

LIFE AND LABOR IN THE SPIRIT WORLD.

BEING A DESCRIPTION OF LOCALITIES, EMPLOYMENTS, SUR-
ROUNDINGS, AND CONDITIONS IN THE SPHERES.

By Members of the Spirit-Band of
MISS M. T. SHELHAMER,
Medium of the *Banner of Light* Public Free Circle.

The refulgent ray of Truth is all-piercing; it can never be quenched; its
light shall yet illuminate the world.

SECOND THOUSAND.

BOSTON:
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PREFACE.

When the thought of publishing this volume was first suggested to me by my spirit guides, I was led to ask, what good will it accomplish? and they replied: It will teach mortals that which it is impossible for them to obtain from any other source, but of which they are supremely desirous of being informed,—the conditions and surroundings, and the pleasures and pursuits of and influence exerted upon the denizens of earth by the inhabitants of the spirit world; it will reveal somewhat of the life their departed relatives and friends live, and to which they themselves are rapidly approaching; it will show that that life is a tangible reality, that it is, in fact, the substance, this being but the shadow,—the eternal, while this is but transitory; that while the joys they may there possess surpass all human power of conception, they are attained only by purity of thought, and a faithful performance of duty, and that every advance made in those essentials in this life places them in a correspondingly advanced state when they enter the spiritual realm. I had no desire to further question; the accomplishment of such a work seemed every way desirable; I cheerfully acceded to their wishes, and the result is here presented.

I believe that all herein given has emanated from the minds of spiritual intelligences, that even the words employed have been chosen by them as most befitting the thoughts they wished to express. They have come to me in times of quiet seclusion, when there was nothing to disturb the harmony absolutely required for the transmission of the truths they wished to convey.

M. T. SHELHAMER.

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LIFE AND LABOR IN THE SPIRIT WORLD.

PART FIRST.

CHAPTER I. SPIRIT VIOLET.

Katie Ammidown Kinsey—the beautiful spirit to whom we are indebted for the larger part of the contents of this book—was the second daughter of Joseph and Ann Frances Kinsey, of Cincinnati, Ohio. Born in that city Oct. 7, 1856, the subject of this sketch lived in the home of her parents—save when she was away at school—until her twenty-first year, when, in the July of 1877, while making a visit at the home of an uncle in Milton, Indiana, she was suddenly summoned to enter the spirit world after an illness of only a few days.

The character and disposition of Miss Kinsey were of the most exemplary and lovely nature. Of her it could be truly said: “None knew thee but to love thee, nor named thee but to praise.” Hers was no common life; imbued with an earnest and deep sympathy for humanity, and ever desirous of doing good, her days were spent in thoughtful care for others, and in seeking to give practical expression to the golden rule. In a memorial address framed by the officers of the Sabbath school, at which Katie was a regular attendant, and presented to her parents as a token of the rare appreciation in which she was held by all, are to be found the following commendatory words of her earthly life:—

“Her heart was open, frank, and transparent; we all recognized the loveliness and beauty of her character and life, and they have left an impression not easily removed. She has always been the same sweet, gentle spirit; no expression which was not fitting to be made anywhere, no harsh word or unkind look marred her beautiful life; always ready to discharge cheerfully any duty assigned to her, and always well. As a scholar she seemed to absorb all that was taught, and to drink in the great truth of redeeming love. Her long connection with our school, and her interest in everything that would promote its welfare, we record as worthy of all imitation.”

For some time before her physical decease Miss Kinsey displayed a taste for literary pursuits, which was very gratifying to her friends, as well as pleasing to herself. For a number of months previous to her last illness, she

had filled the position of editress of a lively little paper called *The Spectator*, published by the Friends' Lyceum, an organization of which she was a member; and it is needless to remark that she managed the sheet with becoming skill, ability, and discretion.

Widely was the death of their beloved president and editress deplored by the various members of the society, and a set of resolutions, expressing grief at their loss, and the esteem in which she was held by the organization, was framed and adopted at its first meeting following her decease.

Notices of the death of Miss Kinsey appeared in the Cincinnati papers, and bore expression to the universal love and respect in which she was held; while letters of condolence were forwarded to her parents from all quarters.

Shortly after the decease of their daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Kinsey collected the memorial addresses, resolutions, letters of sympathy, newspaper articles, etc., on her death, and in connection with the literary productions of their ascended child, published them in an elegantly bound volume, copies of which were presented to the numerous friends who had known and loved her.

This memorial volume bears the following inscription upon its title page:

“Thus, far beyond all noise of earthly strife,
Or silent death, rest 'neath the long, green sod;
Thou art gone triumphant into perfect life,
The soul's *true* life in God.”

The articles that follow, from the pen of Miss Kinsey, will indicate to the reader her mental ability, and the liberal opinions entertained by her. They were written while filling the position of editress of *The Spectator*, and published in its columns on the dates specified:—

SYMPATHY.

“Of all the gifts given to man, the power to sympathize is the most God-like, and the man who has it not knows not what life is; when he reaches his journey's end on this side, having been supremely selfish all the way, he will discover that what he called life was but a living death after all.

“Love and sympathy seem nearly synonymous, but the former can be selfish, while the very essence of the latter is thought for others. Genius is but an intense power to sympathize, coupled with ability to express the same. In fact, this one word makes a part of so many good things that to enjoy life at all we *must* sympathize with nature, man, or God.

“A sympathy with nature is the source of marvelous comfort; Shakespeare understood it when he said:

‘And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.’

“There are times when life grown burdensome hangs like a leaden weight upon our necks; we would get away from ourselves, and it is necessary to use all our power to crush the wish that we had never been born; then if we can go into the fields or woods, and, throwing ourselves upon the ground, rest our heads on the loving earth, how soon we find relief. The quiet breeze is like a friendly hand upon our brows; the voice of the brook, the song of birds, and hum of insects are like balm upon a wound; we are children in our mothers’ arms, and the grand old trees are our brothers and sisters. Whatever human friends may leave or disappoint us, we have always sweet sympathizers in the flowers, trees, brooks, rocks, grass, and everything which springs to life in the fields or woods, on the mountains or in the valleys.

“A sympathy with our fellow-beings is higher than that with nature, because more active and requiring forbearance. ‘Put yourself in his place’ has a world of meaning. We should strive that ours may be the finger which shall touch the secret spring in our neighbor’s heart, which shall unlock the good lying dormant there for want of help to bring it out. Strive to realize their griefs and temptations. If we could for one short hour put ourselves in the place of some one whom we now condemn with so much bitterness; if we could see how circumstances have wrapped their fatal web around him, how much the fatal tendency to do evil is the terrible legacy of his parents, how often would harsh judgment lie low in the dust, and loving mercy cover with her shielding mantle? If we could throw off this crust of ice, with which so many of us seem to have encased ourselves, how much more good we could do? *Now*, we stand apart; *then*, joined together, each helping the other, we would fulfill the purpose of our being.

“Sympathy with God! Is it blasphemous for weak mortals to think of such a thing? No! The loving Father alone is acquainted with us, and is therefore the only thorough sympathizer we have. ‘He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust.’ We commence to be in harmony with God just as soon as by cultivating sympathy for man, we become fellow-workers with Him.”

MARCH 2, 1877.

GIRLS.

“Girls are queer creatures, but we cannot help liking them. Under all the silliness and vanity there is a vein of gold in everyone which is undoubtedly genuine,—it comes to the surface sometimes, but is often so deeply imbedded in nonsense that a superficial observer would not have the slightest suspicion of its existence. Part of this want of sense is natural, but a great deal of it is acquired in a negative way. The majority of girls have very little object in life, and cannot see the use of accumulating material which they never expect to use; to be sure they all intend to be married some time, but, judging from the specimens of male suitors, they see that which requires but very little effort and less sense. So, when papa and mamma, after a great deal of consultation, decide upon a good school their daughter goes there, but she could hardly tell you why. If she has no positive love for study, her chief end and aim, while in school, will be to shuffle off the lessons for the day with the utmost dispatch, and ‘there’s an end.’ When school days are over, she expects to have nothing more to do with the subjects there considered, excepting a little reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic. She is to enter society, which to hundreds means spending the days with a little house-work, making

a good many calls, and doing some shopping. The evenings are devoted to dancing or talking with vapid-brained young men, who never had an idea in their lives, and consider it an insult if a lady ventures one. Or worse than this, perhaps they must talk with young men whom they know *have* sense, but will not condescend to use it in their presence.

“After a while the girl is expected to marry one of these individuals. They do very well for a partner in a cotillion, but how about life? Let us see what she has to say about it, talking to a confidential friend: ‘Oh, yes, it is decided that Mr. B. and I are to be made one. I can’t say I love him devotedly, and really think him decidedly stupid sometimes; but I suppose it is all for the best, for you see I cannot do a single thing, and if papa should be taken away or lose his health, having nothing to depend upon but his salary now, what would become of us then? As it is, Mr. B. is rich, and I can give a nice, comfortable home to both mamma and papa at any time after we are married.’

“What silly and romantic ideas we had about marriage when we went to school? How soon they vanish in real life! *Here* we have to take the best we can get and be thankful for it. We believe the above to be a fair sample of hundreds of the marriages made at the present day. The man wants a housekeeper, the woman a home. Each gets what he or she bargained for, and so much more that it is not strange the daily papers are full of accounts of divorce suits. Let the girls, as well as the boys, be educated to do something whereby they can make an honorable living, and we believe a great deal of unhappiness will be prevented. It seems to us but justice to allow women to do ‘whatsoever their hands find to do with their might,’ whether it be dressmaking, cooking, washing and ironing, or practicing law and medicine. It also seems no more than right that she should have a voice in the affairs of the country under whose laws she lives and educates her children.

“The sterner sex need have no fears that when woman has the ballot she will usurp their privilege of smoking, swearing, wearing the hair short, fighting at the polls, and other such delicacies; neither will she monopolize the stump at election times, and harangue the people, calling everyone who disagrees with her names that decent people would blush to address to a dog. Some people pretend to fear that when women vote they will have no time for domestic affairs, and that the institution of home itself will be destroyed. Heart-rending pictures are drawn of *pater familias*, seated by the deserted hearth-stone, vainly endeavoring to quiet a weeping infant, while its mother has gone to the ‘pollsys, wollsys.’ As the old woman said: ‘We feel for that man, but we can’t find him’; neither can we find the mother who would intrust her infant to such doubtful care. From the fuss made about the time taken from domestic duties one would think it took a week to put a small slip of paper into a medium-sized box. Why, we have known of men who could put in half a dozen in less than half that time, and no one suspects women to be less clever than men.

“As for home, who made the home in the first place? Woman, of course; and she loves it as she loves her life. Here the golden vein in her nature *will* come to the surface and sparkle resplendently. Will her home be any the less sweet when she feels that she can indeed be a help-meet to her husband if disaster overtake him in business? Will her children be less dear because she has the consciousness that she can protect and care for them if the head of the house be taken away? Will she love her husband less, knowing that she married him to have a loving companion, and not simply a person to support her?

“A woman naturally wishes to respect and look up to her husband, therefore, we have decided that society, when it is perfected, should be looked upon as a flight of stairs,—conceding to man the position on the highest step, if you please, but there is a woman on the one just below, and the steps are not very high. In this way they alternate until we reach the lowest step, and what find we there? A disconsolate old bachelor, with disheveled hair, croaking a tune, the burden of which is that women have no business to vote.”

MAY 18, 1877.

The following little gem, published by Miss Kinsey in the *Spectator* early in 1877, is here reproduced at the earnest solicitations of many friends:—

OLD AGE.

“It is a melancholy fact that the majority of mankind hate to grow old. If sin was looked upon with as much shrinking and dread as is the idea of growing old, there would speedily be a great reformation in the world. This is a bad state of affairs; an evidence, in fact, that we are looking through the wrong end of the glass. If we had a journey to make, at the end of which there was a delightful country, more beautiful than anything the imagination could picture, where all that heart could desire should be ours, the one nearest his journey’s end would not be looked upon as the most unfortunate. Yet this is often the case in life; looking upon one far in advance, we think, because his body is feeble and nearly worn out, he must be unhappy; he would not be so if, having understood the journey, he had taken pains to know and accept the blessings by the way.

“We confess that, looking upon life as seen now, there is often much excuse for those who think youth the only pleasant season. Stopping to think a moment, we see this is all wrong. Advancement, not retrogression, is the proper watchword in all undertakings. Is the bud more perfect than the flower, or the flower than the fruit? Old age is the ripened fruit of life, and it remains entirely with us to see that it shall be sweet and pleasant to the taste, instead of bitter and disagreeable. One cause for the latter condition we find lies in persons who, having been disappointed themselves, say to their children: ‘Have a good time while you are young; old age brings nothing but care and responsibility.’ Better give a child poison at once than start him out with that idea. Some will say: ‘Children are so happy, being so innocent; do let them be children forever.’ The innocence of childhood is unfortunately the result of ignorance, and can never make character; one who does good because he knows not how to do evil has no more character than the one who does evil because he knows no good.

“In youth, knowing little, we have small ideas of life, and consequently cannot have a broad and full enjoyment of it. But we might as well remain children if the knowledge we gain with years does not make us wiser and prevent us running off into every by-path we see, getting nearly swamped in somebody else’s opinion, and having to retrace our steps. Behaving in this manner, we cannot expect to reach old age without being tired and disgusted with the journey. Having worn out our brains endeavoring to make two parallel lines meet, and our bodies trying to follow them to the impossible point, time has been too short to consider that which is spiritual, and we must be miserable at the thought of entering a life entirely so. As the body becomes feeble the soul should grow strong and triumphant, for then we *know* that our feet are just upon the border of the ‘Promised Land,’ only waiting till the thin mist which hides it shall be dispersed by the sunlight of God’s will.”

For some years Mr. Joseph Kinsey, the father of Miss Katie, has been an earnest and devoted Spiritualist, and his opinions concerning the future life of man are well-known in the community where he resides, and among the business men of the country with whom he associates. His daughter, however, had not become convinced of the truths of the spiritual philosophy previous to her death. Let us quote her own words on this subject as given through her chosen medium, in a communication to her father some years after her transition to the higher life:—

“I was not well enough acquainted with Spiritualism, dear father, to understand and accept its revealments; nor was it until I myself became a disembodied spirit, and realized that I possessed the power to return and intelligently communicate with my mortal friends, that I cared to investigate its claims, and to profit by the teachings and privileges that Spiritualism affords to man.”

After her departure from the mortal form, Miss Kinsey embraced every opportunity to communicate with her father and other friends; but it was not until Dec. 22, 1878, that she appeared at a circle in South Boston, Mass., and controlled the now well-known *Banner of Light* medium, Miss M. T. Shelhamer, who was at that time the message medium of the *Voice of Angels*,—a spiritual journal then and now published semi-monthly in Boston,—and gave the following lengthy communication, which appeared in that journal Jan. 15, 1879:—

“It was in the beautiful summer time that I passed away from earth, but not from the love, the true home affections, of my parents’ hearts. Then the birds, the zephyrs, and the flowers made life beautiful and glad, and earth rang with the melody of perfected spring. Now the blasts of winter have appeared,—the cold blast and the biting storm. I loved the glad, warm summer; I loved the winter too, with its diadem of glittering ice-gems, and its white drapery of snow, covering all unsightly places with a robe of purity, just as the mantle of charity, drawn by the hand of pitying kindness, covers all unsightly blemishes in the lives of those around it. I come with gladness tonight, not weak and worn out with pain, but strong and robust, to bring the stalks of creamy, white Christmas lilies, that breathe only of purity and peace, and to plant them in the hearts of my darling father and mother, with the blessings of *all* their dear ones who have developed, and are developing the graces of spiritual culture in the higher life.

“Oh, father, oh, mother, life is so beautiful! Here the forces and attributes of the spirit do not ripen at the expense of the external form. Spirit growth is so natural, so in harmony with outward law, that the inner keeps pace with the outer, and both expand together. The student presents no paling cheek, no wasted frame, for knowledge is gained while living in accordance with nature’s laws. My spirit is expanding, developing; I am daily gaining strength. My instructors are judicious and kind, and it is so glorious to express with perfected language the true, pure essence of thought that permeates the spirit.

“By-and-bye we will meet and greet you, oh, so lovingly in our own dear spirit home. Until then we come to you daily, nestling in our sweet, old home, drawing love and sympathy from your souls, bringing peace and affection to crown your spirits. Eight jewels^{[1](#)} flash a radiance of celestial love toward you tonight from this distant place. Eight gems, polished by the hand of the Great Lapidary, shine in the crown of light that awaits you above.”

^{[1](#)}. Referring to herself and brothers and sisters in the spirit world.

“‘Yes, sir,’ addressing Mr. Robert Anderson, the chairman of the *Voice of Angels* circle, ‘I have returned from spirit life before, but not here. We frequently come. We have manifested tangibly and satisfactorily to our friends at different places. Last summer we did so in an unmistakable manner at the West. A year ago, some of us tried to manifest at Mrs. Boothby’s, in Boston. We come as often as we can. Our home is full of harmony and love, and it strengthens our spirits to come, while it consoles our parents to believe that we are with them. My uncle, who passed away many years ago by accident, has gained a great deal of experience and knowledge with my father at the bank, and in other business places; and he blesses father for his faith in spirit ministration, for it is of great assistance to him.

“The spirit editor^[2] of the *Voice* tells me that if I desire at any time to write out my thoughts, or to give expression to my ideas through this medium (Miss Shelhamer), he will be pleased to publish them. I thank him, and may avail myself of his kind offer; should I do so, father and all my friends will recognize me under the *nom de plume* of Spirit Violet, as that is the name I shall assume. I love the violets, their sweet perfume sheds an atmosphere of beauty around me, and they breathe of innocence and peace.

2. L. Judd Pardee, through whose agency the *Voice of Angels* was established and managed, in connection with D. C. Densmore, the publisher.

“I know not as I have given all I could wish, but must not trespass longer. I thank you very kindly for receiving me. My name is Katie A. Kinsey. I come from Cincinnati, Ohio. My father is Mr. Joseph Kinsey of that city.”

The paper containing the above was forwarded according to the spirit’s direction to Cincinnati, and elicited a letter of inquiry from Mr. Joseph Kinsey, of that city, as to how and where the message was first obtained. Dr. D. C. Densmore, the publisher of the *Voice of Angels*, replied, giving all the facts of the case, as he had received them from the managers of the circle. The following response, received in due time by Dr. Densmore, and which explains itself, was published in the *Voice* of Feb. 15, 1879, the very paper which contained the first literary production of Spirit Violet, given through the mediumship of Miss Shelhamer:—

“CINCINNATI, Feb. 3, 1879.

D. C. DENSMORE, North Weymouth, Mass.

Dear Sir,—I have your valued letter of the 20th ult., in reply to my letter of inquiry for the particulars as to how and through what medium that beautiful message came from Katie A. Kinsey, published in your paper of Jan. 15th. Your very full statement of the facts and circumstances, together with her sweet message of love, affection, and sympathy, which has since been partially corroborated through J. V. Mansfield, at 61 West 42nd St., New York, leads me to conclude that the message is verily and truly from our darling daughter Katie, who left her mortal form about nineteen months ago, aged twenty years. In that message she brings to my remembrance occurrences in my father’s family of nearly fifty years ago, of which she probably never heard in her life. I send you this affirmation as a pleasing duty in sustaining your work for the *Voice of Angels*.

Truly yours,
JOSEPH KINSEY.”

Shortly after the publication of the message above alluded to, Spirit Violet, Katie Kinsey, appeared to Miss Shelhamer for the purpose of writing for the press, and in the capacity of a literary spirit has attended that lady from that time to the present, forming one of her band of spirit intelligences, whose work it is to assist other spirits to communicate to their mortal friends through the message department of the *Banner of Light*, to instruct

the denizens of earth concerning their duties to each other, and the best manner of preparing for their future life, and also to inform them of the condition, surroundings, and existence of spirits. Spirit Violet subsequently contributed regularly to the columns of the *Voice of Angels*, and it is from what she thus furnished to mortals from time to time concerning the real existence and experiences of spirits that we have selected the larger part of the contents of this book.

In a private letter written to her father some time since, the spirit thus explains how she happened to learn and avail herself of the mediumship of Miss Shelhamer:—

“When I learned that it was possible for spirits to take possession of certain sensitives on earth, and through the organisms thus provided, manifest their love and sympathy to their earthly friends, my great anxiety to reach you and mother led me to eagerly seek for a medium adapted to my purpose, and I availed myself of every opportunity to express myself to you and others. I remembered that you were strongly interested in the Message Department of the *Banner of Light*, and that you held a high opinion of the abilities of the medium who presided over it. So I expressed my desire to visit the *Banner* circle to my spirit brother John, who promised to accompany me there at an early date. But upon presenting myself at that circle I was disappointed to find that it was utterly impossible for me to control, or to influence in any manner, the medium whom I found there.

“Her magnetism did not in any degree assimilate with my own, and though I visited her circles many times, and watched the ease with which other spirits possessed themselves of her organism, yet I was never able to perform a like operation.

“At those circles, however, I met the spirit Rev. John Pierpont, a frequenter of that place, who noticed my anxiety, and at length questioned me upon it. To him I related my troubles, and he kindly volunteered to direct me to a medium through whom he thought I could express myself. The spirit further stated that the lady to whom he referred was under the charge of a band of spirits of which himself and Mrs. Conant were members, who were developing her powers that they might be utilized by the spirit world upon the *Banner of Light* platform, as the lady who then presided at that office would soon be unable to attend to her duties. And to further this end, a branch office had been established at South Boston, where spirits who desired to communicate with their friends, and were unable to do so at the *Banner* establishment, were given an opportunity to be heard through the columns of the *Voice of Angels*.

“Mr. Pierpont then introduced me to the spirit brother of my present medium, and I was invited by him to attend a circle at his earthly home and to manifest myself through the organism of his sister.

“This occurred in the early fall; but though I became a regular visitor at the weekly circles of the medium, it was not until the following winter that I gained power to control her organism, and indite that message which was afterward received by you through the dear little paper. In the meantime I had made the acquaintance of Mr. Pierpont, Mr. Pardee, John Critchley Prince, and other noble spirits at those seances, by whom I was cordially invited to become a literary contributor to the *Voice*.”

The selections from the writings of Spirit Violet, which this book contains, consist mainly of accounts and narratives of life in the spirit world, together with an intelligent exposition of methods employed by spirits in their labor for the benefit of mortals. We shall now leave the

subject of this sketch to speak for herself in the chapters that follow, concerning those things that appertain to the realms of spirit life.

CHAPTER II. SPIRIT ECHOES.

What is more beautiful than a morning in the Summer-Land? All things breathe of harmony and peace. No jarring discords break upon the ambient air; no sense of unloveliness and distress disturbs the spirit; no storm-clouds overcast the heavens with threatening anger. The golden sun tempers his rays in mildness and with beneficent warmth. The birds sing fearlessly in the tree tops; the waters flow merrily to the laughing sea; the breezes play in wanton glee, tossing the leaflets upon the trees, and robbing the flowers of their choicest perfume to greet the senses of the passer-by.

Pure souls, to whom no taint of materiality clings; sweet spirits, who have never felt, or having felt, have risen above the influence of earthly passions, here abide, and, gathering together into convocations,—convened not for ceremony, nor from pride of station, but from sympathy and friendship,—interchange the rich treasures of the mind, cultivate through soul communion, the true graces of the spirit and work in unity together, thus developing the adaptability of each one for his peculiar mission, and, above all, seek, by those united efforts, born of sincerity of purpose, and love for humanity, to devise ways and means for the amelioration of suffering upon earth, as well as for the elevation of lowly, undeveloped Beings in the spirit world.

This is the dear Summer-Land of ascended souls. A Summer-Land as far removed from those spirits who still dwell in the darkness, emitted by their earthly career, and who continue to cling to the shadow of material dross, as it is from those inhabitants of clay, whose thoughts of the future are confined to longings for personal grandeur alone, and whose souls never mount upon the wings of aspiration in reaching out toward the higher realms of purity and goodness, or in searching for the dear Father and his ministering angels.

The silvery chime of bells floats upon the morning air, which bathes my spirit in waves of sweet, melodious sound. Grandly, solemnly they chime, lifting the soul above all selfish thoughts and purposes; bearing it upward and onward upon the wings of sacred music; far upward in adoration toward the source of all this beautiful, beneficent, and immortal life. Faint

and low the sweet chime flows downward also, bearing a sense of what is highest and best to those plunged in sorrow, pain, and doubt, and giving them hope of a sweeter life yet to be attained through honest endeavor and individual effort. Sweet and low, floating down, down, into the hearts of loved ones on earth, thrilling them with a calmness of heavenly peace, a sense of perfect rest, and bearing into their souls undying echoes of love, sympathy, and remembrance, from their dear ones who have gone before.

A MEETING OF MISSIONARY SPIRITS.

“Waft, waft, ye winds the story;
And you, ye waters, roll
Till like a sea of glory
It spreads from pole to pole.
Progression, oh, Progression!
The joyful sound proclaim,
Till earth’s remotest nation
Hath learned Progression’s name.”

I have just listened to the above rendition of the inspiring missionary hymn, and my soul thrills in harmony with the aspirations and the desire to spread the light of truth before all people, which was thus expressed.

It was in no hall of worship and assembly that the words of the hymn fell upon my hearing. But in returning from the earthly home of loved ones, where I had been to whisper my matin greeting of sympathy and affection, to my peculiar haunts in the spirit world, I found a knot of spirit missionaries who had met to exchange reports of their labor, and to unite their powers and energies in doing good to the needy by shedding a stream of light upon earth’s darkened places.

There were venerable men whose years had been spent in working for others. Their flowing robes, and the sandals upon their feet rendered their appearance patriarchal. There were elderly females in whose countenances appeared the light of pure love and benevolence. These latter were the nurses, the tender counsellors, the gentle mother spirits, whose lives are devoted to the ministering unto sin-sick, battle-worn souls, who enter spirit life without hope or faith. There were also young men and maidens, novices in the work of teaching others, but who, from their earnest desire to be of use and to do good, were drawn to this particular field of toil.

The garb of all but the patriarchs was similar to that worn upon earth; but the females were clothed in plainer, less elaborate garments than I think any of their mortal sisters would have been content to wear. No badge of office glistened upon their breasts, or gleamed from the shoulder. Nor was this necessary; their credentials shone from their sparkling eyes, and beamed in their tender, pitying faces. Theirs is a mission of peace, and only the implements of love and good-will do they require, such as tender, earnest speech, faithful hearts and helping hands, to accomplish their work.

I could perceive the purpose of their meeting; here, in a comparatively isolated spot, where the trees hemmed them in from external scenes, unmolested by others, they had met to make their reports, and to gain strength, cheer, and encouragement from their friendly and soul-felt intercourse. They had just begun to sing the old familiar hymn, a verse of which I have quoted, as I came up, and the melody, which trickled through the lines like a stream of light, together with their earnestness of expression, arrested my attention, and thrilled my being with a new purpose and aspiration. Oh, thought I, what a glorious mission, to be of use to others, to be a beacon-star to some lonely wanderer amid the trials of life, to speak words of kindness, of hope and love to the broken-hearted and sad. Oh, that I might be like these people!

Instantly, one of the band, a gentle, beautiful female, turned to me with out-stretched hand as if in greeting, her whole countenance suffused with joy, and said: "Dear child, thy mission hath already begun; thine is the task to bear love and sympathy to weary mortals, to whisper words of peace and hope, and to point them to a higher life. What more heavenly task than this! The divinest work for the soul is to fulfill the duty laid upon it. In thee we see the promise of labor to be wrought. Go on thy way, inspire the spirits of those thee doth approach with faith and trust in the love of God; point each to the land of life beyond the rolling tide of death; carry pure and gentle thoughts to mortals struggling with the trials of life; drop the sunlight of peace upon all whom thou dost meet. Thus canst thou and every spirit become a messenger of joy, a missionary of hope and truth. God bless and guide thee in thy efforts for good."

Like a holy benediction the words fell upon my spirit, filling me with a sense of love for all things. Then and there I resolved to do all in my power to cheer, enlighten, and instruct the sorrowing and the uninformed, feeling

that in this I could perform my work, and also brighten the golden links binding me to loved ones on the mortal side.

A SPIRIT RETURNS TO COMFORT HER MOTHER.

Just now my mind is filled with thoughts of an interview I have recently held with a fair young girl, who but lately burst the bonds confining her to a material body. She was sad, very sad. All this life is new and strange to her, and though surrounded by tender care and loving sympathy, yet filial affection draws her constantly back to those dear parents who, sorrowing as those without hope, cannot realize her presence with them.

“My mother,” she said to me, “oh, my mother! if I could *speak* to her and tell her of my home in Heaven! But my death was such a heavy blow to her; she is so sad, so miserable, and I cannot help her!”

“You can; you will bless and comfort your mother,” I replied; “if you will come with me I will show you how to send a message to those you love on earth. You have heard of a medium?”

“Oh, yes, but it would be no use for me to visit one. My friends would not accept anything given them from such a source; they would believe it all nonsense. No, it is no use.”

“But you can make such an effort to reach your mother, and if you fail it will be no worse to you than it is at present.”

“Oh, yes, it would,” she exclaimed, “I might not be able to give facts enough through another organism to establish my identity to my friends, and I think it would break my heart to have my love rejected. I would rather not attempt it.”

However, in a little while I gained the young lady’s consent to accompany me to a spirit circle, and I hope ultimately to induce her to send a message to her friends on earth. Her evident sorrow and distress have filled me with deep solicitude to unite her in spirit with her sorrowing mother.

JUST RECOGNITION OF RETURNING SPIRITS.

How true it is that hundreds of spirits, manifesting through organisms foreign to their own, and doing the best they can, expressing their love and sympathy, and bringing words of counsel and cheer to mortals, have been repulsed with distrust and suspicion, even with a positive denial of their presence, because they were unable to give every item of material affairs demanded of them.

Such a reception of their efforts to communicate causes sensitive, loving spirits untold pain and sorrow; causes them to recoil from earthly conditions, and thus retards their manifestation to mortals. Were I upon earth, understanding this matter as I now do, I would accept a loving, kindly communication, purporting to come from a spirit friend, not with over credulity, but with the thought it may come from my friend who is not yet able to give me all I wish to know; but I will not reject this token of love, lest in doing so I spurn and wound my loving spirit friend. In this way I would throw out a ladder of reciprocal love, upon which my dear one could descend and bear me tidings of immortal life, thereby strengthening conditions, until that spirit gained power to give me all my soul required.

CONSOLATORY THOUGHTS FOR BEREAVED MOTHERS.

Who can realize the anguish of a loving mother's heart when called upon to part with the mortal form of a beloved child? Others may sorrow and weep; the nearest kindred may realize with pain a vacancy in the family circle, a niche in their love unfilled, that can never be occupied again. But they have pursuits, and in time enjoyments, to call their attention, and soon their grief becomes a tender, sweet, yet holy, memory. And well that it is so, for death was but a golden bridge over which their loved one passed to immortal shores, while she who left them bodily is unseen, simply because she has come so close to their hearts that she can enter into their love, and permeate them with a spiritual radiance.

But the mother's heart is longest in healing. How she looks for her darling to come to her! How she falls asleep weeping, and awakens with a sense of loss, of hopelessness that is almost akin to despair; and how she hourly calls in spirit the name of the one child who is dearest to her because unseen!

Oh, darling mothers! Oh, sorrowing, heart-broken mothers! weep not; your dear ones are all around you, bringing love, peace, and comfort to your souls. They are *not* lost; sweet and low they whisper tidings of a happy reunion yet to come; and though you know it not, their loving arms are around you, sustaining and strengthening. Their sweet lips meet yours; their white hands lead you onward toward the higher and the better life! Happy, blessed mother, who accepts this truth! To you it is a pearl of great price,—a crown of unspeakable glory.

THE MINISTRATION OF SPIRITS.

Oh, let my mission be to impress the glowing truths of immortality upon the hearts of grief-stricken mortals. To bear to mourning parents, brothers, and sisters, sorrowing husbands, wives, and children; to those who murmur because they believe death has torn their beloved ones from their grasp, this glorious conviction, that the dear ones are not beneath the sod, nor do they dwell millions of miles away, beyond the stars, but amid the glowing sunbeams that fall around their mortal friends, their tender faces shine; and through the golden mists of death their gentle voices are calling to loved ones here. Oh, friends, your dear ones are with you. Not one is lost, none are separated from you, they come to you in the gloom or sorrow, or in the stillness of night. They walk by your side and bless your lives. Whether your sight can pierce the clouds of doubt and fear or not, your loved ones surely come, and by permeating your lives with a holier thought and purer aspiration, they lead you nearer to the heavenly gates, which you shall one day enter, and finding your darlings close beside you, shall then know that they have never died.

THE RAIN OF THE SUMMER-LAND.

A veil of silvery mist has gathered over my Summer-Land home, which is so fine and ethereal that it scarcely hides the golden sunlight that shines through the glittering vapor, turning it molten gold, and now and then changing it to red and blue and every other rainbow hue. The shining mist, descending from snowy clouds, falls silently like a blessing of love upon

the green sward, the fragrant flowers, and the branching trees that look up with grateful joy to catch the refreshing bath. The far-off hills and mountains gleam through the lovely veil, with a softened and subdued light that adds a new charm to their beauty. The waters of stream and river murmur more musically sweet, as if conscious of the new power they will have gained when the mists have cleared away. The birds chirp contentedly in their leafy bowers, as if in welcome to this spiritual rain, and all life becomes animated anew, and thrilled with a sweeter power and strength.

No heavy storms, no tearing whirlwinds, come to sweep away the works of nature. Those are but the effects of forces working through matter alone, and belong solely to the mundane world; but softly, silently, and sweetly descends the rain of the Summer-Land, covering hill and dale, shrub and tree, with a tiny dew-like moisture, that brings new vigor and refreshment to all things.

All alone in my quiet sanctum I sit and gaze out upon the golden mist; half lost in wonder and delight I ask myself, was ever anything so beautiful as this? The very essence of *life* seems descending in that spiritual shower, and under its influence my spirit rises as with new energy, strength, and power.

HAPPINESS OF SPIRITS IN COMMUNING WITH FRIENDS ON EARTH.

From the contemplation of the beautiful works of God spread out before me, my thought flows out to dear ones who abide in the mortal form, and filled with love and sympathy it reaches out to their hearts, forming a magnetic chain which connects their lives with my own. A quiet peace stealing over those dear ones on earth, a happy sense of blissful repose filling their souls, prove them to be *en rapport* with the Higher Life; and though I do not leave my apartment in my spirit home, yet I can see and commune with the loved ones, and send out to them my thoughts upon the chain of affection that binds each soul to mine; I know they receive the message, and respond in the inner consciousness of their hearts to these echoes from the spirit shore.

But though spirits may thus live close to their earthly friends, without leaving their upper homes, yet it affords us sweet delight to return in

spiritual presence to the homes we loved on earth, and, by mingling with dear ones in the mortal, partake of their joys, participate in their sorrows, bless them with our affection, and, by silent impression upon their minds, permeate their thoughts with our ideas, and ever seek to draw them upward and onward toward the beautiful and the good. *Such* is the blessed mission of many loving and devoted spirits who are working for the soul elevation of friends on earth.

POETRY OF THE SPIRIT SPHERES.

In my frequent visits to this medium I have sometimes encountered one who, a poet when on earth, still delights to sing his melodies through the lips of mortals, and at such times I have felt my spirit bathed in a halo of light as I listened to his metrical utterances, or better still came *en rapport* with his spirit, saw the gems of thought therein, and watched him weaving them into lines of richest grace and beauty. Oh, ye mortals, the poems you receive from minds on earth, whether given forth by the acknowledged poet, or through the organisms of mediums, are but the shadows of a glorious reality above; they are but as skeletons compared with the full and perfect forms, clothed with the majesty of perfected expression in the soul world; a mere outline, which conveys to you perhaps an idea of the beautiful whole, as it flashes forth from the realm of spirit.

In poesy as in music, and indeed as in all the arts and sciences, you can never see its grand revealments, its possibilities and its powers, its radiance and its glory, until you drop from your shoulders the mantle of materiality, and stand forth all spirit, with an abiding desire within your souls to find the beautiful, the holy, and the pure.

This poet soul,^[3] of whom I speak, has at times requested me to give expression to some of my thoughts in the golden light of poesy, to drape them with the snowy robes of melodious song; but I shrink from the task, feeling that I cannot do justice to the noble rules of rhyme and rhythm.

³. John Critchley Prince.

