

MARY ANNE CAREW:

WIFE, MOTHER, SPIRIT, ANGEL.

BY

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"Letters from the Spirit World," Etc., Etc.

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To Wives and Mothers

THIS BOOK
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THE WRITER.

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PUBLISHER'S INTRODUCTION

MARY ANNE CAREW,
WIFE, MOTHER, SPIRIT, ANGEL.

In presenting as a premium book this amazing narrative of actual experiences in the spirit spheres, we are adding to the premium list one of the books written by the gifted Carlyle Petersilea. We realize that its perusal will arouse widespread interest in all aspects of the Spiritual Philosophy and it is replete with heart interest from first page to the last.

No one can read this fascinating book without being thoroughly aroused by the strange story and we know our readers will be pleased at this new addition to our Premium List.

M. E. CADWALLADER,
Publisher.

INTRODUCTION.

SHE was a young lady not yet thirty; the wife of a fond husband and the mother of three beautiful children, two boys and a girl, the oldest not yet six, the youngest not a year old. She was of medium height, with rounded graceful form, and eyes of heaven's own blue. Her complexion was clear and very fair; her hair a deep golden brown, thick and waving.

She was an affectionate wife, a careful and loving mother, a good daughter, and fond sister. Her virtues were many, her vices none. She walked in the midst of her little family like a saint, ministering to her children lovingly, and making home pleasant and cheerful for her husband.

It would seem that life to her had, but just commenced in real earnest, and her health had always been excellent.

She was born and bred a good Catholic, and had never swerved from the religion of her fathers.

A generous, warm-hearted, Irish lady. It had never entered her husband's mind that she would be taken from him and her children. He did not dream that he would be bereaved and his children left motherless. How could he? They were both in the heyday of life and youth, both in robust health, both extremely ambitious and hopeful.

And she—the thought of death did not cross her mind, or if she thought of death, it was as something very far removed, something that might occur when she should become an old lady and no longer cared for life: her children would then be men and women, and would no longer need her care. Death was not in her thoughts, but life, life! So she pressed her babes to! her motherly heart, and sung her sweet lullaby blithely, fondly building castles in the air for her darlings to inhabit in the future: her dear, little baby girl, her boy of three, and the pride of her eyes, the man of six.

Thus the months glided by on swift and

happy wings; but there came a time when the fond mother found herself ill.

"Ah! a bad cold," the doctor said. "She would be all right in a day or two."

But the days glided on. Still the cold was no better. A hard cough set in; her strength failed, her limbs were weak and trembling; she often pressed her hand to her side, complaining of a sharp pain there'; her, breathing became labored, her cough worse; soon she was confined to her bed altogether, and her husband saw that she must die.

The doctor shook his head sadly. The nurse looked pitiful and said:

Poor thing! an' she so young an' the childer no more nor babies."

But they carefully concealed from the young mother that she was dying. She expected confidently to get well. She did not think herself dying, and thought each day that her cold, as she persisted in calling it, would be better on the morrow. And thus the morrows came and went, until at last one came, and there were no more to follow, at least, no more for her—her last day—her last hour on earth had come—and still she knew it, not. She

sunk into unconsciousness, and thus breathed her last without bidding adieu to either husband or children.

Her body was soon after prepared for burial, and her heartbroken husband, together with other near and dear relatives, followed her remains to the grave a few days after the sad event, and each and all looked upon the dear one as dead and gone to her final rest. Her husband believed that death was the end: he had no hope of a future life. To him death ended all.

Her own family were all good Catholics, and believed she was in glory with the mother of God, and the saints.

Thus ended the first chapter of the life of Mary; the wife, the mother, the daughter, the sister! A fair and beautiful life, an unspotted soul, a gifted, loving and generous being.

Thousands of just such deaths are taking place, have taken place in the past, and will take place in the future. Babes are robbed of their mothers, husbands of their wives, parents of their daughters, and the earth of young, beautiful womanhood. And why? Where

has this lovely soul gone? What is she doing now? What are her experiences? Has she joys and sorrows as heretofore? What is her daily life—her occupations? Is her life made up of details, such as ours, or does she stand before the throne of God singing praises to His name for evermore? Has she forgotten her babes, her husband, and others, or does she remember them? Is she entirely separated from them, or can she visit them? Would not the thought of their sorrow and loneliness intrude upon her happiness, even if she were in such a heaven as many believe in? Would not the loving heart of the mother yearn for her little, helpless children—yearn for the loves that had become a part of her being? God Himself, as commonly understood, could not fill that mother's heart robbed of its young. The golden heaven, formerly, and even now, by many believed in, would be a place of unrest and unhappiness to the bereaved mother, the sorrowful widow, the orphaned daughter.

Dear friends, did you ever stop to think that the departed soul of such an one as we are describing is, in reality, a widow, a bereaved

mother, an orphaned daughter? or have you thought that these things belonged only to those left behind, that the disappointment, bereavement, and sorrow belonged only to earth? Very likely such has been your thought: but the day which brings much truth begins to dawn. The departed are making themselves known and understood by those that still remain. The link between the dwellers of earth and those on the thither shore of time is being tightly and strongly forged, and the time is near at hand when it can never more, be broken.

This introduction has been written by the spirit of the husband, once so bereaved and widowed, but now, long since a denizen himself of that life to which his young and beautiful wife departed, many, very many, years ago.

The soul of this lovely woman, desires to write, her own experience, and give it to the world, that truth may become manifest: she desires to light the way, and relieve many overburdened hearts of sorrowful weights that press and crush them.

But one of those dear little children, whom,

she left so long ago, remains on earth—the blue-eyed boy of three, now a man: the baby soon Joined its mother: the man of six lived on earth to really become a man, and shortly after, having a little family of his own, went as his mother went before him: and, thus, but one of that family is left, down where the cares of earth fetter the soul.

CHAPTER I.

MARY,

THE WIFE AND MOTHER.

AFTER lying unconscious for a short time my eyes opened. To faint was not an uncommon occurrence; supposed I had fainted. Did not think I was dying; did not know. I was dead.

Had been very weak and ill, but thought I should soon be better, be able to go about attending to my household duties, and properly caring for my three beautiful babes.

My eyes opened and slowly my consciousness returned, sweetly pervaded, filled me like the glowing light of the rising sun.

Was lying just as I had been when unconsciousness overtook me, and as the light of reason again flooded my being, thought that some wonderful change had taken place in my condition; there was no pain whatever, and I was peculiarly light and happy.

O, surely! I was getting well at last! Had so longed and prayed to be well!

Again closed my eyes, fearing that it might be a dream from which I should awake and find myself ill once more. I lay thus, for some time, breathing long and deep, to find if my lungs were really free from pain and soreness; put my hand to my side, moved slightly to find if that also was well. Raised my hand to my head; it felt so clear and free from pain I was astonished. Once more I opened my eyes.

"Nurse," I exclaimed, "I believe I am well! Do fetch baby to me. It has been so long since I have been able to fondle her. O! I long to take her in my arms once more, kiss her sweet little lips, and look into her dear eyes. Don't tell me I am not able," I went on pettishly, thinking her rather tardy in obeying my wishes, at the same time wondering at her silence, for she was usually quite voluble.

"Ah! perhaps she was not in the room. She might have gone into the kitchen for something. Why! how is it that they have left me all alone? Surely, they were All about my bed when I lost myself. Ah! I remember

now—and my dear husband was in tears. Strange, that they should all leave me before I came out of my faint."

Thus thinking, with a peculiar fluttering at my heart, I started up in the bed, sat upright, which I had not been able to do for many days.

My glance fell first upon my hands, and I held them up before my eyes that I might examine them more closely.

"Why, how strangely they looked!" They were as white and beautiful as a dream. Then my eyes travelled up my arms as far as the shoulders, then slowly over my bust.

"Really! what have they been dressing me in? This is not my usual night-dress—no, not even my finest and best. I never had anything so fine and beautiful as this—and my arms and bust—how lovely they are! am sure I never thought they were before!"

"O! nonsense! I am dreaming! The doctor has been giving me morphine again, or chloral, maybe; or some of that medicine which has an extra amount of ether in it. I wish they would not force so much medicine down my throat. Think I should be better if

I did not take so much medicine. Yes; I am under the influence of medicine, so will lie down again until it passes off. That is why they have left me alone—that I may be quiet and sleep."

With this thought I lay back on my pillow once more, and tried again to close my eyes. But, no. I never had been so wakeful in all my life. Sleep I could not.

"I must fetch myself out of this strange condition," I thought. "I'll shake myself, pinch myself, and see if that will do any good." Suiting my action to my thought, I shook myself violently, and then proceeded to pinch myself in a number of places.

The pinching gave me no pain, although I pinched quite hard, and as I shook myself I felt as though I were rising directly up out of the bed, and it was with some difficulty that I kept myself down.

My hair now attracted my attention. It was lying all about over the pillow, and adown my arms and shoulders. "I cannot understand why they have unbound my hair like this? Surely, it will get all matted up; and it was all done up nicely

when I lost myself. Dear, dear! How strange everything is!"

My eyes now began to roam around the room. Everything had rather a strange look. It seemed to me that I was looking through a whitish mist: nothing in the room came out quite clearly, yet it appeared very neat and clean. A door stood ajar, and through it sweet, fresh air struck me. I drew long inspirations that seemed to be the very elixir of life. I felt sweet, new life tingle through all my veins.

"Am sure I never saw this, room before. They have placed me in some hospital since I became unconscious. Must, then, have been unconscious a long time—and they would never let any fresh air strike me. Well hospitals are managed better, perhaps. Ah! here is a lovely bouquet of flowers—just here on this little marble table close by my bed. How very kind and thoughtful of someone."

With this thought I reached forth my hand and took the flowers, naturally carrying them to my nostrils. Their perfume was delicious. Then I held them at a distance and looked at them.

"O! what beautiful flowers, and how deliciously sweet!" Then I began to take note what kind of flowers they were. There were garden pinks and roses, violets, mignonette, and a number of other modest, sweet flowers. The bouquet was tied with white ribbon.

Something on the wall, at the foot of the bed, now attracted my attention—a, picture hanging there in a golden frame. Gradually the forms came out, one by one, as my eyes rested upon it.

"Why; how is this? They have been having their portraits painted."

There were my husband and my three little darlings as plain as life.

"Well; they have been very thoughtful and kind to have that painted and hung there if they really have put me in a hospital," I thought.

I started up once more.

"I cannot be in a hospital. It is very foolish for me to think so. I know I am not in a hospital. This room is nothing like a hospital-ward, for I have often visited my friends who have been placed in such wards, and this room bears no resemblance to any of them."

This thought caused me to notice, more particularly, the furniture of the room.

"O! how exquisite—how beautiful!" A large oriel window was softly draped with white lace and glistening white satin; the floor was carpeted in white velvet, which had a small green vine running through it, and here and there a bunch of violets. There were some chairs covered with white satin, a sofa and ottomans covered with the same. A large easy chair stood near the bed, also covered with white satin. A marble mantel, with a golden grate beneath it, next struck my attention; over the mantel hung another picture, and as I gazed, in utter surprise, the form and features of a lovely sister, who died many years before, distinctly met my view, but her beauty was so heightened and intensified that the sight of the picture enraptured me.

"O, how singular! We never had a picture of dear Annie: how many, many times we have all regretted it.

"What a singular and beautiful dream I am having. I know my husband and the nurse will be delighted to hear me tell it when I awake. Do not think I should ever

care to awake if I did not want to see them all so much. This dream is exceedingly beautiful, but I prefer their warm love, and to feel my darling babies in my arms, than to lie here in this beautiful room and merely look at their pictures.

"There: I have dreamed long enough, and will try another method of awakening myself. I will call—call loudly—for my husband; he, surely, cannot be far away; he has not left me for days; he said he would never leave me until I was better.

"Franz! Franz I" I called. "Where are you, my dear? I am awake now, and want you. Come to me. You said you would not leave me."

No answer.

"O! what has happened?"

"Franz! Franz!" I again shouted: "My husband! I want you."

A soft silence was my only answer.

"He may have dropped asleep, being so weary with watching. I'll call the nurse.

"Babbitt! Babbitt!" I screamed. "Mrs. Babbitt! I am awake now. Come here: I want to speak to you."

I heard a slight rustle near the open door, and my staring eyes caught sight of the nurse, or a form which I supposed must be that of the nurse.

CHAPTER II.

A MINISTERING ANGEL.

SHE entered the room gently; when about midway paused, and her soft, loving eyes rested upon mine. She looked slightly like a nurse, but much more resembled a Sister of Charity.

Her dress was of some soft, silver-grey material, and hung in graceful folds about her dainty, rounded form. She wore a pretty white lace cap on her head, and her dress was partly concealed under a large white apron.

She stood looking at me with gentle, pitiful eyes, her white hands folded.

"You are not Mrs. Babbitt," I said, in surprise, but please tell my husband I want him. Are you one of the Sisters of Charity?"

"I hope you will find me a charitable sister," she replied, with a sweet smile.

Are you come to take Mrs. Babbitt's

place?" I asked. "O, I suppose she is all worn out with watching."

"I will gladly take Mrs. Babbitt's place," she said, "and try to fill it, if possible. Perhaps I may be able to please you better, even, than Mrs. Babbitt."

"Mrs. Babbitt has been very kind and good, am sorry she has become so weary with watching; besides, she has taken nearly all the care of the children. But where am I? Why don't my husband come to me? How was I ever removed to this place without knowing it? I must have been unconscious a long time to have been carried about in this way; but, perhaps, the doctor put me under the influence of ether: think I am not free from it yet: feel very light: don't remember of taking ether, although, perhaps, he gave it to me when I was in the faint. But, really, I don't understand it all. Franz did not tell me that I was to be moved. Am not finding any fault with the place; it is very beautiful; but I had much rather be at home. My babies do not disturb me at all, and it comforts me in my sickness to be near them. Am afraid I shall not see my husband as often as I should if I were at

home. O! had much rather be at home! Should get well sooner, I am certain."

I began to feel pettish and homesick at all this strangeness and secrecy.

"Is my husband here?" I asked, rather sharply.

"He is not," she replied, her lips slightly trembling, and I saw tears in her beautiful eyes as she raised them to mine.

"Why has he left me? Am sure I never needed him more. It is very unlike him."

"He has not left you, my dear; it is you who have left him."

"But he must have sent me hither. I cannot understand why he does not remain with me."

"He would gladly remain with you if it were possible," she replied.

"But I do not understand why it is not possible. He had nothing special to keep him away from me, and the last words I can remember of his saying, were, that he certainly would not leave me."

As I said this I threw myself down in the bed, covered my eyes with my hands, and burst into tears.

Softly the nurse, as I shall call her, approached

the bed; she gently took one of my hands away from my eyes, and began to stroke it with great gentleness: this soothed me: she then did the same with the other. She placed her hand on my forehead, and again I raised myself, looking at her earnestly.

"What is it you have to tell me I questioned." I know there is something very strange that is being kept from me. Tell me—oh, tell me at once! Relieve my suspense."

"Mary," she replied, "you must be strong, and prepare yourself to bear a heavy blow."

She pressed both my hands to her breast lovingly, and then said.

"You are not on the earth any longer, dear Mary, but have been removed to one of the mansions in heaven."

I shrieked out wildly in my surprise—in my horror!

"You do not mean to tell me—you cannot mean to tell me, that I am dead—that my little babies are left motherless, and my husband without his wife?

"O God!" I cried, "heaven would be a hell separated from my darlings," and I sobbed and shrieked aloud in my despair.

The nurse sat with folded hands and drooping head. A thought struck me. I started up again and looked eagerly around.

"You are deceiving me!" I exclaimed. "For some reason, which I do not understand, am being deceived. How can you have the effrontery to tell me that I am dead, when you must know, as well as myself, that I have eyes, and they can see": and I allowed my glance to rest on the pictures in their golden frames, then on each piece of furniture in turn. "How can you tell me that I am dead, and in heaven, when you must know that I can see all these things in this room as well as you can; besides, the room itself, the walls, the ceiling, the window with its curtains; surely, I must have been put in some insane asylum, and you are one of the lunatics instead of a nurse, as I thought you. But if I have been a little delirious, owing to my severe illness, am entirely recovered now, and can see this room with all its, furniture, and clearly comprehend as well as I could when in the best of health."

The nurse raised her beautiful eyes to my face, and tears trembled on the long lashes.

"Mary," she said, in a voice so soft and

gentle that the sound alone soothed my irritation, "I have spoken the truth. You have been removed, by death, from earth, and are now within the realm of spirit, or within the spiritual world."

Dear reader, this was long before Spiritualism was known, and I, for one, had never heard of such a thing. I had been educated, entirely, in the Catholic religion, and thought there was a heaven, a hell, and purgatory: this room, so very much like a nice room of earth, could neither be in heaven, nor hell, nor yet in purgatory; at least, this was the way I thought.

"You say I am dead. If this is the case, to which place have I been consigned, heaven or purgatory? For, of course, this cannot be hell, and it is altogether too pretty for purgatory. To be in purgatory must be an unhappy condition, and you do not look unhappy." I did not yet believe that I was dead.

"Suppose, then, dear Mary, I tell you that you are in heaven, for you cannot yet understand anything about the world of spirits."

"You can never make me believe," I replied, "that this room is heaven. If this is heaven,

why do not I see God, the Saviour, the blessed Virgin, and all the holy Apostles and Saints? Why do not I hear them praising God, making heaven resound with their songs and music? Where are the golden streets, the great white throne, the thronging multitude of the redeemed and blessed?"

"Mary," she asked, "if you could be in a place of that description, would you then be content to leave your little children and your husband?"

This brought me to my real sense once more.

"No, no! A thousand times no! I cried. Was only asking you why I did not see these things, if, as you say, I am dead?"

"Mary," she said gently, "you are dead, as you call it, but such things as you mention do not exist."

I stared at her in horror and surprise.

"Do not exist?" I cried out. "Do not exist? But God exists, certainly?"

"God exists," she replied, "but not as a person seated on a throne. We are taught here that God is all things—all that is material, all that is spiritual, all that is angelic. All that is, all that ever was, all that ever shall be;

and, that there never was a beginning, that there can never be an ending. So, dear Mary, when I told you that—you were in one of the mansions of heaven, I told you the truth."

Still I was incredulous.

"But," I said, "they don't have beds, chairs, sofas, pictures, and windows in heaven."

"Well, dearest Mary, tell me, then, what they do have? or, if you prefer, I will tell you what you have been taught that they have in heaven. First, a throne; second, streets paved with gold; third, harps; fourth, crowns of gold; fifth, the branches of green palm trees; sixth, long white robes or dresses. Now, Mary, this bed, on which you are lying, is just as reasonable, real, and, at present, far more convenient for your weak and spiritually ignorant condition, than the sight of a throne would be. If there could be a throne in heaven, could there not be beds as well? Which, dear Mary, would suit you best just now, this pretty room with its white satin-covered furniture, or streets paved with gold? Is it more unreasonable? How much better suited to your present condition. Is the furniture of this room more strange than harps of gold? Would a crown

of gold suit you better than those pictures, of your loved ones, hanging on the wall? Are the walls themselves more strange than the gates of heaven would be? Are not these flowers more beautiful than the branches of the palm? This room has white lace hangings, and you are clothed in a beautiful white robe suitable for your present state. Are these any more wonderful or unreasonable than the long white robes in which you have believed "?

I sat up in the bed and stared at her dumbly.

"Then, am I not to see the blessed Virgin?" I, at length, asked; for, was beginning to believe that I was dead.

"You may at some future time, if you so desire, meet the mother of Jesus of Nazareth. She is not called the blessed Virgin here. She was not a virgin at the time spoken of in the Bible: she was a mother, dear Mary, as you are a mother; a blessed mother, as you are a blessed mother; and I know that you will agree with me, that it is far better to be a blessed mother than it is to be a blessed virgin."

But where is the Saviour, and the Saints?" I asked. "Am I not to see them?"

"Every mother on earth, or in the heavens,

is a saviour," she replied. "The mothers are saviours, and not the sons; yet you may at length see Jesus if you wish; as for the saints, the so-called saints are all here, but very many of the lowly on earth, and here, are more saintly and worthy of heaven than the most of the regularly calendered saints."

I sighed heavily as I asked:

Then what kind of life have I come to?

"A very beautiful life," she replied., "But, my sweet one, you are entirely unprepared for this life, at present, and have so much to learn that you will never be able to cease learning. There is no end to the knowledge that will be yours, as time goes on."

"Would you not like to get out of bed?" she asked, with a bright smile. "You know it has been many days since you were up and walking about."

My heart leaped joyfully.

"O, can I? Am I able to sit up? It seems as though that alone would be heaven to me just now, am so weary of being sick and lying in bed."

"Let me help you," said my sweet nurse.

She clasped both my hands within her

own, and I rose up light as a thistle-down, a heavenly elixir running through all my being. She placed me in the large chair, then seated herself on a low cushion at my feet, leaning her beautiful arm on my knees. I felt a little faint, for this was the first time I had sat up for weeks. My eyes naturally closed for a few moments, and then my mind rushed back to my husband and children. I involuntarily cried out:

"O! am I never to see you any more, My darlings? Am I really dead and separated from you?" and a great wave of sorrowful emotion shook me; my eyes flew open, and the sweet orbs of my nurse were looking hopefully into mine. A sudden inspiration seized me and I cried:

"You have told me so many strange things, perhaps there are other things equally as strange, such as ghosts. You know I have always heard about ghosts ever since I can remember—how those who are dead appear to the living. Can I make myself a ghost and appear to my husband and children?—and I tightened my grasp on her hands in my eagerness.

"We will see what can be done in that direction."

"Then we can go where they are," I cried; can see my little babies once more? O! tell me! O! I know we can! I see it in your eyes.

"Yes," she answered, "we can. Ar'nt you glad? You are beginning to like this heaven much better than you would that other heaven, are you not?"

"O, yes—yes! if I can go from this place to see my husband and children. How soon can we go? Am very impatient!"

"Just as soon as you are strong enough," she replied. "But you have not been here more than an hour, and the), are all weeping so bitterly over your worn form, which is devoid of yourself, we had better wait a few hours more; you will then be stronger and they will have had time to become more calm."

I was so delighted by the thought of returning that I readily acquiesced.

"Mary," she said, "you have not asked me about the friends whom you have here. Are there none of those, who departed the earth-life, you would like to see?"

"Surely; yes. I have three children here, and a dear sister, besides many other friends and acquaintances. Certainly, I should like to see them all; but more than any, my own little Joey, who died so many years ago—my first little baby boy."

Your little Joey is not a baby now."

Is not a baby now?" I repeated, surprisedly.?

What, then, may he be, pray.

"He is a beautiful boy of eight or nine years, and loves his mania very dearly."

The prospect of seeing my first child gave me great delight, and I asked:

"How soon can I see him? Are we to go where he is, or, can he come to us, here?"

"Joey!" called the nurse, in a soft voice, It you may come in now: mama is prepared to see you."

CHAPTER III.

My BABES IN HEAVEN.

I GLANCED eagerly at the open doorway, heard a springing, blithesome step, and a sweet little boy glided softly into the room: he paused when about midway, as though waiting until I should observe and recognize him.

This child died when but six months old, and, of course, in this well-grown boy of nine I could not recognize the babe of six months but he had his father's dark eyes, although his complexion was fair and his hair a golden-brown: the eyes alone told me plainly that he was my own child, for I had gazed into them hours at a time, when he was a wee babe, and could not forget their expression. There were the same eyes, the same forehead, the same sweet mouth. The nurse rose up, and my little Joey threw himself into my arms, crying:

"Mama-dear, sweet mama! Joey is so glad you have come," and he fondly stroked and kissed my hair, eyes, and cheeks; then nestled his dear head lovingly on my breast.

Ah! my man of six, whom I had left, could not compare with my man of nine, whom I had found.

When I had fondled and kissed my darling Joey to my heart's content, again raised my eyes and involuntarily looked toward the door. Two little cherubic forms stood there clasping each other's hands, their sweet eyes looking full into mine. They were little dimpled darlings, one four, and the other two years of age. I knew them at once. They were the two dear little girls who had died, one a few weeks after its birth, the other when but two months old.

Joey ran to the door and led the children toward me. My beautiful little darlings! the youngest with eyes of blue and flaxen hair, the elder with brown eyes and dark auburn hair. I took them both on my knees and caressed them until my mother heart was once more filled with joy.

"Ah! my three beautiful babes who were lost, but found once more!"

If a mother on earth would like to know how I felt, let her imagine her little innocents lost in a deep, dark forest, filled with wild beasts, her soul racked and tortured with fear—"perhaps they were starving, perhaps torn by wild beasts: poor little lost wandering babes!"—and then let her imagine that after days, or, perhaps, months of anguish, she at last finds them uninjured, and clasps them to her bleeding and frenzied heart; she will realize something of my joy at finding my lost babes, besides, they were grown, and ten times lovelier than they had been before.

The little ones now left my side, and commenced some pretty, noiseless play near the open window. I know that my face was absolutely beaming with joy', as, once more, my eyes rested on my nurse. She was gazing at me with a mysterious smile, at the same time she slowly untied and removed her large, white apron; she then raised her hands to her head and took off the lace cap, shook down her long auburn curls, and, behold! my darling, sweet sister, Annie, was revealed to my astonished gaze.

I arose from my chair in my great surprise,

and we mutually clasped each other in a warm and fond embrace. My darling sister had been dead about ten years. She was only sixteen when she died. She was older and far more beautiful now, yet the same sweet Annie as formerly.

When I became a little calmer we again seated ourselves, for I longed to have her talk to me.

"You are much happier now, dear Mary," she said, "than you were a short time ago. Darling, you are just peeping through the gates of heaven! Would you not rather clasp these dear, lost babes to your heart than to behold the saints? There will be time enough for that in the future. And, would you not rather see me, your virgin sister, than to behold the one who has been called the holy virgin? Am I not nearer to you than she could possibly be—she whom you never saw—she who lived more than eighteen hundred years ago, and was only one of millions of other mothers? and really, dear Mary, was only a mother like yourself. Are you not as blessed as she possibly could have been? Then, again, dear sister, why should she be called the blessed

virgin and worshipped as such, when she was a wife and the mother of at least six children, and lived to be quite old; for Jesus was more than thirty-three years of age at the time of his crucifixion, and she was yet alive and well: we are not even informed when she died. Certainly, Mary, she was old enough to be your mother when last we hear of her. How foolish and absurd to call an old woman, the mother of a large family, the holy virgin, and fall down and worship her. Every pure and right heart holds a worshipful feeling toward a blessed mother, let her be whom she may, but it is senseless to worship Mary, the mother of Jesus, as a holy virgin."

I sat with my hands folded in my lap, my eyes fixed intently on my beautiful sister's face. Her words could not be gainsaid. Were they not true?

"Then, Annie," I at length asked, "is there no heaven, no hell, no purgatory?"

"Yes, Mary," she replied; "in one sense all these things exist, but not in the way you and I were taught to think when we lived on earth. Darling sister, heaven, hell, and purgatory, are conditions, not places. When you first awoke

in this life, you were very unhappy to think you were dead and had lost your husband and children: in one sense that was hell to you: although you were in this beautiful room yet you were in hell or unhappiness, for unhappiness is all the hell there is, and hell is unhappiness: you are now in purgatory, or an intermediate state between hell and heaven, for heaven is happiness, and you are not yet happy. Heaven is yet in store for you, my sweet sister, and heaven can be in this room as well as anywhere else."

All this, which my dear Annie was saying, seemed very strange to me, my education on earth had been so entirely different; yet, I much preferred to be here with my lost children, my sweet sister, together with the prospect which she had held out to me that I could go back to the earth, visit my darling babies and my dear husband.!

"Annie," I questioned, "can we take these dear little ones with us, when we return?"

We can do so if we wish, she replied; "but I think, dearest Mary, we had better leave them here until our return. You are very weak yet, and it will require all my strength

to aid you: they shall go with us at another time, after you get stronger."

"And will my precious children be safe here, all by themselves?"

Annie smiled, giving me a peculiar glance

"Safe?" she said. What do you think could happen to them?

My mind ran swiftly over the list of accidents, which mothers usually fear when called upon to leave their little ones alone, the oldest not being more than nine years of age. I glanced about the room, thinking of fire; and, then, perhaps, there were stairs down which they might fall; there might be knives or other sharp instruments wherewith they might cut themselves; they might wander off and get lost. There might be, for all I knew, water in which they might get drowned. These thoughts ran like lightning through my mind, yet I had not spoken them to Annie. It seemed to make no difference, however: she smiled sweetly and stroked my hair softly.

"Mary," she said, gently; "you forget that a spirit cannot be injured. These dear little ones are spirits now, they cannot be injured. Fire cannot harm them, knives cannot cut

them, neither can they be drowned. Does it not make you happier, my sweet sister, to feel that they cannot be hurt? It removes a load of care from the mind, does it not? and that is a little step nearer heaven."

"Yes," was my reply. "But, still, my little darlings on the earth might meet with all those accidents."

"True," she replied and if they were to meet with any of them, another sweet babe would be here with you and its brother and sisters. It might also learn to love its auntie a little," and she gave me a roguish glance, pinched my cheek softly, and kissed my lips.

"Why, so they would, Annie!" I said, my eyes widening slightly in mild surprise.

I knew this before, still the fact was presented to my mind in a different way. It began to dawn upon me that I really had lost nothing, but gained a great deal; still, I was looking through a glass darkly. Things were not clear yet.

Joey now came up to me.

"Mama," he asked, "can we go out to play, my little sisters and I?"

The two little girls were now standing at my

knees, their sweet, bright eyes fixed on mine. I caught them in my arms, pressing them rapturously to my heart. They were exceedingly beautiful. They kissed, and fondled me with their little hands, and Joey laid his noble head against my arm. I glanced at Annie. She smiled a gentle assent, and I said:

"Yes; darlings. You may go if you want to," and they ran out of the door with joyous, playful laughter.

"Wouldn't you like to see the children at their play, Mary?" asked Annie.

That desire had just entered my mind.

"Am I strong and well enough to go out of doors?" I asked.

My mind was still clouded with earthly conditions, had not yet outgrown my weakness.

"Not quite strong enough yet, my sweet sister, but you are rapidly getting well. Let me wheel this easy-chair to the window, where you will have a nice view of the outdoor world, and at the same time observe the children at their play."

She placed her hands on the back, of my chair, pushing it gently toward the window. It was a very large oriel window. She wheeled

the chair into a position so that I could look in all directions, excepting backward, and then raised each sash. Sweet, fresh air struck my face, which seemed the very elixir of life, odoriferous with the perfume of flowers and balsamic pines. I drew long inspirations, and with each breath my spirits rose, my heart bounded with renewed health and joyous hope. The fresh breeze wafted itself all through my unbound hair, lifting and waving it about until it seemed as though each hair was instinct with life and subtle perfume.

I now allowed my eyes to rove around over the beautiful landscape, and if this were purgatory, or the intermediate state, surely, what must heaven be?

I saw the children playing near a fountain, in a beautiful garden filled with flowers, directly in front of the window,—and—goodness! What was that creature playing with them? Could it be possible? I turned, and looked at Annie in the utmost astonishment.

"Annie—Annie!" I cried, in great confusion. "Am I dreaming, or is that a dog I see? and look, sister; there are ever so many birds flying around out there! See that Bird of

Paradise perched on Joey's shoulder! O! surely, it all must be a dream. I must try and waken myself: yet the dream is so sweet I really don't want to."

I had covered my face with my hands as I said this, for I could not believe in its reality.

Annie stroked my head softly, and patted my shoulder.

"Mary, darling," she said, "you are not dreaming. It is real. You have been taught to believe that nothing but man was immortal. What you have been taught about the immortal country is nearly all wrong. People in the earth-life have been looking through a glass darkly. Mary, all life is immortal in whatever form it may appear. The flowers, the birds, the animals, are all immortal. Look up, sweet sister. There is no death. Every beautiful thing that you have ever seen on earth you will find here. Did you think that earth could boast of more life and beauty than heaven? Earth is a small type of the grandeur and beauty of heaven."

I clasped Annie's hand within my own to gain courage and strength. These truths, at first, had a stunning effect on me, for my

mind had never even conceived of things as they were, and, therefore, they astounded me. Again I looked. The children were playing, laughing, and shouting joyously; the little dog was barking and gamboling with them; the beautiful birds were flying about, perching on their heads and shoulders; the little girls were holding some of the most beautiful of them out on their fingers, their little faces wreathed in happy smiles. Presently, a small black pony, with golden trappings, trotted up

to Joey, laying his nose down on the boy's shoulders as though beseeching him. In a second Joey was on his back and off. The pony went in an undulating graceful lope.

"O, my boy—my beautiful boy!"

My heart swelled with love and pride. The child appeared to be clothed in black velvet, and perched on his flying curls was a little cap tasselled with gold. I watched him until he had ridden far out of my sight.

The two little girls were looking straight into my eyes, clapping their hands and shouting gleefully. To see my lost darlings so happy, made me as happy as themselves.

Presently, they came running in, their little

hands filled with flowers, which they laid on my lap.

"Mama," said Agnes, the older of the two little girls, "Joey is a boy; he don't like to stay with little girls always, if they are his sisters, and he has gone to ride on Nobby's back. Nobby is Joey's little pony, mama."

The little dog entered with the girls, and stood, his eyes fixed in doggish fashion on mine, as though he would like to become acquainted with me. I involuntarily put out my hand. He jumped Lip with his fore-paws resting on my knees, lapped my hand, and presently I gained courage to pat his head, which seemed to please him as much as it would any pet dog on the earth.

"Mama," said Agnes, "can you spare us a little while? We want to go back to school."

"What can you mean, my darling? You don't go to school here, do you?"

"Why, yes, mama;—we go to school. We live in a school. Can we go now? We will come and see you again, just when you want us."

I glanced at Annie. Surprises would never cease, I thought.

"Mary," she said, "it is just as necessary

that children should be taught here, as it is on the earth. Children do not remain children here, for they grow, their little minds develop, and they need schools and teachers as much, perhaps more, than they do on earth."

"Yes, darlings," she said, "run away to school. Mama's getting weary. Kiss her and run."

They wound their little arms about my neck once more, Annie kissed them fondly, and they disappeared hand in hand. Constant surprise had really wearied me somewhat, and Annie wheeled my chair back.

"Mary," she said softly, "this is enough for one lesson. Lie down on the bed once more, lose yourself in sleep, and when you awake we will take the little journey that you so much desire."

"Can one sleep?" I asked. "Is there such A thing as sleep here?"

Yes," she replied. "A weary, undeveloped spirit often sleeps. Lie down, darling, and I will sit here by your side until you awake. A little sleep will give you more strength for the journey."

I did as she requested, and soon became unconscious.

CHAPTER IV.

SIGISMUND.

HOW long I remained unconscious I cannot tell; but my sleep was the sweetest and most restful I had ever known.

When, at last, I opened my eyes, they rested on a form I had not seen before. My sweet Annie still sat by my bedside, apparently conversing with the person whom I had not previously met. The stranger was a gentleman, and I was exceedingly surprised at his appearance. My sister's hand was clasped within his own, and the expression of his eyes, as they rested upon her, was unmistakable; they expressed the most devoted love and adoration. I thought I would feign sleep, for awhile, that I might observe them more closely, without their knowledge, as well as listen to what they were saying.

"Annie," said the gentleman, "it is not well for you to work alone, longer; you will need all the help and strength that I can give you to conduct your sister back to earth, and I am sure it is time now for her to understand that marriage exists in heaven as well as on the earth. When she awakes we must tell her of our union; we must make her comprehend that you are not a youthful virgin now, but a more perfected soul; that you are not the separated half of a whole, but a perfect whole, and that I am the other half of yourself. By a natural spiritual law we have become united. It would be very hard for you, my darling Annie, to accompany your sister alone and leave me behind. Really, it is time now that she understood something about heavenly union."

"You are right, dear Sigismund," replied my sweet sister. "I shall need your aid. It is very doubtful whether I should be able to escort dear Mary back while she is yet so heavy and uninformed of spiritual life. Yes

I agree with you, that it is now necessary she be made acquainted with spiritual marriage."

I had heard enough, and opened my eyes.

"Would wonders never cease?" My earthly teaching had been, that marriage did not exist in heaven, but that all were like brothers and sisters. Their conversation had undeceived me, and I must say it pleased rather than grieved me. It made me happy to think my dear sister was not alone, and the noble-looking gentleman by her side was her husband. Surely, if ever two human beings were matched they were. Human beings did I say? Ah! they were spiritual beings, and were past the stage of human earthly life. The gentleman did not wear his hair and beard cropped, but just as nature intended he should, full and flowing. He was as like my sister as a man could be like a woman. The shade of difference between them was just enough to distinguish them male and female. I moved slightly, then raised myself. Annie pressed my hand softly as she asked:

"Are you rested, dear Mary, and ready to be surprised once more?"

"I have been listening to you for some time," I replied, "and have already learned who this gentleman is, and the relation existing between you. Surely, Annie, I am very glad

that you are not alone, for my own marriage has taught me that it is far better to be wedded than to live single; yet, I never thought that marriage existed after the death of the body, but that all heavenly beings were like brothers and sisters."

"If that were so," replied Annie, "it would not be necessary that man be created male and female."

"Why, yes," I said; "it would be necessary while they were on the earth, but I do not yet clearly understand why there need be sex in heaven."

"Well," replied Annie, with a smile, "all the answer I can give is, that a man remains a man forever, and a woman a woman; that the man and the woman, when rightfully mated, constitute one perfect soul, and when separate are but the sundered halves of a rounded or perfect thing. Now, dearest Mary, we must bear you, between us, back to earth. Am certain I should not be able to escort you unaided."

Thereupon, her husband gave me his hand, my other hand was held fast in my sister's clasp, and, between them, I felt as light as a

thistledown; thus we floated, rather than walked, out into the sweet, fresh air. We had not gone far when I begged them to stop. I wanted to look about me, for such beautiful scenery I had never looked upon before.

The landscape, spread out before me, was in many respects like that of earth; that is, there were mountains, hills and valleys, trees, grass, flowers, and sparkling streams of water. There were also villages, towns, and sequestered homes; but the whole was so radiantly, gloriously beautiful, that I caught my breath in rapturous surprise.

"Mary, do you find this more beautiful and satisfying to the mind than you would a much smaller heaven with golden streets?" asked Annie.

"Am I to understand that there is no such heaven as we have always believed in?"

"Dear Mary," she replied, "I have been in this life, as you know, for ten years or more, and I have not found such a heaven, and am not acquainted with any one that has. The spiritual heavens are composed of the life-principle of all things that exist on earth, but you are, at the present time, a newly-born

spirit, corresponding, with the newly-born infant of earth, and are not yet able to understand this life. Your spirit must be fed, and grow very gradually, as the infant does at its mother's breast. You have been the mother of so many sweet infants that you will find no difficulty in understanding this great natural law. It would certainly be a very unnatural law for a spiritual baby to step into the highest and most glorious heaven at one immense stride. In truth, dear sister, there is not such a law throughout all nature. Think as deeply as one may, one can find no such law. Your greatest and most natural desire, at this time, is to again behold your husband and children. Your heart, at present, knows no other love so strong as the mother love, and the confiding, wifely affection. The saints, at present, would have very few charms for you. All in good time, my sweet sister."

"How far, are we from the earth?" I asked.

"Will the journey be a very long one?"

"No," answered Sigismund. "It is about five miles, as distance is reckoned on the earth. The first Spiritual Sphere rests upon the atmosphere of the earth, and surrounds the

earth as the atmosphere does, and is as much larger than the earth as the distance of five miles in thickness would necessarily make it: still, there are many valleys where the distance is not more than three miles; especially in those places on the earth where the atmosphere is very rare."

We were floating gently along while my sister and her noble husband were imparting to me this information. Glancing downward, I said:

"This earth looks very tangible, although it is spiritual or heavenly. How are we to get down through it?"

Sigismund turned his brilliant blue eyes full upon mine as he replied:

"At present we must bear you downward as an infant must be borne by those older, wiser and stronger than itself, just as we fetched you hither while you were yet unconscious, but your spiritual tutelage will be very rapid compared with that of the earthly infant. No human or spiritual being can perform any voluntary act without exercising will power—in other words, wish power or earnest desire and concentration of purpose. If one desires

a thousand things in a second or two of time, one will gain nothing. In order to gain any desire the will or wish must be fixed and earnestly concentrated on some one particular thing at a time. But, at present, like the infant, you are weak, and we will accomplish your desire for you. Having once observed how it is accomplished, you will readily do the same thing for yourself, at another time."

I now observed that we were floating downward or, what seemed to be, descending a gently sloping hill. Ah! that sweet journey I shall never forget! The hill or mountain was clothed in the most beautiful verdure, soft, mossy and green. Trees of all kinds abounded. The most gorgeous and beautiful flowers were blooming everywhere. Little brooks were leaping and dancing in the soft, mellow light. Squirrels and other small animals were running and skipping on the ground and up through the trees. Beautiful birds were singing and flying around, and everything was life—life—beautiful life! Ah! could it be that this was death?" "Yes," replied Annie, to my thought. "This is the immortal spiritual life that has no further

use for the grosser material covering, which it has thrown off, and is gradually ascending, step by step, as you perceive."

We travelled on in this way for a short time longer, and then paused.

"We are now upon the earthly plane," said Sigismund, "and quite near your former home."

He waved his hands gently before my eyes and I awoke, or experienced a sensation as of awaking.

"Why, yes! Here we were just at my own door. How strange!" But all things had taken on a different meaning to me. To grieve longer was impossible, for death had no sting. There was no death. All was life, beautiful life! Doors nor walls were now no obstruction to this living spiritual self-hood, and so we passed directly into the room where I observed a shrouded body lying on a bier.

"Ah, who is that?" I asked, turning to Annie, for in the fulness of my life I had nearly forgotten that I was dead.

She smiled radiantly as she drew me toward the prostrate form. I glanced at it with sickening horror, and clung to Annie like a

child who is frightened, casting furtive glances at the cold, lifeless thing.

"Enough—enough!" I cried. "Take me out of this room. Let us go to my husband and children."

We passed into another room, and here I found my dear husband, together with my mother and other near relatives. The nurse sat with my darling baby in her arms. My man of six was intently looking out of the window, and his little mind was busy wondering about this strange thing which had happened. My little toddling cherub of three, was earnestly trying to get himself into mischief.

I rushed impetuously toward the nurse, and eagerly caught at my baby, for the moment forgetting that I could not take her into my arms. O, bitter disappointment! My arms passed directly through her little body, and, try as hard as I might, could not lift her. I turned to Annie with a sigh of regret. She gave me a bright smile of encouragement.

"Kiss her and throw your desire of love upon her. There are other delights left you besides that of carrying her body in your arms."

Again I turned to my little sleeping darling,

kissed her sweet lips, smoothed her soft flaxen hair, throwing all the desire of my mother love upon her. She moved her little hands slightly, and a soft smile wreathed her baby lips.

The nurse had been wiping her own tearful eyes. Her attention was now caught by the baby's smile, and she said:

"Och, look at the darlint! She's laughin', she is. May the howly Virgin watch over the motherless babby!"

"The Lord willing," I replied, "I'll watch over my own child. I don't believe the holy Virgin loves her half so well as her own mother does."

The nurse paid no heed to my words, and Annie smiled as she said:

"Mary, you forget that the nurse cannot hear you."

Well; so I had. Again a sigh escaped me.

"And they cannot see us, either? O, it is not all joy, after all!"

"The sweet and bitter waters are mingled at present," she replied.

I softly went to the window where stood my little man of six, and laid my hand on his curly head. A slight shiver shook his small frame;

he turned to his papa, saying, with wide opening eyes:

"I dess its told here, papa, don't you fink so? I feel told just as mama does." And he pointed toward the door of the room where that cold form was lying.

I threw off the force of my desire, which was upon him, that he might turn again toward the bright window, and fill his mind with pleasant thoughts of active life. I smoothed his curls and kissed his little face all over. He laughed softly, and forgot all about being "told"; his little heart was filled with love for mama. He thought of her as she had been before she was taken sick.

My little cherub, as I was wont to call him, now toddled, with his weak bow legs, up to his brother. O! how my mother heart had yearned over those dear little legs! "The sweetest wee cherub in all the world," so I thought. "If only those dear little legs would become strong and straight!" My heart yearned more fondly over this child than all the others. Because of his misfortune my mind had been more deeply agitated, my love drawn out with greater fervor and intensity.

Ah! previous to his birth I had known a little sorrow. My husband had been in straitened circumstances, my own health had not been good; his poverty and misfortune had embittered him somewhat; my condition rendered me very sensitive. My child's bandy legs were not his only misfortune; a birthmark had discoloured one of his eyes. This had caused me great sorrow and uneasiness. Now, as he stood by his brother's side, his sweet little mouth pursed up in grief, the tears resting on his chubby cheeks like jewels, for the sorrow and weeping of his elders had affected his little heart as the passing breeze moves a sweet flower, my soul was shaken to, its foundations. I turned to Annie, crying:—

"O, would that I could take this child to be with me and his brother and sisters in heaven!"

