down, and wafting as though borne by gentle arms! Then a light dawned, such a soft, cool light, and in it I saw, like a stronger light, my dear mother, and by her side, as a dark shadow, stood Maimah. We were distinct, for death had severed us with more subtle power than the surgeon's knife.

When I think of the earth-life, the pleasures that might have been mine, had my wish been realized, I have regrets, especially when I catch a reflection from the minds of those who there await; but a few years more or less, what are they? The fullness of time brings all our wishes, if in accord with the highest good, and what was dimly outlined as a dream, will all be realized and infinitely more.

CHAPTER X.

A VISIT TO THE CIRCLES OF EARTH.

Sincerity is that whereby self-completion is effected.

—Confucius

THE possibility of holding communication with departed spirits, opened wide the fields of Spirit-life for investigation. As the more earthly spirits are nearest the earth and eager to gain recognition, it is not strange that wild theories are promulgated or ludicrous facts attested. Each spirit wishes to hold communion with its friends, and hence strives to impress those friends to grant the conditions necessary for them to communicate. The awful subject, bringing on its wings so much joy, has been perverted and brought to ridicule. There prevails an almost total ignorance of spiritual laws, and a blind zeal in the infallibility of spirit communications. A dense maw of crude spiritual elements directly surround the earth. Perverted reason looks through imperfect mediums, and everything appears distorted.

"We will go to *earth*," exclaimed the Sage, "and, for a while, witness the errors and mistakes of our brothers, inform ourselves in their present ideas, and then endeavor to teach them aright." So saying, the Society departed from their bright home. It was evening when they arrived, and such a beautiful evening! The silvery-orbed moon had just arose from beneath the eastern curtain of trees, and poured its flood of mellow light over the scene. The blue sky, with its lofty arch above, was redolent with gems and glittering diamonds.

"Oh, how beautiful!" exclaimed Hero; "I am on earth again, and seem an inhabitant of the lower sphere."

"Yes, nature is beautiful; but man is corrupt, because he is not true to that nature;" spoke the Philosopher in sorrowful accents.

Near by a "circle" had convened to witness the manifestations made by those who dwelt on the other side of Jordan's terrible stream. A miscellaneous crowd had collected, with curiosity on tip-toe, and all in a fever of expectation. Two or three "mediums" were there, with minds as cloudy as a stormy night, uncultivated and not well formed by nature. Through these channels the crowd expected to receive wisdom worthy of a god.

Over these assembled a group of spirits, full of fun and mischief, though they had no bad intentions. Questions were asked, and answered by the moving of the table. Such questions! The ignorant group of spirits, it was supposed, knew all the secrets of heaven and earth, and were wiser than the Deity himself. To those the spirits answered as best they could, and generally, after repeated blunderings, succeeded in stumbling upon the truth. In short, they were questioned like prisoners at the bar; and oh, such questions! An idiot might well laugh at their silliness! This very much pleased the spirits. They were having a gala time. They loved fun, and could not help giving mirth-provoking answers sometimes. One of the "circle" was determined that they should tell him where his pocket-knife was. Another, how many dollars he had in his pocket. And, most wonderful of all, a decrepit old man said, "If they'll tell me how many children my great-grandfather had, I'll believe?" This greatly astonished and amused the Society. A whining fellow drawled out, "If this is my father's spirit, wont you tell me who stole my oxen?"

"Yes," was the prompt reply, "Your brother John sold them and kept the money."

"D——d lie," said John.

This was true—the spirit reading his thoughts, though his father's spirit was far from there. John was condemned unexpectedly, and the company had great merriment over his discomfiture, in which the communicating spirits heartily joined.

"Enough of this circle," said Leon; "neither wishes to receive nor impart much useful instruction."

"There are thousands of such circles now on earth," answered the Philosopher, "composed of excited elements, and hence gaining nothing but disgust. O earth! is this thy boasted wisdom?—is this the use of the intellect thou extollest so highly? Wretched, indeed, the taste which prompts such gatherings, such questions, such curiosity! I almost blush to think that I was once of earth."

The next circle they visited was composed of believers who were all strong in preconceived errors. They met, not to abandon, but strengthen their old position. They had attracted a spirit who wished to instruct, but who was passive not to desire to infringe on their feelings. A Methodist asked questions, and from the answers drew the honest inference that Methodism was all right. A Baptist, from the answers he received, concluded that *his* creed was *the* thing the world demanded. The two conclusions disagreed, and the Methodist and Baptist revolved in their minds whether they were holding communication with Satan! This grieved the spirit very much, for he was not, like the others, given to make mirth out of the ridiculous in human nature, and he took the accusation as an affront personal, as though he were living in the body.

"Care nothing for this affront, but leave them and go with us." As he spake thus, the Sage extended his hand, and all departed. He led the way to a circle composed of

ten members, all having the highest aspirations for truth and a deep understanding of spiritual laws. A large concourse of the highest order of minds had been attracted, who were disposed to reveal all they possibly could. Joy sat on every countenance, and inexpressible harmony pervaded every mind. There was not even a wish to inquire after stolen goods, or earthly affairs of any kind, for the circle was sufficiently developed to understand that man's business on earth is to look after things of the earth, and exert his own faculties; and that the business of the departed is in relation to their own sphere; and that if they undertook to reveal all crimes, and give certain premonitions of all coming danger, man would resign all his affairs into their charge, and sink into indolence and idiotism; there would be a spirit pilot to every vessel and steamer—a spirit engineer, conductor, and brakeman to every train of cars! In short that the Spirit-world could do nothing else than look after this lower world. This circle understood that the spirit's mission was to teach great and lofty truths, and afterward to go to their own homes above.

"Brothers, rest now," exclaimed the Sage, "for here there is harmony. I would instruct this circle, that its members may depart wiser than they came." Throwing aside his robe he threw his magnetic force on the medium, and proceeded through him to speak on the coming of the spiritual age, and the means whereby its harvest of ideas and truths might be harvested for the greatest benefit of humanity. Ceasing to speak he continued to convey his thoughts by means of a vision impressed on the mind of the subject, allowing the latter to describe what he saw in his own words.

THE VISION.

Glorious and grand the prospect breaks around me as though a magician's wand had dispelled the deep darkness

which before encompassed my senses. My spirit revels with the infinite hosts of heaven. In a sphere of ugliness, I see beings in a most degraded state of filth and corruption. I cannot picture its miseries, for I never before saw such misery. I stand on an elevation in the centre of a boundless plain, covered with human beings freed from earthly life, but not from its cares, strifes, miseries, and woes. They are divided into groups. There a band of robbers; here of murderers, or sensualists. All the passions, desires, propensities, appetites are represented by groups, their various colors and disgusting forms. Avaunt, bloated sensualist and gourmand! Stand not so near, you suffocate me with your loathsome breath. Your presence fills me with disgust. I cannot gaze on the bloodshot eyes and ulcerously-inflamed face without a shudder.

"Here are beings clothed in rags, hanging in tattered shreds around their forms. All, all as black as night! My pity is moved at the spectacle, and keeps me gazing at the scene, fascinated with its changing hues. There is no rest, no quiet, no tranquility of thought, or peace of mind here. All is animal excitement and its attendant suffering. They wander about without purpose or design. Their errors keep them from the light; so they cannot progress, nor raise themselves above the level of the surface of the earth. They group about in a loathsome atmosphere, from which it is almost impossible to rise. No, not impossible, for those superior to themselves descend into this lower abode as missionaries, to teach them the ways of goodness and truth. These messengers, endowed with exalted philanthropy, make the great self-sacrifice with hearts overflowing for their erring brothers. They teach them, the path of righteousness. I can behold many descend, and their shining robes become more brilliant by the contrast with those benighted minds. They are "king on reform. The haggard features around them become more

ghastly in expression, and some approach them, scorning and cursing them in rage, as the Jews of old did Jesus the Nazarene. They cannot enter the sphere which surrounds, like an impenetrable wall, these shining ones, or approach them unless bidden. They are chained, and stand listening to the words of the angels, who paint the errors of each in turn, holding the mirror to each one's heart. By turns they are enraged and chagrined. Now the angel finishes, and, unloosed by the last sentence, that dark audience move away, shouting and cursing in their bitterness. Ah! a *few* have stayed. There they stand, weeping in agony; their hearts have been touched; they see their errors, and wish for the truth. They have resolved to reform, and do not wish to remain with this dark group. They now are going away with the messengers. How bright they appear! To gaze on them fills me with pleasure.

"I have arisen to a higher plane—the sphere of the good and just. Such an exaltation fills me now that I find words inadequate to express it. Here is an Eden of delight, with gorgeous groves and fragrant flowers, beautiful trees and crystal streams. The colors are resplendently clear and vivid, the light is soft and brilliant, partaking of the ethereality I everywhere observe. Throughout the groves bright beings appear, engaged in their various pursuits, meditating or conversing, all joyous and happy. I wish to remain here forever, and mingle with these intelligences; the atmosphere exalts my soul.... But I must come back to earth; how I dislike these words! Earth looks dark, dreary and desolate."

The Sage then controlled the sensitive and wrote:—

"I came here this evening to instruct you. I have given you this vision that you might become impressed with the *opposite* conditions of Spirit-life. In the first part you recognize what will be your position if you indulge the baser faculties at the expense of the moral. If you are

miserly—grind down the poor—speculate in blood and tears—are revengeful and cruel; if you make gourmands and drunkards of yourselves, you must expect to find a home in this dark sphere until your grossness and crudities have passed away. If you would become angels of light, and dwell in the bright abode last described, you must be good, truthful, philanthropic—not from a regard to your own happiness merely, but because it is right to be so.

"This is the hell so vividly impressed on the minds of the ancient seers and clairvoyants, which they supposed to be a lake of fire. You also here find heaven-happiness. The mind carries with it the capabilities of heaven or hell, and you need not look beyond the grave for these; you are all the time surrounded by them. No one should desire to leave the earth-life until its tasks are done.

"The most distant day will find none too well prepared. You should make the present as happy as the future. It were better to give all your attention to the perfection of mortal life, than to neglect its opportunities in expectation of greater enjoyments, in the future. Mau's birthright is to enjoy and garner the benefits of life, and he should fulfil the destiny which is his heritage. Be pure and unselfish in all things that you may enter this life prepared to participate in its joys."

It was queried, "How do you pass through space?"

"If the space between the planets was void, it would be as impossible for us to leave the surface of the earth as for you. This space is pervaded by an ether, which is slightly denser than the substance comprising our forms, highly attenuated as that may be, and thus the force of gravitation is suspended, and we can move with the rapidity of light wherever we will. The more elevated the spirit the greater the ease and rapidity with which this is performed. The lowest cannot rise into space at all, and are compelled

to remain amidst the scones of earth-life. These are around you all the time, their homes are with you, and they have more power to make themselves felt, because their thoughts are in keeping with the earthly with whom they associate. They have leisure, and can await favorable opportunities. They can also control physical matter more readily than the higher classes. As the spirit advances and becomes exalted it loses the power to control physical matter, and ultimately it becomes impossible for it to do so directly. But to pass thus from earthly influences it must become so perfected that the truths it would communicate would so far transcend man's ability to receive that they would be valueless to him. Hence you receive crude answers from their ignorance and deception of this lower class, ever ready to communicate, while the elevated have duties to perform, and cannot, or will not, come at any hour they may be called on."

Then one in the circle asked: "If they have such boundless love and philanthropy for us, they would delight in spending their time in instructing us."

"Suppose the angels you call should give their whole time for your benefit, how much would you surrender to them? What farmer would leave his plough? What mechanic his bench? What merchant his place of trade? Ah! you answer, these are our employments, and we cannot leave them. We have our employments, more essential than yours. We save a minute while you waste an hour. Every moment of time is precious to us, and if our philanthropy sends us to earth it is at great sacrifice. The spirit advances by study. The more we learn the more expansive our minds become; we have our aspirations, our hopes, and expectations. We ardently desire to become elevated into the brilliant circles above us. How we desire to sit down in the groves of the sphere above us—one day's journey nearer the omnipotent God! The

visions from above arise in our expanding souls—beautiful, surpassing expression!

"I would that I could impress you fully with the value of a *single hour*. What can be done in the hours? There is nothing so ruinous as the waste of time. Though life is an eternity, the moments count and wield a potent influence on the character who wastes or preserves them."

"Would you have all faculties employed?"

Yes; every faculty has its appropriate function, which it should be allowed to fill, but not exceed. The moral faculties are monitors over the lower, while the latter give strength to the former. The mind is composed of antagonism, which mutually compensate each other and prevent excessive action. It is wrong for any faculty to absorb the whole energies of its nature from the others. The social faculties and affections should be drawn out by the intercourse with friends, but their cultivation should not become the end of life. The intellect should be cultivated, but not at the expense of the physical being. The animal organs should be kept active, but should not infringe upon the higher functions. The result of pure affections is to lead man into societies; their ultimate effect will be to form associations, communities; etc. It is as wrong to destroy or neglect as it is to improperly excite the basal organs. Their exercise within their prescribed, limits is as right as the exercise of benevolence or friendship. The doctrine which teaches the contrary has descended from the ages of ignorance. All faculties, functions, and powers of the entire being should be maintained in unity and in harmonical activity."

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHANGE CALLED DEATH.

"Are God and Nature then at strife
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the types she seems,
So careless of the single life?"

—Tennyson.

THE scene again changes to the home of the Sage. The Society are enchanted by the wonderful loveliness of the ethereal landscape, accustomed as they were to its beauties. The perfumed air came in rolling gusts, fanning the graceful foliage of the grove, and ruffling the still bosom of the blue ocean in tiny waves, whose sweet murmurs joined harmoniously with the zephyrs. Such coloring, man, who sees only by the common light, cannot appreciate. The splendid views which sometimes appear before the clairvoyant's eye, rivalling the rainbow in gorgeous splendor, convey perhaps the best idea of the vividness of the tints. To one acquainted only with the scenes of earth, who has not travelled on the swift wings of clairvoyance across the universe, it is useless to attempt to imagine by words the splendor, grace, and ethereality of nature in this higher sphere.

The kindred spirits were reposing beneath the shade of a peaceful grove, which filled the air around with the sweetest perfume. They were discoursing on the philosophy of nature and surrounding objects. Leon had begun his

rapid advancement. Already had his investigating mind sent forth its aspirations, reached far out into the arcana of nature, awake to the full consciousness of its strength, and as a giant, he strode through *spheres* of thought, towards the highest where the whole universe is comprehended.

As they sat in conversation, a spirit approached with noble bearing. His countenance shone with the gleam of the morning, and his thoughts were written on his high forehead. He moved with the dignity of one for whom nature had done much and cultivation more. The body in sympathy with the mind becomes more beautiful in the spheres. He was greeted with a hearty welcome, and taking a seat near the Sage, he entered into conversation.

"Here I could dream my life away," said the stranger.

I could never cease to admire the coloring of nature in this grove, so splendid and ethereal. And the glorious prospect the gods might admire from this Portico."

"Our brother," remarked the Sage, "has for a long period been engaged in the study of nature, and the transformation of living forms. Has he forgotten the earth-life?"

"Centuries have passed like summer clouds since I left the rudimental form, still I remember clearly the impressions, the change of death, or rather I should say second birth, awoke in me. Trained in the lore of mythology I believed in a future state, but it was vague and unreal. How should I have obtained a correct idea of a subject of which I could receive no proof of my senses, or receive tidings from those who had gone before? My reason said, death is annihilation. I could not throw off its grim influence. Its voice was ever ringing in my ears. But I dared not think infidelity to the gods, and brushed my fears. The instinctive idea of a controlling power—a somewhat, a somewhere, came diffidently into my mind, and prejudice chained it there. Mythology gave me its crude instructions. I tried to subdue

my reason, and endeavored to believe. Ye gods, I never could *quite* crush my doubts!

* * * * *

It was a cold starlit night when I passed from earth. The fields were covered with a pure mantle of virgin snow. The frost, driven by the northern blast, glistened in the starlight. There was a charm in the scenery which, to one fain to tarry longer on earth, would have rendered it hard to close the eyes and say, 'I have viewed these beauties for the last, last time; I am no more of earth.' I could not force back the clouds of mantling night as they rolled over my intellect. Slowly, gradually, I sank *down; down* into a great black gulf. Down, down I sank, beyond all human thought or conception, seemingly millions of millions of miles with the gloom growing thicker, denser, and more stifling. It was an awful sensation to be suspended over that black abyss by a single thread, and, as life ebbed away, to feel one-self going down, down into its unfathomable depths.