Spirits do not, as a rule, underrate their own powers; there is no false delicacy to be assumed; they understand something of the possibilities

within, and eagerly and thankfully accept the opportunities afforded them to cultivate their powers, and to develop these possibilities of the soul.

Therefore, though I do not at present feel to echo these sounds from the other shore through the channel of poetic expression, yet I do feel that some time I may so develop my inner powers as to sing in measured tones and cadences the song of my spirit, the melody of my soul.

But there is one being on earth to whom I would bring the early efforts of my spirit, to whose name I would sing my first song, and over whose soul I would pour the melody of my undying love. And so, feeble, crude, and imperfect though it be, I bring my song and sing it to

MY MOTHER.

Dear mother, when I found that I was dead,
And that my soul had passed beyond the tomb,
The first few, feeble words my spirit said
Were: "Mother's heart is bowed in sadd'ning gloom;
And so I cannot leave her till you bring
A balm of healing from the world above,
And o'er the anguish of her spirit fling
A perfect peace from God's eternal love."

And so the angel forms who met me there
Brought rest and consolation to thy heart,
Which, in the hour of holy, sacred prayer,
Found heavenly peace that never can depart.
Then from the scenes of earth I turned awhile
To roam with spirit feet through realms above,
Where all receive our heavenly Father's smile,
And bask within the sunlight of His love.

A perfect "home not made with hands" is there,
But built by loving words and kindly deeds;
A heavenly heritage of beauty, where
The spirit finds each attribute it needs;
And friendly faces throng the open door,
With hands out-stretched in welcome to the soul
Who turns in gladness from the earthly shore,
And seeks to gain perfection's heavenly goal.

Oh, mother! kind and true the angel friends
Who cluster round me at the open gate;
My soul with theirs in perfect concord blends,
As patiently for thee we watch and wait;

We guard thee with the deathless light of love,
We bless thee with the calm of holy peace,
We guide thy spirit on to realms above,
Where sad heart-longings shall forever cease.

The heavenly fields are fair with glistening green,
And gemmed with blossoms of immortal bloom,
That beautify the sweet enchanting scene,
And scent the breezes with their sweet perfume;
The sunlight smiles, and waters flow in glee,
The woods reveal new depths of light and shade;
The song-birds warble in each leafy tree,
Or scatter dewdrops in the flowery glade.

All life is gladness, and the spirit grows
In perfect harmony with God above,
And, catching higher inspiration, flows
In grateful praises to the throne of Love.
And so I cull its rarest gems and flowers
To bless my mother, whom I love so well,
And use its aspirations and its powers
To guide her spirit home where angels dwell.

CHAPTER III.

REAL LIFE IN THE SPIRIT WORLD.

My object in writing these pages is to give mortals an idea of the real life that is constantly passing in the spirit world, and to inform them of the conditions, surroundings, duties, labors, and pleasures of the denizens of the immortal state. The unsightly and desolate places I shall describe are as real to their inhabitants as are the dark alleys and gloomy by-ways of your own large cities. But while city lanes and alleys have been occupied, and made unpleasant and unsightly by carelessness and the neglect of physical comfort, these spiritually dark spots have been hedged in and rendered squalid and barren because of the sin and selfishness gathered around the inner life of those who linger here, at the expense of the beautiful qualities of the soul that should shine out and make all places bright.

Thus, spirits whose earthly lives have been impure and selfish find themselves surrounded by darkness and gloom when they enter the other world. The objective scenes around them represent the wild, chaotic state and barren results of their past lives, and present an appearance of great disorder. But as soon as they fully realize their terrible condition, begin to mourn over their past errors and follies, and struggle to arise out of such an unhappy state, the darkness commences to vanish, light dawns upon them, they find sweet fields where before appeared sterile rocks and sandy wastes; and they dimly feel and perceive the presence of ministering spirits, where previously all had appeared lonely and desolate.

Then begins the struggle to break from old ties and associations that still fetter the soul; then repentance and reformation commence, and the spirit pauses not until he or she has arisen out of old errors, and gained knowledge, light, and peace. Spirits of this class who have passed through the cleansing waters of suffering and trial, who have felt the purging fires of tribulation, remorse, and contrition, do not pause and rest content with their own deliverance from temptation and evil, but invariably become grand and efficient co-workers with those sweet missionary angels who delight to do good, and as messengers of light spend their time in seeking to aid other unfortunates out of the slough of error or despondency.

In the spirit world there are many beautiful spots that present an appearance of peace and loveliness, even of grandeur and enchantment to those who linger therein. Of these places I will speak to you by-and-bye, and you shall learn of the life and doings of their inhabitants. But first, I desire to devote a portion of this chapter to scenes and incidents I have witnessed among the unlovely and darksome haunts and resorts of those spirits who have not yet arisen into the light.

What I am about to describe to you is far from being a heavenly scene, and yet it is a scene I myself have witnessed, when in company with a beloved aunt, a veritable angel-missionary, I visited one of the many fields of her angelic labor.

A DARKENED SPIRIT LED TO SEE THE LIGHT.

A barren waste of sand and rocks spread out far and wide before us; no blooming plants, no lofty trees, no singing birds, to awaken music with their melody; all was silent, profound, deep desolation. At a distance I could perceive the white foam and the dashing waves of angry waters breaking upon a great line of cragged, dreary-looking rocks. Oh, what an appearance of unrestfulness was here!

At first I could perceive no signs of human life, not even a vestige of animal existence. The place was too sterile, barren, and forbidding for even the very lowest form of conscious being.

I turned to my companion in surprise at having been brought to such an unhallowed spot; perceiving which, she silently pointed to an object slightly in advance of us, which appeared to me but one of the many rocks about us, so thickly was it enveloped in a cloud of darkness; but which in a little time I discovered to bear a resemblance to a human form.

The figure was crouching down in the sand, its head bowed upon its knees, presenting a most abject and despairing appearance. It was evidently a male, and he seemed to be suffering intensely. I shall never forget the terrible pang that shot through me at the sight; nothing more than that experience would I need through all my life, to pity, sympathize with, and seek to assist the miserable and unfortunate.

I clearly saw that this unhappy soul could not perceive our approach. His senses were absorbed in his own condition and discordant surroundings; but we could trace upon the cloud-like vapor enveloping him lines indicating that his had been a hard and bitter life. Misery, intemperance, impurity of life, had marked his way; unmourned and unregretted on earth, he had entered spirit life, engulfed in degradation and despair. And then and there I learned that this place, appearing so terribly desolate, was typical of the earthly lives of those who came here for a time, because of their unhallowed existence through mortality.

Drawing closer, the angel with me spread her hands above the unfortunate's head, and presently little lines of light streaming from her white fingers began to permeate the darkness, and the being before us groaned and stirred restlessly.

Continuing her work, my blessed companion made rapid passes over the form before us, the light still flowing down upon him from her fingers. He trembled, great tears coursed down his cheeks, and at last he cried: "Oh, Lord, save me! Help me, and I will be a better man!"

It was the cry of a spirit, struggling through the darkness, the degradation and sin of years, yearning for light and praying for assistance.

To me the place began to grow bright and beautiful. The gloom became permeated with streaks of rosy light. Sweet music floated through the air, which had lost its stinging sharpness. I lost sight of the barren rocks, the desert sand, and the dashing waves. Only the praying, tearful being before me, bloated and disfigured as he was, and the shining spirit at my side, were visible to me. The man's tears redoubled, great sobs shook his frame, heavy sighs came welling up from his heaving breast; broken murmurs of remorse, contrition, and despair fell from his lips.

Still he did not see us; but to me the place grew brighter and brighter, until no ray of gloom remained.

Still continuing her magnetic passes, my friend cast a beam of light over the man's face, and, looking up, he discovered her angel form bent in pity above him. Stretching out his hands with an imploring gesture, but with no sound, the miserable being gazed and gazed, as if to drink in hope, encouragement, even life itself, from the beautiful sight.

I soon became conscious of another presence beside me; an elderly female, bright, shining, beautiful, yet sad, very sad.

Catching sight of this new face bending over him, the suffering spirit cried: "My mother, oh, my mother!" and bowed his head from sight.

Drawing me away, my companion said: "We will leave him now to his mother's tender care; she will help him to redeem himself. He is in the valley of tribulation, but soon he will arise to liberty and happiness."

In company with that angel-missionary, my dear aunt, who passed from earth many years ago, a sweet, innocent maiden, I have many times visited these dark by-ways where undeveloped spirits, surrounded by gloomy clouds, remain, many of them perhaps indifferent to their condition. Yet we are always sure of finding one or more among them, who has grown weary, and become anxious for more light and goodness; and when we find them in this frame of mind, it is a beautiful task to talk to them, show them how they may grow better, and little by little lead them up to more pleasant conditions of existence.

AN OUTCAST FROM EARTH RETURNS TO AID THE FALLEN.

But to go on with my description of places I have seen: A thick, almost impenetrable forest, stretching out far and wide before us, its deep, dark undergrowth of shrubbery growing up in great thickets; tangled vines covering the trunks of the trees, and so interlaced that no sunbeams strayed through the leafy covert. No sound of singing bird, no scent of beautiful flower, could there be found. All was so dark, so lonely, so impervious, it seemed that not even a spirit might enter the confines of the gloomy place. But as we approached, the seemingly objective wood became subjective only; I found that we could pass through readily. In the depths of this forest, we came upon a female spirit, apparently asleep; wan, pale, and haggard, she presented an appearance of deep suffering.

My companion explained to me the meaning of this scene. This spirit had shortly before inhabited a mortal form. Tossed about here and there on the waves of poverty and misfortune, scorned and neglected and despised, she had felt herself an outcast from the human family, and in a fever of despair had ended her mortal life by poison.

Her wild longing for solitude, the hatred of society of any kind, her dislike to the city, and her desire to bury herself and her griefs in some

uninhabited spot, had surrounded her spirit with this deep forest, within which no step disturbed her lonely vigils. She had realized that she could not kill the soul; she had found herself in this wild spot, alone and unclaimed, and for a time was thankful that no eye could look upon her.

But the silence, gloom, and solitude produced such an effect upon her spirit that a terrible reaction set in. She had had time to reflect, to realize her past life, and the cause of much of her misery. She had wept, and at last even prayed; and here alone with herself she had recognized her dependence upon humanity, and the duties she owed to it and to her own immortal nature. Then came a longing for companionship, a desire to leave this dreadful place, and a wish that she might go away where she could begin a new life, and be happy, innocent, and good like others.

Weary with contending emotions, she had sunk down exhausted, and her guardian spirit, who was no other than her own mother, and who had never left her, threw her into a deep trance, in which we found her, still attended by that mother-soul.

Raising the stricken being in our arms, we three spirits bore her away from the solitude, gloom, and darkness out into a beautiful valley, where the sun shone warmly, the birds warbled in the branches of the trees, the blue waters of a stream gurgled playfully between green banks, where flowers bloomed in fragrance and beauty, and laying her gently upon one of the mossy beds, we assisted the mother-spirit in bringing back the senses of her child.

Soon the blue eyes opened, and as they began to take in the scene around her, they filled with a happy light, and a peaceful smile played around her pallid lips. Very weak was this child of God, and we left her upon the fragrant couch, where balmy breezes bore new healing to her weary frame.

But not long; again and again we visited her, and shortly after found that she had been taken to a tiny, white cottage by her mother, where she was constantly growing stronger and better.

At times, thoughts of the old life would cause her cheek to blanch and frame to shudder; but as she was so thoroughly regretful for whatever had been wrong in her life, and was filled with such a desire to atone for past errors, and to learn the laws of her being, to perform whatever work my friend and teacher appointed her to do, she was so willing to learn and so anxious to aid others, that the memory of earth at last ceased to pain her,

and now only serves to deepen in her soul a tender sympathy, and gentle, helpful love for the suffering and sin-tried souls who dwell on earth.

We call her “Charity,” and she has become a tender helper wherever a poor soul is in need of strength or encouragement; she goes out alone into the darkness, where others are suffering, and with her spirit love dispels the gloom, and sends rays of hope and mercy into the lowly depths of degradation and sorrow.

Above I have described scenes I have witnessed in the inner or soul-life of individuals, whose moral perceptions were but insufficiently developed, or had been warped and limited in action during their residence in the material form. Let me attempt to convey to you an idea of a scene I not long since witnessed in connection with a terrible disaster occurring upon the earthly plane.

UNSEEN HELPERS AT A CONFLAGRATION.

A terrible conflagration was raging in one of your large cities. Down among the business portions of the place, tenement houses, to be filled with families of human beings, had been erected. They had grown brown and unsafe with age, yet were swarming with human beings—a family of children, as well as grown persons, on every floor; and in this place a fire had broken out in the night, and had been raging for an hour before discovered. At last, relief came, but too late to save the lives of all those poor, helpless creatures. The bodies of a number of children, as well as men and women, were burned to a crisp in that holocaust of flame.

Attracted to the scene by the sufferings and necessities of human beings, hosts of invisible spirits penetrated the smoke and flame (which, though having no power to destroy disembodied beings, yet caused a darkness and gloom to surround them), and in company with dear spirits, whose work is ever for the amelioration of suffering and distress, I was privileged to approach with the hope of being of use to those who were passing out from mortal life in the midst of fiery flames.

And what a sight was there! Half-developed spirits, not realizing the grandeur of the triumph of right over wrong, were gathering around, as if to gloat over the sufferings of the stricken ones before us; gathered together by

the fascinating attractions emanating from the spirit of that incendiary who had created this terrible blaze; and it seemed as if they were delighted at the calamity taking place before us. But a noble band of spirits, drawn together by the ties of sympathy, and attracted to the place by the tender pity in their souls for the suffering, approached, and with them brought such a radiant light that the evil-disposed influences speedily departed.

And then we turned our attention to the spirits struggling out from the flesh; by gentle magnetic passes we released them from the flame and smoke and bore them away to pleasant scenes and blooming places in the spirit world, where nothing can destroy.

Three little children it was our good fortune to release from a terrible sense of suffocation and fear—dear little children, whom we bore away to the Summer-Land, and placing them in a bower of blooming roses, we left them in the charge of a kind mother-spirit, whose tender love and soothing care would hush all grief and fear which might overtake them when they awoke from the deep magnetic sleep cast upon them by spirit power, in order to remove all traces of suffering and anguish.

Oh, could you witness from the spirit side of life the results of such a terrible conflagration as this, you would never rest until your streets were so laid out, your buildings so constructed, and so remote from each other, that it would be impossible for a fire to spread among them and carry such deadly mischief in its blazing folds.

And yet, in spite of the awful scene of blackening smoke and lurid flames, the presence of evil-disposed influences attracted thither by the destroying elements, the suffering, the misery and despair,—in spite of these, the sight of high and exalted intelligences, whose interior life brilliantly illuminated their features, and dispelled the darkness, abashed the evil-disposed, and stimulated the sympathizing efforts of mortals to aid the suffering, was a scene to be witnessed with joy; creating within us a sense of thankfulness, that above and beyond all sorrow, evil and pain, there is a life peopled with unselfish, holy beings, who glorify their Father by alleviating the pangs of the sorrowful and distressed. And I observed that around those kind souls in mortal, who were working with herculean efforts to save the lives and property of the tenants of these houses; around the noble firemen; the crowd who were putting forth powers and desires to be of use; around those who opened their homes for the destitute and suffering,

a golden light shone, and bands of helpful, shining spirits gathered, aiding with strength and sympathy; and a light shone in the darkness of despair, a star gleamed brilliantly above the light of human sympathy,—the star of heavenly love.

The unpleasant, disagreeable, desolate places I have seen in my experience of spirit life have been few indeed compared with the many beautiful spots I have visited, and the scenes of grandeur, sublimity, or sweetness I have been privileged to look upon. I find that the natural scenery of the spirit world far transcends in beauty of forms and coloring everything of the kind which exists upon the earth; for, though the glowing sunset, the fairy-like sunrise, the exquisite blending of colors in fragrant flowers, the blooming vales, the luxuriant forests, the grand old mountains and foamy oceans belonging to earth combine to make up many a scene of indescribable beauty, yet these same forms and tints, existing as they do in the spirit world, are so refined, so delicate, yet so grand, majestic and glowing, that it is impossible for mortals upon earth to comprehend their beauty, or to experience the emotions of reverential delight and solemnity that a spirit feels while gazing upon the wonderful forms of nature, and listening to the rapturous melody of sound rising from birdlings' throats, gurgling waters, and rustling leaves.

ADVENT OF A MORTAL INTO SPIRIT LIFE.

I will now describe to you, as well as I can, a beautiful scene I once witnessed, the memory of which runs through my spirit experience like a strain of music.

Not a great while ago, there dwelt on earth a young girl of about twenty years of age. Of delicate organization and slender mold, one could see that want and suffering had been no stranger to her. Her home was in one of your large cities, where, in an humble dwelling, she lived alone with her invalid mother, whom she supported by the fruits of her needle.

For years she had plied that slender instrument—which has indeed proved an instrument of torture to many a toiling, suffering woman—patient, resigned, and cheerful, as long as she could earn the necessities of life for her dear mother, who was unable to do much of anything for herself. It was thought that the mother would depart from the mortal life long before

the daughter; but exposure to a heavy storm had given a severe cold to the poor girl, and in a few days she was pronounced dying with pneumonia.

Who can describe the terrible grief of the stricken mother as the labored breathing of her child told only too well that the end was near! But angels watched beside that humble bed, and when the last breath was drawn, they mercifully cast a spell of unconsciousness over the mother's senses, while they gently bore the arisen spirit to a haven of rest.

In the midst of a charming spirit vale, where beautiful flowers bud and bloom, and fill the balmy air with fragrance, where the stately trees cast a pleasant shade over many a mossy bank, where glistening waters dash musically along between beds and thickets of roses, and where birds make music as they glance here and there in the soft and mellow light, there is a bower composed entirely of roses, red and white, which lift their regal heads and offer incense to the breeze. This bower has been constructed by loving angels for the resting-place of that beautiful spirit, whose illness and death I have just described.

Within the bower, upon a bed of dewy May-flowers and violets, the spirit form of the maiden reclines; she is robed in garments of white, arranged about her by ministering spirits.

She has been resting, drawing long draughts of health and strength from the flowers beneath and around her; the paleness disappears from her cheek, which loses its thin, attenuated appearance; the eyes no longer appear dim and sunken from exhaustion, but as they flash open, reveal a luster and beauty untold.

She starts, looks around, but perceiving the flowers, utters a low cry of rapture, and grasping the roses, May-flowers, and violets in her arms, she presses them to her bosom and buries her face in the rich fragrance of their leaves. Never before has she seen so many fresh and beautiful flowers together; never has she possessed so great a quantity of blossoms in her life; and she revels in their fragrant beauty with unmitigated delight.

But she is not long allowed to remain thus alone; loving spirits, gentle women, whose souls are all love and tenderness, enter the bower, and, taking the maiden by the hand, give her loving welcome in kindly words. She gazes upon them in delight; they appear to her the embodiment of all that is lovely and pure; and as they kindly greet her in her heavenly home, her spirit becomes filled with affection and gratitude for all that she sees.

Now she has recovered strength and is rested; her gentle companions bear her away from the bower of roses to a beautiful little cottage, embowered in flowers, which stands at the edge of the lovely valley. It is surrounded by a tiny flower garden, abounding with delicate colors and redolent with exquisite perfumes.

The cottage is open on the side, being composed of snowy lattice work, through which the golden sunbeams and the tender rose leaves stray. The interior of this little dwelling is daintily though simply furnished in white and azure, and all betoken it to be an abode of purity and simplicity. The new-comer is greeted at the entrance by a motherly, loving face, kindly hands out-stretched in greeting, and made to feel that she is indeed at home.

The ministering band of spirits who have thus far cared for the newly-arisen one, now leave her in the care of the motherly soul who has been awaiting her in the cottage home; and she immediately learns that this new friend is her own grandmother, who has been dead for many years. This is a home never dreamed of by the poor, working girl, and it seems almost like enchanted ground to her.

But a short time had passed since the spirit departed the body; she had lain in the bower of roses, tended by gentle missionary spirits; sunk in a semi-unconscious condition, but wrapped in a sense of ecstasy, very exquisite to the weary soul, until after the burial of her body, when she had been aroused and borne to her spirit home by her attendants.

Oh, how she enjoyed the sweet song of the birds, the balmy air and the fragrant flowers. The house she inhabited possessed no grand adornments; only white drapery, rustic yet graceful furniture, polished floors, here and there a tiny picture or bit of color within; climbing vines and fragrant flowers without; yet all was beautiful and sweet; and best of all, this pretty home had been reared bit by bit from the daily life of its occupant. Patience, self-sacrifice, devotion to an invalid parent, cheerfulness, and a spirit of perseverance, that faltered not in the midst of suffering, poverty, and affliction, together with an almost passionate love of the beautiful, had thrown out material from the life of this young girl that had been eagerly seized on by her spirit guides with which to rear her cottage home.

And within a tender grandmother had been domiciled to give her greeting and companionship. From the entrance of this little home, its occupants could look out, beyond the blooming garden, into the glowing valley, with

its stately trees, its rippling brooks and mossy dells, with here and there a white homestead, around which gardens spread, and before the doors of which children made glad music. Nestling between two massive mountain ranges, the crags of which glowed in the sunlight like bronze, or deepened into purple radiance at twilight, the valley presented a scene of smiling peace and tranquility.

But you are not to think the girl, who had been borne from the cares of material life to this beautiful spot, had forgotten that invalid mother whom she had left to suffer earthly sorrow and care. Not so; her whole soul went out in love, sympathy, and longing toward that lonely parent, and guided by a slender cord of silvery light which, though invisible to others, yet was always visible to herself, and which extended from her own spirit home to the spot where her mother lay, she constantly returned to the side of her she loved so well, and by her ministrations soothed many a weary pain, and eased her mother's passage to the spirit land.

She found that her mother had been removed from her former habitation to one of the wards of a hospital, and she—the spirit child—found among the nurses one whom she could influence to act tenderly towards the invalid under her care.

But it was not long that tenderness of earth was needed. The shock of her daughter's sudden illness and death was too much for the poor invalid, and in one month from the decease of that daughter the mother joined her in the spirit world.

As I was privileged to be with the guardian band who had attended the younger spirit into the Higher Life, so I also had the privilege of being present at the spirit birth of the elder woman; but the first to greet her was that daughter who had preceded her to the immortal realms, and who now, radiant as an angel of light, returned to bear her mother to rest in her own sweet, little home.

The expressions of delight at her appearance from her mother first called the attention of the daughter to herself; for the first time since her change she discovered that she was no longer pale, wan, and weary-looking, but radiant, bright, and beautiful. With the self-devotion so natural to her, she had been so absorbed in her mother's condition that she had no idea of the beauty which now enveloped her own being like a halo of light. These spirits,—mother and daughter,—with the noble grandmother, dwell happily

together in their valley home; and their time is spent in doing good, and in influencing others to assist the needy and suffering.

CHAPTER IV.

ZENCOLLIA CITY AND ITS SURROUNDINGS.

Shall I speak of my surroundings in the Summer-Land? Shall I tell you of the beautiful city that we in the eternal world call Zencollia,—meaning, literally, “city of light,”—so called from the brilliant rays which are reflected back from its towers, minarets, and gleaming walls when the sunlight falls upon them? The spires and towers of this beautiful city gleam in the distance as I am seated by my eastern window. Its white walls, glistening with alabaster-like spotlessness, seem to tell of purity and peace.

A TEMPLE OF LEARNING.

Amid that wonderful array of exquisite workmanship a brazen temple arises, its massive dome seeming to crown the structure with a coronal of living light. This grand temple I have visited in company with dear brothers who have gained a comprehension of truth and knowledge in the wisdom-schools of spirit life, and who have become familiar with the interior of this shining temple from frequent attendance upon the instructive lectures delivered therein. The temple of learning in Zencollia is the most massive building I have ever beheld. It is surrounded by an open space paved with delicate pink and white tiles of shining, translucent stone. A flight of variegated marble steps leads to the vestibule, which is also paved with pink and white tiles.

The building contains four spacious halls, the finest of which is dedicated to Science, the second to Literature, the third to Metaphysics, and the fourth to Music. Each hall is furnished with roomy seats for the accommodation of the audience; a raised platform at the farther end, upon which stands a marble table, and a cushioned seat, something like a capacious sofa, serves for the accommodation of the speakers or instructors.

The floors are all paved with variegated marble,—white, streaked with delicate pink and sea green; the pillars are of carved ivory; the walls are adorned with beautiful paintings, representing some illustration of the nature of the work to which the hall is dedicated; while the lofty ceilings are frescoed in the faintest azure, white and gold.

One of my companions, a student in the hall of science, was eager for my admittance there as a spectator, which was soon obtained. At the time of my visit the seats were filled with a throng of people, young and old, and of both sexes. The lesson was on the laws of chemistry; and the speaker, a gentleman apparently forty years old, but whom my brother assured me had been in the spirit world many decades of years, had a number of strange-looking instruments before him, with which to illustrate his theme, and to prove the truth of his theories by experiments.

“Do you notice that gray-haired gentleman in front, the one with the high forehead, whose penetrating, searching gaze seems to be taking in every movement of the speaker?” whispered my companion. I nodded assent.

“That is Michael Faraday, the scientist; and I tell you he is as earnest a student as any of us; he attends all our conventions. He has been invited to take part in the exercises, but declines, preferring to study rather than teach. Oh, I tell you, Sis, a good many of earth’s smartest men come here or go to other places to learn, when they reach spirit life.”

The lesson of the day was very instructive, and the experiments interesting; but as they were new to me, and far advanced, I did not understand them very well.

“I’ll tell you what, Miss Ammidown,” said brother J., playfully, as I expressed my amazement at some of the results of the professor’s experiments, “I’ll bring you here when we have a lesson on Electrical Life, and you shall see the teacher produce some most wonderful results without the aid of instruments. You look incredulous; but, Kitty, that is only because you have been used to earthly, material instruments. Here we can make use of the currents of electricity without any such adjuncts. You shall witness some of my own private experiments some time. You have a great deal to learn yet.”

And, indeed, I felt like a child who had just entered into the wonderful arena of knowledge, and saw spread out before her strange sights, and heard strange sounds, which she could not comprehend, but which seemed deliciously clear and interesting to those around her. This was long ago, but the feeling clings to me yet; and I feel there is so much to learn and understand, one can never be idle.

HALL OF METAPHYSICS.

To the Hall of Metaphysics we wandered. Here the speaker was a female; but although the ideas she expressed were grand and beautiful, the language with which they were clothed was almost too abstruse for me.

“I brought you here, dear sister,” said my companion, “not because I expected you to understand the proceedings; you are too familiar with earthly expressions for that as yet; but that you might visit a place where those filled with lofty ideals concerning the soul, and its relations to life, meet to exchange thoughts and to learn of each other. Emerson^[4] will delight to frequent this place when he comes over to our side of life. We have scores of other places,” he continued, “where such teachers as Theodore Parker, Channing, and hundreds of like noble souls, hold forth with earnest utterance for the lifting up and sanctification of the people. These you can understand; and their teachings are generally delivered in some airy chamber or leafy grove, where all the surroundings and conditions are conducive to the worship of God. You will visit many of these with those who love you.”

⁴. This was written some time before Ralph Waldo Emerson ascended to the higher life.

THE HALL OF LITERATURE.

We did not tarry long in the Hall of Metaphysics. The teacher was grandly beautiful, clothed in flowing robes of classic style; her speech gently modulated; her gestures graceful; her mien earnest and convincing; and to those who understood she appeared to furnish a feast of good things. I felt humbly penitent, because I could not comprehend the whole; observing which, my guide hurried me away to the Hall of Literature.

Here I could appreciate, for I understood. The services were conducted by a number of men and women, who favored us with sketches of real life, not published, but what they had themselves witnessed; also readings from eminent authors, bits of rare, descriptive power, rich delineations of gifted writers, with extracts from their productions; followed by expressions of gorgeous imagery and brilliant passages of poetry. Here I was deeply interested, and the more so, because my companion pointed out to me the

presence of gifted men and women, whose works I had admired and read on earth with never the hope of meeting them in person.

THE HALL OF MUSIC.

But I must hasten. With all the wonderful things I had seen and heard, what shall be said of the Hall of Music? The whole front of this spacious hall is a raised balcony, upon which the performers and choristers are generally seated.

Here we were joined by a dear sister, who I shall designate as May; like the May-flowers, she is beautiful and sweet; and hand clasped in hand, in silence,—and so far as I was concerned, in awe,—we listened to the enchanting strains of music evoked from stringed and keyed instruments, by the skillful fingers of their manipulators; and to the deep, rich tones, or bird-like, thrilling notes of the singers' voices. I can never describe it. What I have said is but a faint type of all I witnessed in that marvelous temple; but the music!—the music was so grand, so powerful, so uplifting, and yet so sweet, so subtle, so enchanting, that I seemed floating away, with no thought but to soar upward to the very throne of Life and Love.

All petty affairs of life, all outward sense of existence melted away; and in the pure atmosphere of that celestial melody, my soul asserted itself in all its purest aspirations for the perfect completeness of life.

I love Zencollia for its divine harmony of sweet, inspiring music; and, oh, dear ones I love on earth, could you have been with me in spirit, my bliss would have been complete.

SOCIAL LIFE IN ZENCOLLIA.

In walking through the streets of beautiful Zencollia City, I have observed the perfect freedom of its inhabitants, the undisguised manner of living, the open frankness, and the confidence each one seems to repose in his neighbor, and also the unceremonious hospitality of each household; for every passer-by is welcome to enter, rest, refresh himself, and examine whatever excites an interest in his mind.

I have noticed this, because at first it appeared very strange to me—so at variance with the customs of mortals, who shut themselves up in their homes, becoming sometimes exclusive and ceremonious in their bearing toward others.

But I have learned that while it would be unwise and unsafe for mortals to leave their homes open to the inspection of every curious passer-by, and imprudent in the extreme for them to invite every stranger into their households, it is perfectly safe to do so in the spiritual city Zencollia, whose inhabitants are pure and spotless, who have become purged from all gross and carnal appetites and habits, who do not gossip and slander, who love each other, whose families are bound by the closest ties of tender sympathy and affection, and whose lives are so pure, so devoted to the welfare of others, they have nothing to conceal.

Every home is a shrine of prayerful praise; every family bows at the altar of Infinite Wisdom; each inhabitant has some lesson to repeat, or some experience to rehearse to the new-comer into these high spheres, that will be a guide to his feet; every habitation contains something of interest to the stranger who may have but recently ascended to the upper courts of Zencollia. And there is no risk in entertaining the stranger; for no impure, selfish, worldly-minded spirit can enter Zencollia; he could not breathe its refined atmosphere, the brilliancy of its light would blind him. For while it is true that exalted spirits can descend to lower spheres or conditions, where grossly-minded intelligences dwell, surrounded by the darkness which their mental state throws off, and there minister to the necessities of those earth-bound souls, yet it is as impossible for those spirits to *ascend* to the upper heights as it is for mortals to pierce the heavenly worlds with their material bodies; for as the physical keeps you down to earth, so the weight of passion keeps those spirits down.

Therefore, no impure spirit enters Zencollia, and none who dwell there fear to entertain the stranger, for all the inhabitants of that celestial city are possessed of clear vision, and they can readily read the interior thought and desire of whoever comes within their sphere.

The dwellers in that happy city associate together in groups, all working for the common good; each obeys the law which all assist in framing; everyone contributes to the welfare of the people, the beautifying of the

city, the maintaining of free, open schools of instruction, and in upholding a good government.

I have often thought of the beauty and glory of this sweet life, wishing that I could cause mortals to view it as I do,—to view and to emulate, to bring down something of its happy conditions to earth; for then there would be no need of prison-walls, no cause for corporeal punishment, but love and justice would reign supreme, and the millennium, long foretold by prophet and seer, dawn upon the new earth.

INTERIOR VIEW OF ZENCOLLIA.

Zencollia, “City of Light,” the sight of thy white walls, gleaming in the distance, recalls a vision of thy beautiful streets, so unlike the city streets that mortals know. No jarring noise disturbs the serenity of thy places; and yet the ceaseless murmur, the ever-present appearance of active, energetic life within thy limits, proclaim that therein is found sentient, individualized, conscious existence.

The edifices so beautifully constructed of shining stone, artistically adorned with carvings of exquisite grace and symmetry, do not crowd and elbow each other for want of space; but each building stands within its own enclosure, surrounded by garden plats and banks of emerald green. Lofty trees, whose umbrageous foliage furnishes a cooling shade, are scattered here and there, giving an aspect of natural beauty to the scene. The very streets, though paved through their centres with polished stones, are fringed on either side with grassy leaves and nodding flowers, which no careless foot seeks to trample down.

And yet, it is a city, vast and magnificent. Its massive buildings, its countless inhabitants, all mark the difference between it and the town or country. At regular spaces, great plats, enclosing flowery beds of every variety of color and perfume; tiny lakes and gushing fountains; gleaming pavilions, furnished with rustic seats and tables; small groves of shade trees, tiny grottoes and fairy glens, where birds make music through all the sunny day—are kept under constant care and cultivation for the enjoyment of all who wander therein; and it is no uncommon thing for groups of harmonious spirits to gather together in one of these gardens, and spend an hour in that communion of soul expressed in the singing of hymns, the exhortations

from inspired lips, or the encouraging words given from one to another, that lift the spirit still nearer the Infinite Light that pervades in some measure all space and permeates all life.

A CONVOCATION OF WOMEN.—EQUALITY OF SEX.

I have recently attended a convocation of women, in one of these city gardens, earnest, noble, true-souled women, who met together to discuss plans and devise measures for the welfare of their sister-women upon the earth. They had gathered together to send forth their silent, penetrating, uplifting sympathy toward those who are crowded almost out of existence, either by the pitiless hand of poverty, or shunned and scorned because of the unfortunate lives circumstances have compelled them to lead.

In the realm of spirit, our societies are not confined to one sex; there is no exclusiveness; woman is not considered incompetent to discuss the questions of life with her brother. Men do not meet in club or barroom, to revel in scenes they would blush to have their sisters witness, neither do women have their sorosis, that the gentlemen cannot enter, or sewing-circle, where gossip and slander—those tender tid-bits so delicious to some tastes—are woven into the garments they fashion, with their pernicious and malicious influence.

Each convention, every organization is founded upon the polished square of Equality, and membership is freely extended to male and female alike; thus rounding out the perfect circle of harmonious life. But this convocation of which I speak, composed entirely of women—tender, helpful, loving women—who have witnessed the struggles and the sorrows of those dear children of humanity, whom mortals consider lost, but whom angels know shall yet be redeemed to honor and virtue, was called together because it had become evident to thinking minds that the so-called Progress of Humanity will remain but a sham, until society awakens to the fact that while one outcast remains outside the closed door of fraternal sympathy, while one poor sufferer is refused the helping hand or kindly word, to encourage her onward toward the highway of goodness, it is an agency of intolerance, and unworthy the name it bears.

And so, out in the bright, clear air, with the radiant sky above their heads, the flowery sod beneath their feet, where the grand old trees chanted their

anthems of glory, as the breeze swept through their branches, these spirit women met, and with earnest faces and solemn words, dedicated themselves to the high mission of going one by one out into the material world to sow seeds of love and good-will in the hearts of mortals,—going forth from their beautiful spirit homes as teachers to humanity; and the one little lesson, so easy to read, so hard to remember and weave into practical life, which they seek to implant in human hearts, is this: “Judge not, but extend the friendly hand, the kindly word and smile, even more if you can, the cup of water and the meal of bread, to the poor unfortunate, whose life is bowed beneath the weight of its own mistakes, and who bears more punishment within the soul than you can dream it possible for one to endure.”

And so, from out the company of that heavenly band, whose influence stills all commotion, whose presence breathes a blessing of comfort and peace upon the passing spirit, I come to you today, dear reader, and in the tones of love say unto you of earth: “Oh, cultivate the truly Christ-like principles within you; develop the germs of benevolence, charity, patience, sympathy, and kindness, and let them flow out from your souls toward all those—whether male or female—who tread the paths of sorrow or vice, until like a cleansing flood they roll in waves of light over their sin-stained souls. Be just; give unto every soul the full measure of love that you would crave for yourself! Then shall the age of humanity become indeed a golden age, the fruitage of which will shine forth in noble lives, in redeemed lives, and in progressive lives; and society so blossom under the developed influence of Love and Sympathy as to shed its wealth of fragrant beauty over the hearts of all humanity, and every soul be known by the endearing name of brother or sister.”