Sigismund now went up to my little one, and gently waved his hands above the child's head, then passed them slowly before my eyes. O, strange transformation The little soul was magnified to such an extent that I discovered great powers and gifts hidden there which the coming years would soon develop

powers and gifts even that would shake all mankind, and bring joy and gladness to thousands upon thousands of souls dwelling in the darkness of error; yea, sorrowing and grief-stricken souls who could not see the light of truth.

"Dost desire to take your little unfortunatè with you now?" asked Sigismund, with a deep and earnest look.

"O! No—no! A thousand times no!" exclaimed, the tears filling my eyes.

"This little one, whom you think so weak, is really the strongest and most gifted of all your children; for true power is not so much of body as of soul. His little limbs will straighten as he grows older, the birth-mark will nearly disappear, and he will yet walk the earth a king among men. All are not kings who wear crowns, but the true kings and princes among men are those who give the most light, truth, and happiness to mankind."

My husband sat with bowed head, and weary, desponding countenance. His eyes were dry and feverish with sorrow. He had struggled hard with the world, to keep the wolf from the door, and gain a competence.

but our fast coming family, my sickness, and now my death, had entirely disheartened him. He looked around on his little, motherless children, in a helpless, sorrowful way. Hope of a future life he had none, but sincerely believed that the death of the body ended the life of every individual. He did not believe in heaven, hell, or a future spiritual existence. He was a materialist. His wife was dead, and that was the last of her, so he thought.

I approached him, and wound my arms about his neck, kissed his lips, threw the whole desire of my soul upon him, thinking he might be able to feel that I was not dead, but there by his side, conscious of all his thoughts, and, if he would but understand, could still love, comfort, and advise him. But his mind was firmly set in its own way of thinking, and I could not make the slightest impression upon him; at least, not one that he would admit into his mind. He had barred and bolted the doors of his soul to keep out all thought or hope of a future state of being, and when my impetuous spirit knocked loudly to be admitted he would not listen, and, although he really did sense my presence, would not open the

doors of his mind, but was determined to believe that it was imagination knocking so loudly to be heard and admitted; but, foolish imagination should find no place or lodgment with him. Therefore, he sat there, a bereaved, desolate, and heart-broken man, with three helpless children on his hands, to whom he must be father and mother in one.

"O, hard and wretched fate!" But for the helpless children he would gladly have died there and then. To him death was oblivion and surcease from all care and sorrow: and here was I, standing by his side, filled with life; new hopes and joys springing up within me.

I had found our children—his and mine—not dead but full of sweet, beautiful life. O, how I longed to tell him of those dear children; his children, that he believed were dead for evermore! O, how I desired to comfort and sustain him in his supposed bereavement; but I was powerless. The portals of his mind were closed against me. How gladly would he have received me if he could have known the truth. But he did not, and so I stood there powerless to aid him: a great gulf fixed between us, yet

standing side by side. The gulf was owing entirely to the condition of his mind, which would not and could not see the light of truth.

There is a great gulf between the lower animals and man, yet they may be, and often are, walking or standing side by side; still, the animal cannot understand that which the man does. Something of this relation now existed between myself and my beloved husband. I knew that death did not end life, for I was dead and yet more alive than ever, while he had not this experience or knowledge.

Finding that my presence had not the slightest effect upon him, and that, owing to the condition of his mind, I could not aid him in the least, I turned to Annie dejectedly.

CHAPTER V.

A BEREFT WIDOW.

"O ANNIE! I am indeed a widow! The husband who was mine, but a few hours ago, is mine no longer. We are separated—oh, we are separated! And yet how I love him—the husband of my youth—my first and only love, and the father of my six beautiful children."

I covered my face with my hands, and wept as I had never wept before.

"Surely he is bereaved, and I am widowed! He desires oblivion and everlasting death. I desire—oh, what is my desire?"

"That is the real question at issue," said Sigismund. "What is your greatest desire? for all desires or prayers are at length answered. The soul can desire nothing which natural law cannot supply. Do you

desire, after what you have seen of heaven, to live within yonder cold form of clay once more?

"No—no!" I cried, in shuddering horror. "I would as soon be buried alive. It would seem very much like it after having known the meaning of true life."

"Then, dear Mary," said Annie, "try to think, and tell us what you most desire."

Again my soul was agitated, shaken to its depths; again I stood between two worlds, the material and spiritual, and really not of either. I did not desire the material, and scarcely knew what to desire of the spiritual. My mother heart was equally divided between my three children on earth and my three in heaven; two boys and a girl on earth, two girls and a boy in heaven. My earthly children had their father, my heavenly children now had their mother, of whom they had long been deprived. Thus I stood perplexed and sorrowful. What did I most desire? Really, I could not tell.

"O! would to God I could span this great gulf!" I at length cried, "unite earth with heaven, and heaven with earth!"

"Precisely," said Sigismund. "That, then, is the greatest desire of your soul?"

"But that desire can never be realized," I said. "This gulf cannot be crossed. My husband cannot hear or see me. To my children I am cold and dead. To my mother, and other relatives, am shut up in heaven, purgatory, or, perhaps—alas!—hell; with no power to reach them. How is it possible, then, to unite heaven and earth?"

"How is it possible?" repeated Sigismund. Precisely! How is it possible? First, you have an earnest desire, and then you ask for the requisite knowledge whereby to obtain that desire. Your desire was created by your great love, and now you wish to unite your love with wisdom, so you desire or pray for knowledge."

I stared at this Sigismund with wide open, surprised eyes. Surely, this husband of Annie's was a very singular being. Annie smiled upon him lovingly, their hands at the same time fondly clasped.

"Sister," said Annie, kissing my brow, "you and my precious Sigismund are both right. It is wisdom or knowledge which we must all

obtain, and, united with our love, the great gulf of ignorance is easily spanned."

"But where is one to obtain this knowledge how to unite heaven and earth?"

"At the never failing fountain of truth," answered Sigismund.

"But where is one to find the fountain of truth?" I asked, rather impatiently, for his words seemed to me ambiguous.

"Search and ye shall surely find," he replied.

"You are repeating the words of Christ," I said, "and here I am, and dead, still have not seen Christ," and I burst into tears.

"Yet if you had sought earnestly for a bright jewel of truth and had found it, it would have taught you that the word Christ is only another name for love. It is truth, now, which you are seeking, and not love. Your love, at present, is greater than your wisdom. When you have obtained wisdom enough to balance your love, the gulf will be spanned."

I dried my eyes and looked at him earnestly.

"I understand your meaning at last. You mean that when I have wisdom enough to span the gulf it will be bridged over, and then my dear husband and children will know that I

can cross, and be with them whenever they and I desire it. O Sigismund! tell me, if you can, how long it will take to bridge over this abyss, and where and how one is to obtain the necessary wisdom?"

"Before you can do this," replied Sigismund, "you must thoroughly understand the laws appertaining to the immortal spirit and its eternal life within the heavenly spheres."

I sank down in a crouching position, and covered my face with my hands.

"O, that will take acres upon ages I cried, despairingly.

Annie gently drew my hands away, and holding them within her own warm clasp, she gave me a sweet, encouraging smile.

"Mary, my dear sister, do you realize that we have ages upon ages in which to gain the required wisdom?"

"O, I cannot wait!" I exclaimed, for the impatience of earthly life had not yet left my soul.

"If you cannot wait to gain the wisdom necessary to bridge the gulf, then must it for ever remain unbridged, as far as yourself and your husband and children are concerned,"

said Sigismund, with a grave and rather sorrowful look.

"Would it not be better, dear sister," said Annie, "to commence at once and learn all you possibly can, and as fast as you can. That is the only way in which to construct the bridge. Impatience and despair will never accomplish anything toward it; besides, they are the opposites of true wisdom. Patience is far more beautiful than impatience, and hope is a queen to despair. Impatience and despair are victims of hell, while patience and hope are bright angels of heaven; in other words, when one gives way to impatience and despair, one is in hell; but when one admits hope and patience within one's soul, then, one is in heaven; and wisdom is the key with which to unlock all heavenly treasures. Rise up, dear sister, and let us return; for victory is the reward of diligence. Patience, hope, and diligence: these three will eventually conquer all things."

"Then, must I again leave my darlings?"

"If you remain here for ever," replied Sigismund, "the bridge will never be built, and you will not, even, have wisdom enough to

do them any good whatever. Do you not wish to benefit these dear ones? Do you not wish to aid and help your children? Love is not potent without wisdom, and wisdom is of no use without love; the two must equally blend and balance each other. The love you bear your children has no potency because you have not wisdom, but when your wisdom equals your love, then you will be able to bless, aid, and teach your children. Come, dear sister, let us go. We can do no good by remaining here."

Ah—true! I had no power, as yet, to help my loved ones; not even the power to comfort them. Once more I kissed my babes, threw my arms about my husband's neck, one lingering, farewell pressure of my spiritual lips to his, and, then, with a longing, backward glance I followed my guides. This time I was not unconscious, but widely, most earnestly awake, eager and anxious to observe and understand everything which I might see or hear. A great determination entered my soul. Wisdom I would have, if earnest seeking and diligence could obtain it. This time my guides did not bear me between them; they

told me I must learn to move, or walk, without aid.

"Mary," said Annie, "if an infant was never allowed to use its little legs, it would not be able to walk, but must always be carried in the arms of those who could walk. You would consider such a course a great injustice to the child, would you not? in fact, an irreparable wrong, and if we were to continue to bear you up between us we should do you a great injustice. You must learn to walk alone, or guide yourself; and, like the infant, the only way to do this is to desire and will it. Now, we will lead the way, and you must follow. You will find no trouble if you keep us in view, and earnestly desire to follow us."

Saying this, they moved on before me, and I tremblingly followed. At first, my unaided motions were slow and faltering, then my sweet guides would look back with encouraging smiles and beckoning of white hands. Thus, upward and onward we went. The scenery was much the same as it had been when we descended, and long before we arrived at Annie's home, I became weary like a child who first tries to walk alone.

When my sweet sister and her noble Sigismund observed my fatigue, they again bore me between them: soon we entered the house, and the room from which we had started on our earthly visit. I sank down into the restful chair, closed my eyes, and when I opened them Annie was just placing a dish heaped with fruit on a small table near by. I looked at the fruit in surprise. The thought of eating had not entered my mind since finding myself a spirit, had not supposed that spirits could eat, but the fruit looked exceedingly tempting; and, really, I was hungry. Annie smiled at my questioning look of surprise.

"You thought, dear Mary, that angels never ate anything; but try these luscious grapes, one or two of those red-ripe strawberries, and you will agree with me that it is better to eat than to starve. This fruit is spiritual as you are spiritual, also the flowers and all things else here are spiritual; this being the case they are adapted to your needs."

Annie now wheeled my chair to the table. Sigismund had already taken a seat, and she seated herself opposite him, handing me a small dish of berries, and placing a large bunch

of grapes on my plate. Tasting them, their flavor was delicious; still I was greatly astonished at the thought of eating in heaven, and could not hide my surprise. Sigismund looked at me earnestly.

"Mary," said he, "you were not very much surprised to find flowers in heaven, and you have discovered that there are animals, trees, water and houses. Now it is not reasonable to suppose that fruit alone is left out. If flowers are here, the same law that governs flowers governs fruit. Flowers are but incipient fruit, and fruitage is evolved from them, therefore, is a step in advance of them. If anything were left out of heaven it would be the lower and not the higher; consequently, you find fruit here as well as flowers, and pleasant to your taste, is it not?"

"Indeed, it is, and very refreshing; reanimates me and takes away all my weariness."

"Just so," he said. "But you will readily understand that we eat no animal food whatever, as the life of a living creature cannot be taken. It would be impossible to kill yonder little dog, the pony on which Joey rides, or any other animal. Spirits eat bread and fruit only."

I ate the grapes and berries, one after another, but found no seeds within them; they melted away in my mouth without the refuse of skin or seeds.

"By a natural law," said Sigismund, "seeds gravitate entirely toward the material and do not enter the spiritual, for seed germs can find no root except in matter. Dear sister, you perceive the harmony of this law at once. Seeds are but the covering of spiritual germs which must develop through matter, therefore, earth attracts and holds all seeds whatsoever their kind. The spirits of luscious grapes and fruit ascend, but the seeds of the grapes, berries, and of all other fruit, remain behind on the earth. If this were not so, the earth would be barren, and heaven would have no delicious fruit. Heavens are entirely supplied from the earths."

CHAPTER VI.

THE RAINBOW BRIDGE.

AFTER eating as much fruit as was needful, I leaned back in my chair, and looked about the room with more interest and curiosity than before. My eyes riveted themselves on the picture, hanging just above the foot of the bed, representing my husband and the children left on earth.

Oh! how my heart yearned over them, and how sweet and comforting it was to have such excellent likenesses of them, and I asked, "Who painted that beautiful picture? It is far better than any I ever saw on earth, and must have been the work of a great artist."

"Mary, dear," she replied, "the artist who painted that picture is myself, and it was painted and hung there especially for your pleasure; a present that would be valuable

to you, one which you would prize very highly."

"You were right, and very kind. Nothing could give me greater delight; but when and how did you learn to paint so perfectly?"

I found myself talking to her as naturally as people do to each other on earth.

"A few moments sufficed to paint and place that picture there," she replied.

"But a few moments?" and my eyes opened wide in surprise.

"Would you like to see me paint a picture?"

"Oh, very much indeed!" at the same time attempting to arise, thinking of following her to another room where she must employ herself in painting

It will not be necessary to leave this room," she said. "It can be done here just as well as anywhere."

She pointed to the wall opposite, saying: "Look steadily at that blank place on the wall, and you will see how quickly and beautifully I can paint."

Following her directions, I fixed my eyes on the wall. At first it appeared to be merely a beautifully tinted wall of blue-grey; but as I

continued to look, forms began to slowly outline themselves, indistinctly at first, growing gradually more perfect until a picture of living beauty appeared to my astonished eyes. The picture represented a wide and dark abyss, with a light and beautiful bridge thrown across. At one end of the bridge appeared a large city, which I recognized as the earthly city where my husband and children resided. At the other end of the bridge appeared a city of heavenly beauty, an angelic or spiritual city. The bridge was raised slightly in the form of an arch, in fact it looked very much like a beautiful rainbow. On the bridge, in the very centre of it, stood a woman: her face was turned toward me; her eyes apparently looking directly into my own. The picture was so life-like that it seemed to me like real, moving, living things.

The form on the bridge had one hand extended toward me, the other toward the earthly city.

The form of a man now appeared, slowly moving from that city toward the form on the bridge, and as he walked, many other forms appeared near him, earnestly endeavouring to

hold him back; entreating him not to venture on that frail support, the rainbow bridge. And now it seemed to me that I could hear what they said.

Oh," said one, "the bridge is an illusion there is really no bridge there; it is but the freak of a rainbow; if you venture on it you will sink into the abyss and be eternally lost; for the abyss between the two worlds really descends into hell." Others caught at the skirts of his coat and tried, by main strength, to hold him back. Still others appeared to jeer and deride him, but he kept his eyes earnestly fixed upon the form on the bridge. And now the workings of his mind were made clear to me, and I seemed to hear him say:

This bridge is no delusion: although it is as light and airy as a rainbow, yet I am certain it leads into the immortal country, and the woman standing there, in the middle of it, is as substantial as I am. If the bridge will bear her, it will me. Let me but shake off these detaining hands, ascend the bridge far enough to grasp hers, and I shall learn all about this heavenly country that is now hidden from my sight because I cannot see across this wide and

dark abyss; she, standing at the very acme of the bridge, and half way between this and the country which is invisible to me, must clearly perceive both; and, whether I sink into the abyss or not, upon the bridge I will surely venture."

Saying this, he shook off the detaining, fearful hands, and with firm step he rapidly made his way up the rainbow bridge. At first he was fearful the bridge might prove treacherous and let him down into the gulf, but the further he went the stronger the bridge appeared to be. It really was as firm as the eternal rock of ages, and once fairly out upon it the gulf disappeared entirely. The rainbow bridge stretched out in width until it encompassed the whole earth—stretched into eternity, without beginning or end. All this he clearly saw before he reached the woman's side. At length his hand clasped hers.

"Mary," said Annie, "clasp that woman's other hand," and I at once obeyed.

Oh! joy—joy! The gulf was spanned! The bridge complete, for this woman was the medium of communication between the man and myself—whose eyes were opened to the

truth at last. But who was the man? I gazed at him in questioning wonderment. Really, I did not recognize him. He was a fine, noble-looking man in the prime of life, and I instinctively knew that he was great and good. A singular mark around one of his eyes attracted my attention. My soul shook like a leaf in the wind. Great heavens! It was my little cherub of earth—my boy of three—grown a man. His little bandy legs, that had caused me so much uneasiness, were now straight and well-shaped; his form was erect; the birthmark had not entirely disappeared, but in nowise detracted from his manly beauty. But the woman? Who was the woman? I had not known her on the earth, had never seen her before to my knowledge.

"She is, at present, a little child," replied Sigismund to my thought. "This beautiful picture, which Annie has painted for you, is but a forecasting of that which is to be:"

And as I gazed the picture slowly faded from my sight.

"Of that which is to be?" I repeated. "How is it possible to know that which is to be?"

"That which was, is; and that which is, was"; said Sigismund; "therefore, to the wise, that which is to be, is. You have been taught in the past that God knoweth all things, all that ever was, all that is, all that ever shall be. Now there is a great eternal truth, or law, hidden within those words, and when once your mind is entirely disabused from the idea of a personal God in the form of a man, and you accept the great truth that the soul of man is the God-soul, you will at once comprehend that all there is to be may be known to the soul of man; and as Annie's soul has been freed from the material for many years, and become more wise and God-like, she is able to see that which was, that which is, and that which is to be; at least, she can comprehend these things through long periods of time which to your soul, not yet far advanced, might seem impossible."

"But how did Annie make that picture appear upon the wall?" I asked, utterly non-plussed. It seems to me impossible, incredible I"

"You have been taught, also, that nothing is impossible with God, and you did not think

such an assertion strange when you were on the earth. People there generally accept that thought as true. It is true, but not precisely as it is understood by man. I mean, not in the sense that there is a personal God, and to him and him alone are all things possible, but to the soul of man—the eternal God-soul of man—all things are possible; and, for this reason, Annie was able to paint the picture on the wall, as you will also be able to do when you have the requisite wisdom, the knowledge which is required to perform the act."

Annie gave me a bright, sweet smile.

"Sister," she said, "thoughts are real things to the soul. I but projected my thoughts upon the wall, so that you might be able to perceive them like a picture. Earthly paintings are nothing but thoughts transferred, or made objective, on canvas by the use of a few colors, similar to those of the rainbow bridge, mixed up in oil or water. But we have more knowledge, and greater art in painting than the poor, plodding, material artist, who cannot make the picture within his soul visible until he has toiled for months,

perhaps, with brush and paints on canvas. Would you not much prefer to paint pictures as you saw me paint them, perfectly, and in a few moments, with little trouble and intense pleasure, than be obliged to plod like an earthly painter?"

"Oh, yes," was my reply. But your picture vanished away, and that of an earthly painter does not."

"Neither does my picture vanish," she said,

but will remain for ever."

"Remain? Why, it is gone! I cannot see it."

"Cannot you?" she said, with a little, quizzical smile. "Look within your own soul, dear Mary, and tell me what you see. My picture is merely transferred to your soul, where it will remain for ever."

And instantly within my mind arose the lovely picture, even more beautiful than at first, filling me with sweet hopes and joyful expectations, for, to span the gulf had been my first earnest prayer or desire, and the picture was a sure forecasting of its fulfilment.

"The earthly painter's picture can easily be destroyed," said Sigismund, "but soul

pictures, never. Material things are fleeting and perishable, but spiritual things endure for ever."

The picture was so exceedingly beautiful, and I had been so happy in its contemplation, that for the moment I had lost sight of the fact that it must necessarily refer to a period of time very remote from the present. Certainly, very many years must pass before that dear little boy could be a man of mature years. My spirits fell as the thought forced itself home to me.

"O Annie! Annie!" I cried; "You cannot mean that nearly half-a-century must pass before I shall be able to span the gulf betwixt my darlings and myself?"

"Mary," she replied, "what signifies half-a-century, or more, to a soul who can never, never die? Have you not half of your precious children here, with you now? and, sweet sister, look again upon the wall."

My eyes rapidly turned to the blank place on the wall. Where the first picture had made its appearance another one was slowly outlining itself, and, presently, it glowed distinctly in all* its beauty: it appeared to be the restless

ocean without any land visible. At first nothing was visible but a waste of waters. The waves seemed to be rolling in one after another. Soon I caught sight of a little form floating upon the water, and with each wave the child was borne nearer and nearer, until—oh, happiness!—my baby was thrown almost into my arms. I made a sudden spring, as if to catch her, when remembering it was but a picture, I sank back with a gasp.

"Your baby will soon be with you, dear Mary," said Annie, "and then four children will be here, while only two remain below. Those on earth may not be conscious of your loving care for many years, but that will not deter you from watching over and guarding them from harm. Aye, you can do far more for them here than you could there. As soon as you obtain the requisite wisdom, you can nearly shape their course in life; you can daily feed their little souls with the breath of your heavenly love, and silently instill into their minds, wisdom and power. Eventually the beautiful bridge spanning the gulf will be thrown across the abyss, and the feet of angels shall walk to and fro upon it."

I begin to comprehend you at last," I said, starting up. "My love can do very little until I obtain more wisdom. One must understand how to do before one can accomplish anything, and like a growing child I long to begin."

"You began sometime ago," said Sigismund. You have already taken your first steps, and are about to walk alone, or in other words, to seek wisdom for yourself. In dropping error and taking up truth you have advanced quite a distance on the road to wisdom, and you feel some strength within yourself, do you not?"

"Oh, yes," was my reply, as I moved briskly about the room. "But where are the children? Is it not nearly time for them to return from school?" going to the window and looking out.

"The children do not live here," said Annie; "they merely came to welcome you. This is one of my homes, and your children do not reside with me. Now, sweet sister, you shall have your desire between two things; yes, between three. Sigismund and I will take you to visit one of the saints, the school in which your two little girls are placed, or we will take you directly to an educational hall for ladies."

"Am I not, then, to live here with you, and have my children live with me?"

"Such a course would not be the best way to obtain heavenly wisdom," answered Sigismund; "and as you are now in quest of wisdom, if you were to remain in this place you would not even be able to teach the two little girls who are here in the heavens; they are at

this time wiser than yourself, and you can learn much from them."

I felt a slight pang of disappointment, and seated myself while deciding which of the three things were preferable. Certainly a visit to one of the saints must be instructive and delightful, an educational hall for ladies would be charming, but my two little daughters rested nearer my heart.

Again my eyes roved around the beautiful room. There stood the white bed, but I was

not weary, therefore the bed did not entice me, there being no present need of it. As the foregoing thought arose in my mind, the bed began to grow dim, and at length disappeared entirely. I looked into Annie's eyes with astonishment.

"Why! where has the bed gone?"

"We have nothing here which we do not need," she replied, "and as you have no further use for the bed, we have dispensed with it."

"Dispensed with it? Why, what do you mean?"

"We created that bed, especially for you, at a time when you needed it. Surely, dear sister, you must perceive that the bed could not have been a bed created like those of earth. Consider, for a moment, all that goes to make up such a bed on the earth. First, an elaborate bedstead. Think of the time and labor of many workmen, which must go to make even that. Think of the years upon years which must pass before the trees can grow that form the wood out, of which it is made—especially if it be an oak bedstead—of the art and elaborate carving, of the woodman who felled the trees in the wild old forest, of the saw-mill, of the great wheels and saws used before the rough planks were even formed, of the turning mills and lathes; then, of the mattress stuffed with hair, and the looms; the girls who weave the cloth; the labor that is required in the careful preparation of the hair of animals: then, the fine

sheets and woollen blankets; the downy pillows plucked from geese, and the labor of making them; and last, but not least, your bed had a white satin quilt. If that were made as they are made on earth, think of the thousands of silkworms and their cocoons; the labor of preparing and weaving the silk; the extra labor of making it into satin, so beautifully white and glossy, besides the making and quilting of the quilt. Ah, sister; it is much better to live in heaven than on earth, for I formed that beautiful bed, in a very few minutes, within my mind, and like the picture on the wall it became a real object, because of my desire to serve you in your time of need."

Then, slowly, one by one, each object within the room disappeared, and lastly the window together with the walls.

"The room and all it contained we created for you. Sigismund and myself created them within our minds, because of our desire to do so; and they became real things to your spirit, because they were of the spirit, and you are a spirit and can perceive and make use of spiritual things, which are thoughts of spiritual

beings, thrown from their interior, projected into space according to natural law governing thoughts."

My easy chair had also disappeared with the rest.

CHAPTER VII.

VISITING THE SCHOOL.

ANNIE, Sigismund and myself were now standing together on what at first appeared to me to be an open plain; and I shall describe to my readers this lovely landscape, as nearly as it can be through a mortal's hand holding the pen to write out my thoughts, the thoughts of my recollections, as they are projected by me upon the sensitive plate of the brain: for the person who writes is like one who stands upon the rainbow bridge, a medium, standing half-way between the two worlds, the connecting link between heaven and earth, one whose hand I now clasp after nearly half-a-century has passed.

O! solemn thought! The mother who has waited all these years, and but just consummated her first earnest desire or prayer;

who, all these years, has been earnestly striving to obtain heavenly wisdom that she might be able to teach her loved ones, care for and protect them; for love and wisdom are of no value unless used for the benefit of earth and heaven.

O! treat your mediums well. Be kind to them, standing as they do half-way between heaven and earth; too spiritual to do hard battle with earth and material things; not yet freed from the body, therefore, often clogged and dragged down by it and their earthly surroundings. Treat them well. Uphold and encourage them. Shield them from inharmonious conditions, for their extremely sensitive natures instantly reflect the conditions around them, and if you drag them down by your own inharmonious states, do not expect they will clearly reflect heaven. The faults are with yourselves more than with the mediums. Do not yourselves destroy the conditions necessary to obtain wisdom, love, and happiness.

We stood upon an open plain, and the eyes could roam for long, long distances around. The ground beneath our feet was soft and

elastic. For a short time I sprang up and down upon it, somewhat as a child does when first sitting down on springs, merely for, the pleasure the elastic springing motion gave me. My feet, really, scarcely touched the ground at all.

The most exquisitely beautiful flowers were growing profusely around, more perfect and beautiful than any ever seen on earth) yet of the same species.

"The earth," said Sigismund, "rolls, as a nucleus, about five miles beneath us, and we roll with it. We are now within the first Spiritual Sphere which surrounds the earth, and this sphere rests upon the earth's atmosphere. Our atmosphere is ethereal and our earth spiritual. If you let your gaze rest downward for a short time, Mary, you will be able to see the earth," and he pointed downward.

I looked with eager curiosity, and at length could see the earth for many, many miles in extent; could distinguish numerous towns and cities, the ocean, forests, hills and mountains; but, oh! how dark, coarse, and ugly they looked compared with this beautiful, spiritual,

ethereal world. They were heavy and gross while this world was light, airy, refined and exquisite. This spiritual earth did not obstruct our sight in the least. One could look through it as easily as one looks through glass.

"Glass is a very substantial substance," said Sigismund. "It will keep out air and water, yet one can see through it with ease. Our spiritual earth is substantial to us, yet we can see through it, but, unlike glass, we can pass through it as well. The spiritual particles composing it are so rare and transparent that they do not obstruct our sight, neither do they obstruct man's sight on earth, and that is the reason why he does not perceive anything between himself and other planets except his own atmosphere, which he is well aware does not extend very many miles in thickness about the earth. He looks through the spiritual world as one looks through glass, and would not know it was there unless he came in contact with it. A man looking through spectacles would not know they were on his nose if it were not for the rims and weight of the frame. The spiritual world can only be seen by spiritual beings."

I now raised my eyes from the earth, and let my sight reach out as far as possible into the spiritual world, and here also were beautiful cities, towns, forests, mountains, lakes, rivers, and ocean, all sparkling like jewels of light. Reader, if you have ever blown up a soap-bubble when a child, imagine something a little like it but exceeding it by many degrees in beauty; imagine this bubble ten thousand times ten thousand larger, filled with all manner of life, and you have but the faintest outline of that which I wish to convey of the atmosphere and landscape around me, as far as the eye could reach, and the earth as a dark, coarse nucleus. The coloring of this beautiful world was ten thousand times more beautiful than the colors within a soap-bubble or a prism. The colors of the rainbow are even gross compared with the coloring of this lovely land. Truly, it is the land of immortal and glorious beauty.

Earthly writers write romances of earth. O! let me write romances—true romances—of this heavenly country, where love never dies or grows weary: where youth is perennial and everlasting: where death or decay never enters.

A vast store-house of all things which take root and grow on earth, and then translate themselves here.

"Mary," said Annie, "we are now ready to go wherever you wish."

"I should like to visit all three of the places you mentioned," I replied.

"You can do so if you wish. You have only to decide which place you would like to visit first."

"Then I will visit the school where my little girls are. I greatly desire to know just how children are educated here in this beautiful world."

"Very well," she replied, and we started.

I did not follow after them this time, but was able to keep by Annie's side without much assistance from her. The short journey was so delightful that I must tell my readers about it.

We left the plain, and entered a grove. There were many kinds of trees within this grove, and all so exquisitely perfect that it was intense happiness just to look at them. There they stood in all their immortal beauty: the oak, the maple, the elm, the pine, and many others. A gentle breeze

sweet and solemn anthems through their branches, and beautiful birds, perched among the green and perfect leaves, joined their musical notes in harmony with the sighing wind. Soft moss covered the ground like a carpet. All around were trailing vines and most beautiful woodland flowers. Nothing was crowded. All seemed to have plenty of room, and, of course, there was not a decaying leaf or twig, no prostrate rotting logs, everything was glowing and sparkling with fresh perennial beauty. All seemed to find their places by a natural law which I did not at that time fully understand—and do you, my dear sir or madam, understand the natural law that causes your oak, elm, pine, or the birds and flowers which are in your earthly groves, to grow and find their natural places, when you are disposed to walk therein? And I did not understand, as I now do, the laws which governed this beautiful spiritual grove. It was enough for me, at that time, to walk through it feeling the joy and happiness which it gave me, as a child of earth does when gathering its woodland flowers. The child laughs and sings as naturally as the trees and

flowers grow, without questioning how they came there. If one were to ask the child, how they came there, it would look at the questioner in surprise, and answer: "Why, they grow here ": it was enough for me to know that all this beauty grew here naturally

Presently we paused by a rippling, singing brook. There was no hurry. Why should an immortal being hurry? The thought forced itself home to me, that eternity stretched for ever before me, and death nor decay could never more touch me. I felt a strong desire to sit down on this mossy bank, to rest and dream. Dream of what? Ah! rather to drink in all this beauty, to make it a part of my very life; and so we seated ourselves on the soft turf.

Annie and Sigismund had remained quite silent. Really, conversation was not needed. To breathe in this delightful life, and observe, was enough. As we sat there I saw many wild animals, but it surprised me no longer, for my mind had recognised the truth that all life, of whatever kind, was immortal, and lived here in this heavenly world as naturally as it had lived on the earth. I saw that the chain

of analogy ran up into this world; that is, all life and beauty on earth had its root in the earth, and all life and beauty here had its root within the life and beauty which the earth produced.

As we thus sat dreamily gazing, I espied a tent across the brook among the trees, or, rather, as I soon saw, an Indian wigwam. A lovely Indian maiden came tripping down a little foot-path, smiling and beckoning to us.

"Shall we let Dancing-Water ferry us across?" asked Annie, turning to me, "or would you prefer to float over?"

The Indian maiden attracted me, and I replied:

"O, we will let her ferry us across."

Annie waved her hand, and Dancing-Water stepped into a beautiful little canoe that was rising and falling with the mimic waves; a slight movement of her paddle sent the frail boat across; it touched the shore just at my feet. The lovely girl stood up in the canoe, her beautiful eyes fixed on mine.

"Ah! pale-face squaw, just come to happy hunting ground?" she asked. "Welcome! welcome! sweet sister!" and she threw a

bunch of the most fragrant flowers into my lap. Going to little papoose's school over there? and she pointed toward the east.

"Yes," answered Annie. "This lady has two little girls at that school, and we are about to pay them a visit. You may ferry us across, Dancing-Water, if you please."

This beautiful Indian girl appeared to be about sixteen years of age. She had an oval face, with soft, lovely features; clear, brown skin; large, flashing, dancing, black eyes. Her thick, shining black hair hung down her back, nearly to her feet; her rounded arms and limbs were bare. She was clothed in a single short skirt, of what appeared to be a beautifully spotted leopard skin, together with a little sleeveless blouse waist of white satin. A bunch of red poppies rested on her swelling bosom. The canoe was like one of birch bark, lined with soft, white furs; there were two seats, which were like pearl, and the boat was strewn with the brightest and most fragrant of flowers. Her two little hands grasped the paddle, which was of ivory. Once or twice she took one of her hands from the paddle to throw kisses to me, while saying

"Welcome—welcome! sweet pale-face lady! Welcome to happy hunting grounds."

We were soon seated in the boat, and with a few dexterous movements she shot it across the stream. Thanking her, we waved farewell, and were soon gliding onward. We had not advanced far, when in the distance I espied a little group coming toward us, and as they drew near I perceived a young lady surrounded by eight or ten little ones.

"The children are coming to meet us," said Annie, with a smile.

And presently my two little darlings rushed toward me from out the band. I caught the youngest in my arms, and covered her little cherubic face with kisses, while Agnes, the elder, had grasped my hand, and was caressing it rapturously. Putting her little sister down, and kneeling, I smoothed Agnes's Curly, golden hair, embraced and kissed her fondly.

"O! my precious darling!" I said. "Mama has come to see you, this time. But where is Joey? Is he not with you?"

"Joey does not belong to this school," replied Agnes, "but we can go to see him whenever we want to, and he comes to see us.

Joey is in a school for boys: they are all older than we are, and learn different things."

Annie now introduced me to the guide, or teacher, of this band of little ones. She was a beautiful young lady, perhaps eighteen, clothed in flowing, spotless white, with large, soulful, violet eyes, soft brown hair, coiled smoothly and loosely at the back of her head. Her form was perfect: her movements graceful in the extreme. I noticed a beautiful brooch at her throat, which contained a miniature set with pearls. She gave me her hand in welcome, and a soft smile parted her sweet lips.

"We are very glad to see you, dear madam," she said: "and I hope you will be pleased with the care I have taken of your little ones."

My heart bounded toward her in love and thankfulness.

"Then it is you who have cared for and taught my little babes, who left me weeping and mourning over their cold dead forms? I thought their little souls had gone to be with Jesus. It is you, instead of Jesus, who have cared for them?"

"Yes," she said softly, "it is I who have

kept them with me in this little school. There are countless numbers of babes and children here in this world; they could not all be with Jesus. Thousands of young ladies, like myself, take charge of little children, guide and teach them. Each band usually consists of about eight or ten. I have, at present, ten with me, but two of the older ones will soon go to another guide, or school."

"Surely, I can never thank you enough!" I said, pressing her hand to my heart. "Can you understand the gratitude of a mother's heart toward the one who has cared for her little babes, whom she supposed were lost in the great maelstrom of death, when she finds them blessed, happy, and content with such a beautiful, angelic being as yourself?"

"Yes," she breathed, "I understand. I comprehend your mother heart, for I have visited you many times before you left the earth. I often took your babes to see their mother, not wishing them to forget you, and if they were lost to you for a time, you were not lost to them. They have visited you nearly every day since coming here to live with me."

I now looked at the other little ones composing the band, and recognized two or three of them whom I had known on earth, had wept with their parents at their death, had helped shroud their little bodies for the grave; and here the precious darlings were, safe, beautiful, and happy. Oh! my soul was singing for joy.

CHAPTER VIII.

URSULA'S HISTORY.

WE soon approached the building used as a school-house and home for these little ones. They were all orphans, so their lovely teacher informed me. None of them had either father or mother in this world.

The house was situated near the banks of a beautiful lake. One could see the opposite shore, but quite indistinctly, and all around this exquisite sheet of water were other buildings, all, apparently, about the same size.

As we drew near, I perceived that the surface of the lake was literally covered with fairy-like boats, glittering and dancing on the waves: one could plainly hear the gleeful shouts of many voices. The little boats all had occupants, and they were playful, happy, cherubic children.

I paused in my surprise, and Ursula—that was the beautiful teacher's name—invited us into an elegant arbor near by, and close to the home. We took seats where we had a clear view of the lake. The children asked if they, too, might go out upon the water. Ursula consented with a playful wave of the hand. My two little girls clamored for a kiss, as they said:

"And we may go too, may we not, mama?"

I looked at Ursula, for all this was very surprising to me. It appeared quite dangerous for little girls to go sailing out upon such a great lake by themselves.

Ursula and Annie smiled.

"Run along darlings," said their teacher, "and I will explain it all to your mama, after you are gone."

The children all scampered off. Presently I saw four or five little boats join the others, and one of them held my little girls. The boat, in which they were, was in form and color like a half-blown wild rose, and each little girl held a shining, golden paddle.

"Mary," said Annie, "Sigismund and I will leave you with Ursula for a short time; we

have other work which we wish to be doing just now. Ursula has much to tell you, and it will be pleasant for you to remain awhile with your children."

She kissed me farewell; Sigismund took my hand, and, bending his stately head, pressed his lips upon it.

"Adieu, for a short time, sweet sister," they said, and left the arbor.

I was alone with the lovely Ursula, but the dancing boats and the happy children held my attention, for the sight was so heavenly I could not take my eyes from it.

None of the little girls appeared to be more than seven or eight years of age, and there were hundreds of them. Each little boat contained two, and sometimes three, occupants; they were singing and dancing about like flying birds. The lake was a dream of beauty.

Dear reader, imagine a sunset in Italy, where the clouds are not so dense and heavy as they are in less favored climes—imagine one of the loveliest of these sunsets, with an expanse of sky all pearl and gold, azure, purple, and white—imagine it really in undulatory waves, dotted all over with fairy-like

boats, these boats in various forms of the most beautiful things that can be imagined; some like lovely tinted sea-shells others in the form of roses, lilies, poppies, bluebells, and every beautiful flower that one can think of, besides a hundred other things, which I will not stop to mention: many of the children had little paddles, some like gold, others like silver and ivory; many others were like the stems and petals of flowers; lastly, these beautiful, seraphic children flashing their paddles in the water, swinging their small skiffs around as though keeping time to the strains of a waltz—and, my reader, you will get a faint idea of that which met my astonished eyes.

At length I turned toward Ursula. She was looking at me dreamily, her hands, like two white lilies, resting on her lap.

"Is there any danger of my children being drowned?" I asked.

"No," she replied. "There is no death of any kind in this land; they can sink down through that lake, if they wish to, without injury. I presume many of them will do so before they return; they explore the bottom of the lake equally with the surface."

And now I could see many of these children throwing themselves, as in sport, from the boats, playing awhile on the surface of the water, and then sinking out of sight; again, others were rising in groups to the surface, shaking the sparkling drops from their golden curls, joining their little hands, forming circles, and thus whirling around somewhat as earthly children do when at play; occasionally some lovely little head would rise up out of the water, just in the center of one of the circles, and then they would whirl faster than before. I could hear them singing sweet, childish songs; at the same time many of the little boats were drawing near the shore in various places; the children would land, and then go dancing, hand-in-hand, up to one of the houses, or, as Ursula said, the houses were all schools and homes for these sweet, little heavenly orphans, whose parents still remained below. Then, as my attention became fixed, first on one house and then another, I caught glimpses of beautiful young ladies coming forth to meet the children; these were their guides or teachers. Each young lady had her own little group or band of children,

and each child went to its own teacher and home.

"The heavenly spheres are filled with many thousand beautiful sights like this," said Ursula, "and millions of lovely children are educated in just such homes."

"These children all appear to be girls," I said, "and their teachers young ladies. Where are the boys and young men?"

"They are not far off," replied Ursula, with a smile, "but our heavenly schools are beautifully graded. You may call all which you see before you one school, if you please, and each home a class. You may call this a school for little girls, all under ten years of age, none less than three. If you look off to the right of the lake, you will observe a narrow channel, just where that large sailing vessel appears to be passing through to other parts. There is a twin lake beyond, very much like this, connected with this by that channel, and around that lake is a corresponding school for boys. We will visit it before you leave, if you like. That vessel, which is just now passing through the channel, has on board visitors who have been paying a visit to this school from the

other, probably parents, who have boys there and girls here."

"Why do not the boys and girls mingle together in schools, as they do on earth?" I asked.

"Higher wisdom orders it otherwise," she answered. "They visit each other, but do not mingle in the schools, and when you understand natural laws better, you will discover a great law regulating these homes."

I now desired to know more about this lovely Ursula—this teacher of innocent babes—this loving guide of my own dear little girls, and so I said:

"Have you been in this world very long? I feel interested to know something of your past life."

"Not very long," she replied. "I will tell you my history if you would like to hear it."

"I should like to hear it very much."

"When in the earth—life," she said, "I knew nothing of my parents whatever. I was a foundling—that is, I was found on the doorsteps of a rich man's house, by his servant, one summer's morning, about eighteen years ago—a little, wailing infant in a basket. The

rich man's wife looked at me in horror, for she had suspicions that I was the offspring, of her faithless husband; and her suspicions were true—he was my father, as I have discovered since I came to this world—so she at once sent me to a foundlings' home. It was a Catholic institution, and I was christened Ursula, after St. Ursula. I love the name, and so retain it. I was under strict discipline until ten years of age, when I was sent to a convent. Of my life in the convent it is useless to speak, except to say that I worked hard, leading a very austere and silent life, scarcely ever leaving the convent. When about seventeen years of age I fell into a decline, and thus came to this world a few months ago. I did not take charge of this school at once, but was placed, myself, in a school for young ladies, and after a preparatory education there, was allowed to take charge of this class of little girls. Have you noticed that little girl with the dark hair and large black eyes? Well; that little one is really my half-sister, the daughter of the rich man, my father; the proud lady, his wife, is her mother. I was the first to receive her soul, and give it the love and care which it

needed; now, I am her instructor in this school. My own father would not own me for his child, his lady wife sent me to a foundlings' home, knowing full well that I was her husband's child: I pined on earth for love, the natural love which my parents should have bestowed upon me; from austerity and need of that love, I fell into sickness and, what on earth is called, death. One of the first offices which I am now called upon to perform, is to receive the spirit of the little daughter born in wedlock, petted and acknowledged by my father, give her that love and care which they denied me, and it delights me to be able to do so. But, sweet lady, her wealthy parents, when she fell ill, called in the most skilful doctors who could be found; she was loved, petted and nursed to the amount of thousands of dollars; then, when the body could hold the little soul no longer, it was thrown out as helpless as mine was when I lay in a basket on my father's doorsteps; they sent me to a home for foundlings: I found their helpless little one, and have given her a home, instruction and much love.

"The rich lady had the little body, which was of no further use to her daughter, laid

in the costliest casket that could be obtained for money; the funeral expenses were simply enormous, the monument over the grave cost a small fortune; the lady wept and mourned for the child and would not be comforted, although she said the little one was in heaven resting in the bosom of Jesus, and she would see her child again at the resurrection. Well; I have taken that little girl nearly every day to see her father and mine and her weeping mother. We have tried in vain to make them feel our presence and understand us, but the fashionable mother will not believe that the spirits of the dead can return, simply, because it would render her unpopular in the church and among her friends; while my father, in secret, does not believe in a future state at all, but openly professes to think as his wife does, and both belong to the same church.

"My little half-sister is now an orphan, repudiated and cast off by both parents, although they know it not, but she is as sensible of it as I was when at her age I was repudiated and cast off by my parents, finding a home at a foundlings' hospital. My little half-sister died because of too much love and care. I died for

want of enough. If she had been permitted to lead a more natural life, to play and romp about, and take less poisonous medicines, she would have lived out her natural life on earth. If I could have been loved and cherished by my parents, as I ought to have been, I should have lived out my natural life on earth. My little sister is nearly ten. I am almost eighteen.

We are both orphans, and I am her guide and teacher. Suppose my unnatural father and her proud society mother knew the truth, do you think he would have cast me off or she would have sent me to a foundlings' home, or now both cast off their most cherished little daughter? Her name is Theresa, mine Ursula, and, dear lady, ours is one of the many touching romances of heaven."

Raising my hands and eyes in the earnestness of my desire, I exclaimed:

"O, that the gulf between the visible and the life invisible, to mortal sight, might be spanned!

"Amen!" echoed my sweet companion, Ursula.

"But mortals must meet us half-way," she said, "before the gulf can be spanned: their

minds must be receptive before they can receive our teaching and their brains sensitive to spiritual things before they can be sensibly inspired with them."