"The last words I heard were the lamentations of my family and friends, and their sobs and cries as they said I was gone. Yes, gone! gone from earth, its pleasure and its pains. Their sighs seemed my death-knell to oblivion. *Down, down* I sank for hours after they said 'he is gone,' when suddenly a flood of light burst upon my astonished vision as a gleam of lightning, and on its wings my soul sped upward—up, up, up in that golden light, to earth again. I was conscious, and, looking about me, saw my body on the couch. I was a short distance off, but still myself. A slight cord of ethereal matter connected me with my form. It was soon broken, and I was free. There stood my friends weeping over my inanimate body, inconsolable for my loss I strove to convince them that I still lived, but could not, for I found that my body,

though real to me, and perfectly organized, was far too ethereal to affect physical atoms. My acquaintances, while on earth, who had gone before me, now welcomed me, at the same time giving me a beautiful mantle. Then they conducted me to my new home with the angels.

"Ah! how can I express the overflowing rapture which thrilled my whole being, when the sublime reality of immortal life came rushing over my soul! Words can but faintly express the emotions I experienced, or the ineffable joy which filled my being."

"Centuries have passed since then, and standing on the summit of the present I look down my pathway until its small beginning is lost in the mists. I have been a universal traveller, but now think I should better enjoy a period of less activity."

"Accept this, then, as your haven of rest," said the Sage. "We shall value your companionship, O Plotinus!"

The latter gazed steadfastly at the Master for a moment, as one who would recall the past. Tears came to his eyes, and with a sudden impulse he caught the Sage in his arms. Twenty-five centuries had not effaced gratitude and love from the pupil's mind. In all his wanderings, the Master had held supreme place. The friendship of earth awaits its expanded bloom in the Spirit-world. Gratitude will be expressed in affection, and the friends of to-day become more than friends to-morrow.

"Master!" exclaimed Plotinus, "absorbed as I was I did not recognize you; but I ought to have known that this Portico, like the one on earth, and yet unlike, could have been none other than yours. I have found you at last! When I felt an irresistible attraction this way, I knew it came from an unusual source, but I did not anticipate this joyful reunion."

"These are the delightful moments of our lives. The affections are sadly neglected in the earth-life; they

luxuriate here. But, I may ask, why alone? You do not journey thus?"

"Ah, no! I could not do that. She is now absent, but will soon join me."

"She, too, is one of us."

"Once I learned the beautiful lesson," said Albreda,

that death knows no distinction, and in the associations formed here the pride of wealth and rank are unrealized by those who see and know the reality." And being pressed to relate the lesson she had received, with self-depreciation she proceeded:—

TO THE SAME HEAVEN.

In a by-street, away from the rush of the throng, in a room high up, where the noise of the turbulent city came as an indistinct murmur, was a mother, watching the bedside of her child—a girl of fourteen years. Pale and forlorn was that mother, and her history a chapter of life painful to read.

Once she was a happy child, with every want met by the asking. A happy wife, a blessed mother, and the girl now on that thin, faded couch had been shielded from the rough winds by a father's tender care. It was all gone now. The sea had asked for and received that father. Want came amain, and the tender child, like a plant ill-nourished, faded away.

"It is cold, mother," said the child, softly, "lie here and take me in your arms."

Then the poor mother glanced around the bare room. There was nothing but ashes in the grate. She drew aside the blanket, and lying down drew the suffering Ava close to her breast.

"This is delightful," mamma she said. "You have no warmth to spare, yet give it to me; I am naughty to ask

you. And papa is here, too. He says he wants me to go with him on a journey. What does he mean?"

The mother was silent.

"Oh, then, dear papa, you want me! Well, I want you to have me."

The mother wept. The clocks in the steeple began to strike the hour of midnight.

"Mamma, mamma," softly spoke the child, "is A morning? It is growing light"

"Nay, Ava, it is dark yet, and a long time before morning."

"It is very light. It is full day, and—dear mother, I think I shall—go away. I love you—much—Father—"

No warmth could restore the lifeless clay, and the stricken mother clasped her dear child with a dull and crushed despair.

"I want her," she moaned, "I want her, and what can I give her? What have I given her? Hunger and cold, and sickness. I could do nothing more, and yet I would have her back! No, it is best, for there can be no life worse than this, and perhaps she is better, warmer, and happier. But I have nothing else, and, O God! I am not allowed to have even this poor comfort of my child to suffer with me!"

A mother sat by the side of her suffering child. The subdued light from the shaded globe fell softly over the room, furnished with all the luxuries art could devise. Aldine, the only loved and worshipped child, had it prepared as her own taste desired. The walls were exquisite arabesque designs in purple and gold, the carpet delicate brown, with masses of pale green fern leaves, like a bed of moss; the furniture and bed were a soft shade of blue, while the deep window was filled with rare plants, many

in bloom, and others trained upward and looped in festoons over the damask and lace curtains. The air was warm and perfumed with the breath of roses.

One thing was wanting for perfect happiness in this Eden. Wealth nor love cannot exclude pain. It came stealthily in on the soft air of autumn, and for all the winter months the child had suffered, and loving hearts had ministered and waited with intense expectation. Now, Easter was near. To-morrow the world would put on its gayest robes, just as its generations had done from countless time, for the resurrection of life from death.

The father came, and softly spoke her name. She turned her pale, thin face, and wearily opened her large brown eyes.

"Papa, I had such a sweet dream! Cousin Ray was here, looking just as he did before he died last year. He drew aside a curtain, and I looked through, and far away I saw a landscape of such beauty as I never dreamed of before. Cousin Ray took my hand and wanted to lead me away, and I thought of you, and awoke."

"It is pleasant to have sweet dreams, and you will soon be strong, and then we will go to the mountains and the great lakes, and we shall find many beautiful places."

"Perhaps," she replied, and then after a pause: "It is growing cold." Her father took her hands in his. Ah, they were cold! and her eyes were supernaturally bright cold, and no human power could ever warm them again. In vain, O mother, do you apply stimulants, and chafe those hands and those chill arms. The warmth, which is life, can never more be theirs. Oh, it is terrible to feel our utter helplessness in the presence of death! Love and affection though they offer life for life, are powerless. Death lowers like the mantle of darkness, dropping slowly and inevitably from the sky, and we cannot resist it.

Father and mother stood by that couch, knowing the

hour had come, and that they were helpless to avert one pang, or assist in any way their child in the terrible ordeal through which she was to, pass.

Again she spoke: "Ray is here again. It is warm now, and he says he will take me on a journey. He will show me the beautiful country. Do not weep, papa! mamma! I'll come back. Oh, I love you more than I can tell!—kiss me—"

They kissed her again and again, but she seemed to have sunk to sleep. After a few minutes she opened her eyes. They were aglow with the light of heaven. They saw what mortal eyes have never seen. A smile arched the corners of her delicate mouth, and overspread her pale face, as the setting sun gilds the high mountain peaks, and she was gone. The departing spirit reflected its glory over the deserted shrine, abandoned forever. They listened for her breath, but the cage of the immortal only remained. The clock struck twelve! it was Easter-morn.

Far away in the ether, where the zones of the Spirit-world sweep in vast folds around their primary world, on a jutting promontory, overlooking the earth below, a class of children are grouped with their guardian and teacher, enjoying the glory of the scene. They are waiting for the coming of some one from the space below and soon they are rewarded, for the spirits of Aldine and Cousin Ray floated up as a beam of light and were greeted by the group.

Scarcely was the welcome over when a spirit, tall and radiant, stood before them, holding up by the hand the spirit of Ava.

"I have come with my child," he said to the teacher, to ask you to take her into your group, and care for her as it is not possible for me now to do."

"Most welcome," replied the beautiful teacher, and all the children came around the timid Ava, who Scarcely realized the meaning of the change through which she had passed. They embraced and kissed her, and called her their sister, and made her heart light and happy with affection.

"I must return to earth," said Ava's father, "for my wife, alone and in want, is dying, and I must welcome her from death; I will soon bring mamma to you, my child."

Then the teacher said to the happy children, "This Easter-morning will be kept with joy by our friends on earth, because it is the day sacred to the resurrection of life from death. Two new members have been born into our life, and we will visit other groups, and beautiful places that we may become acquainted with this new and immortal life."

CHAPTER XII.

COMING TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LIGHT.

"Where no cruel word is spoken,
Where no faithful heart is broken,
We shall meet, we shall meet;
Hand in hand and heart to heart,
Friend with friend, no more to part,
Ne'er to grieve for those we love,
On that happy shore above."

SCARCELY had Albreda completed the last sentence, when Hero exclaimed in astonishment:—

"Look, hither cometh Marvin—he of whom we learned so much!"

Yes, it was he—the self-same individual we described previously, unchanged in countenance, if we except a more haggard expression, and a spark of restless insanity gathering in his eye. Such a bewildered and astonished expression as came over him as he approached is beyond the power of the pencil to express. He felt that he stood on sacred ground. With cautious step he trod the flowery path, and with curious gaze scanned the Eden around. When he beheld the group of spirits engaged in conversation, and recognized them as the same he had so scorned at his entrance into new life, his charged overpowered him. Fain would he have hurried away, had not their united magnetism retained him. He remained speechless, with eyes cast on the ground. The Philosopher, well knowing his situation, and pitying him for the errors which had placed him in such embarrassing circumstances, broke the silence:—

Brother, you are welcome here. We left you many years ago, newly-born into this sphere. You were then the slave of a false theology, and were beyond the reach of reason. You then set out on a search for heaven. You have been unsuccessful in your search, or you would not be here. You wronged us then, but if you are right *now*, that occurrence will be as though it had never taken place."

Marvin's bigotry was much subdued by his unsuccessful search; but he would rather have appeared before the judgment-seat of his Creator than before this Society, who were acquainted with his past history, and were able to read his thoughts. With these impressions, combined with the contracted ideas in which he had been educated, such generosity was as unexpected as astonishing to him. For a moment, feelings strange and sore choked his utterance. The heart of stone has its latent sympathies, and those whose hearts are steeled to all charity, may be easily affected if their character is understood. He reached forth his hand to the Sage, exclaiming:—

"Ah, reverend father, if I had listened to your warning voice when I entered this world—if I had sought the source of true happiness in the internal light; had I harkened to your words, and not scorned your sayings, rather than have taken the words of a mythical book, as expounded by a designing priesthood, how much more advanced would I now be! Then might I have enjoyed groves like these, which remind me of the Tree of Life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations—have learned from the great volumes I see around me, fit emblems of the Book of Life. Curse me, but do not pity; I deserve it not; make me miserable by your kindness. I have brought all on my own head and must suffer."

"Curse you? Let not such words be uttered to this Society. An erring brother should *never* be condemned. Nay, we have no ill-will against you. All your former

words are forgotten; we remember them no longer; but strive to remember the good deeds alone. It is true, that you might have been more advanced and far superior to your present position, had you turned immediately into the path I pointed out. But as you believed firmly in a local heaven and the tradition of past ages, it was better for you to have made the search, and by *ocular demonstration* become convinced of the fallacies of your position. Blame you! certainly not. It was not *you* who upbraided us, but the blar-eyed superstition in which you were instructed. And the scenes of this life were so new and unexpected, and you were in such an excited state that you could not act yourself."

"I have searched long and diligently, but have found no heaven such as the Bible describes. That book has undone me—utterly, irretrievably ruined me forever. I would that I had been born in a heathen land, and had never read its soul-destroying pages! I have inquired of every spirit I have met if they knew the locality of heaven, and all the answer I received was a commiserating look while they pointed around them, as much as to say what *you* said long ago—'Everywhere!' I have seen multitudes of spirits similarly engaged as myself, yet none ever discovered the object of their search; and I left them and went alone, beginning to doubt in my mind the theory I formerly believed sacrilege to dispute and which I so fanatically supported. The few words you spoke to me came up with redoubled force, and I was ready to exclaim: 'Ah! that I had hearkened to that venerable man whom I first saw on my entrance into this world!' This day, by some unaccountable means, I arose to a higher plane than usual, and without a moment's warning stood before you. Your forgiveness is worse than your combined curses. I could bear the latter, but this softens me to tears."

"Speak not so harshly of the Bible. It has served an

important purpose. It has done much for the advancement of mind. It has been perverted, misunderstood, and thus made the occasion of great evils; yet all these have resulted in ultimate good. It was your educational prejudice and bigotry which have caused you so much suffering and misery. Because we are at one extreme is no reason for our flying to the other. The 'golden mean' is the centre around which all truth gathers."

"You have corrected me aright; I acknowledge your superior spiritual powers of perception reverentially."

"Reverence not me; I am no more than the others. We acknowledge submission to no one. Each is his own individual sovereign, to think and act as best pleases himself, if he is regardful of the rights of others and is measured by his worth alone. If you are thankful express it, not by words or gestures, but by actions. Reverence not me, but truth. You are still prejudiced on this and kindred subjects, and your prejudice must be overcome."

"I *am* prejudiced; I have not striven to conquer my preconceived opinions. If I had sufficiently done so I might now rest in this beautiful grove instead of going down to mingle with the low demons, one of whom I am, with this difference, that I know *what* I am. Ah! must I always suffer for the wrongs of the past?—the contriving of plans to cheat the poor and defraud innocence, in order to turn more gold into my coffers. The thoughts of the many wrongs I have committed on my fellow-men are like burning coals upon my heart. *Must* I go back to the society of those from whom I have at this moment escaped?"

"Within you I perceive the humiliation which is the awakening of wisdom. Will you tarry with us? Here you will escape the influence of the unworthy and dwell continually in an atmosphere which will invigorate your spiritual strength."

"Tarry with you and enjoy all the sublime ethereality of

this abode!" exclaimed he in astonishment. "You are but tantalizing me."

"In all truth not"

He flung himself down at the feet of the Sage, his once iron heart melted and his sins washed away in tears of contrition. Beneath the rubbish and conventionalisms which conceal it every human heart hath a diamond. Circumstances may dim or entirely obliterate its light, yet sooner or later it will break through all obstacles and shine in immortal brightness. So in this man of iron, this man of the world, once so niggardly to the poor, so unmerciful to the unfortunate, who used all means to acquire riches, trampling on social law and obliterating the moral—the gem was still there.

"Arise! reverence not me by words, I repeat, but by actions meet for repentance. You came hither alone. Where is your companion?"

"My companion? My wife so called on earth? She died a year since. But we loved not each other, and the wider we are asunder the better both are pleased. I wished her saving, prudent, and laborious, but she would be neither, and the result was one continual broil."

"Enough, rest you here, and as one of us commence this day a new life, advancing upward to perfection."

As Marvin entered its decorated vestibule, Leon, who had been an admiring spectator, exclaimed:—

"Is it possible! Marvin—the rich, purse-proud, vain, scornful, bigoted, aristocratic Marvin—here! and thus regenerated! I almost doubt my senses."

"To one who, like mortals, has become contracted with conventionalism it appears strange," replied the Sage, "but to us it is an expected occurrence. This man was once an innocent child. His natural abilities were such as would have raised him head and shoulders above all his contemporaries, exalting him as much in the moral and intellectual

firmament as he became in the religious and commercial. He was trained under the iron despotism of false conditions. He was taught that to be rich was to be great, and that nothing but riches was worth striving for. When he approached manhood, he saw those whom the world praised, flattered, and adored were those who possessed a few dollars more than their neighbors: and he was deeply impressed that, to become likewise, he must do likewise, for a long while he was troubled with a conscience, and his intellect would react against the drudgery be imposed on it in his strife to become rich. If you had been placed in his circumstances, you would have done as he has done; therefore you should not condemn. His natural abilities are as great as ours; and his name shall yet resound through the Spirit-home. Saw you not how readily he confessed his errors after he had fully satisfied himself of their falsehood? He is now free from prejudice, and is like a child, which he should have been half a century ago. For this germ, divested of its educational and animal garb, have I accepted him; and soon you will be proud to call him one of us."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SOCIETY AGAIN VISITS EARTH.