DWELLERS IN ZENCOLLIA.

The dwellers in Zencollia are calm, peaceful, happy souls, who, having known the cares, the sorrows and the temptations of mortal life have, through their earnestness, through their aspirations, risen above all the annoyances of external things, and grown into harmony with the law of Love, which is the law of God. Associating together in bands of fraternal sympathy, they spend their time in devising ways and means to alleviate the

condition of those bowed down by woe and suffering, to enlighten the ignorant, comfort the distressed, and free the imprisoned soul from error's bondage, whether it be encased in mortal flesh, or dwelling in darkness of spirit.

They have founded schools of learning, colleges, where eminent teachers in the various branches of knowledge preside, and give forth their wisdom to the seeking mind, drawing forth and developing all the deepest, fullest powers of comprehension, and awakening all the noblest faculties of the student.

Investigation into the realms of Natural Law proceeds with minute exactness; experiments which test conclusions as to the cause, utility, and result of chemical and electrical forces are carried on; and schools are constantly sending out graduates, whose duty it is to search earnestly among the children of earth until they find minds capable of receiving, brains enlarged by earnest thought and study, competent to grasp and elaborate the ideas the spirits give, in order to convey to earth a practical demonstration of their experiments and investigations.

Such is Zencollia—happy, peaceful, industrious city of light; and as I gaze upon its glittering walls from my casement, I seem to feel a pulsating thrill, emanating, as it were, from its center, of good will to man, coursing through my being, until I become one in sympathy with the divine mission of its dwellers, which is, love toward God, manifested through love and helpfulness toward all creatures, all things.

This is but one of the many cities of that spirit country, that no thought can measure, no being scan. It is dearest, because nearest to me; yielding light, instruction, soul-sustenance to myself and to those I love. But there are countless other cities as glorious, peaceful, and ennobling, of which I shall speak in future pages. Among them may I mention Spring Garden City, home of intellect, philosophy and truth; Harmonial City, abode of wisdom, purity, and peace; Washingtonia, within whose walls dwell knowledge, justice, and freedom; and many another that presents a beautiful record of noble lives and enduring deeds, that shall outlast all perishable evidence of grandeur!—for they are engraved in spirit, and can never tarnish or decay.

Oh, darling friends in mortal, from the boundaries of that sweet city of light, we waft you spirit-greeting, love that shall know no change, sympathy

that outlives all outward separation, and only grows the sweeter; peace that the world can neither give nor take away, and which passeth all understanding.

A SUBURBAN VIEW.

I have told you of the beautiful city of light, so near my spirit home; let me now speak of the natural surroundings upon which I may continually gaze in an ecstasy of delight from my western portico, or where I may roam at will, filled with the bliss of knowing the truth of existence, and its enjoyment among the beautiful works of Nature, that kind mother of us all, who brings her sweet offerings of waters, woods and flowers, birds and insects, mountains and hills, for the gratification and pleasure of humanity.

Close beside the home I inhabit a sweet vale lies, decked with fertile meadows and sunny glades, watered by glistening streams and rippling brooks, shaded by magnificent oaks and elms, and gemmed with starry flowers of every hue and of delicious fragrance.

Thickets of roses, blooming in rich profusion, dot the landscape here and there—roses independent of limited days and weeks, but which blossom on from day to day, one bud bursting into beauty after another, and no one left to bloom alone.

A grove of giant pines make music through this leafy vale, as the breezes sweep through their rustling branches; the carol of birds, the hum of insects, the rippling of waters, and the music of murmuring breezes, all combine to form a sweet harmony of sound, that, blending with the pure harmony of beautiful scenery, brings rest and peace to the souls of all who linger here.

Sweet spirit vale! dear Auburndale! for such I love to call you; within your borders, in sweet communion with God and Nature, the soul becomes purged of all material impurities, and grows into closer harmony with the sacred laws of being—Love, Sympathy, and Purity.

Away in the distance rises that majestic pile which to me is Mount Lookout; and as the sunlight rests upon it in gorgeous splendor, I know that upon my earthly home the sun is slowly sinking, in lines of rose and purple glory, behind the western hills.

Who could dream of pain and sadness amid the sunny sweetness of this enchanting vale? And yet, even here sometimes comes from a-far a sound of distress and anguish, brought plainly to our spirit ears by the waves of sympathy that surge within our souls; and we hear the wails of pain welling up from earth life, and mark the signs of devastation and distress bearing down upon the friends in mortal.

But why is this? Because from the depths of human suffering, pain, and death, that we see around us, a heavenly sympathy is born within our souls, and we become desirous of helping those in need, a sympathizing pity, prompting us to extend the cord of love we hold, until it encircles and draws upward, into realms of ineffable peace, the storm-tossed spirits in pain.

Disasters come to earth—conflagrations, misfortune—and from them often result suffering and death; but, glory to Him who rules! from the midst of these scenes of sorrow arise pure streams of helpfulness, strength, and succor for the distressed, that not only enriches the receiver, but also overflows with sympathy and blesses the soul of the bestower.

Up from the surging billows of distress, out of the fiery furnace of affliction, arises the pure Spirit of Love, cleansed by its contact with water, or refined by its passage through fire—noble, enduring, true—growing stronger and better from its upward flight, seeking as it goes the sympathy of angels, who, looking downward from the upper heights, send forth the sustaining cord of affection to draw the spirit upward, singing as it arises this grand refrain refrain—

“Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee;
E’en though it be a cross that raiseth me.”

MY HOME; ITS LIFE AND ASSOCIATIONS.

The home I inhabit in the Celestial Sphere would appear to mortals as a large, spacious, white mansion, surrounded by porticoes, verandas, and the like, the doorways opening upon a scene of surpassing loveliness; for there Nature wears her richest robes to beautify external life.

The interior of this habitation you would observe to be divided into various apartments, each furnished with appropriate furniture and hangings,

the whole designed to harmonize in a perfect blending of form, color, and texture, pleasing to the eye and restful to every sense of the beholder.

We have private apartments of our own, where, when in need of mental repose, silent study, or deep meditation, the spirit may retire, apart from all companionship save that which breathes through every breadth of space—the presence of its God.

There are times in every life when it is best to be alone, when the spirit requires silent, undisturbed self-communion, when outward presence is an intrusion upon the soul; and at such times we are privileged to retire to our own private sanctum, unquestioned and not misunderstood by others.

In my pleasant spirit home there is a quiet nook, where I love to retire and ponder over the great problems of life constantly unfolding themselves before me; and there, surrounded by the beautiful in nature and art, natural flowers climbing over marble statuary, singing birds making music beneath some exquisite painting, I strive to unravel the seeming mysteries of existence; and not in vain, for to the earnest seeker after truth there comes a flood of light, illuminating the dark places and answering all silent questioning.

But my home contains apartments where sociability reigns, and there a happy band of spirits daily congregate to amuse, instruct, and bless each other; there, social converse, mingling with the recital of some experience, lesson, or advice, pleasant faces and loving hearts, fill the place with that harmony and peace only to be found where spirit meets spirit in sympathy and appreciative kindness. Eight of us, all young souls, meet together hour after hour, bringing each one his or her store of acquired knowledge, or displaying his or her ignorance upon any theme, only to have it dissipated by some new truth revealed to our understandings by others. We are never unhappy, never restless, never idle. In earthly experience others are far younger than myself; but in spiritual love and life I am the youngest of them all, and it refreshes my soul to partake of what those I love have to offer in the way of acquired knowledge.

This is a sample of group-home-life in the spirit world; a band of loving, earnest spirits, whose highest ambition is to become great in knowledge, that they may understand the laws of life, and thereby be able to avoid mistakes, and competent to transmit a light and knowledge of life to poor, darkened, misguided souls, who moil in sorrow and pain. The members of

these groups or bands are guarded and protected, instructed and upheld, by wisdom spirits, who, having dwelt in mortal until the physical ripened naturally for the change, passed on to enjoy the fruits of their experience, and, having dwelt long in the spiritual, are competent to guide and instruct these young souls bound to their own by the ties of soul-affinity, as well as those of consanguinity, yet confined by no arbitrary laws that chain and restrain the higher emotions; thus our lives flow smoothly on, and each moment of existence brings us some new lesson, or some new opportunity of being of use to some one of the many spirits who walk the paths of sin or suffering.

CHAPTER V.

PLACES I HAVE SEEN.

You have heard of Zencollia City, with its peaceful homes and stately temples. Let me now speak to you of that sweet, blooming, delightful Spring Garden City, where the good, the beautiful, and the noble gather together to engage in works of love for humanity. It is impossible for you of earth to conceive of the magnitude and extent of this spirit city, which seems almost boundless in width and length.

The habitations are of various hues and textures; many of them standing in the midst of luxuriant groves, where the branches of stately trees cast a pleasant shade, and where birds make music all the sunny day; or in the center of blooming gardens, where parterres of beautiful flowers make the balmy air redolent with perfume and the landscape to glow with beauty.

These habitations, built as they may be of spotless, alabaster-like stone, marble, or a particular kind of variegated stone, peculiar to this place, which seems almost translucent, as it gleams in rainbow colors beneath the shining sun, are all furnished and adorned with soft, velvet-like draperies, snowy hangings, pure white tables and seats, beautiful, life-like pictures, ivory statuary, and hanging baskets of flowering plants, and present a picture of home-like comfort and hospitality.

Many of the houses are open at the sides, the ceilings being supported by exquisitely carved columns of stone, around which emerald vines, laden with fragrant flowers, climb and cluster; and the passer-by can note the appearance of purity, peace, and comfort within.

THE PEOPLE OF SPRING GARDEN CITY.

The inhabitants of this celestial city are ever busy, either devising some new method of aiding and assisting the distressed, attending some of its many schools of instruction, its halls of music and literature, or working together in bands to elevate and instruct needy souls upon earth, or in the lower realms of spirit life.

These spirit people dress simply and naturally, in flowing robes, of any color which most harmonizes with their interior condition; they are all beautiful, a light radiating from each countenance, an expression of peace and contentment upon each face, and a smile upon the lips; all of which beautify the features and cast a halo of brilliancy around the form.

Beautiful groves, watered by running streams, shaded by lofty trees, and made charming by banks of velvety moss, starred with fragrant blossoms, are seen in the midst of this city of souls; and in these spots beneath the blue canopy of the sky, inhaling the perfumed invigorating air, many spirits daily congregate to listen to words of advice, instruction, and wisdom from inspired lips. And from these places the inhabitants of Spring Garden City go forth to their homes, exalted in spirit, or come down to mortals who dwell in sorrow, and shed over them the divine influence caught from higher scenes, which uplifts and strengthens the struggling ones below.

CHILDREN'S LYCEUM.

In the center of one of the largest, most beautiful groves, where rippling waters, breezes swaying the leafy branches of the trees, and the song of birds send a constant stream of melody through the air, made fragrant by odorous flowers, a stately temple stands. It is of burnished silver, which flashes and glows in the light of the sun. Within, its walls are hung with landscape paintings, and draperies of azure satin. The floor is of white marble, and the spotless ceiling is frescoed with paintings of marvelous beauty.

Here the spiritual lyceum of Spring Garden City daily convenes its sessions, where spirit children are taught the duties and the lessons of life. Some of the most exalted and brilliant souls resident in that city are teachers and guardians in this school, and it is their delight to so cultivate and train the young minds under their charge that only the beautiful attributes of the soul will grow, and the selfishness of life shall be eradicated. And it is because of the instruction and development received in such schools as this that little children can so readily return to earth, and bless and comfort weeping mortals with their sweet words of sympathy and love.

HARMONIAL CITY.

Harmonial City is a broad, beautiful, extensive city of the spirit world. Its streets are literally shining, broad and straight, paved with blocks of cool, white stone of great purity, and lined on either side with beautiful, fragrant flowers.

In the center of each street, a fountain constructed of a material resembling silver, carved in the most wondrous designs, sends forth jets of crystal water, which rise in fan-like shapes and fall again in gleaming sprays upon the beds of flowers blooming at the fountain's base, whence a cloud of sweet perfume rises to scent the balmy air.

At regular intervals, in this city of the spirits, beautiful parks are laid out, abounding in all the natural beauty of flowers, trees, shrubbery and water, serving to delight the eye and calm the senses of the soul.

The habitations of this city of harmony are formed or fashioned of various substances, each dweller building his mansion to suit himself; hence we observe the tiny, white vine-embowered cottage, with its surrounding flower garden, side by side with the stately mansion, environed with smooth walks and velvety lawns.

The inhabitants of this place are particularly sympathetic and harmonious; they are at peace with all the world and their own souls; they take no active part in the turmoils and strifes of others; they do not commune with earth save only as they transmit their messages through spirit intelligences below them.

Here are grand and massive temples, more richly draped and ornamented than any I have elsewhere seen; temples dedicated to Poesy, Music, Literature, and Philosophy. Here the active, critical, keen-searching scientist is not at home; but the musician, the poet, the philosopher, and the idealist find a heaven.

The poetry that delights the soul of the bard is here breathed forth through flower and streamlet; all the surroundings seem made up of poetry, so fragrant, sweet, and subtle is the calm, beautiful life we behold in this wonderful city. Well may it be named Harmonial City; for its very atmosphere, its pretty homes, its adornments, and the features and forms of its inhabitants, all breathe of harmony and peace. The dwellers within this city I am told seem not so much like members of one family, as parts of one

healthy body, each performing its function and duty, the whole harmoniously blending in one form of symmetry and beauty; and I can well believe this, from what I have seen of them.

In this city, musicians, poets, artists, and idealists—transcendentalists, if you will—love to congregate in their respective temples, which are ever open to all who wish to enter, and by contact with each others' minds throw off new strains of harmony in verse, outline some new work of beauty, develop some beautiful idea, or evoke a new melody of the spheres. And from these master-souls beautiful ideas, melodies, and ideals come floating down to earth. Transmitted through the atmosphere below, they eventually awaken an echo in the heart of some aspiring soul,—when, lo, a new poem, a new strain of melody, a new harmonious thought, is given to the world.

It has been my good fortune to visit once or twice this wonderful City of Harmony, and ever after my mind has possessed a new and beautiful picture to hang upon the snowy walls of memory,—a picture of harmoniously blended tints, of flowery beds, of sunny fountains, of massive temples, crowded with faces from which all trace of passion hath forever vanished, and which bear only the impress of ineffable peace; where harmony is the life of the spirit, and melody runs like a liquid stream through all the sunny days.

A MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE.

Imagine, if you can, a magnificent temple built of a kind of white translucent stone, which, as the sunlight falls upon it, glows and sparkles with the bright, prismatic hues of the rainbow; imagine this temple to be so vast and spacious in its dimensions that its brilliant dome seems to pierce the snowy clouds, while in length it extends as far as the eye can reach; imagine delicate vines, wreaths and pictures carved exquisitely upon the outer walls of this building, while a magnificent garden, blooming in the rich luxuriance of summer, surrounds it on every side; and after you have imagined all this, you will have a faint idea of that massive temple of Harmonial City, in which artists of every grade congregate to pursue their favorite studies.

The interior of this splendid palace is hung with richest drapery, and adorned with rarest works of art, creations of those artist-spirits who delight

to give outward expression to the ideals of beauty within their souls.

Mortal eyes have never witnessed such forms of skillful beauteous art, so life-like in every sense, so soul-thrilling, as are gathered here. Mortal ears fail to catch the celestial tones of harmony, the divine notes of melody, that are uttered here by spirits who appear to be all music, all harmony.

The interior of this beautiful building is divided into four spacious compartments, with one vast hall over all.

The lower halls are devoted to sculpture, painting, music, and poetry. Each one is fitted up grandly, hung with shimmering drapery, and adorned with forms of peerless beauty. Here the student lingers, his soul entranced with the glory of his work, his being illuminated with the divine inspiration he gathers.

The whole edifice, with its splendid appointments, is like a divine poem, a completed strain of harmony, a perfect picture, or a finished statue of grace and symmetry; and the forms and faces of the masters who dispense instruction to the student give glory and benignity to the whole.

The vast hall above is the most beautiful place I have ever seen—paved with white and gold, the walls hung with exquisite paintings, adorned with gleaming statuary, save here and there where openings admit the balmy, perfumed air; the ceiling of white and azure, gemmed with golden stars; the shining fountains on the floor, which send up sprays of crystal water, the baskets of richly-blooming flowers, swinging here and there; the grand stands of shining gold, where the favored children of genius gather; the silken couches and dais for the visiting company—all present a scene of richness and beauty difficult to be described.

In this place grand entertainments are given, to which the denizens of the city and elsewhere are admitted, to feast the intellect upon the wondrous creations of artist, poet, sculptor, and musician, and to listen to instructive lectures upon the arts. And it is indeed a feast to the soul to attend one of these receptions; it is an experience which draws the spirit upward, and elevates it into a purer, more refined condition; for purity and goodness are the themes of the artist's inspiration, and love broods over all, manifested in the desire to instruct and bless every life. This is one of the largest temples I have ever seen, although many smaller ones, erected for like purposes, are scattered throughout the higher spheres of spirit life.

CITY OF JOY.

There is a beautiful little city in the Summer-Land, which, situated between rising hills of ever-glowing verdure, presents an appearance of restful tranquillity and harmonious peace. Its name signifies "City of Joy."

The habitations of this place are all of a circular shape, pavilion-like in appearance, typical of the rounded out completeness of human life. These buildings are open at the sides, the roofs of shining brightness, supported by columns of white ivory, exquisitely carved, and entwined with clustering plants and flowering vines. They also are ranged in circles or spheres, eight of these homesteads, with their connecting flower-gardens, comprising a circle. Here and there are gateways, leading to vast and beautiful grounds, where all that can delight the eye and charm the ear may be found. These gateways are reared of solid alabaster-like stone, in the form of an arch.

Everywhere we observe the circle and arch, nowhere do we find sharp corners, or the angular edge; all is smooth, completed, harmonious. The flower-beds are in rings, blooming with soft, exquisite tints, and redolent with delicate odors.

The inhabitants of this city dwell in unity, co-operate together in associative bodies, each one working for the good of all. Their sphere represents brotherly love and honest fidelity; their aura is clear, shining and transparent.

I understand that these beings rarely, if ever, return to earthly scenes. They have long since passed beyond the conditions of material things; they are without passions, but delight to minister to suffering souls; they understand the art of preparing their beautiful garments from elements gathered from the gardens, and their food likewise grows spontaneously in the shape of rich, juicy, and nutritious fruit.

The habits of life of these beings are extremely simple; they have no artificial wants and desires; their clothing is of the flowing, drapery style; their homes are simply furnished with furniture framed from tree and shrub, and adorned with vines and flowers.

They are a studious people, interested in all that affects humanity, and have groves and temples dedicated to Truth, Wisdom, and Knowledge; also temples, large rotundas, where the sage and the philosopher, the chemist and the scientist, hold forth in words of wisdom.

This place I have seen but once, and then imperfectly. Thither I was guided by a venerable ministering being, who delights to instruct the young and ignorant. But one peculiarity I observed; instead of the brilliant light of golden sunshine pouring down upon the scene, the whole city seemed partially veiled in a peculiar, rose-tinted haze, which threw a delicious sense of beauty over the white homesteads, the gleaming waters of the circular fountains, and the blooming gardens.

The inhabitants of this supernal city traverse space mostly by the intensity of will-force, but I am told they also possess conveyances for ærial travel, circular-shaped, silken-draped air cars, which glide through the atmosphere like graceful birds of golden plumage. These I did not see, but I have seen similar ærial cars in other places.

Oh, were it possible to convey to you an adequate comprehension of the wonders and beauties of another life than this, it would be a task over which an angel might rejoice.

FLORALIA, THE VALLEY OF FLOWERS.

I cannot begin to enumerate to you the beautiful cities of spirit life, and the sweet, outlying country places; neither can I hope to convey to you a description of the peaceful, glowing valleys and woodlands of the Better Country. But there are two beautiful valleys of which I feel to speak, and which may give you a conception of the many fertile spots, rich with luxuriant growth, that adorn the Land of Souls.

Floralia, or the Valley of Flowers, is charmingly situated between two ranges of massive mountains, which glow in the sun with more than roseate brightness, or deepen into purple as the cooling shadows ascend their gleaming sides.

Long and wide the valley stretches out, sweet and fair, dotted here and there with groves and clumps of trees; a clear and limpid stream of water, reflecting the azure sky, runs through the midst of the valley, which is fed by living springs from the mountain. Clusters of snow-white cottages abound, whose inhabitants are composed of little innocent children, with their guardians, teachers, or spirit parents; for little ones coming to our life,

who have no father and mother to greet them, are at once adopted by kind spirits, who devote their lives to their care and guidance.

But the most remarkable feature of this valley, and the one from which it derives its name, Floralia, is the lavish profusion of flowers on every hand. The green sward, so like velvet in softness, is literally covered with flowers—flowers of every type, degree, and color—the whole forming a magnificent scene of beauty and fragrance; so exquisitely do the colors blend and their odors harmonize. This you will believe is the home of honey-loving insects and singing birds, and the whole presents a perfect picture of delight.

To this flowery home, little children are brought, who pass out from earth in childhood's hours; here they are borne by loving, ministering angels, and tenderly reared and cherished. Many of these little ones knew not the meaning of care and tenderness on earth, but all are lovingly tended at this place.

Here they attend the school of Nature, learn of flower and bird and rippling rill; and are instructed in the lessons of life, and the laws of being, by their gentle guardians. Only purity and peace abound here, and the little ones develop all their sweetest attributes of soul.

THE VALLEY OF DELIGHT.

The other vale of which I have spoken is called the Valley of Delight. This valley is somewhat depressed and nearly round; nestling between gigantic hills, it resembles a great green basin set with flowers of many hues. No scorching wind, no battling storm ever sweeps across this valley; all is mild and balmy. The crystal water flashes from many fountains and gurgles from leaping springs.

In this sweet spot more than one poet abides, more than one artist makes his home; but the great attraction of the place is a massive, white, academic-looking structure, in the center of the valley. This building is indeed a college of learning; within its lofty walls lessons are given and learned, not only in the usual arts and sciences, but, best of all, in the art of teaching, and of becoming competent to guide, instruct, and develop all the best powers of the little children. From this college in the Valley of Delight,

spirits, men and women, youths and maidens, go forth to Florialia, to become teachers and guides for the little children who gather there.

In this college school, even elderly men and women are entered as pupils; those who, having experienced earthly life without the advantages of education, or have passed through mortality confined to one department of learning. In our world every spirit receives the opportunity for acquiring an education, and all, at some time, avail themselves of it. There are many such schools of learning in the spiritual world, and they are of untold benefit to the inquiring soul.

It would be useless for me to attempt to describe even a tenth part of the places I have visited, and scenes I have witnessed in the spiritual. Mortal language fails to convey a proper idea of certain phases of spirit life, even when the brain of our instrument can receive correctly the thoughts we impress upon it. To realize positively the beauties as well as the deformities,—if I may be allowed to use the word in relation to the lower spheres of spirit life,—one must be able to perceive them with spirit vision. Hence I have only attempted to convey to you a faint though real idea, so far as it extends, of what I have witnessed in other lands than those of earth.

THE HAPPY HUNTING GROUND OF THE INDIANS.

Before I close this chapter I must speak to you of that fair, peaceful, mountainous country of the spirit world, where the Indian race find a happy home. To reach this region from the cities of which I have spoken, one must go far out into the open country; through valleys and over hills; through deep forests and sunny glades, up, ever upward in his march, until at length he comes to an open stretch of green fields, where the mellow sunlight gleams and tiny flowers blossom. Beyond this level plain of verdure, a deep, blue, rolling river sweeps, its shining waves dancing in the sunlight under the quaint, canoe-like boats that rest upon them. Kanlaw, Smiling River, I have heard these waters called; and it seems indeed a fitting name, for only peace and joy is suggested at the sight of its shining waves. Beyond this rolling river there is a deeply-wooded country. Here you are up high among the mountains; this is the red man's home, his happy hunting ground, where no foe disturbs him, where no storms can come.

The white race is welcome here as visitors, and a number live here as teachers to their dusky friends; but this is exclusively an Indian country. Throughout the deep forests, where cooling streamlets flow, and birds make merry music in the branches of the stately trees, the picturesque wigwams of the Indians stand, white and shining, embroidered with quills, feathers, and silks of every hue, hung with many-colored hangings or curtains of silken texture, and ornamented with natural flowers, which give out sweet incense to the breezes. The young people of the race delight to weave flowery garlands with which to deck their homes.

Out in the sunny glades of this region, where flowers of every kind bud and blossom, where the brooks murmur over mossy stones, and all life is glad, the great lodges of the country stand,—their school-houses and their council-halls,—and there they meet to give or gain instruction and to receive counsel from the wise chiefs whom they honor and love.

Tribes here mingle together and dwell in unity; no hate, no anger, no fears disturb their minds; they grow in harmony, and gain that strength of mind which they send back to aid and assist the pale-faces through their chosen mediums. Here the Indian finds rest and peace, gaining freedom, vigor, and strength from the waters, woods, and hills; growing gentle like the flowers, and mild as the evening breeze. His soul grows and expands in the power of love, and he gains knowledge not only from surrounding scenes, but through his intuitive faculties, which are receptive to truths, and likewise from learned and cultured beings from the higher spheres, who delight to teach the red man, and whom he in turn listens to with reverence and love.

This beautiful country, fairer than mortal eye hath ever witnessed, has proved a blessing to many a weary spirit. Not only is it a refuge for the poor, hunted and despised Indian, who, fleeing from mortal chains, finds therein rest and peace, but it is also a haven of rest to many a poor, weary pale face, who, passing out from mortal life, uncared for and alone, is taken up by tender spirits into this blooming country, and amid its pure air and green hills, cared for by the tender Indian maid, he gains strength and ease of mind and body. Here, too, many little children gain strength and power to return to earth as messengers of light to weary hearts.

And there are lyceums in the Indian country,—lyceums, where lessons are learned from the singing brook, the mossy stone, the budding flower,

and the warbling bird; where the grand march is made beneath archways of living green, and many-colored banners are formed of blooming flowers; where life is natural, and where souls are happy and free.

CHAPTER VI.

SCENES AND INCIDENTS IN THE SPIRIT LAND.

As you gather around your cheerful firesides as mortals, and rejoice in the sweet associations and affections of the family circle, do you not sometimes think of those homes not made with hands, which the great army of your so-called dead inhabit? and do you not long to know something of them and their manner of existence?

I have recently visited one of these homes in the spirit world, of which I will endeavor to tell you. Imagine a large, white building, surrounded by pleasant grounds, and shaded by lofty trees (similar to your trees of maple and oak), in form, construction, and surroundings much like a substantial, comfortable country-seat of some well-to-do merchant in earth life. This home of which I speak is situated in "Pleasant Valley." No wintry storms, no sudden waves of cold, no visitations of extreme heat, ever come to this place! The temperature of the valley is mild and delightful. There are many such homes as this of which I speak in Pleasant Valley, but they are not all inhabited by the same class of people.

TRIAL AND TRIUMPH.

In this comfortable home dwell two beings, male and female, companions in every sense of the term, whose delight it is to minister to the wants of others. I know not all the roads of suffering they passed, but I do know that on earth, many years ago, this woman loved and trusted in this man, and through the force of circumstances and conditions (perhaps because of a vacillating, fickle nature), he abandoned her to the merciless scorn of an un pitying world. Left alone, friendless and unaided, to fight the battles of life, what wonder that she was plunged in despair! Her babe lived scarcely three months on earth, ere it passed to the spirit world.

Crazed at this culmination of all her woes, the poor mother ended her mortal existence by suicide. For a time she led an aimless, restless existence in spirit, owing to the law of association drawing her back to former scenes; but soon, through the aid of ministering spirits, she was aroused to her true condition and prevailed upon to reach outward for a higher life.

Her mother-heart yearned and prayed for the tiny babe she had lost, when, lo, it was brought to her arms by tender mother-spirits, who had tended and cared for it with loving kindness. Mother and child were taken to a bright home, where flowers bloomed and branches waved, where all was beautiful, and there was nought of selfishness or woe to mar the serenity of the scene. Here in Pleasant Valley, surrounded by loving helpers and guides, these two beings unfolded in sweetness and purity, their lives growing into harmony with all mankind.

But the mother, whom I will call Mary, could not forget her early love; the object of her fondest affections was still dear to her soul, and in spite of unkindness, desertion, and neglect, her woman's heart went out to him in a devotion born of undying love. At times, she could feel something like a chord vibrating within her, as if with pain, and she would feel that the spirit of her dear one was calling her to him.

At length she found him, still on earth, but, oh, how changed! Sorrow, want, and pain were marked on every feature. Oh, what tribulation and suffering had been his! Friends had died or deserted him; fortune had fled, and sickness marked him as her own. In hours of misery, thoughts of Mary

had come to him; bitterly did he repent his past conduct, sadly did he mourn over his wasted life.

Soon he was called to the spirit world, but not at first did he find the angel of his dreams; though she was near, seeking to aid and assist him to throw off the clouds that pressed upon him, and to aid him to emerge from the terrible conditions that surged around him, it was impossible for her to announce her presence.

At length, by the herculean efforts of his will, by a determination to live for others instead of wholly for himself, he succeeded in throwing off the incubus that weighed upon his soul and confined it in the bondage of darkness. Then, what a glorious sight burst upon his awakened vision,—the face of her he once knew and loved, the face of her he had wronged, he beheld smiling upon him tenderly and peacefully, glorified by angelic love and pardon, while beside it gleamed another,—sweet, innocent, lovely,—the face of their angel child.

It is impossible for others to realize the misery and anguish of a human heart, to comprehend the thorny path a soul may have to tread in its journey of purification; therefore I cannot convey to you a knowledge of the suffering and sorrow these two beings experienced,—the one through betrayed confidence, the other through selfishness and wrong-doing; but we may well believe the anguish of the latter must ultimately have exceeded ten times the suffering of the former, as the wrong-doer must meet with stings and scourges of conscience of which the wronged is never aware.

A HOME FOR THE WEARY.

Led by Mary and her child into paths of peace, and at last pleasantness, the erring spirit began to blossom out from old conditions, and to develop depths of goodness in his nature, undreamed of hitherto. At length, it became their desire to open a spiritual home of peace and comfort for such weary souls, who, like our friend Mary, are forced out of mortal existence by the relentless hand of despair and to surround them with that sweet magnetism of love that serves to assuage their sorrows and strengthen their hearts.

Consequently, this beautiful home in Pleasant Valley, surrounded by shaded walks, rippling streams, blooming flowers, and smiling fields, is sustained by them as a refuge for weary, heart-sick souls, who through misery, want or neglect, have passed out from earth by their own act. Within, the apartments are pleasantly situated, commanding views of the joyous scene without; comfort, and even luxury, abound; the furnishing of the house is such as to please the eye and harmonize with the senses; form, color, and texture all blend in perfect unison. Seclusion and privacy may be had by those who will; cheerful companionship also is freely offered. Surely such a house of refuge, such a home of peace, must be welcome to a weary, storm-tossed soul.

Content in their work for others, Mary and her companion pass their time, constantly devising something new for the amelioration of human suffering, or giving of their energy and influence to strengthen and encourage the morally weak and blind. As teachers, helpers and guides, they are invaluable to others, and their labors follow them in the blessing and appreciation of all. Serenity and peace are stamped upon their features, while their forms, clad in simple robes, shine with dignity; hand in hand they pass through life, happy in each other and in their work.

What shall we say of their child,—innocent, star-eyed Stella,—she who returns to earthly scenes daily, as a missionary of light and peace to weary mortals, who brings an influence of benevolence to the hearts of the affluent, that they may bestow their bounty upon those in need; who soothes the weary and sad, and carries a blessing wherever she goes? She is a missionary of light, performing a noble work in guiding sorrow-stricken hearts to a haven of rest. The angels bless her, as mortals would do, were they aware of her presence in their midst, at times, when a deep influx of strength and consolation flows out from her life to theirs, and they know not whence it comes.

A few words more: Those happy, calm, and quiet beings, who at present inhabit the home in Pleasant Valley,—the “Mary Home,” as we love to call it,—would never be recognized as the sorrowful, hollow-eyed, unhappy creatures who not long since dragged their weary frames through the streets of earth. Now, peace and content are theirs; affection and sympathy feed their lives, and their hearts are no longer starved for the sustenance they crave.

But these beings will not always remain here. One by one, as they become strengthened and refreshed, as they become imbued with a desire to help others, they pass out to other scenes, to new labors, and new associations, where, as missionaries, they will continue to work for others, leaving sweet memories to cluster around the old home, and bright influences which bless and strengthen the weary ones who are brought to fill their places.

Such is the work accomplished in the Mary Home; such the life spent by those who, through much tribulation and sorrow, have found the dawn of a new existence. We do not scorn a spirit for what it has been; we honor it for its efforts to advance and grow into something better; for in this way happiness, peace, and blessing come to humanity.

THE CONDITION OF ONE SELFISH ON EARTH.

Passing through the various places and conditions of the spirit world, on missionary or beneficent purposes intent, one comes in contact with strange and startling scenes and people, presenting a weird and uncouth appearance, as well as with those bearing the impress of suffering and woe.

I well remember one being with whom I was brought into association by a beautiful spirit, whose delight it is ever to work out some benefit to others. This being, to whose side I was brought, was a female, tall, gaunt, unhappy; her garments seemed to be formed of a heterogeneous mass of fabric, of every color and texture, presenting at once a grotesque and unnatural appearance.

“See,” she said, as I gazed upon her, “see my fine robes, how beautiful, how rich; I hid my jewels, that none should find them; I cut up my handsome dresses, that none could wear them when I was dead; I hid my gold, that none should spend it in riotous living; and see, I have them all here again, in these beautiful robes of mine.”

It was plainly to be seen that this unfortunate creature believed what she said; presenting a pitiable appearance to others, to herself she appeared to be the perfect ideal of dignity and beauty. I soon learned the secret of her deplorable condition. On earth this woman had been cursed with great wealth. I say “cursed,” for to her spirit it had indeed proved a curse,

narrowing her intellect in the eager pursuit of more wealth, and warping her spiritual faculties to a truly lamentable extent. While not denying herself the luxuries of life, she yet refused to spend one penny for the comfort of others; indeed, so selfish and greedy had she grown, that she could not bear to see others enjoying one grain of the wealth and luxury which she possessed, and she determined that since she must “die,”—she did not believe in a future life, nor in the existence of a higher power than man,—since she must leave all she possessed, no one else should enjoy it; and so she had destroyed her riches and garments, and hidden much of her jewelry and gold, so that after she was dead, her relatives would fail to benefit by them.

This woman had lived alone on earth, a solitary, haughty, mercenary being; and in this spirit of unrest she had passed out into the Eternal World, only to find herself stripped of all wealth, grandeur, and honor,—a poor, wretched creature.

But as yet she had not aroused to this fact; she felt herself a dethroned queen; she did not realize the utter poverty and squalor of her surroundings; her only desire seemed to be to keep the gold and jewels hidden from the light of day.

I was much interested in this spirit. I sought to awaken some sense of justice, honor, and benevolence within her soul, but without avail. To all my entreaties, arguments, and persuasions, she would turn a deaf ear. Her mind seemed to gloat only upon the disappointments of those on earth, who sought for her hidden treasure, and her time was spent in mocking their futile search, bewailing her own inability to profit by her wealth, or parading herself to and fro before the eyes of any passer-by.

The surroundings of this miserable woman seemed to be as sterile and gloomy of aspect as her own soul,—cold, cheerless, and deserted. No blooming flower, no shrub of luxuriant green adorned the scene; barren rocks and stony ground alone met the sight; not even the maligned thistle or thorn-bush were here to enliven the scene; and yet this being in her haughtiness of spirit, perceived not the gloom and darkness and dearth.

This woman,—seemingly in all but outward appearance anything but a woman,—so haughty, selfish, even vindictive—what could she produce sweeter than thorn or thistle?

Spirit parents and friends of this unfortunate being gathered around, who would fain have assisted her out of her miserable condition; but she knew them not, and waved them away from her side.

FIRST STEPS TOWARD ENLIGHTENMENT.

But this state of things could not continue long; as the constant dropping of water will wear away a stone, so the continued influence of earnest spirits descending upon another will produce its result, and so the influence of these good, beneficent ones began slowly yet surely to produce a softening effect upon this woman's heart. She grew unhappy, restless; the gold and jewels of her former days haunted her; she longed to see them once again. In one of these moods she found herself in the bodily presence of a kinsman,—one poor, but worthy,—whom she had despised as shiftless, because while burdened with an invalid wife, and a family of little ones, he could do nothing more than keep himself and family above want and debt.