I then related to this lovely girl my own experience—how I had already returned to the earth, but could not make my husband or children understand that I was there with them—how my dear husband's mind was clouded by his unbelief in immortality: but, I have received a promise, or, rather, a prophecy, through my dear sister Annie's mind, that the gulf will be spanned. The prophetic picture was a bow set in the clouds like a bridge, and midway upon it stood a form; dear Annie called this person a medium between heaven and earth."

"Yes," replied Ursula, "I have already been taught, by one who, loves me, that the bow set in the clouds is the bridge which will surely connect heaven and earth, and those who stand midway are the keystones in the arch; without them the gulf could never be spanned; those persons with large sensitive brains will receive truthful impressions, their souls will be receptive, and being still within mortality while

yet they live between the two worlds, one hand grasping heavenly knowledge, the other extending it to the children of earth."

"Dear Ursula, we are work together," I said, "for we both earnestly desire the same thing—that our loved ones on the earth may recognize us."

"And, when they do," she replied, "we can tell them of ourselves, and the kind of life we lead here: when once this intercourse is fully established it will change the whole face of the earth, and the erroneous opinions of mankind concerning the future life and immortality. All the wrongs and sins that men and women commit, they will commit no more. Think you, my father would have thus wronged my mother and me, and now his own recognized child, if he knew just how it is here in the heavens? Think you, he would have thus wronged his own soul? But he believes that death is the end; that the grave hides all sin and error. He knows that I am dead, for he kept track of me while I lived, although he opened not his lips for fear of detection, and he now thinks the grave has closed over his fault for ever, whereas, it lives on throughout

eternity, it visits him every day, it tries to return good for evil, aye—my poor, unloved father His gold has been his curse but his children still live and he will yet be glad to own his cast-off daughter, some day. The grave cannot hide me. I am immortal!

"And your mother?" I asked. "You have told me nothing of her. What of your mother?"

Great tears started into Ursula's beautiful eyes.

My mother! My heart-broken deserted mother! She is in a convent, hidden from the world behind the veil of a nun: but the veil hides her not from the eyes of her loving Ursula. Ah! my mother knows me not, yet shall she see me shortly, for I shall receive her soul before many months are past. My mother's fault was the fault of a loving heart that gave all, to her own harm; but her wrongs will all be righted as time goes on. My mother was a beautiful Irish girl. Her parents were staunch Catholics, and well to do in life, but very strict disciplinarians. My father, at that time, was a young man and unmarried; he loved my mother as much as it was in his nature to love any one; he had asked her to

marry him; she had consented and all the wealth of her affection was lavished upon him; he took advantage of her youth and innocence, and then, shortly before the time set for their marriage, he deserted her, paid his court at another's shrine, where wealth was his sole object, and love did not enter into his feelings at all; at the time of my birth he had been married nearly six months, long enough for his wife to lose all confidence in his loyalty to herself. When my mother's parents discovered how their daughter had been wronged, they were filled with rage and despair; upon her head they heaped anathemas and curses. There was but one way, so they thought, to wipe out the sin. As soon as her child should be born, she must enter a convent and take the veil. My father was a Protestant, and my grandfather swore that no Protestant's brat should ever find shelter beneath his roof, At last the hour came in which I was ushered into life—the hour that should have been one of rejoicing that an immortal soul was born; it was, instead, an hour for deep cursing, and as soon as my wailing voice was heard, my grandmother packed me in a basket, and my grandfather

father carried me to the door of my father, rang the bell, and left me on the steps. Sweet lady, you know the rest. When my mother had somewhat recovered from her illness—they had told her the babe was dead, had died shortly after its birth—they forced her to take the veil, and she has been hidden for eighteen years.

"Shortly after coming to this world, I was taken by my guide, or teacher, to visit my mother in the cloister, and put into rapport with her unhappy mind; there I read all her wrongs, but me she knew not. I was then taken to my father, and here I found a world-serving man, whose aims in life were the getting of money, to reside in a palatial mansion, keep a retinue of servants; at the same time living in slavish fear of the fashionable world: these made up the sum of his life. Love, or adaptation, between him and his wife there was none; their only bond of union was little Theresa. She was the idol of both.

"When visiting my grand-parents, I learned from their minds how they had disposed of me at my birth, and from the others, all that I

knew of myself previous to the time when memory first asserted itself.

"At the time of my birth, my grandfather called me, "The brat of the Protestant!" and cast me on his doorstep as he might have done a young puppy—yes," she continued, the tears falling down on her lily-white hands, "my grandfather called me a brat, my own father cast me forth with other off-scourings, whilst Theresa, at her birth, was welcomed with joy, fondled and cradled in love and luxury, yet her father is my father, and my mother was the daughter of my grandfather."

I listened intently to Ursula's story. There *she* sat before me, more beautiful than a dream; graceful as a swan, pure as a lily; her large azure eyes swimming in tears, her sweet red lips trembling with emotion; her long hair had escaped from its confinement, and was sweeping about her like living threads of gold; and I began to realize that every angel in heaven had a romantic story to tell, either of joy or sorrow, guilt or wrong, but more likely all of the foregoing, well mixed, in their lives.

"Yes," went on Ursula, "I *was* a foundling.

I *am* an orphan. My father and mother are both, yet, within the earthly sphere."

Calling herself and these children orphans struck me rather strangely, and I said

"Why do you call yourself and your little band orphans?"

"I merely follow earthly teaching in this respect," she replied, "for it must be clear to you that if a child whose father and mother are here and the child still left on earth is an orphan, the rule holds good that the child who is here and the father and mother on earth must be an orphan also. We often feel ourselves orphaned as much as the corresponding orphan does on earth. As for me, I feel doubly orphaned, for my parents disowned and cast me off even before I knew that I lived."

"But why do you take this thing to heart so sadly?" I asked for all the angels in heaven must love you. Certainly, you cannot be unloved. We have been taught on earth that the love of heaven exceedeth that of father, mother, brother, sister, relative, or friend."

"Natural laws hold as good here as on the earth," she replied. "One does not dream of

saying that the inhabitants of earth love other fathers' and mothers' children better than they do their own. Do you love the children composing my band better than you do your own sweet little girls? You are an inhabitant of heaven now, and are as well able to answer my question as any other resident here."

Why, surely, her questions were most surprising!

"I love all in a general way, but not at all as I do my own children."

"No," she said, "neither does any other spirit. You have also felt your widowhood as much here as you would have done had your husband been the one to come to this life instead of yourself."

"Oh, it seems to me I have felt it more keenly than I should the case been reversed."

"Then, sweet lady, you have your answer, she said, "and for long periods of time you will be more interested in your own children and will love them better than you possibly can those of another; therefore, dear lady, I am sadder than most daughters, for I am a double orphan."

Yet you love your little band," I said, "and they love you."

"True," she replied, "but I love Theresa better than all the others. My own mother, in the convent on earth, is nearer and dearer to me than any other mother who lives, either here or there, and my father is my father always, and I love him accordingly. My love is enduring."

CHAPTER IX

ADAM AND Eve.

URSULA'S little band of children now entered the arbor. We had been so deeply engrossed in conversation that we had not been aware of their approach. They had become weary of their play on the lake, and therefore had returned to their sweet guide.

My dear little girls rushed toward me fondly. I embraced Agnes, and then she quietly took a seat by my side, whilst the little one nestled in my arms. Ursula kissed them all affectionately, and Theresa remained near her; the others grouped themselves here and there about the arbor, chatting and laughing gaily. All at once my attention was attracted to a distant corner where some glittering object lay coiled up. I started up in affright.

"Oh! what is that?" I cried. "Why! it looks like a serpent!"

Immediately the creature began crawling around among the children. I screamed in horror, and clasping my little one closer to my breast, ran out of the arbor, expecting the others would follow, but to my utter amazement no one else seemed at all alarmed, and, as I glanced backward, some of the children were actually playing with what I supposed to be a poisonous creature.

Ursula gave a little laugh, and called me back.

"Come back, dear lady," she cried. "The serpent cannot hurt you. Come back, and observe how beautiful he is. He is perfectly harmless, has no desire to injure any one, and could not if he would."

I had paused and turned at her call. I saw that the creature's bright eyes were intently fixed upon me. Oh, how my heart palpitated with fear and horror! The dreadful creature was arching its neck, and the children were actually stroking and playing with it; but I found it impossible to return. I could not overcome my native repugnance and fear. At length the creature went back to its corner, and Ursula came out followed by the children.

"You are not very much in love with the children's playmate, I see," she said, laughingly; "but, I assure you, it is perfectly harmless, as are all of the lower animals and reptiles in this world: not one can either bite or sting. We have named that serpent, Adam; and he makes his home in that arbor; his mate is also there. You did not observe her. We call her Eve; and, I am sure, they are a very beautiful pair. One would not fear serpents if one were Sure they were harmless, and, as we know them to be so, we feel no horror or dread of them: on the contrary, we rather admire them for their beauty and suppleness. That pair in the arbor are very intelligent, and as old as the supposed Adam and Eve."

"Adam and Eve!" I repeated. "You astonish me! and I am also surprised, beyond measure, to find serpents here in this life."

She smiled quizzically as she said:

"Well; Adam and Eve have as good a right to be here as you, the children, or myself.

We cannot destroy them if we would, and they cannot hurt us. But why do you look with such horror upon man's first progenitors?"

"First progenitors? Surely, what can you mean?"

"Just what I say," she replied, with a roguish smile. "They are the first or rudimentary forms that man ever wore; and we ought not to be ashamed of our ancestors. I am sure Adam, nor Eve, would never have disowned and cast-off their own offspring: low and vile as they may appear, they are truer to nature and themselves than many of their descendants. It is better to learn a lesson, even from Adam and Eve, than to remain in ignorance."

"What would people on the earth say, if it were possible for me to tell them, that serpents lived in this world, and that I had seen them?"

"Many of them would sneer and laugh at you, no doubt. Others might call you insane; but those same people firmly believe that a serpent conversed with Eve in the garden of Eden, and prevailed upon her to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If the serpent was wiser than Eve, and able to instruct her how to obtain knowledge, he is as worthy of immortality as she. I am certain our Adam and Eve, of the arbor, teach

the children and me many a good lesson, if we but take heed, and treat them kindly."

But whatever Ursula might say on the subject, I was not yet ready to take kindly to creatures whom I had feared and hated all my life, and so I told her. She laughed pleasantly as she replied:

"Well; I cannot say that any of us particularly love them, but as we know them to be entirely harmless, having no fear of them, cease to abhor them as we once did on earth. But, dear lady, would you now like to enter the house? or you may call it school-house if you prefer.

I assented, and we slowly moved in the direction of the house; and here I would like to pause and describe it—tell my readers just how a house, not made with hands, eternal and in the heavens, looks; yet there are no two precisely alike throughout all the heavens.

This little school-house was the first one that I had examined closely, all the others had appeared somewhat in the distance, and Annie's house had disappeared before I had fully observed it.

This little house was in the form of a circular

Chinese pagoda, a light veranda running all round it: the roof was bell-shaped, but instead of a bell an exquisite statue stood, one hand pointing upward, the other outstretched over a group of little children in statuary. The large figure represented a goddess so beautiful that it held me like a spell. The roof of this small structure appeared like shining gold; the statuary looked much more life-like than marble; in fact, the coloring was like the human form, and appeared soft and dainty; the drapery nearly transparent. The group of little ones was much the same.

The roof was supported by eight pillars, apparently of amethyst; each pillar was twined by a living vine; each vine differed from the other, and all were filled with the most exquisite flowers: around one was a lovely trailing rose, around another the dainty canary vine, and still another, the bright convolvulus; the others were vines such as I had never seen, and were beautiful beyond description. Hanging from the roof, midway between each pillar, were what looked like silver bells, and as a gentle breeze would strike them they tinkled most musically.

The floor of the veranda was slightly raised above the level of the ground, and appeared to be of amber. Beautiful little wicker chairs and settees were arranged about, decorated with knots of pale ribbon of various shades. There were four doors leading from the body of the house, and they were open. Four large oriel windows alternated with the doors, and they were more beautiful than a dream: they appeared like stained glass, but the staining was like that of a brilliant sunset, yet more lovely still. The doors were like pearl, the remaining body of the house like pure garnet of untold value, but one could readily perceive that this beautiful edifice had never been made with hands; it was a heavenly mansion, constructed by angels from their thoughts, or the desires of their love, for these little orphans, wherein the band retired for repose, and to receive instruction in many branches of knowledge.

An elegant garden of the most beautiful flowers surrounded the house, and birds were flitting hither and thither, singing their sweetest songs. I noticed many little canaries that I at once perceived had been pet birds

on the earth, but none were confined within cages here; they remained near the house for love of its inmates. There were also trees and flowering shrubs all around.

As we neared the gate, which led into the garden and to the veranda, a large Newfoundland dog rose up, with quiet dignity, to meet us.

"Are you glad to see us, Faithful?" said Ursula, laying her hand upon the dog's head.

He waved his tail slowly from side to side, and then turned his intelligent eyes on me.

"Oh! the strange lady is all right!" said Ursula, with a smile. "He thinks he must guard our doors here the same as he did on earth, and he will not allow a tramp to pass through. So you see we are all safe." Again she laughed with roguish glee.

"A tramp?" I questioned.

"Well; why not?" she asked. "There are thousands of tramps, thieves, murderers, savages, and guilty creatures of all kinds, ascending to this world, and one is as liable to meet with them here as there."

"Yet they cannot hurt you?" I said.

"They cannot kill our spiritual bodies, but they might injure the souls of these little ones

if left without guardians. If these children were left to associate with low degraded spirits, error would be instilled into their youthful minds, which must be guarded against. The children are immortal, and might be left without guides, but the angels in their higher wisdom know it is not best, and so they are graded into schools and classes, with each a competent teacher or guide."

"How strange it all is," I said, meditatively.

Surely, down on the earth they would not believe that there were schools in heaven."

"No," she replied; "but whoever thinks deeply on the subject must arrive very near the truth. There are thousands upon thousands of little children coming to this life every year; what can they think becomes of them? These little ones have no knowledge to speak of, they are simple and innocent, little buds and half-blown flowers, destined in time to become wise angels; and if they were not taught, how would they ever obtain wisdom? What would be thought of a father and mother on earth, who were rich or even in good circumstances, if they were to allow their children to remain untaught or in perfect

ignorance: do they not, rather, send their children to the best schools, and often spend thousands of dollars to instruct and educate them in all branches of knowledge, that they may become wise and accomplished? And, really, is it not reasonable to think that heaven has higher and better advantages than earth can give? Heaven is not inferior to earth in anything, much less the methods by which children are taught."

The great dog stood one side, and we passed through the gate. This gate was a gem of beauty. In form it was very much like a gate used for similar purposes on the earth, but instead of being made of wood or iron it appeared a gate of pearls hung with silver hinges, it also had a silver latch and catch.

The pearls were of many sizes, set together after the most beautiful pattern, and near the top of the gate pearls formed the words:

"Home for Orphans."

The dog, Faithful, greeted each child, as it passed through the gate, in an affectionate protecting way, as though he thought their lives and happiness were in his keeping. His extreme dignity and self-consequence provoked

a smile. Ursula smiled also, and seated herself on the emerald step which led up to the veranda. The great dog laid his nose on her knee, while she patted and caressed his intelligent head.

"You smile," she said, "because you were not prepared to find that dogs were immortal; but now that you are aware of the truth, I will tell you this dog's history—for he has a history more interesting than some human beings can boast. He accomplished a great deal of good during his life on earth, and saved many, very many, lives. He never committed an error or made a mistake. He never failed in his love or faithfulness, and he was as well aware that he saved lives as you or I would be if we had performed the same acts. He never killed man, woman, or child, although his size and strength would have enabled him to do so if he had been disposed; but he lost his own body while striving to save that of a human being, and he had suffered near unto death many times while performing the same kind mission. He is a real St. Bernard, and was kept and educated by the Benedictines for the purpose of going down the snow-bound

mountain, and rescuing travellers from a frozen grave. He was, at length, frozen and buried, accidentally, in the deep snow himself But here he is; my good old Faithful! more faithful and worthy than many human beings who think he has no soul. Nature is more considerate of him, even, than the human beings whose bodies he has saved, for they in their ignorance consigned him to everlasting death or oblivion; but natural law preserves him alive, for which, I am sure, the children and myself are very grateful."

The children were already romping on the veranda, and two or three little pet dogs, with bright ribbons about their necks to which silver bells were attached, were running, barking and playing joyfully with them. The bright little birds and singing canaries were also taking part in their play. Truly, such a happy, joyous class of little girls I never saw before. Not even my wildest dreams of heaven could compare with the reality.

Ursula and I seated ourselves on one of the wicker settees while the children skipped and played around. In and out of the garden they flew, singing and chatting joyously; as they

ran about among the shrubbery and flowers I perceived rabbits and white mice, butterflies, larks, robins, humming-birds, and many other creatures that I was familiar with. Two or three little kittens were scampering and playing together, and a couple of sedate cats were purring, and winking their large, yellow eyes. All was life; all was beauty; all was peace. The cats did not offer to touch the mice or the birds; their time for feeding on the bodies of their victims was long past, they lived but as spirits.

I know that all this will sound very strange to people who have been taught, from their youth up, that nothing but man existed after the death of the body; thus I had been taught, but it is a mistake. All life, whatsoever, is spirit, and all spirit is life; there is no death of any kind, or any where; the material body falls away from the spiritual and becomes disintegrated, but there is no death even in that; the spiritual body does not need it any longer as a covering or garment, and so drops it, and it becomes clothing for other forms of life which are spiritual. If such forms as I found here are the spirits of the forms developed on

earth, why is it more strange that they exist here than there? If they are worthy to exist at all, they are as worthy to exist in one place as another, for, surely, I found this life a counterpart of the one I had left, but vaster and far more beautiful.

CHAPTER X.

OLD PONTO

WHILE thus sitting in dreamy meditation, gazing out over the beautiful expanse of water, we observed a form approaching the gate, and, as it came nearer, I saw that it was a negro. He came up to the gate, and leaned his arms upon it.

"How do, Suly?" he said, rolling his great, black eyes toward her.

"Oh! is that you, Ponto?" exclaimed Ursula. "I am quite well, thank you. How are your master and mistress?"

"Oh—missus—she be takin' on, some'at but it'll all come right, bye-'n-bye!"

This negro was black as ebony, with hair as woolly as hair could be, great, rolling eyes, and thick, negro features. He wore a gracefully flowing robe of bright red, trimmed and faced with gold, tied about the waist with

golden cord and tassels. In his ears were large hoops of gold, and nearly all his fingers were covered with gold rings. I had now ceased to be surprised at what I saw, and was becoming eager and curious to learn all that I could. My mind was actually hungering and thirsting for knowledge.

"Your master takes more kindly to this life than your mistress?" continued Ursula, addressing the negro.

"Yes 'm—yes 'm; for massa done fo' expected he go ter hell, Miss Suly, but missus she spected to stan' fo' der Lord ob Glory, 'mong de Angels in der golden streets, an' she am awfully disampinted. Massa an' dis nigga make berry nice house fo' missus, but she cry all de time an' say, she am los'—she am los'! She do'n want to lib here; she want to lib in Glory wif de Lord! Massa he say, 'O Katy! dis am berry nice house we make fo' yo'. O, Katy! look! It am yo' husban'! O Katy, darlin', look! it am Le'nard.' But she cry an' say, 'Go 'way-go 'way! I wan' to lib in glory wif de Lord.' Den massa say, Look, Katy, darlin'! dis am ole Ponto dat sarve yo' so long, ever sin' yo' were a little

gal. See dem posies he brung yo'.' An' she strike at de posies, an' she say, 'Go 'way—go way! yo' big brack nigga!' an' den she wring her han's an' say, 'O—ho! O—ho! jus' ter tink, arter all my prayer, dat I shud hav' ter cum ter lib in der same place wif a big brack nigga—in der same place wif my slave! Am a missus no better den her slave, dat she go to der same worl' where he lib?' Den massa he say, 'Ponto jes stay here fo' love—he sarve us fo' love, an' I am yo'r husban', Le'nard. Say, Katy, darlin'! do'an yer know me?' Den she say, 'I hate yo', Le'nard! I always hated yo'! I wan' to lib in glory wif de Lord. It am all a lie—a lie! fo' I belonged to de church an' say my prayers reg'lar, an' did do all de Lord require me to do, an' now I am cas' off, now I am los'! Git out'n here, yo' big brack nigga! Yo' sarve me fo' love do yo'? I want none o' yer love! Aint yo' ashamed, Le'nard, ter talk about a brack nigga's love? If I wern't dead I'd hev him horsewhipped!' Dat am der way she go on, Miss Suly. Den I run ober here jes fo' ter look ar yo' pretty face an' de little gals. Who am dis lady, Suly?"

"This lady is the mother of those two little girls," replied Ursula. "She has been in this world but a few hours, still, I have not heard her say a word about the Lord of Glory."

"She do'n go on like my missus, den," and he doffed his bright cap, bowing low before me; "but missus, she 'll git ober it—she 'll git ober it, by-'n-bye!"

"Oh, yes," said Ursula, smiling brightly upon him; "she will get over it before long, and take to this life as kindly as any of us where are you going now, Ponto? you faithful old soul! I will warrant on some kind errand for that termagant who once owned you as her slave, and, I doubt not, had you whipped many a time."

"'Bout reg'Iar ebery week, 'cause, she sed, 'it war good fo' me."

"And then when you were feeble and old, your last whipping sent you here, did it not, Ponto?"

"Yes 'm; dat war de way ob it," he replied "but it war my las'whippin'; fo' de Lor' I'm glad, an' it am good to be here."

"You are a slave no longer, Ponto, and at

present you are much happier than your mistress."

"Bress de Lor'! yes 'm. De Lord hab been berry good to ole Ponto. No mo' whippin'—no mo' tile in de rice fiel'—nobody order ole Ponto 'bout now. Dis am berry good lan', flowin' wif milk an' honey. Dis am de promise' lan' ole Ponto look fo' so long, an' 'spected he'd neber fin' it."

He threw up his hands, and commenced chanting a beautiful melody. One could not catch all the words, but it was about the goodly land flowing with milk and honey.

"Where are you going now?" asked Ursula.

"Down by de ole riber Jerden," he replied, showing his teeth as he broadly smiled, which like those of the rest of his race, were as white as ivory.

"Oh, de riber—de beautiful riber Jerden! he chanted. "Down by the riber where de rushes grow, an' it am sparklin' wif silber an' gold! But de silber an' gold can stay dar; ole Ponto do'an need him no mo' Guess I'll gader some grapes fo'missus. She war powerful fond o' grapes fo' she come to dis worl'. 'Spec' she'll like um heah, an' when I come

'long back, little Katy she go wif me to see her mudder. Mabby when her mudder see her, she feel better contented to stay in dis worl' when she fin' her little Katy heah too."

"Yes," assented Ursula; "to find her child here will comfort her more than all else. Her mother love will be awakened, it will give her hope and courage, and help her to perceive the goodness and beauty of this life. This life to you, Ponto, is heaven; while to her, because she had expected something so different, it is, at present, hell."

Ponto doffed his cap to us once more, and went on singing and chanting to himself He was a very large, grand-looking negro, and he swayed his body gracefully in time to his melody. His full ebony features and bright flowing robe blended harmoniously with the beautiful scenery.

Ursula turned to me and asked if I would like to hear the story of the lady whom Ponto and herself had been talking of?

"Very much," was my reply.

"She is of a very old Southern family, who owned many slaves for years—an extremely proud, aristocratic woman—and as devout as

she is proud. She was also noted for her cruelty to her slaves. She was very set in her opinions, and domineering to the last degree. It was said of her, that it was easier to bend the heavens than to change her mind, and she ruled her household with a rod of iron. She was a cold, unloving wife, treating her husband with disdain. She married him solely because their estates joined, and uniting them would greatly increase their value. Her husband, on the contrary, was a very mild, amiable gentleman, and loved his wife as much as was possible. Old Ponto has been in this world a number of years. He was an old slave, owned by her, and was beaten to death for not performing the usual amount of labor, which, on account of his age, he was unable to accomplish. Even the overseer of her plantation had interceded for him, but she was inexorable: if the heavens were to fall, her orders must be carried out. Well, as you now see, it was better for the old slave, but she, of course, knew it not. Her husband came to this life a few months ago. Her little daughter, Katy, died of yellow fever two or three weeks since, and yesterday she, also, came here, for the

fever did not spare her, even, although her will was iron. Her former husband, and old Ponto have created for her a lovely home, where she may remain until her spirit shall accept wisdom enough to be content with life as it really is; but they are having a very hard time with her. She insists that there is just such a heaven as she always believed in when on the earth, and that she will go there, whether or no. She screams and cries continually, and upbraids her former husband, together with old Ponto, for keeping her from that heaven. She insists that her former slave, from hatred of her, is trying to drag her soul down into hell, but not being permitted to do this, he is holding her with the power which has been given him by satan, to keep her for a time out of heaven: but to heaven she is determined to go.

"And so she struggles, cries, and abuses them continually, telling her former husband that, on account of his weakness, satan and old Ponto have gotten the better of him, and between them they are holding her soul in bondage. She tries to beat them with her fists, but, of course, it does them no harm,

as it would if they were in a mortal form. She declares that Ponto's bright robe is evidence enough that he is an emissary from the depths of hell, and she will not look about her to see whether there is any brightness in this life or not: because it does not agree with that which she believed when on the earth, she will have none of it. She will not accept or look at anything, and they cannot get her forth from the house, for, she insists, if she were to yield to their wishes, she would be for ever lost in hell. She calls Ponto an imp of the devil, and that out of revenge for his merited whippings, he and his rightful master are determined to drag her down to hell, for which reason she struggles and beats them off. How long this state of things will last it is impossible to say. Poor Ponto is doing all he can to enlighten her, and so is her former husband. Her father and mother are not yet in this life. She was not a person whom anyone loved, therefore, there are not many here to interest themselves particularly on her account. Her former husband is the nearest friend she has in this life, except little Katy. Katy is that

little creature out in the garden, the child with the little kitten in her lap. She is not yet four years of age, and, of course, cannot teach her mother a great deal.

Ponto would have taken the child to her mother before this, but we all thought it would be useless, for she would be sure to say, that the old negro held the child, together with herself, in his awful power. You know, dear lady, that many of this kind of people are very superstitious."

Oh, what a story was this! Once more I raised my hands and eyes in my great desire, as I earnestly exclaimed:

"Oh, that the gulf betwixt heaven and earth might be spanned, and souls not remain in ignorance of this life to which they all must come

This unhappy woman expected, and had always been taught as I also had, that at death she would go to heaven or hell; that hell was a flaming pit presided over by satan and filled with lost souls; that heaven was a place where the streets were paved with gold, and God sat enthroned while the white-robed angels sang His praises for evermore.

Now in one sense this is all true, and the woman at this time was in hell, but the hell was within herself, caused by ignorance of the real truth which she, owing to a stubborn nature and wrong teaching, could or would not see; wisdom coupled with love would have made for her a heaven-bright, shining and glorious.

"Ursula, you speak of this woman's husband, as her former husband. What can you possibly mean by that? Is he not her husband, and with her at the present time?"

"He was her husband in the earth-life; he probably thinks he is her husband now, and she thinks so without a doubt; yet they are both mistaken, as I have good reason to think."

"Mistaken!" I exclaimed in surprise. "What can you mean?"

"I mean," she replied, "that it is very doubtful whether their souls are one. He is not at all like her, but is a mild, rather weak gentleman, easily satisfied, and very glad that this life is as beautiful as he finds it; his soul is not one that will progress very rapidly, and he will, possibly, remain very

much as he now is for some time to come. He has been here often to see little Katy, but has not cared to take her away; he thought that I could do better by her than he could. He preferred to live with Ponto, for being weak of mind and purposeless, he has not been able to erect a home for himself. The poor old slave is really more progressive than either the master or mistress; his earthlife being one of suffering and bondage, it spurred his soul into greater activity, and, finding now that he can have things by earnestly desiring them, he erected for himself a very lovely house, and you saw how nicely and appropriately he was clothed. Ponto really loved his master, and on that gentleman's arrival here, was one of the first to greet him, and offer a home in his own beautiful abode. The master's former slave now attended him for love. Really, their positions are reversed. The weak-minded master is not yet capable of erecting a home, and the slave, from the riches of his soul, gives to the master most bounteously. Thus the former slave has taken both master and mistress into his own home, where they will

probably remain until they become wiser, and he is doing all he can to teach them. How long she may remain in her present state it is hard to say."

"And will not this man and his wife remain man and wife for ever?"

"I think not," replied Ursula. "They do not appear to me to be the right halves which form a whole or perfect soul—a completed angel."

"What can you mean, my dear young lady?" I asked in surprise.

She smiled as she said:

"We all have much to learn, and eternity stretches before us that we may have plenty of time in which to increase our wisdom. There need be no hurry. Your own soul is not yet ready to comprehend a great truth, but the hint which I have given you will expand your mind somewhat: really, my friend, do you think, after what you have heard of these two people, that they are at all alike—one mild and weak, the other stubborn, despotic, and possessed of a cruel, indomitable will?"

"Surely not," I replied.

"Do you suppose two natures, so entirely

unlike, can blend into one harmonious whole, equally balancing each half the other?

"Why, really not!" I answered.

"Then you think, as I do, that they are not now husband and wife, although on earth, they held that relationship to each other."

"But is not such a relationship perpetuated here?"

If it is the true one which forms the angel, it remains for ever, but not otherwise. You heard Ponto repeat what she said about hating her husband, and that she had always disliked him. I do not doubt it in the least. She did not marry him for love, or because they were adapted to each other, but their estates joined, and she would become more rich and powerful if they were united; now, her soul is so poverty-stricken, that the slave, whom she caused to be whipped until he died, is the only one to take her in, give her a home, and feed her soul until she gets wiser and stronger. I fear it will take a nature like hers many days, to say the least."

"But could not a very bright and wise angel teach her better, and would she not be

more willing to be taught, by such an one than by the negro?"

"Her former husband took her soul at first, and he on earth would be considered her nearest of kin: but, we will suppose that bright and shining angels went to her, saying, as Ponto and her husband have said: 'There is no such heaven as you have been taught to believe in and there is no hell except the hell of ignorance and error'; and she were to cry out, as she has to them: 'I do not believe it! You are frauds and liars! Take me to heaven, instantly! that I may see God and his beautiful Christ. If you do not, you are arch-fiends, in the guise of angels, sent by satan to decoy my soul into hell!' If these beautiful angels were to tell her that wisdom and love had made them bright and shining, and she could not be like them until she had obtained sufficient love and wisdom to make her so; that it would take a great deal of experience and time; that God was, in part, her own soul, the wiser and more loving she became, the nearer she would approach unto God: do you think, in her present state, all this would do any good? Her stubborn will insists that heaven is a small

locality where she will see God, in the form of a man, sitting as a judge or potentate, with Christ at his right hand, and a few select, holy angels clothed in white, walking golden streets and singing praises to God forever. She firmly believes herself to be one of these chosen few, kept from going there by the emissaries of satan, in the persons of Ponto and her former husband whom she hated. She could not even understand a holy angel until she became a holy angel herself: but, when Ponto returns, we are going to see what her love for her child will do for her. The mother love is a powerful lever to move the soul, and it now rests with little Katy to subdue her mother's stubborn will."

I clasped my own little girls to my breast, as they came dancing up to me. My heart yearned for the three little children left below. We were soon going to pay Joey a visit; afterward I was determined to return to the earth again, and make sure that all was well with my darlings there.

CHAPTER XI.

An UNHAPPY WOMAN.

PRESENTLY Ponto came in sight, on his way back. His appearance was picturesque in the extreme. He bore on his head a beautiful basket, heaped with fruit and grapes; this he held with one hand, while with the other he led by a golden cord a beautiful white heifer. He was chanting musically, as before, a song in which "flowin' wif milk an' honey, Canaan an' de promise' lan'," and, "down by de riber Jerden," bore a large share.

I did not catch all the words, if indeed, there were others, but these were enough to show how happy and content he was. It was really the promised land to him, who had shortly before been a poor, old, worn out slave, whipped to his death.

He came up to the gate.

"Miss Suly," he said, "will you an' de stranger lady come long wif little Katy, while dis nigga bring de milk an' de honey, an' de grapes?"

Ursula laughingly replied:

"Yes, Ponto; we will come too. Would you like to go?" she asked, turning to me.

"Oh; very much!"

"We will take little Katy, and the other children can remain here until our return. Come, Katy," she called; "come! we are going to see your papa, and your mama has come to be with us too."

Katy came skipping up, holding the kittens in her apron.

"What! are you going to take the kittens?"

"Yes," replied Katy; "me mus' tate 'ittle tittens. 'ittle tittens want to see my papa, an' me sa'l dive one 'ittle titten to mama."

"Very well," said Ursula. "You shall take them along if you want to."

The child was a beautiful little creature, fair as a lily, with flaxen curls, and starry blue eyes. She was chubby, and dimpled as a cherub, which she very much resembled. She

wore a blue, silken frock, and white, gauzy pinafore, through which the pretty maltese and white kittens could plainly be seen: she also wore a necklace of small pearls around her pretty, white throat.

Ursula opened the gate, and we started; Ponto following with the basket and the heifer. Presently the little girl wanted to ride, and Ponto lifted her to the heifer's back, where she sat like a fairy queen, playing with the kittens. Ponto said she ought to be crowned; so he gathered some small, fragrant, star-shaped blossoms, wove them into a wreath, and placed them on her head.

Oh! how lovely everything was! We had not far to go, for just around a curve in the beautiful, winding path, we came in sight of the house. The lawn, which we were now crossing, was covered with the freshest and most beautiful of dandelion blossoms, with their long, pipe-like stems. Little Katy clapped her hands delightedly.

"O Ponto!" she cried. "Me want pitty posies!"

We all stopped, and Ponto, together with our aid, gathered a large number of, the

blossoms, and, while he was forming a wreath for the white heifer's neck, I had time to take in all the details of the house and its surroundings.

The house was erected in the midst of a wide-spreading green, was roomy and rambling, one story in height, with a wing here and another there to suit the fancy of the builder. There were a number of large old-fashioned windows, three or four doors, a portico here and a veranda there. There was no particular style of architecture about it. It seemed to have been thrown up after a promiscuous fashion, yet, altogether, presented quite a beautiful and imposing appearance: but its greatest charm lay in its exceedingly restful, home-like look. It reminded me of grandfathers, grandmothers, and sweet old-fashioned homes—and, surely, that must be a well-sweep near the house. The roof was almost flat, just rounded up sufficiently to hold a flagstaff, from which floated a bright flag—the American flag of stars and stripes—but in each stripe were printed words, and I read them with curiosity: they read thus:

Ethiopia's children will soon be free!

The strong arm of the Northman shall smite his Southern brother even unto death, and the powers of heaven shall descend, and rest within the soul of Abraham! By his hand shall Ethiopia's chain be loosed I"

At some distance from the house were clustered a number of outbuildings, and roaming around them were many animals of various kinds: conspicuous among them were a number of mules and donkeys. There were horses, colts, cows, calves, sheep, oxen, swine, pigs, turkeys, chickens, cocks, hens, peacocks, guinea-hens, rabbits, ducks, goslings, cats, dogs, crows, mocking-birds, parrots, and a great many other kind of birds which love to frequent home-like places and farmyards. At the back of all this, not far off, was a large tract of wooded land, which one could see was sequestered and very beautiful. A glancing, shining river wound its serpentine course between the farmyard and the woods. When my eyes had drunk in all the beautiful scenery, my attention was again called to Ponto, who was placing a hanging wreath of dandelions around the neck of the white heifer. Little Katy was shouting with glee, crying:

"How pitty the 'ittle cow looks; tause she has a yellow necklace."

We moved on. As we drew near the house I perceived a gentleman seated on one of the verandas; he was tall and slender, with light blue eyes, pale brown hair and beard; his appearance was somewhat dejected and forlorn; he greeted us with politeness, and clasped little Katy in his arms. She patted his face with her dimpled hands, and kissed him fondly many times.

Ponto turned his heifer loose, to roam about the place at her own sweet will and pleasure; many of the other creatures came up to her to get acquainted. We all took seats on the veranda, and we could distinctly hear the voice of the unhappy woman inside the house. She was groaning, praying, crying, and screaming alternately. The following were some of the words which caught my ear:

"O Lord, save me for Christ's sweet sake! O God, bend down thine ear, and hearken to the prayers of thine handmaiden! O God, in thine infinite mercy, save me from mine enemy! O Lord, bind min-adversary, that he may not drag my soul down to hell!

O God, smite this wicked old negro, who is in league with satan against me! O God, why hast thou hidden thy face from me? O Lord, smile upon me, and hear my prayers! Here, on my bended knees, I crave thy mercy! Hear me, O God, for Christ's sweet sake! Open to me the gates of paradise, that my soul may enter in!"

Then would come groanings, heart-rending cries, and loud screaming. The gentleman's face grew more and more dejected and disconsolate, as he hugged his little girl closer and closer to his breast.

Ponto had seated himself on the step of the veranda, and one could see two great, glistening tears resting on his cheeks.

"Dis nigga wish missus would listen to reason. Why; heah we all am right heah in de promis' lan', an' it am all flowin' wif milk an' honey. De Lor' he am a sperret, he am like a sweet bref ob air. De Lor' he pass by, an' bress Ponto all right. Jes' see how good de Lor' am. He gib Ponto, wifout money an' wifout price, all dese fine cattle an' horses, an' dem nice, fat pigs, an' he not eben ask ole Ponto feed um no mo'. Dey jes' all lub ole

Ponto, an' Ponto lub dem. Oh! de Lor' am bery good to Ponto! All de cattle an' de horses am free. Ponto doan hab to steal um. De Lor' in his marcy gib um to Ponto, as many as he like."

And Ponto wiped the tears from his cheeks, grinning with fond delight, as his great, rolling, black eyes roamed over his possessions.

The groaning and praying from within, again smote the ear. Little Katy looked frightened.

"It is mama," said the gentleman. "She is very unhappy. Let us go in, and see if we can comfort her."

But Katy held back.

"Who is hurting mama?" she asked.

"Not any one," he replied. "She is hurting herself, I think. Come, Katy! Come and see if you can comfort mama."

He led the reluctant child into the house immediately there was a violent scream. Ursula and I went to the open window, and looked in. The unhappy woman, on beholding her child, had covered her face with her hands, and was screaming with great violence:

"Oh! my child—my child—my child! My little innocent Katy! Has that fiend been able to decoy my child to her destruction?"

She was on her knees, wringing her hands, and swaying her form backward and forward; her black hair was hanging around her in dishevelled masses; her pallid features expressed horror and despair. Katy ran up to her mother, opened her pinafore, and cried gleefully:

"Mama—mama: des look at 'ese 'ittle tittens! See, mama. See my 'ittle tittens!"

The act was so perfectly natural and childlike that the mother was taken by surprise. She dropped her hands from her eyes, and stared at the little girl wonderingly. Such a vision of innocent beauty never was and never could be an inhabitant of hell. The little creature held up one of the kittens, and placed it on her mother's hand.

"O mama—mama! it 's pitty, pitty! an', see my wreaf, mama. Ole Ponto made it for me."

She pulled the wreath from her head, and hung it on her mother's arm, over the hand which held the little kitten. That mother,

there on her knees; the little child standing in front of her, her cherubic face wreathed in innocent smiles; the little bright-eyed kitten on the woman's extended hand; the wreaths of white blossoms hanging on her arm, made a picture I shall never forget. The woman glanced toward the window where Ursula and myself were looking in upon her. She rose slowly to her feet. Ursula smiled sweetly as she said:

"Pardon us, madam; but we have brought your baby to you, thinking you might wish to see her; we also assure you that we are not denizens of hell or in league with satan; in fact, we are not acquainted with his majesty at all, and have never seen him, although, one of us, at least, has been in this life many months. We have had your child in our keeping since she came here, and I think you will agree with us that she is none the worse for our care. We have also been taught, since coming to this life, that God helps those who help themselves; and if you wish God to save you from hell, you had best commence by saving yourself, taking care of your own child, trying to make your husband happy, and

humbly asking old Ponto's forgiveness, whom you caused to be whipped to death. Instead of going on your knees to an imaginary personal God, you had better go on your knees to one of his children whom you have most shamefully abused. We advise these methods, for they are the only ones whereby you will be able to climb into heaven. The heaven and the God, madam, are within yourself, if you so will it, or you can make a hell there whose flames will scorch your own soul."

The woman stood a picture of guilt and amazement. At last she stammered:

"Who—who are you? Perhaps God has commissioned you to accompany me to his blest abode?"

"Well," replied Ursula, "I have not seen a personal God any more than I have a personal devil, and I have been in this land for some time; but the God within my soul commissions me to enlighten the ignorant, teach truth instead of error, and work for the good of souls, wherever I find them: in this way, I gain a little more of heaven each hour; but one might go on, as you have been doing, for ever, and accomplish nothing toward getting

into heaven, but gradually sink deeper and deeper into hell. Come forth, madam, and look about you! Heaven may lie all around a fool, or a blind person, and they not know it. Take your little child by the hand; come forth, and open the eyes of your understanding that you may see, and the ears of your hearing that you may hear. Love and wisdom, beauty and heaven, lie all around you: you have but to put forth your hand, pluck and eat. God is wisdom! God is love! God is beauty and majesty! The God within me has commissioned me, as you said, to lead you into heaven; to open your eyes and your ears. Become as your own little child. Let her instruct you in wisdom's ways; for one who wishes to gain heaven must first become like a little child, who finds its heaven in natural objects, as your own little one does with kittens and flowers, riding on the backs of docile animals, and making a heaven with innocent smiles and gleeful laughter; loving that which is lovable, and growing, day by day, more heavenly and beautiful."

The woman still stood looking wildly at Ursula

"You cannot mean to tell me," she at last said, "that there is no God, no heaven, no hell; nothing but this place which looks so much like the earth that one can hardly tell the difference; where there are animals, negroes, and nobody can tell what other things besides?"

"I did not say there was no God," replied Ursula; "on the contrary, I mean to say that God is all things which are or were or ever shall be. We, here, recognize a God so grand, majestic and perfect, that it requires immensity to hold Him; although, we do not recognize a him alone as God, but a God so perfect that the male and female are one and indivisible, equally balanced and co-existent; but if you expect to see a small heaven for a select few and a personal male God seated on a throne, then my answer is: there is no such God: there is no such heaven. You ask me if there is no hell, and my reply is: yes, there is a hell, and you are at present within one of its compartments; or, a portion of it is within yourself, and we invite you to come out of hell. Nothing obliges you to remain there. You ask if you are to live in the same

place with animals, negroes, and no one can tell what besides. Our reply is: that the animals won't hurt you, the negro won't whip you to death, nor even whip you at all; but if he were to do so, it would be no more than you deserve, and if the soul of the negro was not in a higher heaven than your own, he would whip and torture you. Your former slave is far better than yourself, more acceptable to God and heaven."

The woman dropped the wreath and the kitten. Katy quickly picked them up; again placing the wreath on her little head she ran out on the veranda, and commenced to romp with the kittens; presently two or three little dogs joined in the play.

"Madam," said Ursula; "we are about to take some lunch. Will you come forth and join us."

"Miss," replied the woman; "you have talked to me in the most impertinent manner. I do not believe that you are all that you should be. My associations have always been of the best. I doubt if you are a proper person to sit at table with."

"Very well," answered Ursula; "then you

shall take your lunch by yourself; but, pray) come out and see what a nice lunch Ponto has prepared for you."

The foolish woman could not yet forget her former dignity. She began to arrange her dress, and assumed a commanding air, then she gracefully swept out to the veranda. Her husband, as we shall still call him, had already seated himself at the little table, which was spread for four. In the center stood a large, silver fruit dish, heaped with the grapes and fruit that Ponto had gathered, "down by de riber Jerden," as he said. She took her seat at the table, gave her husband a haughty glance, and then swept her eyes superciliously over the rest of the company.

"O, please, Miss Suly, jes' yo' take dis seat, and the stranger lady de odder one. Ponto jes' done break his ole heart ef yo' doan eat some ob de grapes an' de peaches an' plums. Dis ole nigga gader urn fo yo', sure."

"Yes; kindly sit at the table with us," entreated the gentleman. Katherine, do treat our guests with politeness," he continued, turning to his wife.

Ursula complied, and took one of the vacant

seats, whilst I took the other. Ponto brought sparkling water from the well, in a pitcher, and filled our goblets; the gentleman heaped our plates with the delicious fruit and grapes. Mrs. Evans raised a grape to her lips, but immediately put it down without tasting it. The expression of her face grew dark and ominous as a thunder-cloud. She gave Ursula a threatening glance.

"I care little for what you have said," she remarked. "An emissary of satan can put on a very attractive appearance when endeavoring to lead souls astray: I see through all your wiles! No doubt you were a very bad girl before you came to his life, but being quite good looking, satan thinks you will be able to do him good service. But, you shall never get the best of me! I promise you that! And as for this seeming fruit, I will not touch it! I am certain that, if I were to do so, it would give you more power over me. Any person who will tell me to my face that there is no God and no heaven, must be an extremely wicked, bad character: and I wonder that you, who look so much like a lady, should be found in the company of one who in the most

blasphemous and awful manner denies both God and the Saviour," she continued, turning to me.