"Do the angels rest in heaven?
Aye, in eternal activity which is rest."

IT was such a morning as is alone beheld in the spheres, when the group of spirits again passed from their bright homes to survey the inharmonious conditions of earth. We find them resting over a large city, in which were concentrated all the abominations of the world. Fashion here held her baneful sway, and on her altars of eternally consuming fire sacrificed her untold victims. Toil, God's first command to man, was either excessive or utterly neglected. Classes, grades, and other conventional distinctions, held potent sway; and error (sin) sat brooding over all, from the beggar in his rags to the ruler on his golden throne. Commerce sat in her deceitful form on the quays, or housed herself in high towering walls of brick and stone. Falsehood, as a commodity, was bought and sold. Deception, fraud, hypocrisy, were everywhere prevalent. Man had contracted his God-like soul into the compass of a copper cent, and found an infinite universe in which to roam within its narrow rim. No low animal passions were suppressed; these held supreme control and what fearful control! All underneath was corruption, which filled the sewers, drains, and cesspools, sending up its poisonous exhalations to mingle with the moral effluvia generated above by corrupted man, who, with God-like powers, walked the pavement amid the mass of corrupted

elements, unconscious of their presence, pursuing his puerile ends as eagerly as a boy chases the bubble or the gaudy butterfly.

There was nothing natural—no God—none of his works—all artificial, bowing to arbitrary and conventional rules. No clear blue sky, as seen when rambling over the verdant mead; no boundless prospect, such as exalts and exhilarates the mind when on the shores of a tameless ocean; no bright sunshine awakening cheerily the activity of animal life, bidding the flowers to expand their petals and shake off the dews of heaven. No gorgeous sunset behind the western forests, commanding life to be for the time dormant. There was nothing pure, lovely, and truly beautiful. Bick walls shut out the extended view; pavements concealed God's ground; night was changed to, day by the glare of poisonous gas; stimulating foods and drinks were spread at every street corner, tempting the overtaken body to plunge into the gulf of infamy deeper—still deeper. The overfed gourmand jostled the beggar he had robbed of bread from his path with a sneer. Monopoly towered in six-storied structures, and crowded God's children from the soil rightly their own.

O misery, crime, ignorance, and degradation, can you be surpassed in the mythic hell? Angels weep, weep, for your brothers on earth!

Over this scene of misgovernment, error, and death the group in silence rested. Within their wide-extended gaze the whole vast scene stretched out in all the rank deformities of perverted nature. Marvin, who was with them, had been a speculator—a monopolist, and had played at the high-handed game of trade in a manner superior to the shrewdest. When he saw the hell-sent speculation grind down the poor and oppress the miserable; when his extended perception saw the results of the actions of those who followed his footsteps, and *knew* that he had caused

equal suffering, crime, and woe, he called upon the rocks and mountains to fall upon him and conceal him from the sight of those who saw him in the light in which he saw himself. He covered his face with his hands, and wept as though the bursting tempest would rend every fibre of his frame.

"Wretch! wretch! wretch he exclaimed in anguish."

"Oh, that I had never been born! I now see myself in the mirror of my own heart. Annihilation, or the torments of the fabled hell, are nothing to this. Plunge me, O God, if thou art merciful, into the bottomless pit of destruction, burning with fires unquenchable, and blot from memory's tablet the knowledge of the past! Hope, that once spread her balmy wings around my heart, thou, too, hast forsaken me, and the future is an awful scene of woe and despair!"

The Sage, taking him by the hand, raised him up, saying:—

"Self-accusing child, why blame yourself thus? Blame no one for their follies, but the circumstances in which you were placed. They were bad; popular opinion, before which you bent, was bad. All tended to make you what you were. You have a germ of native goodness in your being, or you would not thus accuse yourself. Arise! weep no more! The future is bright. You can retrieve your misdeeds, but must lose the time wasted since a child?"

"Is that all? Am I forgiven?"

"Not forgiven; so much is lost. Study as intensely as you will—learn until you become a god in wisdom—still, so much is lost. The scar of wrong will never hide itself in growth."

Marvin made no reply, but sat wrapped in melancholy reflections. The others engaged in conversation on the passing panorama. Spirit after spirit ascended as freed from earth—some black as night, others bright as a sun

beam in a cloudless morning. Between these extremes were all degrees of brightness and purity.

A female figure arose from among the brick walls, and beholding the dazzling light of the Society, she came toward them. She was *a la mode*, with life powers cramped by a slender waist, one half the size of that which nature would have given her, and her mind diseased by stimulants and poison. She was bewildered by the new state of things, and wished an explanation of their mysteries. She approached, and with a fashionable greeting, cold and formal, inquired where she was.

"In heaven!" was the response.

"In heaven! Why this does not agree with my belief!" was the surprised response.

"This is heaven, let your belief be as it may," replied the Sage.

"Heaven is a place of enjoyment; but how do you enjoy yourselves in this airy region?"

"By travelling and working."

"By working!" said she, in the utmost scorn; "working in heaven! I, never *did* work, and as for travelling, it was always too much trouble."

"Travelling is very pleasant," interrupted Hero. "I take great pleasure in roaming through the groves and among the flowers."

"That may be true for *you*, but it is not for *me*. When you wish to become otherwise than as you now are, what do you do?"

"Work."

"Work! *I* never worked, and I never *will*. Why vulgar people labor; the refined do not. I *won't* work—*never!*"

"It is with yourself to choose," calmly replied the Sage,

"You cannot be happy in indolence, while around you are those as intellectual, as good, and as refined as yourself,

performing the tasks assigned them. You cannot be contented, or advance. Recall this rash sentence and supply its place with a will."

"Never, never! I declare I won't work; indeed, it would soil my hands, brown my complexion, and injure my beauty."

That may be true; but your hands are no better than those of the millions who labor, and if your complexion were browned your beauty would be improved by health."

"Health!" exclaimed she; "health! indeed, that is none of mine, unless it be wretched health. Such misery as I endure makes life a burden; such terrible pains, piercing me like needles. Don't talk to me of health, diseased And dying as I am."

"You have already passed the change called death and will now outgrow the conditions and influences of your earthly life; but, sick as you are, you never can be better until you labor."

"I *won't* work!"

"You will be obliged to recall that foolish declaration. Are you not ashamed to remain idle while all surrounding nature is at work? You are a consumer. You must eat, drink, and wear raiment, while for the last thirty years you have produced nothing. You are to live through all future time; but according to your present determination, you will never produce anything. On earth—that great bedlam beneath—pursuant to established conventional rules, you could use the earnings of a hundred brothers and sisters, giving in return no equivalent and causing their families to live in wretchedness and woe. There the poor can be made slaves, toiling night and day for the support of idle masters and mistresses; there those who toil most receive least, eking out a life of want; while those who toil least receive most, sleep on down, sup from silver dishes, consuming an endless number of useless

luxuries, while thousands are living in destitution and are obliged to expose themselves to the winter's blast. You have entered a new sphere of existence. Here the laws of right are observed. No one here can live on the sustenance of another. When a person refuses his share of honest toil we let him suffer the consequences of violated law, which soon makes him tractable and ready to listen to the words of nature."

"But I *can't* work; I never learned to do anything."

"Have you not learned something useful?"

"Oh, yes; I can embroider, can play on the piano, can Sing, Point, and draw."

"Nothing more?" asked the Sage, in a tone of pity.

"I know a little of French and Italian, and can dance."

"Know you nothing of the laws of life and of your being?"

"Laws of my being! Why God takes care of that He giveth and taketh away. Can I know his reasons?"

"Verily it rests in your hands, and you should understand those reasons? Can you expect health without knowing how it may be preserved? Sickness is the result of ignorance and consequent physical violation. If you understand not this subject, you are like one walking in dark over yawning precipices, every moment liable to slip and precipitate himself on the rocks below."

"To understand this subject, and avail one-self of its advantages, would it not set at naught the mysterious ways of Providence, and be a sacrilege in the sight of God, by changing what he has decreed?"

"As for the Providence of which you speak, it exists only in the diseased fancies of the abnormal brain; and as for sacrilege, what we can discover of nature and render available, is our privilege to investigate—not trembling at every step for fear of God's wrath, but boldly and manfully

doing all that we can to discover truth. This is our privilege. You understand not the science of life!"

"No; all I know is to live, asking no questions."

"That is as much as the blind devotees of the world know. They understand nothing of *manhood*; they are in their infancy. Thus you have wasted years in the accumulation of useless—worse than useless—knowledge. Man studies to elevate himself for a few days on earth. He acquires knowledge to that effect, and not for eternal life. The *spirit* is neglected and crushed to earth. They send their children to the primary school to prepare for the college. Strange that the future is not provided for! You are totally, totally unprepared for the unseen realities before you."

"I know I am. Let me go back! Ah, I *must* go back to earth. I can't stay here. What shall I do? Ah, how I wish I could go back!"

"You are wishing for an impossibility; you have entered a new life, and *must* submit to its conditions."

"If I stay here I will be obliged to labor; and you know that I do not know how."

"There is an eternity before you in which to learn."

"But there is no one to teach me."

"There is a circle of those like yourself, striving for elevation, and to them. I direct you."

"A circle! all strangers! and I becoming a pupil in a workshop! I won't *do* it! I'll go back! I *won't* work!"

At this moment, an infant spirit, conducted by one long in the spheres, arose above the smoke and dust of the city. With almost a scream of delight, the *lady* spirit flew toward them and clasped the infant in her arms. She then came back to her former position in a transport of joy, exclaiming:—

"I don't want to go back now. My child is with me. Poor thing!, so delicate, pale, and unwell! She has

troubled me ever since she was born. I expected her to die, but while on earth I dreaded the event which now gives me so much joy."

"Yes, she is a delicate thing—an offspring of your infringement of organic laws and the sacred principles of life. She is a fitting emblem of the ignorance of earth. Delicate and unwell, indeed! How could it be otherwise where the laws of hereditary descent prevail and mould the child after the thoughts of the mother? Whatever thoughts are excited or depressed in the mother will appear in the same state in the child. When will mankind learn that the development of their offspring depends upon themselves, and that it is as possible to rear philosophers, statesmen, and poets—minds having the capabilities to arouse a world—as such mental dwarfs—such poor, imperfectly formed beings?

"*You* are another fitting emblem of earth's errors. Fashion has distorted your form, changed your manners and your whole being. God made you for health; you have striven to disobey his laws, and have bent before the silly force of prejudice and conservatism. Look at yourself, and compare yourself with Hero. Beautiful as your form was thought to be, how ugly and homely when compared with one who has obeyed Nature's laws!

"Don't laugh at me," said she, piteously.

"Laugh at you!—never! I pity you, and your child I pity still more. She is a copy of all your defects and of none of your virtues. This is the result of your violation of marriage laws. The offspring of those who are uncongenially joined take the bad qualities of both parents in their aggravated state. In *true* marriage it is the reverse. Ah, men and women of earth! a tremendous responsibility rests on you, from which you cannot escape. The destinies of the future generations are in your hands. Send not into the world such miserable organizations, with but half

the life they should possess, diseased and suffering from the effects of your continual, violations. Think of these things *well* before you take the responsibility of ushering an immortal being into the world! Look at your child there! its death written in vivid hues on its countenance, imbecility of intellect in its vacant eye, an instability of purpose and a deficient morality in the contour of its head. Strange you should become so nervous on account of her illness, when you took so little care in her embryonic development! Strange!"

Not strange. How could I do better, considering my ignorance and the evils with which I was surrounded?" asked she, in a palliating tone.

"Because man is surrounded by evil circumstances, he should not cease to strive to overcome those circumstances. He himself is the greatest circumstance. Let him strive to change himself; then will all conditions put on a new aspect, as clouds change their color in the setting sun. He should not sit down complaining of bad circumstances, but take hold manfully, and work his way upward out of them into the light. Does the mariner, on the wide ocean, complainingly sit down in imbecility when the storm breaks over him and the billows dash at his feet? Assuredly not; but the fiercer the blast the more intense his exertions. Thus should man strive on the sea of human life—strive ever to overcome and conquer. Well do I know your condition was anything else but enviable, for the best situated are bad enough. Here, in this little being, behold the result."

"Is she to bear *my* sins?" asked the mother, in agitation.

"Not your *sins*, but the *results* of those sins: and the punishment recoils back upon yourself."

"This is injustice," said the agitated lady. "My poor Isabel to suffer for my crimes! I cannot bear the thought

of it I had rather suffer a thousandfold than have her suffer for a single hour. It is unjust!"

"Not so; it is but the extension of the great principles of equity which he concealed in the depths of nature. It is necessarily the result of infringed law. Without this punishment the laws would be useless. Pain is the police and safety-guard set along the way to drive us back to the right path. If not for its influence we might go off on some tangent and never return. So we are compelled to do right at last. We oscillate within given limits. Thus you perceive infinite justice in punishment."

"Talk of justice to me when I see my child crushed as an opening flower by its iron-sway!"

"Yes, I would talk of justice, to you, that you need not sink yourself under new violations. Your feelings are overwrought, and distort your reason.... Rememberest thou the noble ancient who gave his eye to save his sons? Seek not to take this punishment upon yourself, for you will have all you can bear without more."

"Can I not retrieve the errors by which I have brought misery on her?"

"You know there is a law of progress that will relieve you."

"And is it possible for little Bell to become healthy as other children?"

"Possible—but a long time must elapse before this can be fully accomplished. Nature once crushed recovers slowly and with great effort."

"If it is possible, I am happy;" and a joyful radiance overspread her countenance.

"Can I not do something to aid her recovery?"

"You can work. This for the time will be your field of labor. You said you would not labor. You must toil here, or your child will pass ages in the sphere where you now behold it."

"If I can do anything to elevate my child, I will work night and day continually."

"I said you must work. You are now willing to do so. If you had expended one-half the labor on earth that you will be *obliged* to exert here, your child would be very much superior to its present state. You thus perceive nature is a grand scheme of compensations, and all, sooner or later, must perform the tasks assigned them."

"I am willing—willing to labor to eradicate the evils I have entailed upon my dear, dear Bell."

"Speak not rashly, for centuries must intervene before you have accomplished what you *might* have done in a few years on earth."

This announcement chilled her courage and she was very much pained, but it was for a moment only. Her woman's nature, crushed as it was, arose above selfishness, and she exclaimed:—

"No sacrifice is too great for my child. I have caused her to enter existence as she is; I feel that it is my duty now to make atonement by instructing her."

"Can you instruct her when ignorant yourself?"

"No; I had not thought of that. My God, have mercy! I had a bright vision of happiness, but it has faded away—gone forever!"

Mother, with thy loved babe, how feeblest thou when it is snatched from thy embrace? Canst thou feel her heart's pangs? Then thou knowest how agonized was the mother in the spheres, regretting that she had not learned something useful while a mortal.

"Sister," said Hero, soothingly; "sister, it is not as dark as it seemeth. There is hope. If you cannot instruct your child, the circle to which I will conduct you will rejoice to assist you."

"Can I be with my child?"

"Yes, sister; you will do all you can to instruct it

while learning yourself. You will be her guide and procure such assistance as you desire. I will conduct you to that circle and there leave you."

"But shall I find friends there?" she asked, in great anxiety.

"Spirits in this plane are all friends. We know no hate or revenge. If they formed a part of our minds on earth or were reflected during the earlier years in this life, they have been outgrown."

They passed away and arrived at the mentioned circle. Hero introduced her to them, and the affectionate band pressed around her, each striving to manifest the warmest friendship. The worldly lady was a worldling no longer. Infinite possibilities dawned on her awakened consciousness, and she had only to be led by loving hands and do the work which presented itself.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FORSAKEN AND DESPISED.

Proves it that she
Was wrong in being constant in her love!
The man she loved in after years was not
The one who wooed her girlish love;
Her lover changed to fiend; and could she love a fiend?"

WHILE engaged in this discussion, a spirit came near, on whose countenance rested the shades of grief and regret She saluted the group with a low bow, for their dazzling brightness informed her of their superior purity and wisdom. Her salute was returned, evidently to her surprise.

"Enter our circle," invited the silver voiced, "and be one with us."

"Not a heart as sad as mine," she answered sorrowfully.