Thinking deeply of the hiding-place of her treasure, and longing to behold it once again, she did not know that the intensity of her desire, and the impression on her soul concerning the place of concealment, communicated itself to the mind, or spirit, of her relative. He was in a partial slumber, it was early morning; just the time and condition favorable for producing spirit impression. Starting from his sleep, he exclaimed to his suffering wife: "I believe I have dreamed out the hiding-place of aunt Sarah's money; I believe I can find it; at least, I shall search for it."

His companion tried to soothe him into quiet, but all in vain; he could not rest, and shortly left the house, followed by the now anxious and thoroughly alarmed spirit.

I need not enter into details; before nightfall the treasure was found,—bank-notes, gold and jewels,—together with a note in the handwriting of the deceased woman, stating that the money should be owned by whoever found it, but the jewels must be returned to the heirs of the family. The only heir to the property was a young lady, a governess in a distant city. Gladly did the fortunate finder communicate with her, and as the jewels were worth fully as much as the money, she was glad to take them, and leave the residue with her relative.

Thus were honest hearts made happy, and needy ones provided for. He who found the treasure had been sorely tried; his wife's health had become more precarious than ever, and his family were in need of even the necessities of life; for he had been thrown out of employment, and there was no prospect or hope of better days before him.

You may judge of the rejoicing in the poor man's cottage that night; the children were elated, but the invalid's tears flowed freely, as in broken accents she thanked the Father of us all for his tender mercy.

ENFRANCHISEMENT OF A SPIRIT.

It was this scene that softened the heart of that unhappy spirit, and actually brought tears to her eyes. She had rejoiced at the sight of her treasures again, then grown alarmed as she realized they had forever passed away from her; but when she witnessed the tears, and listened to the thanksgiving of the invalid woman, her own heart melted, and she wept in sympathy.

And so one little wayside blossom dared to lift its head above the arid soil, and to shed its fragrance over a bitter life,—the flower of Sympathy, which is so near akin to Love, that the angels consider them twin lilies blooming from one stem.

At this blessed moment, those earnest spirits who had longed for this surrounded the woman, dissipating the shadows with their brilliant presence, and revealing her to herself as she was. Horror, shame, anguish filled her spirit for a time; remorse for the good she had left undone pierced her through and through; but possessing strength, endurance, and energy, and assisted by her friends, she at length rallied and emerged from her old condition into a brighter one; her old garments dropped away, and womanly robes of simple fashion clothed her form, which soon rounded out in beauty of expression and symmetrical proportions. She is still growing, seeking to learn more of her new life, and to benefit others; and it is her delight to impress the receivers of her former fortune to expend a part of it for the benefit of others.

Thus have the wayside flowers of sympathy, love, benevolence, humility, and peace blossomed out from the defilement of selfishness and pride.

CHILDREN'S PROGRESSIVE LYCEUMS.

In this chapter, which I have devoted to the recital of scenes and incidents that occur in the spirit land, I must mention something concerning the Children's Progressive Lyceums of that world, which are in session at this hour. I will give a description of that school which daily convenes in the massive temple at Spring Garden City, dedicated to Truth and Education. In this, as in all of our spirit lyceums, spiritual principles and aspirations are inculcated, and a knowledge of the laws of life instilled into the young minds who throng its spacious halls.

In that delightful temple, adorned with the artistic expressions of grace and beauty, where snowy statuary gleam out from nook and corner, displaying the sculptor's skill, marvelous creations of ideality, representing all the grace and loveliness of human conception; where beautiful paintings adorn the crystal walls: scenes of natural beauty, glowing landscapes, gleaming water pictures, representations of calm and peaceful life, which the artist-soul has caused to speak a lesson from inert canvas; where the ceiling is carved in delicate forms of beauty, and the open walls invite the perfume of the flower and the balm of the passing breeze; where in truth all the surroundings are calculated to awaken only thoughts of the good, to develop a love of the beautiful in the growing mind, and to cause sensation to glow and blossom under the light of Purity;—groups of spirit children meet to learn the lessons of life, develop all the highest, noblest attributes of mind, and to cultivate the strongest, purest health for the outward form.

There spirit teachers gather, to give instruction to these young souls; to draw forth the inner powers of the undeveloped minds under their charge, and to inculcate on them the principles of true spirituality, which are love, purity, fidelity to truth, and a sense of justice.

And these groups of innocent children, from the prattling babe to the laughing youth or maiden, present a picture at once sublime and inviting. Whether chanting in chorus their beautiful spiritual hymns, which awaken devotion, or delivering in concert their golden-chain recitations, which tell of the wisdom and boundless love of our Father; whether relating some simple story of actual experience, or transmitting the grand and soul-inspiring utterances of others; whether exercising the limbs in wing movements, or performing the graceful and strengthening evolutions of the

grand triumphal march; in each and all of these they present a picture of youthful beauty and innocence, of developing power and purpose, which strikes the beholder with the conviction that these groups of spirits are yet to wield a mighty power. By-and-bye those young souls will depart to take their places as teachers, guides, and helpers to the needy and lowly of earth, or to the ignorant, darkened minds who enter spirit life covered with the pall of superstition and fear; and to such beings they will prove a light that will brighten the highway to knowledge.

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION IN SPIRIT LYCEUMS.

These spirit lyceums are schools of education where thought is developed and love awakened; where beautiful sights and sounds arouse the young spirit into activity, and draw it into a condition of perfect harmony. The lessons are all instructive while entertaining, and are drawn from some natural object of bird or blossom, or taken from some beautiful painting, or group of statuary, which represents the idea to be conveyed to the mind grasping for knowledge.

Each child whose musical taste is developing, receives instruction in the laws of harmony and melodious sound; each child who loves art in its expressive form of painting or sculpture receives lessons from master-minds who delight to guide the awakening talent in its proper direction. All work in concord and all delight to please each other.

The rose and the acorn, the sparrow and the bee, the tinkling brook and the mossy stone, all speak a lesson of active, changing life to the child. The stars and the sunbeams breathe a lesson of divine goodness to him; and the spirit of all things is felt as he communes with Nature. And thus these children are prepared to go forth from their spirit lyceums breathing holy inspirations upon the lives of others, gently drawing them upward towards the life that knoweth all, the *Love* that enfoldeth everyone.

Oh, ye fathers and mothers, who weep in sorrow today because some darling has been taken from your earthly homes; did you realize how tenderly your loved one is cared for, into what a beautiful school your child has entered, to prepare him or her to become a glorious messenger of life and light and peace to the weary and the sad, you would not mourn, but

rather rejoice that you have been permitted to offer up to the service of the Lord such a beautiful and pure missionary of love.

These spiritual lyceums, unlike your earthly gatherings of like import, convene daily; and the children and leaders, in constant association with each other, grow so in harmony together in sympathy and love, that they become a perfect whole, each one fitting naturally and beautifully into his or her place; and hence are enabled to perform an unequalled amount of good for humanity; and I have found that to these bands of holy angels, together with the efforts of the red race,—our Indian brothers,—belongs the credit of swinging back the pearly gates of immortal life, and setting them forever ajar, for the benefit of those who linger yet in mortal clay.

A GOLDEN-CHAIN RECITATION.

I would like to give you a specimen of the golden-chain recitations I listened to at the lyceum of Spring Garden City. The Guardian of the school recited the first line; the teachers of the various groups or classes followed on, in concert, with the second line; then the children of the first group recited the third line; the scholars of the second group the fourth line; and so on, until all had taken part in the exercise and become impressed with its beauty and devotional tendency; when all joined in the recitation of the last four lines.

Spirit of Life and Love!
To thee our souls we bring,
And lay them on Thy Fount of Truth,
Our purest offering.
Spirit of endless Peace!
Who worketh all things well,
To Thee our soul's divinest praise
In songs of gladness swell.

God of the wise and good!
Who rules by perfect law,
Thy vast creations show thy power
Without a single flaw.
The storms and tempests sweep
Impurities away,
And after darkness brightly shines
The golden light of day.

The green fruit and the sour
Are but unripened good,
And every crude, imperfect life,
When rightly understood,
Will teach the human soul
Progression's deathless power
To beautify the living form
With perfect fruit and flower.

Father! we bring to Thee
All that our souls contain
Of love and reverence and joy,
Without one touch of pain;
And, oh, we ask of Thee
Thy blessing evermore,
That we may walk still close to Thee—
Thou whom our souls adore.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW SPIRITS WORK.

The work of the spirit is true labor; it may not be labor of the hands, but it is of the heart; it is the impelling of spiritual force outward from within, directing that force in certain channels, or against special obstacles, in order to accomplish a purpose. Spirit work is always for the attainment of some definite end or object, never for the whiling away of an idle hour, or the performance of some task that is to delight for a brief, fleeting moment.

Let me give you an illustration of how spirits work; but this instance is by no means an example of all the methods that spirits take to accomplish their labors. Oh, no; these methods are varied, even as individuals vary in their natures and constitutions.

A SPIRIT MOTHER REFORMS HER WAYWARD SON.

In a certain city of this fair land dwells an individual who is at our present writing universally respected and beloved by all who know him; but such was not always the case. Twenty years ago this individual was a young man given to dissipation in its various forms; his mother, then in the body, wept and besought him in vain to abandon his evil course, and turn to a better life. Finally, the mother entered spirit life, and for a time that young man plunged into the wildest of dissipations. In the meantime, the mother, awakened in the spirit world, found that she could return to the side of her son, and to a certain extent exert an influence upon him. She began to follow him wherever he went, steadily bending her will-power upon his mind. Into places of low and evil resort went that spirit mother with her erring son; scenes that made her soul grow sick within her met her pure vision. Yet she faltered not; her work lay before her, and accomplish it she would, whatsoever obstacles might interpose.

It would make an interesting volume to describe the experiences and incidents that befell the spirit. For a time the case seemed hopeless, but still the spirit despaired not. Occasionally thoughts of his mother's teachings, and remembrances of her devotion and love for him, would flit across the mind of the dissolute youth, and for the moment his heart would seem to

melt; but the force of habit and association had such a hold upon him that these brief moments of remorse would pass away and seem to leave no trace. But all such experiences do leave their impress upon the spirit for good, and in this instance they afforded means of encouragement and power to the angel mother, whose mission was to accomplish the reformation of the immortal soul of a well-loved son.

Three, five, eight years passed; the youth, now grown to manhood's estate, but in all appearance a perfect wreck of humanity, drifted away from the home of his boyhood among strangers, homeless and alone. Of course he fell among evil associates, but still memories of long ago, and occasionally remorseful thoughts of his own impure life, continued to haunt him.

Still the spirit mother exerted her influence upon him, and it finally became manifest in a singular manner. Groping through the city streets one dark night, he stumbled and fell, striking his head upon the pavement, which caused him to lose consciousness for a few moments; when he beheld the face of that mother gazing upon him with sorrowful eyes.

He started up, confused and alarmed; but the ringing pain in his head refused to leave, and he seated himself upon the curb-stone, holding his bowed head in his hands.

All at once a scene opened before him: he saw his boyhood's home, and his mother standing in the door to meet him as he came from school; he heard her gentle, earnest words: "My son, whatever you do in life, seek to keep a pure heart and a clean hand."

That was all. Then a calmness fell upon his spirit, as though the peace of heaven had descended there. He felt an angel's touch upon his aching head, and tears of anguish fell from his tired eyes. In this condition he was found and taken to a hospital, where his wounds were dressed, and he was cared for until he recovered from the blow he had received. In the meantime the spirit mother, who had followed her son, succeeded in influencing one of the physicians in charge of the hospital, in her son's favor; so much so, that he offered to obtain manual employment for him if he would work, which offer was accepted.

I cannot go into details; suffice it to say that the hitherto wretched man seemed to have changed his nature completely; and why? Because the mother's influence had gained the ascendancy over him. He worked early

and late, at first at rough toil, afterward at more congenial labor. Time passed; he became respectable and manly in appearance; he shunned the haunts of evil and followed the good. Finally, he succeeded in gaining a competence; until now he is beloved and honored by all. And what do you think his present work is? He is the superintendent and guide of a mission for the suppression of crime and the development of good in the street urchins and unfortunate youth of the city.

For ten weary years a spirit mother watched and toiled, but at length she was rewarded, for her son was saved, not only to bless himself and her, but also to bless and strengthen many others.

Thus one mother toiled and watched and hoped, for many years, for the reformation and uplifting of a child. This is one way in which spirits work, but not the only one which they have of accomplishing their purpose.

Let me relate an instance of spirit work of another kind, and in a different direction from that spoken of above, which will reveal to you how possible it is for your ascended friends to assist you in material ways even though you know it not:

A SPIRIT MOTHER RELIEVES AN IMPOVERISHED DAUGHTER.

A widow, who resided in a neat little cottage with her only child, a young girl of sixteen years, maintained herself and daughter by the preparation of certain kinds of fancy work, in the making of which she was highly skilled, and which, being in great demand, yielded her an income sufficient to provide a comfortable living for both.

This woman was a good, careful, tender mother, and her daughter was reared to respect herself, her fellows, and her God. But she made one mistake; loving her child as she did, she argued that she could not put her to hard or tedious labor, and, therefore, she left her to her own pleasure, in place of teaching her some good and profitable employment.

When the girl was between the years of sixteen and seventeen, the mother suddenly sickened and died, leaving her child without the means of support. For a few weeks after this calamity, the orphan existed as best she could. Being obliged to give up the pretty cottage home, she disposed of a

portion of its furniture, and taking an upper room in a lodging-house, furnished it with the remainder in a comfortable manner. As long as the money realized from the sale of her mother's effects lasted, our young friend managed very nicely, in spite of the terrible gloom and loneliness that had settled over her spirit; but in a little time this was exhausted, and want stared her in the face.

In the meantime, the spirit mother, becoming painfully alive to the condition of her mourning child, sorrowed that she had not given her the means of earning a livelihood, and grew restlessly anxious to care for and assist that lonely one. She could not remain in the spirit world with her dear companions, but constantly returned to her child, who lived alone and friendless on the earth, seeking ever to influence and guide her aright.

Finally, as pressing want necessitated the immediate trial of some work, the young girl—in a state bordering upon desperation—decided to attempt to perform a piece of the work which her mother had been wont to do so skillfully and well, whose busy fingers she had watched so many times. Materials being at hand, she collected them together and began her unaccustomed task.

Never before had she attempted anything of the kind, and at first she was excited and nervous; but as the fingers flew over the delicate, fairy-like work, she grew more composed and hopeful, until, when her task was finished, she held it up to the light in an ecstasy of admiration, exclaiming in triumph: "Why, it looks almost as good as mother's used to."

Again and again did she attempt a piece, and each time her success grew more sure and certain, until, when the curtains of evening fell, quite a little pile of delicately finished work lay before her shining though weary eyes.

On the following morning, our friend, after consuming a hasty meal of crackers and water, carried the work she had finished to one of the former patrons of her mother, who examined, bought, and paid for it, furnishing materials for more of the same kind.

The girl hastened home to resume her work, and again transpired that strange scene of an inexperienced, unskilled child performing work which required dexterity and practice, without making a single mistake; and so on, from day to day, week to week, until she was no longer inexperienced, but had become skilled in her task, and was enabled to take advantage of it, and thus gain more time for recreation for herself.

What was the solution of this—to the girl—seeming mystery? Why, merely that the spirit mother, drawn to her child day by day through the intensity of her love and anxiety, impressed that child to attempt the work, and guided her in the performance of it, not by unconsciously entrancing her and doing the labor—in which case she would not be teaching the daughter—but by impressing her how to proceed, guiding her fingers, and directing the work, until at length the daughter needed no teacher, for she had become an adept in the art of labor.

And yet another good than the power of earning her own living was received by the maiden; in close communion with her spirit mother, though she knew it not, she began to lose the sensation of loneliness and gloom, and gradually grew peaceful and calmly happy. Thus was a double good wrought by that spirit mother, whose anxiety for her child's happiness first led her to make the mistake of rearing her in ignorance of manual labor, and afterward caused her to project her influence from the spirit sphere upon that child, thus becoming a teacher, in order to rectify the mistakes of the past.

To those interested in this narrative I will say the young girl soon made friends and companions, and she is now living a loving, happy, useful wife and mother.

Every spirit who cares more for others than for self—and all spirits will do so in time—has a work of some kind to perform, a work of uplifting, benefiting, and blessing one or more individuals—spirits or mortals; and he or she will pause not in despair in this labor of love until it is accomplished, and then at its completion the spirit will not lay down its power of work and say: “I have accomplished my labor; I will now rest;” but, instead, passes on with a smile to new departments and new scenes of labor.

PARENTS SUDDENLY BEREAVED.

A young and beautiful girl, the pet and pride of fond, indulgent parents, the joy of the household and its only flower, just passing into the budding stage of womanhood, met with an accident. She was out riding with a friend, when the coachman, who was partially intoxicated, lost control of the spirited animal he was driving, and it dashed along the road at headlong speed until brought to a sudden check by rushing against a great rock by the

roadside. The carriage was overturned; one of its occupants escaped with but few injuries, as she fell upon her companion; but the other, the young girl of whom I write, was taken up senseless and conveyed to her home, where a medical examination revealed that a fatal injury had been inflicted upon the spine.

For nearly three weeks the young lady lingered, enduring the most excruciating agony of body, unable to move, while nothing but the administration of anæsthetics would give her a moment's ease from pain. At length her exhausted spirit took its flight from the poor broken body, and she was at rest.

The parents of this child, whom I shall call Estelle, were in affluent circumstances, cultivated and refined people; the father, however, did not believe in a future life, and his grief at the suffering and death of his only child was almost uncontrollable; the mother, a beautiful little brown-eyed woman, was a member of a Christian church, and while she sorrowed in anguish over the bereavement she had sustained, yet felt as one who has something to look forward to; for she hoped to meet her treasure again in another world.

Estelle, who had passed from earthly life and suffering, had been lovingly welcomed, and tenderly cared for by gentle ministering spirits, who bore her to a bright home, where immortal flowers bloomed, and where everything spoke only of beauty and of joy. The sweet spirit was delighted with all she beheld, and for a brief time seemed to bask in the glory of her new surroundings.

THE FATHER'S GRIEF AFFECTS THE SPIRIT.

But soon those around her observed that she ceased to take an interest in them and their work; her thoughts constantly turned backward to earth and the home of her parents. Shades of sadness lurked in her lovely eyes and clouded her pure face. Soon the cause became apparent; her father was drifting away from her spirit, and she could not hold him by her love. Her mother's spirit she could meet and soothe and cheer, and so leave a quiet blessing of holy peace with her, that upheld while it strengthened; but the father's spirit was so beclouded and tossed that the spirit child could not find comfort by his side. And no wonder; for as the weeks flew by, the

father became still more restless and unhappy. Said he to a clergyman who came to condole with him: "Sir, it is of no use; I cannot believe in your religion. I can find no hope for a future life in its teachings, no assurance that there is a divine Creator. Why, sir, did I believe in the existence of a God who permitted that terrible suffering and horrible death to visit my beautiful, innocent child, who never wronged a human being, or did an unkind thing in her life, I would curse him as a fiend, unfit for human companionship, much less for worship."

Such talk as this, engendered by morbid, bitter feelings, distressed his gentle wife and tortured the spirit daughter; but what could be done? The man seemed to be fast drifting toward hopeless insanity, and there was no one to give him succor and relief. His friends offered him as consolation words of religious sympathy and exhortation; but these only served to madden him the more; while his poor wife could only clasp her hands and kneel in prayer to Him who knoweth the needs of each one, and responds to them as he thinketh best.

THE SPIRIT SEEKS TO MAKE HER PRESENCE KNOWN.

The beautiful spirit Estelle had learned that it was possible for spirits to return to mortals, manifesting their intelligence and demonstrating their identity to their earthly friends; and feeling that nothing but a complete and perfect recognition of her presence would convince her father of her continued existence, and so restore the equipoise of his wavering senses, she set herself to work to prove to him the immortality of the soul.

But how was she to begin operations? Her parents never mingled with Spiritualists, would not listen to a word in their favor; they were not mediumistic themselves, and their home did not afford suitable conditions for spiritual manifestations of any kind. What was to be done? Our friend Estelle visited medium after medium, seeking to influence them to address her parents; she attended circle after circle, in order to gain experience in spiritual control; she devoted her time to this work, and the months rolled on, bringing no satisfaction with them, only increased sorrow and gloom to the earthly home, and sadness to the waiting, watching spirit, who could only exert just influence enough over her paternal parent to prevent him from becoming insane outright.

At length, through the agency of a kindly spirit, Estelle came in contact with a poor and humble working-woman of about twenty-two years of age, and after a few experiments found herself able to sway the thoughts and control the actions of this person as she desired.

One morning, this woman awoke with a strange feeling of depression; the thought of going to work in the great mill where she was accustomed to labor seemed more than ever distasteful, while the idea of taking a holiday for herself appeared very alluring to her.

After an early breakfast, dressed in her Sabbath clothes, she emerged from her boarding-house, but, in place of turning toward the mill, walked in the opposite direction toward the heart of the town, and wandered hither and thither, scarce knowing for what.

THE RECOGNITION AND ITS RESULTS.

It was nearly noon of the same day, when Estelle's mother hastily entered her husband's library and requested him to come out into the garden, for a strange person had been found within the gate who was acting in a very unaccountable manner.

The husband passed out into the garden followed by his wife, and found our mill-hand seated by the side of a rose-vine, which had been a favorite of his daughter.

Her eyes were closed, and her hands lay folded in her lap, but at the approach of the pair she stretched them out and said: "Oh, father, father, don't you know me? I am your little Estelle, whom you thought had left you; I have not died; I am here with you, to bring to you and darling mother my love. Don't you know how you used to call me 'pet,' and 'chickie,' and your 'blue-eyed belle?' Oh, father, I am so glad to come to you, and tell you what a happy home is awaiting you and mother with me."

The man and woman were astounded; they knew not what to say; they had heard of Spiritualism, but had never attempted an investigation of it, and, therefore, did not understand what to do with this strange being.

However, she continued to speak, relating story after story of the early life of their child, until at length the mists seemed to clear away from the father's brain, and he accepted the joyful truth that his child was before

him, not in her own material form, but in control of the organism of one who was a perfect stranger to all parties.

I cannot continue these interesting details; suffice it to say that, when spirit Estelle loosened her control of the medium-stranger, her parents were both bathed in happy, joyful tears. The father of the spirit questioned the strange woman, who was in a perfect tumult of amazement, incredulity, and wonder at her surroundings and the strange story related to her.

Her humble history was soon told, and investigation proved its truth. In a short time, this lowly working-woman was invited to make her home with Estelle's parents, she to receive a liberal compensation as companion and medium for them. The generous offer was accepted, and today she is an honored inmate of that happy home, where, when evening's shadows fall, Estelle makes her daily visit, to impart instruction and information concerning the heavenly life to her listening parents, and to shower their hearts with loving benedictions, which purify and bless their souls.

No longer is the mother sad and despairing; no longer is the father bitter and misanthropical; peace and joy have become inmates of their household. No longer is the humble medium friendless and alone; a beautiful home and friendly, loving attention are hers. No longer does Estelle sorrow and repine; but she returns from the spiritual world day by day to accomplish her work of guiding her dear ones home to the better land.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN ECHO FROM THE SUMMER-LAND.

The Summer-land is so near to this mundane sphere of yours, my friends, that I am often led to question why it is you cannot often hear the sounds of its busy, active life. But I know that the din and bustle, the cares, turmoils, and perplexities of mortal existence have dulled your hearing, and sealed your senses to the beautiful, internal, ever-new life and activities of the spiritual universe, and that only in a few instances can you sense the presence and power of invisible, potent beings.

But I have to record one instance of perception of spiritual things, that I may term an echo from the Summer-land; an echo that brought music, heart-ease and peace to two weary, suffering human hearts, yet encased in the temple of flesh.

Recently a rare case of suffering and devotion has come to my knowledge. A woman, young in years, yet a mother and widow, was struggling on in spite of want, poverty, and pain, seeking to earn a subsistence for her two children, grew weary, faint, and exhausted, when her little ones were taken from her without a moment's warning, and hurried into the spirit world by what you of earth call an accident. They were together at play, when an embankment caved in and buried them beneath its ruins.

The poor mother was nearly wild with grief. She became ill, and in a little time it was found that she could never see again. The shock to her system, together with previous exhaustion from over-work, had paralyzed the optic nerve, and she was blind.

Upon a lower floor of the humble tenement where this poor woman lived dwelt another, a noble soul, one who had seen better days, but had also been brought to a condition of extreme poverty by the hand of adversity. This was a poor, middle-aged woman, who was employed as night-nurse at a public hospital in the city. She had always presented a kindly, friendly manner to the widow and her children, but nothing of a special nature had been observed.

Suddenly, however, as the terrible catastrophe that hurled the two children into eternity occurred, this woman seemed to arouse to the distress

of her neighbor; and when it was found that the poor woman was ill and in need, all the heroism of her nature was called forth. She hastened to the bedside of the suffering one, nursed and attended to her wants with rare devotion, neglected her own comfort for the sake of her neighbor, and finally gave up her situation at the hospital, in order to be with her at all times her presence was required.

At the time of the accident, as the situation of the poor mother became known, a few sympathetic persons contributed certain sums of money for her relief; but in a little while these became exhausted, and she was again penniless; then did the kind nurse take prompt action. Not content with caring for the sufferer, she brought her down to her own more comfortable apartments, shared her little store with her while it lasted, and watched and tended her like a mother caring for a well-loved child.

But the invalid was unhappy, aye, wildly unhappy. Her children dead, her home broken up, herself bereft of sight, a weak, miserable wreck of her former self, dependent upon the bounty of another, and that other a poor woman, almost a stranger,—what had she left to live for? Surely nothing, she thought, and daily she longed and prayed for death to come to her deliverance.

Before a great while, however, the slender resources of our nurse had given out; then it was that she sought and obtained a kind of cheap needle-work that she could take home, and at the same time attend to the wants of her charge.

These were dark days. Poverty, hunger, and cold sometimes stared them in the face; but still the noble woman faltered not in her labors of love, nor ceased to speak cheerily and encouragingly to the helpless invalid she had chosen to burden herself with.

THE LESSON OF SELF-SACRIFICE.

Let me here pause to comment upon the noble, self-sacrificing spirit of this humble nurse. Impecunious herself, she could yet find something to spare for another; but far more than this, she could deprive herself of the necessities of life, and devote her time, attention and care to one who had no claim upon her, save as she appealed to the sympathies of a tender soul.

Risking want and suffering for herself, she gave up her only means of support in order to be able to care for that other, and finally took that other into her own home, shared with her her own little all, depriving herself of health, strength, and much that makes life bearable, to comfort and sustain her charge. Can human love do more than this? Is spirit love more tender, more self-denying, more beautiful?

The Nazarene said: "As ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me;" and again, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for another." But better than the sacrifice of life is the constant denial of self, that continually blesses another at the expense of the individual.

Oh, Spiritualists, heed the lesson of this woman's work as revealed to you in these pages; heed it well, for by such labors is the soul brought into communion with the angels and fitted to enjoy the blessings of heavenly life.

There are thousands of human hearts pining for some one to love, and for some one to love them; would they but look around them, and take an active, sympathetic interest in their fellow-creatures, they would speedily find some one to love, and would win a soul's affection in return.

DAYS OF DARKNESS.

The days sped away, bringing only poverty and want to the little humble home. The brave woman fought nobly to keep the wolf from the door, but with ill success. The invalid still lay exhausted, weak and sightless, a helpless burden, constantly pining for a release that did not come.

Dark and dreary seemed the days before them; friends they had none, and their neighbors took no notice of them. Still the brave nurse resisted the sick woman's plea to be sent away; well did she know that unkindness and neglect would become the portion of that suffering one, did she heed her request, and so she struggled on until the hour of which I write.

It would seem that human distress could go no further. It had been a day of suffering untold. Hunger, cold, and darkness settled down upon that little home, as the shades of night closed in upon a dreary March day. The last

morsel of food had disappeared, the last stick of wood burned the day before.

Silence fell upon the inmates of that little room, for their anxiety and care were too great for words. A sense of feeling like despair settled upon their hearts; it seemed that the burden of life was too great to be borne.

WORDS OF CHEER FROM THE SPIRIT LAND.

Suddenly, through the stillness and darkness, there came a faint, sweet sound of children's voices; like a far-off echo from some unseen land it fell, swelling louder and louder, until the tones could be distinctly heard, and these words sung in chorus floated upon the quiet atmosphere of that little room, made holy by the spirit of tender love and abnegation:—

“We come, we come from the Summer-land,
Our earthly friends to greet;
We come a happy, joyous band,
With blessings pure and sweet;
We bring you peace from Heaven above,
Where sorrows never come:
We call your spirits with our love
To their eternal home.”

A hush of holy quiet now fell upon the tortured hearts of the two women; peace indeed entered their souls, for in those angelic tones they recognized familiar voices,—the one, those of her two children, who had been so recently snatched away from her; the other, that of a beautiful boy who, years before, at the tender age of four years, had been called home to the angels, leaving her almost crazed with pain and grief.

The instance here recorded was the first echo our friends caught from the Summer-land,—nothing more, nothing less than that one little verse sang in the familiar tones of their departed children, and which were recognized as those of the voices of loved ones gone before.

Want of space compels me to be brief with my narrative. I must not dwell on the long, hard, cold winter which these two women were called upon to endure; I will only state that on the day following the blessed evening that brought such great comfort and peace to their weary hearts our good nurse

succeeded in finding a little work, which continued from time to time, and yielded just enough income to purchase the plainest necessities of life.

Many times did these two women feel the pangs of hunger and cold; many times during that relentless winter did they almost despair of keeping life in the body; but after events proved these bitter experiences to have been refining, spiritualizing, and unfolding to their natures.

For two months after the spiritual experience which I have recorded occurred nothing more was heard or felt of a like character; yet the memory of that one beautiful hour lingered in the hearts of those women, and caused them often to speak in rejoicing tones of it. But at last the time came when our poor, sightless invalid began to hear whispered words and sweet sounds; lights of golden and azure hue flitted before her eyes, and finally she beheld smiling faces and shining forms,—first those of her dear children and departed husband, then others that she recognized as those of dear ones who had passed from earth life years before; and, at length, strange individuals, whom she did not know, yet who smiled upon her, bringing her messages of encouragement, hope and cheer.

Her faithful companion and friend had become obliged to leave the invalid daily for a few hours, in order to earn the trifle which she could obtain by menial service to others, and it was during these lonely hours that she beheld the glowing forms and listened to the spirit utterances of which I write.

Many an evening then did the two women spend in happiness together—the one in relating her pleasant spiritual experiences of the day, the other in listening eagerly to them; and though cold and hunger sometimes nipped them severely, yet there were no two happier beings in all that large city, for they had spiritual meat to eat, which others knew not of.

In describing some of the strange visitants who came to her, and mentioning the words they uttered, our invalid was delighted to find that they were recognized by her companion; and now a double joy was theirs, for through the unfolded medial powers of one, both were enabled to hold sweet and loving communion with their dear ones in the spirit world.

THE MISTS CLEARING AWAY.

It was a clear, cold Sabbath day in March; our friends were seated together in their humble room, conversing on spiritual things, when a rap upon the door of their apartment startled them,—for visitors they had none,—and in answer to the invitation “Come in,” a lady, clothed in heavy and costly apparel, entered. The lady proved to be the wife of a wealthy Spiritualist. She had been directed to this humble abode by the spirit of her child, who had told her, through a medium, that there she would find manifold evidences of spirit existence, and a medium of great power, poor and unknown, in need of assistance.

The events proved these statements to be true; for hardly had the lady entered than the medium beheld a bright light shining all around, and standing in this light were many spirits who spoke their names to her, and whispered messages of hope, coupled with words and sentences concerning their identity; and a power she could not withstand impelled her to describe those spirits and to repeat their words aloud. The visitor wept for joy at receiving such tokens of spirit power and presence; she recognized the spirits, both by their description and words, and for a time it seemed as though heaven had descended to earth, and was chiefly known in that almost barren home.

You may be sure the lady insisted on paying the poor, blind woman liberally for her services as medium that day, and departed promising to visit her again in a short time. And not only did she keep her promise, but sent her friends to the poor woman to receive a spiritual baptism. Not one went away disappointed; all were gratified with what they received, and paid for it with willing hearts. At length the visitors became so numerous that the good nurse found herself obliged to remain at home to attend to her charge and those who came daily.

Instead of the spiritual power lessening, it seemed to increase, and the medium grew strong and happy. All care of the morrow passed away, and the two friends now began to reap the harvest of their weary-watching and patient trust in God. Our good nurse found sweet compensation for all her hours of toil, self-denial and sacrifice; for she had not only some one to love and to love her, but the daily companionship of angels, and likewise the comforts that material means can furnish.

In a short time, our friends were enabled to remove from their humble abode to a neat brick house in the heart of the city, which they furnished

with taste and an eye to comfort. Here business grew and thrived; here the two women lived and blessed each other, the one by providing means of existence, as well as imparting spiritual light, the other in tender helpfulness and care for her companion. And today these two individuals reside in one of your large cities, honored and respected by all who know them.

The spiritual work goes on; the medium has never regained her sight, but she is no longer the pale, emaciated, despairing being she once was. Angel friends have saved her from a living death, and she delights to impart their blessing unto others. She has never been obliged to advertise for business, for she has all she can attend to; and it is not for the wealthy alone she sits, for many a poor soul has received spiritual bounty from her, without money and without price; while it is the delight of our dear old nurse, strong and hearty in her well-doing, to minister to the bodily comforts of those who are in needy circumstances.

Occasionally she, too, listens to the sound of angel voices, and it makes her heart rejoice; but her grand work seems to be in caring for others.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FORTUNES OF LITTLE GEORGIE.

A child, young, fair, and innocent, lay dying among the pillows of a snowy couch in the upper room of a large and spacious house,—the only child of wealthy parents, whose hearts seemed breaking under the necessity of giving their loved one up to death,—for these parents had no idea or knowledge of the spirit world, and the power of its inhabitants to return to earth and to minister to their friends. All that skill could do or love suggest had been tried for the recovery of their one ewe lamb, but all in vain; slowly and surely the change was stealing upon him, and in a little while his spirit had joined the angel band.

Out in the chilly streets, not far from the stately mansion of which I have written, another child, as young and fair and innocent as the first, sat shivering with cold, and trembling with hunger. What was to be his fate? who could tell? This was the offspring of poor, respectable parents; the father had passed to the spirit world, the mother had earned her bread by hard labor, until an attack of acute bronchial trouble threatened her life, and she had been taken to the hospital for treatment, where she still lingered, battling with disease; while her little boy, uncared for and alone, sat in the street, or roamed about, picking up a bit here and there as best he could, returning at night to the humble room he had always called home, to throw himself upon his lowly bed and weep himself to sleep.

You may ask, in doubt, “Can such things be? Are such things allowed in a Christian land?” and we answer: “Yes; here in your boasted civilized country, little children, the pride and flowers of humanity, are permitted to struggle up through poverty, hunger, cold, and misery; and then you wonder at the existence of crime, the spread of evil.”

SHADOWS ON EARTHLY PATHS.

The child of the wealthy parents passed to the higher life, leaving that elegant home lonely and desolate, and those parents’ hearts sad and sorrowful. The mother of the little street-waif also passed on to the other world, leaving her beloved boy homeless and destitute; for the authorities,

finding that the woman was no more, sent to her former home to ascertain the whereabouts of her friends. The neighbors could tell the messenger nothing, only that there was a little boy of about eight years; but they had seen nothing of him of late. Of the woman they knew little; she had been a hard-working, decent body, who minded her own business and did not talk much.

Concluding—without taking the trouble to investigate the matter—that the child had been taken care of by some one who knew its mother, the city authorities ordered the burial of her remains, stripped her former abode of its humble possessions, and when in the coldness and darkness of night the child crept home to his bed, he found the door locked, and himself unable to gain admittance.

And thus it happened that he wandered off, until, faint and weary, he sank down upon a door-stone, where he was found by a night-watchman and taken to the nearest station. Having been warmed and fed, our little waif told his story. He was then given a place to sleep, and in the morning taken to a charitable institution for children, and left in charge of its matron.