Until now I had not spoken. I must own that I felt timid, and afraid of this strong, positive-minded woman. I had not been in this life long enough to have much strength of purpose, except that of loving and being with my children. I had not as yet much heavenly wisdom. I glanced at Ursula entreatingly, and then looked at Mrs. Evans deprecatingly.

"I have but lately arrived in this world," I said, at last, "and this young lady is the teacher of my two little girls, one a mere babe, the other but a little creature. I also found your little Katy in her care, besides other small children, and all the surroundings of their home so exquisitely beautiful, that I cannot associate her, or anything that I have* seen here, with satan or his emissaries; and, as I cannot think my own little darling's are destined for hell, knowing as I do that they never committed sin, it is not reasonable to think that a, young lady, who was not pure and good, should be given the charge of these

little innocents. Certainly, if there were a personal God, he would not allow sweet little babes, like yours and mine, to be given into the care of one of satan's emissaries. No, madam: I am sure that Miss Ursula is as good as she is beautiful. My own dear sister not only fetched me hither, but left me to stay, with my children and the young lady, as long as I liked: and, really, madam, I am constrained to accept things as I find them. I was born and bred a Catholic, and it was quite hard for me, at first, to give up my preconceived ideas.—I really did think, for awhile, that I was in purgatory, but I have already paid a visit to earth, and my husband and children there. As this world is not at all like what I thought purgatory to be, surely, one can not be blamed for accepting things as one finds them."

"Well," said she, "whatever you may think, I shall still hold to my own opinions, and the teachings of the holy church of God. I have heard that the devil can cast a mirage before people's eyes, and make them think they see that which is not, and am certain that this is what he is doing in your case and my own."

They are not really our children which we see, but some little satanic imps made to look like our little ones, that our souls may be misled, and more easily dragged down to hell. As for me, I will not again look upon that little imp resembling my Katy, who must be in heaven, swinging her little harp before the throne of God. Madam, you and I are being deceived by illusions, be sure of that; and, now I think of it, that little imp they call my Katy, has on a blue, silken gown, or something that looks like it. Certainly, angels do not wear silk frocks. O madam! we are being cruelly deceived!"

Ursula called to Katy: "Come here, darling!" And the little one came dancing toward her with curls flying in the sweet air, her small face aglow with happiness, one of the little kittens perched on her shoulder.

"We will let the kittens go now, Katy," said Ursula. "Come with me a moment," and she led the happy child into the house: presently, they returned. Katy's dress was changed. She now wore a long white robe, somewhat like a night-dress; her pearl ornaments had been taken off, her little feet were

bare; she looked as though just ready for bed, although it was yet broad day. Ursula led the child with one hand, and in the other she carried a little chair. She placed, the chair a short distance from where we were seated at the table, then, returning into the house, she fetched out a little harp. Placing Katy in the chair, she put the harp within her hands.

"Now, baby," she said, with a sweet smile;

Ursula wants you to sit there for a long, long time, and play the most exquisitely perfect music on the little harp; and, dearest, you must sing, all the while you are playing, praises to God."

Katy looked at Ursula wonderingly, then at the harp with greater wonder still; she picked at the strings in a playful way with her little, chubby fingers. Twing! twang! twing! The sound pleased the child, and for two or three minutes she twinged, twanged away, rocking herself backward and forward in the little chair. She picked the strings at random, without any method whatever.

"Oh," said Ursula, "you must play perfect and heavenly music, and sing at the same time."

Dess me don't want to any more. Me raver do play," and she threw the harp down.

"O, my darling! pick up the harp," said Ursula. "You want to please your mama; don't you, Katy? your mama, who has just come here to live with you? and, darling, she does not think your blue silk frock pretty or suitable. She thinks it better for you to wear that long white robe. Baby, in order to please mama, you must sit there and play that little harp for evermore. That is the only way to please her, and her particular kind of God."

Katy picked up the harp, for she had been accustomed to obey her gentle teacher for love alone, and stared at Ursula with round wondering eyes: presently two great tears rolled down the chubby little cheeks.

"Me tant play no more," she said, with a sob. "Me tant sin' eiver. Me don't know how to sin'. Dod don't want 'ittle dirls to sin when dey tant. I 's tired. Me wants to dit up out'en dis chair, an' do play wif my 'ittle tittens."

She threw the harp as far from her as her slight strength would allow.

"Me wants my frot on adin, an' my pinafore." She moved her little feet up and down with restless impatience.

"Me wish my mama didn't tome to see me. Katy don't like mama any more. Do way, mama!"

She jumped up from the chair and rushed to Ursula, hiding her face in her dress. This was the first time I had seen a child in tears or in the least unhappy.

Ursula smoothed the golden curls, caught up the child in her arms, and kissed her fondly. Once more the little face was wreathed in smiles. She patted the young lady's cheeks with her baby hands, crying:

Me want on my frot, Suly."

Ursula carried her back into the house, and soon returned. The baby was again clothed as before, and left to run and play about at her own sweet will and pleasure.

CHAPTER XII.

OLD ERROR WOUNDED, BUT NOT
CONQUERED.

MR. EVANS, in the meantime, had not spoken, but sat in a drooping, dejected attitude, and when Ursula had once more taken her seat at the table, he said, addressing his wife:

"Katherine, I begin to think that many of our former ideas were very foolish, and devoid of common sense. Really," he continued, with a smile, as he caught sight of his little daughter skipping and playing on the lawn, now here, now there, filling her little hands with flowers, while the kittens gamboled about her—"really, Katherine; how could a little child like that play the harp before it was old enough to be taught? Moreover, she does not know how to sing. She is not even old enough to comprehend anything about God or heaven. Really, Kate; it is ridiculous to

think that such a little creature, with her baby mind, could possibly play a harp and sing praises to God forever and for evermore."

Ursula gave a long, silvery laugh.

"I think," she observed, "that even if there were a personal God, he would be more cruel than satan is represented to be, if he could require millions upon millions of little children and babes to do nothing throughout eternity but sing his praises. One, certainly, would consider such a God as that capable of any horrible cruelty. Can you think that God is such an egotistical being that he requires nothing of the souls and spirits of men, women and children, but to shout his praises forever and forever?"

And her laughter pealed forth once more. The idea was really so ludicrous that I laughed too, in spite of my efforts to the contrary. Mr. Evans looked up more brightly and cheerfully than he had previously done, and Ponto showed his ivories nearly from ear to ear: catching up the baby's harp he began to play a negro melody, while he sang or, rather, chanted a medley about 'de promis' lan', de lan' flowin' wif milk an' honey.'

Bress de Lor'! Hallelujah! O, Canaan it am a happy lan'! Bress de Lor'! Hallelujah! Down by de riber Jerden! Hallelujah! De Lor' he am good to ole Ponto! Hallelujah! De Lor' bress my missus! Hallelujah!

"Shut up! you imp of satan!" exclaimed Mrs. Evans, wrathfully. "How dare you mock in that style? you horrible, wicked, old negro! Get out of my sight, or I shall be tempted to do you a mischief! What do you know of God or heaven?"

"Den ef I doan know nofing bout de Lor, my missus she do, an' she tell Ponto all 'bout him. Ha-ha!" and he smiled very broadly indeed.

Mrs. Evans was now beside herself with anger. She caught up her goblet, and flung it at the negro's head. I learned afterwards that she had been in the habit, before leaving the earth, of flinging goblets, dishes, knives and forks at the heads of her dependents and slaves, when in anger. The goblet went directly through the negro's head without doing him the slightest injury.

"He—he—he! Ha—ha—ha!" He laughed, loud and long. "Missus can't hurt ole Ponto.

"No—no!" he cried. "O, de Lor' am good! Bress de Lor'! Hallelujah!"

Mrs. Evans's face, at this juncture, was altogether frightful in its expression. I looked at her in great surprise, and began to realize that heaven and hell were conditions more than places: the negro and the little child were happy in their innocence, while the cultured and formerly very wealthy Mrs. Evans was burning in flames of torment. She believed in a small heaven, a personal God, a burning hell, and a devil; therefore, they resided within her own mind; her spirit lived and suffered within a hell of its own creating, whilst happiness and heaven lay all around her. The lady herself was not entirely to blame; she deserved pity. Those terrible ideas had been instilled into her mind by her parents, teachers, the church, and the society which she had frequented from her childhood up; she was now reaping the fruit of false teaching. Can my readers wonder that my soul ardently longed for the gulf between heaven and earth to be spanned, that truth instead of error might prevail among men? And is it at all surprising, now that the gulf is spanned, that

the bridges are thronged by an invisible host, willing and eager to break the bread of everlasting life with man, that he may eat of the tree of good and evil, and his eyes be opened to discover his nakedness? which means, that he may become aware how naked and ignorant his soul is of the truth.

The old mythological fable of Adam and Eve and the garden of Eden, means nothing more nor less; and the eating of the fruit of tree of knowledge of good and evil, whereby they discover their nakedness, means that by obtaining knowledge they thereby discovered how ignorant and naked they were, naked of the truths of creation and the immortal life. It was by thoughtfully observing a serpent or the lowest forms of reptile life, that set woman's mind to questioning about creation, life and immortality: through her, man also began to question, and, consequently, both found themselves very naked and ignorant; they also came to the conclusion, it was by diligence and labor alone that truth could be discovered.

How foolish for people to suppose that a serpent talked: or, that a person called Eve

plucked fruit from a tree whereby she discovered that her body was naked, when the old story is merely allegorical, or a pictured representation of the state of mankind without knowledge. Good and evil mean truth and error. But to return from this digression.

Mrs. Evans's face was really horrible to look at, so filled with revenge and wrath was it.

"Leonard!" she cried; "how can you sit there, and see your wife thus insulted and abused by a vile girl and a low, wicked negro? You are supinely weak, and always were! You never possessed manhood! You always would allow me to be insulted by any and everybody who chose to do so. I really think it makes you happy to see me abused! If you were half a man you would take my part! But, no! you usually add your insults to their injuries!"

"O Kate!" replied Mr. Evans; "I have always tried to do my best, and meant to be a good husband to you; but, somehow, we never could get along. You always turn upon me when you have trouble with others."

"And if I have turned to you, very little good ever came from it!" she said, tartly.

Mr. Evans again fell into his drooping, dejected attitude, which aroused my sympathy. Mrs. Evans now remained silent, her eyes flashing defiantly, a scowl on her countenance. At length the gentleman turned to me, saying:

"You seem to accept this life in a different spirit from what Katherine does; although, you tell us you were a strict Catholic up to the time of coming here, yet, you look very beautiful, quite happy and content. I wish Kate could look upon this life as you seem to do."

"There you are again!" she cried. "Every one is more beautiful and better than your wife! It has always been just that way! No wonder I am wretched! I have never had anything to make me otherwise!"

"I am quite happy," I said, replying to the gentleman. "This world is exceedingly beautiful to me; besides, the joy of finding my three lovely children, and they so beautiful and happy, how can one be otherwise than happy with them? I am quite happy, but cannot say that I am content: am eager to see more of this life, and learn as rapidly as possible. My sweet sister, whom I also have

found here, tells me that heaven and happiness extend for ever before us: the more wisdom we obtain, the nearer heaven we are; that it is love and wisdom which make heaven; that it is ignorance and error which make hell or unhappiness. Sir, you must pardon my boldness, for I am yet but a babe in wisdom, nevertheless, I feel like applying the test to your wife's condition and your own. Why are you both in hell or unhappiness? Mrs. Evans somewhat deeper in the flames than yourself."

Mr. Evans raised his eyes to mine with a look of great interest, yet they were sad and enquiring.

"Well, madam," he said, "I believe if Kate was happy and loved me, I should be as happy as you seem to be. We are here together, and our baby is also with us. You tell me, as does Miss Ursula, that love and wisdom make heaven. It is love which I need, and if I had love I believe I should soon obtain wisdom."

"When love and wisdom meet and join hands," said Ursula, "the gates of heaven are wide open to them.

"But Kate will never love me," he continued, despairingly. "She never has, she

never will, and without love I can never be happy."

"Very true," said Ursula; "but, Mr. Evans, you need not remain without love, and therefore need not be unhappy."

"What is that vile hussy saying to you? cried Mrs. Evans.

Mr. Evans looked guilty and frightened. I noticed that he trembled violently.

"I knew you were a vile, bad girl," screamed Mrs. Evans; "aiding my husband to be false to his marriage vows and to me! What do you mean, you wretched creature? Leave this house instantly, or I will call a servant and have you thrust forth!"

In her wrath she had forgotten where she was, and her earthly habit asserted itself.

"You forget yourself, Mrs. Evans," replied Ursula, quietly. "This is not your house; it belongs to your former slave, Ponto, an abode of his constructing, and I think he has done remarkably well considering the few advantages he has had in his past life. Madam, this house belongs to Ponto; and if he bids me go I shall be happy to obey, but if not I shall remain a short time longer."

Mrs. Evans covered her face with her hands, and screamed hysterically:

"O wretched—wretched woman that I am! O Lord, open thine ears to my cry! O Lord, open the gates of heaven that thine handmaiden may enter in! O Lord, take me to Thyself; for I am humbled even into the dust!"

"Mrs. Evans", said Ursula, with some severity you may keep on screaming in that style throughout eternity, and it will not do the least good: you will never enter heaven until you become wise and loving. If you would cease your screaming and praying, turn about and love your little child and your husband, recognize the goodness and generosity of your former slave, and accept the teachings of those who have been in this world longer than you have, allowing your former errors to drop away from you as this lady has done," turning to me, "you would begin to see the gates of heaven standing ajar, and before long you would be able to squeeze through."

"O leave me—leave me! you emissary of satan!" screamed the wretched woman. Leave me, or I shall go mad—mad—mad!" and she rushed back into the room which she had left,

and we could hear her sobbing and crying with hysterical violence.

Little Katy could not be prevailed upon to go near her mama again. Mr. Evans looked more despairing than ever, and Ponto appeared disgusted.

"It 'll neber do any good, Missy, Sul" he said. "It'll neber do any good."

"There is where you make a mistake, Ponto," replied Ursula. "Mrs. Evans will never forget what we have said to her, and when her natural stubbornness has become exhausted, better and higher resolves will take its place, and your mistress will yet be bright and happy. But we must leave you now. The children need me, and we must be going. Cheer up, Mr. Evans; cheer up, Ponto. All will yet be well. Shall we leave Katy, or take her back with us?"

"You had better take her with you," answered Mr. Evans, "until Katherine is better fitted to care for her."

And so we bade them adieu, and taking little Katy we started on our way back to the happy little school of girls.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN ELECTRIC CLOCK.

THE little ones came forth to meet us, with glad smiles and sweet kisses. I raised my youngest in my arms, her little hands clasped my neck, whilst Agnes linked her hand within mine. The young Theresa welcomed Ursula joyously, and all the children were delighted to see the baby Katy back with them again, for they had thought she would remain with her mama, and, thereby, they should lose her from among them. We all entered the house.

This was the first time I had been inside the little Pagoda, if one may be allowed so to call it, for it resembled a Pagoda more than anything else, but much larger than they usually are.

My readers may be interested in a description

of this unique school-room within one of the heavenly spheres.

It will be remembered that the building was circular, with four large oriel windows of elegantly-stained glass, uncurtained. There were pearly partitions between each window, running out into the room about six feet, forming compartments, and over each hung elegant lace draperies, woven in the most beautiful patterns; these draperies ran entirely around the room, which, of course, was circular; the compartments taking in the doors the same as the windows, and the curtains hanging the same over the door compartments, forming vestibules. Each window compartment contained a small round table of ebony with marble top, and each table was adorned with a basket of fragrant cut flowers. Two wicker chairs stood, one on either side of the table; they were light and exquisitely beautiful. A knot of bright ribbon was tied on each one.

Close to the pearly partitions, on each side of a compartment, were couches spread with white satin counterpanes, together with downy pillows covered by the softest of lace.

The window ledges were in the form of

basins, about a foot in width, the same in depth, running the entire length of the window ledge. In the center of each rose silver fountains, throwing up jets of water, which, curving back, fell into the basins in soft spray: the basins were always nearly full of water, and the bottom of each was covered with little shells, snails, pearls, bright pebbles of various colours, pieces of coral, and many other beautiful infinitesimal things, too numerous to mention.

In the center of the main apartment stood a large round table of ebony, inlaid with pearl, and grouped about the table were ten small chairs, similar to those within the compartments, besides larger chairs. This main room was quite spacious, large enough for all that was needed by the children and their teacher or guide. There were two pianos in this room, two or three harps, and a couple of violins; also, two or three easels, sustaining pictures not yet finished. Upon the large table were many books, together with sheets of music. The door of this lovely room usually stood wide open, a soft breeze just swaying the lace curtains. The ceiling was a complete azure

dome, and this dome was the most remarkable part of the whole building.

When I had seated myself in one of the larger chairs, and Ursula had taken the other, and the children had all run out into the garden to play, I fixed my eyes intently on this wonderful dome. Ursula sat, a dreamy smile just parting her beautiful lips.

"Ah!" she sighed, "how nice to be at home once more. Do you like my pretty home, dear lady?"

"Like it? It is exquisitely beautiful; and that dome is simply wonderful! Really, I must study it."

"Do, dear lady," she said; "and if you find anything which you do not understand, I may be able to explain it to you. That dome is our clock. I venture to say, it is the first clock of the kind that you ever saw."

"A clock!" I exclaimed, in great surprise.

"No; surely, I never saw a clock like that before. Does that mark your time?—and, now I think of it: what a long day this must be! Is there no night here at all?"

"Not exactly," she replied. "You will learn all about our habits here, in good time."

I now began to study the clock with great curiosity. The entire dome was filled by small revolving globes of various colours and sizes; the largest globe of all was black as jet, and streaming, from what appeared to be every pore, were rays of golden light. This globe was revolving in a pathway which ran completely around the dome, and directly opposite to it was another globe of nearly the same size, revolving in the same pathway, and at exactly the same rate of speed, so that it was always just opposite the first globe: this latter globe was spectral and transparent, one could see directly through it. It appeared somewhat like a thin, vapory, globular cloud; yet it was, if anything, more real and active than any of the others. Now, as these two globes thus revolved, there seemed to be a strange interblending or play, between them. As the pale globe revolved, it absorbed every ray of light from the globe of jet; at the same time it appeared to eliminate wave upon wave of its pale substance, and, as the jet globe revolved, these waves were like an ocean in which it bathed; and as it rolled it absorbed the waves, which seemed to be the food, or

fuel, which caused the rays of light to leap forth.

"That is a very strange kind of clock," I remarked.
"Please, explain it to me a little, Ursula."

"Well," she replied, roguishly, "that is an electric clock; or, at least, those two large globes form an electric battery which runs the clock, and the small globes mark the time. I presume you have seen a battery and understand something about electricity?"

"Oh, yes," I answered.

"Well," she continued, "those rays of light, which the jet globe throws out, are electrical; those amber waves, which the transparent globe throws off, are magnetic; those two globes form a complete battery, each discharging its force for the other's benefit."

"Really," I said, "how strange!"

"Lady," said she, "those two globes exactly represent the sun, and the true cause of light: by those I teach the children the central law of light."

These globes were all quite small, the one representing the sun not being larger than a good-sized orange. It was, of course, necessary

that they should be small, in order that they might have space in this comparatively small dome.

"You will observe," continued Ursula, "that there is but one system of worlds represented by our clock, and that system is the one to which the earth, where you and I had our birth, belongs. My little class of girls are not yet old enough to understand much more than they can learn by this one clock, or system of worlds."

"But why do you call it a clock?" I enquired.

"Because," she replied, "it is our only way of reckoning time here in this world. You must bear in mind, dear lady, that we are outside of time; that we are not on the earth, which turns over every twenty-four hours, and the light of the sun is not the light of the spiritual world. Our light is pure magnetism, and the electric light of the sun does not affect us."

Again my attention was fixed on this very interesting clock. All the other globes' names appearing near them, they all revolved within the space between the one which represented

the sun and the pale, magnetic globe, the sun's counterpart. There was Uranus, lying nearest the pale globe; then came Saturn, with her seven smaller satellites and rings; next, Jupiter, with his four satellites; then the Earth, with her one satellite; then Venus, Mars, and Mercury: they were all revolving, just as they really do within the heavens. Certainly, it was the most attractive sight that I had ever seen. Uranus was about the size of an egg; Saturn, as large as an English walnut, and her moons like small peas; Jupiter, as large as a common walnut, and his moons like pins' heads; Venus was as large as a good-sized currant, the others, like smaller ones.

"The motion of these globes," said Ursula, "is the only method that I have for teaching the children all about time; and the reason why we call it our clock, is, that it is all the time we know anything about: that is out only dial. I will not trouble you with the figuring of our time, but you can readily see that time is merely relative. The time on Uranus is very different from the time on the other planets: each one's time being according to its size. You will observe that it takes

Jupiter much longer to revolve completely over, than it does Mercury, Mars, or the Earth, and that each planet marks its own time according to its size. If we did not have this clock, the children here could get no idea of time. Time, to us, is merely from one event to another: but, dear lady, this one system is only a clock for children. As you go on in wisdom, the vastness of the astronomical heavens will be shown you, with its countless systems of worlds, and will be the clock which you will study; the gates of heaven will gradually be thrown wide open for your inspection. Lady, heaven has neither beginning nor end. You may go on forever and forever, be wiser and happier at every step you take. You can, as soon as you are qualified, visit each one of the planets which these toys represent, and learn all about them. You can be as active as you like throughout eternity, and yet there will be more to learn. Lady, you live forever, within heaven and God; and, as much of God and heaven lives within you as you are capable of holding; the more one grows, the greater one's capacity, I" the more of God and heaven one can contain."

"If there is no night here," I asked, "why do you have those little apartments and couches, that appear so much like beautiful sleeping-rooms?"

"They are sleeping-rooms," she replied.

"These little children must sleep. They left earth as unfinished buds; they can never blossom until they have passed through all the different stages of life, obtained the knowledge and experience that earth would have given them, had they remained there; therefore, they eat, sleep, play, study, and from little, unfinished buds, they thus gradually unfold into the perfect flower."

"Do children grow here, and become men and women?"

"Certainly," she replied. "If they did not, they would have great reason to complain of injustice, and justice is the perfect law: that which appears to the finite mind as injustice is the law of justice not yet fulfilled, and when injustice becomes strict justice in anything, or with any creature here or on the earth, when the law is perfected happiness is attained. If a little child, that passed from earth in its ignorance, was obliged to remain ignorant

and helpless for ever, how could it ever know anything of wisdom or truth? How could a helpless crying infant ever become wise or happy? Madam, a greater number of infants and children come to this life than adults or old people, and the first spheres surrounding the earth are largely made up of children, consequently they are filled with schools and classes of all kinds and grades."

CHAPTER XIV.

PAINTING, SINGING, AND SUPPER.

URSULA now rang a little silver bell, which she took from the table, and the children readily obeyed the summons: they entered the room quietly, and took seats in the little wicker chairs.

"Children," said she; "this lady would like to hear you sing, I am sure."

She then went to one of the pianos, and began to play a pretty, simple prelude, then the children commenced to sing a sweet song, all joining their voices, even to little Katy and my own youngest girl: these two little ones could not sing very well, of course, but Ursula said they could learn in no other way except by joining with those somewhat older and farther advanced than themselves. Ursula led the children with her own sweet voice and the piano: presently she arose, and Theresa

took her place: again they sang another sweet song, then she gave place to the next in age, and so on until every child had played and led in the singing, according to its ability. Now came Katy and my own little one. Ursula placed each in turn at the piano, and they played the major scale while all the children sang: "C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C."

This greatly delighted the little creatures, and Katy exclaimed in great glee:

"Me tan sin' now, tant me Suly?"

"Yes, darling," replied Ursula; "you can sing and play too, in your own little class, and one of these days you will be able to play the harp and sing to your mama: but, baby, you will have to learn how first, and you are getting along very nicely."

One of the little girls now played a sweet, simple air on the violin, while the others remained silent, and listened with great attention.

"This little girl," said Ursula, "has an especial talent for composing music, and she loves the violin better than any other musical instrument. She has composed many pieces already, and that sweet air which she has just performed, is one of her compositions.

Whenever I find a child has a particular gift, I encourage and give every opportunity for its cultivation.

"Now we will have some pictures," she continued, and a little girl seated herself in front of an easel. It was one on which there was no picture; but, instead of a canvas being stretched on a frame, there was a shining surface of palest blue, oval in form. The little girl sat for a short time with rapt, thoughtful face and motionless, gazing intently at the oval frame, or rather, its shining surface. This surprised me, for I had expected her to use brushes and pallet. Presently she arose with a smile, and turned the easel so that we could all see the picture which she had transferred to the oval plate, and it was a very beautiful picture indeed. As Annie had drawn pictures for me in the same way, I understood how it was done, or comprehended it in part.

"We draw, or transfer, all our pictures here, upon a sensitive plate, by the use of magnetism and electricity," explained Ursula. "Our clock is run in the same way. That plate is merely a thin plate of silver. First, it is magnetised, and we keep a number of them

on hand, which have previously been magnetised, ready for use, as the younger children do not as yet understand how to magnetise a silver plate. This process is accomplished by those more advanced than we are—by angels who understand scientific processes better than we do—and we transfer a picture to the prepared plates by fixing the mind intently on the plate, at the same time forming the picture with great distinctness within our minds; the picture is thus transferred to the magnetic plate by the electric rays of light shooting from our minds directly upon the plate, and the picture is fixed there by the combination of magnetism and electricity; or, rather, when the rays of electric light strike the magnetic plate, the magnetism is changed into the various shades and colors requisite for the picture. You know, dear lady, that when the electric light of the sun strikes an opaque cloud at a certain angle, a rainbow appears visible to the people of earth, and all the colors with which one desires to paint a picture, reside within the electric rays which are disclosed by a rainbow. Now that magnetised sensitive plate is opaque, the same as

the cloud is; and when that little girl casts the electric rays from her mind, or spirit, at a certain angle on that plate, it forms the picture that she has drawn in her mind, precisely as a rainbow is formed in the clouds of earth, or, the principle is the same."

All the little girls, in turn, now painted a picture. It did not take each one but a few seconds, and every girl formed a picture according to her age and ability; at last, it was Katy's turn. My baby was too young for this, but Katy was just commencing.

"Now," said Ursula, "can Katy make a little picture?"

"Dess me tan," said Katy, pursing up her sweet lips. "Now you all keep still while me finks."

And Katy fixed her dewy eyes on the prepared plate. Presently she clapped her little hands in glee. Ursula turned the easel toward us, and there, in bold relief, stood the white heifer, with the wreath of dandelions around her neck.

"Well done, Katy!" said Ursula. "You shall paint another one as a reward."

She placed another plate on the easel; Katy

fixed her eyes on it intently with a sort of scared expression, and soon turned away. Ursula moved the easel toward us, and there, with scowling, angry features, was Mrs. Evans, her hand upraised just in the act of throwing the goblet at Ponto's head, while the negro was showing all his ivories.

"All acts are pictures which remain within the mind of the beholder forever," said Ursula, with a sigh. "Would that this child's mother had not left such a picture within her little daughter's soul, never to be erased while the ages roll onward. All the world is a picture painted by the electric rays from the sun, as they strike sensitive, opaque substance; for when there is no light there is no picture nothing is visible. So, think it not strange that we here paint our pictures from the electricity, which resides within us, upon magnetised plates."

"Now," continued Ursula, "we must have our supper, and then retire. Theresa, you, Addie and Jennie, may go, this time, and gather fruit for our supper."

The three little girls each took a light tray, and started forth with bright eyes and rosy

cheeks. As they passed the open doors, they presented a beautiful picture, with their gauzy robes, waving locks and graceful, dancing steps: three other little girls were now required to lay the table, which they seemed well pleased to do. From a dresser near by, they brought plates which looked like rare china, together with what appeared to be silver forks, crystal goblets, and, lastly, two large silver fruit dishes. A plate was set for each, together with knife, fork and goblet: the books and music were removed from the table, and Ursula placed in the center of it a silver fountain. Two little girls ran out, and presently returned, each bringing a beautiful bouquet of flowers, which Ursula placed in a couple of lovely vases on the table. A dainty white napkin was put on each plate, by little Katy, every child seeming desirous of doing something toward preparing the supper, and by the time that all was ready the three little girls returned, their trays filled with luscious fruit: peaches, pears, apples, plums, oranges, bananas, strawberries, and many other kinds. Ursula heaped the silver fruit dishes, and we all seated ourselves at the table. Ursula filled

our goblets with sparkling water from the fountain, and heaped our plates with the fruit we commenced our supper, or, rather, feast. The little girls chatted and laughed; told little stories about things which they had seen on and within the lake, and the different flowers and fruits which they had observed on the land; told anecdotes about playful pet animals and birds.

How beautiful they were, with their little bright, happy faces, their rippling laughter, their lovely attire, and sweet contentment.

Agnes was seated at my right, and my little one at my left. Theresa had a place at Ursula's right, and Katy at her left. The others were seated after an orderly and pretty way. While the little girls chatted and laughed, in their more childish way, Ursula conversed with me.

"How strange it would seem to the people on the earth, if we could tell them that there was fruit in heaven, and that the spirits eat and drink," I said, rather thoughtfully.

"Yes; very strange," she replied. "It is surprising how little they really know about this life; but all the fruit we have here comes

from the earth. This fruit which we are eating is the spirit of the fruit, which decays in the earth life, just as your spirit and mine are the same spirits that were once within bodies which decayed, or are dead at the present time; and yet we are here, more alive than before, eating of this spiritual fruit that has decayed, or is dead at the present time, on earth. The great law of spiritual life holds good in all things. How barren and desolate this world would be if it did not. If the earth was ages in preparing itself for man, the spiritual world has been as long preparing itself for the spirits of mankind to find a habitation, when they shall leave their natural bodies."

"My dear young lady, did you construct this beautiful building?"

"Oh, no," she replied. "The angels constructed it for a school-room. I was merely sent here, to take charge of this little class, from a school for young ladies in which I had been for some time: the lady-superior of that school thought I had become qualified to teach this little class."

"And she was right, I said. "Do you

know who constructed the electric clock which interests me so much?"

"That clock was constructed by Sir William Herschel, with the assistance of other famous astronomical personages: those great minds are following out their studies here on a much grander scale than they did on earth, without the impediment of the flesh. I think that the restless souls of many of the greatest men who have ever lived on earth, would find it very hard and extremely unjust if, when at the death of their material bodies—which they had found such weights and clogs to the aspiring mind, thirsting for greater knowledge than it was possible for it to attain while within a body—they were to find after leaving them no progress, no way of attaining more exalted wisdom, merely finding such a heaven as Mrs. Evans and many others believe in; and if they could do nothing else throughout eternity but sing praises to a personal God in the form of a man. The true way to serve God is to serve at the feet of wisdom, to get as much wisdom as one possibly can on all subjects. The souls of great men and women delight in discovering all which they could

not find out when on earth and within a body which hindered them; and, dear lady, eternity is but vast enough to hold all that may be known, not only vast enough for the angelic soul to attain all that may be attained. Light thrown on any subject gives back truth and beauty, but under the cover of darkness, error and ignorance hide their hideous heads. Sir William Herschel, by earnestly seeking wisdom in the light of truth, has raised himself into heavenly heights. Mrs. Evans, by hiding herself in the darkness of error, remains in unhappiness or hell. Sir William Herschel and others like him are exceedingly active souls when they discover a truth they turn and make use of it to benefit others. Mrs. Evans, and those like her, by stubbornly remaining in error keep others in darkness, unhappiness, or hell, who are related to them, either by blood, marriage, or society.

The gentleman, whom Mrs. Evans calls husband, is thus kept in error and unhappiness: his natural inclination is to accept things as he finds them: although somewhat mild and slow of perception, yet but for her he would rise into wisdom and happiness very

readily: she holds him back from heaven, and keeps him by her side in hell. Do you think, dear lady, that it is right for one soul to hold another in unhappiness or hell?"

"Certainly, not!" I replied. "But, perhaps, the husband may lead his wife into happiness or heaven."

"No," said Ursula; "for her mind dominates his, and holds it in subjection. A soul held in bondage is held in unhappiness or hell. Bondage of any kind is error and wrong. All captives should go free."

"Why need he remain in captivity?" I asked. "Why does he not leave her, and seek wisdom and happiness where it may be found?"

"Because she compels him to think, that, as they were married by the laws of earth, they must remain married for all time: but, lady, they never were married according to heavenly laws; he was bound to her as a captive is bound to a tyrant, not married in sweet heavenly union. True marriage should be a mutual blending of souls, should be reciprocal, giving and taking equally; neither one nor the other should be in any kind of bondage."

"How is it possible for one so young, one who has never been married, to understand such things so well?" I asked.

"I have been taught the true principles which govern marriage, at the school for young ladies which I entered on coming to this life, it being one of the principal subjects treated of in that school."

"My sweet sister Annie and her "husband seem to be very happy together," I said. Theirs must be a heavenly union."

"Yes," she replied. "Annie was taught, like myself, just how to marry—just who her true mate was—and the result is harmony, happiness or heaven; it is the true union of love and wisdom. Are love and wisdom united in Mr. Evans's case? Does he represent wisdom and his wife love?"

"Surely, not," was my reply.

"Then it is not marriage but bondage," she said. "Mr. Evans has, in reality, been his wife's slave, during all their so-called married life, instead of her husband."

My eyes opened wide with surprise.

"Her slave?" I questioned. "Surely, you cannot mean just what you say."

"I mean precisely what I say," she replied. Did not the law bind Mr. Evans to his wife, when they were on earth?"

"Certainly; they were bound by the law together in marriage."

"But when there is no marriage, what then must we call such a bond? There never existed between Mr. and Mrs. Evans mutual or conjugal love. Their marriage, at first, was one of convenience. Mrs. Evans's mind, even at that time, dominated his. She desired to own him, together with his estates, and the marriage bond made him her slave. She then considered that she owned him body and soul, and she treated him accordingly. Her strong will and stubborn mind made him as much her slave as ever Ponto was, about the only difference being, that she could not have him whipped, and his higher position kept him from, being obliged to perform very hard labor, but the relation which the two souls held toward each other was that of mistress and slave; his mind yielded always to hers, not from love, but fear. Her mind governed his, not because she loved him, but because she desired to bind him to herself for the benefit

which might accrue to her personally. Now, the earthly marriage bond ceases at the death of the body: the bond which held Ponto her slave ceased at his death, and Mr. Evans is now as free as Ponto. The former wife and mistress has now neither husband nor slave: according to soul laws, she has never had a husband, and he has never had a wife. How long her mind may be able to hold his in bondage, I cannot say, but I think not very long. If their marriage had been a true one, or a marriage of souls, it would have continued for ever. The death of the body releases thousands upon thousands of human beings from terrible bondage and unjust slavery, in some of its manifold forms.

CHAPTER XV.

REST.

SUPPER was now over. The St. Bernard, Faithful, entered the room with, dignified slowness, and went to each child in turn to receive a good-night caress; then to Ursula, before whom he stood longer than he did to the others, as though he well comprehended that she was the guardian of the little ones. She patted his head as she said:

"Good night, old Faithful! Guard us well, my good dog, while we sleep!"

He then passed before me, gazing into my eyes as though he would have said, if the power of speech had been his:

"You are a stranger here, yet I think you may be trusted."

Then he walked out and laid himself down by the gate, and Ursula said, that no creature'

could pass that gate until she had given Faithful the morning signal. The outer doors were now closed, which gave the interior of this beautiful building the appearance of twilight, because of its heavily stained windows, and after we had all joined in singing a soft anthem of praise, the little girls entered those beautiful compartments, two in each room: Ursula pointed to one which was vacant, saying that one of the couches I might occupy with my youngest child, while the other was for Agnes.

I was quite weary: the apparent day had been a very long one; I had seen a great deal for one day, and was very glad to rest.

Agnes kissed me good-night, and I was soon as fast asleep as I ever was when in the earth-life once or twice, during the apparent night, I awoke. The gentle stillness, the soft twilight, the sound of the water falling from the spraying fountains, lulled me back to repose. Surely, my dreams of paradise were more than realized.

I should judge that we thus rested for at least ten hours. It was not dark night, such as there is on earth, and, really, I do not think

it was dark at all outside of this beautiful little house; it was, merely, that we all needed rest, and by closing the doors we obtained it. As for me, I could not get along, at this time, without rest corresponding with earth's night.

At length we heard Ursula moving about in the main room. I arose, bathed my face in the reservoir of the fountain; my little ones did the same. I smoothed out my hair and theirs, then we joined Ursula in the schoolroom. Soon, all the children were there. We breakfasted, as we had supped, on fruit; and, shortly afterward, Annie and Sigismund came in. When our fond greetings were over, Annie said:

"Sister, we will now go and visit Joey. We had better leave your little girls here to receive their morning lessons."

'And so, bidding Ursula and the children adieu, we went forth to pay my eldest boy a visit. Annie said that his school-room was near the banks of the other lake, the twin to this. We floated on until the corresponding lake came into view, and soon we paused before a small house, somewhat different in style to the one we had left; instead of being

circular in form it was square; yet it was surmounted by a golden dome, and, instead of a spire, there stood at its apex a bronze statue representing Hercules, with hammer upraised in his right hand; in the left he carried a flagstaff, and from it floated a beautiful flag of white satin, bordered with green and gold. Upon the white ground, in golden letters, were the following words:

"SCIENCE AND ART."

"ERIN-GO-BRAGH."

This building had the appearance of polished granite, with four large plate-glass windows: the entrance was arched, and the large keystone was a brilliant diamond: the arch was deep, and within its recess was a door which appeared like solid oak. Seven steps ran up to this door: the first of granite, the second of marble, the third of gold, the fourth of pearl, the fifth of silver, the sixth of amber, the seventh a diamond. The door was entirely surrounded by stained glass windows, and there was an ebony knocker upon it. The house boasted no veranda, and stood even, with what seemed to be a side-walk of curious and very beautiful tiles.

This lake appeared very different from the other—its twin: instead of fairy-like boats it was covered with various kinds of shipping, There were ships, sloops, men-of-war, steamers, ironclads, ferry-boats, yachts, yawls, dories, skiffs, rafts, and lastly, very singular but exceedingly beautiful palace-boats, that seemed to be moving rapidly without any apparent means of locomotion.

Sigismund pointed to these boats, with a smile, saying:

"Mary, do you see those beautiful boats moving so swiftly through the water?"

"Yes," I replied, "and I am curious to know by what means they are propelled."

"Electricity is the motive power."

"Electricity?" I exclaimed, in surprise.

He assented smilingly. I observed that all the boats on the lake were quite small yet very perfect, and all the boats were manned by boys who appeared to be having a glorious time.

"These boys are at play," said Sigismund; "and yet their play is work of the most learned and scientific kind. All those boats, which you see, have been built within the minds of those

little lads, and they are inventing and building continually."

This lake was surrounded by other houses, no two alike, yet all were beautiful in design and architecture. One of the little boats now "glided up to a wharf that ran out into the water, and presently Joey came bounding toward us. To-day he was dressed in a sailor suit,—a little jacket of blue, white satin breeches reaching to the knees, a straw hat with a golden band embroidered in stars, together with an anchor in each flying end of the ribbon. His little shirt and rolling collar were of pale blue satin. He wore amber-colored silk stockings, and his slippers were embroidered with pearls. His sunny hair floated nearly to his waist. He doffed his little hat, as he came toward us, waving it around his head as a salute, and then, running up to me, he cried:

"O mama! How glad I am that you are here to visit me! I shall show you all my toys, and all my inventions. The professor says I am getting along bravely. O mama, mama! I knew you would come here some time, and I have tried to learn all I could, that I might have much to show you, and

now you are here, you shall see all my treasures."

I stooped and pressed my beautiful boy to my heart. Surely, grief could never come to me more! My little children, who were dead, were all preserved alive and happy—happy and beautiful as any of my dreams of heaven could be, merely a little different, but far more natural and useful. Sigismund's penetrating eyes seemed to read my thought, for he said:

"Mary, that which men call God is far wiser than any man or church has ever dreamed. If spiritual beings had nothing else to do but to worship and praise, very little would be accomplished, either on earth or in the heavens. No doubt, you have often heard the phrase about making one hand wash the other, and this is true of all life, either material or spiritual. One hand washes the other throughout all nature; the spiritual spheres are all busy,—learning, imparting, reasoning, cultivating the arts and sciences—each mind following out the bent of its inclination; and then these hands turn and wash the others, that is: each mind turns its acquired knowledge to good account by giving to those

who are not as wise. Nature is a great economist. That which men call God is too wise and economical to allow beings merely to spend their time in worship and praise; they must all work and acquire wisdom, that they may turn about and give to their brothers and sisters, their fathers, their mothers, their children, their friends and lovers, that may be benefited, and at last made happy. Ah! here is the professor, or the teacher and guide of the school in which your little Joey is studying. Herman, allow me to introduce Mary—the mother of little Joey here, and sister of my Annie—to your notice. She has but very lately come to this life, and this is her first visit to a school for little boys."

Herman took my hand kindly.

"Welcome, madam," he said, "most welcome; and I shall be very glad to show you our method here of teaching boys."

Herman appeared a young man of, perhaps, twenty years, and a very remarkable young man he looked. His figure was tall, upright, broadshouldered, and commanding: his hands, large, powerful, and well-shaped: his arms, indeed, were Herculean: his head was round,

large, and massive, covered with short, dark curls, and set on a neck like that of a graceful war-horse: his eyes were bright hazel, large, wide apart, expressing great depth and intelligence. He had a prominent, well-formed nose, with delicate nostrils. His lips were sweet, but firmly set; his teeth, even, white and strong. A dark silken beard was just making its appearance. He was clothed in black velvet, with soft white ruffles at his wrists and on his breast. He wore nothing on his head, for he had but just stepped from the house. We were all standing in front of it. Joey insisted that mama should go sailing with him in his boat, and Herman said, the boat was, indeed, large enough to hold us all. Annie and Sigismund thought we had better do as Joey wished, for I had not taken a sail yet on spiritual waters. The motive power of Joey's boat was electricity, so they told me. Joey was delighted, and ran on ahead, we following; and now I must describe the boat.

It was in form like a large skiff, and appeared to be composed entirely of mother-of-pearl. The inside of the boat, together

with the seats, was lined with pink satin, and strewn with fresh white roses, whose perfume was most exquisite.

Little Joey gave me his hand, assisting me into the boat with much gallantry.

"I knew you were coming, mama," he said, "and so had Margarita all prepared for your reception: Margarita is the name of my boat," and he pointed toward the bow of the boat. A figure-head, veiled in misty white lace, held within its hand a wreath of flowers, and, as I observed them more closely, the small white daisies which composed the wreath formed letters, which spelled the word, "Margarita."

The boat was, by this time, skimming rapidly over the bosom of the placid lake, and I asked Joey to show me how it was moved by electricity."

"Mama," said he, "I will it to go with my mind."

"With you mind?" I repeated, in some surprise. "I thought you said the motive power was electricity."

"And so it is," he replied; "but I am learning how to control electricity with my mind; still, mama, Herman can explain it more fully

than I can, for I am only a little boy yet, and can do things better than I can explain them."

"Madam," said Herman, "will you please tell me what causes a bird to fly in the air? It certainly flies more swiftly than this little boat sails."

"To be sure!" I replied. "Really, it seems so natural for a bird to fly, I have never thought what caused it to fly."

"Yet, there certainly is a cause, or the bird could not fly."

And as he said this, a large white gull alighted on the stern of the boat, and eyed us without manifesting fear.

"Well, madam," continued Herman, "the bird's mind or will-power causes it to fly. In earth-life it has a heavy material body, therefore it must be supplied with a material battery, and electric wires running to every part of its frame. The material battery is its brain, and its nerves are the wires. The battery—its brain—is worked by its mind or will-power, which sends currents of electricity all along the different sets of wires—its nerves—which it desires to move, and when it is flying the motive power is electricity; therefore, the

motive power which causes it to fly is electricity, and so of all motion whatever. Joey moves this little boat in the same way."

"But the boat is a separate thing from Joey," I said, "while the bird's body is its own."

"This spiritual boat is not a separate thing from Joey, at the present time," replied Herman. "He is able to disengage himself from it at his pleasure, and put himself in communication with it when he pleases. This boat is an outgrowth of Joey's mind, and, therefore, a part of Joey, and when he connects the electric wires between his mind and the boat, he is able to move it as you see."

"But the boat has no nerves, like the wing of a bird."