"Here the tearful eye is made bright with gladness," said the Sage. "Why are you sad?"

"Ah, noble sir, I am sad, and *more* than sad; I am in woe and misery. My heart is bursting with its secret grief."

"Why is it that one so fair and pure should be thus troubled?"

"Call me not pure; the words burn my brain. I am miserable. because I am *not* pure."

"What have you done to stain your purity or make you sad?"

"Ah, it is a sad tale—one which should remain a secret from any but those as bright and pure as you. I was a happy girl. The day was but a round of happiness. I sang

in the old forest to the evening breeze, culled flowers from the murmuring brookside, gathered moss from the gray old rocks, and listened breathless to the songsters of the grove, for hours. Ah, I was happy then; I had no cares of the morrow, and the world went cheerfully on without infringing on me or mine. I lived to love, and was loved in return. How noble was my lover! Such towering aspirations as he possessed, united with such gentleness and affection, I never found in another. We were youths then, but had love for years.; and I began to look upon him as mine forever. Then fancy built airy castles in which we always dwelt; and hours and hours I passed in those delicious day dreams. Nothing so bright, so joyous, so beautiful, as 'Love's young dream.' How I have experienced that! how felt its influence! The heart pangs those dreams have caused me have more than compensated for short hours of bliss they afforded.

"After years of love, my lover left me—why, I never knew—and married one much my inferior in every point of view. Oh, that was a dark day—the darkest day in my life! I sunk under its miseries. My brain seemed on fire, and long I lay in delirium, but my physical strength grappled with the disease of my mind, and overpowered it. I was again free but no more the joyous girl I had been. I brooded over my crushed hopes in secret; stifled my aspirations as much as was in my power; and blame me not, great sire, if I called pride to my aid. Yes, pride was the greatest strength I possessed. A *friend* would have said from my demeanor that I cared nothing for him by whom my being was enthralled. And still more, to show my indifference for him, I married a man my equal in talents it is true, yet as black-hearted as night. It was a childish revenge—one which came bounding back, and stuck its keen edge in my own bosom. It was too late for repentance then—too late for hope! I soon found a misery

greater than all. The man I thought I married, I married not. It was a sham, and the priest was a priest for the occasion. I was deserted, left in the heartless world, despised and scorned. Of the many friends I had previously, not one remained in the hour of my adversity. They passed by me without recognition, while scorn mantled their lips. I had *no* friends, *no* society—nothing but enemies who hated and despised me!"

"Oh, it is fearful to feel continually the jeering taunts of those who once pretended to be friends! I could not bear it, and I sank to rest. A kind mother who had been my support while I lived had me buried beneath the family willow in the churchyard, and planted flowers over my grave. I was, there when she moistened them with her tears, and I whispered to her: 'Mary lives with the angels.' The delicate breeze wooed the drooping willow, rustling to my mother's brow, revealed the careworn features and the tearful eye. Oh, I was sad, sad! I was transported into a new world, of which I knew nothing. I sat down on my grave, and oh, what sorrow I endured! I sat down for a long time wrapped in my grief, not daring to stir for fear of encountering someone who would laugh at or scorn me, when one came near me with the most beautiful expression of countenance I ever beheld. Perhaps I thought so because it was the first spirit I ever had seen. She took me by the hand, raised me up, saying in the sweetest voice, whose melody I yet hear:—

"Be cheerful. Let not such saddening thoughts influence you. You are no more of earth. Heaven is yours with its joys."

"Oh, say not so!" I cried. "I am a poor, despised thing, with no one but my mother to think or care for me."

"The inhabitants of this world," replied she, "despise not the unfortunate, but pity those who grieve, and under circumstances especially such as yours. The people of the

world crush and then despise the blighted flower. Their prejudice may exist, but it has no place with angels who read motives and are not misjudged by actions. We love the unfortunate for their misfortunes. Cheerfully, then, sister, go with me."

"I cannot,' I replied. 'It will cause every one to look with compassion on me. I can't bear pity. I want to be regarded, as when a girl, I played in the old forest or sang to the babbling brook.'

"And that is as we regard you, not as those who commiserate.'

"Ah, then, I *am* happy!' I exclaimed, in a flood of tears, and flung my arms around my angel's neck, and she returned the embrace with the same warmth.

"Then accompany me,' she said, 'to those who will by their love strive to remove every trace of grief from your mind.' I grasped her extended hand and soon found myself in the midst of a band of bright beings, who came forward with joy on their radiant countenances and with embraces manifested their friendship and love. I could not repress my tears; they came from an overflowing heart. The change was too great. The scenes of earth were still fresh in my memory. Even now, great sire, a shadowy recollection crosses my mind, when I meet with these bright beings, of my own inferiority, and I fear the scorn I never receive."

"Nor ever will. If any scorn you, they are not worthy of your contempt, much less your regard. Earth's children have a great lesson to learn, and that is charity for their fellows and regard for their feelings."

"If one so elevated as you despise me not, I will not care for others."

"Never let the thoughts of how *men* regard you enter your mind again. Blot it out by thinking how angels regard you. You took a false step; and who has not taken

one false step? And is a false step in *one* direction so much worse than one in another?"

"The world regards it so."

"Mankind are governed by their lowest faculties. They see dimly the principles of right. To show my appreciation for you, and to dispel every doubt from your mind, I request you to join our circle and become one of us."

"I feel so beneath you, I cannot. It is too great a privilege to ask."

"You will confer a favor on us all by doing so, and place yourself in a position for rapid advancement."

"I can not express my thanks to you by words."

This is the reception the broken heart receives from the angels. Their discriminative powers are used, and the thoughts weighed in an equitable balance. *Be* careful then, O man, how you condemn and despise the lowly; and the victim of circumstances.

CHAPTER XV.

DISCUSSIONS.

"Can ye burn the truth in the martyr's fire,
Or chain a thought in the dungeon dire?
Or stay the soul when it wars away,
In glorious life from the mouldering clay?"

"BEING now in the rudimental sphere, we might profitably tarry for a time, and improve the opportunity in learning various ideas entertained by the spirit before it has left earth to try the unknown realms of eternity" said the Sage.

"Then you still hold that man knows nothing of the future state while he remains man?" asked Hero.

"He cannot know with certainty—all is obscure and doubtful. He may possess an interior desire for immortality, but he cannot reason upon this important subject from the testimony of his senses; and he has no other data from which to draw his conclusions."

"Has he not the Bible."

"What data can that afford, when there is no external evidence of its truth? And those who profess to believe it do not live exemplary lives as a proof of its inspiration. The fact is, that man believes not fully in immortality. If he did, think you he would not depart the earthly life with joy, when he was *sure* of being ushered into the presence of his God? Verily, if he recognizes fully in his conscience such a beautiful place as his ideal heaven, he would rejoice at grim Death's approach. Men profess to believe the Bible fully, and are terribly shocked if you question its

veracity in the least. It is the *idea* they believe, not the *substance*, educational prejudice compelling them to take for granted that which the eternal light of their natures condemns."

"Reason, they say, is carnal, and not of God," said Leon, "and should not be exercised."

"Yes, and those who preach this doctrine exercise their reason to shut the light from their own and others' understanding."

"That is the light in which it always appeared to me. I have heard preachers declaim by the hour on the fallibility of poor human reason, and the infallibility of the Holy Scripture, exerting their own benighted reasoning powers to prove reason false."

"But why should they declaim so much against reason?" asked Hero; "they of course admit that reason and nature, as well as the Bible, came from God; why recognize one as superior to the other?"

To support priestly rule, the mass must not think, nor reason, but be kept in ignorance. On these grounds, reason must be debarred from all access to the Bible for you well know that, admitting the right to reason on a subject, gives also the right to pronounce true or false. Without this privilege, reason is useless. When we reason on a subject, we are in doubt as to its truth. Our reason may condemn, and no one should question our right to obey its dictates, or condemn us for not accepting that which appears contrary to our understanding. If the right to reason on the Scriptures and the various church schemes of salvation be admitted, then we can, after mature investigation, condemn the whole or a part. To maintain the present system of theology, the Bible must be taken as an infallible standard. Everything must be measured by it. Reason, if allowed, would condemn a portion, and prove very hostile to the monstrous speculations drawn from mythic tradition.

Hence it is hurled rudely aside, and from one end of Christendom to the other the cry is sent up: 'Trust not carnal reason and poor foolish nature; they have plunged more souls into hell than the arch-fiend himself, who bids you follow their guidance.' The whole fabric of the church system is founded on educational prejudice. This system, accumulated under priestly rule, has assumed the character of a dead weight on a man's advancement, dragging him down to ignorance and blind subservience. Why is it indisputably the case that the lawyer, physician, and clergyman are generally striving with their united energies, and ever striven to keep the masses in mental darkness? Simply because their success—their wages, depend on the ignorance of the masses concerning the organic and physical laws. Under these, and no other conditions, will they swallow stale doctrines and nostrums without murmuring. But set them to thinking, and they make sad havoc with the professions. If the clergyman would preach practical lessons of morality, instead of such endless verbose theorisms, they would become more useful members of society. If the doctor would lay aside his antiquated theories and mystical technicalities, and discourse in a language which common sense could understand, explaining the laws of health and life in a simple style, his patients would soon know enough not to be sick. If the lawyer would strive with his brother, the clergyman, to elevate the moral condition of his clients, instead of arousing all the base principles of their nature, his quibbling falsehoods and deceptions would not be needed. Mankind, properly elevated by their moral teachers, would forgive the trespasses of their brother, as they already have the *idea* of doing, and not nourish those feelings of hate and revenge too often found among the highest order of Christians. If *all* would strive to elevate their fellows, instead of keeping them in ignorance, how soon, think you, the ram would be

redeemed, and all these professional men who now live like sharks in the ocean, on the smaller fishes, be compelled to forego delicacies for which others have labored, and with the motto, 'dig or die,' ringing in their ears, of necessity be forced to honest toil? The clergy have ever acted as a millstone around the neck of reformation, checking progress until it could be restrained no longer—when the masses, bursting through their efforts to hold them back, take a mighty leap upward and onward, carrying everything with their accumulated energy. All the clergy's influence has been directed backward, while humanity has moved forward, despite their efforts. Their cries of infallibility are now but little heeded. Few have patience to hear the jargon of diplomated physicians; and none but the ignorant have confidence in their remedies. A less number of persons think of consulting a priest while on the death-couch. The once prevalent idea of infallibility is fast decreasing. The question now asked is: 'How much do you practically know?' not, 'At what college did you graduate?' Oh, that the bright day, fast dawning, may shine forth, when every one will be his own master, his own sovereign, his own ruler, and govern himself with the strength of his manhood! Then shall we hail a millennium, where all will be developed up to the plane of the highest now on earth. Then we will hail an age of practical intellectual power and morality, shadowed forth in the vague prophecies of the past.

Near the place where they were reposing, a clergyman and an infidel were engaged in argument.

"Then you doubt all claims of the Bible to inspiration?" said the clergyman.

"Not only do I doubt, but wholly, totally disbelieve," replied the infidel. "What claim has it to my belief?"

"Why it commands all to believe, or be cast into hell, where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth forever."

"Because it *commands*, is *that* a reason why I should believe?" was the retort, with a sneer.

"In truth it is, and a strong reason, too."

"Must I believe that which contradicts my senses?"

"If God says so, you must."

"Does not God speak through nature, as well as the Bible?"

"Yes."

"Do they agree?"

"Not apparently."

"Do they, in reality?"

"I must acknowledge that God has seen fit to throw great mysteries in the way of reconciliation, and to my feeble knowledge they cannot be harmonized."

"Of the two, acknowledging both came from God, which *one* must be taken as a standard? Why, the written page, *you* say, descending through centuries, unknown as to its origin except its own assertion, and even if true, but the rude chronicles of a tribe of low barbarians. Yes, the written page, mutilated, interpolated, falsely translated, must be taken as infallible; and Nature, the living mouthpiece of Deity, the instrument through which He now speaks to mankind, must be rejected! God made nature, and pronounced it all right according to *your* Bible. We are left to judge of its laws and actions. *Our* lamp is reason, which you attempt to ridicule and despise; and we call all Christendom to witness that *our* lives are as correct as *yours*."

"You may be moral, and do right; yet morality is not religion. You are not baptized in the blood of the Lamb, and therefore can never enter life eternal. In the last great day you will be found wanting. Christ died to save sinners; but they must take up his cross."

"If Christ died to save sinners, of course without him none can be saved. By what miracle were those saved who died before him? They must necessarily all be lost."

"You deny the great doctrine of the atonement!" said the priest, in holy horror.

"I never could believe that my sins were to be laid on an innocent man. I expect to suffer for my *own* errors, and for no one's else. The world must be saved by its own merits—sink or rise by its own wickedness or goodness. Salvation must be by growth, and not by blood even of a slaughtered God."

"Few, then, will be saved. If our own goodness is to save us, I fear few, few will ever enter heaven."

"Then few will; for to *my* understanding there can be no other scheme for their salvation—if saved."

"If *saved!* Why an *if?*"

"Because I feel the case doubtful."

"Why should the human mind desire immortality—why such an excessive hope in the future?"

"I answer this question by asking another: If man is not annihilated at death, why does he so sadly fear that end?"

"Ah, my dear friend, I fear the old master of evil has hardened your heart, and turned you to error!"

"Satan, you mean? I do not fear him; in truth, air, I never could see the use of the old rascal."

"Worse and worse! Where will you land next? Better disbelieve all else than that. The Bible teaches of a devil as much as of a god."

"And nature says that there is *not*, as plainly, and a thousand times more conclusively."

[*Clergyman musingly.*] "Disbelieve in a devil! Why that saps the very foundations of our theology, and destroys all our systems of salvation, all our creeds, our churches everything. [*Aloud.*] Nature teaches! Ah, vain and miserable mortal! you but exercise your carnal reason."

"If there is a devil, why does God suffer him to exist!"

"It is a part of his inscrutable providence to suffer him to tempt souls to hell."

"You say God knows who are going there; if they are doomed, why does he take all this trouble to obtain an excuse for Bending them there? You say God made all things good; the devil is not good, nor ever can have been good. Hence God could not have made him, and he must be co-eternal and co-equal *with* God, or else so good a being as God must be would not allow such a scoundrel to forever defeat his best plans. Hence your God is limited, and of but little use in nature's government."

"O perverse sinner! Satan himself is in your heart. I cannot argue with your stubbornness. Oh, when will you see the true way, and join our holy order?" He turned and walked away, leaving the infidel exulting in his supposed triumph, musing to himself:—

"I hate these professors. They appear to think they have a right to abuse anybody who believes not as themselves. Our 'holy order!' Poor self-deluding fools!"

"How mistaken are both! One is as much as the other."

"It does seem," said Leon, passionately, "that there might be some means to converse with these our erring brothers, and convince one and all that they are in error."

CHAPTER XVI.

A VISIT TO A DISTANT GLOBE.

My guardian angel spoke:

"Mount this magnetic stream and soar away
From earthly shadows to supernal day."

Swift as an arrow on its fearful race,

On, on we sped through countless leagues of space.

WILL converse never end, nor the spirit weary of soul communion? Not as long as the day brings new ideas, new conceptions of nature and of being, and thus fresh themes replace those made familiar. The heart will never weary of love, nor the intellect of thinking and of knowing.

Again at the Portico, Marvin, recovered from his melancholy, proposed a visit to a distant planet which shone softly above the purple horizon.

"Not to earth," said he, "not to earth with its sham ways of living, but to a globe where beings of superior model enjoy life with a full sense of its significance."

"Your memories of earth are not pleasant," sympathetically replied Hero.

"Nay, on the contrary, when I think of the lost opportunities, the physical and spiritual pain of that life, it will darken my light for all years to come."

"Nay, not so."