Just three weeks after these events, a wealthy farmer arriving from a Western city visited the institution in search of a boy to accompany him home and learn to do chores on the farm. Our friend Georgie was selected to accompany him; and after giving the references required by the institution concerning his character and ability to care for the child, the stranger departed, taking the little one with him. But arriving at his destination, it transpired that the man of wealth had not taken the child into his own service, but had brought him from the East to deliver into the hands of a neighbor of his, a hard, grasping, relentless man, who proved to be a most terrible and heartless task-master to our little boy, whose life now became one of drudgery and abject servitude.

Time passed; the health of the child began to suffer severely under the severe treatment received. This only served to harden his master toward him. It seemed that death must soon come to his release, when an event happened which changed the entire life of the boy, and brought him under conditions favorable for the growth of his hitherto stunted powers, as well as for the unfoldment of happiness within him.

We are not unmindful of the work of the spirit; in this case, the work of many spirits. The poor mother who had breathed her earthly life away upon

a hospital cot had joined her husband and found a sweet home in the spirit world; but she had not forgotten her little, homeless boy on earth, and it was now her purpose and her mission, aided by her companion, to work early and late for that child's welfare.

With sorrowful hearts did they watch over their loved one, with anguished feelings did they behold the misery of his daily life, caused and promoted by the severity of his cruel master; and it was with the greatest anxiety that they sought to guard him from evil, and to guide his spirit in the path of right.

A SPIRIT MOTHER LEADS HER CHILD.

At length, one calm summer evening, about eight months after the child had been taken to the West, and placed in the power of his keeper, our little boy was made happy by a sight of his dear mother. It had been a day of unusual hardship—work too heavy for him to perform had been given him to do, and when he broke down under it he had been met with blows and curses. Smarting under the infliction, he had crept away to his humble room, beneath the eaves of the old house, and, throwing himself upon the lowly bed, had sobbed himself to sleep.

It was yet early evening, when our little boy suddenly awoke, to behold the well-remembered face of his mother beaming upon him, and to hear her well-known voice saying: "Come, my darling, you have remained here too long, I cannot see you suffer under the power of your cruel master another day; follow me, and God will take care of you."

The child, bewildered and but half awake, not doubting but that his mother had found him, and had come to take him away—for he had never realized that she was dead—arose from his low couch and softly followed the spirit form as it glided from the room and down the stairs, out into the cool, sweet dusk of a summer evening.

In the glimmering twilight he stumbled on, still following that form which he believed to be his mother's, yet half-awed and somewhat frightened that it did not speak, but only seemed to glide along as though barely touching the ground over which it passed. By-and-bye, the wandering child heard the noise and bustle of a large city, not yet settled

into the quietude of night, but he lost sight of the form which had led him such a long distance, and realized that he was alone.

What a situation for a child of nine years to be in, alone in all the world, homeless and friendless, a waif upon the wide sea of humanity. But do you for a moment imagine that the good spirits had deserted this little one? Ah, no! Hopeless, helpless, and alone, the child sank down by the roadside; the night was warm, the stars gleamed above his head; he was footsore, tired and lame, from his long and wearisome journey. Soon he fell into a troubled slumber, his head rolled from side to side, and he moaned in his sleep. In this condition he was found by a passing traveller, a gentleman of business, who was journeying to his home in the suburbs of the city, not far away. Not having the heart to leave the child alone, and knowing of no habitation near at hand, this gentleman determined to convey him to his own home; and as he was travelling by carriage, this was easily accomplished.

Upon reaching his destination, the little boy was kindly received and tenderly cared for by Mrs. Webster, the wife of the gentleman who had found him, and her sister-in-law, Mrs. Harris, who, in company with her husband, was visiting this region from their home in the East.

The terrible hardships which little Georgie had undergone for months, together with the mental and physical strain of that one night's journey, left him stranded upon a bed of sickness, which lasted many weeks, during which time he knew nothing of what was taking place around him; but careful nursing and skillful treatment at length triumphed over the dangerous fever, and the child once more awoke to life and consciousness. We must now leave our little orphan in the care of the kind friends who had found him, and return to the eastern city from which he had been taken by the western farmer.

Our readers will remember that about the time little Georgie wandered friendless and alone throughout the city's streets while his mother lay ill in the public hospital, a young child, fair and innocent, lay dying in a sumptuously-furnished chamber of an up-town residence. Mr. and Mrs. Harris were religious people; they attended a respectable and fashionable church, listened to the teachings of their pastor, and believed the bible to be unqualifiedly the word of God. But in the hour of their bereavement they found no relief, no consolation in these things; theirs was utter and profound sadness.

VISIONS OF THE NIGHT.

The lady's health, never robust, began to fail; she became easily wrought upon by her surroundings, and sensitive to the slightest influence brought to bear upon her; the nervous system was pronounced prostrated by her attending physician, who recommended a change of scene and associations for her benefit. At times, while her mortal senses were locked in slumber, Mrs. Harris would behold the face of her little boy, and hear his well-known tones calling to her in words of love. So real did these visions seem to the lady that she could hardly believe them to be dreams, although—as she said to her husband while relating them to him—her common-sense told her that they could be nothing else.

Weeks passed away, Mrs. Harris dreamed on, drawing comfort and peace from the nightly visits of her spirit child. The visions became stronger and clearer; other forms than that of her little boy were sometimes seen, and other voices than his mingled in her ears. These voices spoke to the lonely woman of the spirit world, its joys, its home life, and its duties; so vivid did they appear to her that she would remember and repeat them to her husband in her waking hours.

At length the lady began to declare her belief that God had permitted her little one to return to her in her hours of sleep, to comfort her in her sore affliction; and truly did she seem to grow calm and happy in mind, even though her body became more delicate and fragile. Anxious for his wife's health, and fearful lest her mind was becoming unbalanced, Mr. Harris consulted with his family physician concerning her strange condition. The doctor examined the lady, and pronounced her of sound mind; he declared the nervous system, however, to be shattered, and recommended travel as a means of restoration to health.

About this time, Mrs. Harris received a letter from her sister and husband living in the West, urging her and Mr. Harris to visit them in their far-off home. After mature deliberation on the part of our friends, it was decided to accept the cordial invitation extended by their relatives, the Websters; and they accordingly prepared to leave their home for the West, as soon as the spring should open and render travelling comfortable and easy.

DREAMS THAT APPEARED STRANGE.

One morning—soon after the above decision was made—Mrs. Harris appeared at the breakfast table in a pre-occupied state of mind, which her husband noticed, and which elicited inquiry from him as to its cause.

“I will tell you,” said the lady. “You remember Mrs. Stevens, the seamstress I used to employ to do my plain sewing? Well, the last time she was here I noticed she labored very hard for breath, and fearing that she had taken a violent cold, I paid her her due, and advised her to go home and attend to herself. It was the time Freddie was so very ill, and in my anxiety for him I forgot all about the poor woman; until about six weeks ago I sent for her to come to me, when I learned for the first time of her death at the hospital, which occurred last winter.

“I wondered what had become of her little boy, but supposed he had been taken care of by friends. You remember what a liking our Freddie took to the little fellow, and how he always begged to be allowed to show him some toys and give him cake whenever his mother brought him with her.

“Well, for the last three nights I have seen Mrs. Stevens as plainly as I ever saw her in my life, but with a look of distress on her face that she never wore in my presence. Last night, our Freddie was with her, and I heard him say: ‘Oh, mamma, her Georgie is in trouble, he is not treated well, he is unhappy, and it makes her so too. I like Georgie, and I want you to find him and make him happy, as I am happy in this lovely world.’

“There,” continued the lady, “I have told you my dream. I promised Freddie I would do what I could for the little Stevens boy; but I don’t know where he is, I am sure. However, I am certain I have had a visit from the dead, and I feel that I must keep my promise.”

This occurrence convinced Mr. Harris that his wife’s sanity depended upon his taking her away from home immediately; and so quickly did he push his preparations for departure that the end of another week found them fairly started on their long journey.

We do not propose to enter into the details of the trip, nor of their welcome to their sister’s home. The expectations of Mr. Harris seemed about to be realized. The excitement of the journey, the change of scene and of atmospheric influences, appeared to exert a beneficial effect upon his wife. The extreme degree of lassitude, formerly so frequent with her, departed; her step became firmer, her eye clearer, her voice more cheerful. Her appetite also began to improve, her new life seemed full of interest to

her, and, best of all,—in her husband's opinion,—no more was heard from her of nightly vision and visiting spirit.

It was a beautiful morning in summer, when Mrs. Harris startled her husband by exclaiming: "I had a visit from Mrs. Stevens again last night, who said to me: 'Remember your promise; my child is in trouble; he will be brought to you ere twenty-four hours have gone over your head; I trust you to take care of him.' And when she passed from my sight, our Freddie came, looking so beautiful that I almost cried aloud, so anxious was I to hold him in my arms, and he said: 'Dear mamma, I come to you in this way, for I love you, and I want you to see how happy I am in the spirit world. I love you and papa dearly, but I don't want to come back here to live. You will come to me by-and-bye; but I want you to have a little boy here to love and care for, and we will bring you Georgie Stevens. The cruel man beats and curses him; you and papa must love him, and teach him of God and the angels; he will be their gift to you.'"

The lady ceased speaking, and the husband stood looking upon her in silence. The sweetness and solemnity in her tones impressed him deeply, yet a terrible fear that his wife had become insane filled his soul with speechless sorrow.

THE STRANGE DREAMS FULFILLED.

It was the evening of the same day that Mrs. Webster sat watching for her husband's return from the distant city. He was late, and anxious fears for his safety disturbed the serenity of her mind. Mr. and Mrs. Harris had retired, but not to rest; for the minds of both were disturbed,—the one over her vision of the night before, the other over the condition of his wife.

It was near the midnight hour when at length Mr. Webster arrived, bearing a burden,—the form of an unconscious child found by him on the roadside. The noise and bustle of the arrival aroused Mr. Harris, who decided to investigate. Judge of his surprise to find his brother-in-law burdened with a waif of apparently nine years of age,—one, too, whose sunburned features seemed strangely familiar to him. Actuated by a feeling of uneasiness, Mrs. Harris wrapped a light shawl around her, and also descended to the lower part of the house to ascertain why her brother had been detained so late.

No sooner had the eyes of the lady rested upon the face of the child—who had been conveyed to a bed-room and placed upon the couch, where Mrs. Webster was now attending to him—than she started forward, exclaiming: “It is, it is Georgie Stevens!”

In a moment her husband was beside her, and as he, too, gazed upon the form before him, the conviction fastened upon his mind that it was no other than the little boy whom he had more than once seen in his own house, and whom he knew to be the son of a poor yet worthy woman employed in former times by his wife as a seamstress. A startled silence fell upon all in that apartment, for each one present knew of the “strange dreams” that had visited Mrs. Harris; and as the stillness deepened, a peculiar light shone above the face of the fever-tossed child, which formed into letters, and then words, until the sentence: “God’s and the Angels’ Gift,” could be read, and having been read slowly faded from sight.

When the fever abated, and little Georgie returned to consciousness, he found himself cared for by loving friends, who had accepted their charge reverently and gladly; and when he became able to relate the story of his miserable life in the West, under the persecutions of his cruel master, the confirmation of the spirits’ statements to Mrs. Harris was received. In a little while the child was able to travel, and he was taken by Mr. and Mrs. Harris to their eastern home; for these good people had determined to adopt and educate him as their son.

Through these occurrences, Mr. Harris sought to investigate Spiritualism, which he did to his satisfaction, receiving unbounded evidence of its truth. His wife still continues to have “visions” and to hold communion with the spirits, and her soul is happy and at rest.

Little Georgie, now a youth who bids fair to make a mark in the world, has never seen his own mother since the night he followed her spirit from the home of his tormentor; but he delights to receive tidings of her watchful care over him from the lips of his beloved second mother, Mrs. Harris, who often holds communion with her spirit in the silence of the midnight hour.

CHAPTER X. LUCY AIKEN'S MISSION.

In relating to you these incidents in illustration of the work of the spirit, and its influence upon mortals, you are not to suppose that they are fictitious,—truth is ever stranger than fiction; and the events of daily occurrence in the lives of human beings are more marvelous, more significant, in their bearings toward the mission and destiny of individuals than any tale of novelist can possibly seem to be; while, in reality, he who weaves his web of fiction, filled with startling scenes and incidents, with which to regale his readers, finds the foundation of all that is most real, startling and beautiful in his romance in the passing events of daily realistic life.

Yet another instance will we relate to you of the earnestness, depth of feeling, intensity of power, and persevering patience displayed by spirits in the pursuance of the work they have to perform for the benefit of mortals.

A terrible accident had happened in one of your large cities. A factory boiler exploding had dealt destruction all around; but by far the saddest result of the catastrophe might be seen in an upper room of a tenement house not far away. A man, once strong and active, but now reduced to a mere skeleton, lay breathing the hours away in misery and pain.

His spine had been seriously injured from the effects of the explosion, rendering him a helpless, hopeless invalid, but not mercifully inflicting upon his body a fatal injury. Ah, no! Doomed to live, in agony and pain, deprived of strength, the days rolled by bringing no cheer to his soul save the blithesome presence, at morn and evening, of his cheery-faced young daughter, who, in her frail person, alone stood between him and starvation.

This young girl of sixteen summers was employed in a cotton-mill, where, from morning till night, she toiled for the small sum of four dollars per week, out of which she was compelled to buy food for herself and parent, pay the rent of their humble tenement, and provide medicine for the invalid. After this had been accomplished, it would seem that nothing could remain for clothing, and yet Katy was always neatly clad in clean but coarse garments of her own manufacture.

Time passed, and our cheerful young friend found herself wearing out and breaking down under the burdens imposed upon her. Health gave way, her strength became exhausted, and at length a distressing cough set in, which the dispensary doctor, who attended her father, declared to be the herald of incipient consumption. It seemed that her work at the mill must be given up; but if this was done, what would become of her invalid father, as well as of herself? Ah, who could tell!

UNSEEN HELPERS.

Thus matters stood with those of whom we write at the commencement of our story. Katy still kept at her post, in spite of pain and fatigue, and despite the remonstrances of physician and others; and it was found that she could accomplish as much labor, and perform it as satisfactorily, as the strongest and smartest hand in the place. The cause of this amount of endurance on the part of a fragile girl, whose every breath was fraught with pain, was a mystery to all who knew her; but not so to the angels. They brought her the power, day by day, to accomplish her work to the satisfaction of all; they magnetized her weary frame night after night, thus holding the ravages of disease at bay, even though they could not deliver her from suffering and pain.

The humblest of God's children have spirit friends and attendants, as well as the highest and grandest; spirits who watch over, guide, and direct those under their charge are with the poor and lowly as well as with the wealthy and great; none are forsaken, none forgotten, all are cared for and blessed with angel ministrations.

In this case, the spirit mother of Katy brought strength and power to the girl, aided by wise and good magnetic physicians of spirit life, who loved to benefit the needy and soothe the suffering. And the father, upon his bed of pain, was enabled to behold his daughter attending to his wants, ministering to his necessities, and caring for him in every loving way. Surely a sight to cause rejoicing among the angels, who delight to behold good deeds and noble acts performed for others.

A SPIRIT'S EFFORTS TO REACH HER FATHER.

Katy's father met with the disaster that had injured him for life at a factory, or rather a mill, owned by a corporation, the president of which, a stern, overbearing man, had but a few years before lost a lovely and only daughter of fourteen summers. This beautiful spirit had long sought to influence her father, in order to convince him of her continued existence, but all in vain, until now she had turned her attention to the needs and necessities of the lowly and suffering, and had entered heart and soul into the work of relieving their distress. For ten weeks following the accident the corporation of which we write paid the expenses of the suffering man; but at the expiration of that time all help from that quarter ceased, and, as we have said, there was no resource but Katy's scanty earnings for the needs of the invalid and herself.

Lucy, the spirit daughter of the rich man at the head of the mill, had become cognizant of these facts, and, being strongly attracted to Katy, sought in every possible way to lighten her burdens.

She now redoubled her efforts to reach and influence her father, for she felt that something must be done for the relief of the young working girl and the suffering man. As yet her efforts were uncrowned with success; but still she continued them unceasingly, for she felt that it was her mission to penetrate the crust of worldliness that had gathered around her father's spirit, and to draw him upward toward the higher and the better life.

Time passed. In spite of all that attending spirits could do, Katy was surely breaking down under the wearing labor imposed upon her; for the physical system could not withstand the strain brought to bear upon it. One day she fainted at her work, and it was a full hour before she was brought to her senses by the efforts of the frightened girls who clustered around her; then, weak and pallid, she was taken home, to be placed under the care of a physician who was in attendance upon her father. This was a time of sore trial to the members of that little family; but, although they knew it not, spirit helpers were working for their benefit.

Two weeks had passed since the day that Katy had left her work at the mill. Mr. Aiken, the president, was in the counting-room as the working girls filed in to receive their week's wages. Carefully he scrutinized each face at the little window until the last one had disappeared, when he turned to the book-keeper and inquired for "Morrow's girl," whose ever-cheerful, modest, and smiling demeanor had often attracted his attention. He was told

that she had left the mill because of failing health, and the matter was dropped for the time being. But the spirits, particularly gentle Lucy Aiken, and anxious Mrs. Morrow, were determined that the obdurate heart of this dignified man of wealth should be softened, and they were steadily working to accomplish their purpose.

Weeks lengthened into months, and still Mr. Morrow languished upon his bed of pain, and still Katy drooped in her seat by the window where she sat striving to perform some needle-work which one of her mill companions had procured for her, and which she persisted in doing, despite the protest of the doctor whenever he came to visit his patients.

THE LAST PENNY AND THE LAST APPEAL.

Many times did the work drop from the weary fingers of the sick girl, while her frame shook with the spasmodic cough which seized upon her, until at length this kind of work had to be laid aside, and our young friend was obliged to remain idle altogether. In a very short time, every penny of the carefully-saved, hard-earned little store of means was exhausted, and cold and hunger settled upon the little household. It was at this time that the dispensary physician, Dr. Jones, determined to see Mr. Aiken in behalf of his patients.

The doctor found Mr. Aiken alone in his office, and made his errand known at once. He, the kind physician, related the fallen fortunes and present misery of Mr. Morrow, and his brave daughter Katy, to the stern-eyed man of wealth, who listened to the recital in silence. When he had concluded his story, he said, after waiting a moment in vain for word or comment from the millionaire: "And, so, Mr. Aiken, I have come to see what you can do for this man who met with the injury that has made him a hopeless, helpless invalid while in your employ."

"I do not see that I am called upon to do anything," responded the man of means; "the rule of the corporation is to pay all expenses of an injured employee for ten weeks after the accident. This rule has been complied with in Mr. Morrow's case, I believe."

"But, Mr. Aiken," interrupted Dr. Jones, "consider the circumstances of this peculiar case, for only a moment, and I am sure your sense of justice

will prompt you to do something more for this unfortunate man. He was a steady, faithful, and conscientious workman, always at his post, ever discharging his duties with promptness and fidelity. Through no fault of his own, an explosion occurred, depriving this man of the use of his limbs, and rendering him an invalid for life. True, the corporation paid his expenses for a time, but health did not return to him, and when that supply ceased, his daughter, a young girl, nurse, companion, and housekeeper in one, entered the mill, and labored early and late until her health gave way, and she, too, became an almost confirmed invalid I feel——”

THE INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRIT BEGINS TO SHOW ITSELF.

“There, doctor, that will do,” interrupted the rich man, “I cannot listen longer, as I have an engagement to meet in just five minutes. Here are ten dollars; give them to Mr. Morrow, and perhaps—not positively, mind you, but possibly—I may make it in my way to call upon him before many days.”

The doctor took the money tendered him, and retired from the presence of the great merchant with a sigh, thinking to himself: “Ah, well, it is true that ‘corporations have no souls,’ and it seems to me that the individuals who form these corporations have very little ones. The pitiful sum he has given me will provide for the wants of my patients for a few days only, and I must cast about in some other quarter for assistance. I will again make application for their admittance to the hospital before the money is exhausted; they will have to be separated, but it cannot be avoided;” and so musing he passed on his way.

Sweet, gentle, Lucy Aiken! Mild and benign spirit, working for a father’s enlightenment, striving to elevate the soul of a beloved parent above the selfishness of worldly interests and personal grandeur! She had no thought of allowing the matter to rest here, and she lingered by the side of that parent, filling his mind with thoughts of the suffering and destitute family whose circumstances had been so eloquently presented to him that day by his visitor, Dr. Jones, and causing him to turn in spirit toward that humble home many times, until at last, “to get rid of the thing,” he murmured, Mr. Aiken ordered his carriage and was driven down to the humble neighborhood of Morrow’s tenement.

The injured man lay stretched upon his couch in a passing paroxysm of pain as the merchant entered. By his side, leaning back in an easy chair, sat his daughter Katy, so pale, wasted and wan in appearance that she seemed more like a wraith that would vanish away at a touch than a human being. Mr. Aiken was startled at the sight that met his gaze,—the suffering inmates, the extreme destitution, yet cleanly surroundings of that humble home, spoke more eloquently to this man rolling in wealth, and wrapped up in self-sufficiency, than a hundred sermons on the poor could have done; and, strange to relate, while questioning the pallid girl concerning her own and her father's condition, his lower lip actually trembled with emotion.

THE SPIRIT DAUGHTER'S PRESENCE.

Ah, this was a place where spirits could gather and perform their work, and Lucy Aiken came so near to Katy Morrow at this time that her presence quite overshadowed the features of the invalid, and reflected its expression and influence upon them, causing the face of the mortal girl to assume a striking likeness to the well-remembered features of the spirit, the loved and loving daughter of Mr. Aiken. It was this sight that thrilled the visitor with emotion, and caused his eyes to grow dim with unshed tears.

At that interview with the invalids—Mr. Morrow and his daughter Kate—the proud heart of Mr. Aiken became softened as it had never been before; the time, place and circumstances exerted a strange influence upon him, for which he could not account, and he left, promising to send assistance, and also to come again, which promises were faithfully kept. A strong and capable female nurse was engaged to attend the sufferers, and arrangements were made with the proprietors of various stores to supply the family with whatever they required, without stint or question.

Mr. Aiken found himself unable to remain long away from that humble abode; again and again was he to be seen in the home of Mr. Morrow, questioning the suffering man concerning his malady, conversing with the invalid daughter in relation to her ailments, or speaking words of cheer to both. At each visit the likeness between Katy Morrow and the long-lost darling of his heart grew upon him. Ah, little did he know that it was the presence of his angel child that caused the marvelous likeness, and that at every visit of her father the spirit gained power to come closer and closer to

him; or, indeed, that it was herself, dear Lucy Aiken, who filled her parent's mind day after day with the desire to visit these humble but worthy people.

HAPPY RESULTS OF SPIRIT EFFORTS.

In a little while, under the generous treatment and kindly care bestowed upon them, both invalids began to show signs of improvement in their condition, and soon good Dr. Jones—who still continued to visit them, and who looked upon the visits and assistance of the proud capitalist with silent but approving amazement—declared that, with the approach of early spring, it would be advisable to remove them to some country place where they could enjoy the fresh air and mellow sunlight. Accordingly, Mr. Aiken took it upon himself to provide such a place.

A few miles from the great city there is a quiet, peaceful village, where the flowers bloom and birds make cheerful music through all the golden summer time. It is a lovely spot, where Nature dons her fairest, freshest robes in which to charm the eye and delight the senses of those weary travelers who linger there in order to gain strength and repose of mind and body. In this pleasant spot, Mr. Aiken, the man of wealth, makes his summer home; and it was here he determined to find a place for Mr. Morrow and his daughter.

By this time, Mr. Aiken had enlisted the interest and sympathies of his wife in the case of the invalids, and it was mainly through her exertions that a pretty cottage located on a quiet lane, and partly shaded by the branches of a magnificent old elm, was secured for their occupancy.

In due time our friends were removed to this pleasant retreat, and it really seemed that the change was calculated to work a marvelous cure in the condition of both invalids, so rapidly did they acquire strength in the genial atmosphere in which they now dwelt. In a little time, however, it was seen that Mr. Morrow's days in the form were numbered. The spinal trouble from which he suffered became aggravated to an intense degree, and all that could be done was to make his sufferings as light as possible by skillful treatment and care. All that kindness could do was done.

Mr. Aiken and his wife, who had grown wonderfully attached to Katy Morrow, spared no pains to make his last days peaceful and happy; and

when his mortal eyes closed upon the scenes of earthly life, which they did in the latter part of August, it was with a knowledge that kind friends and faithful hearts were ready to care for the orphan child he was to leave behind.

In the meantime, Miss Katy was slowly but surely regaining health and strength in the glow of the new life which had come upon her. Skillfully nursed and attended by her physician and waiting woman, petted back into health by the loving sympathy of Mrs. Aiken and the thoughtful kindness of the merchant, the roses began to show themselves once again on her cheeks, her form and features became rounded out with new vigor, until at length Dr. Jones declared her to be no longer an invalid, and said that he would now restore her name to the lists of the hearty and healthy ones of the land.

Each day spirit Lucy Aiken visited Katy Morrow, whom she had chosen for her medium, and through her instrumentality was enabled to come into spiritual communion with her beloved parents, although as yet they had no thought of such a thing. Already had the sweet spirit performed a wonderful work. By the influence she exerted upon her father, she had strengthened his higher nature and given it power to rise above the slough of worldliness, self-interest and cold indifference to others, in which it had been long submerged, and had so sweetened and mellowed his spirit, and caused it to blossom out in deeds of kindness and even loveliness, that Katy Morrow expressed herself, in contrite tones, to her friend Dr. Jones, for “ever daring to think of dear, kind Mr. Aiken as unkind and hard-hearted.”

As for the good physician, he was all wonder and amazement at the unaccountable change which had been wrought in the disposition of the wealthy merchant; but he took good care not to express his opinion before others, for he felt that here was something he could not understand.

Nor was this the only labor accomplished by the sweet spirit. Hitherto, Mrs. Aiken had been a restless, nervous, easily-excited creature,—one who often declared nobody understood her since her dear Lucy died, and who had many times made her husband unhappy and uncomfortable by her forlorn repinings. But since she had come into communication with Kate Morrow and her invalid father, and had witnessed their patient endurance and fortitude under suffering, as well as felt the influence exerted upon her being by the spirits gathered in their humble home, this unhappy lady seemed to be a new creature. She became calm and tranquil, and in her care

and solicitude for others forgot to remember self or to complain of her many trials. Thus did the work of the spirit spread, until it included these two humans in its loving embrace; the husband and wife seemed to understand each other once more. In these days they grew together, and, from consulting each other over the case of their humble friends, they began to counsel with each other over home affairs, until at last they appeared to be once again one in perfect harmony of thought and intention.

It had been decided that, after the death of Mr. Morrow, his daughter Kate should enter the home of Mrs. Aiken as companion and private maid to that lady, a decision that was agreeable to all parties, and which filled the mind of the dying man with content when he learned of it.

ANGEL VISITS NOT FEW NOR FAR BETWEEN

Three days had passed since the death of the worn-out body, and it had just been consigned to the bosom of mother-earth, there to rest forever. Katy Morrow and her friends, Mr. and Mrs. Aiken, were seated in their private sitting-room. The girl looked pale and exhausted from the effects of the trials of the last few days. Mrs. Aiken was just thinking of advising her to retire to rest, and was looking at her for that purpose, when she was startled at beholding a change steal over the face of the girl. At first, the lady thought Kate had swooned; but in a moment she was undeceived. The face became transfigured and shone with an unearthly light, assuming the cast of features and expression of a man's countenance. Slowly they developed, until they appeared plain and unmistakable. It was the well-known face of Mr. Morrow, whose mortal lineaments had but a few hours before been covered up from sight.

The lips moved, and Mr. Aiken, whose attention had been directed to the scene by the frightened gestures of his wife, and who had started forward, caught these words: "I come to tell you I am happy; all pain is removed; tell Kate I am with her mother now; we bring our love, our blessing; we will care for her; we bless you all."

In a moment the scene changed; the features of the sleeping girl resumed their natural appearance, but for an instant only. Before any word could be spoken by the astonished spectators, they beheld a sight which electrified their souls, and—as soon as they could comprehend it—filled them with the

keenest rapture: none other than the well-remembered face of their darling Lucy, whom they had long mourned as lost to them, gazed upon them with an expression of the most angelic love and peace.

In a little while the spirit gained power to speak to her parents, assuring them of her presence with them from the day of her physical decease,—of her endeavors to announce herself to them, relating scenes in the spirit world, and speaking of her home of light there. Thus did she continue until the shades of doubt, perplexity, and incredulity faded from the father's face, until the sensation of terror vanished from the mother's heart, when, with a tender caress to both parents, she bade them adieu. You can imagine the rapture and happiness which dawned upon that household at this revelation of life and love from beyond the grave. Words fail to express the joy they felt; it must be experienced to be fully appreciated.

In a little time it became almost a daily occurrence for Kate Morrow to be controlled by some dear spirit from whose lips the Aikens received many lessons of instruction and benefit. Their darling child was enabled to explain the past, and her efforts to reach them. Not only did this bright spirit, and Mr. and Mrs. Morrow, come with messages of love and advice, but other dear ones also manifested their presence, until it seemed that the gates of heaven were indeed opened and the angels thronging through.

No happier home is to be found anywhere than that of the Aikens. From the experiences of the past they have learned many lessons. As benefactors to the needy and suffering they are widely known, for they delight to use their wealth for good, under the direction of their angel friends; while Katie Morrow is looked upon by all as the favored daughter of a most happy and lovable couple.

CHAPTER XI.

EXPERIENCES IN SPIRIT LIFE.

In my investigations into the mode and manner of living beyond earth's portals, and in my desire to gain knowledge of spiritual things, I have visited many places, witnessed various scenes,—some strange, others familiar,—and have interviewed a number of spirits in regard to their own experiences. A portion of the information thus acquired I propose to transcribe for my readers.

I do not think that mortal—even well-educated, well-informed Spiritualists—realize fully that all around them spirits live, that the very atmosphere pressing around them is peopled by human, conscious, individualized beings, each intent upon his or her own work, purpose or mission, be it good or be it evil. While this is true, it is also true that the spirit world has its localities, its homes distinct from your homes, its natural scenery, and its places of interest; its life is as real, and its inhabitants pass through many and varied experiences, even as do the denizens of the mundane sphere.

THE VARIOUS CLASSES OF SPIRITS NEAR THE EARTH.

In passing, let me simply state that those beings who people the world around you, who dwell in earthly homes and pursue a labor in connection with material life, are not all attracted to this locality of yours by the same conditions. Some of these spirits are bound to physical life because of the grossness of their under-natures; their joy is found in pursuing carnal pleasures; they have no desire to rise above the conditions of matter. A portion of the spirits abiding here are held by the selfish affection of their mortal friends who cling to them,—if only in memory,—with a passionate sorrow and despair that will not let them rise above the earthly sphere; and for a time such spirits remain in contact with material life, because they yet lack the power to rise above its conditions. Others find their work and pass a large part of their existence here, in connection with the physical, in doing good, ministering to the spiritual necessities as well as laboring for the alleviation of the physical wants and sorrows of suffering humanity. And so

you have a world within a world right here, and a double life pulsating, where you only perceive the manifestations of the external; and those of you whose aspirations are holy, whose desire is to be of use in the world, who strive to do right, attract the good spirits to your side; they come to gain magnetic strength from your lives, which enables them to resist the friction of material conditions while pursuing their labors for others, and at the same time they impart a blessing of peace to your souls. Often do you entertain unawares pure and silent guests, who watch you with their holy eyes and read your hearts with unerring precision.

And those of you whose aims are all personal and selfish, whose motives are impure and unworthy, who do not cultivate charity and kindly feeling toward others, attract undeveloped, unreliable spirits to your homes; they come depleting you of vital and spiritual strength, thus leaving you unarmed for the battles of life. Sowing discord in your hearts, their presence is a curse to all. Where ill-harmony, want of sympathy and distrust abound in families, these selfish, malicious spirits delight to throng, and thither they flock, by their presence to increase the unhappiness of the home of strife, while at the same time fostering their own disposition to live a sensuous life. And so it behooves each one of earth to look well to the personal life they live, for upon its character depends not only their own happiness but also the well-being of many others.

THE POWER AND EXTENT OF PERSONAL INFLUENCE.

These things of which I speak I have learned through my experiences with spirits, and they have opened up a vast field of inquiry concerning the influence which we as individuals, embodied, or disembodied, exert upon one another,—a field that is yet to be explored thoroughly by the investigating spirit of man; and when its problems are solved, and its questions correctly answered, I believe we shall understand many mysteries which now puzzle humanity, and comprehend more fully the conditions pressing around and upon mankind. And in this way, and from these experiences, we will learn to so regulate our individual lives that only the best influences will emanate from them, and only the highest results flow from their midst.

It has interested me to perceive the lives led by spirits in the body; for when I come in close contact with a mortal, I can behold the interior workings of the spirit within, and know whether its tendency is upward or downward; for life is continuous everywhere, and what its environments and conditions are to the mortal, so are they of the same kind as those to the spirit,—apart from the body,—only differing in degree, those of the untrammelled spirit perhaps being less limited, intolerant, and arbitrary. And so spirits begin their vital experiences in the body and work out through them into the larger freedom, the broader realities and wider expanse, of the immortal world. These truths are suggestive of thought to the studious mind, and teach the lesson that you, mortals, are God's children now,—his spirits at the present as much as you ever will be; and it is your bounden duty to brighten, unfold, and bless your spiritual life in the body as much as it will be to do so by-and-bye, when you leave the tenement of clay for another home “not made with hands.”

BEULAH, A SPIRIT MISSIONARY

I wish to tell you, my friends, of a dear, beautiful spirit who is a missionary of joy and peace, a true ministering angel to many a sad and weary soul,—one whom I shall call Beulah in speaking of her to you, for she is really a beautiful, blessed being. This spirit lived in the mortal form to an advanced age, but long since passed to the spirit world, after an earthly life of varied experience,—one flecked here and there with sunbeams, but also one that was thickly sown with tears; for trouble, privation, and sorrow were often her portion.

To look upon this sainted being now,—her whole form illuminated with the interior light of a pure soul, her features, no longer care—worn and bearing the impress of weakness and age, but beaming with the bloom of vigor and strength, and showing only the traces of matured experience and thought, radiant with benevolence and kindness,—with the glance of a casual observer you would have no idea that this woman had suffered as few are called upon to suffer, even in this mundane sphere; and only the watchful, experienced eye would detect the signet of firm endurance and quiet patience resting upon that noble countenance, and realize that that signet had been won through sufferance of sorrow, deep and stern. Yet so it

was; and it is this calm, sweet, even holy expression, such as you might imagine martyrs wearing, which imparts a loftiness of character to the features of this truly spiritual being.

With the early life of Beulah we have nothing to do; it is only of her spiritual experience and work that we wish to speak. When this woman entered the spirit land, laying down the casket of flesh with its weakness and weariness, she did not find herself an exhausted being, one lacking the vital force of activity, the fire of energy or the potency of will; for through all the struggles of her mortal career she never lost faith in the power and the goodness of God to evolve light from darkness, strength from weakness, and knowledge and wisdom from the bitter trials of existence. She never faltered or fell fainting by the way, but rather bravely struggled on in spite of disaster and care. Therefore, hers was a brave, strong spirit, one that gathered power from the storms of adversity, sweetness from affliction, and knowledge from the lessons of life; and when she had thrown off the useless body of clay, she found her inner powers springing up renewed and quickened, and ready to out-work themselves in useful labor for humanity.

It was my good fortune to become associated with this dear woman,—indeed, she was one of the first to bring me strength and cheer in my new-found spirit home; for she is one of my kin, and when my heart grew faint within me for the old earthly life with parents and mortal friends, as it sometimes would, it was her words, her tender, brave, hopeful ministrations that revived my drooping spirits, and led me to learn something of the helpful, active, benevolent labor of her life in the spheres. No tale of sorrow is ever poured into her ear without meeting with a responsive flood of sympathy and cheer that lightens the weary soul of its burden forthwith. Let Beulah become aware of any soul in distress, and she is constantly learning of such, and she is ready to seek that suffering one; and by the influence her presence imparts, she succeeds in uplifting, strengthening, and benefiting him or her.

BEULAH'S SELF-SACRIFICING BENEFICENCE.

I have watched carefully the work of this remarkable woman, and have never known her to fail in imparting relief to any suffering one whom she sought to assist; her indomitable, yet tender, loving spirit seems to know no

such word as failure or defeat. She wills to succeed in her work, her whole soul is engaged in it; with her it is truly a labor of love; her own past experience has surcharged her heart with sympathy and affection for mankind; she despises no one, not even the vilest sinner; she would not hesitate to go down into the depths of the darkest, most offensive conditions to rescue a human being, even though her pure hands and her beautiful garments were grievously besmirched thereby; and she would succeed in her efforts for that human being's redemption, for her unflinching bravery, her untiring patience and unwavering gentleness, would cause her to won the victory over all foes.