"No; and an oar, such as men use for propelling small boats in the earth-life, has no nerves; yet it is moved by an arm that has, and the oar in its turn moves the boat; yet there is no mind, or nerves, within the oar; but the boat, the oar, and the man's arm, are all connected in such a way that the boat is propelled by electricity—the electricity running on the nerves, or wires, of the arm of the man, and his mind, or will-power, governs it, and

every independent motion which the boat makes: but it is the resisting power of the water which propels the boat, after all; for without that the boat would not move, despite the efforts which the man puts forth. Now, the resisting force in this case is not the water, but the atmosphere, the spiritual atmosphere, which is ether. Ether, or the ethereal atmosphere, which is the spiritual atmosphere, resists or retards electricity, or electric rays. Now, observe Joey's skiff, how it rolls lightly on a golden rudder, which acts like a scull. Now, Joey shoots the electric rays from his mind, or will-power, ahead; the ethereal atmosphere acts just as water does on earth, resists the rays. Joey is in communication with the boat through the rudder, and thus we are propelled. All locomotives and steamers, on the earth, will presently be propelled by electricity; but there they will be obliged to use a material battery, which will move paddles, wheels, and oars, yet all must be connected with the battery by electric wires. Soon, all great weights will be lifted by electricity. Magnetism and electricity are the motive powers which move all the worlds

in space, as well as the cause of all light and heat."

Herman was very learned, no doubt, but I was not yet able to full understand all that he desired to teach me; yet, I comprehended much of it. Joey's eyes were fixed intently on some object in the distance: observing this, I said:

"Dear child, what are you, so earnestly, looking at?"

"Do you see that little island in the distance, mama?" he asked, pointing in the same direction in which the boat was being propelled.

"Yes; I do see something that looks like an island, and as we move on it appears more distinctly."

"We boys here named that island, Robinson Crusoe's island," said Joey, with sparkling eyes. "I am going to land there. Oh! we have great fun on the island," he continued. "I think we like to play there better than anywhere else. All the boys in my school have clubbed together and we have built a refuge, or home for lost sailors. O mama! we do good as well as have fun. It is really work which we do, but we make our work here, all

play. I built this boat, but, then, it's my playboat. Don't you think it a very nice boat, mama?"

"The nicest and most beautiful I ever saw," was my reply: "but I feel intensely interested in that island. Shall we get there soon?"

"In about five or six minutes," replied Joey.

Herman smiled benignly, Sigismund waved his sailor hat toward the island, and as he did so I saw a white flag hoisted high in air, although I could not distinctly see the building from which it was waving. Soon our little boat touched the shore, and we all landed.

CHAPTER XVI.

SAILORS' REFUGE.

JOEY ran ahead, we following, until we came near a building. This building was not remarkable for its beauty of architecture; it looked more like a hospital than anything else, yet, not quite like the hospitals of earth.

The main body of the structure was similar to a round house, about ten feet in height, completely arched by a dome, as nearly all the buildings were in this beautiful world. There were four arched entrances—one North, one South, one East, one West,—and these entrances had each two windows" one on either side, which made four doors and eight windows. The windows were also arched like the doors.

The body of the house was like pearl; the dome, like very thick sea-green glass; and, stamped upon the glass, at equal distances

apart, were four large vessels under full sail; and I perceived that the very thick glass appeared like the waves of the ocean. A tall flag-staff, of shining gold, ran up from the center of the dome, from which floated a large white flag, the one I had seen hoisted at the time Sigismund waved his hat, previous to our landing.

We were walking leisurely, which gave me time to observe groves of palm trees, intersected with bread-fruit and cocoa-nut trees, dates, oranges, and many other kinds of tropical fruit trees. I now observed that these, groves were filled with parrots, monkeys, and birds-of-paradise, and I caught sight of a leopard or two.

The island was gorgeous with bright-colored birds of various kinds, brilliant flowers, and tropical vegetation generally.

As we drew near, a man came forth to meet us. Joey ran up to him with extended hand.

"How do you do, Captain?" he said; then, taking off his little sailor hat, he gave the regular seaman's salute. Sigismund and Herman did the same. Annie led me forward with a smile.

"Allow me to introduce my sister Mary," she said.

I raised my eyes to his, and gave him my hand. He bowed over my hand and kissed it.

"Welcome, madam," he said. "All are welcome who desire to visit this home for lost sailors."

"Have you any new ones to-day?" asked Annie.

"Two were brought in a short time since," he replied. "One, a young boy, the other, an old man. The old man still sleeps; the boy awoke a short time ago, and is calling piteously for his mother."

The captain, as he was called, was a large man, and looked about forty. He was dressed in silver-grey trousers, together with a blouse, tied around the waist by a cord and tassels of gold; he wore sandals of sandal-wood; his dark brown hair waved gently to his shoulders; his handsome, noble countenance was extremely benign; the expression of his eyes, mild and pitiful. They called him Daking—Captain Daking, and Annie whispered to me, that he had not been here long himself, having been lost at sea a few months

previous, but was much interested in the work of assisting lost sailors.

"One might easily associate him with the story of Robinson Crusoe, might one not?" she asked. "And he has an assistant who might well pass for good man Friday; but Friday is away just now, hunting for more lost sailors."

We now entered the building. Its lofty beauty surprised and pleased me greatly, for it was very large: the dome, simply immense, and the pale green light which it shed over all things inside, gave to them a peculiar charm; and as I looked at the pictured vessels, they appeared so real one could hardly believe them to be pictures. The interior of the building was even more beautiful than its exterior. The windows were curtained with rose-colored silken draperies; the circular wall, which was some ten feet high before it joined the dome, was of frosted work, but of a very singular kind, which had the appearance of waving sea-grasses, inlaid with all manner of beautiful shells, alternating with fishes, crabs, lobsters, and occasionally a great whale, together with porpoises and seals, while over

laying all was a sparkling work like hoar frost, glinting and glistening in the beautiful pale green light of the dome.

The floor appeared like a hard, dry beach of beaten gold. In the center of the room was a round divan of rose-colored velvet. There were easy chairs of the same material. A number of very beautiful leopard skins were thrown down in various places. There was a grand piano, harps, violins, horns, bugles, and other musical instruments; small tables, covered with music, books, and flowers.

About three feet distant from the beautiful wall were posts equally apart, between which hung hammocks, low down; these hammocks sparkled with jewels shining between all their meshes, and each had a pillow of white satin, embroidered in pale blue and gold. Two of these hammocks were occupied, one by an old man still asleep: by this I mean he had not yet awoke to consciousness since being drowned, but his disenthralled spirit had been received by Captain Daking's assistant, and fetched hither to be cared for until he should awake. In the other hammock lay a wild-eyed boy, about twelve years of age, moaning piteously

and calling for his mother. One could readily see that he was not yet conscious of his whereabouts or surroundings, that he was not even aware that his spirit was out of his mortal body.

"Cap'n!" he moaned, "don't send me aloft in this gale. I don't feel strong; I'm not used to it. I shall fall—I know I shall! O Cap'n! Cap'n! I can't go! just hear how the wind blows? We can't even keep our feet on deck. O Cap'n, spare me—spare me! O my mother—my mother—my poor, poor mother! She will die if I am drowned. My mother told me just how it would be. She didn't want me to come to sea, but I wouldn't mind her, and ran away from home. O Cap'n! Cap'n! let me live and go home once more. I want to see my mother! O mother! mother! I will never go to sea again—never—never!"

Then he would catch his breath with a gasping, shuddering scream, and grasp and claw with his hands and feet, as though trying to climb the rigging of a pitching, tossing vessel, all the while crying:

"O Cap'n! Cap'n! don't—don't kick me! Oh, it hurts awfully! I am only a little boy:

I don't feel strong enough. I can't do it: I shall fall and be drowned!"

Then would come more gasping, gurgling struggling, and screaming; again his poor little hands and feet would claw wildly at the supposed rigging, then, once more, he would cry out:

"O Cap'n! Cap'n! don't shoot!—*don't* shoot! I'm goin'! I'm goin'!"

And he would claw fiercely, with starting eyeballs and frightened, agonized features; then his hands and feet would relax, as though they had lost their hold, a great shuddering sigh would shake him throughout, his eyes would close, and he would lie quite still for a short time, except a gurgling, gasping sound in his throat. Presently his eyes would open wide once more, and he would again go through the whole scene.

"I have tried to bring him to his senses," said Captain Daking, "but have not yet succeeded. He confounds me with the cruel captain of the ship from which he was lost overboard in a fearful gale, being swept from the rigging. The captain had forced him aloft, to furl the sail, with kicks and blows, and, when

he could reach him no longer, with a pointed revolver. Poor child! he is passed all his troubles if he could be made to understand it." The boy was again screaming for his mother.

I could bear it no longer. O my dear reader! I was a mother myself, the mother of three beautiful boys, and Joey was nearly as old as this little fellow. O! would my two precious orphans on earth ever go to sea? They might, for they would suppose themselves motherless. Would their fate be like this poor child's? I shuddered to think that they might have to pass through an ordeal similar to the one this child had—one he was living over and over again within his frightened mind or spirit. I could bear it no longer, but glided softly to the hammock in which he lay. I put my arms about him, and folded him to my heart, murmuring sweet words to him.

"Poor little boy! poor little boy!" I said. Look at me, darling. See! Am I not like your mother? Will I not do? placing my hand on his burning brow and kissing his cold lips. O my poor boy! my poor boy! again pressing him to my breast, holding him there for some time: when I again laid him back he

was calm, opening his large blue eyes, and looking at me with returning reason. Annie whispered:

"Your motherly magnetism is fetching him round."

And when the little nervous hands commenced to claw slightly, I held them fast in mine, and fixed his wandering eyes with a loving look: soon, lie lay as calm as an infant, gazing at me with a pleased smile, as though it were an angel, although at that time I was but a spirit. Shortly, he said in a weak voice:

"Who are you, lady? You are not my mother, and how did you come to be aboard this ship?"

"My dear little boy," I replied, "you are not on board that dreadful ship now, but are all safe in a nice home where there is no cruel captain to send you aloft with kicks and blows."

"How did I get here?" he asked. "Was I washed ashore on an island? We were near some islands, I remember. How cold the water, was," he continued, with a shudder, "and then I forgot everything, the water choked me so," and he gurgled slightly.

"Yes, darling! you are safe and sound on

an island," I answered. "Look about you, dear: see what a lovely place you are in!"

14 But I want to see my mother," he said, with a sob.

"You shall see your mother, by-and-by," I replied, not yet daring to tell him he was dead. "Look about you now, dear boy, and see what a lovely place you have found; and, look! here is a little boy very nearly as large as yourself." Joey came up to us holding out a beautiful bouquet for the child's acceptance. The little weary hands grasped the flowers, and then the childish eyes fastened themselves on Joey.

"Oh! my eyes!" he said. "What a fine little gentleman you be! Be you the cap'n's little boy? He'd never kick you aloft, I know, and my mother loved me just as well as he loves you, only she was poor, and father he went away and left her. He used to get drunk, you know. That's why she was poor. She only had me and two little girls. They couldn't do anything, you know, 'cause they was little, and I had growed so big, I thought I'd run away and go to sea, and earn some money to help poor mother; but she didn't

want me to go, she didn't. Oh, I want to see my mother, bad!"

"I am not that captain's boy," said Joey, "but this lady is my mother, and you shall be my brother, and have my mama for your mama, and in a little while we will take you to see your own mama. You are on an island now, and this is a nice home for little sailor boys. Come, don't you want to get up, and run about with me and play?"

The child started up, and stared about him amazedly.

"By jingo!" he exclaimed. "This beats all! Why, it makes me think of the Arabian Nights, and I have read all about Alladin too. Oh! Crackey! Ain't this fine! Your name's Jo, is it? and mine's Bill. Willie, mother calls me, and your mama calls you Joey, but then its Jo and Bill all the same, you know. Jiminy! that floor's a nice place to play marbles on. Say; Jo! Have you got any marbles? The cap'n throwed mine all overboard, or he told the second mate to do it; all the same, you know. But where's my pants? Guess I don't like to put urn on afore the ladies."

He glanced at his limbs, then his eyes roved

slowly all over his form. Again his great blue eyes stared into mine.

"They was all wet," he said, "so, I suppose you took um off?"

Captain Daking now came forward, holding out a little blouse of blue, together with short white pants and a little sailor hat something like Joey's.

"Madam," he said, "I will dress the child in these, and you can join your sister while I do so."

I did as he requested, and presently Joey led little Willie up to where we were sitting. The child was very handsome, and but a half-head taller than Joey.

"Lady," he said, "I don't know what to make of all this, but I feel very funny. I am so light I can hardly keep myself down. Seems as though I should go right up through that curious ceiling where them ships be. Guess I must be dreaming, and all of you look so funny, too. You don't any of you look like real flesh and blood, but just like the people do when I dream. Say, Jo; we're all so funny, ain't we? Yet we're folks, ain't we now?"

And his great eyes looked strangely puzzled. "Guess this ere's some furrin land," he continued. "P'raps it's Italy or Venice, or some such place that I've read about in my georgerfy; but, then, I didn't know they could fly, and I know I could if I tried. Now look here! I'll bet I'm dead! I'll bet I was drowneded, and you 're all cheatin' me and making me think I'm alive; now, ain't yer?" he asked, gazing intently at me. "Oh! what'll my poor mother do? She'll cry her eyes out and die of grief, and my poor little sisters 'll never see Billy no more. Yes; I know I'm dead; I know I'm drowneded, and never was washed ashore, 'cause them islands didn't have any but niggers on um; the cap'n and all the crew said so."

He stooped and examined his limbs, and then his hands and arms.

"By Jiminy!" he exclaimed, "I ain't got no bones; that's why I'm so light. Now I know I'm dead, but I guess it's jolly after all, that is, if I'm not sent to hell. Do you think I'll be sent to hell? for you know I swore sometimes; but I didn't do much else that was wicked, and I loved my mother and little

sisters. Say; are you going to take me to God? Is that why you've dressed me so fine? Guess I don't want to see God, 'cause I swore so much, and he 'll look awful at me, but then I loved my mother and little sisters, you know; p'raps God will forgive me?"

"Billy," said Annie, "how would you like to go to a nice school with little Joey's teacher," she went on, pointing to Herman; "and after you have been there a few days you shall go and see your mother and sisters."

Oh, I'd like that, bully!" said Billy. "Then I'm dead, ain't I?"

"Yes, Willie," I answered. "You were lost at sea: you fell from the rigging and were drowned."

"Well; that cap'n 'll never kick and cuff me no more, will he?"

"No; never any more," I replied. "You are to be a good and happy little boy, be placed in a school where you will learn a great deal."

"And mayn't I have some marbles?" he asked. "Do you think the teacher will whip me much and the boys call me bad names?"

"You shall never be whipped at all," said

Herman, "and my boys call no bad names; do they, Joey?"

"That they do not, Sir," replied Joey. Come, Billy, let us go out and play."

"Crackey! Can we play some?" asked Billy, of Herman.

"You may play as much as you like," replied the professor.

"Oh, I guess it's nice to be dead, after all!" said Billy, as he left the room with little lo, on play intent.

CHAPTER XVII.

A POOR OLD TRAMP.

AS I looked toward the hammock on which the old man lay, I saw a movement of his hand: presently his eyes opened, roved around from one face to another, and at length slowly wandered about the beautiful room with its exquisite appointments: then, with considerable difficulty, he raised himself to a sitting posture.

I was standing in front of his hammock but a few feet from him. Sigismund, Annie, and Herman were seated on the divan, while the Captain was in a far part of the room, with his back toward us, busy about something.

The old man's eyes rested on mine with a wondering stare; his lips moved, and he spoke, but in a very faint voice.

"Madam," he said, "for the love of heaven,

give me something to eat. I am starving, actually starving, to death. I am too old and feeble to work, too proud to beg, but save my life, madam, whoever you are; don't let me starve, and I will serve you in some way or other: although I am very old, nearly ninety, yet I could do many an errand for you, enough to earn what little I may eat, surely."

He stretched his hands out toward me in a supplicating manner.

"Lady," he went on, "believe me; I am no beggar. I once had plenty and to spare. Time has robbed me of all things—home, friends, wife and children. My present condition is not my own fault, but the fault of time. I am an old, old man, lady, and I am starving!"

He sank back with a moan, but soon started up again.

"Where am I?" he asked. "I must have fainted with hunger and exposure. Did you find me insensible by the road-side, and in your kindness fetch me hither? O lady! give me a morsel and a sup, and I shall gain strength to arise and serve you."

Once more he stretched forth his hands

pleadingly. A little table stood near me which I had not previously noticed, and upon it were bread, fruit and wine. I poured some wine from the decanter into a dainty goblet, and held it to the old man's lips. He drank eagerly. Replacing the glass, I offered him the bread and fruit. He ate of the bread ravenously, while tears streamed down his withered, sunken, pallid cheeks. When his hunger was somewhat appeased and he had drunk a little more wine, he continued to eat of the luscious fruit, but more daintily; and now he poured forth his thanks.

"Thanks! A thousand thanks, dear lady," he said. "How very, very good of you to allow me, whom everybody calls an old tramp and beggar, to stay in this beautiful room with you, and those other elegant people. Yet, madam, I never begged until this very moment. To tramp I am obliged, for I have no home. Madam, you are so kind to me I will tell you all."

"Many years ago,—perhaps ten, for I was very old at that time, too old to sustain my rights, and keep that which I had been years in laying by for my old age,—I lost all that

possessed through the dishonesty of one in the legal profession, whom I had employed as my lawyer. Dear madam, law, which is supposed to be justice, robbed me of all I had in the world, after I had become too old to earn more, and sent me forth, if not a beggar, a homeless tramp, to be abused, insulted, scoffed at, and often to find lodging in a police station, arrested for vagrancy; an old man whom they had first robbed, compelling vagrancy because too old to work; ragged, as I am, because I have no money to buy clothes. Madam, I was once decent and respectable. I once had a wife and children—but, O! so many, many years ago, for I am nearly ninety. My troubles are almost over, I think. Surely, one as old as myself cannot live much longer. I have thought many times, when I have been cold and hungry, that I was dying. I have slept in haystacks, crawled into barns, outhouses, and as a last best resort have smuggled myself on board sailing vessels, hidden in some remote corner where I would not be discovered until the open sea was gained: often, I have been long voyages in this way, for when the sailors found me I

would plead with them to allow me to remain, and I would serve them in any way that an old man could. But this time the captain would not have me, and they put me ashore on a small island. It was not inhabited, and so I must have been insensible with hunger when you found me."

Thus far I had not spoken, not knowing what to say. It was evident that this old man had not the least suspicion that he was dead. How should I break it to him? While I was trying to think of some pleasant way, he began to examine his hammock, to gaze about the room once more, then at the curious and beautiful dome, at me and the others, his countenance all the while expressing more and still more surprise.

"Madam," he said, at last, "will you kindly tell me where I am, and how I came here? Surely, I never saw anything like this before. I am a very old man, and have seen a great deal of the world, besides many countries in it, but this place is not like anything which I ever saw.

He stared at the floor of beaten gold, at the sparkling jewels within the meshes of the

hammocks, and at the clothing we wore: he put both hands to his head, looking more and more bewildered. For some reason I could not open my lips to tell him where he was, the others seemed unwilling to lend me any assistance, and I knew they were acting for the best, also that they were wiser in such matters than myself, and as it was impossible to answer him I kept silent.

"Either I must be dreaming," he went on, "or the wine has made me drunk. It has been a very long time since wine has passed my lips. Lady, I have never been a drunkard."

Then he fell to examining his hands and his limbs.

"Yes," he murmured, "I must be dreaming and presently I shall awake to starvation and suffering, as I have done many times before, after having delightful dreams. Oh! that I might never awake! I would that I were dead! Strange that I should live to be so old while the young and the happy die—die in their beautiful homes, surrounded by luxury and plenty. O God! take my soul to thyself, before I awake to want and misery.'

He threw himself back, closed his eyes, and folded his hands as if in prayer.

"Dear God, thou hast looked on my misery long enough," he prayed; "now, dear Saviour, take me to thyself; let me not awake, and I will praise thee evermore!, Would that this beautiful lady of my dream were an angel sent to escort me home."

I approached him, laying my hand on his folded ones.

"Look at me," I said. "You are not dreaming; it is all so. I am a real woman, and have given you to eat and to drink. Look at these other people here; they are not visions but persons. They are my sister and her husband; my own darling little boy has but just left the room, and that gentleman is his teacher," pointing to Herman; "the other gentleman is Captain Daking, who has charge of this beautiful place,"

"Is this a hospital, or home for sailors? asked the old man.

"Yes," I replied, "it is a refuge for sailors."

"On what island, or in what country is it?"

I raised my finger to my lips somewhat solicitously.

"It is on an island within the heavens," I at length found courage to say; "and this is one of God's mansions for poor lost sailors: a refuge within the heavens for the outcast, the forlorn, the tramp, and the beggar: one of God's provisions for man's inhumanity to man: here, the weary find rest, the hungry are fed, and the homeless find a home."

The old man started up once more.

"Then it is all over at last?" he questioned, and I am really dead? This is heaven, and you are an angel; but where is God, the great white throne, and the golden streets? Of course, I am yet to be judged. Perhaps he will say, 'Depart ye cursed!' for I have been cursed by man for these many years."

"God is not a God of cursing," I said, "but a God of wisdom and love. Wisdom and love curse not, neither do they bid any depart, but invite all to drink at the everlasting fount, and none who desire are ever turned away."

"Then I shall not be turned away into everlasting torment with the devil and his angels, shall not be obliged to flee from the wrath of God? for this I have always fully believed."

Sigismund now approached, saying:

"There is no torment which endures for ever. Torment is a thing of time, not of eternity, and your torment, my dear sir, has come to an end: as for the devil and his angels, they are usually found lurking within the minds of ignorant, unprincipled men and women on earth; such ones as rob an old man, then cast him adrift; such ones as arrest the old and helpless as vagrants, after making them so by their foolish and unjust laws; such ones as have not the milk of human kindness within their breasts; such ones as preach hellfire, the devil and his angels, and God's wrath. The devil and the wrath and the hell-fire are within them, and are not found within the heavens."

The old man's face took on a pleased, bright expression.

"And my days of want, decrepitude and suffering are really over at last?"

He raised himself out of the hammock, placed his feet on the golden floor, and stood erect: he threw back his shoulders, and one could see the wrinkles slowly disappearing as the bright, hopeful look grew brighter and

more hopeful still, filling out the marks which despair and misery had caused.

"This is the first time I have been able to stand perfectly straight for many years," he said, "and the pain and rheumatism are all gone. I feel so light I think I could fly with ease. Yes; it is really myself," he continued, "but as though I were made all over new. I think I can now understand the true meaning of the words within the Bible: 'And there shall be a new song put into their mouths.' No; I can never sing the old song again. It is all new, entirely new!"

"'And there shall be a new heaven and a new earth,'" quoted Sigismund. "Friend, look about you. Behold the new heaven and the new earth! There is a natural body, and a spiritual body. The natural, or material, body thou hast left or laid aside. Behold! all things have become new, bright, and clean, without spot or blemish. Friend, thou wast formerly clothed in filthy rags, but the rags and filth were merely upon the surface, they did not penetrate nor permeate thy spiritual body, neither did they affect thy soul. 'And their raiment, shall be as white as snow, and

a crown shall be given them likewise a harp of gold."

And as Sigismund thus murmured softly, Captain Daking came forward: over one arm was thrown a misty white robe, in one hand he carried a crown sparkling with jewels, in the other a golden harp. Sigismund took the crown, Annie the harp, Captain Daking placed the robe in my hands.

"Thou hast fed this our brother with the bread of heaven, in other words, spiritual bread, and given him to drink of the wine of heaven, for he was an hungered and a thirst: 'if thou hast done it unto the least of my children, thou hast done it unto me,' still quoted Sigismund, as he made gentle passes with his hands over the entire form of him who shortly before had been an outcast and tramp, who, like many other sons of men, had not where to lay his head: with each movement of Sigismund's hands, all that was dark, doubtful, undefined, not quite perfect or straight and symmetrical, gradually faded and dropped away from the old man, and he stood before us a grand, noble-looking spirit.

"And the lame shall walk, the blind shall see, and the crooked shall be made straight," quoted Sigismund, musingly: "and the things which I do, ye shall do also.' Mary, clothe this our friend in white raiment."

Whereupon I threw the robe about him, Captain Daking drew a cord of gold around the waist, Sigismund placed the sparkling crown upon his head, and Annie reached him the harp of gold.

"Thou wert a ripened sheaf, and filled with many years, therefore be thou crowned, and may thy soul be attuned like unto this golden harp, wherewith thou shalt discourse sweet music. And now, our friend and brother, go thou and do likewise unto the spirits in prison, for thou wert imprisoned for many years within a worn and feeble natural body; thou couldst not see, for thou wert blind to the truth; thy prison doors have been oped, and now thou art free: Praise thou the Lord!"

The old man now stood before us, a vision of grandeur and beauty. His blue eyes shone like stars. His hair and beard had been left to remain in snowy whiteness, long and flowing, at his own request; and within a large

mirror, not far from us, he beheld the reflection of himself.

"You have bidden me to praise the Lord," he said. "Am afraid I do not quite understand your meaning. My soul is filled with love and thankfulness toward you, my saviours and benefactors, but the Lord I have not yet seen."

"Brother, open thine eyes—the eyes of thine understanding; for, lo! the Lord of Hosts stands before you."

Still the old man looked somewhat puzzled.

"Brother," said Sigismund, "I will explain my words. It is not a person to whom you must sing praises, or to whom you must bow down and worship, but the great eternal principles of love and wisdom, from which spring forth justice and truth. If Jesus of Nazareth stood before you this moment, and you were to bow down and worship him, he would say to you as he said to those who followed him on earth 'See that thou doest it not. Am I not a spirit like unto thyself?' No, my friend; your worshipful thanks belong to the great principles of love and wisdom, justice and truth that flow down through our

souls to you: you are our brother, therefore we love you, and is it not wisdom to clothe and protect our brother? Friend, nature for ever strikes a balance. On earth, for a season, you were naked, cold, and hungry; now the balance is struck, which means strict justice and eternal truth stands invitingly before you, therefore, sing praises to whom they rightfully belong—the eternal principles which govern all heavens and all earths."

"Well," said the old man, whose name, when on earth, had been Erricson; "in my younger days I was accustomed to play on the harpsicord, and my wife and I would sing sweet hymns of praise together to its accompaniment. Ah! many of those hymns come now to my memory."

"Play them upon your harp of gold, my friend, and we will sing."

Whereupon Erricson struck the strings of his harp with a masterful hand; the music was an anthem of praise, well worthy of heaven, and the beautiful room resounded with the joyful strains.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TOBACCO AND MARBLES.

JOEY, with Willie, came running in to hear the sweet music, and stood breathlessly, with clasped hands, and bright, eager eyes, while the music flooded through their little souls.

"Ah!" exclaimed Willie, at last, when the music ceased, "I think I would rather have a harp like that, learn to play, and give up the marbles; wouldn't you, Jo?"

"Well," replied Joey, thoughtfully, "perhaps we can have the marbles and the harp besides; may not we, Mr. Herman?"

"Willie," asked Herman, "do you like playing at marbles so very, very much?"

"Playin' marbles is bully!" exclaimed Willie.

"By which you mean," continued the professor, "that you like to play at marbles very

much? Well; how many have you won from Joey since you went out?"

"All! Every one!" replied Willie, at the same time taking a large handful from his pocket, and displaying them with immense satisfaction.

"So you have completely robbed poor little Joey?"

"Oh, I won um fair," replied Willie; "didn't I, Jo?"

Joey hung his head and looked at Herman.

"Do you feel quite sure that you won them all fairly?"

"Certain! Sure! I didn't cheat once; did I, Jo?"

But Joey's eyes were intently fixed on those of his teacher.

"Willie," said the professor, "you are somewhat older, as well as larger and stronger then Joey; then, do you think it fair play to take Joey's marbles from him?"

"I just bit um all, according to rule; didn't I, Jo?"

"Joey, not having your strength, could not play at the game as well as you could?" asked the professor.

"Well; big boys play at marbles with little ones," said Willie, slightly indignant, "and they always calls it fair when they beats um."

"But do you think that calling it fair makes it fair?" again questioned the professor.

"Well; I dunno," replied Willie. "Guess it's fair, tho', when you hits um all right."

"Did you consider it fair for the captain of your ship to kick and cuff you, and send you aloft in a gale, because he was older, larger, and stronger than you were?"

"But that was werry different from playing marbles," pouted Willie.

"How different?" asked the professor.

"Why! I didn't kick and cuff Joey to git his marbles away."

"But you won them from him because you were older and stronger than he, and the captain compelled you to go aloft for the same reason, he was older and stronger than you. Now, you have been treating little Joey, here, in the same way that the captain treated you, robbing him because you were older and stronger than he, and understood the game of marbles better. You understood how to beat little Joey, and, therefore, you robbed him.

The captain understood how to beat you, and, therefore, you lost your life, at least your earthly life; the captain robbed you of it. Willie, do you think it was all fair play between you and the captain?"

Willie's hands clutched at the marbles, his eyes opening to twice their natural size.

"Come!" said the professor, "speak up! Answer me, my boy! Was it all fair play between you and the captain? If you had been as old, large, and strong as the captain, and a captain yourself, would you have allowed him to kick, cuff, and send you aloft in a furious gale?"

"You jest bet your bottom dollar I wouldn't!"

"Well; what would you have done?"

"I'd er kicked and cuffed him back agin, and nary aloft would I go!"

"Then, if Joey had been as old, strong, and expert as you, you would not have been able to rob him of his marbles. Do you think now that you won them fairly, or do you agree with me that you robbed him of them?"

Willie made no reply.

"I suppose, Willie, you would consider it very unjust if I were to call you a robber

and a thief"; Willie hung his head; "yet such you really are," continued the professor. "Your captain was a robber and a murderer, while you are a robber and a thief: the principles underlying the acts, are the same: the stronger wrenches by force and expertness from the weaker, that which he possesses, and appropriates it to himself; this is theft and robbery, is it not?"

Still no answer.

"Do you love little Joey, Willie?"

"I do sir," answered Willie, respectfully, "leastwise, I thought I did."

It Do you think you love him just as well as you love yourself?"

"Guess you've got me there, sir," replied Willie.

"If you loved little Joey just as well as you loved yourself, you would be very sorry to rob him of his marbles, or of anything else which he might possess. You would not like to have Joey beat you, and take all your marbles away: you would not think it just or fair if he were older and stronger than you. Now, I want you to think of Joey as your brother, as well as all the other little boys whom you will

shortly meet. I want you to love Joey and all the others just as well as you love yourself, and never, under any circumstances, do to any one of them anything that you would not like them to do to you: they are all your little brothers, every one, and you must love them just as well as you love yourself, and never rob them of anything whatsoever. All play wherein there is robbery had better be left unplayed. The principle is the same, be it boy or man, to whom it is applied. The scales of justice must balance evenly. There is no justice in robbing Peter that Paul may gain: all should be brothers in wisdom, love, justice, and truth."

"Then, 'taint any use for me to play marbles no more," said Willie, "is it? You jest bet, though, I allers loved to play marbles. Don't know what I kin do if I can't play marbles. Marbles was allers my hobby, and I allers beat all the other boys. If I can't beat no boys, I guess I won't enj'y myself much."

"Suppose you were to think of how much you could do to help the other boys, instead of beating or robbing them. Suppose you were to look upon each boy as a savings

bank in which to deposit your treasures, and every time you met a boy you were to drop in whatever treasures you were possessed of?"

"Well; by Jiminy! that's a funny notion! I'll be danged!"

"You would like to be very rich, would you not, Willie?"

"Rich? Oh! When! You bet I would!"

"Well, if a person never saved anything, he could never be rich, could he?"

"No; 'less it all come to him to onc't," replied Willie.

"Heavenly treasures never come to any one all at once; they must be sought after diligently and with great care. When once a jewel has been obtained, the possessor can never lose it under any circumstances; and he can divide it again and again, and give to every other boy he meets a jewel, just like his own and of equal value: still he may go on dividing it for ever: instead of being robbed, he will have just so much more treasure laid up, he will grow richer and richer for ever. Don't you think, Willie, that such a way would be much better than playing at marbles?"

To rob your brother is wasteful folly. To divide your jewels with him would be riches untold."

Willie became exceedingly interested, his eyes sparkled, and his cheeks glowed: giving the marbles a contemptuous toss he exclaimed:

"Guess I 'd rather have the jewels: ain't that funny, though, 'bout the dividing of um up?"

"Where did you get the marbles with which you and Joey were playing?"

Willie's eyes opened to their widest extent.

"Well; by Jiminy!" he exclaimed, "that's the funniest thing of all! I wanted to play marbles with Jo, bad, and I axed him if he had any marbles, and he axed me what was them? Then I jest laffed. Oh! gosh! It was too funny for anything: a boy what didn't know what marbles was. Then I said, Look-a-here, Jo; I wish I jest had my old trouses instead of these white things. This stuff is on'y fit for little gals that is rich boys don't wear sich trouses as these where come from. I've got some marbles, and a spinning top, and a lot of string in the pockets of my old trouses; Jo, you jest g'win and git um for

me; they's some the captain didn't find, and we'll have some bully fun. Then, Jo he went in and brought urn out. Guess you didn't any of you see him, though. Well, they was wet and dirty, sure enough, and then I thought, I guess I didn't care to put um on agin, but I jest rammed my hand into the pockets and got out the marbles and top and string and a plug o'tobaccy and a good long stump o' a cigar, that the cap'n had throwed away, an' I grabbed it, you bet! afore any of the others got it. Then, Jo, he looked at um, and sort o'turned up his nose, an' he axed me, "What was all them?" an' then I laffed agin jest as loud as I could laff, an' I says: "O my eye! Jo, but you is green. Why! them's marbles an' a top an' string an' tobaccy, an' jest look-a-here, Jo, in this other pocket is my jack-knife. Oh! bully! but I'm all right now."

All eyes were now turned in the direction of Willie's pockets, which were stuffed out to their, fullest extent, and his beautiful white pants were considerably soiled around the entrance to the pockets; his hands were dirty, his mouth and teeth smeared with tobacco, and

occasionally he ejected large quantities of the juice upon the spotless golden floor. As I looked at this boy, a feeling of despair filled my soul. Annie and Sigismund sat half-smiling with amusement. Mr. Erricson had taken a seat on the crimson divan, his golden harp resting between his knees, his eyes fixed sympathetically on mine. Captain Daking glanced at the filthy pool on his spotless floor: Willie's eyes met his reproachful glance, and the boy's quailed perceptibly, but the captain turned away without a word. Professor Herman's eyes twinkled mirthfully, and for a short space of time not a word was uttered by any one. Joey stood near Willie, a vision of beauty, his golden curls lying slightly tangled over his blue velvet jacket, his large azure eyes wearing a look of deep perplexity; evidently he was at a loss how to make Willie over again into a good and beautiful boy; and yet, as my eyes still rested upon the little waif of humanity—this little street gamin with all his filthy habits still upon him noticed that his eyes were nearly as large and beautiful as Joey's; his hair was also hanging in golden waving masses over his shoulders; his forehead was

even broader and fuller, his features more commanding and prominent. "Surely," I thought, "there is the making of a great, good and noble man in that child. O, what a pity that his natural self should be so warped and covered with dirty habits." The silence still continued. The boy looked about him uneasily; then his eyes rested on the filthy pool at his feet; then they slowly wandered over the beautiful room and the assembled company. He stood with both dirty hands crowded into his protruding pockets. He noticed the amused look in Annie's and Sigismund's faces, his eyes caught the despair on mine, then they turned to the professor.

"I guess I ain't fit for no sich place as this," he at last said, rather dejectedly; "but, then, how about them jewels what you was telling me of? Guess you was foolin' all the while, an' you're all laffin at me."

He crossed to where his discarded marbles were lying, and gathering them up, he hurriedly crammed them into his already distended pockets. Surely, it needed a wiser head than mine to transform this boy into a white-winged angel. My thoughts ran rapidly over the

proper ways and means. I was at a loss to understand what course these wiser ones present would take. Captain Daking might possibly punish him for soiling his spotless floor. Professor Herman could ferule those dirty hands, and compel the boy to empty his pockets of their heterogeneous contents, which he could destroy before the child's eyes, and then with threatening words, and pompous, imperious air, he could lay a strict injunction upon him, never to be found with such things again under any circumstances! if he were, the penalty would be more severe punishment still. Captain Daking could humble the child by compelling him to clean up his own filth, with hard words and commanding air; yet, I knew intuitively, that none of the foregoing methods would be resorted to, and I was very eager to see what course would be taken with him.

"Willie," said the professor, at last, "two or three persons present do feel slightly amused on your account, including myself, but that lovely lady, little Joey's mother, looks very sad. Now, as little Joey is to be your brother, and your own mother is not in this world, you

must necessarily look, upon that lady as your mother. See how pure, clean and white the lady is, and how sorrowful she looks, all on account of her little adopted son, Willie. Now, Willie, here is a mirror; take little Joey by the hand, and stand side by side with him. You think two little brothers ought to look very much alike, do you not? You are the older and taller of the two, therefore you ought to be an example for your younger brother to follow; and you would not like to teach little Joey anything which would grieve his mother's heart, would you?"

Willie glanced at me, then at Joey, and taking the smaller boy's hand, he stepped with him in front of the mirror. The two boys were dressed exactly alike, the only difference between them being the dirty hands, the soiled, protruding pockets, and filthy mouth of Willie, whereas Joey was sweet, pure and clean in every respect. The filthiness had not been so apparent to Willie in his old clothes, but now in his pure and beautiful raiment, his dazzling white skin and clear blue eyes, it was simply horrible and fearfully disgusting. The child turned away from his own reflection with

a sick look: tears started into the great, intelligent, blue eyes, and rolled down his cheeks.

"Oh!" he groaned, "I ain't fit for this place, I ain't!

"Willie," said the professor, "look into the glass again with little Joey. Now observe, my little man; your mouth is just as sweet and clean as little Joey's, but for the tobacco which defiles it. Now, my child, if you will give me that tobacco and cigar, I promise you faithfully that in return I will give you something in their stead, ten times their value: not to-day, but when once you are established at my school. I will not forget my promise; if I should, you may take me to task for it. Willie, take note that I am getting very much in your debt."

And the professor took out a pearl-covered book, and commenced to jot down the items:

"Professor Herman to his beloved pupil, William Smith, debtor: To four jewels: the first, a diamond of the first water; second, a ruby, red and exceedingly brilliant; third, a topaz, blue and fair as the skies; fourth, a pearl of great price. Now, Willie, if you will deliver up to me your marbles, I will give to

you in return the above-mentioned four jewels, and, as I told you at first, these jewels can be divided and subdivided, again and again, without loss, but gain; and these jewels I will put into your hands now, as soon as you give me the marbles; and you may keep them in your pocket until I teach you the proper way to use, or, if you prefer, play with them."

Willie's eyes glittered joyfully.

"Item," again went on the professor. "This tobacco and cigar are worth, how much?"

"Well," said Willie, deeply interested, "I guess they 'er worth 'bout ten cents."

"Well; ten times ten are one hundred, are they not?" asked the professor.

"In course it is," answered Willie. "That makes a dollar, you know."

Herman took a bright silver dollar from his pocket, together with four sparkling jewels, and laid them on the table.

"Now, Willie, the top, the string, and the jack-knife; what will you take for them?"

Willie looked thoughtful.

"Well," he said at last; "I whittles with my jack-knife, and makes whistles and things: mayn't I keep my jack-knife?"

"How will you swap?" asked Herman, displaying a beautiful pearl-handled knife, which had three keen, bright blades', and a silver plate, with Willie's name engraved in full upon it.

The child actually danced for joy.

"You don't mean it?" he said at last.

"You must be a fool to swap even, for mine's only an old rusty thing what 's got only one blade, and the end of that 's broken off, and the handle's part gone."

"Yes, Willie," said the professor, "I'll swap even; besides, I'll teach you how to do many a beautiful piece of work with it when we are at the school again: Now the string and the top."

"Oh! the string's not worth much, only I can't spin my top without it; and the top was gin me, my mother giv it to me last Christmas time."

Again the boy's eyes filled with tears, his chest heaved with sobs.

"O my marm, my marm!" he exclaimed. She'll never give me no more tops nor things, cause I 'in drowned, I 'm drowned! I want to see my marm! I want to see my

marm!" Tears trembled in every eye like pearls, and they rolled freely down my checks.

Herman's face looked grave and tender.

"Willie," he said, "if I will take you, this very day, to see your mother, and allow you to keep the top, will you clean up that filthy pool, and wash your mouth and hands, all sweet and clean, like your little brother's here."

"Oh! yes, indeed," sobbed Willie.

Captain Daking gave the child a basin of clean water, cloth, and towel. Willie washed up the filth, making the place look as bright and clean as ever. The captain gave him another basin and towel; he washed his face, mouth, and hands. Having already given all the things which his pockets had contained, to his teacher, they lay on the table side by side with the jewels, the silver dollar, the pearlhandled knife: the dirty string had been replaced by threads of strong, fine gold, but the top remained precisely as it had been: no filth now was visible about the child except the soiled pockets.

"Willie, my dear little adopted son!" I cried, for I could not restrain myself longer, "come

here, and give me a sweet kiss, and I will find a way to clean those pockets."

The child shyly approached me. I clasped him in my arms, and kissed the little wet face all over, when, lo! the pockets had become as clean and white as snow.

"Great love overcometh the filth of evil," said Sigismund, looking at me with his deep, deep eyes.

I led the child to the table, and stood clasping one of his hands, while Joey held the other. The professor had placed the boy's treasures on a bright, silver tray, side by side with a filthy, rusty one on which were the things that the child had given up."

"Now, my boy," said he, "the things which I exchange with you for yours are merely symbols of real things: the real things themselves I still owe you. I am your banker, and I these things are your cheques. Whenever you fetch me one of the cheques I will return to you, together with compound interest, its value in full of real, true, everlasting treasure, that can be divided and subdivided forever without loss, but gain or compound interest.

Will you try to remember all this, my child?

Mary," he continued, "be kind enough to transfer Willie's treasures to his pockets, that he may have them to play with and gaze upon until he is ready to draw their full value from his banker. My friend," addressing Erricson, "strike once more the strings of your golden harp."

I put the boy's treasures into his pockets, and after a sweet prelude on the harp, Erricson struck into a chant; we all joined our voices, and the room resounded with the sweet and solemn strains.

"Whatever ye do to the least of these my little ones, ye have done unto me," chanted Sigismund.

CHAPTER XIX

AN EDUCATIONAL HALL FOR LADIES.

DEAR reader, I do not mean to be understood that the boy, Willie, had material marbles, or that his old wet material clothes were really here in the spiritual world. No. All those things, so far as coarse material substance was concerned, were left with his drowned material body; but the child's thoughts and habits were still with him, and the things which were in his mind were as real to him and to all present, as material things are to material sense.

Joey had been in league with the professor and Captain Daking, yet the child did not understand all which the older spirits endeavored to teach, therefore, when he found his own pockets supplied with marbles, he knew at once that they had been put or willed there, by Herman, for him to make use of in

the game, also knowing that the professor intended by these means to teach the undeveloped spirit of little Willie valuable lessons. If these things were not so, if the thoughts of spirits and angels did not become objective and appear as real things, how could ignorant and undeveloped spirits and children be taught

or make any progress after the death of the material body?

No: spiritual things are the only real, imperishable things, and not the material. The material is fleeting and perishable; only heavenly or spiritual things are real and enduring.

Poor little Willie's material body, with its appurtenances, was lying at the bottom of

the sea, food for ravenous fishes, but his spirit which was his real self, together with all his former thoughts and habits, was here with us in this refuge for lost sailors; and he must be taught with and through those things which he loved best, those things which had become habitual to him and cherished most.

I might go on at great length, to tell my

readers how, after little Willie was taken into Professor Herman's school, he gradually grew

wearry of looking at his treasures, which were merely symbols of higher things, and how, one after the other, those symbolic cheques were presented at the bank, and their value paid in full, with compound interest, by his banker, Professor Herman. To sum it up briefly, however, little Willie's diamond signified pure truth unmixed with error; and as a diamond throws back all the colors of the rainbow, so truth and truthful principles reveal all the beauties of the heavenly spheres, that wisdom and truth are for ever blended together like the beautiful colors seen within a diamond. Next, that his ruby-red signified love; that true love should dwell within the heart of every man, woman and child, as well as within the souls of all spirits and angels, for every other man, woman and child, spirit and angel. Next; that his azure gem signified the ethereal, never-ending ocean of eternity, wherein all things live and move and have their being; that his pearl signified purity, in thought, word and deed; that his beautiful pearl-handled knife signified that wisdom, love, justice and truth possessed many bright, sharp blades, or ways and means, whereby to accomplish

desired results; that the golden threads, or strings, represented the golden analogical chain that bound all things one to the other

his top, the great spiritual or magnetic attraction, that kept all things in rapid motion, so that stagnation and death were impossible

and that this same top, which his mother gave him, should always be a reminder, or symbol, that he could visit his mother whenever he pleased, because he was not dead, but alive, and in constant motion; and that this magnetic attraction, and power of motion, would carry him wherever his love and desire willed: that whatever wisdom, love, justice, or truth he had, could, and ought to be, divided and subdivided again and again, and given to every hungry soul that needed food; that at length, Willie himself should possess so much, that he would become a great banker, from whom, those more ignorant than he, could continually draw wealth of wisdom, love, justice and truth.