"Oh, that I again might live that life, knowing what I now know; beginning where I am, I would devote myself to the work of teaching a just system, not so much of producing as distributing wealth, that all might have enough, and none to waste. I would say, must the poor be with

always? Must starvation go hand in hand with plethora? Always with you? The robbed, starved, suffering poor; hopelessly, helplessly poor, unpitied, degraded, damned. The capitalist who has coined millions from their blood may sit in his cushioned pew, from which they are excluded, and when he dies be buried in a cemetery from which they are rejected, and go to heaven in a grand way. Aristocratic dust will not be suffered to mingle with plebeian clay! In heaven will aristocratic spirits associate with plebeian, or are they equal there? If so, unsatisfying place, where there is no popular church, nor a sexton to keep out the ragged children of toil. Aye, forever with you, as long as capital is the waster and labor the slave. The slave is, clothed and fed; it is for his interest to feed him, but labor is bought, and the laborer may go to bed or a pallet of straw, what can the employer? The fool has said in his heart there is no God; the toiler shall say it every day, and his children shall cry it every hour of the day. Mammon's children are sleek with good living; their suits are glossy with exquisite finish. Do not touch them, smutty child of labor. They are of a different race from you. They are of high caste and noble blood. Aye, in the olden times the Lord was a man who subdued with his word, and obedience was rendered because he compelled it. Blood was the food of the aristocrats, the blood shed in battle. The aristocrats of to-day are fed on the product of concrete tears of pain, and clothed with fingers of despair. Does nature make a water-power? forthwith capital builds its factory, and the laborer does all that the water will not, and is allowed to exist, while capital grows plethoric. A workingman invents a locomotive. Do workingmen receive the benefits? Oh, no; but capital pours out of it the gigantic swindling schemes, and—so artfully spreads its nets that a whole nation of freemen are made subservient to its designs."

"The hour has come," responded the Sage, "when this old order shall pass away. Mankind are now in the throes of revolution, which happily for the diffusion of knowledge may be bloodless. There must come a readjustment on a new basis, and labor be crowned the king of the domain it conquers."

"Our Brother," said Hero, "must forget the years bygone, in the achievements of those to come."

"My earth-life was a failure."

"Nay, without its failures you could not have had your present gain. They who are apparently most successful may be really failures, for that depends on the standard by which they are judged. Every action is the result of a motive, which is often concealed and brought to light only by searching analysis: for the force is too intent on its work to make itself known. The swinging pendulum, grating wheels, clanging bell are not the forces which cause the hands to point the hours. In the innermost recesses, coiled in dumb resistance, is a strip of steel which in silence drives the wheels and measures time in its ceaseless flow into the past. Every individual is actuated by a motive or combination of motives in the main unknown to the world, which sees the thing done; sees the wheels move, the pendulum swing, and praises the actor for his success. The hero is exalted to a demigod; triumphal hymns are sung in his praise; he is thought unlike other men, actuated by different motives, and swayed by more noble desires. Go behind the curtain, the illusion of gaudy splendor vanishes and the reality is painfully distinct."

"Patriotism," interposed Leon, "the love of country, is one of the most noble feelings which actuate the mind of man. By it the meanest countryman is raised to a hero, and, forsaking all the heart holds dear, friends, children, wife, and home, gives his life for the good of his fellows. Yet it may be truly said that few soldiers who go forth to

battle in the brave trappings of war are moved by patriotism. The hope of renown, the love of adventure, the lash of disappointment, or the whim of the moment, decides and fixes their course. Often the force in the rear is more dreaded than that in the front, and it becomes less brave to go than to retreat.

"This man is moved by religious zeal; that is the verdict with those with whom he associates. He attends church, pays his dues, says grace regularly, and is ready with religious phrases. The motive is not religious, impelling to purity and nobility of life, or to efforts to make others purer and happier. Oh no! Inordinate vanity, superstition, bigoted zeal, the hope of honors and emoluments—these are the incentives which too often veneer the character with a show of religion. Are we satisfied with the thing done? Hereafter it shall be asked by the recording angel, 'Why was it done?' and the answer may demolish the castles of vain pretensions, and shrivel into nothingness the arrogance of conceit. The poor widow who gave the mite from her scanty store, will outrank all the lords of wealth and power who ever trod the earth. Her motive was kindly good, for another, and her sacrifice was great, however small her gift."

"We have in our earnestness forgotten our Brother's proposition, which will furnish to each a new source of enjoyment. Let us at once accept it."

Away, as a thought, lightning-winged they passed, while around them the stellar universe shifted and changed, and they experienced the strange sensation of being surrounded by stars, a heaven beneath as well as above and around. The planet they sought, blazed on the horizon, expanding until it spread beneath them bounding the horizon, and they alighted on its beautiful surface.

"I once came here in search of heaven," said Marvin, "bringing a hell and the capabilities of a heaven with me."

I was attracted by the superior beauties of the place, and searched this whole world over. I was unsuccessful, but thereby gained knowledge I should never have otherwise obtained."

"Your experience," replied Leon, "has taught you many things unknown to us. Your knowledge of localities, and the aspects of Nature in the various worlds you have visited far exceeds that we possess, for, we have remained on a single earth and pursued other paths."

"Each has his or her sphere of action," said the Sage.

"Each has his time and place. All things are governed by the absolute and impartial law of *necessity*, which none can set aside. We enter the rudimental state by laws over which we have no control, and we leave it without consultation. The stone falls to the earth, world revolves around world, sun around sun with no more certainty. The universe, physically and spiritually considered, is nicely adjusted in all its parts, and impelled by a force which, if we are to judge by its results, is an intelligent and farseeing energy."

"Who established such important and wise laws?"

"They are co-eternal and co-existent with matter. On them matter depends for its existence, and by them it derives all its properties of form, extension, indestructibility, etc. Who made matter? I cannot answer otherwise than by my reason and the reason of those above me, which inform me that in some form it has always existed."

"If this be true, as it was governed by the same laws, why did not nature assume her present form at first?"

"Saying the laws of the universe were, co-eternal with matter is not affirming that they all began their action at once. Matter was subject to development, and when the conditions were not favorable to the "on of superior influences it remained in a low and negative state. But however low it may be it will in time be prepared for the

action of the higher. Thus we may regard the universe as a machine governed by higher and higher principles as it is polished and perfected. In every new plane matter reaches, the previous laws become modified, not set aside. When the essential conditions of life are supplied, life is generated."

"Is law a final cause, or are we to regard it as a mode of action—a groove along which a cause runs to do its effect?"

"Our ideas are comparative. We speak of natural laws and involuntarily we compare them with legal enactments; but there is no likeness between the two, and hence the term is misleading. The existence of matter depends on certain principles, and thus it must have ever been, for if it lost a single one of these it would cease to be. But back of matter and these principles is force—intelligent, prescient force—which under various names has been worshipped as a deity. Orz mud, Zeus, Jehovah, Jupiter, God, are accidental names to the same unknown fountain."

"On this subject," responded Marvin; "I have thought little and must now accept your ideas, because yours, rather than from ability to fully test them by reason."

"Like too many, you were willing to pay the clergy to do your thinking while you were amassing wealth."

"True, alas, too true! I gave my reason to their keeping and believed, because told to do so, that there was a personal, overruling being *detached* from Nature."

"The error of this dogma you now plainly see. Its advocates resort to fallacies for its support. For instance, they ask: 'Is it possible for the beautiful creation to come by chance?' No one has asserted that it came by chance; yet it were easier to believe that it did so than that a being came by chance with power to create it from nothing. I do not advocate that the universe came by chance. I cannot speak of its beginning—only of its career since that

time. Nor can we know, finite as we are, of the infinite energy behind the appearance we call Creation."

"I feel an attraction from our right," interrupted Hero.

"Yes," replied, Marvin; "I remember an ancient society dwell on that portion of this planet."

In a few moments they were in the presence of a vast assembly, listening to an address by Jesus of Nazareth. When on earth he embodied the ideal of perfect manhood; his body a model of symmetry, his mind harmonious and pure, his thoughts beautiful, his speech simple and eloquent. In the higher life he was an ideal for angels. As the assembly were arranged he occupied a slightly elevated position, as he did in his ancient temple—a temple whose lofty canopy was the blue arch of heaven. He discoursed to eager listeners. Some of them were still imbued with the false idea they had formed of him and his doctrines while on earth, and efforts were used to eradicate them. He first spoke of the idol worship of earth's children, and compared them to heathen islanders with whom a sculptor left a beautiful marble statue. When he was gone they hung beads and tinsel, shell and decorations over it, until when, years after, the sculptor returned, he found his masterpiece entirely concealed beneath the towering pile of rubbish. So had it been with his teachings. They had lost all their pristine vigor and beauty by being clouded by bigotry, fanaticism, and superstition, and the rubbish and tinsel must be cast away and their spirit renovated. Such burning eloquence, such grand comparisons, such figures of speech, being flashes of thought unobscured or misrepresented by words, man with his labored methods cannot comprehend. He spoke of the erroneous ideas of him taught by the evangelists and the consequences wrought by such errors. He spoke of the crime, vice, and misery of the lower societies and melted the heart steeled by transgression. No words can describe the effect of his

utterance on his listeners. Language of words is barren to express the exalted emotions. When we speak of things within the conception of the human mind we do not perceive the wants of terms in language; but when we would speak of the beauties of the spirit-home we find written language deficient, for the *idea* of such sublimity and splendor never entered the mind of man, and hence he has no terms to represent them.

The charmed audience were excited with deepest emotion as his thrilling words swept over their heart-strings. He closed by exhorting them, whenever they had the opportunity to descend to the lower societies and to earth, and teach the doctrines of Nature, to which they assented, convinced that they owed this duty to themselves and their fellows.

"Now have I seen Christ Whom I worshiped as God," said Marvin, in bewilderment, "and if ever a messenger came from the throne of the Great Intelligence he is one,"

"I presume he has dispelled all your ideas of his divinity?"

"Truly he has, and I cannot imagine how I could have ever believed so absurd a doctrine. I think I never did harmonize the *three-oneness* of the Godhead, but I thought it sacrilege to touch its mystery."

"Men conceal their ignorance with the all-comprehending term 'mystery,' which is but another name for ignorance."

"When they find a subject baffling their powers of comprehension they are ever ready to exclaim: It is a great mystery, beyond the ken of reason, and it is sacrilege to attempt to reveal what God has concealed. Alas for human ignorance, crushing the millions down, down the dark and loathsome ways of death! Alas for human weakness, grasping the shadow, while the substance passes by them unobserved!"

"Well may you thus exclaim, brother," said Hero. "Alas for human ignorance and selfishness! All believe themselves superior to their neighbors; all are willing to teach, and none to be taught. I have wept over the earth. I still weep, praying ever that the march of ages will relieve the down-trodden, and elevate all far, far above the level of the most advanced minds now on earth."

"The day of which you speak," said the Sage, "is close at hand Its messengers are already rapping at the portals of earth. The prophets saw its gray morning's blush on the horizon of mind, with its refulgent coming. The grand illumination—the millennium of mind—is approaching on the wings of thought. Tyranny, anarchy, misrule, slavery, and false government will be swept away before its irresistible tide! The sovereignty of the individual will take the place of these *then* shall the love of wisdom walk forth in the splendor of its morning beams."

CHAPTER XVII.

REUNION IN THE SPIRIT-WORLD.

I am safe in port, but I watch and wait
For another boat to bring my mate:
The faithful mate, who, in calm and strife,
Had cruised with me o'er the sea of life."
—*James G. Clark.*

LUCIAN, the stranger who had recounted his conventional marriage to the Society, approached him the evening after their return. The same careworn expression marked his brow, and nervous tension his manners.

"You have returned, brother, from your earthly mission?" said Hero.

"I have," answered Lucian, in mingled accents of shame and sorrow.

"Have you fulfilled that mission?"

"Speak not of it to me," said he—"speak not of it to me! How can I teach when I have such sins resting on my shoulders? I cannot say to others, do this, when I have done the contrary myself."

"You spoke not of such disobedience when I saw you."

"No, for I did not then regard it as such; but when, conversing with a circle, I saw my own case in one of its members, the conviction burst upon my mind: I saw for what I had suffered so much, and recognized that punishment as just I could say no more of love, when I had disregarded its just laws, and I fled away confounded. O mighty Sage! a burning hell has encompassed me ever since, from which I cannot escape."

"You are guilty?"

"Guilty! yes, a vile, guilty wretch! It is a long tale, soon told. I loved a maiden, and she loved me. We played and sang together in our childhood, and in our youth our lot was always cast together. She was confiding, unaffected, and retiring in her manners. She was always what she appeared, but she did not fill my ideal. I at length saw one who, understanding my peculiarities, used art, and was the ideal of my dreams. She made me forget my first love, and for a time love her. But when the art appeared, love vanished, and I was miserable. The maiden of my boyhood died of a broken heart, or worse, for she threw her sensitive life away in desperation, Oh, to think of this! To remember the pleasant days we passed together—that I, in whom she had placed her confidence, should cause her death, intensifies my suffering."

"Human affection," replied the Sage, "is more precious than diamonds; and he who crushes them is severely punished. I understood your situation when I first saw you, but considered it best to allow you to find it out for yourself, as it would be for your good."

"But I was ignorant of the injury I was inflicting; I knew not unanswered affections recoiled with such force. I supposed love but a transient passion, soon and easily subdued."

"Cause and effect will eternally operate; and punishment must necessarily follow crime. The prejudices of earth are such that there is no mean between friendship and love. The opposite sexes are forbidden to be friends of a higher order. The suspicion of parents or neighbors is immediately aroused. Marry, or stand clear, is the motto. The individual thus deprived of society, as necessary as breath, rushes hastily into marriage without due consideration. Love is not a passion neither is it transitory, but it is the uniting of two souls into one; and unions founded

on its basis will exist, growing stronger and more intricate, when yonder mountain shall have changed to vapor and passed away. This is true marriage—an eternal union of soul, thought, and being. Passion is secondary, and will perish with the conditions on which it depends, but spiritual love is as lasting as time, and develops more and more in the Spirit-world. It seeks one object, and clings to it through life and death, and puts forth its immortal bloom a thousand ages hence, under the shadow of the throne of omnipotent mind. Love is a delicious dream of the soul, which may be realized. It expands the wings of thought, and adds power to genius. But love crushed back to its secret fountain, stifled by the proud soul, is blasting and destructive."

"Oh, that I knew Mary loved me still—that she did not hate and despise me!"

"You disowned your *Mary* in the world, and through long years scorned and despised her."

"I never despised her—I loved her! I thought it *friendship*, but you well know I could not manifest *that* in the jealous world without scandal."

"You threw away her love."

But I was led astray, and afterwards compelled to do so. I condemned her not for her course nor despised her."

"Did you sympathize with and pity her?"

"May God bear record that I did! How often have I prayed that I might find her and tell her of my repentance and remorse for the wrong I inflicted on her!"

"Why have you not found her?"

"Because in heaven I am repelled from her."

During this conversation his eyes were cast on the ground, daring not to meet the searching gaze of the Sage. The latter now took Mary by the hand, saying:—

"Lucian, here is the Mary you disowned and crushed by refusing her love. She forgives you all."

Mary, who had restrained herself during the conversation, was now completely overcome as Lucian caught her in his arms, exclaiming:—

"My own lost one!" But recalling the wrongs he had inflicted he withdrew his embrace, saying:—

"It is not for me to be thus happy! I am not—cannot ask Mary to accept me. I am unworthy, and have thrown it away. She must despise me now."

"Not so," said the Sage; "she forgets and forgives."

"Speak, Mary, speak! Is this true?"

"Yes, Lucian, a thousand times," she replied, in a sweet voice, smiling through her tears.

* * * * *

No violation of law receives so severe a punishment as that of treachery to confiding love. The affections send out their tendrils to twine around some human heart, and if they find no support, or are ruthlessly torn from their object, they lie prostrate and broken.

"Can you now teach mankind?" asked the Philosopher.

"I feel free to go now. No crime is on my brow. I have just found heaven; its peace and joy encompass my heart. I have been in the opposite condition ever since I left earth. I feel seconded by a noble being, and conscience no longer reproves me."

"You can *now* add this precept to your teachings: 'Teachers should follow their own instructions, and not attempt to teach until they are themselves comparatively pure.'"

"I will delay no longer, but at once execute my mission on earth."

"Our prayers attend you."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GROWTH OF A CHILD IN HEAVEN.

Tell me if Love is a passionless splendor
Upon the amethyst mountains of time
Or is the old love eternal and tender—
Life folding life in a sweetness sublime?
You float at will over measureless spaces,
I cannot climb up to God-lighted places;
Come down to me from your lily-starred meadows,
I will come up by and by from the shadows.