You can perhaps gain an idea from what I tell you of Beulah of the usefulness, nobility, and grandeur of such lives as hers; and just such lives are attained by all spirits who are firm, enduring, patient, and unselfish. Those who grow strong through suffering, even as the oak tree gains strength and vigor because of the blasts that shake its sturdy frame; those whose spirits are mellowed, sweetened, and ripened, despite the calamities that befall them in their journey through matter, eventually become just such beautiful ministers of love and light, of joy and gladness, as this woman of whom I write today.

I have known Beulah to leave her bright, happy home in the supernal realm and immerse herself in some dark, unsightly, and miserable place where a human being groveled in the haunts of wickedness, sorrow, or despair, in order to bring the magnetic rays of light from her own pure presence and the soothing, cheering influence of her beautiful sphere, to bear upon that unhappy spirit for its own advancement; and I have known her to absent herself from her nearest friends for months, during which time she was engaged in ministering to the wretched and sad, walking by their side, dwelling in their midst, never withdrawing her helpful influence from them until she had succeeded in elevating their spirits above the gross desires of carnal life, or awakening within them emotions of peace and hope where before only despair and woe had reigned. Oh, this one blessed spirit has accomplished great good in her own humble manner. Because of her ministrations alone, hundreds of souls now blossom out in gladness and beauty, which before were shadowed by desolation and the keenest pain.

REFORMATION OF SPIRITS IN THE LOWER SPHERES.

It is true that hundreds of evil-minded, ignorant, crude, and unfolded spirits pass out of the body annually, and it is also true that most of these unfortunate ones remain for a long time in the darkened condition which the effects of their earthly career have surrounded them with; but while this is so, it is sweet to know and realize that good and noble souls, enlightened and developed spirits, are making grand and unwearying efforts to elevate, strengthen, and educate those who come to the eternal world bowed down by moral weakness and spiritual infirmity. These endeavors for the sake of others, are not without avail,—on the contrary they are grandly successful; and while we are constantly receiving new arrivals of such poor unfortunates in the spirit world who are in need of the ministrations of pure and good teachers and helpers, we are as continuously finding other heretofore ill-disposed spirits arousing to the requirements of their being, to the necessity of making an effort to rise above the darkness and slough of evil conditions, and to a desire for a holier and a better life; and I am glad to be able to report to you this grand truth. Daily are the angels of goodness called upon to rejoice over many sinners who, repenting of their wrongdoing, are determined to become worthy members of humanity. Therefore, though largely peopled with undeveloped, unholy human beings, even the lowest spheres of the spiritual world are spheres of advancement, wherein are provided facilities and opportunities, i.e., conditions for the growth of their inhabitants, which conditions are seized upon as soon as the torpid minds centered there became sufficiently aroused under the stimulating, supporting light brought to bear upon them by unselfish ministers of helpful goodness, to become aware of their true position and the degradation of a human soul which it implies.

ILLUSTRATIVE INSTANCE OF THE REFORMATION OF A SPIRIT.

Some time since—years ago, as mortals measure time—an individual came to the spirit world who presented a most deplorable and pitiable condition. He had been one of those unfortunates who are reared in iniquity; it would seem almost as though the doctrine of total depravity was demonstrated in his case. His soul was stained with crime in its various degrees, and at length his earthly career terminated upon the gallows, in

expiation of the life of a little innocent child he had ruthlessly destroyed. It would be impossible for me to describe to you the tortures of misery through which this spirit has passed, such suffering I can only faintly conceive of; it must undoubtedly be experienced to be understood. But this I am assured of: the torments of a lake of literal fire and brimstone would be pleasant compared to this. At first he seemed plunged in an abyss of apathy, of squalid and stupid helplessness, from which he would occasionally arouse only to curse humanity, and send out a revengeful, diabolical influence which, from the intensity of its power, as directed by the positive will of this evil-minded man against those who had accused him of wrongdoing and condemned him to his present condition, sped like a ball of flame bearing destruction in its heart to the peace of mind, happiness, and prosperity of more than one who had testified against him.

It became the mission of Beulah to operate upon the mind of this terrible creature, and she set about the task without flinching. For a long time he seemed impervious to her ministrations, insensible of her presence and influence: but she did not falter nor grow weary with her work. Finally the magnetism of her presence began to be felt, and to arouse him from his terrible condition; he began to perceive dimly that a bright and beautiful being was beside him. This tended to frighten him, and he struggled to get away; but all in vain. He tried to utter an oath, but found himself powerless to do so. There was an influence upon him which he could not understand; a light seemed to stream in upon him from which he vainly tried to hide. An illuminating light which radiated from Beulah, and which all pure, exalted spirits bear, had at last begun to penetrate the darkness of this man's soul; all-searching in power, it seemed to lay bare every recess of his being, and he recoiled from the exposure. He could not hide himself in darkness, for all gloom had perished; nothing remained but that, to him, terrible light which revealed to him his past life in all its deformity. This was punishment of the direst kind, and he writhed in torment. In the clear light of Beulah's magnetism he beheld the sweet face of the little one he had bodily destroyed gazing upon him with pitying, gentle eyes. The sight overpowered him, he sought to shut it out, but he could not do so; still it haunted him, and he could not escape it until it was withdrawn to give place to another,—one loving, earnest, kindly brooding over him like the face of an angel mother,—only, alas! this poor soul had no angel mother to guide it. The being who had given him mortal birth still dwelt on earth a degraded,

besotted, helpless creature. The face he now beheld was the face of Beulah. The sweet, benign expression of this face calmed and comforted the man; he stretched out his hands to it in supplication, and from that moment the evil in his nature was broken and subdued; for, dawning upon his soul came a faint realization of that life where holy ones, such as this beautiful being, reside, and with it a desire, not a hope, not a belief, but only a wish to be good, entered his soul and pierced it through and through.

The experience through which this man passed, which I have briefly and hastily sketched to you, was one bitter and keen in intensity, one not of moments but of years; and all this time Beulah had labored, hoped and watched for the dawn of reason in his mind, which came with the abandonment of evil thoughts and purposes, and the adoption of that condition of mind which recognized the supremacy of goodness, and desired to learn and know something of it.

THE WORK CARRIED TO COMPLETION.

But the work had now only commenced; for if it was difficult before to cope with and over-power a mind reeking with evil thoughts and impure desires, how distressing was it now to witness the struggles—almost hopeless as they were—of this spirit to get away from the remembrance of his past career. How sad to behold him putting forth feeble efforts toward feeling kindly concerning others, and to see him fall back despairingly, with the thought that he could never associate with such as he! How touching to witness his endeavors to cherish only pure desires and to banish evil from his mind, even while the memory of past days haunted him with horror. And yet, every thought, desire, aspiration, and effort for good which he made brought with it such a power to encourage and uphold his spirit that it became impossible for him to sink back into his former condition of degradation and iniquity; and as time rolled on, his struggles with self gradually grew fewer and easier, until at length right triumphed and wrong was overcome. Through all this time, Beulah encouraged and supported him by her presence, her magnetic power and her words of cheer; and, as experience after experience came to him, his conditions brightened. He was led out of the gloom, out of the forests of unpleasant and inharmonious surroundings, until at length no longer sandy wastes and rocky places were

his home, but fertile fields and blooming forests offered shelter and refreshment to his spirit. And at last, when her work with him was finished, and she beheld him a soul redeemed from sin through suffering, developed from ignorance by experience, made even peaceful through his power and desire to assist others, Beulah brought to him the sweet spirit, now grown a beautiful woman, whom he had sent untimely into the spirit world, to be his teacher, helper, and guide.

He could bear to look upon the sweet face now, could humbly listen to the teachings of one so pure and good; all wretchedness and misery which it was possible for him to experience had been passed, and therefore he was prepared to accept the ministrations of this beautiful being in lieu of those of Beulah, whose duty called her elsewhere. And thus, harmony of life was restored to the broken soul; the presence of the one he had injured only served to make him more humble in spirit, self-sacrificing and benign, charitable, pitiful, and tender to the erring and degraded wherever they were to be found. Beulah departed to her celestial home, where a glad, fond welcome awaited her; but the soul she had blessed remained in his own spirit home, not to grow idle or neglectful of others, but to do unto those in need as he had been done by; to impart strength, courage, and knowledge to his fellows while still continuing to advance in spiritual attainments himself.

You may wonder what connection the spirit brought to this man by Beulah had with his work. The child maiden was not with him all the time, other good spirits were associated with him in his home and his work; but whenever she felt that she could be of use to him, this sweet spirit would come and lead him to whatever place she felt there was a lesson awaiting his spirit. Sometimes it would be to spots on earth where spirit help was required by suffering mortals; sometimes to haunts in spirit life where a higher influence was required by struggling souls, and sometimes to the homes of little children in the Summer-land, whose happy, peaceful lives afforded a valuable lesson to the observing spirit. From all these experiences he of whom I write gathered power, strength, and light to go on with his work.

THE REFORMED SPIRIT RETURNS TO EARTH TO REFORM OTHERS.

One instance of the good work accomplished by this same arisen, reformed spirit I must relate to you. It was after he had become strong in his manhood and powerful to resist and conquer evil. He had for some time felt a desire to revisit the lower haunts of spirit life, where he had once lived, feeling that perhaps he might be able to help some unfortunate one as he had been aided during the past. Yielding to the impulse, he found himself plunged in darkness, but only for a moment; for the light proceeding from his own person penetrated the gloom, and enabled him to behold his surroundings clearly. I cannot dwell upon his experiences here, but must hasten on to tell you that the first spirit he encountered who was immersed in the darkness which a besotted, sensual life on earth surrounds one with was his own mother,—the being who had given him a mortal birth. Here was work for our spirit, indeed; and he set about it right royally, never faltering, never growing disgusted or disheartened. I cannot tell you of the almost infinite amount of care, patience, endeavor, and affection our redeemed one exhausted on that selfish, stupid, and ignorant mother before he was rewarded by one answering gleam of love and the sight of one faint desire in her soul to be like him. But at length he succeeded in his work, from which he paused not until the redeeming power was fully and freely making its way through the soul of that woman, and slowly but surely lifting her up to the level of the pure and good,—a sight over which angels and seraphs might weep with joy,—that of a once-hardened criminal, though now a redeemed and honest man, laboring unselfishly, earnestly, and constantly to elevate a wretched, degraded, and dishonest woman—his own mother—out of the bonds of darkness, the haunts of sin, a work that was finally accomplished, and which brought gratitude, joy, and honor to many hearts.

This is no fancy sketch I have penned for you, but a recital of what has actually occurred, as related to me by an interested witness of the entire work from its beginning to its completion.

FIRST SENSATIONS UPON ENTERING SPIRIT LIFE.

“Life! Hope! Immortality!” How these words thrill the spirit when it awakens from its dream of mortal existence, and finds itself a conscious, active, arisen being in the natural, tangible world of souls! I have seen many

new-comers to the spirit land, and have watched with interest the various expressions of emotion sweep across their speaking faces when they discovered themselves to be not dead but alive, and surrounded by scenes as natural as were any they ever beheld on earth. Some countenances sparkle with joy at the grand revealments of immortal life; others exhibit signs of amazement or disappointment; but all ultimately learn to wear a contented, satisfied expression, as though (which is true) they had arrived at home.

What is more beautiful to the tired, sorrowing, pain-worn spirit than the sight of a peaceful, happy, comfortable home waiting to give him welcome? And over here in the Summer-land are real, true homes where love is to be found, where peace abides, and where a bright measure of contentment is held out to the weary and sad. I have seen something of the stopping-places of crude-minded, undeveloped spirits; I have witnessed their surroundings and unpleasant conditions. I have also visited the homes of the pure and good denizens of the spheres, have beheld the beautiful emanations from their lives, have noted their work and perceived the noble, uplifting influence they have sent forth; and I unhesitatingly declare that the good far outnumber the evil and impure,—that thousands of spirits are seeking to comfort, soothe and bless others where tens endeavor to injure and debase their fellows.

Thousands of spirits make the homes of the eternal world beautiful and sweet. Love seems to be unconfined and free in its expression “Over There.” Flowing forth spontaneously from the heart, it reaches all kindred souls, and enriches the lives of the giver and recipient alike. How often I have seen a spirit doing something that will please and gratify another. How frequently I have heard the remark: “I will do this because my friend will like it.” Thoughtful for the comfort and pleasure of others, good spirits have no opportunity, time, or desire for selfish purposes. Very often the work performed or planned is for the comfort and gratification of some dear one in the flesh, who at the time has no idea that loved and loving angels are laboring in practical ways for their advancement.

THE ULTIMATE REIGN OF PEACE AND HAPPINESS ON EARTH.

There is, in my opinion, every hope for the race. Humanity will and must advance, for thousands, aye, millions, of ascended loved ones are laboring

for the benefit of mankind. When I travel from point to point with the rapidity of spiritual flight, and behold everywhere I go—in each town, city, and encampment that I traverse—multitudes of angelic beings dwelling in homes of love, all united and happy, each one devoting his or her thought, energy, and time to the labor of devising and executing ways, plans, and means for the blessing and elevation of their fellow-beings, I am led to rejoice in the certainty that some time, and perhaps before many years,—for humanity is rapidly advancing in knowledge, scientific lore, and wisdom,—the condition of mankind will be one of happiness, peace, and true prosperity.

As the brilliant sun and the shining stars are above and far outnumber the clouds of earth's atmosphere, so the radiant, glowing forms and homes of bright, exalted spirits are above and far outnumber the lower, undeveloped beings whose habitations are crude, dark, and dreary; and though the influence of those crude-minded spirits is exerted upon and felt by many of the inhabitants of earth, even as the clouds and shadows of the skies produce their effect upon material life, yet as the glorious light of heaven dispels all darkness and gloom, so will the abiding influence of higher, purer lives ultimately banish and counteract the effects of that baneful miasma that emanates from the lower spheres. As coldness is turned to warmth and darkness becomes light, under the rays of the sun, so evil is turned to goodness and all error becomes swallowed up in divine truth, under the inspiring influence of heavenly love, that endureth forever.

Therefore, I feel that the future weal of humanity is assured, and all that each one of us has to do is to follow the highest dictates of right our soul can conceive of, and to feel that the angel world, with its power and might, is working for the cause of Truth and Justice, and is laboring steadfastly and earnestly for the elevation of Mankind.

CHAPTER XII.

SANITARIUMS IN SPIRIT LIFE.

I think it will be interesting to you to learn something of the sanitariums of spirit life, where the grown people—those who while in the body were weak and struggling in spirit, whose natures were but partially unfolded, whose higher qualities of being were stunted or warped in growth, and who, through lack of opportunity, power, and favorable conditions generally were unable to grow in grace, beauty, and sweetness of spirit—gain health, strength, vigor, and power. Those unfortunate ones who, from whatever cause, are unable during their sojourn on earth to put forth the purest attributes of the soul, to become mentally strong and fearless, to rise above the temptations of mortal life, to resist the evil thoughts which assail them, or who fail in any manner to grow in goodness and wisdom, are spiritually sick, and in need of tender and judicious treatment.

In the spiritual world there are sanitariums for such as these, and when the spirit, weak and feeble, exhibits a desire to become strong and healthy, and to be placed under conditions that will afford the means of growth, unfoldment, and of gaining power, he or she may be conducted to one of these beautiful places, where only life, health, enjoyment, mental vigor, and happiness can be obtained.

LOCALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS.

Our places where health is sought and found are not great gloomy buildings where dozens of individuals live, where perhaps no two of them are alike in temperament, constitution, and habits, but where all must undergo the same amount and quality of discipline and treatment; but they are large gardens, beautifully laid out with beds of flowers, banks of moss, pebbly walks, and groves of trees, where birds sing and sparkling waters leap and play; where the glad sunshine is felt by all, and where life is untrammelled, free and happy; or in shady woods where nature invites man to partake of the quiet, calm, and tranquility of her forest nooks. And I know of such bright homes of rest, where the sparkling sea surges and beats upon shining sands, and others that are built upon the mountain sides,

where the atmosphere is strong, clear, and bracing. The houses are small, light, and airy, furnished with deference to taste as well as utility; they are at short distances from each other and separated by garden plots of flowers, groves of trees, etc., as the particular section of country decides. Only one weak, enfeebled, diseased spirit dwells in each house at a time, but he or she is an inmate of a home where two or more healthy, happy, industrious spirits reside; these vigorous ones are the attendants and teachers of the patient, and their presence, care, and example impart strength, health, and happiness to the one under their charge, while at the same time he or she is learning those lessons of life of which they were deprived while on the earth, but which are requisite to the upbuilding and outrounding of every intelligent, progressive soul.

METHODS OF TREATMENT.

The natural scenery of these places enters largely into the system of treatment as an active agent, and exerts a powerful influence upon the weak and suffering spirit. For instance, the soul that is irritable, peevish, dissatisfied with itself, requires a soothing, calm, and gentle influence. She is brought to one of the great garden sanitariums, and taken in charge by a family of tender, sympathetic beings, who delight to care for her. The harmonious influence of her new home, the sight of blooming flowers, waving trees, and rippling waters, the sound of gentle human voices, of singing birds, and of the soothing, elevating, enchanting music which her kind attendants evoke from their melodious instruments for her, produce a tranquilizing effect upon her entire being, and she gradually grows restful, contented, and at peace, thus bringing her highest nature into proper condition for its unfoldment in spiritual power, and its advancement in the acquirement of knowledge. Fruits form the staple of her diet, and thus removed from all that is coarse of the earth, earthly, crude, and sensual, her spirit grows in strength and beauty, until she, too, becomes permeated with true vitality, becomes perfectly healthy, and is ready to take upon herself the duties of a teacher, nurse, and physician, and to attend some poor soul that is ill.

Another patient may require the healthful atmosphere and the partial solitude of some forest glen; if so, such a home, with loving attendants,

pleasing surroundings, and delicate nourishment is provided for her. Another is drooping, easily discouraged, cannot resist any condition that at the time presses upon him, easily becomes a prey to the positive encroachment of temptation. He is taken to a pleasant home by the sea shore, where the sight of the great blue waves rushing in toward the land, or flowing out to the further side, and the sound of surging billows and singing winds, stimulates him with new strength, courage, and vigorous endeavor to grow upward from an unhealthy, darkened condition. He, too, has spirit guardians and teachers, whose duty it is to arouse within him that interior self-reliance that enables the soul to conquer all difficulties and to rise above all obstacles that are to be encountered. In his home, and in every home provided for the weak and suffering, and all around them, are to be found only the most beautiful works of nature and of art. Only those sights and sounds that appeal to the highest, loftiest nature of man, are to be seen and heard therein; and thus conditions are afforded that enable strength, health, mental vigor and spiritual power to supersede and eradicate ill health, mental paucity, moral weakness, and sensual proclivities.

MUSIC AS A MEANS OF RECUPERATION.

The cultivation of the human voice in singing is one of the means of advancement for the spirit. It is also very effective in its results in the sanitariums of spirit life, producing a marvelous effect upon the weary and feeble ones. Music and singing are employed as curative agents in the treatment of diseased or enfeebled souls, and with marked results. You will find that every lover of good music and singing can at times become receptive to angelic influence. It is a sacred work in the higher life to awaken this love of music in the minds of the afflicted ones; for this once accomplished, the higher influences can impart their magnetism to those in distress. Hence, many of our greatest musicians and sweetest singers may at times be found in the home of some invalid spirit, exercising his or her divine gifts with rare power for the especial benefit of the ailing one. Music, so elevating, cheering, soul-inspiring in power, lifts the spirit above the conditions that favor ill health into an atmosphere where only vigor and mental vitality abound.

RESTORATION OF THE MENTALLY DISEASED.

We have homes where those spirits who were considered insane in the body may find rest, repose, and strength. Having been unable to express themselves understandingly or to manifest their desires clearly through the poor, unbalanced brains which belonged to their earthly forms, their spirits are weak, feeble, not unfolded, and they require that treatment which will restore tone, power, and energy to their wasted forces. And so homes, guides, teachers, and every attention are provided for them. Flowers, birds, music, and kind faces surround them. They are not restricted nor confined, but are allowed liberty, though under the careful, yet tender, surveillance of their friends. No medicine but sunshine and air is given them; no unkind treatment is resorted to. In the pure and genial atmosphere of their spirit homes, and under the gentle influence of their surroundings, they gain a perfect mental equipoise, become strong in spirit and attain a knowledge of life in all its various grades and departments of unfoldment.

Thus need no one of earth, who has friends weak and suffering in body or mind, or who are undeveloped in spiritual health, strength, and power, fear that these unpleasant conditions will long continue with them after they have passed from the mortal.

The tendency of human life is upward and on; the spirit world affords conditions and opportunities, facilities and advantages, for its growth and progress. No soul can advance in wisdom and happiness that is weak and enfeebled from any cause whatever; therefore, the first work to be done is to remove the weakness and misery by subduing them with strength and power and friends and homes; and all that is requisite for the upbuilding of a beautiful spirit is provided for the unhappy one.

No prison cells, no hospital wards, no massive walls where the mentally diseased languish in pain, are to be found in the spirit world; but as God's sunshine, and air, his flowers and singing birds, are free to all, they are there provided for the welfare and pleasure of any and every soul, and have proved to be the means of restoring to life, health, and happiness many poor, pain-stricken, suffering human beings.

My experiences in the spirit world have taught me that all crime, all unkindness of feeling, all selfishness, all misery of men, are diseases which need to be eradicated from the human system, and if they cannot become

obliterated here, the time will surely come in the spiritual world when they will be eliminated.

These unpleasant and unfortunate conditions of which I write are the correspondence of the physical ailments with which man is assailed, and I believe the time will come when they will be recognized by mortals as diseases, and proper measures taken to repress and overcome them.

IMPROVED MEDICAL TREATMENT ON EARTH.

As all things have their origin in the spiritual, and as ideas of practical import are given to mortals through and from the silent yet potential inspiration of the spirit, I believe the time will come when individuals on earth will be impressed and imbued with ideas of medical treatment, and the establishing of sanitariums similar to those which already exist in the beyond, when the public mind will become exercised on the subject of the proper treatment and care of the sick and suffering of both body and spirit, and when a new thought will be agitated concerning its duty toward the morally weak and low. Then your hospitals will not be huge edifices, but small habitations with only one invalid in each, so that no impure and unhealthy magnetism from another diseased body shall be absorbed by its occupant. Light, air, water, music, and flowers will take the place of drugs and powders, and cheerful, ready attendance be freely given. So with your homes of refuge, your places of confinement for criminals; those now of walls of stone will give way to light and airy dwellings, gardens of beauty will surround them; music and flowers, books and papers, congenial, active employment, and the cheerful companionship of healthy, kind-hearted teachers, will supersede whip and thong, and supply to the mental nature that bracing tone so much required, and under your present system of discipline, so seldom obtained, these will awaken retrospection in the mind of the diseased, and bring a desire for amendment, thus beginning that radical cure which will in time be firmly established in every sin-sick soul.

ONE OF THE SANITARIUMS OF SPIRIT LIFE.

I will tell you of a beautiful scene I have recently witnessed in one of the sanitariums of spirit life. Picture to yourselves an immense garden, spread with a closely-cropped carpet of the freshest, greenest, and most velvety grass you can conceive adorned with parterres of fragrant, bright-colored flowers. The trees are tall, stately, and graceful, and their foliage glistens as though sprinkled with dew; rippling streams of water make rhythmic music pleasant to the ear. The sky is cloudless, and the sun shines mildly down upon the placid scene. The atmosphere is of a peculiar golden tint that clothes every object in a mantle of beauty. Birds with musical throats and bright plumage flit from flower to flower undisturbed by those human beings who are walking the grounds, or seated in various parts of the garden. Small, white, cosey-looking dwellings, simple and neat, are scattered here and there, while in the center of this immense park a stately, white temple uprears its shining dome.

This place is a sanitarium or home where weary women, as well as neglected children, from the earth sphere are brought to receive protection, care, and instruction from the pure mother souls who abide in this lovely spot.

The teachers and nurses of this glowing plane are of a truly *spirituelle* character; their lives are spent in seeking to guide, influence, and encourage unfortunate spirits to find a higher and better life than that they have hitherto known, and in endeavors for self-improvement.

Here teachers and preceptors are educated and directed through a course of experience that will prepare them to guide and guard those young souls who come to the spirit world with no natural guardian or parent to care for them. Love is the ruling power in this community, and no unkind, unsympathetic thought finds its way hither.

INTERESTING INCIDENT: A MOTHER FINDS HER CHILD.

But the incident which I propose to relate to you was so beautiful I feel that I must tell you of it now while it is fresh in my mind: a beautiful young female spirit, a true teacher, a natural mother-soul, whose entire being is illuminated with the light of benevolence and love, had brought to her charming little cottage in the delightful garden a young child, one who had recently passed to the higher life, with no kind hand to close its mortal eyes

or to drop tender caresses upon the marble brow,—one of the waifs of society, cast out by mankind, and permitted to ignobly perish from the earth.

This child was brought to the bright Summer-land, and tenderly cared for by guardian angels; all the good within its nature was encouraged to unfold and blossom out; all the attributes of ill, the conditions of carnal life transmitted to it by others, were fading for want of nourishment and attention.

The work of cultivating and beautifying an immortal soul, as was this little one, under the direction of a sweet, self-denying, loving spirit, is delightful to contemplate; but the most thrilling incident in this special instance, and one which came under my immediate observation, was this:—

One day there came to this garden of delight a poor, sin-stained, weary woman,—one who, through all the misery heaped upon her by the conditions of vice and crime, still kept the love-light for her child burning in her soul. She had been an inhabitant of the spirit world three years, but, because of the crudities of physical conditions still clinging to her spirit, had been held down to the earthly sphere.

Now, she had been found by a benevolent spirit, and conducted to the blooming paradise of which I write. Sad, disheartened, despairing, nothing could rouse her from her condition of unhappiness. The tender encouragements of benevolent beings, the beautiful objects and sweet sounds around her, the gentle ministrations of kindly spirits, seemed to have no effect upon her state of apathy. At last it was suggested that she be taken to the grove, where the children were busy with their innocent sports; and accordingly the unfortunate woman was conducted to a green and shady spot where a company of little spirits, under the care of their teachers and guides, were engaged in pleasant pursuits.

The eyes of the unhappy spirit for the first time lighted up with a gleam of pleasure as they fell upon the children, and her conductor noted the sign with a joyous heart. Suddenly the woman screamed, sprang forward, and clasped one of the little ones to her breast. It was the little waif who not long since had been brought hither. “My child! my child! my darling child!” exclaimed the spirit, as tears of joy rained down her pallid face, “have I found you at last! have I found you!”

It was a scene to make angels weep, and tears of sympathy stood in the eyes of more than one of that celestial company. It transpired that the poor, suffering woman was the mother of that little child; that, at the time the child had attained the age of three years, the mother met with an accident that hurled her spirit from the body, and from that time to the present moment she had been roaming in darkness, seeking for the child she had lost.

The little one was allowed to accompany her teacher and her new-found mother to a pleasant, quiet retreat where, under the spell of her darling's presence, and the kindly care of ministering attendants, her spirit is rapidly arising above the clouds of sorrow, degradation and woe, and emerging into the light of happiness and peace,—is unfolding its higher powers to such a degree that we feel certain, in a very little while, she will herself become a helper, teacher, and beneficent spirit to those who travel in darkness and woe.

The beautiful white temple that uprears its shining dome in the center of that delightful garden of which I have spoken is a massive structure, elegant in appearance, and marvelous in construction. No description of mine could do it justice; it must be seen in order to receive all the admiration which it merits. Dedicated to the Arts, it is itself a master-piece of art, and stands a fitting testimonial to the wonderful design and skill of the artists who planned and executed it in all its details. The material of which this pile is composed is like alabaster, snowy white, but so nearly transparent that, when the sun's rays strike directly upon it, it glows with all the colors of the rainbow, and presents a brilliant appearance. Delicate carvings of vines and flowers, birds and insects, are traced upon its corner walls, showing evidences of the work of a master-hand. Within are spacious halls dedicated to the Muses, each of which is used as an instruction hall, where knowledge of the particular art to which it is consecrated is imparted and received. The halls of Music, of Painting, of Sculpture, of Poesy, of designing and tracing, are to be found here, presided over by master-artists, who pay especial attention to their pupils, believing that it is better to inspire or to assist in cultivating the powers of another than to create any piece of artistic work themselves.

CULTIVATION OF INHERENT TALENTS.

To this temple are brought the children, in order to ascertain whether or not they have any taste, talent, or genius for practicing any of the fine arts. Here, where all is beautiful, whether of sight or sound, appealing alike to the harmonious instinct and the love of the beautiful within the soul, any especial gift that the child may have in the direction of music, poesy, etc., speedily shows itself, and he or she is taken in charge by some competent teacher who bends all his or her energies in the direction of drawing out or unfolding the talents of the pupil. A child who manifests a passion for music, but takes no interest in drawing or painting, is allowed to devote his time to the cultivation of his musical powers, and is not required to waste energy and patience over the vain task of trying to learn the rules of perspective, light and shade, and coloring. One who exhibits a taste for carving and molding, but cares little for music, is not obliged to throw away time over the distasteful labor of practicing with voice and instrument, but is assisted to unfold the natural powers of his soul. Another is attracted to painting, but has no desire to attempt to carve a statue; another is exercised over the rhymes and metric measures of poetry, but has no gift in the other departments of art. These are encouraged and taught how to develop their God-given powers, and are not requested to attempt any labor for which they have no taste. Children who are found to exhibit no taste for, or attraction toward, any of the arts, but to have a gift for the outworking of and desire to study other branches of knowledge, are permitted to follow the guidance of their tastes or deeper natures, and are not expected to spend time over the study of those artistic rules for which they have no attraction.

Therefore, you will at once perceive that the work of each spirit is that for which they are naturally adapted; it becomes congenial to them, consequently is agreeable. They love to pursue it, and bring forth the best possible results from it.

There are many temples of art in the spirit world, as there are many schools, academies, colleges of learning, etc. Education is the great power that is to uplift and bless humanity, and in the higher life the best forms of enlightenment are afforded freely unto all. The beautiful white temple in the great garden, where the neglected, cast-off children from earth are taken to be cared for, opens its glowing portals to those little ones who, had they remained in the bodily form, would have had no advantages of education or for spiritual unfoldment. Many of these exhibit a marked inclination toward

the development of artistic powers, and under the favorable conditions afforded them begin early to show signs of talent to an astonishing degree.

Encouraged to learn, stimulated to emulation by advice, example, and assistance, they readily follow the teachings of their instructors, and in a surprisingly brief space of time—considering all the circumstances of their early life—their efforts to accomplish something are crowned with success. Thus, under proper conditions, all the spiritual attributes and faculties of an immortal soul may become unfolded, displaying a degree of refinement, beauty, culture, and power of which humanity at present but little dreams.

CHAPTER XIII.

SURROUNDINGS AND CONDITIONS OF SPIRITS.

Mortals sometimes wonder if there is cold and frost, snow and ice, in the spirit world; and spirits, in making their statements concerning the surroundings and conditions in that land, do so according to their own experience, which is sometimes greatly varied and diversified. Speaking for myself, I have never witnessed any severe storm, nor been affected by either extreme of cold or heat, since passing to the "other life." The atmosphere in which I dwell is mild and genial, rather of an exhilarating than of a depressing nature, because of the preponderance of the electrical current. While inhaling the air of my spirit home I always feel strong and full of vitality. Work is there like play, so easily is it taken up and pursued, and the mere act of breathing is an exquisite pleasure. Life is full of gladness, because no external condition presses heavily upon the bodily frame. Our clothing is adapted to the wants and purposes of the body; our food assimilates with the system, and provides nutriment for every part. And so, being blest with good health, pleasant surroundings, and an abundance of labor, we cannot be otherwise than cheerful and happy. Where I reside, we are never visited by storm and tempest; the face of nature is daily bathed in a soft, delicious mist that descends from the snowy clouds above, moistening the trees and flowers and wrapping everything in a semi-transparent veil through which the rosy light of day glows with a bewitching hue. This mist only remains long enough to give the world around a plenteous bath, and then disappears before the presence of the ever-genial yet to us never too-fervid sun.

REASONS FOR DIFFERENT VIEWS OF SPIRIT SURROUNDINGS.

I have visited other localities of the spirit world, whose inhabitants have complained of intense cold; and though I was not affected by any uncomfortable sensation, yet I have seen them shiver and shake as though smitten by an ague fit. The landscape to these unhappy ones appeared to be cold, lifeless, and barren, as though the dreariness of December days had settled upon it; but to me the scene was more promising and life-like, for I

was not surrounded by the same conditions of mind and body as were those who dwelt in these haunts of woe.

I have known certain spirits to manifest themselves to mortals with the declaration that their homes in the spirit world had been visited by terrible storms and whirlwinds, and that the shock of those tempests had been almost too much for them to endure. This was very true; but those spirits did not realize or know that they had never entered the spiritual world, but that, through the earthly nature of their own magnetic attraction, they had gravitated to some condition of earthly life,—had attached themselves to crude-minded spirits yet in the flesh, and had encountered earthly storms and whirlwinds that had swept wildly over the terrestrial world.

Other spirits have testified to mortals that their homes are dark, dreary, rugged, and bleak. Such beings dwell very near the physical life. They have never explored the realms of spirit; their desires are all of a carnal character; the very persons who attract them to their earthly haunts are of a rough, uncouth, and undeveloped nature. Therefore, they come in contact with no refinement, no culture, and no beauty; their lives are barren indeed, and not until they desire to receive, understand, and acknowledge the truths that missionary spirits are ready to reveal to their comprehension will they emerge from their unhappy condition. “None are so blind as those who will not see;” and the arrogant, self-sufficient, and self-opinionated spirit prefers to wander in darkness, and to stumble on over a rough and thorny road, rather than to acknowledge his short-sightedness and admit a desire to be guided aright. Only suffering, keen and severe, will bring to such the experience required to produce a better and sweeter nature.

Beautiful homes, lovely associations, and the fondest and most endearing of ties, all of which will be found to be real, tangible, and enduring, await every spirit in the supernal world; yet those who are not aspirational in character, who are not ready to spurn the selfish propensities that belong to the animal nature, to lay aside all considerations of personal grandeur, glory, and aggrandizement, will not be able to perceive, appreciate, or enjoy those “homes not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Oh, how earnestly we should all strive to cultivate a pure, noble, and unselfish character! How we should endeavor to uplift, guide, and instruct the poor, benighted spirits who know not the true meaning of existence! Those of you, O mortals, who have opened your hearts and homes to the

presence of spirits, who devote a part of your time to the good work of receiving the poor, ignorant, and uncultured who come to you through mediumistic sources, are performing a grand mission in life; you are co-operating with exalted intelligences in accomplishing a noble work.

Speak not harshly to the erring, either of mortal or spirit life. Let your words be full of kindness, admonition, and instruction, and let your lives be living examples of the love and truth you expound. Thus you will accomplish a great and lasting good for the benefit of others and the glory of the angel world.

A word of kindness, a gentle clasp of the hand, the gift of a single flower tendered to an erring spirit, accompanied by a little instructive, loving advice, may be the means of setting a benighted soul forward upon the upward road which leadeth to light and joy, and peace everlasting. This is a work that all may do; let us, spirits and mortals, co-operate to the grand end of elevating the lowly.

EARTHLY CONDITIONS THAT RETARD SPIRITUAL PROGRESS.

I have seen spirits whose earthly condition was one of prosperity and grandeur,—those in whom a sense of worldly ambition and aggrandizement overcame every other consideration in their minds; whose hearts became haughty and arrogant; whose lives grew morbidly selfish beneath the desire for personal gratification and the greed of gain. Primarily, their motives for action were laudable; but as they grew in worldly influence, power, and grandeur, the stifling atmosphere of this condition effectually pressed out all emotions and aspirations higher than those for earthly affluence, authority, and ambition.

I find the conditions of such spirits to be most unattractive yet pitiable. Deprived of their power and influence, unable to wield that authority which once belonged to them, powerless to attract the homage and laudation of the world in which they formerly lived and moved, longing for the things of material life which they cannot grasp with satisfaction, unfamiliar with things, conditions, and customs of spiritual life, they are restless and unhappy indeed.