Willie was taken that very hour, by the professor, to visit his mother, little Joey going with them because he greatly desired to go; but the child's disappointment was

very great when he found that his mother Could not see him, and did not know he was there with her. The professor comforted him by saying, that in time, when love and wisdom became triumphant, as they surely would, his mother would recognize him: in the meantime he was to attend school and learn all he possibly could.

Mr. Erricson concluded to remain awhile at the home, and assist Captain Daking with other lost sailors who might be brought in, and the captain told him that he would telegraph for his, Erricson's, nearest friends, who were in the, spiritual life, to come there and visit him: no doubt they would all be there in a very short time, to say the least.

Sigismund, Annie and myself concluded to return to earth for a short time, as my heart yearned for my loved ones there. My children here were all cared for in the most loving and beautiful way; no anxious thoughts for them disturbed me; but the dear little ones of earth: over them my soul brooded anxiously; things still remained there very much as I had left them. My first desire was now fulfilled, that of visiting the schools wherein the souls of my

little spiritual children were being educated, and I now felt a greater desire to visit an educational hall for ladies, than I did to view a saint; for, said Sigismund:

"You will be far better able to understand the true meaning of the word, 'saint,' after you have visited an educational hall for ladies. There are; thousands of such halls within the heavens, but I think we will first visit one which is dedicated to St. Agnes, by ladies who were formerly oppressed and forlorn."

This pleased me, and so we floated onward; but Sigismund said he would leave us at the door, for gentlemen were not yet admitted within this hall. He smiled benignly upon us, and we were left to go in by ourselves.

This hall was a grand, elegant structure, and stood in the midst of grounds teeming with life and beauty. I would like to have my readers distinctly understand that this building, with its lovely surroundings, was entirely spiritual, although as plainly visible and real to spirits and angels as material things are to mortals.

If one within the body could have been transported here, and could have looked at

this building with material eyes, it would have appeared very much to them as a rainbow appears, and if the rainbow could take on the form of an elegant hall, with all the beautiful colors in proper places suited to the building, with its lovely grounds filled with the most exquisite flowers, a faint conception can be had of this grand spiritual hall; the difference being, that a rainbow soon fades, but this hall was fadeless and immortal.

Annie and I stood gazing at it delightedly.

"Now, Mary," she said, "I shall try to make you understand just how this hall has been erected. You already know, my dear sister, that thoughts are real things, and that desire is a wish to clothe a thought in a visible garment. Now, in the earthly life, a company of ladies or gentlemen might desire to erect a hall, but before that hall could be built, it must first exist as a thought; and those persons must have a desire to clothe their thoughts, but having material bodies themselves, and being on the material earth, they must clothe their thoughts with material substance in order that they may be visible to others and themselves. Now, spirits have

spiritual or magnetic bodies, and when they desire to clothe their thoughts they must clothe them with spiritual or magnetic substance, in order that they may be visible to others and themselves. If one with a material body were to stand here with us now, he could pass directly through this building as one could pass through a mist; it would be to him like a shadow, and *vice versa*: we can pass through his material walls of brick and mortar, or wood, precisely as though they were mists or shadows. Material substance is so coarse to us, it is as though it were nought; whereas, our spiritual substance, being so fine and ethereal, is to him as though it were nought. Spiritual things are objective. Material things are subjective. A man can pass through air and say, 'there's nothing here!' But what is more real and powerful than air? Likewise, he might pass through the spiritual world and say, 'there is nothing here!' But all spiritual things are more real and enduring than the material atmosphere. Air is as real to a bird as water is to man, and, spiritual things are more real to a spirit

than material things are to man, for they are imperishable.

"Now, a company of ladies here in this realm, desired to erect this hall, that it might serve them as a place in which to care for, and properly educate, those who might be classed under the head of forlorn, despairing, and wronged; also, those who had false ideas of the life of the spirit. The ladies who desired to erect this hall consulted together, and all agreed on the style of the building needed, and when each point had been carefully weighed and decided, they earnestly threw their united thoughts outward to the spot where they wished the building to stand. A thought must, in the spiritual world, take on form and substance: the spiritual substance, which the thought attracts to itself as a covering, is a fine aura, yet it clothes the thought so completely that it is as impervious to a spirit as thoughts clothed with material substance are to mortal men and women."

"Yes," I replied, "that building is as real to me as any stone church I ever entered, or any other building which I ever saw before leaving the earth. Would that the people of earth

knew how real and beautiful this life is. Oh I that the gulf betwixt the two worlds might be spanned!"

"That is right, Mary," said my dear sister.

Keep on wishing and praying with all your might; there are thousands of others here who are earnestly desiring the same thing, and when the proper time comes, you and I will join these spirits and angels; they intend to form large companies, who will consult together as to the best means to be used to accomplish the desired result. Mary, you will yet see your wish fulfilled; in the meantime, gather to yourself as much wisdom as you can, and labor diligently, for without wisdom you can do but very little."

"Do you think, Annie, that my precious darlings on the earth, will eventually know that I can be with them whenever I desire to be?"

Annie's face saddened slightly as she replied.

"Mary, I will never deceive you in the slightest thing. It is given me to know, that but one of all your little family on the earth,

will ever be made aware of your spiritual

presence, and that one is he, who, at the

present time, you would consider the least likely to comprehend such things: your little boy of three will yet hold communication with you, will yet be an instrument in your hands to aid in spanning the gulf, but when the gulf is once spanned, you will desire to have something of importance to give to the men and women of earth; therefore, dear Mary, we will enter this hall; it will be to you an educational visit; others, who learn more slowly than yourself, remain there, often, for months."

We now entered the lovely garden which was around this beautiful building. Annie paused that I might take in all the details of its architecture, but I will describe the garden first.

It was in the form of a square, enclosed on all sides by walls of amber, and in the center of each wall was an arched gateway of solid gold. The walls were about four feet high, the arches about seven: the walls were some two feet in thickness, and upon the top of them grew trailing vines, mosses, ferns, and many kinds of small, sweet flowers; and upon each corner was placed a statue, for we have

statuary here far more beautiful than any on the earth. The statues represented four female forms, with the name of each written on its pedestal. My eyes rested first upon Hope.

The beautiful image stood like a thing of life, one delicate hand pointing upward, the eyes looking expectantly at something which could be seen in the distance. My eyes instinctively followed, and as I looked there appeared a picture, or vision, which made my heart quake with terror; then as my glance followed upward, my terror was merged into hope and joy.

The first scene seemed to be set in dark, angry clouds, that were whirling and warring together; in the midst of them were large armies of men, who were also warring and killing each other. The scene was horrible in the extreme. Blood, carnage and murder: men killing each other; men killing their brothers. Just above the black clouds hovered an immense eagle, with a long pennon streaming from its beak, on which I plainly read the word, Liberty!

"Blood must flow like water," said Annie, "before Liberty can arise on strong pinions

above the black clouds of slavery and error. Truth and error are for ever at war, but truth is invariably victorious in the end; therefore, how foolish for error to try to slay his brother, truth. Slavery of any kind is error. Men will war and kill each other; liberty, or truth, will arise from the fray on strong pinions; error and slavery will be beaten back severely wounded, yet will they arise again in other forms.

My eyes now followed upward, and must have taken on the hopeful look that was expressed in the eyes of the statue, for over and above the terrible scene below, I saw immense congregations of angels and spirits, and they were constantly passing and repassing downward, in and out of the black, warring clouds, and each one ascending, bore upward a languid spirit of one whose body had just been slain. As far as my sight could reach, the expanse above the black, warring clouds, was filled by the spirits of the slain, and a bright angelic form was by the side of each one, who had thus been thrust forth from his body, busy in revivifying his spirit, and as soon as the slain soldier felt that he was alive

and full of a new-born power, if he were on the side of liberty, he was soon taken back by the angel, and brought into close relations with a soldier still in the body and fighting; the spirit of that slain one would nerve the heart and brain of the one in the body, and impart to him agility, endurance, and strength, besides warding off danger as much as possible; but the spirits of the slain soldiers who were on the side of slavery and error, were not permitted by their accompanying angel to return and help those on the side of wrong, but were carried far on, away from the scene of warfare, and there restored to consciousness.

"Those on the side of error will not be allowed to help their brothers," said Annie. "Truth is always encompassed round about by an invisible host, and that is why she is at last victorious. Those spirits on the side of error will be shown the truth, and when they are able to perceive it, they will be carried down again, like those other soldiers, to aid on the side of truth, but not until they are able and willing to aid the right cause. Some will not be permitted to return until the war

is over, because they are slow to perceive truth. Mary," she continued, "there is shortly to be just such a war, as you now see, on the earth which you have but so lately left, and this is a shadowing of that which is to be. This shadow is cast before, or upward, from the conflicting minds of political parties: it is, as it were, a mirage of that which is shortly to be, and is shown you as preparatory education, that you may be able to take an active part on the side of truth in the coming terrible warfare between Liberty and Slavery, Truth and Error!"

We now turned our attention to the next corner of the wall, where another statue stood. This image was calm and grand beyond anything I had ever seen. Its broad, expansive brow was crowned by a wreath of immortelles: it was draped heavily, but very majestically: its features were grand and massive; the hands partly raised, the arms bearing up large folds of drapery, its feet encased within heavy shoes. Upon the pedestal was the word, "Immortality!" Its great, beautiful, calm eyes were looking straight into that which was before it in the distance. I also looked

in the same direction, and there I saw a landscape spread out before my sight: it was something like one of earth, and filled with weary, plodding men and women: many were oppressed or in slavish bondage; many more were despairing and hopeless, because they had not the light of truth to guide their weary feet. Great buildings, wherein the rankest error was taught, reared their steeples toward the sky, and multitudes toiled slavishly to build these temples, and pay those in power to instruct them in error. Little children were taught the most horrible doctrines, from which at first their souls recoiled in awful terror; but as they grew, the erroneous teachings grew with them, and became a part of them. Many strutted about clothed in purple and fine linen, reared elegant mansions, fed upon the choicest viands, but always at the expense of their toiling brothers: the man who toiled and produced lived in poverty, ignorance, and often filth, while their taskmasters lashed them with fears, unjust laws, besides threatenings of awful punishment to their souls after death. Thus the masses were kept under, that the few might ride over them

rough-shod, and still the unequal warfare raged on until, what?—the masses rose and the few sank.

As old error always does and must," said Annie's sweet voice. "Look again, dear Mary: look higher, my sweet sister."

And once more my eyes were rivetted upon a landscape higher up, one above the clouds; one, as it were, on a level with where we stood, the other had been lower down; and just above the clouds I saw an angel rising, mighty and powerful; in one hand he carried a banner, in the other a lighted torch. Upon the banner I read the following words:

"TRUTH SHALL SET MAN FREE, AND ITS TORCH SHALL FIRE THE RUBBISH OF ERROR!"

In this upper landscape, I saw, as before, a multitude of spirits and angels hovering over the darker scene, and now I beheld small bands of men and women on the lower plane, whose minds had been cleared of error by the angel's torch, and the rubbish burned out; but they were very few compared with the masses. Now I saw spirits and angels ascending and descending: each one as it ascended bore by its side a new-born spirit from the lower

plane, and when the new-born spirit had been revived and instructed in truth, it was carried back to earth, placed by the side of its nearest and dearest loved ones, to enlighten, strengthen, and encourage their darkened minds, until the little bands of men and women who were warring for truth, became mighty and powerful; their numbers were added to until they encompassed all the land, and old Error was beaten down.

"But, he will rise again in some other form," said Annie; "still, immortality will be proven and stand firm, for Truth is ever victorious in the end."

We now turned our attention to the third and fourth corners of the wall. On one corner stood a female figure, on the other a male. His right arm was stretched forth toward the female, her left toward him. They were much alike in form and feature. His left hand pointed outward to an extended plain, her right hand pointed upward. On his head was a blazing crown of pure diamonds, on hers a chaplet of roses interwoven with pearls. I thought at first the figures represented Adam and Eve, but reading the names on the

pedestals, I read, Wisdom for the male figure, and Love for the female. Over the archway of the gate, in the center, I read: "THE TRUE ETERNAL MARRIAGE OF LOVE AND WISDOM IS THE ONLY ROAD TOWARD HEAVEN AND HAPPINESS!"

And now I gazed out over the plain toward which Wisdom was pointing, and saw what at first appeared to be pandemonium. Certainly, it was the most incongruous sight ever seen, men and women mixed together in one promiscuous crowd; they all appeared to be care-worn, discontented, complaining, quarrelling and bickering.

I was now able to distinguish that the most of this throng were the so-called married, and I could see the secret motives which prompted the greater part of these unions. There were old men married to young girls, and occasionally the reverse; there were thousands of women married to men, whom they absolutely disliked, because they coveted position, money and a fine house; there were thousands of men married to women for the sole reason that they wanted a home, regardless whether the woman was competent to make one for them or not

there were strong men united to little, pun), girls, and men filled with crime, debauchery, and disease, to pure, lovely women, and sometimes the reverse; there were both men and women whose souls were starving and forlorn; there were men who beat and murdered their wives, and sometimes women who secretly poisoned their husbands. I saw all kinds of misery and degradation; one and all laboring under the mistaken idea that such relations, once entered into, must be perpetuated at all hazards; and I continued to see that from such marriages spring forth children of crime, disease, and vice. Oh! what a struggling, warring pandemonium it all was.

And now, as I looked above all this misery and crime, I saw two forms rising majestically upward; they were male and female. His right hand clasped her left, and arched above their heads was a bow like unto a rainbow, and set within the bow in letters of gold, above his head, WISDOM! above hers, LOVE! At the apex of the arch, resting upon it, was a golden crown; and set with diamonds, shining brighter than the stars of heaven, was the word, TRUTH!

"Yes," whispered Annie, sweetly, "when men and women marry, if they unite themselves in Love and Wisdom, Truth shall arise and crown their union, like that beautiful jewelled crown, and Heaven and Happiness will have been attained."

And now, as I looked higher still, I saw no spirits simply, but each soul was joined to, its corresponding soul, forming a galaxy so bright and beautiful, that their united glory was as the light of the sun, whose rays penetrated the wrangling masses beneath; many, very many, were enlightened, and would no longer live the wretched lives they had been living, but separated, each going their own way, yet were they dejected, for they did not understand how to unite themselves in Wisdom and Love. The eyes of my own spirit were beginning to open, and Truth was being forced in upon my understanding.

CHAPTER XX.

LADY AGNES.

WE now turned our attention to the building or Hall itself, whose magnificent beauty astonished and bewildered me. It was surrounded, as before stated, by extensive grounds filled with exquisite flowers of all kinds, and very many such as I had never seen before. Beautiful trees and shrubbery abounded; elegant statuary gleamed through the verdure; fountains sent up their spraying jets in which could be seen the most magnificent colors; silvery paths intersected, winding themselves like shining serpents, everywhere.

The building was an immense structure, four-square. The great dome of pearl, surmounted by a golden belfry, within which hung a large silver bell. At the four corners, where the dome joined the body of the house,

were four smaller belfries, in which were chimes of silver bells. The body of the building was a study indeed! Although the structure was of immense size, yet each stone differed from another; no two were alike throughout all its vastness, still all were so perfectly united and welded together that the walls appeared absolutely impenetrable: all the dark, heavy, coarse material was at the base, and as it rose, tier upon tier, the material became lighter and more exceedingly beautiful. Each of the four walls was pierced by an arched entrance; and set within the curves of each arch, with various colored gems, appeared a word, but no two gems composing the letters were alike.

Over one arch blazed the word, WISDOM! over the opposite one, LOVE! on another, TRUTH! and over the last, ERROR! No two of the four large doors were alike. The one marked "Error," was dark and sodden; the three steps leading up to it, which were of rough marble, were stained by indelible marks, some looking as though made by bloody feet and filthy hands; other marks seemed to have been made by pools of filth

spewed from the mouth, and all about the doorway were marks and indentations as though made by violent, intemperate hands; although, all had apparently been washed clean, yet the stains, marks, and indentations remained.

"This is the door," remarked Annie, "by which the souls of those steeped in error, vice, and crime, enter this educational hall for ladies. You, and others, may think, dear Mary, that women, not ladies, are guilty of vice and crime, but before you leave this place you will think differently."

We now passed around to the door marked, "Love." Here the most beautiful roses were blooming, filling the ethereal air with fragrance: the door was a garnet, glowing deeply and darkly red; the steps were ingrained and flecked by rose petals in all their different shades, each leaf overlapping the other in beautiful mosaic, yet no two alike, or of the same color. The door-knob was of pearl, heart-shaped, a ruby set in its center.

Seated on the upper step was the most beautiful child imaginable, a chubby little girl, playing with roses, a veritable cherub. Her

sweet, red lips were wreathed in smiles; her little teeth gleamed like pearls; her broad white brow was surrounded with dark, curling masses of fine, soft hair; her full, roguish eyes were filled with glee as she playfully showered us with rose leaves. Her white dimpled shoulders and arms were bare; she wore a rose-colored frock with an over-dress of dainty lace and pearls. I turned to Annie and said:

"You did not tell me there were children here."

"No. This is not a home for children," she replied still, many of the inmates here have children from whom they are not willing to part. The time will of course come when they will feel differently, but many who love intensely have not attained the corresponding wisdom, therefore, these children of love are not taken from them, but remain with them until sufficient wisdom is attained to balance their love, when they will, of their own accord, place their children within schools, where they can learn all that children should know. Mary, you are already much wiser than many mothers, for you are willing that your children

should remain where it is best for them to be. Great love can injure its object if not equally coupled with wisdom."

"But this child is exceedingly beautiful," I said.

"Yes; but if she were always to remain at the door of love, she would never be anything more than she is at present; in fact, as she grew without wisdom, her beauty would soon fade and grow dim; love would pine and die for want of wisdom."

We now passed around to the door of Truth. Instead of a door there appeared a burning flame, and in the center of the flame stood the form of a woman. The scene held me spell-bound with astonishment.

"O Annie!" I exclaimed; "that woman will be burned to death!"

"Oh, no," replied Annie. You forget, dear Mary, that she is a spirit, and cannot be hurt by fire; besides, the fire which you perceive is not material fire, but the flaming brightness of Truth, in which she is being cleansed, and the filthy rags of error burned up from around her. That young woman is one of the advanced pupils of the school, and

when the flame of Truth has consumed every vestige of error wherewith her spirit has been clothed, she will leave this school, become an angel, and enter into the joys and perform the mission of an angel."

The steps leading up to this flaming door were slashed and cut as with a sword or battleaxe, for, said Annie:

"Many battles between Truth and Error have been fought there, but flaming Truth has never yet been conquered within this Hall."

There now remained but one door for our inspection: the door of Wisdom; and we stood before it awe-stricken, dazzled by its brilliant beauty. The door was closed, being one immense diamond, priceless as Eternity, brilliant and flashing back as many colors as immensity. There was an ebony knocker on the door, and above it in letters of gold the words: SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND! KNOCK AND IT SHALL BE OPENED UNTO YOU?" I glanced at the steps; they were of the whitest marble, veined with gold, without a vestige of stain, spot, or blemish.

"Shall we knock, sweet sister?" asked Annie, turning to me,

But I drew back, feeling unworthy to enter through this grand, brilliant, and spotless arch.

"Cannot we enter by some other door?" I asked.

"You would not care to knock at error's stained portals, would you, my sister? for none but the vicious and criminal ever enter by that door:"

"O, no"; I replied, tremblingly.

"Nor by the door of love? for it is not love alone that we seek: nor by the door of truth? for you are not ready yet to bear its flame. No, dear Mary, we must knock for admission at Wisdom's door, or not at all. Approach the door, my sweet sister, and knock."

I ascended the spotless steps with timid reluctance, and, raising the knocker, knocked faintly.

"Louder," said Annie.

Gaining courage, I knocked urgently. Annie smiled, ascending to my side. The splendid door opened noiselessly and wide; we passed through into an elegant hall; the door closed softly behind us, and we stood gazing about wonderingly. The first thing that struck my sight was a stairway of shining gold. Let not

my readers demur and say, there can be no gold within the spiritual heavens, for I assure them this was not material gold, but as real to the spirit as material gold is to mortal man. Let not my Orthodox or Catholic readers demur, for the heaven in which they believe is one whose entire streets are paved with gold, and this was one of the mansions within the heavens, not made with hands, but by the Eternal Spirit working through spiritual beings. But to continue, however. The hall floor was of pure emerald; the walls of alabaster, whereon was suspended many a beautiful picture, which I will not now describe in detail. There was an arched doorway at the right of the hall, another at the left, and a large double arch directly ahead; the doorways all hung with the most exquisite drapery of pale blue and gold, with filmy lace over-curtains, worked in the loveliest and daintiest of patterns. The statue of a beautiful female goddess stood midway of the hall, with filmy drapery gathered about its exquisite form by one hand, while with the other it pointed directly toward the large archway at the end the hall, its beautiful eyes wearing

a welcoming expression as they gazed into our own. Really, it seemed almost life-like in its perfect beauty, yet it was but a work of art.

Over the entrance to the room were the words, as though written with electric light, LADIES' PARLOUR. Annie pushed aside the drapery, and we entered a large and exquisitely appointed room. The room was circular, and directly beneath the golden dome, which appeared transparent when looked at from the interior, and a flood of subdued light filled the place. A carpet, like the softest and daintiest of moss, with here and there a rosebud, a dandelion, a small bunch of violets, a few pansies, and many other delicate flowers, that looked so perfectly natural one was tempted to stoop and pick them, covered the floor. A large circular table, whose top was of pearl, stood in the center of the room, and elegant chairs, of various sizes and patterns, were scattered about: lastly, my eyes rested on a magnificent grand piano! The daintily tinted walls were adorned by many beautiful paintings, besides other pictures of various kinds; so beautiful were they that the finest

works of art by the greatest masters on earth would appear mere daubs.

I hope my readers will not take exception to the piano, for all the angels in the olden heaven were said to have harps of gold on which they played, and as a piano is but an improved harp, please believe me when I tell you that all kinds of improvements are allowed within the spiritual heavens as well as on earths; in fact, that they first exist within the minds and homes of the spirits and angels, before they are handed down to earth, through the medium of men's and women's brains, by spiritual impression. Spirits and angels stamp or picture them upon sensitives who are still within mortality.

A beautiful young lady was seated at the piano, striking the keys softly with her dainty fingers, which filled the lofty room with enchantingly melodious sounds: she raised her large, blue eyes as we entered, and, rising with the sweetest of smiles, extended a lily hand to each of us.

"And this is your sister Mary, dear Annie?" she asked, looking at me.

"Yes," replied Annie, for they seemed to be

well acquainted; "this is my dear sister Mary, whom I have brought here to be educated, as we all have been, and must be, before we can become wise, or do much good within the heavens or to the dwellers of earth. But Mary is a very sweet, apt pupil, who will not give you much trouble. I think she will be able to help around, and be of great service to the teachers, before many days have passed."

The beautiful young lady pressed her sweet lips to mine with a welcoming kiss, saying:

Yes; we greatly need all the assistance we can get: as our work extends before us for ever, dearest Mary, we may not be idle."

Annie now arose, saying:

"Mary, I must now leave you, and join my husband. My work is by his side, and one with his; but I will visit you shortly to see how you get along in the ways of wisdom."

She kissed me good-bye, and took her departure. A slight feeling of home-sickness passed over me, and I thought I should rather go with my sister than stay here. The young lady perceived my thought, and said:

"Annie must work on a higher plane than you are able to, at present, dear Mary. We

all must commence with the first steps before we can reach the top of the golden stairs, and Annie began to climb those stairs many years ago, therefore her work cannot lie on the same plane as your own. But be patient, dear lady, and persevere; you will surely attain to great heights, and be happy in the ways of wisdom and love. Shall I play for you?

I assented, and she began to play some of the sweetest and most inspiring airs. My feeling of home-sickness vanished, hope and courage filled my soul. All at once, strange sounds broke upon my ears. Heart-rending and discordant shrieks resounded through the house. Muffled sounds and gurgling groans split the air. I started up, a great horror filling me.

"Oh! What is that?" I exclaimed. "It sounds as though murder were being committed!"

"And, probably, murder has been committed," she replied, rising with a graceful, benign air, and taking my hand.

"Oh! horrible!" I cried. "It cannot be possible that murders are perpetrated in this beautiful building?"

She glanced at me surprisedly.

"Certainly not!" she said. "You forget, dear Mary, that a spirit cannot be killed."

Surely, so I had! But such awful sounds could mean nothing short of murder. Again the dreadful shrieks, the horrible groans, the stifled, gurgling sounds.

"Let us go and help," she said, drawing me gently along with her.

My first thoughts were, that I was expected to assist in committing a murder, for the frightful sounds had bewildered me. She drew me along through a corridor, toward a room which I intuitively knew the door of Error must lead into; she pushed aside the curtain, and we stood within the room. The stained door was open, and bloody marks were upon it; little pools of, fresh blood bedabbled the floor here and there, and the steps were also discolored as with footprints of blood. Everything swam before my eyes: I turned faint and sick with horror and fright.

"Mary," said the gentle voice of my companion, "don't give way to such feelings, for we need your assistance."

Her words brought back my failing courage,

and I looked in the direction from whence the horrible sounds proceeded, and there, lying on a white bed all bedabbled with gore, was the writhing, shrieking form of a woman. Her face was contorted in agony, her eyes were glaring wildly, and she was clawing the air as though to ward off murderous blows. Two lovely young girls were standing a short distance away, their white garments all stained with blood, their forms swaying and drooping as though in grief, the tears rolling down their sweet, angelic cheeks. They looked up as we entered, and one of them said:

"She cannot see us yet; we must wait awhile."

"Who has committed this deed?" asked my companion.

"Her husband and our father," was the sorrowful reply; "and we have just borne her spirit hither. O mother, mother!"

One of them knelt by the bedside, and gently took the clawing hand within her own; the other daughter took fresh water, carefully wiped away the stains and marks about the door and steps, also from the floor of the room. The murdered woman's shrieks now grew less,

her hands became quiet; the daughter who was kneeling by her side took fresh water, bathed the pale face and hands, then commenced to make gentle passes over the eyes; they gradually lost their terrified expression, the features became more calm, and at length a look of intelligence lighted up the countenance. The daughter, kneeling by the bedside, again called in gentle, loving tones:

"Mother! Mother!"

The other girl went to the opposite side of the bed, bending her sweet face above that of the prostrate murdered woman.

"Mother! Mother! Dearest mother," she softly called, "look at me, your own dear girl."

"Whist! Whist!" whispered the mother.

Is that you, me darlint, who calls? Me sweet gurl that died of want an' neglect, this two Year gone by? Och! Och! Thin Teddy has murdered me sure, an' ye are me blissid saints that wint to heaven before me. Och! Och an' Teddy will be hung, sure! Och! Och me troubles are more thin I kin bear! Sure, it was not Teddy, but the liquor that was in him, that murdered me!"

The two girls bent above their mother with sweet caresses, and loving, encouraging words. I remained a spectator of the scene until they had restored the woman to her full senses, and together with her they had left this room for one across the hall.

My gentle companion and I now returned to the parlor.

CHAPTER XXI.

A MURDERED WIFE AND MOTHER.

HE experience related in the foregoing chapter had rendered me, very weak, and I threw myself down upon the sofa with a sighing moan.

"O! such things are dreadful—dreadful I murmured:

"And yet the earth is filled with cruelty and murder," said my companion. "We can neither shut our eyes, ears, nor hearts, to the cries of these wronged ones; but we must all work for the redemption of mankind. This husband has murdered his wife, and, as she truly said, it was not the man but the whisky that was in him. Those two young girls have been in this hall many months, therefore, I know all about their troubles; and this murder has been expected by them for

some time. The father's intemperate habits were the direct cause of their own deaths; they were obliged to toil early and late, in destitution and misery, together with their mother; their tender youth could not bear the strain, so first one dropped off with consumption, and then the other; but for whisky the father would have been an honest workman, the mother would have been thrifty and saving, the daughters would have been sent to school, and lived to be respectable women with little families of their own. To abolish the whisky trade, and entirely stop the distilling of ardent spirits, would do the world more real good than all the prayers of the priests and people of the Romish Church, or any other church as for that matter. The government first allows the manufacture of ardent spirits, allows them to be, dealt out to those who drink them, providing a portion of the money thus obtained is paid into its own coffers; and when the poor victim of intemperance commits murder under their maddening influence, he is hung, and those in power pray to God to be redeemed of their sins. Mary, will you be one to help abolish the whisky

trade? It will be a great way to work out the redemption of mankind."

"I will! I will!" I moaned. But how can it be done? Oh, that* the gulf between heaven and earth might be spanned!"

"It will be," she replied, "and you shall be one to help span it."

"Dear young lady," I asked, "tell me your name?"

"My name is Agnes," she replied. "I am called 'Lady Agnes,' and am the superintendent of this 'Educational Hall.'"

I was still lying on the sofa, actually prostrated by the terrible scene which I had witnessed. Lady Agnes, as I shall now call her, approached me, laid her hand gently upon my head, and over my eyes; her strong, soothing magnetism filled and restored me

I rose up strengthened and refreshed.

"Mary, do you feel strong enough now to see this poor woman once more? She needs other help besides that which her two young daughters are able to give her. I would like to have her come to this room, and receive the needed instruction to aid her in understanding things as they are."

Lady Agnes's touch had strengthened me so much that I now felt a desire to see and help this poor murdered woman. Lady Agnes touched an electric communication, and presently the young girls entered with their mother between them. Lady Agnes gave the woman her hand, and turning to me said:

"The ladies who are admitted into this Hall help and educate each other, together with what assistance I am able to give them. As you two have but just entered, it is fitting that you become acquainted. You were both wives and mothers below, each has left children and husband on earth, each has children here in the heavens. You are Mary, this is Bridget."

I gave my hand to Bridget. She curtsied low. Lady Agnes went to the piano, and struck a few soothing, harmonious chords. The mother and daughters seated themselves on the beautiful circular divan, and I took a seat not far away. The stains upon the white robes of the young girls had entirely disappeared, but the mother's garments were still dark and blood-stained: although her face had lost much of its agonized expression, yet it was

deeply furrowed, the eyes wearing a look like that of a hunted wild animal, fear and fierceness about evenly blended; her manner was abject and slavish, her form bowed as by toil and deprivation, her hands large and coarse.

Lady Agnes played a soft, plaintive air, that filled the room with sweetness. Bridget sat with crossed hands and downcast eyes, occasionally casting furtive glances about the elegant room; her glances were stealthy, as though she had no right ever to look upon beautiful things, yet her two daughters were as beautiful as they were heavenly. The elder had dark hair, large, sweet, expressive brown eyes, a soft, peachy face, and rounded, graceful form, coupled with great refinement of manner. The younger was a sweet little blonde, with golden curls, large, spiritual, blue eyes, pure, oval face, and exquisite Mouth. She was leaning her pretty head against her mother's shoulder.

"Och! me darlints sighed Bridget, tenderly stroking the soft curls with her rough hand. "Me purty darlints! an' its mesel' that 's glad to see yees once more: but, och, och!" she wailed, "an' vats to

become o' Maggie an' little Pat, an' the babby wi'out me? Their fayther's a murtherous brute fen he's thrunk, an' he's murthered me—he 's murthered me! but the childer, the childer that's left? Ah! to look at yees, ye purties! There 's no need yees heve o' me, but the childer that 's left—the c'hilder that 's left? Och! vat will become o' thim?" And tears rolled down the grief-stricken mother's face. "It's freezin' an' starvin' they will be, sure! for their fayther can'o' wurruk fen he's full o' the visky; an' vat could he do at all, at all, wi' the babby? Och, och, och!" and she rocked herself to and fro in her anxiety and grief for her little ones. "An' it was all I could do to keep thim from freezin' an' starvin', washin' an' scrubbin' all the days long fur the gintry, an' fearin' for yees, me darlints, that yer souls would no' be at rist. We often wint cold an' hungry, that the money might be gi'en to the praist, that yer precious souls might be prayed outen purgatory, an' be at rist wi' the Mother o' God, an' 'the blissid saints: an' vy is 't that I find yees here, an' no' wi' the Mother o' God? for I have paid the praist all the money that he said was

needed to put yer souls in hiven wi' the blissid saints. This place is purty enough, to be sure," she went on, "but this is on'y a foine house, an' these leddies, beggin' their parden, canno' be the blissid saints; an' sure, the one nor the other is no' the Mother of God."

"You need not ask our pardon," said Lady Agnes, "for what you say is true; and no one need ask pardon for speaking the truth. I am not the Mother of God, neither am I a calendared saint, although my work at present is to receive, comfort and instruct the souls of forlorn and weary women, who are sent into this world before they ought to come. This place is merely an Educational Hall for Ladies, which I superintend."

"An' is this house in purgatory, thin? an' the praist toul't me my two gurls, bliss their shwate harts, were prayed out long ago."

"We do not call this place purgatory," answered Lady Agnes, "but a house not made with hands, eternal and within the heavens."

Bridget's eyes lost their hunted, fierce expression, and opened to their fullest extent, in a wondering stare of amazement.

"Whist!" she whispered. "Vats that yees

talking? Within the hivens? Thin its in hiven we are, afther all?"

"Yes," replied Lady Agnes; "you are in the heavens."

"Whist! whist! thin. Vare is the howly Virgin, the Saints, an' the blissid Saviour o' mankind?"

"They are all here kithin the heavens."

"Then ven shall I go to them?" asked Bridget, anxiously; "fur I have made confission o' me sins regular, an' niver missed fur a lang, lang time, an' the praist has absolved me."

"The heavens," answered Lady Agnes, "are very, very large, as well as exceedingly high. We are, at present, far removed from Jesus of Nazareth and Mary his mother. The saints are few and very far removed from each other, besides, in your present condition, to reach them at their high altitude would be impossible: it may be many, many years, dear Bridget, before you will be able to perceive them; and, even supposing that Mary, the Mother of God, as you call her, could enter this room at the present moment, what could she do for you—what boon would you crave at her hands?"

"Vat! vat 's that you say?" asked Bridget,

with mouth and eyes agape. "Vat would I ax o' her?"

"Yes; what would you wish her to do for you?"

"Och! Howly Virgin!" exclaimed Bridget.

"But I 'd fall at her feet an' kiss the him o' her garment."

"But what possible good would that do you or her?"

Bridget's eyes and mouth opened wider and still wider, if that were possible, in the utmost astonishment; at last she found voice to say:

"Whist, O whist! Yees must be a great blackguard to talk afther that manner o' the howly Virgin, the Mother o' God! Ought'en the Mother o' God to be worshipped?"

"Well," replied Lady Agnes, "that depends very much on what you mean by the word, worship. To fall down on your face, and kiss the hem of her garment, would do neither her nor you any good whatever: in fact, I do not think such a proceeding would be at all agreeable to an angel as wise as Mary the mother of Jesus must be, after being within the heavens for eighteen hundred years or more. Bridget; blind worship in any form is the

folly of ignorance. But, I will repeat my question. What would you ask of her?"

Bridget meditated in great perplexity.

"Perhaps you have more than one desire. Please to tell us what you wish for more than all things else."

"But if I am murdered an' in hiven, where's the good o' wishin'?"

"It is the only way in which you can obtain anything."

"But the praist toul't me it were sinful to wish for anythin' that one could no' have."

"Bridget," said Lady Agnes, "there is not any thing one may not have, if one earnestly desires and constantly strives to obtain it."

"Och! now yees tellin' the falsest o' lies! an' it's in purgatory I musht be, afther all; an' ye are one of the decaivers, for I might o' axed to be rich all the days o' me life, an' that could ne'er o' bin."

"But your life is not ended, my dear Bridget; it is but scarcely commenced as yet."

I could not help smiling at the ludicrous expression on Bridget's stolid face.

"Whist! now; vat 's that yees tellin' me? an' wasn't it Teddy hiself that murdered me?"

"Well; he sent you out of your body, certainly; but, Bridget, are you dead or alive?"

"Whist! now; it 's both I am, sure!"

"No," replied Lady Agnes; "you, yourself, are living, and ever will live; all your wishes can meet with fulfilment, for eternity lies outstretched before you. I do not wish you to understand that your desires can be granted at once, but, unless you earnestly wish for something you can make no progress."

"Can I wish for anythin', at all, at all?"

"Anything: no matter what; but it is the real and greatest desire which you feel within yourself, that I would like to have you manifest."

"Thin," said Bridget, "I want to see my babby, an' little Pat, an' Nora. But vare's the use o' that? I'm dead an' murdered!"

"You will soon find your desire a very useful one, which will shortly meet with its fulfilment. And, now, let me impress upon your mind, dear Bridget, that all your desires will at last meet with corresponding fulfilment. To wish and strive for a thing is the only way to obtain anything whatever. Your present wish is right and proper. Your wish

to see Mary, the mother of Jesus, will also meet with its fulfilment in time. It is a matter of time only. You can also fall at her feet, and kiss the hem of her garment, if you greatly desire to do so; I merely questioned the wisdom of it; whether much good would thereby be accomplished or not. I doubt much whether you will still retain those desires when you become as wise as she is. I certainly know that she does not desire you to do anything of the kind; she would much rather that you should love and help those nearest and dearest to you. Mary, will you now relate to Bridget your experience; it will help and strengthen her."

"With pleasure," I replied; and in as few words as possible, I told her all, from the time I had found myself an inhabitant of the spiritual world; of the many times I had already returned to those loved ones whom I had left there; I told her of my own little baby, of my boy of three, and my man of six; of the two little girls here in the spiritual world, and of my husband.

"Och!" said she, but yer husband ne'ar murdered yees loike Teddy has me."

"No; he did not kill my body, but he killed my soul, and every other soul in existence."

Bridget raised her hands, and rolled up her eyes with such a look of horror on her face, that I laughed quite heartily as I replied:

"That is to say, he killed them to himself alone, blotted them out of his own earthly life, besides, killing his own soul to himself as long as he lives on earth."

"Och! vat can ye mane?" asked Bridget, with a look of incredulity.

"I mean that he is what is called a materialist; will not believe that people live at all after the death of the body. He has killed my soul to himself, because he will not believe that I have a soul at all, therefore, I am dead to him while he remains on earth, and it will be impossible for me to reach him. I hope better things of my children: they are young; I shall spend a great part of my time striving to impress their tender minds with the great truth of immortal life, growth, and progress of the soul. Really, it now seems to me as though it were no worse to kill the body than to endeavor to kill the soul. Teddy has, in a moment of drunken fury, destroyed your

material body to himself and the little ones on earth; my husband has destroyed my soul to himself and my little ones on earth; for he teaches them that their mother is dead for ever. Bridget, is not my grief as great as yours?"

"Well, now, mum," replied she, light dawning on her stolid face, "yees right, yees are. Thin ye 've seen yer babbies an' yer husban' sin' comin' here?"

"O, yes; many times," I replied: "but they cannot see me, which causes me much sorrow. O, that the gulf might be spanned!" I sighed.

"An' vat gulf is it yees mane?" asked she.

"The gulf of ignorance which separates the two worlds," I answered.

Bridget glanced at Lady Agnes.

"An' did yees not tell us that we should have all our wishes?"

Never shall I forget the look of heavenly delight that rested, like the flush of rosy morn, on that lovely face as she softly replied:

"I did, my dear Bridget; I did, my sweet Mary; the gulf will be spanned, and that very shortly; you shall both help to span it, and

when the gulf is once thoroughly spanned you shall lend your aid toward the destruction of the great monster, intemperance: this will please Mary, the mother of Jesus, and all other angels, much better than it would to have you fall down and worship her or kiss the hem of her garment."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CIRCLE.

ALL the details of our conversation need not be entered into; suffice it to say that we all, excepting Lady Agnes, shortly after visited the squalid place poor Bridget had called home. Teddy had been arrested, and was in jail. Her disfigured body had been decently laid out for burial. The neighbors, together with one or two relatives, were preparing for a grand wake, which means, I suppose, to light her soul through purgatory. The children would be taken care of for a few days, at least.

Poor Bridget was bitterly disappointed because they could not see her, and wailed sorrowfully.

"Och!" said she, angrily; "vat's the use o' bein' a ghost, at all, at all? whin ye can naither go to hiven ner hell, an' yer own flesh an' blood canno' seen ye? But I'll sthay to

me own wake, sure! fur it's a wake that delights me harrut!"

She was prevailed upon to go with me to my dear ones, for I now made it a point to visit my husband and children on all available occasions. There had not yet been many changes in my own home worth mentioning, and as Bridget was determined to stay to her own wake, one of her white-robed daughters remained with her; the younger of the two, the graceful, dark-haired girl returning with me to the Hall. When we entered the parlor, we found many ladies there conversing together in the most animated way.

Lady Agnes, on perceiving me, said:

"Ladies, allow me to introduce to your notice Mary, a pupil lately admitted to this Hall."

I bowed. The ladies saluted me cheerfully, and I took a seat where I thought I should be the least observed, listening with some curiosity to the conversation.

"Yes," replied a large, fine-looking lady, to a question that had been asked her, "telegraphy has become a success on the earth, and together with it, *Spiritual Telegraphy*! Many spirits have been able to produce sounds similar to

those made by the electric batteries; we have already been heard and heeded, sentinels have been appointed and stationed near all the greatest sensitives who live on the earth: we shall never cease in our efforts until heaven and earth clasp hands, and are united in an indissoluble union."

"But we shall be beaten back by the churches," said the first speaker.

"Yes; the war between spirits and the churches will be a desperate one, still, we well know that truth and right will at length win the victory."

"They are about to declare war between the North and the South, are they not?"

Yes; and the result will be the emancipation of the slaves; the result of the war between heaven and the churches will be the emancipation of the priest-ridden, creed-bound slaves belonging to the churches; but the war between heaven and the churches will be a long and bitter one; hundreds of mediums, or sensitives, must be sacrificed before the Victory is gained, and all must suffer, be wounded, insulted and slandered, but the war will not end until every creed-bound slave is set free."

"You certainly cannot mean that the Romish Church will fall, and her votaries lose their galling chains?"

"I do; although, at first thought, it would seem impossible; but, believe me, all things are possible. That great Scarlet Woman of Babylon must fall—will fall,—for Truth is a conquering hero; the light of day cannot be kept out of the Romish Church. She may be the last to succumb, but fall she surely will! There are vast armies of spirits here, who were once Roman Catholics, and they have all found that the teachings of the Church were erroneous, and thousands of fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and children are attaching themselves to their loved ones still in the flesh, gently and silently impressing their minds with the truth. How, think you, will the Church be able to ward off this great, silent, unseen foe, who marches straight on resistlessly as the waves of the ocean, or as rays of light from the sun? They build their churches large, strong, and high, but the Church walls are not the people, the Pope of Rome is not God or wisdom, and the priesthood are not angels. Can the Pope of Rome resist the flaming

sword of Truth? or the priests conquer the angelic world? Their foe comes from a quarter entirely unlooked for. They are looking for outward foes, when the true foes of the Church will be entirely within its own heart, within its own brain, within its own walls. Civil war will free the black man civil war will free the white man from a bondage of error worse than slavery; every priest-ridden soul who comes to this world is sighing and struggling to span the gulf between themselves and their loved ones on earth; this gulf will soon be spanned, and they will tell those loved ones all about this life, and when truth is made manifest, how long will the Romish Church be able to stand?"

"Not long, I think," said the first speaker.

The large lady now turned, and made her way to where I was seated: she took my hand, with a smile, and placed herself by my side.

"Lady Agnes has been speaking to me about you," she said. "You are one of the vast number who earnestly desire to span the gulf, and, when your wish is accomplished, will you not tell the truth to your loved ones about this life? Will you not tell them what you

find, and how you find it, regardless of the teachings of the Catholic Church?"

"If I am ever able to reach my loved ones, and make them comprehend who I am, I will surely tell them the truth as I find it; as surely as I hope for happiness; as surely as that I love my widowed husband and motherless babes!" was my solemn and earnest reply.

"Very good! and we have thousands upon thousands here as loving and earnest as yourself; yet all "Must be taught how and by what means to accomplish the desired result. This little band of ladies present, are about to pay a visit to a circle of friends who are yet in the body, for the purpose of communicating intelligently with them; that is, the earthly circle will be well aware that they are communing with the souls of the so-called dead. You will be able to learn much, and perhaps assist a good deal: this will give you more pleasure and do more good, no doubt, than it would to kiss the hem of a saint's robe or a pope's toe."

I felt a blush of shame rise to my face, shame for the superstitious ignorance of those whom I had called my people, shame for my own ignorance—and with it a strong determination

to learn as much and as fast as I could. I gladly consented to go with this party of ladies; my heart bounded joyfully at the thought of soon being able to learn how to reach my husband and children. We were

soon on our way, and presently entered a room where a small party of ladies and gentlemen were seated around a table: it was a common dining-table of hard wood, and the hands of all present were laid flat upon it.

"Now," said the large lady, who had informed me her name was Esther, "observe carefully all that is going on," and I gladly heeded her admonition.