Emma R. Tuttle.

A MESSAGE floated up from the earth-life, a prayer from the heart of a suffering mother, whose child had vanished from mortal sight:—

"Father in heaven, has my darling lost by the change? Has she forgotten me? Is she wishing for her mother, as her mother languishes for the want of her? Are the angels kind, and is she content?" The message fell on the sensitive mind of Mona, and she responded as kindred souls answer each other:—

"Nay she has gained. Earth-life has its advantages, but they are not to be compared to angel being. Look, weeping mother, into the vista of fifty years of your darling's life, were she to remain on earth. See the events which would crowd those years, such as befall other mortals: the partings, sickness, pains, disappointments, loss of children and of friends, cares and burdens beyond the strength to bear. She has escaped to a land where these cannot enter. They may be useful for discipline, but better the soft hand of exalting love."

The question came back:

"Are you sure, quite sure?"

A soft light came into the eyes of Mona, as she replied:—

"Listen! I will tell you what I have seen. When your child closed its mortal eyes, its spirit-vision fell on the smiling face of your aunt, the dear girl, who was called when the rose was budding on her cheeks and her heart was brimming with the wealth of love. As the little one found your arms ready to receive it when it awoke to life, so now it found in the arms of its aunt the same protection. Resting on her bosom, it sank to sleep, weary from the pain and struggle of the last sickness.

"I saw them often, as soon as they came to the old home, for they were drawn by the powerful magnetism of love. As you sat weeping, your aunt would bring your child and place it on your lap. Then it would look wonderingly up in your face, and put its little hand against your cheek or in your hair. It did not know what had occurred. It knew not that it had left its mortal body. When you did not notice its caress, it became grieved, and then its guardian would take it in her arms, and in a manner I cannot explain, substitute herself in your place, and the darling was again happy and content. It was exquisitely dressed in gauze, pale-blue and delicate in pattern, like that its guardian wore.

"From time to time I observed her growth and advancement in knowledge. Both were more rapid than if she had remained. On her first birthday her guardian came with her late in the evening, and both were exceedingly happy. She was crowned with lovely flowers, and bore a bouquet in her hand. Her guardian explained that she had taken her to a group of children whom she had under her care, and they had made her their queen and crowned her because of the event. They had all enjoyed that day, and many more were in store. Harsh words, the stinging reproach,

the jeer of selfishness, the biting winds of envy and jealousy to her would forever be unknown.

"When three years had passed, I saw her as a child of five. She knew the relations of life and death, and that her guardian and mother were distinct. It was a singularly beautiful sight to see her float into the room where you sat and throw her arms around your neck. She was not grieved because she met no response, for she expected none. Her heart was overflowing with tenderness. She has become exquisitely beautiful, with an indescribable softness, transparency and purity, which no artist's pencil can represent; the embodiment of spiritual qualities. It is a joy to gaze on her perfection. Trained in the angel school with such companionship, when a score of years have passed, you cannot in fancy idealize her position or attainments."

"Love you still?"

"With all the immeasurable depths of an angel's love."

"Will you know her when you meet on that shore?"

"Aye, she will be the first to welcome you, as you were the first to welcome her."

"Treasure the little shoes, for her feet now tread on the zones which span the spheres. She is a companion of the tall and shining ones who dwell in light."

"You weep! Oh, that I might open your spiritual eyes, that you might see all this. Then would your sorrow be changed to joy. The dreadful wound, the memory of which makes you shudder and cry in anguish, would be healed."

"Our poet has been too long silent," said Leon. "In our symposium each must contribute, under penalty of falling in the rear with the laggards."

"I will," replied the poet, "but I have recently returned from earth, and I am saturated by its sensuous views. I have woven its terrible philosophy of creation into rhyme; a creation which only creates, and has no purpose:—

'HUNGER AND DEATH.

Some time will love rule by its gentle power
 Above the realm where lustful passions tower,
 And conscience hold its court with law supreme,
 As prophesied by sage in heavenly dream.
 But in the past from dark silurian sea,
 That rolled its seething billows on the lea,
 There is no break in this historic page,
 When man, as man, appeared upon the stage,
 More brute than man, he struggled in the coil
 Of adverse fate and gained by ceaseless toil.
 To live! That was the problem over all—
 To live! on fish or flesh, or fruit to fall:
 Starving or feasting like the beast of prey,
 As chanced the chase or findings of the day.
 For food is life's insatiate demand:
 Food, food forever, is its fierce demand:
 The mills of God fine grinding for the maw—
 The flinty teeth set in the working jaw—
 Hunger the plaint and never-ceasing cry,
 From am and earth and over-arching sky.
 There's not an atom of the world's thick crust,
 Of earth or rock, or metal's hardest crust,
 But has a myriad times been charged with life,
 And mingled in the vortex of its strife;
 And every grain has been a battle-field,
 Where murder boldly rushed with sword and shield.
 Turn back the rocky pages of earth's lore,
 And ev'ry leaf is written o'er and o'er
 With wanton waste. The weak are for the strong,
 And Might is victor, whether right or wrong.
 Enamelled armour and tessellated wale,
 With conic tooth that broke the flinty mail;
 The shell protecting, and the jaw which ground
 The shell to dust, there side by side are found;
 The fin that sped the weak from danger's path,
 The stronger fin that sped the captor's wrath;
 A charnel house, where, locked in endless strife,
 Cycle the balanced forces, Death and Life."

"That is a subject unworthy of your muse. For poetry, when it descends to voice the views of those who see not beyond appearances, cease to be the light-bearer of the spirit."

"I regret that I have fallen in disgrace where I expected delight, as I should were I on earth, to endorse in voice the potency of matter, and the negation of spirit"

"I appreciate your sarcasm," replied Hero, smiling, "but on your visit did you not do aught but murk yourself with the dust of earth? Found you no heart in need of balm?"

"Aye," replied the Poet, "and, fair sister, thus did I profit by my journey, and redeem myself in your estimation. I was drawn to one in grief, poet like myself, and I struck the harp of her mind, and she sang a song gladsome to herself, and to many another. Here it is, and you will favor us, if you will sing it, while I accompany you with the lyre. Its sentiment is for those on the earth, and to voice it in music well we must transport ourselves to the land of shadows."

Just as the flowers of early spring
 Broke through the leafy mould,
And passage birds began to sing
Their songs creation old;
When throbb'd the earth with warmth and light,
 And puls'd the fragrant air,
There fell on us the darkest night
 Of pitiless despair.
Hellene had come the year before,
A waif from angel skies,
And just began to lisp the love
Long spoken by her eyes.
She twined around our heart-strings dear,
And by a holy power
She made us feel that heaven was near,
E'en from her natal hour.
She fell asleep within our arms,
That strove to hold her fast,
And while our hearts beat with alarm,
We hoped the crisis past;
We hoped and prayed, and yet the while
Out of our hands she sped,
And on her face an angel's smile
Revealed that she was dead.
As though the spring with bud and flower
And prophecy of store,
Blighted by frosts in morning's hour
Had passed to winter hoar;
Hellene had wrought our hopes full-tide
And left us to deplore;
Naught but the promise did abide—
The hope and nothing more.

Out of our hearts the heavenly light
Faded in utter gloom;
It seemed a sin to feel delight
When she was in her tomb;
It seemed a sin for birds to sing
Out in the ambient air,
For odorous flowers to dock the spring
With garlands all too fair.

Oh, love and life, how sweet thou art!
How sweet to hold you fast,
And nurse delusions in our heart
That you will ever last,
When this we know, most surely know,
Nothing abides but change,
And all we hold will swiftly go
Through dust to something strange.

Oh, twenty years have passed and still
Her place more sacred grows,
For her the vase with flowers we fill,
The little chair draw close;
We naught can see with mortal gaze,
And not a sound can hear,
But through the cold and darkling maze
We feel that she is near.

We sit and dream; an angel stands
Beside that little chair,
With garments of light-woven strands
And face most wondrous fair.
It is our child, our babe Hellene,
Who has an angel grown
In loveliness of mind and mien,
While these score years have flown.

And yet a child of her we thought,
Who changed not, nor grow old,
A lily bud the summer wrought
No blossom to unfold.
But she had bloomed in perfectness
And every grace had won,
With not a stain of earth's impress
Of duties idly done.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONTENTEDNESS NOT GOODNESS.

We are marching on, we are marching on,
To the fair lands bathed in light,
Where wisdom rules in majesty,
And heaven is doing right
We ask no pledge that a crown of gems
Upon our brows shall glow,
For the silver flowers of immortal bowers
Within each heart will grow."

"HERE, where all is order and individuals aggregate according to their attractions, what would be the result were one from a lower plane introduced suddenly to a higher?" This question having disturbed the mind of Leon, he addressed to the Sage.

"If you are in doubt, it is easy for you to ascertain by trial. It will be a valuable lesson to your pupil as well as yourself," replied the master.

Acting at once on the suggestion, he went to the earth, and soon found a spirit such as he desired, standing by the side of his mortal body, gazing around in bewilderment. He had been a man satisfied with everything, because too negative to offer opposition. He revered the doctrines of the church because he had been educated therein; he believed because he did not think. He loved his fellowmen because he did not hate them. It was indeed doubtful where such a passive organization would gravitate.

Leon took his hand and asked him if he knew of the transition.

"Yes; I am dead," he replied; "but where am I?"

"In heaven, or, rather, the world of spirits. Look yonder, through the blue expanse, and the zone you see is

the Spirit-world. Your mind is so peaceful and composed, you seem prepared for its enjoyment"

"I trust I am, for I have lived fourscore years on earth and have never had any difficulty with my neighbors or a dispute of any kind. My relations are harmonious with all men. I can safely say no one can bring a charge against me before the throne of God. I have done right, as far as possible, and have gone truthfully according to my knowledge of God's Holy Book."

"Well, then, be it for you, and you should receive your reward. Come with me and enjoy the fruits of your good deeds."

He conducted him suddenly into the midst of the highest society possible for him to enter. It was composed of philosophers and naturalists—active students who sought to wrench the mysteries of creation from the innermost shrine of creative power. The light overpowered his senses. There was nothing in common with him and them. He could not comprehend their actions; but in the brilliancy of colors which flashed around him the forms he saw seemed a council of the gods met in consultation over the destiny of worlds, and he was completely bewildered and confounded. He intuitively understood that there was no enjoyment for him there, and happening to cast his eyes upon his garments, in the brilliancy around they were as black as night. This overpowered him; his passive mind was excited to action, and in agony he exclaimed:—

"O take me away! take me away! I shall perish in the intensity of this light. Take me where I am equal, at least, to those who surround me!"

"Come with me, then," said Leon, taking the hand of his companion; "you here behold what *you* and every other spirit are capable of becoming."

They approached a society of the same grade as the aged man. They were not of that shining purity of Leon nor as

dark as those described in previous chapters. Here was a mean where *passive* goodness resided. They possessed not the energetic qualities which cause crime and were consequently good, not because of noble virtue, but because they had no inclination to evil. They crowded around them, knowing that a new member was to be added to their number, and thankful that so developed a mind as Leon's should visit, them. Leon, when about to depart, spoke as follows:—

"Your goodness has been of a passive character. So far, you never have had any difficulty with any one. You have always agreed with the world. So the Quakers strove to live. But I say to you, that this is not the goodness that elevates man in the spheres. It is no virtue for a person devoid of passions to be virtuous, nor for a person devoid of animalities to be good, for we cannot measure the goodness of the man until we know how well he governs his baser faculties, if he possesses them. The morality having nothing to combat, becomes dormant contentment, or rather lethargy, is not the law of nature. Everything is striving and aspiring to attain a higher state. The infant looks forward to youth, youth to mankind, old age to the Spirit-world. He who sits down content amid the scenes of strife will speedily find himself on the retrograde. You *should not* be satisfied with your present lot, but strive to elevate your minds, that some time in the ages of the future you can comprehend the condition of those whose presence has now so blinded and confused you. Strive with holy aspirations to ascend upward forever, to the comprehension of causes. The shaded garments you wear to-day will grow brighter to-morrow."

CHAPTER XX.

ADDRESS OF THE SAGE.

I saw the Spirit-world, its mighty minds,
Had oped my vision to its vast designs,
The spheres spread 'round me and I looked far through
Into the ocean of space's ether blue."

IT was evening when the spirit band departed from their ethereal home to re-visit earth. They paused to gaze for a passing moment on familiar scenes. Silence oppressed them, which Leon interrupted:—

"These scenes produce a melancholy which I would gladly throw off, and yet a flood of memories of the old time thrills me with a strange emotion."

"Melancholy is often of a holy character," replied the master.

"I wish I might feel its influence," said hero with a smile.

"It would not accord with your light heart, and for the hour not our seeking; let us at once devote ourselves to the object of our coming."

They entered a mansion in which a large circle had convened. The Sage said in satisfaction:—

"I have long desired to meet with those to whom I might with at least partial accuracy transmit my thoughts."

After several preliminary tests, he proceeded to speak through the organism of the sensitive, and his thoughts appeared in the words of the following:—

ADDRESS.

Man has an eternity beyond the grave, that his insatiate thirst for wisdom may be satisfied. The perfected Spirit

is the end of creative force. For it, the gaseous ocean of the beginning existed; for it, the igneous ball rolled through the vast space for ages; for it, one form of life after another came, type following type, and degree succeeding degree in endless mutations. Man is the bud, the spirit, the unfolding flower of Nature, which will go on unfolding its powers until it reaches the throne of Omnipotent mind.

There is no end to the acquisition of wisdom, and though the weary soul pitches its camp each day a day's journey nearer God, the number of those day's journeys are as countless as the leaves of the forest, or the sands of the seashore. March forward as far and as fast as you will, and you need never speculate on the consequences of arriving at a point where progression ends.

Draw a circle about you to-day, and to-morrow's circle will encompass it. The growth of the soul is like that of the tree, each new growth encompassing all the rest. The soul is exogenous and endogenous in its growth: not only from within, but also from without. Each age draws its circle around all those which are past. You may think cohesive attraction comprehensive—yet gravitation draws its circle around attraction, and a thousand forces beside; and gravitation itself is not a *final* cause. Some one will, in the distant future, stretch forth his hand and describe a circle which will include gravitation and all its antagonistic forces. We learn to comprehend great principles, and classify facts. By observing isolated instances, you lose the connection and become confused. Nature is a whole, and should be studied as such.

Men are striving to describe circles around their predecessors. The circle which bounded the mental horizon of the ancients has become, as it were, the centre, a point in the circle of to-day, while to-day's circle will be lost in the efforts of the future. A circle which cannot

be outgrown exists only in the imagination. Whitherward tend all these effects? To mingle in the grand circle of OMNIPOTENT MIND. The men who draw circles around their farms and cottages, around their stores, their warehouses, or the countries to where their ships go out; those who circumscribe the range of thought to the earth, or in their efforts after wisdom include the starry host in their mightily-expanded sphere—all, all are for the same object—the advance of mind in its efforts after the unattainable.

The savage reaches out into the future state, and feels the presence of supreme intelligence. Man has progressed by the efforts of his intuition, in receiving impressions from the Omnipotent Mind. Thus all races, in whatever clime or country, however disadvantageously situated in every age, have acknowledged an incomprehensible wisdom. From this, too, each nation has its own peculiar mythology. Even the half animal, naked savage on the bleak rocks of Patagonia has a glimpse of that Infinite Spirit who he imagines sighs in the evening breeze and echoes his thundering voice in the hoarseness of the mad waves which forever lash the rock-bound shore of his inhospitable clime.

The human intellect has astonishing powers. It grasps solar systems at a thought. It would solve the mysteries of the Divine character. The undeveloped mind feels that the external world is controlled by an invisible force which it cannot comprehend; and from this arises the idea of the *cosmos*, or universe, being a machine with a superior intelligence to direct its motions. Of the character of that force the savage knows nothing, and the civilized man, the theologian, knows no more. The savage regards God as a separate and detached being, the civilized man as the author of creation, penetrating through every atom of matter.

This is well expressed in the ALLAH of the Mohammedan, "the Only." How beautiful is the idea contained in

this, "God is the Only!" When we speak of Him there is no Nature, for we mean everything. All is a part of the Omnipotent. God is the "Only," the "All," the "I Am." He speaks to you through every sense.