The things for which these beings crave belong to the material plane alone, and they are constantly attracted back to this sphere of life. But they have not the authority and power they once possessed. Coming in contact with the very individuals who once fawned upon and bowed down to them, these spirits are yet unable to make any impression upon their minds. The invisible ones speak what they believe to be loud words of authority and dignity; but they are unheeded, even unheard, by the mortal to whom they are addressed. Even should the spirits succeed in expressing their identity and in giving utterance to their thoughts through the lips of a trance medium, they will remain as unnoticed by those for whom they are intended as is the faint flutterings of a leaflet blown hither and thither by the autumn wind, even if they are not scoffed at or scorned by those individuals who once were wont to bow down in servile awe before a scrap of paper bearing the name that is given by the returning spirit. Imagine the unhappy, restless condition of such a spirit, and you will understand something of that peculiar, self-tormenting state which in former times was typified to mankind as a lake of fire and brimstone.

WORLDLY SUCCESS OFTEN A MISFORTUNE.

Picture to yourselves a man who has been full of energy and power, successful in every undertaking, prosperous in business, influential in his walks of life,—one recognized for great executive ability and dispatch, bowed down and even toadied to by a multitude; one having a large class of human beings in his employ and under his dominion, to whom he is the autocrat upon all questions pertaining to their comfort, even existence itself. The note of this individual is recognized and accepted on all sides; his lightest word is law, and he has only to speak to be immediately obeyed.

A man wielding such authority, and delighting in it, is always ambitious and arrogant; he is held in fear by those under his charge, who endeavor to cajole him into some degree of mercy even while secretly despising him. This power, grandeur, prosperity, and worldly influence has been gained by the potency of a domineering, masterful will; but at the expense of the interior nature, which is stripped of all adornments and barren of those fruitful conditions necessary to the happiness and peace of spirits.

Such a man passes from the body. With the temple of clay he is shorn of all his power, grandeur, influence, and wealth; for such as he had were of the earth, temporal in their character and perishable. But the qualities of his mind are still his; the energy of his nature has not departed, the positive will-force does not desert him; he remains ambitious still. He does not become an imbecile or an idiot, therefore he is capable of realizing all that he has lost; but he has not yet learned that those things were unworthy an immortal soul, and that there is something of inestimable value to the spirit that may yet be acquired. He is in the condition that a strong, passionate man on earth would be in who had lost all that was dearest to him. At times, he is violent in the expression of his emotions, again he sinks into the apathy of despair; frequently he returns to earth, seeking to command attention, and to force obedience to his behests, and occasionally he endeavors to burst asunder the conditions that surround him.

Ask such a spirit as this of the beauties of the immortal life, and he will declare there are none,—that nature there is sterile and barren, that only damp clouds and fogs are to be seen, that rugged rocks and stones compose the roads, that the dwellings are uncomfortable and confining, and that the inhabitants are uncongenial and inhospitable. The truth is, this person is so enwrapped in the murky atmosphere of his own being, so chilled by the restless, combatant elements of his own mind, so torn by conflicting emotions, that he cannot see beyond the shadowy outline of his own selfish nature; and whatever object or person comes into the line of his vision becomes colored or darkened by the greyness of his own life, and presents an appearance corresponding to the conditions by which he is confined.

EARTHLY CONDITIONS CONTINUED IN SPIRIT LIFE.

There are many such beings in that immortal life—men and women—who have not yet outgrown the conditions belonging to the physical existence. The intensity of the will-force with these persons is so powerful when applied in any direction that it is difficult to detach it from the object in view, and to direct it to and through other channels of expression. Hence the positive, ambitious, energetic man of the world, who pursues his own business and pleasure, regardless of the rights and privileges of others, remains the same grasping, exacting individual after passing out of the

body. Men and women, once of fashion and wealth, autocratic and haughty in their demeanor,—some of them rulers and sovereigns over multitudes,—have remained in a sphere of unhappiness for many years. Wrapping the pride of their selfishness around them, they have dwelt in a condition of cold and darkness, the chill and shadows of which were but emanations from their own lives, until at last they have grown weary and have stretched their hands upward in search of light and warmth.

Finally, when such individuals do feel the necessity of turning from the old life,—which necessity comes to them after a long siege of battling against opposing forces, vainly striving to be recognized and obeyed, making futile attempts to gain power and dominion over others, and *at last* obliged to recognize their own impotency and utter littleness,—they begin to perceive the grandeur of spiritual labor, and to acknowledge and respond to the efforts made by ministering, industrious spirits to teach and bless them. Thoughts of the old life on earth fade before the presentation of ideas concerning the future life to be attained by the spirit. Selfish propensities and desires gradually pale before the new light of soul endeavor that dawns upon the suffering spirits; and sometimes aided by sympathetic mortals, to whom they are attracted, and always benefited by the assistance of wise, loving, and truthful spirits, these erring ones gradually emerge from their unhappy state into a condition of peace and joy. Ask them *then* of the life in the spirit world, and they will pronounce it beautiful, illuminated with a glorious light that never becomes wholly quenched; the land they inhabit they will tell you is real and natural, its roads paved with shining blocks, smooth and even to the feet, and fringed with blooming flowers; its homes comfortable, elegant, and commodious, and its inhabitants harmonious, gentle, hospitable, and friendly. They now see with the clear vision of the soul; no mists obscure their sight, no preconceived opinions and prejudices bias their statements. They dwell in the spirit world, and not amid the murky confines of sensual life.

AN ILLUSTRATION.

I will briefly relate a little episode recently coming under my observation, which will illustrate my subject more clearly to you. My beloved father was recently in the presence of a spiritual medium,—a

lovely, saint-like, elderly woman, whose life and aspirations cannot fail to attract beneficent workers of both lives to her sphere. This medium was entranced by a spirit who appeared very much distressed, and who said that there was a gulf between him and a condition of happy peace that he could not bridge. After bemoaning his unpleasant position, he expressed an earnest desire to free himself from it. My father felt his entire soul going out in sympathy to this suffering fellow-being, and with words of encouragement, hope, and cheer, which were also replete with instruction, he addressed the spirit, who, in a little while, raised his head, and with an expression of gladness and triumph, exclaimed: "I see the bridge; I may now pass over safely."

After this spirit had departed, my father was addressed by one of our beneficent, working spirits, who explained that the unhappy being was none other than he who had been known to the world as Baron Rothschild,—that in early life he had concentrated his energy and power to the work of accumulating great wealth for a laudable purpose, that of expending it in restoring Jerusalem—the home of his race—to its pristine glory and splendor for the benefit of his unhappy people; but as wealth and power and glory rolled in upon him, ambition grew within his soul. Finding himself exalted because of his influence, bowed down to and fawned upon by the Gentiles who had despised his race, the desire grew upon him to wield an influence among mankind that no power could break; and the primal intention to bless his people by restoring them to their rightful home, if he should be successful in life, faded away before the growing determination to bring the haughty Gentile to his feet in supplication for his assistance in the control of the monetary interests of the world.

Thus this man lived, flourished, and died; but in passing to the spirit world he could take none of his grandeur, power, wealth, or influence with him. These were not of the spiritual, but belonged to the material life. Unhappy and restless, expending his energy in striving to regain his former prestige, he lived, until, growing weary of vain contention and striving, he turned from the earthly side to ascertain the prospect toward the spiritual. He could perceive the light and the homes of happy spirits, but knew not how to reach them. In this condition he was brought by wise spirits to my father, whose tender sympathy, perceived and felt by the unfortunate one, awakened a new condition of mind, aroused a new train of thought and

aspiration in his soul, which bridged over the chasm and gave him power to reach the happier state where contented, useful beings dwell.

Oh, the power of sympathy! Mortals, you understand it not! When truly felt and expressed, it flows toward the soul of its recipient in waves of light, which become tangible to the suffering one, and form a bridge over which he may pass to a condition of happiness and peace.

EXTERNAL SURROUNDINGS PRODUCED BY MENTAL CONDITIONS.

To those minds who are materialistic in their tendency, whose thought is concerned with the affairs of the mundane sphere, and who do not recognize any other force in existence so potent, powerful, and vigorous in its operations as mere organic law which depends upon matter alone for its power, the idea that the mental condition of an individual can become so active as to influence his external surroundings and determine the shape, form, appearance, and character of the objective life in which he dwells, will be presented as only the wild dream of some visionist, or the vapid speculation of an enthusiast. But I do not bring my statements of spirit life and its conditions to the notice of such material minds; for I know that they who can find nothing above and beyond matter to study and investigate, who understand nothing of that subtle power permeating all material life which is *pure* spirit, who cannot comprehend the higher laws of the universe whenever they transcend in any degree the operations of those laws that are concerned alone with the external, visible, mundane world, will not be able to grasp the vital truth that is recognized and accepted by all deeply studious and spiritualized beings,—that spirit alone is the real power, the substantial part of man, the abiding life that projects its image outward upon the exterior form, affects the condition of the individual, beautifies or mars his surroundings, and controls his state of mind; while matter is but the external expression, the outer covering, form, or projection of this potent, governing force.

MATERIALISTIC SCIENTISTS IN SPIRIT LIFE.

I have seen spirits whose earthly condition was one of grandeur, whose mortal life was one of study, experimentalism, achievement, and triumph,—scientists who gave their entire thought, time, and attention to the investigation of certain laws, elements, and forces of the physical world, and who made grand and important discoveries in the domain of Nature. Their demonstrations of scientific law have been of value to mankind; their achievements and the practical results of their discoveries and studies have benefited humanity. But certain ones of this learned body did not believe in the existence of any force or power outside of organic law,—would not accept the thought that any manifestation of human or divine intelligence, skill and wisdom, could possibly be made aside from matter, and declined to investigate any department of life outside of that particular field of scientific inquiry that chained their attention. Anything savoring of occult law, or denoting the existence of subtle forces in the universe, that physical science could not explain, they scoffed at as unworthy their thought and investigation.

The condition of such spirits as these in the spiritual world is not an envious one. For a time they are unaware that they have left the material body. Dependent upon gross matter for their thought, study, labor, and research, they do not gravitate above the earth, and for awhile they continue their investigations and experiments in the laboratories of their former earthly associates.

But the laws they pursue fail to explain to them the causes of existence, or of the variation and mutability of form, the origin of mind, or the source of power. The facts presented before them from time to time cannot be reconciled with the theories they have entertained. Important links in the chain of scientific evidence concerning the nature of things they fain would forge, as they are wanting here and there. These learned (?) spirits, with all their splendid endowments of mental ability, erudition, and conservative thought, become restless, dissatisfied, and unhappy. When they discover that they are not dependent upon a mortal body for their existence, they are amazed, and even annoyed, to find their preconceived opinions and conclusions concerning earthly matter refuted by the one great fact of continued conscious life after the dissolution of the physical form; and they do not feel prepared to accept the spiritual life that opens before them. Ask such a being of the beauty and peace of the higher life, and he would declare to you his inability to find such conditions,—that to him all

appeared confusion, disorder, fleeting, and unsubstantial. The reason of this is clear to a thinking mind. The spirit who has hitherto held the utmost confidence in his own mental powers and ready discernment; who has believed his own position on any subject incontrovertible; who has thought his opinions and conclusions to be unquestionable, and who has been accustomed to lay down his propositions and theories with the secret feeling that they must demand attention and an early acceptance from all others, suddenly becomes aware that he has been treading on dangerous ground, that those things, ideas, and conclusions that he thought so weighty and undeniable are but fabrications of his own mind; that he has followed false lights, because he has recognized but a small portion of the universe and believed it to be the whole, and has understood the operations of but a few of its laws, and thought they were the great network of all force and power.

No wonder that this being cannot see clearly before him; that his surroundings appear chaotic and disorderly, and that the ground seems slipping from beneath his feet. His *mental* condition determines the character of his external state, and he perceives naught but the reflection of the conflicting emotions that surge through his being.

THE DAWNING OF SPIRITUAL LIGHT.

After a time the mists will cease to obscure his vision; possessing an intelligent mind, he will begin to reason and reflect upon this state of things, and desire to reach the truth concerning them. Then he will perceive that, though much of the work he thought he had performed must be taken up and remodeled, that many of the opinions he held were unsound, and the platform of theory he occupied untenable; yet he has obtained a sufficiency of solid fact; has discovered truth, derived knowledge, and accomplished labor enough to form a new foundation upon which to build a structure that will remain enduring for all time.

Then the shadows will clear away; the spirit will gaze around him and behold smiling order and harmonious design. The new life will present an appearance of peace, plenty, and thrift to his sight. He will then inform you that the higher life is one of beauty, happiness, and power, filled with pleasant homes, contented people, and active employments. The conditions belonging to the crude, undeveloped state of his being have been overcome

by the spiritual part, and he is now enabled to behold the spirit world in its true likeness and imagery.

Before this change can take place in the surroundings and interior life of the spirit, he must outgrow the arrogant pride in his own powers that has hitherto possessed him; he must be ready to doff the teacher's gown, and to don the pupil's cap,—be eager to become the patient scholar, and to forego the pleasure of propounding his personal opinions to other minds; must, in brief, become a child of humility, recognize his shortcomings, his mistakes and failures, and be willing to repair them. There is no necessity for him to lose sight of his former achievements, or of the good work he has wrought out for mankind; the memory of his labors may be retained to inspire him on to greater exertions for the future, but not allowed to magnify itself to such proportions as to influence the mind with pride and vain-glory.

THE LIBERAL-MINDED SCIENTIST.

I have also witnessed the spiritual condition, which, in my experience, always determines the surroundings of the individual in the spirit world, of the man of science, or of general learning, who, when in the body, was willing to consider other opinions than his own, was tolerant of other people, and ready to adopt any practical suggestion emanating from the mind of another, whose attitude toward spiritual things was respectful, even if it were not reverential. Such a personage may find himself astonished at the revelations of immortal life, but they do not annoy him; they rather gladden his soul, for they open before him opportunities for study, investigation, and spiritual growth that he has felt the need of, but could not hitherto grasp their supply. He is eager to at once begin a new line of scholarship, and to ask the assistance of those masters of science and philosophy who for ages have been acquiring knowledge and wisdom in the schools of the higher life. Such a spirit is willing to sit at the feet of his teachers, and to follow their instructions. He listens humbly to the suggestions that are made to him, follows the line of argument presented, and pays attention to the explanations, experiments, and researches his instructors open before him. Thus he comes into sympathy with the wise ones around him, and can readily comprehend their labor and its vast results.

In a little time such a spirit becomes qualified to follow his labor and pursue his studies unaided; he grasps a comprehension of the laws that govern them, and can experiment in any particular department of scientific inquiry he desires, certain that his researches cannot fail to yield him a good return. By-and-bye he will be competent to return to earth and seek out some organism, some mind similar in construction to his own, through whom he can transmit his ideas and a knowledge of his discoveries and inventions for the benefit of struggling mortals. It may be that his instrument will be unaware of the presence of a spirit moving and directing him, would even scout such a thought were it presented before him; but such non-recognition does not lessen the efforts of the earnest spirit. He is bent upon expressing the results of his labors, or manifesting some spiritual truth to ignorant humanity, and he will not falter nor be turned aside from his mission.

Or, this intelligence may come in contact with some mortal who has great mental ability as yet undeveloped, with an embryotic genius whose gifts need stimulating, whose constructive powers are grand, but have not become aroused to vigorous action. The spirit will exert his influence, will concentrate his magnetic force upon such an individual; will visit him in moments of quiet or in hours of bodily repose, and impress him what works to read, what line of study to pursue, what form of employment to practice, what habits to cultivate, and what method of life to follow; all of which will be calculated to stimulate, unfold, and invigorate the innate powers of his mind.

Gradually, the invisible, yet powerful, guide will perceive the development of those wonderful abilities that he knows belong to his charge; he will see them throw out little tendrils and grow stronger and stronger; his magnetic and energizing influence operating upon that mind is doing for its powers what the genial sunshine and refreshing showers do for the blossoms of the plant upon which they fall, drawing them out to a beautiful, healthful, and vigorous unfoldment; and by-and-bye the world will become aware that it has a man of genius or a woman of transcendent power in its midst.

At that supreme moment of achievement or triumph the delight of the mortal whose abilities are thus given outward expression in some enduring form will be nothing to the satisfaction of the intelligent spirit who has

aided the work of development, and by his superior power stimulated the mental growth of his charge. Can you not comprehend what a grand, unselfish labor his has been, and appreciate in some degree the difficulties he has encountered and overcome, the blessed results he has achieved?

CONTRASTED CAUSES AND EFFECTS.

The difference between a spirit of this class and the one mentioned previously is simply in the condition of mind. Both were equally learned, scholarly, cultivated, brilliant, and useful when in the body; but where one was dogmatic in assumption, intolerant in opinion, autocratic in assertion, and materialistic in belief, the other was considerate of others, paid deference to the honest opinion of his fellows, was respectful in his attitude toward all mankind, and sought earnestly for the greatest measure of light to be obtained, even though it should lead him away from his own position and toward that of others.

Consequently, the one was many years in reaching the condition and elevated spiritual position which the other readily found upon entering spirit life; and while the first was obliged to pass through painful experiences before he could throw aside his lordly manner, air of assumption, and offensive arrogance, the latter, having none of these burdens clinging to his garments, was enabled immediately to take up the studies of life, and pursue them to their grand revealment. Ask this last intelligence as to his surroundings in heaven, and he would define them as beautiful, congenial, and productive of great happiness to the spirit. His associates he would describe as happy, harmonious, and agreeable; his home as filled with luxurious adornments and beautiful forms; the landscape as fair, sweet, and charming, and life itself grand and glorious.

THE SIMPLY INTELLECTUAL.

I have seen the condition of spirits who, when inhabitants of the earth, were very erudite and intellectual, but who were so closely engaged in the pursuit of material knowledge that they paid no attention to the cultivation of their spiritual powers.

These individuals possessed splendid powers of mind, for their mental abilities were finely unfolded. Their powers of imagery were great, and many were the word-pictures of beauty they were instrumental in placing before the public eye. But as they did not recognize the existence of spiritual powers, did not seek to unfold within themselves the attributes that belong to spirit, nor endeavor to learn of their inner natures, they were not prepared to perceive and enjoy the true glories of the spiritual world. The condition of such beings for some time after they have passed from the earthly form is one of dissatisfaction; for to them the immortal life presents but cold and barren forms, destitute of the glow and vigor of life-like activity. Splendid statues and fine pictures may adorn their homes, for such forms are the expression of the intellectual and artistic taste of their possessors; but these objects lack the expression and softened effects of fine coloring and appearance of life that alone can make them the productions of really great minds. Only mere mechanical work has created them; they are but the objective forms of ideas, destitute of the spirit that should have been breathed into them, to make of each a model of beauty and of expressive force. The homes of these learned individuals, though furnished and adorned with luxurious belongings, present a cold, inhospitable appearance to the truly spiritual being; for their inmates are haughty, proud, dissatisfied with life, and forever longing for something more in the line of personal grandeur than what is theirs; and their mental condition reflects itself so strongly upon their exterior surroundings as to cause it to strike a chill to the heart of any aspirational or devotional being who might approach them.

CHEERLESSNESS OF A WANT OF SPIRITUALITY.

Imagine yourselves in a vast hall, from which all rays of sunlight or warmth are excluded. Imagine this apartment lined with gorgeous pictures of material life that are remarkable only for their excess of brilliant color, and the magnitude and variety of the forms they represent; each nook and recess filled with statues of men, women, and animals,—white, cold, stiff, stern, and lifeless in appearance; the entire building cheerless and chilly, with no appearance of life, activity, or warmth. Think what it would be to your spirit to be condemned to continuously wander over this vast hall,

gazing upon the unattractive paintings, and moving in and out among the lifeless statues, cold and unpleasant to the touch.

Such a life as you would thus lead corresponds to the existence of those spirits of whom I write. On earth they were only intellectual, æsthetic animals, for their love of the beautiful was developed only on the material side, and the spiritual part of life was neglected. Here, they are surrounded by the embodiments of their mental and artistic tastes; but as these are mere forms, and are not imbued with one spiritual idea, they appear cold, unconscious, and dead to the beholder. Continuously wandering amid the senseless, barren forms of their own mind creations, unable to behold anything lovely and meritorious in the productions of others who are more spiritual than themselves, these individuals are like those who live in the frozen regions of the North, stunted in appearance and unable to understand and appreciate the life apart from and beyond their own narrow circle.

True, the awakening period will come to all such when they shall become aware of their false position in the spirit world, and learn that there is active duty and noble endeavor beyond them, through which they will gain happiness and a sense of genial, vigorous life; and they will eventually turn to the more exalted realms of immortal life, in order to gain a spiritual education that will unfold their soul powers, and cultivate the true sense of beauty and the highest intellectual abilities their spirits are capable of expressing. Then their condition will be one of warmth, vigor, and activity; their surroundings, while beautiful in form and expression, will partake of glorified life, and their homes appear bright, attractive, and hospitable to those who enter within their walls.

BLENDING OF THE SPIRITUAL AND INTELLECTUAL.

I have seen spirits who were intellectual and lovers of beauty on earth, who were also spiritual in their aspirations, proclivities, and tendencies,—whose tastes were delicate, and whose habits were very refined. The productions of such minds, whether of a literary or artistic nature, appealed ever to the sense of the beautiful, the love of the good, and to the highest conception of purity in the hearts of those for whom they were created. The conditions in the higher life of such souls are glorious. In spirit they are active, ever working for the general good of humanity, seeking to perfect

their own powers of mind in order to give them a more beautiful and complete expression for the delight or elevation of others. Ready to receive instruction from the more advanced minds around them, they are constantly gaining a richer experience and a greater unfoldment of their powers. Aspirational in nature and loving in spirit, these beings send forth a congenial, helpful influence that attracts the good and wise to their side. Their homes are bright, cheerful, and attractive; a delicious warmth pervades their households, for they are made radiant by the divine light of love which never grows dim. The surroundings of such celestials are like a beautiful and immense garden, where the choicest and sweetest of flowers bloom, the clearest of waters flow, the most beautiful of birds warble melodious songs of praise, the whitest and daintiest sculptured forms are to be seen, where the stateliest of trees uprear their plummy heads, the balmiest of zephyrs blow, the richest and most delicious fruits are to be found, and where all things continuously allure one to the enjoyment of the finest, most glorious forms of sentient, active, genial life. Who would not rather roam through such a fairy-land of sweets than be compelled to wander in that gloomy, cheerless hall of senseless stone and vapid, unsatisfactory paintings mentioned above.

The difference between the two classes of intellectual and æsthetic spirits is this: the one has developed a taste for beautiful forms and intellectual pursuits merely to satisfy its own material nature and for its own personal glorification and aggrandizement, and while catering to the external has ignored the vital or spiritual part of its being. The other class has cultivated its sense of beauty and educated its intellect in order to instruct and elevate others; has produced literary and artistic work for the purpose of appealing to the inner and higher natures of humanity; has sought and found the love-element within its own being, and has thrown it out as a quickening power to others; has endeavored to cultivate the spiritual attributes of its being, and to bring them into conscious harmony with the outward forces of nature. Therefore, while the condition of one class in spirit life is inharmonious and unsatisfactory to itself and others, that of the other is beautiful, blissful, and congenial to all.

HAPPINESS DERIVABLE ONLY FROM WITHIN.

Observation and experience have taught me that in the spirit world, as in earthly life, individuals vary in disposition, constitution, and characteristics. What is of the greatest interest to one person possesses no charm whatever for another; and that particular employment one being is adapted to pursue may be totally unsuited for another. Happiness among spirits is not drawn from external sources, but finds its central power within the soul, from whence it radiates outward, and clothes every objective form with beauty and every external pleasure with a splendor peculiar to itself, which in turn becomes reflected back upon the heart, and increases the enjoyment of the individual. Never was there a truer declaration than that attributed to the gentle Nazarene: "The kingdom of heaven is within you;" and it is as true today as it could possibly have been eighteen or twenty centuries ago. Unless the soul is at peace with itself and all others,—is not envious of the good another may possess, lives in a sphere of purity and kindly feeling, and desires only to do right,—he or she cannot experience true happiness, which essentially in itself constitutes heaven. But when an individual has attained that superior condition of mind consequent upon the possession of such lovely attributes, he or she has indeed arrived at the heavenly state of existence, and cannot be otherwise than happy.

THE HUMAN NATURE OF SPIRITS.

Humanity appears to be the same everywhere, and in every grade of unfoldment. Many mortals seem to think that spirits—those who have passed through the material transition called death—must be somewhat different from themselves. This, however, is not absolutely the case. Spirits are human beings, nothing more, many of them very imperfect at that, though many others are pure-minded, progressive, and exalted individuals, yet essentially human in every attribute and tendency. And why not? What is more beautiful, more intelligent, more powerful, and more noble than humanity? Nothing but divinity itself.

Perverted human nature is deplorable, and to be pitied while condemned; but unfolding, advancing human nature is to be admired and emulated, for it is steadily arising toward divinity. Mankind ever has been, and at present is, subjected to various grades of development; we find man low down in advancement, almost brutal in the exhibition of his nature, but by degrees

ascending from the immoral and degraded to the good and the better, we come to man purified, unfolded in spiritual refinements, exalted even to the heights of angelhood, but a human being still.

These varying conditions, incident to the life and experience of humanity, are just as vivid and operative in the spirit world as on earth; hence we have on that plane of existence the pure and the lowly, the exalted and the humble, the wise and the ignorant, the happy as well as the miserable.

The conditions of peace, satisfaction, and enjoyment in the spirit world do not depend upon the possession of outward grandeur, external power, and wealth, or a love of display, as they too often do on earth, though those who are happiest and most free from care in the higher life are the richest in spiritual possessions, and their surroundings show a refined and cultivated taste, accompanied by the means and ability for gratifying this love of the beautiful. There is no inconsistency in this statement, because, as I have before explained, the external conditions and surrounding of spirits are but the expression and reflection of the mental or soul condition within the being, and must appear beautiful, sweet, and delicate, or the reverse, according to the mental and moral status of the individual.

RIGHT AND WRONG STATES OF CONTENTMENT.

Progressive spirits are contented with their existence and its surroundings sufficiently to enjoy and appreciate all the good and lovely things that are theirs, but *not* enough to prevent them from reaching upward for more light, instruction, and soul-exaltation. They are deeply grateful for life and its powers of unfoldment, but they ever desire to move steadily on in the acquirement of wisdom and the accomplishment of good works.

Undeveloped spirits are prone to exhibit an indifference to their condition which may be mistaken for contentment, and which discloses a kind of inertia which prevents its possessor from attempting to rise into a healthier and happier state of being. This is, unfortunately, too often the trouble with those who need assistance, and is the chief obstacle good spirits have to contend with in their efforts to benefit those unhappy souls. Not until these miserable beings manifest a desire to better their own condition can the ministering spirits who endeavor to assist them be of any service; but when this wish to rise exerts itself in an attempt to reach upward, the degraded

being is encircled by the magnetic influence of that human yet divine love which emanates from the wise and beneficent ones around him, upon which, through the impelling force of his inner desire and exertion, he rises to superior heights and more pleasing conditions.

From degree to degree of unfoldment, from grade to grade of promotion in the great school of life, humanity is ever passing. Pressing on toward the goal where all lovely attributes blend, and approaching the sphere of Perfected Being, each one will, in God's own time, through experience and discipline, outgrow all imperfect traits, all unholy tendencies, and become, through the operations of nature's grandest law, progress, what all are intended to be,—noble, manly, purified, and perfected human beings.

CHAPTER XIV.

OUR CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES.

I have told my friends something of the work of the spirits who labor for the good of humanity, and have described some of the conditions that surround human beings—embodied and disembodied—which make or mar their happiness, elevate or depress their spirits.

As on earth, so in the spirit world, various organizations and societies exist for the suppression of vice and evil, the propagation of virtue and truth, the diffusion of knowledge and the banishment of ignorance, the protection of society, and the general elevation of mankind. Many of your most philanthropic schemes, your greatest benevolent institutions, your grandest methods of benefiting humanity, your purest organizations, and your noblest societies for the good of man, are outgrowths from similar labors and establishments that have long flourished in the spirit world. Wise and exalted spirits unite in working for the blessing of their fellow-beings; they devise ways and means, and work continuously to enlighten human minds upon the laws of life.

It has always been the desire of these spirits to bring a comprehension of their work to mortals, and to enlist kindred souls on earth in like labors. Whenever they have found mortals sufficiently susceptible to holy influences, and possessed with souls beating in sympathy for suffering humanity, they have worked upon their sensibilities until they have become quickened under the angelic power operating upon them, and have responded to the thought of the attending spirits. What is the result? Philanthropic schemes are started, agitated, and discussed; earnest men and noble women associate together to evolve plans for the benefit of the lowly, weak, and suffering; a new influx of spiritual power is brought to them, which they imbibe into their lives, all unconsciously to themselves, and very soon some useful, benevolent work is in progress, corresponding to a similar beneficent labor in the higher life.

EARTHLY REFORMS ORIGINATE IN SPIRIT LIFE.

In this way good works are conceived and elaborated on earth. I do not mean to say that mortals are unable to project and perform any philanthropic enterprise for themselves, and that your self-sacrificing, earnest men and women are made so entirely by the influence of others who are unseen; but I do affirm that all good spirits are working in the direction of human reform, and to benefit humanity; that many of these intelligences have thus labored for many centuries; that their sympathies and tender pity for the unfortunate condition of a large portion of mankind bring them into close contact with the earth, and that, when they perceive a mortal who is alike sympathetic, pitiful, and desirous of doing good with themselves, they are attracted to such a being, and by the magnetic influence and quickening energy they shed upon him, they stimulate his powers, multiply his resources, and inspire him to express his holy desires and good wishes in outward, practical form. Thus, noble institutions are established on earth for the enlightenment, education, and elevation of our race; grand labors for the suppression of vice and the promotion of virtue are pursued, and these are types, counterparts, and representations of like institutions and good works in the spirit world.

Whatever is good, reformatory, or beneficent in its nature, whatever is progressive and an aid to human unfoldment, is abiding, for it is of the spirit. Whatever is debasing, selfish in character, and downward in tendency, is transient; it belongs to the material, and cannot survive the encroachments of the higher law. Therefore, all good works have their inception in the spirit, and gain their first growth in the land of souls. After a time, when conditions are made favorable for their appearance, they become expressed through physical life, and are productive of lasting results for the welfare of humanity.

The spirit kingdoms that are inhabited by intelligences who have advanced to a state of happiness commensurate to the lesson of truth, wisdom, and self-abnegation they have learned; who know that life is only truly employed by those who labor for the benefit of others; who are pure-minded, and work in love for those more unfortunate than themselves, may be said to consist of one grand co-operative society, the various members of which are so united in sympathy and purpose that all work together as one person for the amelioration of human sorrow and suffering. This society has, however, its various duties to perform, and these duties may be assigned to different bodies of intelligences, so that a number of smaller

organizations or bands are formed, all having their particular labors to perform, and all working to the one grand end of educating mankind.

That you may more fully understand the work of these spiritual societies, and the results, vast and important in their nature, continually flowing from them, I will endeavor to unfold before you a description of the labors, uses, and intentions of a few of them. I know that the earthly language I am obliged to employ is very inadequate to express things belonging to the spirit, where life is rich in signs and symbols, and where ideas are multiplied beyond the power of mortals to express; yet, if I but give you a faint conception of these things, you will gain some knowledge of life in the spheres, and be the better prepared to experience it yourselves when you pass up higher.

DIVISIONS OF SPIRIT MISSION OF LABOR.

A large number of spirits have banded together for the purpose of disseminating the light of truth and a practical knowledge of real life among the ignorant and unenlightened of both worlds. In order to utilize their powers and to employ their energies more effectively, the large band of workers is subdivided into a number of smaller societies, or unions, each of which has a special duty to perform. Thus, one of these organizations finds its particular mission among the lowly and undeveloped individuals of earthly life; and it is the duty of its members to use their influence to its utmost extent for the elevation of those misguided, untutored individuals with whom they come in contact. While much may be accomplished by the good spirits from time to time by operating directly upon the hearts and minds of the unfortunate ones, and implanting within them a desire to advance in the attainment of knowledge and goodness, yet their greatest means of labor is to exert an influence upon the denizens of earth who are educated, cultured, and refined, and awaken within *them* a determination to agitate the subject of human needs and requirements, until, through the power and persistency they bring to bear upon such questions, a widespread public sentiment is created in favor of them that will force society to recognize their claims, and to seek some method for their proper adjustment.

Thus has every reform that has resulted in benefit to the human race received its impetus on earth from bands of spirits whose special work has been in that direction. In this way the question of a universal and free education has been aroused, agitated, and started upon the road to a practical and successful solution in this country. Thus the abolition of human slavery in the American nation received its first great power to accomplish its vast results from the spirit world. Thus the subject of temperance was brought home to the attention and thought of thinking, humanitarian minds by a band of invisible intelligences from the higher life, who have pledged themselves to relax not their efforts until they behold every mortal regarding intemperance as an evil habit to be devoutly shunned and resisted.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE.

Thus, the question of universal liberty has been aroused in the minds of the thinkers of every nation,—a subject that will not down at any bidding, but one that will continue to arise until all countries are thrown open in a hospitable welcome to all people, and until all rights and privileges become free and equal to each one. As an outgrowth of this idea comes the question of Woman Suffrage, which makes its demands with the laws of justice and reason on its side, and which will continue to appear before mankind until its claims and requests are recognized and granted; for this matter—so vital to all classes of society, and so essential to the true advancement of the race—is under the supervision of a co-operative society in the heavens, whose members are enlisted in the labor of guiding it on to a grand and successful result.

THE INDIANS.

Growing out of the question of human freedom also appears the problem of how are the native Americans of this country—the Indians—to be protected and cared for? And the bands of spirits who are looking after this matter declare that nothing short of exact justice towards the red man can answer their demands in this quarter. And sooner or later this great question

must be settled by the government of the United States granting the privileges of education, industrial and intellectual, of establishing homes, of holding property, and the rights of citizenship to all honest and respectable Indians; for they (the spirits) will continue to exert their influence and power upon the inhabitants of this country until the people arouse in their might, and demand justice for the too-long outraged red man.

PEACE ARBITRATION.

The subject of national and sectional warfare is also under the attention of a large organization of spirits, who are working to establish a system of Peace Arbitration on earth, under the quiet and harmonious regulation of which all national or other difficulties relating to the interests of the people may be wisely adjusted; and there is no doubt in my mind but that their efforts will be crowned with success.

HEREDITY.

There are many other branches of reform relating to human interests that are looked after by wise spirits who are laboring for the advancement of mankind, and one especially, and an important theme, is that which comes under the title of Heredity, and which concerns more vitally, perhaps, than does anything else the health, happiness, and prosperity of the coming races. Much thought and observation long since taught a large class of thinking spirits what a few mortals are but just beginning to learn, viz., that unless man attends to the offspring he rears by providing them with the very best pre-natal conditions for growth and development, it will be almost useless for him to attempt to reform them of gross habits and impure tendencies *after* they have entered upon the arena of mortal existence and strife. Not until humanity is educated concerning the laws of its being, and understands that whatever trait or characteristic is unduly developed in the individual, whatever taint of bodily or moral disease is allowed to fester in his system, will surely transmit its evil results to his children, and that it is his duty to so study his constitution and habits, and to so regulate his daily life, that he will be able to entail upon his offspring only those traits of

character, or those elements of physical health, that will produce the most beautiful and satisfactory results; not until then will the coming generations show a proper development of physical and moral power that will regenerate and redeem the world from misery.

The laws of Heredity, or Transmission, work in two directions, and while they declare “the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children,” they also maintain that the virtues and lovely attributes of the parents shall descend to their offspring with added power. Therefore, wise spirits are working for the dissemination of this great truth among mortals, and they are constantly bringing in a new influx of thought and the desire to agitate the subject to those few minds on earth who are ready to receive this knowledge, and who have the courage to express their convictions for the enlightenment of the many.

AN ORGANIZATION OF SPIRITS FOR THE ELEVATION OF EARTH’S INHABITANTS.

We have a society in the spirit world whose members are all pledged to the work assigned them. The tasks set before them by the wise and exalted spirits whose abilities, intelligence, beneficent purposes and practices, as well as spiritual experiences, qualify them for their positions as guides, directors, and councilors are not always pleasant and agreeable to the members, and yet, knowing that these tasks are designed to work out some lasting blessing for others, they falter not, but attend faithfully to the accomplishment of what proves to be a divinely-appointed mission.