I saw pale waves of magnetic light emanating from all the hands of those who sat at the table. The table appeared to be a conductor of these waves, and they all flowed toward one particular lady, who was sitting with the others, and were absorbed by her; thus she seemed to be filled more fully than the others, or the others were robbed that she might have a surplus of magnetism, the light of which radiated from her, surrounding her like a halo. Immediately one of the spirit ladies of our party entered this aura, which was a perfect conductor of

thought, and by these means the spirit lady was able to stamp upon the brain of the sensitive her own thoughts, or the knowledge which she possessed; stamp them as clearly and forcibly as a photographer stamps the face and figure of the one, who is sitting for the purpose, upon the sensitive plate. Soon, by force of great desire or will-power, she controlled this medium or sensitive, as a mother controls her child, to speak and write that which she wished her to speak and write, so that it really was the spirit lady who wrote and spoke, and not the lady seated at the table.

I looked on in wonder and surprise, and was so delighted that I clapped my hands for joy. "Surely, the gulf was already spanned!" but not known to me. O, it was a great thing to have wisdom!

My attention was now directed toward a gentleman, one of the persons at the table, and I observed an aura about him, but differing from the pale magnetic aura surrounding the lady; this aura, instead of being amber or flame-colored, was of a greyish hue: Esther drew me along with her and entered this aura, at the, same time whispering to me:

"This aura, which I am about to enter, is a surplus of elementary carbon. Now, see what I shall do with it."

Immediately after she entered it I heard snapping sounds like the explosions of percussion caps or the clicks of a telegraph apparatus, and I readily saw just how Esther was making these sounds. Her own aura was pure magnetism, and each time she sent forth her thoughts and will-power, they carried with them a corresponding amount of magnetism which ignited an equal amount of carbon, and the explosive sounds were the spirit's rap, and the table was the sounding board against which the explosions struck and resounded.

Now, the party at the table asked questions, and it was understood that one sound was to mean No, two sounds were to mean Don't know, and three sounds were to mean Yes, and Esther answered each question as it was propounded, to the best of her ability, at the same time talking with me.

"Mary," she said, smiling, I am not all-wise, all-powerful, and there may be questions asked here tonight which I am not able to answer. I have not been in the spiritual world

very long, myself, but so far as I can, all shall be answered truthfully. This gentleman calls me his control, meaning that it is my spirit who controls him. He loved me very dearly when I was in my mortal body, and we were engaged to be married, but a contagious fever sent me hither, and he seeks me sorrowing; he does not seek in vain, as you see."

"O, that my beloved husband would seek me!" I cried, "How soon, after this, I should be able to answer his questions, and almost talk with him face to face. Oh! it is the fault of earth and not of heaven that the gulf is not spanned. If my dear Franz were here this very evening, I know just what he would say he would pooh-pooh sarcastically and exclaim

"Fraud! Delusion! Trickery! Humbug! Imagination!"

Esther and the other spirit ladies present were able to give many messages of love, cheer and wisdom that evening, and the circle broke up, all being happier and many wiser, because they had spanned the gulf between heaven and earth, and clasped hands with each other; after which we returned to the Educational Hall for Ladies.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LONELINESS.

It is not now my purpose to give my daily life in all its details, enough to say that every hour was filled with interesting events and episodes of all kinds; thousands of new-born spirits entered this Hall, and were here taught in the rudimentary branches of knowledge; went through much the same experience as I had, and similar to those which the reader has been made acquainted with. I visited my husband and children whenever I wished, and tried to do all in my power to shape events to bring them the greatest amount of happiness and do them the most good; still, my power at this time was very limited as far as they were concerned; my husband believed that death was the end; he taught my children to think the same; my baby girl joined me in a short

time, and after remaining with me as long as was best for her, was placed in a school for infants whose ages corresponded with her own. Joey, and the two little girls already here, grew apace. I visited them daily, overlooking their welfare. Many people on earth may think that I ought to have had a home, taken my four spirit children to live with me, and waited until my husband and two boys joined me, so that we might all again be united in a happy family.

Reader, such are not truthful principles, and it is truth which is to be given in this writing.

First, then, I had not wisdom enough to educate my spirit children properly, as they must be educated in the highest principles possible, of love and wisdom. Greater wisdom than mine had founded schools of all descriptions and grades for the education of the young as well as the old, and Annie and Sigismund, being wiser than myself, had cast for me the future of my husband and two children left on earth.

My husband, believing that I was forever dead, gradually became resigned, and as the

struggle of life went on with him my image faded from his memory: no matter how hard I might try to fan the flame, it would not burn: he was in the material. He soon found that it was very hard for a man alone, to take proper care of two little boys; he needed a wife, and soon found one. He was still a young man, and Annie had told me that he would live on earth with this wife for many years, and would not enter the spirit-world until he was old; that he would live with this wife many, many years longer than he had with me, and she also would bear him a number of children; then, asked Annie, pertinently:

"Whose husband will he be, yours or hers?"

This thought staggered me at first, for I was yet a babe in wisdom.

"Then," continued Annie, "you could not make a home all together, for your two boys on earth will live to be men, and have wives and children of their own; even your little ones here will soon be women, and Joey a man; their mother's love will not always fill the measure of their souls; a greater love than that of mother love awaits them."

A greater love than that of mother love? I cried in agony. "Can there be a love greater than that of mother love?"

"Certainly," she replied. A mother can be a mother for ever, but mother love alone will not fill the measure of her soul."

"Then am I indeed, bereft! My husband has already another wife; my children are growing rapidly into men and women, will have husbands and wives of their own; and you, even you, my sweet sister, have your husband—your Sigismund."

"Certainly," she said, with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes. "I have my Sigismund! Is not my love for him greater than mother love? and yet if I were the mother of a dozen children, his love would not interfere with mother love: his love rounds out and completes my being, and mother love would be wiser, grander, and more capable in consequence. A yearning, wandering spirit has not the wisdom of an angel, and, therefore, cannot do the same amount of good; besides, educational halls are not homes, and one half, of an angel cannot make a home, neither can one half soar into the regions of the blessed."

"Regions of the blessed?" I repeated. Where are the regions of the blessed, dear Annie?"

"We must first understand the meaning of the word blessed," she answered. "To be blessed is to be happy, is it not, my sister?"

"That is not the way I have comprehended it; have always supposed it meant to be blessed by God, or the Saviour, or even by the Virgin Mary."

"Well; if a personal God, and Jesus, or Mary his mother, were to lay their hands on your head and say, 'Blessed art thou, O Mary! Sit thou here by my right hand'; would it make you supremely blessed and happy to sit there for evermore, merely shouting praises, while the greater part of mankind went down to hell into the most horrible agony? We will say, for instance, your husband, and the two beautiful boys you left on earth; every human being has a mother somewhere, that would feel for her children precisely as you would."

"No; Annie. I am now far advanced beyond such ideas."

"Well, then, is not blessedness happiness?"

The regions of the blessed, mean the regions of the happy. Are you happy yet, dear Mary? Is there nothing left that you desire?"

"O Annie; how can you ask that question? I am very far from being happy, and am very, very lonely since Franz has another wife. I do not feel that it is right to call him by the name of husband, much less my husband: another woman now calls him by that endearing name; my two little boys can neither hear nor see me, and have actually forgotten how their mother looked; they now call that other woman mother; the most that I can do is to guard them from evil, as much as possible, by impressing their minds with truth, as far as I myself understand it; but earthly teaching is, at present, more powerful than all I am able to do for them. Annie, the gulf is not yet spanned for me."

"No; not yet. The gulf really has been spanned for acres, aye, acres upon ages; it is a condition and not a gulf. To all earthly minds that reach up into the spiritual and angelic, the gulf is spanned, always has been; spirits and angels have always communed with mortals, those whose minds have been

open to receive them, and they have ever been ready to give wisdom, love and truth; but, until those whom you have left on earth, and those whom other mothers have left, are wise enough to understand truth, the gulf to them is not spanned; but to return to my former question: Why are you not blessed or happy, Mary? What desire or incompleteness do you feel within yourself?"

"O Annie! do not blame me when I tell you that I am lonely. I am nothing more to Franz now, or my two little boys on earth; my children here do not especially need my love or care; their mother's love is not the end and aim of their desires, and, as you say, other and stronger love will soon fill their souls: your love is greater for Sigismund than for me. Yes; I feel a sense of desolation, an incompleteness, a yearning desire for a love greater than I have ever known."

"And, it is high time that this desire became more definite," she said. "I have been waiting patiently until your soul should grow to this point. You have been doing for others all that you could, since coming here; the time has now come when you must take a step

higher; you have outgrown your past condition, and all is well: Mary, you have thus far been but a spirit; the time is near at hand when you will become an angel."

"You often speak of spirits and angels, dear Annie, as though there were a distinction between them. Please tell me what the difference may be?"

"The difference is this," she replied: "a spirit is the undeveloped half of an angel. Every child is a spirit; all males and females, still disunited, are spirits or uncompleted angels, and they cannot become angels until they are developed up to that point where they, fully comprehend the true eternal union of the two in one, the two halves that make the perfect whole."

"By this you mean marriage, do you not?"

"Certainly!"

"But I have been married, as you know."

"Are you very sure that you were ever united?" she asked.

"What a strange question, dear sister: was not Franz my husband?"

"Yes; he was your husband, as mortals wed; but is he your husband now?"

"O no!" I answered sadly, with drooping head: "he belongs to another, and I am bereft!"

"But, even if he were not married to another, would he yet be your husband? Would his soul and yours be the perfect and complete whole? Could you soar with him into the regions of the blessed, and be eternally happy in his society? Could he respond to every desire of yours, and fill you with bliss unspeakable? Mary, I shall now pierce your soul with a dart of truth. Franz was never your other self, can never be, will never be, and by the time he reaches this life you will be as far apart as the poles; your souls never even blended, although your marriage was as happy as most earthly marriages are; it is not your body now that is to be married, but your soul. There are many kinds of earthly marriages, but only one eternal or heavenly marriage, and it is of this that you must now learn."

"Are you and Sigismund eternally married?" Most certainly we are. We are one angel, and cannot be severed any more than a man can sever his right side from his left, or cut himself in two lengthwise and live. If a man

cut his body in twain, behold! it perishes, but his spirit lives unsevered and complete, although his body perishes he cannot sever his spirit in that way; it is impossible: no more can spirits once united and made whole sever or cut themselves apart. Mary, it still remains for you to be thus united, but I shall tell you a still deeper secret. The other half of your own soul is in existence, and always has been, but it is not Franz; his soul and yours are not at all alike, and if you had remained very much longer on earth you would have been very unhappy and incomplete; the mother love would not have satisfied that part of your being any more than it does now. Mother love and conjugal love are entirely different in their attributes; one does not and cannot take the place of the other. True conjugal love endures forever; parental love is swallowed up within conjugal love, and when every mother's child has found its own other self and is united to it, thus becoming a completed angel, the mother love ceases. The love of the completed angel becomes universal love, or the love which mortals suppose to be God love. Do I make this clear to you, Mary?"

"Not quite," I replied.

Well, then, a completed angel, which is the true male and female halves united, sends forth its love to all mankind to all spirits equally; that is, the angel desires to benefit all whenever and wherever it can find an opportunity, regardless whether it be its own immediate relatives or not. When you are thus united, dear Mary, all human beings and spirits will be your children, you will love all and work for all."

CHAPTER XXIV.

A SPIRITUAL TELEPHONE.

WHILE I had been at the Educational Hall for Ladies, Annie had visited me often. She now said:

"Mary, as you now desire to be united to your other self, and become an angel, you shall leave this Hall, and go with me to make necessary preparations for the bridegroom."

"For the bridegroom!" I exclaimed. "Why, I have never seen him yet, and if Franz is not he, I do not even know who or where he is."

"But because you do not at present know who and where he is, is no proof that he is not. If there were no knowledge except that which undeveloped spirits have, there would be nothing more to know, and all nature would be at a standstill. Mary, the desire within yourself of something more to complete yourself, is positive evidence that that something

exists, and is as nearly ready as yourself to be united. Your feeling of loneliness shows you that there is a want, or incompleteness, which must be filled before you can be blessed or happy."

We now left the Educational Hall together, and joined Sigismund outside the walls, where he always waited for Annie, as gentlemen were not admitted to this particular Hall.

Sigismund smiled, and gave me a wise look. I flushed, and drooped my head, for I at once realized that my desire was known to him.

"Behold! the bridegroom waits for his bride," he said, sententiously: "make ready for the nuptials. Love and wisdom must be united, that truth may be made manifest."

I drew back almost affrighted.

"O, no! not yet!" I cried. I am not ready, and do not understand it all."

"You certainly shall not see him until you are ready," said Annie.

"And even if I were to see him, there is no need to be united for a long time, is there?"

"You certainly cannot be united until you desire to be," she replied. "The wooing can last for months if you choose."

"But, Annie," I questioned; "among all the men who ever lived, how is one to know, beyond a doubt, which is the right one, the other self?"

"This is what you have yet to learn," she replied; "and while you are visiting me I will teach you, so that it will be impossible to make a mistake. If this knowledge had not been taught to me, before I wedded with *Sigismund*, I could not impart it to you."

We had been gliding on rapidly for some time during the conversation, when, suddenly, a glorious scene burst upon my view: a great expanse, as far as the eye could reach, filled with the most beautiful sights imaginable. Directly before us lay a placid lake, in which was reflected much of the scenery that lay near it, and beyond was a city, so gloriously beautiful that my eyes were dazzled, and I was obliged to cover them with my hands as one on earth might do when looking at the sun. Sigismund and Annie laid their united hands on my head, which strengthened my sight, and shortly I was able to look again. The whole city glowed and sparkled as though built of the most precious Jewels: temples

composed entirely of diamonds sent forth their dazzling rays. In the distance rose lofty mountains, whose sides were dotted with the brightest and most elegant structures, and upon the heights rose towers of gold. Beautiful shrubbery and perfect trees were growing profusely everywhere. Sigismund and Annie pointed to this lovely city, saying:

Mary, that city is one of many in which angels dwell; in that city is our own home, from which we go forth to labor for the good of men and spirits; that home is our retreat when weary; to that home we go to gain rest and strength, wisdom and love, and when we are filled with that which we need, hand-in-hand we go forth to scatter our pearls among those who desire them, and none who ask of us are ever turned away empty handed. Mary, you are yet a spirit, but the angelic world is opening up to your view; a little later, and you also will be an angel; at present you may not cross that lake, for a spirit is not able to dwell among the angels; but fear not, dear sister, we will abide here with you until after the coming event, and then together we will cross the lake, and you shall build a home beside us.

Dear Mary, as you are already aware, we can construct homes or dwellings wherever we wish here in the spiritual life, and as you are not yet ready to join the angels, Sigismund and I concluded to erect a dwelling on this side of the lake, that you might remain with us until ready to build your own home among the angels; and yonder it stands," she continued, pointing toward a lovely spot, where, glistening through the green trees, I espied a beautiful cottage, apparently built of pearl and gold, together with plate glass windows. The dome, doors and trimmings were of shining gold, the remainder of the most beautiful pearl with all its variegated tints. The flowers, trees, vines and shrubbery were more beautiful than a dream, and as we neared the place exquisite statuary and fountains met my view. A green, velvety lawn extended to the water's edge, and a little boat moored there was riding the waves gently. The boat in form and color represented a wild rose, with a concave seat of gold attached to each leaf, while one's feet could rest on the soft, yellow matting; yet the boat was large enough to hold four people easily. I noticed other boats

sailing in the distance, and over all this beautiful scene rested a rosy, sparkling light.! it was so exquisitely beautiful here; it seemed as though one might dreamily linger for ever, and not grow weary of the perfect loveliness.

Sigismund said he would leave us for a short time: Annie and I entered the cottage. It is impossible for me to convey to my readers, through language, the splendor and magnificence of its interior, yet will try to give a faint outline.

First, think of the most beautiful sunset that you ever beheld, with its opal, crimson, purple, and gold, and all their various delicate shades; pink, blue, and fleecy white; dun, grey, and heavy shades of darkest hue; and think of every thing within this large and elegant parlor as being not material but spiritual, as light and color are spiritual, yet perfectly adapted to our aerial spiritual needs, and you will get a faint idea of it all. The great oriel window, looking over and across the lake, directly into the sparkling, angelic city, was partly shaded by dainty draperies of lace and gold; the same kind of hangings partly concealed, partly revealed, another large

parlor beyond, and within these parlors were the most elegant furnishings imaginable; tables of pearl and gold, golden grates, within which burned sweetest incense, a grand piano, an exquisite harp, a violin, and some other musical instruments; sofas, divans, and chairs, fashioned after the patterns of beautiful flowers, with all their color and shading; for instance, an easy chair would be like a calla lily, another like a passion flower, another like a full-blown rose; others, still, like water-lilies, tulips, pansies, and many other flowers were represented; sofas seemed to be beds of the softest, daintiest moss, besprinkled with the finest and sweetest of flowers. The carpets were similar, showing a greater variety of colors and flowers: I omitted to say that the cottage was circular in form. These two parlors appeared to be just half of the house, and as I looked upward toward the very high dome, I noticed a large number of little cherubic babes—they were real, living cherubs—moving about, smiling, clasping hands, kissing each other, and dropping dainty, aerial flowers downward, that faded before they reached the carpet. Annie noticed my wondering look, and said:

Mary, those little cherubs were never born into earth life; they were blighted in the bud, but are not lost as you perceive, yet it takes a far longer time for them to develop into spirits and angels; they really are never quite like those who have come up through the material; they lack the firmness and consistency of children that are born and have a partial growth on earth; still, they are exceedingly lovely, and develop as time rolls on. They scarcely ever descend, and become one with spirits and angels, but remain as you now perceive them: they are attracted into homes and halls where there are high domed ceilings, and hover over and above spirits and angels until they imbibe a sufficient amount of magnetism and wisdom to grow and mingle with the children; then they go on like the others, and remain within schools until old and wise enough to become angels."

Hanging on the walls of these beautiful rooms were very many exquisite pictures; all these pictures appeared to be prophetic, as though prophesying some great change or improvement in the future of the earth and the people who were yet upon it: among the others

my eyes became rivetted intently on one; it was a beautiful likeness of the little boy of three whom I had left on earth, but not now a child, instead, a young man with earnest, rather sorrowful face. It seemed as though his form and features came out distinctly through a heavy mist, and in the background I dimly discerned his father and brother, besides many other forms too dim to be recognized; all were grasping at him as though to draw him back into the misty darkness, but yet he seemed to struggle, like one in the water, for his life, for a time. As I looked, it appeared as though he would be drawn out of my sight into the mist with the others, but at these times a look of anguish would settle upon his features, he would struggle once more and shake off some of the detaining hands, and reappear again distinctly through the cloud. When this had been repeated a great many times, and each time he appeared stronger and clearer, the detaining hands gradually began to drop off, until all had disappeared, and he stood clear, free and alone, a look of hope and joy irradiating his features; and now the hopeful eyes were gazing directly

into mine. Ah! those eyes recognized me at last! My heart bounded with joy, but it was only a picture now, still, a prophetic one, as I was well aware. Beneath the picture, in letters of flame, were these words: "Through this Child will the Gulf be Spanned for You! Time rolls on apace!"

And now sweetest music filled the room. I looked at Annie in astonishment, for she was standing near me, and had not touched the piano, yet we were both listening to a wonderful performance on that instrument, and it seemed as though the player were in the room. I listened with great delight.

"It is your son who is playing," said Annie, with a smile. "Look at the picture once more."

I turned; the picture had disappeared, and in its place was what seemed to be a rainbow, or, perhaps, I should say a prism. The picture had been directly opposite the grand piano, and now in its place streamed forth all the prismatic hues of the rainbow, and, what surprised me, they were all vibrating rapidly.

"Listen," said Annie, holding up one dainty finger. "Hear your dear boy play."

Reader, the prism in our room was an ethereal or spiritual one, and as the rays vibrated they struck the keys of our piano, and the result was this wonderful music.

"Where is my boy?" I asked; "that we can hear him play like this?"

"Down on the earth," replied Annie; "but no sound is ever lost. I thought you could not have a better reception than to hear your gifted son play, and as we knew he would play about this time, we, that is, Sigismund and myself, arranged a spiritual telephone so that you might hear and be pleased with his Music."

"A telephone!" I exclaimed, in surprise. Pray, what is a telephone?"

"A conductor of vibration," she replied.

"Why; I never heard of such a thing," I said.

"They certainly know nothing about it on earth—not yet," she said, "but they soon will. The true theory of conducting vibration is soon to be given to earth through another mother's son who has already spanned the gulf; but those are vibrating colors which strike our piano."

"O! really! I don't understand it at all!"

"The keys of our piano, you will notice, are colored exactly like a rainbow or prism."

"Yes; but I thought it was for beauty: all things are in such beautiful colors here."

"Well, yes," she said; "beauty, and use go hand-in-hand throughout all nature; still, I think the piano keys would be equally as beautiful if they were white; the colors art: for use as much as for beauty. You will notice, dear Mary, that there are seven fundamental prismatic rays, and that these repeat themselves seven times, besides blending into every conceivable shade of beauty and harmony. Mary, we, as ethereal beings, can both see and hear color."

"O how strange!" I exclaimed.

"Well; no more strange than true. Listen: Is not that beautiful? Beethoven's grandest sonata?"

"Grand and beautiful as heaven," I replied.

"Well; heaven gave it to Beethoven. He was deaf at the time, and could not hear a sound. How do you think he got it without hearing?"

"O! I don't know!"

"He saw it," she said.

"Saw it?"

"Yes; saw it. It was, presented to his sight by the angels, in all its beauty of vibrating color; he grasped it as well as he could, and wrote it down. Look at the colors again, dear sister; observe, black, white, red, green, blue, yellow, purple; seven fundamental colors, with all their different and beautiful shading, as they blend, one harmoniously into the other. These colors are all conductors of vibrations or sounds; notice how they run in straight rays, unless deflected by some object which they cannot pass through; when they strike such an object they glance off, are bent or deflected. Your son, when he strikes a key on his piano, sets corresponding color rays in motion or vibration', and those particular rays never cease vibrating until they reach the magnetic globe, which is the counterpart of the sun; there they become absorbed, and lose themselves as independent vibrations: but, to return. Now we have a method whereby we can catch vibrating color rays, and make them tell us a story, or sing or play to us that which we wish

to hear, and the opening in the wall is my telephone."

"But how have you connected it with my son's playing?" I asked.

"Why; in the simplest manner possible," she replied. I deflected the rays, and caught them as they journeyed on. You perceive, dearest, they don't stop long, just long enough for us to hear them, that is all. Do you notice that corresponding opening, over there?"

I had not until she called my attention to it. I now observed that the vibrating rays passed through the opening straight to the piano, and from thence deflected and passed directly through the opposite opening in the wall.

"Mary," she went on, "all principles in nature are round or circular; each little ray of color is round like a very fine wire; the seven color rays combined are round like a large wire, and when we have seven times seven combined, we have a larger wire or rope, just the size of that opening in the wall now, I have made that opening in the wall on a direct line, so that the color rays, which are set in motion by your son's music, shall pass, all vibrating as they are, directly into this

room. You notice that my piano is placed just where these rays will strike each key corresponding to its color, that my piano acts as a mirror, bends or deflects the rays; that is, when each ray strikes it rebounds, to our delight, by striking us in its effort to straighten itself, and then finding its straight course once more, vibrates joyously on its way out at that other opening in the wall. In the same way, my sister, we can hear, if we like, lectures and conversations that are taking place on the earth, although we are very far removed from it. On much the same principle, dear Mary, they will shortly have a large cable wire, or bundle of wires, sunk in the Atlantic ocean, by which they will talk across the seas."

I drew a long sigh. Would wonders never cease?

"We shall have no more music through that aperture to-day," said Annie, "so I will replace the picture of your much-loved and most gifted child, that your eyes may be pleased if not your ears."

This young man had been my little cherub of three whom I left on earth, but as he advanced into boyhood and youth it was

discovered that he possessed great musical ability; in fact he was a perfect prodigy for his age: his limbs were now straight and well-formed, the birth-mark could scarcely be distinguished, and he was a handsome and noble youth: his mind alone, of those whom I left, reached forward into the heavens, striving to understand what kind of life the immortals led. Although his father and brother did not believe in immortality, his fine, sensitive organization and larger, grander soul intuitively comprehended that there was and must be a future life; he had often felt, if he did not fully know, that his mother's spirit was near him. Ah! yes; through my cherub of three I should yet span the gulf. I had already discovered that the spirits of great composers of music hovered near him, for they loved to hear the language of their souls interpreted to the world in such masterly style. Ah! his hands were already taking hold on heaven, and the child I had feared for most was the one through whom I should receive recompense; he would fulfil for me my greatest desire, that of spanning the gulf between the two worlds: for others it might have been spanned, might be

spanned, but to me it yet remained to be spanned.

I drew a long impatient sigh. "When would the time come? O I had waited long!" My children were very nearly men and women now, and yet for me, the gulf remained unspanned, still, signs of the coming event were dimly visible.

"When love and wisdom are united, power and victory are gained! Love alone is not victorious; wisdom alone is not all powerful," said Annie, with a meaning look. "Mary, it is high time that the union of these two great principles in nature should with you take place. You can no longer alone accomplish much good."

CHAPTER XXV.

ISLANDS OF HEAVEN.

I HAD noticed a number of islands dotting the lake here and there as far as the eye could reach, making the whole scene transcendently beautiful. Many of these islands were quite near the shore, so near that one could distinguish the forms of men and women moving about upon them.

“Those islands which you observe,” said Annie, “are intermediate between the spiritual and the angelic, the connecting links between the two worlds, and the people who inhabit them are neither spirits nor angels; they are too advanced to be classed merely as spirits, but not yet being united or made whole, they are not angels; they are mediums, and hold the same position relatively that the mediums do on earth; they cannot yet dwell among the angels, they are beyond the spirits—they often

feel their isolated position, and look forward with eagerness to the time when they will become angels. Dearest Mary, you are very nearly in that condition yourself; you have become weary of being merely a spirit, and begin to yearn for the angelic state; already you feel your isolated condition."

Ah! yes; she read my soul as though it were an open book. Sigismund now entered.

"Our little boat is ready, dear Annie," said he. "Would you and Mary like to take a sail around among the islands? They are exceedingly interesting and very beautiful."

"We shall be very glad to visit one or more of them," replied Annie, "and Mary will then have an opportunity of understanding better the position of an intermediate class of beings."

We now went down to the water's edge, and entered the fairy-like boat. Sigismund grasped a pair of golden oars, and slowly rowed the boat from the shore. The light within this heavenly world is not like the light of earth, and in order to give my readers a correct idea of it, I must ask them if they have ever seen the different shading of calcium lights on earth; now, let one imagine all these

beautiful shades of colored light sparkling like dainty frost-work on a window pane when the golden morning sun is rising and shining upon it; now, imagine all this ten times more beautiful still, and one will have a faint conception of the light which glinted and sparkled on the water, and through which these lovely islands were outlined. All things combined to fill the soul with rapture. O! the old idea of heaven is wearisome darkness compared to the real heavens and spiritual spheres as they actually exist.

We rowed lazily around among the islands for sometime; they were all inhabited, dotted over with lovely villas and smaller structures of exceeding beauty and brightness; trees, vegetation, flowers, winding silvery paths whereon many a beautiful form was gliding, pet animals, also wild ones appearing among the thickets. At last we touched at an island somewhat larger than the others, the most beautiful one of all the groups which we had passed. It was oblong or egg-shaped, about three miles long by two or more wide, and rose out of the golden purpling waters of the lake, as an immense egg might have done,

showing half of its entire bulk. In the center of the island rose a domed edifice with long, slender, needle-shaped spire, cutting the exquisite light like an immense Damascus blade. This blade glittered like the finest of polished steel; the hilt, in the form of an inverted cross, was of fretted gold. The dome was of sapphire, and the body of the building was of precious stones, far more beautiful and precious than any I ever saw on earth, and the names of most of them were not known to me.

"Strange as it may seem," said Sigismund, "this island has but one inhabitant, the owner and constructor of yonder beautiful edifice, yet the gentleman who lives here entertains many visitors; spirits flock here by thousands during the hours in which he can be seen. He is a great philosopher and scientist, dear Mary, and all souls who visit him are made wiser and better through the information which he is able to impart."

Annie's eyes wore a very mysterious expression, which I was not able to understand.

"We visit this gentleman quite often," continued Sigismund, "and this is not my

first visit to-day. While you and Annie were conversing together in the parlor, at our villa, I took the opportunity of paying a visit to my friend, the philosopher, in order to appoint a time when he would be at leisure to receive us privately; for, we like better to talk with him in his own parlor than listen to an elaborate discourse when a large congregation are present. When I asked him for a private reception, he gave me a happy smile, saying, he should be pleased to do so; that his audience would soon be dismissed, and by the time we should arrive he would be refreshed and ready to receive us. I told him, however, that we should not be alone: a lady, my wife's sister, would come with us.

"She will be most welcome." he said blandly.

"She is very eager to learn, and will be an intelligent listener and apt pupil. Talk as scientifically as we may, her quick mind will keep pace with us, I think," was my reply.

We now landed, and walked up a broad and beautiful pathway, bordered with luxuriant vines and sweetest flowers, running directly up to the entrance. The door was open, and we entered. Sigismund advanced to a door

leading into a large parlor, this was also open; taking seats we awaited our host: presently an inner door opened, and the gentleman himself stood before us. While pleasant greetings were being exchanged between himself, Annie, and Sigismund, I had time to survey him rapidly, and as I did so my heart gave a great bound. Surely, this man was the king of all men whom I had ever yet seen, and I felt certain, if I were to live for countless ages, still would he remain the king of men to me.

"This lady is Mary, our sister," said Sigismund, turning to me. "Mary, this gentleman is called Solon, and we all think the name suits him admirably."

Solon gave me his hand. Our eyes met. O! how wise and grave were his; what depths of thought lay half hidden within them; what power; what glory; what majesty were all about him like a garment. I trembled like a frightened child as his hand clasped mine; he gave me a reassuring, protecting smile.

"They tell me you are much interested in philosophy and science," he said; "such subjects, to most ladies, are usually devoid of

interest; my hearers are, consequently, nearly all of the sterner sex, although it pleases me much when gentle woman will listen."

"The gentlemen are somewhat to blame for such a state of things," was my reply. "How it may be here, I do not yet know; but, on earth, ladies who interest themselves very much in scientific problems, or are of a deeply philosophic turn of mind, are laughed at by most gentlemen, and snubbed, 'bluestockings,' 'strong-minded women,' and many of your sex fly from them in horror, saying, they are not fit for wives or mothers."

"That is one great reason why women become so insipid, and think of little else than dress and fashion, spend most of their time gossiping, or slandering their neighbors: their minds are fully as active as most men's, and if not engaged in deep things must become frivolous. A frivolous woman cannot be the companion and equal of a great man, no matter what particular channel his gifts may take," said Sigismund.

Solon now invited us into the inner apartment, where a banquet was spread for four; we took seats, and were invited

wine, fruit and bread; soon, we were launched on a wordy, scientific sea.

"It is deplorable," said Sigismund, "that so many truly great scientific men on earth, should think that life commenced and ended within matter, when, as we here all know, matter is merely the covering of, spirit, spiritual clothing; that life and spirit are all that is real and enduring."

"Such minds," replied Solon, "have merely tasted at the cup of wisdom; when they have drunk deeply, their eyes will open to the truth. It is the youth who thinks he is wise, not he who is old. Science, on earth and within the spiritual realm, is still but a stripling, who imagines that he is the personification of all wisdom and bravery; but time and experience will soon teach him that he has but taken the first step in wisdom, and his bravery would ooze out at his finger tips before the powerful strides of one who was older and wiser."

"What was the subject of your discourse to-day?" asked Sigismund.

"Light and heat," replied Solon. "There are as many spirits here who do not understand

how or by what means the spiritual world is made as there are men and women on earth who do not know how or by what means the earth is made. Many on earth think that God made the earth in six days out of nothing, while many here think that He made the heavens and the earths in six days out of nothing. Is this not youthful adolescence? I have been showing my audience to-day that magnetism and matter created the earths, that light and heat created the heavens."

I looked at Solon earnestly, for I had long desired to know how the spiritual spheres had been created. When I found myself a woman on earth, I did not know how it had been created, but, as he had said, believed that God made it in six days out of nothing; and when I found myself a spirit within the spiritual world, I did not know how it had been created, and not yet learned. I knew I was a spirit, and this beautiful world was real, and that was all.

"Did light and heat create this world? and, if so, how?" I asked.

"The method is very simple," replied Solon.

"when once understood. All things are simple when thoroughly comprehended. Light and heat have been the creators of the spiritual world, or, more properly speaking, light and heat have been the vehicles on which the spiritual has travelled to its destination."

"Mary, your eyes are as large as a child's," said Annie, with a smile.

Solon's face expressed interest.

"Truly, Mary; thou art very beautiful in thine eagerness," put in Sigismund.

"Yes," continued Solon the spiritual realm has all been brought hither on the wings of light and heat. Beautiful little chariots, are they not, Mary?"

"But heat and light are not very small things," I replied.

"No; an army is not a small thing, collectively, but each man helping to compose it is, relatively, quite small. The ocean is not small, but the drops of water are very small which make it up."

"True: the wisest or most ignorant man or woman could have no chance for doubt here," said Sigismund, and Annie smiled her sweetest assent.

I could not smile from eagerness to hear more.

"Look at the water, Mary," continued Solon. "What think you brought it hither? If you do not know you soon shall. It was all brought hither by heat; light unloaded it, and placed it where it belonged."

"Why; how did heat fetch it here?" I asked, almost gaspingly.

"How does it carry billions upon billions of tons of water into the atmosphere around the earth; and leave it at proper altitudes?" I questioned. "Can science deny that great universal fact?"

"No," said Sigismund; "the most ignorant and the wisest all well understand that the water above the earth has all been carried there from the earth."

"Yet, there was a time when mankind were so youthfully wise, they thought that God made a firmament to divide the waters above from the waters below, but how he pierced it with holes to let the water through, we were not told. Now, heat is such a sweet little god, and works so silently, that we do not perceive what he is about."

went on Solon, "but he performs most wonderful feats. If it were not for his enemy, cold, he would dissolve the earth in a short time and carry it all away on his little wings: but the burdened army of heat must fight its way through the dense army of cold, which robs it of a large portion of its treasures. If this were not so, not one drop of water would ever fall back to earth, which heat had taken up; but cold has not the power to rob heat of all its hidden treasures; a portion is still left, and the little gods rush on: their sweetest and most beautiful treasures are still left, and these they deposit at the feet of light. Can any scientist on earth prove that all the water which heat carries up falls back to earth? Can he deny that heat carries water up? Can he deny that cold condenses or robs heat of a larger portion of its burden? Can he affirm that all is taken and none left? If he were here he would be wiser, would he not, Mary?"

"I think he would," was my reply, as I glanced out over the beautiful expanse of water.

"Cold merely robs heat of the heavier, coarser parts of which water is composed; the

refined essence of water it leaves here within the spiritual realm, and the color rays of light place it where it belongs: thus are the waters of the spiritual world gathered together. Now, we have here a world of foliage and flowers, and I told my audience to-day how they come to be here."

"And now you will tell me, also," I said, extending my hands toward him, supplicatingly.

"Yes, sweet lady; I will tell you. The same vehicle which brought the water, brought the flowers and foliage. When a flower yields up its perfume, or life on earth, what carries it upward that one's nostrils perceive it? Why, dear lady, heat; nothing but heat: but who ever heard of the perfume returning, after it had once ascended? No; it does not return. Heat never yields up this treasure, for it belongs to the soul of the flower. The larger portion of the water, which enters into the composition of the flower, is condensed and carried back by cold, but its beauty and inner essences, heat deposits here in the spiritual world, and light and color rays claim their own: the form, beauty, and inner essence of

the flower remain for ever undestroyed earth keeps back merely the dull, outer husk that the flower no longer needs, which would detract from and mar its beauty: thus is our world of trees, foliage and flowers brought together. Can any scientific man affirm that all the sweetness, perfume, life and beauty of the trees, foliage, and flowers return, to enter into the composition of the next summer's array? If he were here, as we are, he would at once see that they did not; and, as it is with the water, foliage, and flowers, so it is with bird, beast, and man: the soul, the form, the inner essence, all are carried by heat upward, cold condenses and returns to earth all that is too coarse and heavy to be fetched hither; the sweetest and most precious treasures are carried by heat beyond the atmosphere of earth, beyond cold, and deposited by light, with its pencil rays of exquisite colors, in great spiritual zones about the earth, and they rest within the spiritual ether, worlds upon worlds of exquisitely glorious life and beauty. Can any scientist deny these great truths? Some look into the atmosphere, on a clear day, and, seeing the sun, they foolishly say, 'Why,

there is nothing between us and the sun but this clear atmosphere, but when the light of the sun is obscured by the earth's shadow, at night, they look into the same atmosphere, and, lo! there are thousands of worlds revealed to their sight; still, this great fact does not teach them that appearances are often deceitful, for they say: 'Behold! there is nothing between us and the beautiful moon and stars but the atmosphere and space, interstellar space.' O foolish men! If you were looking on a very dark night into the atmosphere, and there were no other lamps lighted between the State House and the revolving light in Boston Harbor, strain your eyes as you might, not another object would you see; could you affirm that there was nothing but space between the State House and the harbor light, supposing you had not previously known anything about it, merely because you could not see anything else? The same principle holds good of all the beautiful spiritual zones or worlds which lie between you and the stars; the bright, material light of the sun hides them from your sight in the daytime, as it also hides the stars; at

night, darkness hides them from your sight, for you can see nothing but the material light of the moon and stars, which does not reveal the refined and spiritual which lie between. Who on the earth could ever believe, unless they had seen a rainbow, that such exquisite coloring resided within light? but, when conditions are favorable, the fact is revealed."

"You have told us," said Sigismund, "that after cold had robbed heat of a large amount of treasure, condensed and carried it back to earth in the form of rain, that light took the remaining and most precious treasures and placed them where they belonged. Will you kindly explain to us the method by which it is done?"

"Certainly," replied Solon. "Light is made up of different colored rays; each ray is chemical in its nature, and each ray can be robbed of a portion of its chemical coloring matter; to illustrate: a woman has many skeins of yarn, all pure white; she desires to have them in many colors, she would like to have them of all imaginable shades of coloring, so she dips them in chemical compounds

called dye-stuffs, and the desire of her heart is accomplished: now, she takes common grey canvas, and draws upon it the forms of birds, animals, flowers, and many other things too numerous to mention, then she dexterously works in her colored yarns, shading a leaf here, a flower there, a bird in another place, until she has them worked as natural as life. Now, rays of light may be called white yarn, for unless they were colored by chemical compounds, every ray would be white; but as each ray is colored, and there are many different shadings of color, our white rays are transformed into all the colors of the rainbow. Now, heat has fetched hither the canvas and forms drawn therein, that is, heat has brought upward attenuated matter in all its various forms, and attenuated matter might be likened unto loose canvas, with the forms of all things outlined within its meshes. For instance heat has fetched hither the ethereal or volatile essence of a rose, or any other flower or leaf, and that ethereal essence retains the form it wore on earth; the color rays now commence to rob heat of its treasures through chemical assimilation, or the attenuated ethereal essence

attracts and holds the chemical dyes that are in the color rays: the more dense the essence the lower the spiritual strata, and heat retains a finer, more ethereal essence still, together with more shadowy forms, and this again attracts finer, more beautiful and perfect shading, and a higher spiritual sphere is formed. Now, all these things rise sphere upon spheres unnumbered, each finer, more beautiful than the last, and who can tell where the end may be? for thus the earth has been yielding up its treasures for countless ages, and countless millions of souls dwell within them; still, eternity stretches onward, upward, downward, and forever and forever."

A fine, deep fire burned within Solon's eyes. I sat gazing at him, entranced, bewildered. His wisdom and magnetic presence held me like a charm, which it was impossible to break, and I do not think that I had any desire to break it.

"Then we are to understand you to mean, that attenuated matter, which may be called the volatile essence of all things that die on earth, chemically unites with the color rays of light by natural selection or affinity, and,

when thus united, form the spiritual zones or spheres?" asked Sigismund.

"After deep and careful research," replied Solon, "the truth has been made plain to my understanding; and the soul of man also rises on the wings of heat, carrying his ethereal essences with him, and, after chemical coalescence with the color rays of light, he takes his proper place within the heavenly spheres."

CHAPTER XXVI.

SCIENCE AND LOVE.

OUR banquet finished, Solon invited us into his Auditorium.

This grand hall would seat some thousands of spirits.

The spacious room was circular in form; an immense, exquisitely stained window was just back of the speaker's stand, and on the desk rested a large volume in vellum and gold; on the cover was the one word, "SCIENCE."

"Within the covers of that book," said Solon, "all scientific facts known to mankind are garnered and preserved: from it my texts are taken, just as clergymen on the earth take theirs from the Bible: nothing is treasured within its covers but truth, positive facts, that cannot be doubted. I expound nothing but absolutely demonstrated scientific truths. Truth

can never be ashamed of itself. My hearers do not leave this hall without having learned one great truth at least, richer in the possession of one more valuable jewel."

"And are you able to understand all there is in that immense volume?" I asked.

"Not without aid from those wiser than myself," he replied. "The angels from yonder sparkling city often visit me here, and expound all that is mysterious to me, and then I am ready to discourse to the spirits, following the same method. The spirits have earthly mediums, to whom they give that which they have learned, and these same mediums give what they receive to mankind: it is but a chain, my dear lady, an endless chain, for all things repeat themselves."

Looking at this grand, wise man, with all his scientific attainments, the quenchless desire within me flamed up brighter than ever. Perhaps, in his great wisdom he might be able to do for me that which Annie, Sigismund and myself had failed to accomplish, span the gulf between me and my former husband and children: but so many years had now passed, their memory of me had become very dim!

more especially was this the case with my man of six and cherub of three, both now grown to young manhood: but the deathless hope would spring up fresh and green, with the least breath to fan the nearly extinguished embers.

"O Sir!" I pleaded, with clasped hands and earnest eyes. "You are so very, very wise; surely you can help me: your knowledge of the sciences will enable you to do that which I have been years striving to do, but without success."

"Lady," he replied, taking my hand, "I have looked upon thousands of other women, but not until this moment have I ever felt that I could scale the everlasting walls of heaven, and grasp the fruit from the tree of Eternity! Yes," he went on, "I have plodded deeply among the sciences, all the time feeling that I had not wings wherewith to soar. Ah!" he sighed, "with all my attainments I have not even been able to enter yonder beautiful city. To enter that city has been the greatest desire of my life. You tell me that your greatest desire is to span the gulf between the spiritual life and earth, while my greatest wish is to span the gulf between the angelic and spiritual

worlds, for this lake or gulf before us lies between the two, and never, until I looked on your face, has it appeared possible for me to cross to yonder shining city."

His gaze was so ardent, so hopeful, filled with such passionate longing, that I trembled like a leaf in a strong wind. Annie and Sigismund had retired to a far part of the auditorium, and the soft murmur of their voices reached us indistinctly. Solon still held my hand in his firm clasp.

"One would think," I said, "that nothing could be easier than to row over to that city. Why; Annie told me, not long ago, that her real home was in that city; and, if she can go there, why may not you? I am sure your wisdom must be superior to hers."

"Therein you are mistaken," he replied

"that which science fails to find out love easily discovers, and when love and wisdom are united, as is the case with Sigismund and Annie, the road to that city is easy and plain. One might live on this island for hundreds of years, with that heavenly city in sight, and yet never be able to reach it."

"But, why? tell me, why?" I asked, in great

surprise. "I believe I could row over there myself, without the least trouble. It is very strange though," I continued, "for Annie told me herself that, although her home was there, she could not take me."

No," he said, shaking his head, sadly; It neither you nor myself can enter that city, at least, not at present. With all my scientific knowledge I have not love, with all your love you have not wisdom, therefore the gates of the city are closed to us."

"You have not love?" I repeated, slowly.

One would think that every spirit, who heard your wise discourse and looked on you, would love you."

His eyes twinkled rather mirthfully, I thought, as he replied.

"Being a scientist, dear lady, perhaps I can analyze love; for although you are the personification of love, yet you have not wisdom enough to understand your own attributes. First, then; man's love for man is not love but emulation; there may be friendship, perhaps; love, never: all the male spirits who, come here to hear me, come that they may gather riches unto themselves; they gather up

and garner jewels of wisdom as they fall from the lips of my inspiration, but scientific jewels are hard and brilliant, love does not enter into their composition: few ladies come to hear me, and not one as yet has ever looked on me with eyes of love: admiration, appreciation, homage, these are not love; but, until the priceless jewel is found, yonder city is locked and barred against me."

"You have told me what is not love," I said, "but you have not yet made it plain what love is."

"Will you not help me?" he returned. "How can I make plain that which I have never known?"

"You had a mother once?" I questioned. "Did she not love you?"