Here the question arises, "What and where is God?" This vast subject has engaged the attention of theologians and philosophers through all recorded time, and yet nothing but a vague, unsatisfactory conception has been gained. Still, the mind manifests its inward dissatisfaction in striving for something more—something beyond. In early ages the chiefs and rulers gave their ideas, and their followers were satisfied. They recognized God as a personal being, and their followers worshiped as such. This idea of God's personality has descended to the present time, and the mass still worship a monstrous human potentate instead of the controlling principle of universal nature—The Over Soul.

Say to the churchman that you believe the Deity to be the mind of Nature, and he will exclaim in horror: "You are a disbeliever in God; you cannot worship Him unless he is personified," The Chinese bowing before their idols, the Hindoo prostrating himself before the crushing wheels of Juggernaut, the fire-worshippers venerating the rising king of day, are no more idolatrous than those who worship a personified Deity. The germ of true veneration is deeply planted in man's nature, and cannot be suppressed. From beneath the weight of ages of superstition the holy aspirations of our nature will Bash out like beautiful stars from behind the rolling clouds. In olden time I often uttered to myself the sentence, "What and where is God?" Civilization sent back its sullen echoes in a host of answers; individuals and classes assailed me for a separate hearing; all was uproar and confusion; but above the universal din arose the voice of the priests that God was a potentate in the human form dwelling in High Olympus, surrounded by

a court of demigods. To deny, was to accept the scourge and death.

I wandered over the sands of the desert, revolving the great inquiry in my mind. A son of the waste stood before me. Here is a child of Nature, thought I; he cannot be prejudiced by the myths of their fathers. In this, however, I was mistaken. For a moment, free thought broke through the clouds which hung over his mind, and Nature spoke through him:—

"Behold," said he, "these sands are bordered with plants. They grow and give me sustenance. In their growth I behold life and wisdom, and, in proportion as my mind expands, I behold intelligence. Look abroad over this water. See yonder moving pillar of sand. God has moved his breath to do his bidding. I feel his presence in the broad sunshine and in the serene night. The stars reflecting the dim shadows of the waste remind me that he is far off, yet near."

Turning to the Indian, who passes his life chasing the deer through the forest, or pursuing the bear to his den—who dwelt most with nature, and had never been led astray from her truthfulness—I presented my bold inquiry. For a moment he was amazed and confounded, when he exclaimed:—

"View the mighty forest, the birds caroling in the branches. I hear his voice mingling with the wail of the spirits of my fathers in the breeze. In the echo of the thunder he speaks to me. Where is he? You are now in his presence. He is ever speaking to you, for he dwells in everything and in everywhere."

Untutored child of Nature, from whence derived you so much truth? Theologians have long striven to grasp thy simple explanation, and failed. Preconceived opinions and tradition exercise great influence over the mind; and, although fully convinced that the Deity is an intelligent

principle, our fancy *will* personify Him. Reason alone can set the matter right. As soon as you personify and give God a shape, you circumscribe his limits and power. As soon as you measure him by man, in power or shape, and thus bring him down to finite comprehension, you make him a finite personage. You must not compare him with man. The fact that man stands apparently at the head of creation is no evidence that there may not be inhabitants on other planets differing entirely from him in form, yet as far exceeding him in comprehension and power of thought as the most acute philosopher on this globe exceeds the Hottentot who imagines the horizon to be the boundary of the universe. The *finite* cannot comprehend the Infinite. The idea of God's personality leads us immediately to believe that he is of the human form. The Caucasian thinks he is a Caucasian; the Indian a red man; the African a black chieftain; and so to the limits of intelligence, where God's existence ceases to be recognized. It also compels the assigning of a locality. If God is local, he cannot be universal; he must be finite—and not infinite. A finite being cannot control an infinite empire—hence there would be systems of worlds, situated far, far beyond the control of such a God. The great code of principles created the earth in its present form, and so far as they acted in creating, they now act in controlling. God is eternal; so are these attributes. They are co-eternal, co-existent with matter, and can never be annulled or altered. As man's soul and body are one, so is the Infinite mind and the whole universe.

But this idea of Deity will lead to Pantheism. What if it does? Can there be no truth in Pantheism? I care not from whence truth is derived. I never trouble myself as to the *origin* of an idea. If reason approve it, I am satisfied. Pantheism may contain some correct views, as may the lowest depths of atheism. All errors begin in *myth*, and would be immediately condemned if not for the few truths

upon which they rest. Men who dare not use a new truth for fear of being styled infidel are in want of moral courage. Such are willing to skim the surface, never daring to go deeper than their predecessors and contemporaries.

"But how can you worship a principle or a code of laws?"

If the ancients called those attributes manifested in Nature by the term God, and we now recognize in what this Deity consists, and if our devotion thus ceases, it is no argument against our conception. This objection is similar to the plea for ignorance, because the learned do not feel the same degree of awe and wonder as the savage when gazing on the fearful tempest or the roaring cataract. If increase of knowledge destroys devotion, then it should be destroyed. But does it do this? The man who regards Deity as the Omnipotent Intelligence will not fall down with blind zeal or bigoted devotion, with fear and trembling, as in the presence of an angry tyrant. Perhaps he will have no stated time to go through the mummery of a formal prayer, only lip deep; but his veneration will speak in the still, small voice, and he will adore the great cause of universal harmony which spreads around him, in which he recognizes the action of those great and comprehensive principles to which his fathers gave the name "Jehovah." The ignorant devotion paid him is the result of superstitious fear, and has not the semblance of true devotion.

If man strives to be devout he immediately loses his object: when he strives not at all he is most devotional. When the man who has violated law prays, whence cometh his prayer? Not from the moral organs, but from the selfish and the animal. After men have become miserable by violating law they pray God to forgive them. After doing wrong through the day they pray for forgiveness at night. God receives the homage of the animal propensities. True devotion to Deity, of the developed mind, is obedience to all the laws of his nature. There is no distinction between

Nature and God. Matter and Mind, which have ever been separated, are an indivisible unity. Let this lead to Naturalism or Pantheism; these impressions rest on the immutable basis of creation. The laws of Nature are the will of Deity; the Wisdom and intelligence displayed are his mind; and though in speaking of these it is well to preserve a partial distinction, yet, in reality, all is one inseparable unity. I recognize nothing superior or *external* to Nature—nothing above or controlling this unity; but within dwells perfection of principle working forever with indefatigable energy.

We have but one guide in our study of Nature, and that is reason. The field is open, and though "infidel" is branded on all who pass through its portals, followers are not wanting. Why has the pursuit of the natural sciences always been thought dangerous to the mind? Why has materialism been said to be the result? Simply because such investigation opens the path to free thought—free communication with Deity.

God's attributes are revealed in Nature, and constitute the justice, benevolence, wisdom, and love of the external world, from which spring harmony and progression. From these man *absorbs* the attributes he possesses. If they had existed in nature, they could not exist in him. His ideas are all absorbed in this manner. His conception of mathematics is derived from the precision he recognizes in all things. He observes that matter pursues certain fixed courses to accomplish given results, and he calls these laws.

Nature is the "All," and from her crystal fount mind absorbs as much as it wills, and still the clear stream flows as bountifully as before, in never-ending currents of truth, love and intelligence.

In all your pursuits after knowledge you will make Nature your textbook, and Reason your guide; and learn from every babbling brook, from the majestic river, rolling its tranquil waters to the ocean in its sublimity; learn from

every mound, towering mountain, tumbling waterfall and fruitful plain. A wonderful intelligence is displayed on every flower. Its signet ring is impressed on every shell of the sea and on every leaf of the forest. Every dewdrop contains a lesson of creation. He who sees not this intelligence in shell and leaf is blind. He who bears it not in storms, and in thunder, is deaf. He who *feels* it not around and within him, speaking all the time, has not clear intelligence to feel. Thus is Deity ever present, addressing man and spirit from age to age. You stand forever in the presence of Jehovah. He is your teacher; all your mentality and morality are absorbed from him. How, then, should you act? Act true to those attributes. How you can do so I will now inform you: Charity is the basis of greatness.

You preach temperance and abolition, yet you shun the drunkard as you would contagion, and the negro, whom you have so shamefully wronged, with disgust. You are against capital punishment and the barbarous abuses of the criminal. Why do you not use all your influence to abolish these abuses?

The infant must travel the same road his ancestors have travelled for these thousands of years. The road is a beaten track, and easily followed; hence, under favorable circumstances, at thirty he has travelled over the whole vast space, But one may be hindered, or entirely stopped on the way, and then he becomes a savage, a barbarian', or half civilized, according to the point he reaches before encountering the obstruction. Who arrests the upward journey of a child? Society; and society must bear the recoil of its arbitrary power.

If you were in the circumstances of the drunkard, slaveholder, or criminal you would act as they do. Considering this, you should have charity for crime in all its forms.

How have the past ages treated the criminal? Humanity shudder and hide thy blushing face! Look down into the loathsome dungeon, where a bundle of straw on the dirty floor is the resting-place of what might have been a man—a mouldy piece of bread and a bottle of water his only sustenance for days together. Look yonder at those State engines, the gallows, the gibbet, the guillotine, the inquisitorial prison, whose secret chambers are the portals of hell; whose officers are incarnate demons!

You turn from these in disgust and blush! But enormities as great stare you to-day in the face, from which you withdraw your charity. An age of iron called for blood. These things were necessary concomitants of the struggle for civil freedom. *Your* jails and prisons, and the manner in which you treat your prisoners, though mild, compared with the past, are harsh, when compared with the standard of humanity.

Society has a right to protect itself, but it has none to infringe on the just rights of the individual. If a man threatens you with injury, you are justified in restraining him, and if gentle means will not do, in using strong measures; but never are you justified in taking his life, or maiming him intentionally. The fact that he injured you yesterday does not justify you in retaliating to-day. Revenge is the basest of the animalities. In the undeveloped state of things now existing, the majority are born with bad organizations, in all classes of society. Reared from the *embryo* in the worst conditions, surrounded by circumstances calculated to excite alone the animalities, why should you be astonished that men are as they are? They are surrounded by objects which excite their acquisitiveness, by companions who allure them on to crime. They are bred amid filth, vice and corruption, with scarce food enough to sustain the life within them, or fuel to keep them from freezing; while all around are wealth, luxury, and

comfort. Blame them not, brother; you would *lie* and steal and cheat if you were similarly situated.

The disposition to crime is a disease, like lunacy and other cerebral disorganizations! and charity should teach pity and not revenge.

How were lunatics treated a few years ago? You shut them up in dungeons, gave them straw for a couch, and only a little grated window through which to look out on the beautiful world. Then you appointed iron-hearted men, almost devoid of humanity, to oversee them. When they screamed and tore their clothes, and gnashed their teeth, and twined their fingers through their hair in their agony, they were scourged, lashed, bruised, and beaten. Did you cure lunacy by these means? "Never, never!" echo the cold, damp walls. Enlightened humanity stepped in and said: "Lunacy is a disease;" then insane asylums arose amid beautiful parks; comfort, convenience, and health were consulted; the insane were taught that they were not hated, but loved; and now the consequences are apparent. The lunatic is sent back to society a useful man.

Take the criminal, shut him up in a cage as you would a wild beast, give him nothing to divert his mind from his gloomy situation. He feels crushed and insulted; he feels that in him humanity is outraged. What do you shut him up that dismal place for? To protect society? No, but for revenge, cold-blooded, premeditated revenge! *He* knows this, and resolves, when he regains his freedom, to profit by the example. He passes his gloomy years in concocting desperate plans of revenge, and is turned loose upon society like a fierce tiger from the jungle. Your roofs shall blaze now. Your property and life be in danger. You have made him worse by such training.

So of the drunkard. You despise him as you do the criminal fresh from prison. Both feel that their manhood is forever lost; and, do they ever so well, they feel that it

is impossible for them to retrieve their former position. You say the murderer is past all hope, and you hang him for an example. Once, and that but a short time since, he was seated on his coffin, and paraded through the streets, and the gallows occupied the most conspicuous position in every town. Crime was more prevalent than now. Such scenes do not intimidate and frighten the lower faculties, but rather excite and feed them. You now acknowledge this, and hang the poor culprit in one corner of the prison yard, out of sight. Crime is not awed by fear, and the gallows cheapens human life, the inviolable sacredness of which should be inculcated by every possible means. In none of these proceedings is charity exhibited. Take the drunkard away from the influence of his associates; take the poisoned cup from his burning lips, and apply healing balms to his wound. If you retain men for revenge and retaliation, and if your object is to intimidate others, then apply the lash, and invent tortures at which a demon would shudder. But if your object is to reform the unbalanced, and send them home to their friends and to society regenerated men, capable of struggling honestly with the adversities of life, then a great change must be made in your prison system. The offender's morality and intellect should be aroused, and everything which excites the basal or animal propensities avoided.

Have charity. Do not say that any one in their present circumstances can do better, but place yourselves in their path, and become a new circumstance in their lives. Copy benevolence from the external world. The rain falls equally on the just and the unjust. Gifts are bestowed alike on the savage in his wild forest home, and the most refined Caucasian in his beautiful mansion.

Again you ask: "How can we become exalted in the spheres?"

He who seeks exaltation for its own sake will be debased.

Genius may soar on eagle's wing, tireless and strong, but the same wings which carry it to heaven will, when used by a perverted mind, depress it downward to perdition. Great men are necessary, and to them the race are loyal at heart. Genius may tread secure in its upward march among the precipices of fame, and so long as it keeps its eye steadfastly fixed on the radiant orb of truth and love, it may go on until it rests upon the summit; but so sure as it looks *down* with contempt on the masses toiling below, whom it has outstripped in the race of life, with scorn or egotism, so surely will it grow dizzy and fall, mangled and crushed, on the rocks below—its light put out when in its noon-tide glory.

Men of genius! a tremendous responsibility rests on you. Strive ever so hard, and you cannot accomplish the work demanded of you. The towering mountain which overlooks all its neighbours is a sublime spectacle to behold. From its craggy sides flow many crystal streams, to water and fertilize the warm valley below; where the flowers bloom in fragrance, and the grass spreads its downy carpet over the hills; where the cool breeze waves the sighing forest, and ruffles the beautiful lake. Away up on its granite brow the storm and the sleet beat in wild fury, and the avalanche plows great furrows in its jagged sides. Thus genius, which towers above common men, must expect to live in a different clime, and encounter storm, tempest, hail, snow and driving sleet, while those on a lower plane enjoy the warm sunshine. The demand is, to manfully combat all opposing forces, and, like the mountain, resting on its strong basis, present a granite front to the battle.

All have duties to perform to their fellow-men. It is in vain to cry, "I am not my brother's keeper." Mankind is a great brotherhood. The depression of *one* individual depresses all, as a blow of the hammer moves the earth. So the elevation of a single mind is felt by all. You cannot progress

without dragging the whole world after you. Are you envious of the fame of the great discoverer or inventor? Be not so; the light is not shut from you, for by their efforts has been opened a larger field for your research. Most men make themselves prominent by putting out others' lights. These do not appreciate the truth that, by bringing the world *with* them, they can accomplish an infinitely greater good. The *Nazarene* understood this. His precepts, his philanthropy, his pure life, embraced the race and he lives forever. If any one would speak through the coming ages, he must do likewise.

Thus you perceive what exalts the man; what depresses him? The pursuit of wealth has no correspondence in the Spirit-world. The miser and speculator are men of this world. They are respected and called great. All their powers of mind are directed in one channel, and that the accumulation of wealth. In their haste for riches their intellect is perverted, and the rank weeds of error luxuriate in the neglected mind. After death they awake the same in every minutiae of thought; but having no real objects upon which to exert their selfish desires, the only channel through which they can receive enjoyment is closed and they are miserable. On earth nature always presented to them the sunny side; now her light flashes up but to reveal their hideous development. You know that these cannot be happy, but miserable, under this recoil of the moral law.

Death is a great leveler. When Charon wafts the weary soul over the Styx, he strips it of all its wealth, titles, honors, and ornaments. The mind remains in its unconcealed magnanimity or meanness, and gravitates to its proper sphere. Kings and nobles awake and find themselves kings and nobles no longer, and hence are greatly dissatisfied with heaven's grand republic.