"I once had a mother, and have a mother now, but she journeyed into the cities of the angels long since," he replied. "She loved me with a mother's love, but mother love is not competent to make of me an angel fit to live in yonder pure city; an angelic mother cannot make her son an angel, be her love ever so great."

"Have you no sister, then, who loves you?"

if Sisters I had, and still have two yet on earth, one in the spiritual world and one an angel; those on earth have families of their own, the one in spirit is still quite young and at school; we visit each other often, our love is that of brother and sister; she could not take me to that city if she would: the one who is an angel is to me what Annie and Sigismund are to YOU, and cannot take me, no more than they can you, to yonder city."

"Were you not married when on the earth?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied. "I had the good or ill fortune to marry twice."

"Twice?" I repeated, arching my brows,

"Is there anything surprising in that fact? There are many men who have two, three, and even four wives; we have heard of seven," he said, laughingly.

"Surely, then, you must have known great love. Could not the love of two women lead you into the angelic city?"

A Moslem of high cast often possesses a harem, within which fifty or sixty women play a part, but not one of them be able to lead him into the angelic city; on the contrary,

they are so many sirens dragging his soul down to hell; but my earthly wives were both Christian women, and I had but one at a time, that is, the first one died before I married another; the one left on earth long since married again, is the mother of a number of bright-eyed children, and devoted to her husband; the wife who died within a year of our marriage has long been among the angels, long before I came into the spiritual world."

"Why did she not wait for you?" I cried; then her love would have led you into the city."

"The love which I had cherished for her did not hinder me from taking another wife, after she had departed," he said. "Why, then, should she wait for me? No; that, which went by the name of love on earth, was not the love which makes an angel, in fact, is hardly ever love at all."

"Did you not marry your first wife for love?" I asked.

"I thought I loved them both," he replied and when my second wife would ask me if I loved her as well as the other, my answer was invariably, 'Yes; better,' and I thought

I did, but nothing. Promiscuous can ever enter yonder city. When a man thinks he has loved two women, he has loved neither. When a man thinks he can love a good many women, he loves none; promiscuity is not love, and the feeling which I cherished for both those women has long since faded and died, but love withers not; it is fadeless, immortal, and never dies, but grows brighter and brighter with the march of the eternal ages. No; dear lady, the real truth is, that I have never yet possessed the priceless jewel, love: and, now, tell me of yourself, for you are not yet among the angels, therefore you cannot have found the wisdom which completes you—the other half of yourself. Do not you also desire to enter yonder city, and live with the glorious shining ones who sing the song of everlasting love and wisdom, whose united voices rend the vail before the temple, and the bright God of Truth bursts forth from his concealment, and, with uplifted sword, rushes downward to do battle with error? say: do you not also look with longing eyes toward that beautiful city?"

But my eyes were looking, into his, my hands were both within his.

I am already married," I said, falteringly, "or, at least, I was married when on the earth. I am also the mother of six children. My former husband has long, long ago been married to another woman, by whom he has, already, many children: my own children are nearly all, now, men and women, thinking of a nearer and dearer love than that of mother love; still, my love for those yet on earth is so great, I would make almost any sacrifice to be able to span the gulf between them and me, more especially my two young men, that they might recognize their mother."

"Then, you still believe in sacrificial atonement?"

"O, no," I replied. "I have long since given up that absurd idea."

"Yet, you tell me that you would sacrifice yourself in order to reach your children; and, so long as you have this feeling, you will never reach them."

"Why; one would suppose that to be the very way to reach them."

"How could you benefit your children by robbing yourself?" he asked.

"Well, really; I—I don't know," I stammered.

"What great treasure have you to give them now, suppose you were to reach them?"

"Well, I should tell them that their mother still lived, still loved them, still watched over them; that the spiritual life was not just as they thought it was; then, I should try to tell them all which I have already learned."

"Yet, you would lose nothing by telling them any of those things; there would be no sacrifice, no robbery; you would merely be giving them from a storehouse of treasures already garnered, and you would be none the poorer. Now, sweet lady, I shall tell you, according to scientific principles, that the more you expand yourself, the more you gather to yourself, the greater will be your power to benefit your children; but, if, on the contrary, you continue to cherish the feeling of self-sacrifice, growing little and less, binding yourself down into the spiritual realm, allowing your inefficient love to blind you to true wisdom, you will not only rob yourself, but them of that which you might gather for their benefit, as well as your own: your feelings of

self-sacrifice, and sacrificial atonement, are robbers always and wherever found; but, to bestow from an abundance, is the right principle, and the more one gathers, the more one has to bestow. If your eyes are for ever fixed downward in longing love, you can never look upward into the heights of heavenly wisdom. No, dear lady, your true path is upward and onward; then, when the time comes in which you shall have wisdom enough to span the gulf, you will have greater and more precious gifts to bestow. You have already learned about all there is to know within the spiritual realm; and, really, your wisdom at present is not very far in advance of many of the wise ones of earth. The people within the earthly sphere think that those who are dead, or arisen, must necessarily know all things: many imagine that their knowledge is nearly equal, if not quite, to that of the God in whom they believe. If you had no more to tell your children than that which you have just said you would tell them, if you could but make them comprehend it was their arisen mother it would not satisfy them; they would say at once:

"Why; if this were truly our angel mother, she could tell us all things; her knowledge would be so extensive that we could never find its limits; she could even tell us our past, present, and future; she could also give to us all the united treasures of heaven and earth.' So you perceive, dear lady, that merely to tell them that this life was not as they supposed it was, that you loved and watched over them, and could be near them whenever you wished to be, would be very inadequate food to satisfy their yearning desire for knowledge of the, to them, future or heavenly life. Would it not be far better to enter yonder shining city, and be as wise as those heavenly angels are, than to keep your mind bound down to earth?"

His words inspired me. The large entrance doors to the auditorium were wide open, and I gazed earnestly across the water into that glorious city, whose brightness dazzled me like the sun. Yes; I would certainly enter that city if it were possible; but it was not yet quite plain to me how it was to be accomplished.

"You tell me, sir," I said, turning to Solon, "that if a man thinks he has loved two women, he has really loved neither, or, rather, not loved

at all. I do not quite understand your meaning. I am very sure that Franz loved me."

"And you are quite as sure that lie loves his present wife, are you not?"

"Certainly: I know that he loves her well."

"Then, when Franz comes to this life, and his present wife comes also and some of her children, together with your children already here, if, as you say, he loves you both, do you feel willing to share your husband equally with her? or do you think she would be willing to share him with you? This is a far more important question than at first appears."

Share my husband with another? The very thought was horrible. It really made me sick and dizzy.

"Never! No; never!" I cried. "I could never share a husband's love with another woman."

"Then, like myself, your former husband, in thinking he has loved two women, has really loved neither with the true, heavenly, everlasting, conjugal love; and, if he has never loved you conjugally, you, certainly, have not loved him conjugally, for conjugal means equally, the same, that is, your love

and his must weigh and measure exactly alike in order to be truly conjugal. The scientific facts are these: his love for you and also for his present wife is, and was, material and fleeting; it really amounted to little more than friendship; while your greatest love was for your children; maternal love was paramount with you; true conjugal love you have never yet known."

I heaved a long, deep sigh. Yes; plainly, his words were true, and as I glanced at him, tears nearly blinded my sight. O, how wise, how God-like he seemed!

"I think one could hear you talk for ever, and not grow weary. The more you tell me, the more eager I am to hear."

"And I am eager to awaken your soul from its long sleep," he replied.

"Sleep—sleep?" I questioned, surprisedly.

"Surely I am not asleep."

"No; the outward, or spiritual, is widely awake enough, but the inner, the soul, has not yet awakened from its slumbers; it has stirred, and stretched forth its arms, but its eyes are still closed in sleep."

"You are talking in parables," I said. "Do

you mean that the lonely, yearning feeling, which I have had, is the soul stirring, and stretching forth its arms?

"That is precisely my meaning."

"O! would that I had a little of your wisdom," I sighed.

"O! would that I had a little of your love," he replied. "You wish for my wisdom, I wish for your love; quite an even thing, is it not? But this is not the way of it down below, at least, not often. A woman there, seldom marries a man for love of his wisdom, but oftener for love of his material wealth, or material good in some form. A man seldom marries a woman because his wisdom comprehends her love, or he understands that she loves him for himself or his wisdom alone, but oftener because he desires her material form, and thinks she will make a home for him: such loves must all fall away before yonder glorious city can be entered, before man and woman can become an angel."

CHAPTER XXVII.

COURTSHIP.

ANNIE and Sigismund now joined us. They invited Solon to go home with them. He accepted the invitation with smiling thanks, and as the boat in which we had come was not large enough to seat four comfortably, Solon invited me to go with him in his boat. I gladly consented, for I longed to hear more of his wise discourse.

Solon's boat was a wonderful piece of mechanism. I took my seat in the midst of soft, fleecy—O dear! what can I compare it to? clouds? no; that would not give the right idea, but I will say tulle, the very finest that earth can manufacture, refined ten degrees more, lying lightly four feet deep, and my own form was but slightly heavier. This tulle was in color like a blush rose, with all its

delicate perfume, and as I sank into the seat I was half-buried in all this fragrant beauty.

Solon sat opposite, holding a sculling oar in one hand: the oar represented the feathered quill of a very large bird, enlarged to the size of a common sculling oar: again, imagine this refined ten degrees more than the quill of a bird, and it will give one some idea of spiritual things. Solon's form was not more than two or three shades heavier than my own, and in form and feature he was more noble than one can imagine a God to be; his glance was sufficient to thrill me through to that degree that it stirred me, as effervescing, sparkling wine is stirred on coming to the light and air, throughout all my being.

The boat was formed something like a gondola, or, rather, the body of a swan, except that the neck and face were carved into the likeness of an angel. At the first glance it seemed as though there was but one face, but soon two faces were distinctly visible, and then again but one appeared. Certainly, it was a consummate piece of art. We were seated within the hollow body of this swanboat, and its wings were just trailing the

water loosely with exceeding grace; our feet rested on what appeared to be the most refined swan's-down. The boat was white as a swan, excepting where the neck and faces appeared; these were life-like in color, with long, golden hair, flowing to the water.

As Solon pushed the beautiful boat from the shore, I looked into the water. Now, dear reader, you must exert your imagination once more, that you may get a faint idea of all which I saw. If you were ever at Niagara Falls, you must have seen the beautifully colored spray that is continually rising from the foaming waters below the falls; imagine a vast lake, extending nearly as far as the eyes could reach, colored, throughout all its vastness, ten times more beautiful than, the spraying falls, and you will comprehend a little of that which I saw, together with all the lovely islands, and the shining,! sparkling, glowing, glorious city, just over on the other shore.

As I glanced up I saw that Sigismund and Annie were a long way ahead, and Solon was sculling very indolently. He smiled at me, as one might say, "Two are company, more would be superfluous just now." I understood

him without words, and smiled back a contented assent.

"Mary," he said, "it is time for you to comprehend the meaning of the word Angel, in contradistinction to that of Spirit. All human beings must become spirits. All spirits must become angels. All angels must become arch-angels. All arch-angels must become God-angels. All God-angels must become God, or the component parts constituting the Godhead; and not until a God-angel is all-wise, all-perfect, without fault or flaw, knowing and understanding all things from the least to the greatest, can it become one with the Godhead. The Godhead angels are the highest that I, at present, know anything about; A'hat there may be to know beyond this I cannot tell you."

All this was startling to me, and I looked at him with wide open eyes.

"O! it must take ages upon ages to become a God-angel!"

"You are right," he replied. "It takes ages upon ages, and aeons of ages, and yet I have seen a God-angel afar off: it would be impossible for one to approach very near to such as myself, without consuming such an one by

its glorious brightness, yet, afar off I have seen and heard the voice of a God-angel."

"O! tell me: What did it say?"

"It said, 'Solon, be diligent, gather up thy jewels of wisdom as rapidly as thou canst, and follow on!' then waved its hand, smiled, and disappeared. Mary, all human beings, who exist or ever will exist, must, at length, become angels: all relationships, such as brother and sister, father and mother, son and daughter, must at length be swallowed up within angelhood. I will try to make this plain to you, if I can. Suppose you had already been here a thousand years, which is but a drop in eternity; where, think you, would be Your father, mother, brother, sister, son, or daughter?"

I looked at him gaspingly.

"This is a plain, scientific, sensible question," he continued. "Do you think, Mary; that any of these relationships would be nearer to you or to each other than they would to any other angel? Each one of them would be merged into its own angelhood, that is, each child will have become developed and joined to its own other self, which state constitutes the first angelhood; each brother and each sister will

also have reached the same state, and all fathers and mothers will also have become angels; where and how, then, can families be united in the heavenly spheres? Not one reaches the same altitude at the same time. How could the family you or I have left on earth, ever again be reunited as one family here? Mary, such a thing is absolutely, as well as scientifically, impossible: by the time our families on earth reach here, all things with them and with us will be radically changed: your sons there will perhaps become old men with growing families of their own; your children here will have become angels themselves; those relatives of yours on earth will come here one by one, perhaps at long intervals of time, at different ages and stages of advancement, and at the end, we will say, of a thousand years, all relationships, whatever, will be merged into angelhood, each angel differing from another angel, as flowers and all things else differ, and no two exactly at the same point of their progress in wisdom and love. It is folly to think that all families will be reunited in heaven: the fact is, that the family institution is entirely one of earth,

wherein are started on their road, rudimentary angels. Tell me, sweet Mary, if you can, how it would be possible for you to again gather up your former family as a united one in heaven? for yours is a fair type of most others. Your former husband has had two wives, and a family of children by both: your rapidly growing sons on earth will soon have wives and families of their own: your son and three daughters here will shortly become angels: your sister has long been an angel, and even she has not the power of taking you into the angelic city wherein her real home is: in order to work for you she has been obliged to leave her real home on visits of love and charity, and she is doing for others, whom she never knew on earth, the same things which she has been doing for you, and will thus continue to do. All spirits and mortals are yet to be taught by angels before they can become angels themselves; she but performs her appointed work in the great vineyard. Mary, have I not abundantly proved to you that a family can never be reunited, as one family in heaven?"

What answer could I give? Tell me, my

reader, if you can. I answered nothing, but drank in his words as thirsty soil drinks in water.

"One more illustration, and I am done on this point. A mother in earth-life loses a sweet little babe; she mourns, and comforts herself with the thought that she will be reunited to it in heaven; the mother lives yet on earth forty, fifty, or even sixty years afterward; the little babe that was has long before that time advanced onward into youth,—and from thence into angelhood, perhaps into archangelhood, even beyond possible recognition by the mother; when, at last, she arrives on the confines of the spiritual life, to be united to her angel child, on the same basis as before, would be utterly impossible: she might, through unprogressed ignorance, be destined to remain within the spiritual sphere for a long time after that, while her former babe might be many spheres removed from her. Still, I do not mean you to understand that the child, already a fully developed and exceedingly wise angel, might not be able to visit that mother, and aid her on in her own progress toward angelhood, and this

rule applies to all who go and all who stay."

It was all clear and plain to me now, that my relations with my former family could never be the same again. While I had been looking downward, all things had been silently moving onward and upward.

"O Solon!" I at length cried, with all your wisdom how can it be possible that you are not able to enter the city of the angels?"

"For the very simple reason, that I am not yet an angel but merely a spirit. Wisdom alone does not constitute angelhood; man is but half an angel or a spiritual entity. Love alone does not constitute angelhood; a woman is but half an angel or a spiritual entity; when properly united the angel is formed, but not until they are properly united; and, here again, are the deepest and most profound love and wisdom required, to understand what constitutes the proper union, for unless the union is the right one, the gates of that glorious city can never be opened for them to pass through."

Again I stared at this Solon with bated breath.

"And, pray," I asked, "how is one to know

what the proper union is, or to whom one is to be united in order to become an angel?"

"Yet, there surely is a way to understand all things," he replied. "There is always a way to distinguish real gold from the counterfeit coin."

"But, if you have the required knowledge," I said, "one would think that it could enable you to unite yourself to the true one, and that long ago, and thus to have become an angel."

"My wisdom alone would not be able to accomplish such a result," he replied; "the other half of myself must understand it as well. True marriage must be mutual, or it is no marriage. Bondage is not marriage. There must be no bondage on either side. If a man holds a woman through bonds, she is not his, or *vice versa*. Slavery of any kind can not enter yon golden city."

"But how is one to find the right half? Have you ever seen the one whom you think is your true half?"

"I have," he said, with great solemnity.

A pang shot through my heart, and I shook like a leaf in the wind.

"Then, as you are not united to her, there

must be barriers to your union. Perhaps she is still on earth?"

"Happily for me she is not, and but a few frail barriers are yet between us. If

"You are so wise, you certainly must know how to remove the frail impediments you speak of."

They are rapidly fading away," he, replied.

"Do you often visit this lady?" I asked, with a sinking heart.

"Her soul has been with me forever and forever," he said, still more solemnly than before; "but our mortal bodies were separated. I never saw her in the body. Our spiritual bodies have been separated. Once only have I looked upon her spiritual form, yet our souls have never been separated for an instant."

"O!" I exclaimed, "you talk in riddles! How can such things be?"

"Because the soul reflects all things that ever were, all things that are, and all things that are to be."

"Annie said to me those very words, a long time ago," I said, "and still I do not fully comprehend them."

"The soul is a mirror," he replied, sententiously

"but sometimes a thin or a thick veil is placed over a mirror, and until it is lifted the mirror fails to reflect clearly. Scientific knowledge has already lifted the veil from my soul, and it has reflected clearly for some time past; my hand shall shortly lift the veil from the soul of my beloved, and then we shall stand face to face, clearly reflected to each other; but she must see herself clearly within my soul, and I must see myself clearly within hers."

"O! it is more and more puzzling!" I cried, a little pettishly, hiding my face in the voluminous folds of the tulle-like substance, then sinking my body deeper and deeper into it until it entirely enwrapped me about: his replies had wearied me, and I looked through the veiling with some anxiety for Annie and Sigismund; they were just landing opposite the villa. Solon, observing my weariness, shot the boat ahead; we soon joined them, and shortly were all seated in the elegant parlor, listening to a very interesting conversation between Solon and Sigismund.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE BRIDAL CHAMBER.

THERE is no doubt in my mind," said Solon, but that men of science on earth will shortly be able to prove, through scientific demonstration, the existence of the spiritual spheres together with the angelic, also, that these worlds are not mere shadows, but substance in an ethereal state, as we, who are here, are well aware."

"Yes," replied Sigismund; "they are well on the road toward it already; the methods which are being evolved will soon bring forth the wished for result; sensitive plates, telegraphy, telephony, electric motive power,

aerial ships, vibratory sound, color rays reflection and refraction: Ah! they will arrive at the grand truth sooner than they think, and will suddenly pull up with an exclamation of

astonishment. The soul of man has dimly reflected the truth always, but he will soon be able to grasp it with his material scientific sense, and thus prove it to his utter dismay."

"Yes," said Solon, "and when he at length finds that the waters of his earth are actually lessening, the earth itself really growing lighter in weight although larger in bulk, he will begin to ask, 'What becomes of the water? Wherefore is the earth lighter?'"

"How easily we could tell him," said Sigismund, "if he would believe us; but evolution will set him right before long."

"Yes; when he finds that evolution is a great chain, binding and connecting all things together, he will readily trace the links upward until he arrives at the spiritual; that the material evolves the spiritual, the spiritual the angelic, and so on. How can one, who comprehends the law of evolution, stop at the material? When one comes to understand that water evolves air, air ether, that the earth evolves spiritual essences, and all living things evolve spiritual life, one will be striking great scientific facts. Ah! never fear for man; he will soon get there; he is speeding very rapidly."

"But even the most scientific men, at the present time, make great mistakes: for instance, they call the young child of their earth—the moon—an old worn-out world, when they have Saturn and Jupiter before their eyes as positive evidence that such cannot be the case. Is not Jupiter larger and older than the earth, and has she not four moons instead of one? Who could ever dream of calling Jupiter's moons, old worn-out worlds? Is it not plain to be seen that they are Jupiter's children, revolving about their parent, and that she is likely to throw off other worlds as time goes on?"

"Truly," replied Solon, "you have well said, and you might add, when they even have Saturn before their eyes, with her immensely heavy rings, rings almost ready to break away from their progenitor, and resolve themselves into a young moon."

"Also, the belts of Jupiter," interrupted Sigismund, "not yet wholly fecundated. Ages must pass before Jupiter will throw off another child or moon."

"If man was but wise enough to see that all things whatsoever are types of all other things

whatsoever, he would not make as many mistakes as he does now. The natural world is before his eyes, and all things therein appeal to his reason, yet he prefers, like a child, to believe in myths and fables which have been handed down to him from his progenitors, who lived in a more youthful age of the world's history; and, as youth has not the wisdom of more mature years, he ought to understand well, that the myths and fables of the past are not worthy of the present age of his world. Man, in his progress, Must keep pace with the planet on which he lives. The earth is older and more mature now than it was five or six thousand years ago, of its time, and man ought to be ashamed to look back to that comparatively early period, and still believe in its youthful follies. Man observes that all things on earth propagate in small families; all animals; each tuft of grass; in fact, the whole animal and vegetable kingdoms, and lastly men; he looks at the sun with its system or family of planets, he also observes some of these planets, which are old enough, With little families of moons; his own earth with one, and yet he foolishly talks about this young

child being an old worn-out world, when it is merely the helplessness and undeveloped condition of an exceedingly young child who is not yet able to walk alone; a world that has so recently been thrown off from the earth that it has not yet evolved an atmosphere, its water has not yet been entirely evolved from its material substance: its great inequalities, which are called mountains, are owing to the fact that the broken ring from the earth has not yet had time to make itself smooth and lovely."

"Ah!" said Sigismund, "man will soon begin to reason more wisely. Wisdom is a priceless jewel, and must be diligently sought for."

Annie now arose, and asked me if I would like to go with her, as she had something to show me. I followed her, feeling more blithe and gay than I ever had before in all my past existence; although we were ascending a spiral stairway of pearl and gold, yet my feet did not touch the steps, for we floated rather than walked. Up and up we softly went, until Annie paused before the entrance to an upper chamber. This entrance was large, loftly and

arched; the drapery by which it was covered was just the color of morning's rosy dawn—deep, gauzy, misty; so much so that it concealed the interior of the room, and within its lovely depths the sun was rising, showing about half its golden disk. The curtain was so exquisitely beautiful and mysterious, that I paused long to examine it, and I found it to be, like all other spiritual things, composed of spiritual emanations:

"And fashioned into this semblance by myself," said Annie, with a smile. "Is not that a beautiful curtain for a bridal chamber? Behold! it is not heavier than light. You will not be obliged to lift it on entering; we can pass directly through it, just as those, on earth pass through light, but seldom stop to think that light is a substance, although so spiritualized and attenuated. Yes," she continued, "man, on earth, walks within light, which is purely a spiritual emanation from the sun, or rather, it is the sun's aura, and if it were not for this shining aura he could see nothing. Now, I have made this curtain from my own spiritual aura, because I love you, my sweet Mary. Come, let us enter the chamber."

We passed through the curtain of light, and entered the room: it was very large, lofty and domed, one great, stained, bay window overlooking the lake and the pure city angelic. I glided to a corresponding window opposite, and looked forth toward the East, for the first mentioned one was Westward, and, far in the distance, I saw a boundless expanse of water. This ocean had not been visible when we were lower down, and it was the first time I had seen it. My surprise was so great that I fairly gasped.

"O Annie! Annie I cried. Come here! Do, look! Is it possible that there is an ocean in the spiritual world?"

"An ocean?" she said. "There are many, many oceans, but that particular one is called the Red Sea: observe its exquisite coloring, Mary, just the color of a red, red rose."

And so it was. She threw open the window, and the fresh sea breeze swept through the apartment. Salt sea breeze, would you have it, dear reader? but it was not; instead, like the subtle perfume of a rose, but as breezy, fresh and invigorating to the spirit as the salt sea is to earthly man. The perfume of flowers

is to the soul what the perfume of the ocean is to man. Spirits and angels draw in the sweet breath of the flowers, and the subtle essence feeds and helps to sustain their ethereal bodies. Do not suppose that flowers alone hold all the perfume or essence there is in the universe; they but attract and hold for a time the least little grain; each its particular kind; but, within immensity are vast oceans and seas composed of the subtle spiritual essence of all the perfumes that are known on earth, and many more. Tell me, if you can, where the flowers obtain their perfume, ye men of science. Not from the earth, certainly. Soil does not hold the subtle perfumes within it. Take up a handful, and smell it. The rose, nor any other flower, does not get its sweetness there; but, where? From out the spiritual atmosphere. They lift up their sweet faces, and draw their color and perfume from our clime, the heavens, or the ethereal atmosphere. Deny it, if you can, O ye men of science—ye wise ones in your own conceit."

I looked at my sister. A change had come over her. Her angelhood leaped, sparkled,

and quivered all about her. There are no words to describe the glorious creature.

"Mary," she said, observing my surprise,

I have kept myself down for seasons of time, that you might be able to comprehend me, and thus gradually be lifted into the angel world: soon, I shall be able to throw off those lower conditions, when in your presence, and you will perceive me as I really am; but before you can do this fully, you must first become an angel yourself."

We turned from the window to the room and its furnishings; but before describing the room I will answer a question that I know will arise in the mind of the reader:

"You say, 'One window looked toward the West, and the other toward the East.' How is it that you have points of compass in the spiritual world? We thought that was merely an earthly fact?"

I will tell you. That condition and place which is ever before us to be attained, we call the West. Our past, and all which we have in part known something about, is East. We reverse the earthly order of things a little, for we face the West, at our right is North.

at our left South, and behind us East—the past or more material things. Thus, all I had left in the past was East, all to which I was going forward, was the West, that which my right hand grasped was North, and my left, South; thus, the points of the compass are within each one. I hope I have made this clear.

This large room was oblong, and in the center of it was a great white throne, circular in form; on the throne stood a statue draped in white; three spotless steps led up to this, but I did not yet ascend them, instead, turned toward a table which was near me, to see what it might contain:

"Wedding cake and wine; as sure as I live!"

I turned my astonished eyes on my sister.

"Why! how is this, Annie? Who is to be wedded here?"

"Your own sweet self, my darling," she replied.

"And to whom am I to be wed?"

If you lift the vail which covers the statue, it will reveal to you your other-self, for that throne and that statue was not created by me, but has stood within the Temple since the

waves of time and eternity rolled. Mary, the throne is within yourself. I merely reveal, or make it objective to you; that is all."

I turned away, awe-struck and shaking, not yet having courage to lift the veil. Annie observed my weakness, and said:

"Sip a little of the wine, dear, and taste a morsel of cake; it will strengthen, and give you courage to lift the veil."

Obedying her, she said, as I broke a piece of cake and carried it to my lips:

"That cake represents spiritual food; the wine"—as we filled our glasses and softly clinked them together—"everlasting life. The food of the soul is wisdom, and love the wine. Have you now courage and strength to lift the veil?"

Yes; the wine of love filled my soul, and wisdom's food inspired me with courage; I ascended the steps, and reverently—O! so reverently lifted the veil, throwing it back gently. A glorious vision met my eyes. It was not one statue, but two, standing, when concealed by the veil, as one, yet the faces were so carved and blended together that looking at them in one way they appeared

but one, yet when they appeared two, they were Solon and myself. His left arm was thrown about her shoulders as she stood one step in advance, her head resting against his left breast; his right hand clasped her left, her right arm was thrown about him. The figures were far more beautiful than Venus and Adonis, for the faces were those of Angelhood, the forms those of Wisdom and Love: both wore flowing robes, tinged like a glowing sunrise. The figures were so dazzlingly bright that I slowly drew the vail over them, but, from this time for evermore, I knew who my own other-self was. Once more my gaze rested longingly over the lake, on the shining city, which I now knew would soon be my home.

"Has Solon ever seen these figures?" I asked.

"No," she replied. "When souls are about to be wedded, the true one is revealed to the female first; from her to the male. He may have been very much attracted to her may have felt the sweetness of her power, may have hoped and believed she was his by natural law, but the revelation to her soul,

beyond cavil or doubt, is first made. Let us now descend, that Sigismund and Solon may also come hither."

We descended, and found the gentlemen still conversing together. Annie, looking at her beloved, waved her hand toward the stairway, and we then went out into the garden, while the gentlemen made their way to the Bridal Chamber. We slowly wound our way around among the flowers and shrubbery, and at last entered a bower literally covered by trailing roses; here we took seats, gazing out toward the North.

For a time we did not speak, for I was lost in a blissful dream. A great event was taking place in my life, an event which rounded out and completed my otherwise incomplete being, and my soul was chanting to itself a hymn of thankfulness and joy. I now fully realized that my earthly, marriage had been a thing of time and not of eternity. I dearly loved my husband, so I thought at the time, but I now found that my interior or spiritual life had known nothing about love whatever; the marriage had been entirely of an earthly nature, my love for my children being paramount:

whereas, my love for my husband should have been greatest, my parental love secondary; the union had been entirely of the material and not of the spiritual, and, as time after time I visited my former husband, I found our souls widely separated; really, there was nothing whatever in common between us except our mutual love for the two young men, our children, yet on earth; those with me here he did not believe existed; he looked no higher than the earth and that which it would give him, yet his soul was filled with seeds of greatness, talents of a very high order were budding within him; still, he thought all would be blighted and come to naught when he should lay his body down.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SWEDENBORG

WHILE thoughts like the foregoing were rapidly passing through my mind, I suddenly looked up, and was surprised to see a form standing in the doorway of the arbor that looked toward the North. The sublime grandeur and perfectness of this being took away my breath, and my eyes dilated with astonishment.

The form, at first, appeared that of a man, immensely proportioned, and so grand that he reminded me of a statue hewn from granite, and polished into the softness of a human being, otherwise an angelic being, Ah! no finite mind can conceive of God looking greater, grander, or more awful in majesty. A great head, so perfectly balanced that one part could not exceed another by so much as a single atom; clouds of hair streaming from

it about him, like threads spun from the aurora borealis; large eyes, which expressed lightning, thunder, fire and water, sun, moon and stars, rain, snow and hail, storm and cloud, cyclone and maelstrom, and, above and over all, Love and Wisdom, so that not one atom more than the other had Love or Wisdom. The form was so perfect that not one atom could be subtracted from any part of it, and added to another part, without detracting from its perfectness. His clothing was a part of his own body, and surrounded his inner form, as the light of the sun surrounds its inner form, and hides it from view. In his right hand he carried a long pole or staff, spear-shaped, whose point appeared of shining steel, its staff of gold, and upon the staff these words were written in Swedish dialect: "TRUTH! THE LEVER WHICH MOVES ALL CREATION!" In his left hand he carried a large book, the following appearing upon its cover: "RECORDS OF THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE. TRUTH AND ERROR MIXED."

Awe-struck and trembling, my *eyes* were still fixed upon him, when his voice broke the spell, like the musical blast or *call* of a bugle.

"Mary," he said, his eyes fixed on mine, "Truth hath called me, and I am come. Wouldst know my name, sweet lady? They call me on earth the Swedish Seer, and I was there christened, by my parents, Emanuel Swedenborg. Truth was diligently sought for by me from my youth up, and at length she was in my grasp, covered with rags and filth. After many hard battles fought with old Error, she was rescued at last, but her plight was most horrible; bleeding and disfigured, sore-footed and weary, hidden beneath rags, filth, and garbage: O Truth! thy fair face had become foul and loathsome! But she could and must be cleansed. I had long sought her, I had found her, and now it should be my mission to cleanse her from the filth and wounds with which old Error had covered her; thus, I took her to my heart, and she abode with me. Lady, the remainder of my life, on earth, was spent in earnest endeavour to heal up Truth's wounds, restore her original brightness and beauty, strip from her the filthy rags, cleanse her from impurity; and I, in part, succeeded. I found hidden within her hand, one jewel of priceless value, and wrested it

from her grasp; it was untarnished, bright and shining. I concealed it within my breast. It is credited to my account within this book."

And he laid the great book upon the table which stood in the center of the arbor. Annie now raised her face to his, with a look of joy and reverence. He laid his hand benignly on her head in blessing.

"Heaven's choicest blessings or gifts rest upon thee, my daughter," he said. Long ago thou didst discover the jewel of great price, which, when on earth, I had wrested from the hand of Truth, and now thy sister Mary wouldst also possess it. The jewel was not created by me: thou well understandest that; I merely discovered it, hidden within the hand of Truth."

He seated himself at the table, opened the book, and for a few moments appeared absorbed in its perusal. Shortly, we heard Solon and Sigismund approaching. They greeted the Seer with great reverence and gladness; then, Solon approached me with shining eyes; opening his closed palm, there lay upon it the jewel beyond price, and within my own hand I found its twin. Obeying a subtle law, we

voluntarily laid them upon the table, side by side, where they sparkled with dazzling brilliancy. The Seer took them up, and laid them upon the open book.

"I cast my bread upon the waters," he said, sweetly and solemnly, "and it has returned to me after many days."

Solon whispered to me:

"Our souls are already wedded, my Mary, and have been since the stars first sang together, but thinking you might from force of habit like some sort of marriage ceremony, we called for the most revered Emanuel Swedenborg, and he is here. Those precious jewels are our marriage fee."

The Seer gathered them up, and put them in his breast.

"You are right, dear Solon," I said. "My earthly teachings still cling to me somewhat, and I believe I shall be happier if that grand man appears to cement our union."

"He has no power either to cement or dissolve our union; if it were not the true eternal one it would dissolve without his aid, and if it is, as we know it to be, the true eternal union, no words of his can bind or cement

it; but his approval, his loving benediction, we may receive, and we have rewarded him by rediscovering and returning to him the jewel of great price, hidden within the soul of every man and woman who lives."

The great Seer rose to his feet, the bright aura about him increased until the arbor was filled with glorious light, when, lo! by his side stood the counterpart of himself, a glorious and beautiful woman, his twin soul; like him in all respects except the male principle; she had previously been hidden within this aura, by the condensing of it, or the desire to be so hidden, but there being no call for longer concealment, their aura spread and dispersed itself, by their desire, until she stood fully revealed within it. Sigismund and Annie also arose. A change took place. They stood, like the Seer, within a dazzling aura of their own, one perfect whole, an Angel! Solon's face grew as bright as theirs. We arose. He threw his left arm about my shoulders, grasped my left hand with his right, my head was supported against his left breast; I timidly threw my right arm about him, naturally taking one step in advance, as one half of my form rested

against the half of his; the Seers raised their hands and eyes, but not from their lips came the words which solemnly resounded through infinite space; they but called or prayed for Truth from above them, and the great words sounded and resounded again:

"WHAT GOD HATH ETERNALLY JOINED TOGETHER
CANNOT BE SUNDERED!"

And then we heard the singing of Angels; the arbor disappeared as by magic, and a band of the most glorious beings floated down in our midst, singing the sweetest of nuptial songs, and gliding around together in the mazes of an angelic waltz. A beautiful hand placed a wreath of spotless blossoms on my head, another placed a dazzling crown on Solon's head; I found myself enveloped in gauzy, fleecy robes of spotless white, over all they threw the veil of modesty; with sweet songs, and twinkling, tripping feet, they glided on, with beckoning white hands, to the edge of the lake. Here was a small fleet of boats, and one held a musical band.

The boats were jewelled, and dazzling in brightness. We entered them. The band struck up a grand overture, and the boats all

moved out upon the bosom of the water. Sailing across, we landed at the gates of the beautiful city—a city of Angels As we passed through the gate, "Beautiful," Solon's voice rose above all the others in a glad anthem of thanksgiving. The greatest desire of his heart was at length consummated. He was made whole. He was completed. He had become an Angel! For evermore his home would be with them, and all wisdom and love would be ours for the seeking.

On either side of the golden pathway were rows of angels, singing, and throwing flowers of the most exquisite fragrance and coloring. We passed by stately halls, glittering with all manner of precious stones; dedicated as we could read for ourselves, for words were formed upon them by blazing jewels—to various branches of knowledge. Many of these halls were presided over by those whose names I had been familiar with on earth. Here was one over which Galileo presided, and another Franklin, and many other names. I saw over others the names of great musical composers and performers; still others, painters; and, best of all, Daguerre;

then there were names of great reformers and philosophers, yet we passed by but very few compared with the number that must be spread out over this vast expanse, and this was only one small city among the angels there were millions upon millions of others.

At length we paused before the door of Annie and Sigismund's home. The angels who had escorted us retired, and we entered this shining abode of Love and Wisdom, Beauty and Holiness: a Sanctuary that no impure thought might defile, nor heedless foot deface. The excitement and surprise from all I had witnessed had wearied me a little; Annie took me directly to an elegant apartment, the very sight of which was rest and peace, purity and holiness, the very holy of the holies: it is needless to describe it. I cannot. Earthly language has no words, to express that which I wish to convey.

Annie's beautiful hands laid aside my vail, took the wreath from my head, and I threw myself into a restful position on that which seemed like rosy clouds of light, where I soon entered into a dreamy, blissful state, but not unconscious as in sleep; still, I had closed my

eyes that my rest might be more complete. Presently I felt my hand clasped in that of my Solon's. Lips, as soft as a zephyr's kiss, pressed my eyelids and then my brow. I opened my eyes, and my lips met those of my beloved in lingering sweetness, our souls blended in one, because we were one, then and for evermore; it was but the reunion of that which had been parted during our earthly and spiritual sojourn; for, from out eternity, we had been one; our paths had diverged for periods of time, but the two paths had joined again into one broad and shining road, which led through this angelic city, and onward and upward toward the still more glorious cities of the archangels, from thence up to the God-angels, and from thence, Where? We cannot yet tell. Probably, ages upon ages must pass before we shall even know.

After we had remained in quietude until we were completely rested and refreshed, we again joined Annie and Sigismund. Reader, it is impossible for me now to give you a detailed account of our life, for words cannot convey it to you; but search your own soul to its remotest

depths; enter into the holiness of all holinesses within yourself, and faint outlines will be given you of things unutterable.

We erected for ourselves a home, "not made with hands" holy and beautiful as the angels are holy; pure and sweet as the dawn of lovely morning; here we retired for rest and peace, and from here winged our way on missions of saving love to the spiritual realm and to earth. We spent much of our time visiting Halls of Learning, like those already described, which we saw as we entered into the city. We visited many other cities, and there was no branch of knowledge which we did not make ourselves acquainted with, and the more we learned the more we desired to know. Wisdom could be our food for evermore, and love our wine. Each child of mine, as well as all other children, would eventually reach the same altitude as we had.

The angels in the cities all dwelt within abodes of splendor and holiness, from whence, like ourselves, they proceeded on missions of love and wisdom; they founded schools and educational halls within the spiritual spheres, and from thence they were handed

down to earth. Hundreds and thousands of episodes, similar to those described in the first part of this book, are continually taking place, and angels are steadily guiding all, as the sun's rays guide and sustain the earth and planets. Never fear for man or his future. His barque is guided by the hands of the angels.

CHAPTER XXX.

The GULF SPANNED.

YEARS of earthly time passed on; aye, even a half century, and yet my first great desire remained to be accomplished.

My former husband had already grown old, entered the spiritual world, found out his grave earthly mistake, and at length become an angel. My man of six had become a man in reality, married, brought forth children of his own, and had come to spirit-life long before he was old; he, too, had entered on his career of angelhood. My cherub of three was the only one remaining below; all my other children had long since become angels on their own account, and the one remaining below was a grey-haired man, past the meridian of earthly life. Would my desire to span the gulf between heaven and earth be accomplished? Yes: the hour had come at

last! A long, long time in coming, perhaps you think, but it was merely a drop in the great ocean of events. This babe who was, but now a man, became the connecting link, or medium, between heaven and earth; such as Solon had been, such as the form on the rainbow bridge was, for he had at last reached it; no hands, however strong, could longer hold him back, and, like Joseph of old, he had left his coat of many colors within their grasp, and they had found it worthless.

He had nobly struggled on, and stood at last on the apex of the bridge between heaven and earth, his hand fast clasped in that of his spiritual guide, and, behold what happened! Not merely a few words of little meaning, but volumes, whole volumes could now be written and given to the world, because love and wisdom had at last clasped hands, and the link had become connected with the great chain or ladder; and, behold, the angels ascended and descended upon it!

Solon and myself had, by the inception of wisdom, been able, through love, to clasp these hands together, or connect the chain; and, even when we had accomplished this, we were not

the first to descend, but at last my turn came. Thanks to eternal Love and Wisdom; my turn came at last

Reader, the gulf was spanned! Behold the result! I lost nothing by waiting, but gained much.

Thirty years ago these books, or messages, would not have been accepted either by my own children or the world in which they lived.

Little, very little, good could have been accomplished at that time, and for many years after. Even now, but comparatively few will accept and profit by them, and that which they teach; yet the time has come.

THE GULF IS SPANNED FOR ME.

For Solon, also, the gulf has been spanned. We have worked together in many places, have been joined with bands of angels who were giving to the children of earth jewels of truth. It was not necessary that our identity or names should be, given, or even that those to whom we gave gifts of wisdom and love should know that they were presented by the angels, enough, that they received them and profited by them.

READER, COME THOU, ALSO, UP HIGHER!

CHAPTER XXXI.

A CHAPTER OF QUESTIONS.

PROPOUNDED by Solon for the Scientific Men of the Nineteenth Century to answer.

From whence do Suns obtain their light and Heat?

From whence do Planets obtain their solidity and Form?

From whence their Waters?

From whence their Atmospheres which surround them?

From whence their Motion?

What is Life?

What is Spirit?

Does the Grey Matter of the Brain do any Thinking when the Spirit has departed?

Why not? the brain is all there! A dead man's brain weighs as much as a dying man's.

Why does not a dead man walk, think and

talk? All his material organs are there just the same as before.

Why does not an Engine move when the Motive Power is shut off or the Steam escaped?

What is the cause of Steam?

What the cause of Heat?

What is Heat? Analyze *it*.

What is Carbon?

What is Magnetism?

What is Matter, and from whence cometh it?

What is Ether? and what is Air? and from whence do they come?

What is a Germ? and from whence cometh it?

Do all living things—the Animal and Vegetable Kingdoms—spring forth from Germs? or do they not?

Is there an exception to the Rule?

Is the Law of Evolution correct? or is it not?

Do living things spring forth singly? or in small Families, or Circles Evolved from Parents previously Evolved?

What is a Flower? and wherefore?,

Are all living things developed from Germs? or are they not?

Are Seed Germs within man or plant until manhood appears or the plant flowers?

Where does the flower obtain its Seed Germ?

Where does Man obtain his?

If the Invisible Seed Germ is breathed in by Man, Animal and Plant, from Whence does it come?

If it exists as an Undeveloped Spiritual Germ, how is it possible for it to be Dissolved after development?

Is one drop of Water ever lost? or one material atom? If not, how can a Developed Spirit be lost or dissolved?

What is Growth? and wherefore?

Does Matter gather together and grow into form of its own accord? or is it the Spirit, which develops according to its own inherent form, attracting and covering itself with matter until it is developed, and able to throw it off as useless, and a clog weighing it down so that it cannot rise to brighter and fairer climes?

Do not all things rise outward from the earth, even the material?

Does not water rise up from the earth, and yet one cannot see it while rising?

Are there not countless millions of tons of Water floating within the atmosphere at all times?

Is not Spirit more ethereal than Water? Why may it not rise also without being seen?

Does not much of the water return to earth in rain and snow?

Is there any reason why Spirits may not also return to earth?

If, throughout Nature's vast domain, the Law of Evolution hold good without an exception, does the Law break at the formation of Systems of World's or small Families of Worlds?

Are they not Evolved or thrown off from parents very much like themselves?

If Man obtains his Wisdom entirely from Developed Spirits and Angels, is it not reasonable to suppose that the Sun is a Spiritualized World, giving Light and Heat to its material children the Planets, and to its grandchildren the Moons? And—if a completed Angel is Male and Female in, one, may not the Spiritualized Sun be in two forms, yet appear as one?

Is not Magnetism invisible? Is not

Elementary Carbon invisible? and does not the union of the two forces result in visible Electricity, consequently Light and Heat?

Is not Electricity the greatest moving power which human beings can see?

Is not the Light and Heat of the Sun the cause of all growth and development on the Earth? and if Light and Heat, which is pure Electricity, if caused by the union of Magnetism and Carbon, are not they the invisible parents of all things?

Is it not through the great Law of Magnetic Attraction that all things move and thereby have their being?

Does not the Invisible Magnetism attract the Visible Matter and hold it together? Do not Worlds thus held together attract each other by their inherent Magnetism? and keep each the other rolling in space?

And when—Ye Men of Science—ye have truthfully answered all the foregoing questions, then we will ask as many more; for we here, as Angels, have solved each and every question which we herein have asked, and are perfect Masters of them all, and thousands more besides

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MARY ANNE CAREW:

When ye have answered them all, ask of us as many as
you can, and we will answer them truthfully.

Give and Take! This is the Great Universal Law!

Yours in Love and Wisdom!

SOLON.