The *condition* in which men are born has great effect on

them here. You do not expect the ignorant boor, the vagabond who roams your streets, to be as elevated as yourselves. Why? Because the circumstances in which he was reared, and over which he has no control, made him ignorant, vicious, and criminal. But perhaps in the infinity of future ages, you will behold the power of that vagabond's mind transcend the United strength of Newton and Humboldt.

If you would exalt your children through life and eternity, make the family circle harmonious and pure—a primary school where all the virtues and magnanimity are taught.

No parents should be guilty of the unanswerable crime of bringing into the world an immortal being, unless able to bestow a healthy constitution, and the long-continued patient care essential to prepare for the race of life; what can be expected of children bred in antagonistic unions and the atmosphere of animal passions?

Instead of striving to be born again, have first birth what it ought to be—what every child has the right to exact. Do not talk of correct maternity, for the mother but cherishes the germ given to her care. Correct paternity! A pure and holy fatherhood is demanded. Although the errors and misfortunes of sinful conception and untoward conditions may be and are outgrown in the ages, the demands of earth life alone are more fully answered by being from conception to maturity, at the best,

You ask what is the condition of spirits?

That is but one law and condition of happiness—to do right; which means adjustment to the laws of being.

This is as true of the Spirit-world as of earth, which are intimately blended, and the passing from one to the other, like going from one room to another, the only change being as that of garments.

The earth is the first stage in the life of the spirit, and

not without profit, as those believe who regard it as an evil to be borne, and escaped from by death.

Immortality is necessary because of the constitution of the mind. Every individual has the germ of an intellect which if fully developed would surpass that of the ideal angels. Shall that germ never be allowed to develop? Nay, there is no soul made in vain in creation; and if man cannot be developed on earth, he will have an eternity in which to expand hereafter. Men look on the surface when they speak of greatness. Very few kings, lordlings, or autocrats are great; he alone is truly great, who not only has love, not only philanthropy, not only wisdom, but all of these combined into one harmonious whole. Then harmonize your being; make this the object of your lives. Eradicate your peculiar evils one by one, with a firm faith in success. Your position, estimated by the world's standard, is nothing. The poor beggar shall stand on a higher plane than the proud king, and many a poor African will be more elevated than his master.

The slavery of the body is terrible, but incomparably more that of the spirit.

A great incubus hangs over the American nation; stand from under when the weight falls, for fearful will be the crash. That incubus is a small cloud compared with that which rests on the mental firmament. Mankind are ever ready to drag the corpses of their dead ideas after them, travelling slowly onward, but looking wistfully over their shoulders at their old superstitions, and hence are very liable to stumble in their course. How loudly you praise your free-thinkers! But how free *are* they? How can you clamor about your reformers! Your free-thinkers are bound by superstition, and your reformers have their strong prejudices. Here is one who attenuates his ideas until he becomes as befogged as the fogies he has deserted, and riding his hobby until he is as bigoted as those he decries.

There is one who goes out into the future a little way and stops, frames his ideas into a creed, and awaits the coming up of the advance guard of the world. He forms them into an army, looking around to prevent any from passing or leaving him. The stream of life is choked and must stop at the creed until it has accumulated sufficient force to sweep creed, reformer, and all away on its impetuous current. Luther built a strong craft, but must use some parts of expiring Catholicism in its construction, and it was no sooner finished than all progress stopped. Men are slaves to their passions, their creeds, their superstitions, and prejudices. He who dares to stand up nobly, defending his manhood and acting true to his convictions, is but one in millions. You laugh at the Chinese compressing their feet until they can scarcely walk, while you yourselves are greater slaves to fashion.

Where is the natural man or woman? All have some distortion. We might the rude mind refer the deformities he saw in his companions to judgments of the gods, and look back to a period of perfection from which he had fallen instead of forward to future perfection.

Everyman and woman should consider themselves individual sovereigns, to think and to act as best pleases themselves, if they do not infringe on the rights of others. There should be no conformity except to Nature. The thoughts of yesterday, if they cannot bear the light of to-day, should be cast aside. If you take any part of the old craft to build your new one, it will be, bungling and incapable of withstanding the rough waves of reform. Cease lopping off the branches and strike at the roots of error.

To be perfect, thereby great, should be the aim of all. Not as Caesar or Alexander as warriors; not as Laplace and Cuvier in intellect; not as Confucius or Plato in morals; but as all of these combined in one. For the advance of the race it is well to have the vanguard go out from the circle in

tangents, but for the individual this is injurious. The perfect mind is represented by a circle. Specialists go out in their particular directions until the circle is almost obliterated; and although science has been in this manner advanced, the individual has suffered. It must be accepted that such distorted development—special, narrow, and one-sided—receives and distorts the truth in the same manner, and only an harmonious and full-rounded mind can give it perfect expression.

There is one last and greatest subject for consideration, that is, true religion. All creeds, beliefs, and moral systems melt into one fundamental command.

DO ALL FOR OTHERS.

The golden rule—"then for all things whatsoever ye would men should do unto you do you to them"—is not enough. Jesus himself, by his life, taught a higher rule, for he devoted himself to the good of others and gave himself a sacrifice to that principle. His constant struggle arises from the idealizing of his perfect unselfishness. All great deeds of history, sung in verse and told in story, are the products of self-sacrifice.

THE IDEAL ANGEL.

When we picture in imagination angelic beings they are arrayed in spotless purity, and no shadow of selfishness is upheld in their actions. They are absorbed in doing for others, and thereby gain the greatest happiness. That we are able to entertain such ideals, proves that we are ourselves capable of actualizing them. We can become all that we aspire to become, for the ideal is a dim prophecy of what is possible for us.

Man as an immortal being, with infinite ages for progress before him, occupies the most exalted position conceivable; and as the next life is in continuity with this, the ways of

angels are not, and should not be foreign to him. The rule of the conduct of his life should be to do that singly which has relations to his future life as well as the present.

The angel-life should begin on earth. Man is a spirit, flesh-clad, and stands in the very courts of heaven if he so desires. Circumstances and cares may impose their burdens, yet it is through such struggles strength of will and nobility of purpose are acquired.

You have seen a plant whose lot was cast in a desert spot, growing amidst stones in a sandy soil. It strove to perfect itself in the fullness of its nature, and bear its beautiful chaplet of flowers, and mature its fruits; but the rains ran away and left its roots parched and the air refused its dew. A scraggy stalk, with ill-shaped leaves, and a few pale blossoms, are all of it, yet the fruit matures, under these unfavorable conditions; its fruit is perfect. The plant has been true to the laws of its growth, and made the most of the surroundings.

So should the spirit make the most of its environments, comprehending that sunshine or clouds, day or night, success or defeat, are the threads woven by time's shuttle into the web of its destiny.

The spirit stands on the eminence of life, and sees before it an infinite vista of joys in acquisition unending. Terrible and sublime position! bringing magnanimity of thought and parity and fervor of purpose. Why should we hate those who injure us? The injury is only of the hour, and tomorrow will be no more than a mark on the sands effaced by the waves. Why anger, when those who call it forth are so far beneath us? Why envy, when we have only to reach, and the qualities envied are ours?

Every soul inherits the possibilities of infinite acquirement, and some time we shall deserve this inherent quality, and find those now degraded, perfect and beautiful beyond our present conception.

As the angels are perfect and their realm is harmony, so ought you to labor to make the present life as a lower stage. Earth-life is too brief to waste in any pursuit which bears no benefit to the immortal state. Every selfish act is waste, for the deeds of love alone are treasures carried to a higher life."

After the address, the group drifted away to the portico, leaving a subtle influence like a delicate perfume, felt but not comprehended by the members of the circle, who were uplifted and ennobled by the contact with the dwellers in the spheres of light.

As the group drew close together in their home, Leon, with thoughts still lingering earthward, said:—

Once for all the principles of conduct of life, based on an eternal existence, have been clearly presented, and the dominant motives, of its rule disclosed.

"The world worships at the shrine of unselfish action, and the real Bible of humanity would be a narrative of self-abnegations without a reflected thought of self. Here Christianity has its fundamental hold of the human heart. Let the sharp winds of criticism blow away everything else, prove miracles idle tales, its doctrines false, even Jesus a myth, and yet there remains the ideal, divine character, exalted, ennobled, purified by the fervid fancy and innate aspiration of man for excellence through all historic time. This ideal has gathered force from intellectual culture, and of necessity is a part that may be called 'the spirit of the age.' Take this away, and Christianity is a dead and withered bough.

"The central thought and ideal are held in common by all religions, and are the heritage of the raw. Hence if we cast aside all the dogmas, trappings, creeds, and extraneous teachings, which hedge in and obscure this germ-principle, we still retain all that is essential for the highest and purest moral growth, and herein all religions become one. The

idea of superlative excellence expressed in a God, inwrought in every human soul, and possible of complete expression in god-like thoughts and actions, is never assailed, is always tacitly accepted as the spirit of the highest civilization."

"Once, in the days of our earth-life, do you remember," said Hero, "that yachting excursion when we sailed by Scotland into the gray northern seas? Aye, you remember! We had recently sailed the Ionian Sea, by the lovely isles of Greece, and the contrast heightened the weirdness of the rocky coast and turbulent waves. We went as far as the desolate Orkneys, where the poor people fight a desperate battle with nature for their lives. Yet, even there, the fundamental principle which distinguishes humanity from brutality—doing all for others, is recognized and worshiped."

"I also call to mind," replied Leon, "that after we turned our course homeward, you wrote a poem. of an incident of that hard northern life."

"A poem!" exclaimed the Poet; "then you must repeat it."

"I will," he quietly responded, "for it is a pleasure to recall some memories, as it ought to be all that clings to the past"

We sailed into the north, past Pentland Frith.
 Where all seemed strange, recalling Northland myth
 It was a summer day, yet dark the sky,
 And all around the inky sea flung high
 Its foaming crests. The wolfish winds howled low
 Through every bursting sail and moaning shroud
 The sun went down in flame behind the ledge
 Of leaping waves on the horizon's edge,
 And from the landless waste the storm-wind swept
 The billows leeward, where they chasing leapt
 Against the headlands, black in sullen pride,
 That held at bay, their madness on that side.

When o'er the desolate waste swept down the night,
 We saw shine through the dark a cheering light,
 And by its aid the foaming reefs were cleared,
 Past sunken rocks and eddying currents steered,

And as we gained the harbor's sheltering bar,
The moon broke through the east with many a star.
But vainly sought we there the grateful flame
Which o'er the darkling waters hopeful came.
Then spake the captain: "Strange it, fail to-night!
For fifty years, I ween, that guiding light
Has undiminished shone. You never heard the tale?
Nay? It is known in every hill and vale
In all the Orkneys. Beautiful and fair
Was she with softly waving, flaxen hair,
And like its bloom of blue her liquid eyes,
Which ever spoke in glances of surprise;
And with the sweetness of the gentle south
Where wrought the soft of her winsome mouth.

"Her rugged father never shrank for fear
To guide his bark into the foaming mere,
An in the early morn she saw his sail
Far out at sea bend to the freshening gale,
The long day passed; she waited his return,
Watching the storm its angry lightnings burn.
The thunder roared, the wind rose high and load,
And sudden darkness folded like a cloud
The restless earth. In agony she wept,
Her fair face pressing hard a blackened pane
Against which beat in floods the drifting rain.
All night she watched, and in the early mom,
Cold, grey with mist most dismal and forlorn,
She sought and found half-buried in the sands
Her father with the tiller in his hands.
Oh, what cannot the soul triumphant bear,
Nor break beneath the uttermost despair?

"Though all her charms were crushed by her great grief,
She sought in one kind task to gain relief.
Each day she spun to buy the constant light
She in her window burned the coming night,
To warn the sailor from the treacherous reef
Where perished all her joy in blasting grief;
And countless toilers on the storm-swept main,
Have caught its glow and taken heart again."

Our good ship, in the harbor safe at last,
Furled close her weary sails and anchor cast;
When o'er the gentle tide the distant bell
Moaned on the air a sad funereal knell.
Oh, weary hands! Oh, stricken heart, at last
Your years of bitter patience all are rot;
Your life has burned into the beacon's flame
Which made a thousand toilers bless your name.

"A beautiful story," exclaimed Hero, "they who would be beautiful, must cultivate the good. It is the poison of hate, envy and selfishness which corrodes the face, and a bad heart makes a lowly countenance."

"Aye," said the Sage, "they who do most for others do most for themselves!"

"Allow me," said the poet hesitatingly, "allow me after presenting this sad though sweet story of a single life, to recite the history of all life outwrought and concentrated in spirit"

"And could you undertake the impossible, to give the hard facts of science the garb of poetry?"

"Hard facts of science!" was the reply; "science is crystallized poetry. Can there be fancy in wilder flight than that which hovers around the birth of worlds, the birth of life, or Nature's travail through ages measured only by the origin and death of suns? The story of life on the earth, from the protozoan by successive embodiments to man, where life in spirit leaps the abyss from the perishable and transformable to the imperishable and intransformable. What to it in comparison the grandest poem, 'Odyssey,' 'Iliad,' or the charming 'Idylls of the King?'"

"You are justified," said Hero with a smile, "now your poem shall be a demonstration of your words."

Thus encouraged, the poet sang of the wonderful line of advance and birthright of spirit, the first fruitage of the tree of life:—

Creation is my own. Each atomed world,
Suns, planets and the clustering fleets of stars,
Out of abysmal chaos fiercely hurled,
 Belong to me. And as a-through the bars
Of night I gaze into the ether deep—
As though I trembled on a dizzy steep—
I feel a longing for my former home;
For I have dwelt on every star of space—
 Through every fathom of abyss have flown,
And tarried eons in each new found place.

Before the Earth I sang in measured strains;

I was, I am, existing ever more.

I felt the world-births in my swelling veins,

I felt the whirling suns within my brain—

Not theirs but mine the vantage and the gain.

E'en than I was of force, but now of sense,

Breathed in a convulsed, seething earth:

So have I writhed to gain the recompense,

And find myself in life receiving birth.

Why, restless gaze I at the stars in tears,

And trembling sigh, like bird confined by bars?

I but express my kinship with my peers,

The atoms of myself, the pulsing stars.

I own Creation. Thus I claim my own,

Now manacled by flesh, and tortured here;

By every adverse breeze a-hither flown,

A prey to home sickness, and childish fears,

I gaze afar, with prayer that is a moan.

The scale, the tooth, the white and flinty bone,

Which tell of monsters of the ages flown:

Teeth which would tear, scales for a safe defence,

Strong fins for flight, and stronger to pursue,

Or finless forms, with wings for recompense;

Huge bones, like broken columns, thickly strew

With debris of the world, the wonderous page,

Congealed in rock. All these were mine,

Not only mine, but in that early age,

I was the fish, the saurian of the slime;

I was the winged reptile of the sea,

I was the flower which bloomed in early prime,

I was the grass that waved upon the lea.

Arising from these forms, to which I feel

As heavenly spirit, who, with joyous gaze,

Its body leaving when its veins congeal,

I love to gather from the rocky maw,

The saurian tooth, the thick enameled scale,

Titanic bone and claw, the flinty mail;

For once they served me, once they were my friends;

I scorn them not, nor think my being bends,

For them I am what I in total am;

Else I had been a force, and but a sham

The system we call nature. I arose

Through all this pulsing dust, and am of all—

The harmony of nature, her repose,

Her strife; her agony; her life, her pall,

Each finds an atom in me of its own.

The light of suns, the sea by tempest blown;
The genial spring, the seasons which appal;
The cyclone's war, the zephyr's gentle mood,
On chords responsive in my being fall.

I understand because a part of all.
The laws of nature are writ in my soul;
The birth of suns, the world: life's rise and fall,
Exist in thought before in form they roll.
I am the real, and all else are dreams—
Substance is fleeting and not what it seems.
I am eternal, shadow is the rest.
When alps dissolve, and worlds shall fade away,
When suns expire, and stars nor longer blaze
I shall not yet have reached my youthful day.
I am the type of Nature, her ideal;
I, only I, can claim to be the Real.

"Thou hast redeemed thy word," said the Sage, "the highest poetry is the raiment of the Truth."

Then as the shadows fell from the eclipsing sphere, they separated, each to his appointed task.

THE END.