The labors of this society are varied, but all tend in the one direction,—that of purifying and educating humanity. One or more of its members may be directed to visit some den of iniquity on earth, and by a holy and uplifting influence seek to draw away and benefit some unhappy, miserable spirit who lingers there, and also to exert a magnetic power upon some degraded mortal until he or she becomes disgusted with an unholy life, and feels a desire to abandon it for a better. This is not as pleasing and beautiful a task to the spirits who engage in it as is the mission of others of the same band who are delegated to watch over and care for little children whose lives are innocent, and whose conditions are refining; but they know that in

their field of labor is the promise of good results, and they apply themselves faithfully to the performance of their duty.

Great good is accomplished in this way. In every crowd of undeveloped and immoral beings who cling close to the lowest haunts of human life on earth the wise beneficent spirits are sure to find at least one mortal and one spirit who have become satiated with the indulgence of their animal natures, disgusted with their lives of wrong-doing and sin, and anxious to begin a holier life. Thus, these angel missionaries find fruitful soil in which to plant their good seed, and, after many trials, and the exercise of great patience, they have the satisfaction of finding their efforts rewarded with success, and of knowing that they have been the means of guiding more than one immortal soul toward the life of peace and happiness that belongs to all, but which can only be attained by manly efforts to reach it,—a life of endeavor and of self-renunciation so far as the gratification of personal pride, passion, or ambition is concerned.

The society of spirits of which I write is large and extensive, and embraces a great number of intelligences who work in connection not only with this country but also with those of the entire world. Wherever there is a human being to be uplifted, instructed, and blest; wherever there is an immortal soul to be redeemed from error, they are to be found. The mission of these spirit people is to do good; their labors are confined to no race, color, or nation, but are extended to all humanity. It would be impossible for me to enumerate the various methods they adopt for the accomplishment of their work, or the divers duties and labors that engage their attention; but they are earnest, zealous, and faithful to duty, and under their benign influence the lowly are exalted and the weak receive strength.

Co-operation is a grand incentive to labor; it also bringeth strength and courage to those who are united by its shining bands. It is the creator of harmony, sympathy, and fraternity of feeling in the hearts of all whom it reaches. Under its beautiful and effective ministrations, humanity is destined to grow and unfold its highest powers and attributes until universal love and tenderness bloom in all hearts, and every soul, of every race and clime, becomes united in a heavenly band of brotherhood and sisterhood.

CARE AND PROTECTION OF MEDIUMS.

One of our extensive co-operative societies is composed of young ladies whose duties are to study the laws governing mediumship, as well as to gain an understanding of those electric forces operating between spirit and matter, of which certain spirits take advantage in manifesting their presence to mortals. Realizing the grievous error concerning immortal life in which the larger portion of mankind is plunged, and wishing to do all in their power to demonstrate the truth to humanity, so that doubt may give way to certainty, fear to confidence, ignorance to knowledge, and all hearts made glad with the soul-cheering conviction that there is no death, but that life is eternal, these spirits have joined together for the purpose of working in harmony for the promotion of spiritual truth upon the earth.

Singly, in pairs, or in groups, the young people of this society visit the various mediums of earth to supply them with magnetic power and spiritual strength. They draw around each of those sensitive instruments an ethereal garment woven from the elements of their (the spirits') own lives, which, like a mantle of light, protects the mediums from the poisonous arrows of persecution, scorn, and envy hurled against them by malicious or distrustful minds, and guards them in their labor of love for the angels. Spirits are well aware that thoughts are tangible things that can be both seen and felt, and can wound or heal the sensitive souls to whom they are directed, according to their blighting or beneficent character. Thus, when one is envious or in any manner hostile in feeling to another, the thoughts which he directs toward that person, charged as they are with the virile magnetism the exercise of hatred or any other passion engenders, strike upon the spirit of him to whom they are directed with stinging effect. If the individual of whom this person happens to think unkindly or severely is one susceptible to spiritual and other influences,—kept in a negative condition because of the frequent control of his organism by spirits,—he will keenly sense the silent shafts of thought hurled against him, and suffer in consequence. Many mediums experience mental and physical pain, as well as debility of power, frequently when they are unaware of the cause; while at the very time some person, who is antagonistic to them and their work, is thinking unkindly of them, thus producing a disastrous effect upon the life of the sensitive subject of their thoughts.

Therefore, the work of the band of spirits here alluded to is a highly important one, for the magnetic sympathy and love of these pure-minded, earnest, and tender young beings produce a tranquilizing, soothing effect

upon the lives of the mediums whom they approach, which is very beneficial to them. And though each medium has a band of attending spirits, composed of males and females, many of whom are powerful to guard and care for the susceptible instrument under their charge, yet they are ever glad to be assisted in the performance of their arduous duties of demonstrating immortal truth to mortals, and at the same time warding off unpleasant and dangerous conditions from their mediums, by the spirits of whom I write.

Just here allow me to remark that as unkind and malicious thoughts of another will wound and annoy that person, so gentle, loving, and kindly thoughts concerning a friend will reach the individual to whom they are directed with an influence refreshing and sweet, and carry blessing upon their way. How important, then, that we should all endeavor to cultivate kindly feelings in our hearts for our fellows, that our influence may result in good for humanity.

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MEDIUMS.

While the society of spirits here mentioned have much to do in exerting a cheerful influence over mediums in order to keep them in condition for their work, this does not comprise the extent of their labors. To spread the truth, and to be able to enlighten humanity at large upon the great question of immortal life, new mediums must be developed and brought into the field of spiritual labor. The spirit world has need of more instruments; and the members of our society find a work in visiting earth's people, and seeking mediumistic persons whose powers can be unfolded for the use of spirit helpers and the service of humanity. This task is pursued with zeal and earnestness, and many mortals are thus discovered and magnetically operated upon whose powers are developing for the work of the future. While certain individuals in middle and advanced life are becoming mediums, many young people are developing, in the privacy of home life, medial powers that are to be utilized by the spirits for the furtherance of their grand work. And the bands of young spirits from our co-operative society are determined that they will do all in their power to make this labor a mighty success.

“OUR CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY.”

Some three summers ago, a small company of Spiritualists visiting from the West, while assembled in an upper room of one of the largest hotels in Boston, was addressed by “Betsey,” the spirit-messenger of Mrs. J. C. Jackson, one of Cincinnati’s most popular and active mediums, upon the subject of co-operation. At that time, the sprightly and entertaining control of Mrs. Jackson proposed that those present should form themselves into a society for the purpose of uniting their efforts in seeking to benefit and bless humanity. It was suggested that this organization be called “Our Co-operative Society,” and known as an offshoot from, or a branch of, the Co-operative Societies of the Spirit World. Its members were not to be pledged to secrecy as to its forms and conditions, for their doings were to be such as would bear the inspection of the world; their labors might be extended in any direction, provided they pointed to the one result,—that of blessing some human being, mortal or spirit, and could be performed together or separately, as circumstances at the time demanded. It was further urged that no initiation fee, quarterly or other payment be collected from its members, for its doors were to be opened free to everyone who had a desire at heart to be of use in the world. The regulations of this society were to be such that all could conform to them in spirit as well as to the letter, for they only required earnest hearts and willing hands to do the work.

The duties of the members who should join this band would be such as all could perform. The brother who possessed material wealth would be expected to use a portion of his means in assisting the needy, or in other beneficent ways, as an opportunity for doing so arose before him. Those who could give but a mite for the furtherance of some good work, and who gave it with a cheerful spirit, would perform their share of the society’s labor just as truly as the man or woman of ample means who contributed largely. Those who had no money to bestow in charity, but who could speak a comforting word to the distressed, would be welcomed to the band; while those who, when the occasion arose, could perform some helpful hand-service in aid of others would be called associates and helpers. In short, the duty of members would be to become useful to others, and to exert their energies to benefit their fellow-beings. No matter in what direction or under what circumstances they found a human creature in need of any service

they could render,—whether of a material or spiritual nature,—they must exercise their power, and perform that work.

The life that now is may be beautified and made to extend its influence into the higher existence, and in blessing mortals by our helpful assistance, we also benefit and uplift the weary spirits who return to earthly conditions seeking release from their sufferings, while a benison of light and peace reflects from our good works upon the lovely evangels who are returning to mortal life to associate and co-operate with those who choose to join such a society as the one under consideration.

“Betsey” further stated to her group of interested listeners that no special place or regular time of meeting would be chosen for “Our Co-operative Society,” but that its members could perform their work wherever they might be, and that all the world had the privilege of considering themselves associative workers of the Union if they chose to do so; while if true charity, kindly feeling and helpful service were cultivated and conscientiously exercised by each one, no report of their doings or progress would be needed. The angels would know, understand, and approve.

WHAT CONSTITUTES MEMBERSHIP.

We are all brothers and sisters, children of one Father and Mother, members of one great family, and it is time we endeavored to strengthen the bonds of fraternity between each other. Let us do this to make our fellows happier or their lot easier to bear. To call up a smile to a weary face, to make a heart sing with joy, to cause others to grow thankful for the amenities and blessings of life, is a noble work; and mortals who strive to do these things, wherever they are, or under whatsoever conditions they may labor, are members of “Our Co-operative Society,” originated and established in the spirit world and revealed to mortals for their approval.

Thus was the question of the formation of a co-operative society on earth, similar in its principles, objects and purposes, and to be as far-reaching in its results as the same organizations in the spiritual world, first mooted and approved by “Betsey,” the control of Mrs. Jackson, to a few friends in the city of Boston; but at the time nothing was accomplished in the way of forming a union, or of adopting the practical suggestions of that worthy and clear-sighted spirit. After the return of the party to their homes in

Cincinnati, a spiritual seance was formed, which now convenes at the residence of Mrs. Dr. Jackson on the Saturday evenings of each week.

Upon these occasions it is the privilege of my father's sister—a beautiful spirit who is truly a minister of peace, hope, and love to many weary souls—to regularly control Mrs. J., through whose organism she is enabled to give many instructive and important lessons that result in great good to her hearers.

In frequenting the circles of her loved and ever faithful medium, my aunt Sarah has become familiar with its regular attendants, and so understands in a measure their spiritual capacities, powers, and aspirations; and at one time, taking up the idea of “Our Co-operative Society,” as out-lined by “Betsey” upon an earlier occasion, she so clearly elaborated it to the understanding of the mortal friends that they expressed themselves in utter harmony with its design, and intimated they were ready to unite with the spiritual world in its labors of love for humanity.

ITS PLANS, PURPOSES, AND INFLUENCE.

Thus “Our Co-operative Society” has been inaugurated, and its members are in earnest. They desire and intend to do good whenever and wherever they can, and to try and make the world better for having lived. Not only the Cincinnati friends belong to this Union, but individuals in Boston and elsewhere are aware of its existence, and join in its labors, declaring themselves members, and signifying their intention to perform their share of its good works; while hundreds of spirits are in sympathy with the movement, and are the unseen associates who are guiding it on to a glorious result.

Already has the power and influence of “Our Co-operative Society” spread in many directions, and the magnitude of its future usefulness and prosperity no man can predict. The grand, moral, spiritual teachings enunciated by celestial visitants through the instrumentality of Mrs. Jackson at her Saturday seances are productive of the best results, and are an important element in the work and growth of the society. All such meetings, where the truths taught are wisely and lovingly given, and are thankfully received by earnest minds who endeavor to incorporate them into their daily lives, are places where the true principles of union are to be found, and

where harmony of action reveal the existence of “Our Co-operative Society.”

Allow me here to invite all my readers to join our association, and to become helpers in the work of blessing mankind. They have no need to send in their names; all they have to do is to resolve to do good wherever they can, and to set about it at once, and they will be recognized by the angels as co-workers and friends.

PART SECOND.

CHAPTER XV. INTRODUCTORY.—SPIRIT MAY.

This, the second part of our volume, will contain the writings of a beautiful young spirit whose literary labors through her medium, Miss M. T. Shelhamer, have been adapted to the taste of children and young people; though ample testimony has been received from a number of persons of mature age that these simply-worded and easily-understood poems and narratives of spirit children, and of child-life in the spheres, are replete with interest, instruction, and enjoyment for “children of a larger growth” than those for whom they were originally designed.

Mary G. Kinsey is a younger sister of Kate A. Kinsey—spirit Violet—whose descriptions of life and labor in the spirit world have been given on the preceding pages. She passed to spirit life June 27, 1862, at the tender age of four months and one day, and consequently has gained her knowledge and experience of life in the spirit world. In the early summer of 1879, spirit Violet informed her medium that her sister Mary was a teacher of little children in the Summer-land; that she dearly loved the young and lovely buds of humanity, and found her chief enjoyment in ministering to their needs, and in catering to their pleasure; and announced her, Mary’s, intention of opening a children’s department in the columns of the *Voice of Angels*, through which she would talk to the children of earth,—singing them simple rhymes, or relating incidents and anecdotes of the children of the spirit world.

Shortly after this, Mary appeared to the medium for the purpose of putting this plan into execution, inditing through the organism of Miss Shelhamer her first contribution to a Children's Department for the *Voice* under the signature of "Spirit May," which *nom de plume* she has ever since employed; and from that time to the present, this sweet young spirit has assiduously labored to present to mortal children something fresh and bright from the tablets of her mind—either in poetry or prose—that would be at once interesting and instructive. At first, spirit May's productions were given in the form of verse for the ready comprehension of her young readers; but later, she successfully attempted the description of how children live in the Summer-land, with accounts of their labors, studies, and recreations.

As this work is published for the purpose of informing mortals concerning real life in the spirit world, that portion of it which spirit May has contributed will consist principally of her recitals of the work, doings, and surroundings of spirit children. The succeeding four chapters of this work treat upon these themes exclusively. Below we give a little brochure written by spirit May, entitled, "The Council of the Flowers," followed by a few selections from her poetic contributions to the *Voice of Angels*, with which it is thought best to finish this chapter.

THE COUNCIL OF THE FLOWERS.

The soft, glistening raindrops of April fell over the tired earth, that had been held by wintry cold and storm for many long months. The bright golden sunbeams and the sweet, fragrant breezes of May swept over the fields and woods and lanes, calling their flowers forth to enjoy the beautiful springtime of gladness and mirth.

Myriads of blossoms, white and yellow, red and purple and blue, sprang up from their nests of dainty green grasses and leaves, to swing in the passing breeze and shake the perfume from their petals with which to scent the balmy air. Roses and lilies, violets and daisies, pinks and cowslips, and a thousand other flowers made the hedges and gardens and meadows and forests appear gay and beautiful and very sweet.

June came and went, followed by July and August, with their burning splendor of sunlight and heat. Many of the flowers bloomed in sweetness

for a little while, and then dropped their leaves and died to earthly things, and passed away to the heaven where flowers bloom forever. Others, fragrant and fresh and fair, came to take their places, and so the whole world was sweet until the autumn came.

Down, down, dropped the leaves from the trees, whirling along through the air, no longer wearing their summer hue of green, but bearing the marks of age in the dull, brown appearance which had come to them.

The autumn time had come, and the oldest flowers began to shake their heads and whisper to each other that it was time for them to be gone, and that the winter must not find them here below. A great wind from the east, that had been listening to these remarks, caught up the words, and rushing over hill and dale, and wood and field, shrieked them into the ears of all the flowers that lingered there, causing them to draw their petals together and shiver in alarm.

Then the wise old flowers said: "Let us call a council, and discuss the propriety of leaving earth before the snow-king comes."

And so they gathered together all who could come, and concluded that they had lived quite long enough in this world, and it was time for them to take their flight to the great Paradise of flowers, where in one great garden they should live and bloom, and enjoy the sunlight and the dew forever.

And then a great red rose, the last of its kind, shook its fragrant petals and sweetly said: "Oh, kind west wind, we have decided to leave this world for our beautiful home above. Please to carry this message to our friends and relations all over the land. Wherever you find a flower, no matter how humble it may be, or what its color, whisper into its ear these words: Be ready when the west wind comes again to take your flight from earth; all your friends and kindred will join you in your journey to the Summer-land; their mission is ended here below; their new life will be taken up in company with their sweet friends of spring and summer, who have passed on before them. There is joyful reunion for all the flowers. Here they shall bloom no more. When the winter flies, new flowers and other blooms will shed their perfume here, but you and your friends will blossom in the eternal world, where no wintry cold nor frost will ever come."

And the genial west wind bore the message of the grand old rose far and wide, and whispered it to every flower, and the flowers bowed in silence while he spake; but when he had passed along, they shook off their useless

petals and prepared for their journey as they sweetly sang: "We are going home, we are going home; good-bye, old world, good-bye."

And when the west wind came again, he found them ready, and he gathered them all up in his arms and bore them away to the happy Summerland.

The north wind came with a biting blast, but he found no trembling leaf or shrinking flower; they had all departed with their friend, the west wind, to remain forever in that land of sunlight, where the south wind sings to them of the peace and beauty of their heavenly home.

FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

All day long the leafy branches
Of the stately maple tree
Waved their banners in the breezes
Bold and fearless, strong and free;
All day long the golden sunshine
Bathed the pretty flowers in light,
As they peeped above the grasses
And revealed their faces bright.

All day long a merry songster
Warbled in the leafy tree,
Waking all the air with music,
Thrilling all the hours with glee;
For he held a happy secret
'Neath his crimson mottled coat,
Cause of all the liquid gladness
Bubbling from his downy throat.

Let me tell to you the secret—
In a dainty, pretty nest,
Hid among the leafy branches,
There were cuddled down to rest
Little tiny, cunning birdlings,
Three in number—do you see?
This was why the merry songster
Warbled in his happy glee.

All day long the birdies wondered
What this strange, bright world could be,
While their gentle-hearted mother
Hushed them with her tender "Wee;"
And the happy, singing father
Brought them goodies fresh to eat,

As he told them famous stories
Of the flowers pure and sweet.

What a happy, joyous summer
Came to bless the maple tree
As the birdies grew in beauty,
Strength and vigor, full and free;
And they filled the earth with music,
Charmed the sunshine, woke the flowers,
As they brought a peaceful blessing
To the golden-hearted hours.

WHO CAN TELL?

Which is the prettiest flower
Growing in field or dell?
Think of it, little children,
See if your tongues can tell.
Is it the white-fringed daisy,
Bright with its heart of gold?
Is it the fragrant snowdrop,
Peeping above the mold?

Which is the prettiest flower
Blooming in woody glade?
Is it the lowly violet,
Seeking the cooling shade?
Is it the sweet field-lily,
Lifting her shining head?
Or is it the perfumed wild rose,
On the clearest dewdrops fed?

Which is the prettiest flower
Growing in meadow green?—
The buttercup so yellow,
With gay and dashing mien?
Is it the dandelion,
So like a star of gold?
Or is it the tiger-lily,
With manner bright and bold?

Oh, who can tell, my children,
The prettiest flower of all,
From lily fair and stately
To violet so small?
For each is bright and glowing,
And fills with native grace,
From early seed to blowing,
Its own appointed place.

WORK.

Work! work! work!

'Tis better to work than play—
'Tis better to do some little good
As we travel from day to day;
'Tis better to help some needy one
Than to idle our time away.

Work that is done with zeal
Is never too hard to do,
Work that is full of use
Will bring only strength to you;
Work that will bless some weary soul
Is filled with a purpose true.

Oh, children, large or small,
Give happy smiles, not tears,
Give pleasant looks and loving words
Through all the coming years
To those who come to you in pain,
Bowed down by doubts and fears.

Give of the best you have
To brighten life below,
To all who come within your reach
As on your way you go;
Be gentle, patient, true, and kind,
A friend to all in woe.

The angels give you joy,
And guard you with their love,
They watch you with their tender care
Where'er your footsteps rove;
They guide you o'er the shining way
That leads to Heaven above.

TO MY SISTER GENEVIEVE.

I know a little maiden,
So pure and sweet and fair,
There's roses in her smiling face
And sunbeams in her hair;
Her voice is soft and pleasant,
And rings with notes of love;
Her eyes are bright as starry gems
That shine in heaven above.

This happy little maiden
Possesses jewels bright,
With mines of wealth and splendor,
Aflame with brilliant light;
The wealth of priceless tenderness
Affection's soul imparts,
The gems of love and kindness
That shine from parent hearts.

Her path is strewn with blossoms
Of kindly smiles and words,
That break in sweetest music,
Like songs of summer birds,
From those who dwell about her—
Dear brothers, sister, true—
And crown her life with gladness
More sweet than morning dew.

Oh, gentle little maiden,
The angels love you well,
And bless your life with holier joy
Than human tongue can tell;
They whisper to your spirit
In accents pure and clear,
“Be gentle, pure, and loving,
For God has placed you here

To bless the souls of mortals,
And fill their hearts with love,
To lead them o'er the starry heights
To holier worlds above:

He gives you words of kindness
To scatter as you go
Along the way that leads to heaven
From earthly fields below.”

GRANDMA'S PET.

What a charming, nice old lady
Sits in yonder easy-chair,
Where the straying sunbeams wander
O'er her locks of snow-white hair!
Do you know that she is grandma
To these little children three,
Who are playing by the doorway
In such merry, laughing glee?

There is roguish little Harry,

With his eyes as black as sloes,
Flashing, leaping, snapping, dancing,
And a sweet face like a rose;
There is laughing Sue, whose tresses
Are as bright as shining gold—
Happy Sue, whose life is joyous,
For she is but ten years old.

Here is little, timid Bessie,
Quietest of all the three,
Fair as any snow-white lily
And as sweet as she can be;
With her ringlets brown and shining
Falling o'er her smiling face,
Bessie is a pretty picture
As she moves with gentle grace.

Now, of all these little children,
Which does grandma love the best?
Listen to her quiet answer:
"If you put me to the test,

I am sure I cannot tell you,
For each one is dear to me:
Harry is my pride and pleasure,
And I love his boyish glee:

Sue is wild and sometimes reckless,
And she does not always mind
What her gentle mother tells her—
To such faults I am not blind;
But I know that she is thoughtless,
And these faults will be outgrown;
Susie is my darling madcap,
And no brighter child I've known.

Bessie is a precious baby,
And for her I often fret
If she's from my side an hour—
So perhaps *she* is my pet:
But I love them *all*—the darlings—
And I pray the Holy One
To preserve them pure and spotless,
Till their life on earth is done."

TWO BIRDIES.

Down in a cool and mossy glen
Two little birdies sing,

One hath a flaming crimson breast,
And one a speckled wing;
They chirp and talk and sing away,
As birdies often do,
And fill the sunny air of day
With music sweet and true.

They have a cunning little nest,
Safe hidden in a tree,
Where four wee birdlings snugly rest
In happiness and glee;

And not a shadow flits across
The sunshine of their way,
And so they sit and sing in joy
Through all the summer day.

When Master Robin brings his food
To Mrs. Jenny Wren,
A cheerful flutter ripples through
The pleasant, mossy glen;
The wee, small birdlings open wide
Their tiny mouths for more,
As careful Jenny feeds them well
From out her ample store.

Oh, children, when you go and play
Within the mossy glen,
Look carefully for Robin Red,
And Mrs. Jenny Wren;
And as they sit and chirp to you
Of all their tender joy,
Resolve to never harm a bird
Nor any nest destroy.

EVENING.

When the day has gone to sleep,
And the shades of night appear,
All along the evening sky
Twinkling stars are shining clear;
Then the restless, weary birds
Cuddle in their downy nest,
Undisturbed by doubt or fear,
For our Father gives them rest.

As the golden stars appear
In the sky of crystal blue,
And the flowerets seek repose,

Bathed in heaven's pearly dew;
When the breezes cease to blow,
 In their wandering, willful way,
When the waters quiet grow,
 And the leaflets cease to play;

All are folded down to rest,
 Nature gives each one repose
Till the morning-star appears,
 And the gates of day uncloze;
And with flowers, birds, and bees
 Little children fall asleep,
Safely in the arms of love,
 That eternal vigils keep.

When the evening stars appear,
 Little forms in robes of white,
Kneeling by their mother's knee,
 Pray to Him who rules the night;
And their gentle prayers ascend
 On the wings of faith and love,
To the angels who attend
 Little children up above.

From the heavens where angels dwell,
 From the earth and air and sky,
From the parent heart below,
 From the Father's love on high,
Comes a blessing pure and sweet,
 All aglow with holy care,
For the children who repeat,
 Lispingly, their evening prayer.

THE AWAKENING OF THE FLOWERS.

Out in the sunshine, far out in the lanes,
Up on the hillsides, and over the plains,
Springing to life in each meadow and glen,
Filling the forests with sweetness again—
See how the flowers come trooping in glee,
Decking the woodlands, adorning each tree,
Climbing the mountain side, thronging the dell,
Weaving o'er all things a magical spell.

All through the long frosty winter they slept,
Nature above them her kind vigils kept;
Snugly tucked into their beds soft and warm,
Every sweet flower was safe from all storm.

Spring, with her musical voice, is now heard
Calling: "Good morning," to flower and bird;
Singing: "Awaken, my darlings, 't is time,
Winter has gone to some far-distant clime.

Come from the valley and hillside and glen,—
Birdlings now list for your footsteps again,
Violet! May Flower! Snowdrop! my dears,
Rouse and give welcome when robin appears.
Summer is coming with sunshine and song,
Life will be happiness all the day long.
Haste! from your slumbers now brightly arouse,
Shake out your garments and garland your brows!"

Swift at the sound of their loved leader's call,
Leaped up the flowers by hillside and wall;
Over the meadows and forests they wove
Treasures of beauty; each woodland and grove
Rang with the musical anthems of birds,
Nature's rich music unwedded to words;
While summer found earth so enchanting and sweet,
She thought nothing lacking to make it complete.

BABY NELLIE.

Cunning little baby Nellie,
With her laughing, sweet blue eyes,
Gazing on the world around her
In a wondering, deep surprise,
As if asking in amazement,
What do all these strange things mean?
Ne'er before such giant people,
Or such places has she seen.

For you see, my little children,
Baby Nell has lately come
From some far-off sunny Elf-land,
To make this her future home:
And so many things around her
Seem so hard to understand,
For such people and their doings
Are not known in Baby-land.

Now she catches at the sunbeam
Gleaming on the snowy floor,
Then she coos in smiling wonder
At the vines around the door;
And the little, spotted kitten
Is a source of great delight

To our charming baby Nellie,—
Winsome baby, sweet and bright.

Through her tiny lips so rosy
Peeps one tooth as white as milk,
And her sunny, golden tresses
Are as soft as finest silk;
With her dimpled hands and fingers,
And her little pink-white toes,
She is just the fairest creature,
Sweet and pure as any rose.

Oh, she is our little darling,
Sent to us by God above,
As a token of his goodness,
As a symbol of his love;
And we prize our tiny treasure,
For an angel sure must dwell,
Undefined and pure and spotless,
In the form of baby Nell.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

New Year has come! New Year has come!
Oh, children sweet and dear,
And from our pleasant spirit home
We've seen its face appear;
'Tis fresh and clear, and full of smiles,
And beaming o'er with mirth,
'Tis bright with charming little wiles,
To please old Mother-Earth.

I know its happy hours dawn
In sunbeams sweet and mild,
That bring a story, or a song,
To every laughing child;
I know its hands are full of love
For children sweet and dear,
It comes in gladness from above,
This gentle, bright New Year.

Oh, it is full of work and play,
To share with little boys
And little girls, it comes your way,
To bring you pleasant joys;
And when you deeds of kindness show
To others whom you meet,
Its hours with happiness will glow
All pure and rich and sweet.

New Year has come! New Year has come!
Oh, meet it children, dear,
With shouts of welcome to your home—
This happy, glad New Year!
Oh, smile upon it with your love,
And make its life more sweet—
It is an angel from above
To guide your little feet!

SNOW DROPS.

Beneath the coverlet of snow,
Two little flowers learn to grow;
Their cheeks are pale and white and fair,
Their lips are sweet as summer air.
At first they shiver in the cold,
Then grow more fearless, calm and bold,
To push aside the snowy sheet
And lift their faces pure and sweet.

One to the other gently speaks,
As March winds blanch her tender cheeks:
“Dear sister, it is cold today,
But yet I think we here may stay;
The earth is bleak, and dark and chill,
All other flowers are sleeping still,
But we’ll remain awhile to sing
In token of the coming spring.”

The sister softly makes reply:
“We’ll bloom together, you and I,
And send our choicest perfume out
To gladden mortals round about;
I’m sure they must be weary now
Of winter’s dismal, icy brow,
And longing for the breath of flowers,
So we will stay and offer ours.”

And so the dainty blossoms braved
The snow and sleet, and only craved
A tiny place to fill with bloom,
And scatter forth their rich perfume;
And many hearts that yearned for spring,
And all the beauties she would bring,
Gave blessing to the little flowers,
As heralds of her fragrant hours.

AN EVENING SONG.

Rest, rest sweet hours of the day,
Your moments, filled with toil and play,
Have wandered far since morning's sun,
But now their journeyings are done;
Rest, precious hours, bright and fair,
Let no rude touch of pain and care
Disturb your well-earned calm repose,
The world its friendship to you owes.

Hail! peaceful hours of the night
Attended by yon stars so bright,
You come with quiet steps to earth,
And silent tones of woe or mirth;
We give you welcome, for you bring
The balm of sleep upon your wing,
With which to touch our weary eyes
Until all sense of weakness flies.

Oh, we are little children small,
And yet we love the hours all,—
Those of the bright and shining day
That fly in happiness away;
And those that wander through the night
To give us visions of delight,
And show us in each pleasant dream
The world where heavenly mansions gleam.

CHILDREN.

Everywhere we hear the voices
Of the children, glad and free,
Shouting, chatting, laughing, talking,
Ringing out in merry glee;
Everywhere we hear the patter
Of their busy little feet,
Romping over hills and meadows,
Rushing through the city street.

Everywhere we see the faces
Of those little girls and boys,
Who, in spite of care and trial,
Are their parents' sweetest joys;
Boys and girls that in the future
Will be men and women too,
Rulers of the sunny nation,

Bright and active, grand and true.

Little children, as you wander
In your happy, careless moods,
Through the snowy streets of winter,
Or the pleasant summer woods;
As you feel that in the future,
When to manhood you have grown,
You will seek for truth and wisdom,
Seek to gain them for your own.

Little children, pray remember
That the love that holds you fast,
Burning in your parents' bosoms,
Will endure until the last;
Seek to pay it back in kindness,
Gentle smiles and loving words,
Which will echo in their hearing
Sweeter than the songs of birds.

Little children, live in blessing
Others with a word or smile,
And the angel friends above you
Will protect you all the while;
Live by love and gentle kindness,
Then the world will better grow,
And rejoice that little people
Such as you may dwell below.

SNOW FLAKES.

Softly falls the spotless snow,—
Flakes are flying everywhere,
Like as many white-winged birds
Speeding through the silent air;
Down and down to earth they come,
Full of mercy, full of love,
Sent upon their mission forth,
By our Father-God above.

How they weave a garment bright,
As they come in thick'ning crowds;
Weave a garment soft and light,
White and fleecy as the clouds.
Over all the fields it spreads,
Tucking all the flowers in,
Hushing them to sleep in beds,
Far removed from earthly din.

Thick and fast the snow-flakes fly,
Giving every girl and boy,
As they watch them flutter by,
Glimpses of delight and joy.
How they cover all the earth,
Brown and gloomy, up from sight;
How they deck each leafless tree
With a garment fresh and white!

Oh, we love the downy snow,
'Tis a messenger of love,
Sent to grace the world below
By our God who reigns above;
Sent to keep the flowers warm
Till the wintry storms are o'er,
And to gladden youthful hearts
With their beauty evermore.

CHAPTER XVI.

A STORY FOR THE CHILDREN.

In the outskirts of a large city, a little way out in the cool and pleasant country, there stands a little one-story house, which was once painted a light yellow, but which time and storm have turned to a dull, brown color. A little plot of ground attached, shaded by one noble oak tree, seemed turned into a perfect fairy bower of red and gold and green and purple, when summer suns shone down upon its beds of blooming four-o'clocks, correopsis, and larkspurs, in their setting of dainty foliage. All day long, the birds warbled or twittered to each other in the tree-top, where a nest of young robins was safely hidden from the prying eyes of too curious school-boys. Such stores of wonderful seeds, buds, and flowers did these birds know of at a no-distant place; such cherries and berries, which they could enjoy to their hearts' content, after carefully providing for their half-famished young!

But of all the delightful spots these joyful birds had visited, not one seemed so suitable for their home as the plummy tops of this old oak tree, which cast its genial shade over the little old brown house, and here a nest was built,—five little, spotted eggs were carefully covered up by the mother-bird, which by-and-bye burst open and disclosed five little hungry bills, wide apart, gasping for food.

What a happy summer was this! Father Robin bustling about, looking very important, bringing a dainty worm or toothsome berry to feed his children upon, or perching upon the topmost bough of the tree, and filling the air with the music of his joyful songs; while the dainty, careful mother, prudent Mrs. Jenny, anxiously watched her little ones, lest some harm should come to them, or talked to them in her quaint bird-fashion, with now and then a little chirp of encouragement, when one would attempt to try its wings for a tiny flight amid the leaves.

But I have something to tell you about the inmates of the little old brown house, which contained two tiny rooms, a kitchen and a bed-room. The floors of these rooms were always white and shining; pretty pink curtains hung at the windows, a few chairs, a table and a little stove were in the outer room; while the inner apartment contained a neat, white bed, a stand, and one chair.

But two persons lived in this little home,—a pale, delicate woman, who was stitching her life away by constant sewing (for she made cheap clothing for a firm in the big city),—and a little girl about six years old. This little girl had bright blue eyes, and brown, curling hair; her name was Fannie, and she lived here alone with her dear mamma. Fannie's papa had been in the spirit world for three years, and her mamma was obliged to do the sewing in order to earn bread and shelter for herself and little one.

Little Fannie used to help her dear mamma by threading needles, sewing tags on the work,—tags are tickets with the number of the garment written on them,—and picking up the litter on the floor.

Fannie Davis was a very happy little girl; she had but few toys, and these were old, nearly worn-out playthings, which had seen better days; but she loved to play in the little garden, and watch the flowers, pulling out old weeds and picking the flower-seeds as they ripened. She would listen to the birds for hours, and talk to them in her childish way. They were her companions, for she had no playmates, and it was a happy summer for this little girl when the robins built their nest in the old tree.

But, alas, a terrible storm of wind and rain came one night, and brought disaster to the birdies' home. The nest became detached from its fastenings and fell, catching upon a lower branch of the tree. The old birds were not harmed, but two of their young ones were killed, and another was lying on the ground with a broken wing. In this condition little Fannie found them in the morning, when the storm had disappeared and the sun was shining bright. Poor little thing, how she cried as she buried the two tiny birds in the garden, and placed a handful of her choicest flowers upon their grave. The little wounded bird she carried into the house, her mother tied up its broken wing with a cotton string, and fed it with bread-crumbs. Fannie made a little, soft nest for the bird from some pieces of old linen, and kept it until it was strong and well, when she let it go again out into the bright world to find its parents, its two brother birdies, and its nest repaired and straightened in the old tree.

But something really wonderful—so it appeared to the little girl—happened. While the poor little bird had remained a wounded prisoner under Fannie's care, it had become very tame and would eat its food from her hand, and now that it had grown strong and well, the little girl felt sad at

losing her friend; for she felt that she could no longer keep him and pet and feed him as she once did.

But I think little birds are grateful creatures; they do not forget a kindness. In the warm summer weather Mrs. Davis always left the window open at night, that fresh air might enter her dwelling; and you may judge of Fannie's delight to find her little bird entering the house every morning. He would perch upon her shoulder, eat seeds or crumbs from her mouth and hand, and chirp and warble his little songs to her in an ecstasy of glee. Every morning regularly did this occur; the bird would enter the open window, remain about half an hour to delight his benefactress, and then soar away to his home on the tree-top, or to other pleasant places in the neighborhood.

One bright, pleasant day in August, as little Fannie sat playing with her flowers and pebbles in the garden, she espied the face of a little boy, framed in by a mass of sunny-brown hair, and half covered—as if from shyness—with a white straw hat, bound with a bright blue ribbon, upon the other side of the fence. The stranger was peeping at her with sparkling, roguish brown eyes, and seemed half inclined to speak.

Springing from the ground, Fannie opened the gate and called: "Would you like to come in here and see my flowers, little boy?"

The stranger smiled and advanced, and in a few minutes was chatting with our little girl as though he had always known her. He told her his name was Franklin Hedge, that he lived in a beautiful, large, white house ever so far away,—the "ever so far" was about two miles farther into the country,—that he had a dear mamma, and a splendid papa, with big, black whiskers; that he had no brothers and sisters, but he guessed God was going to bring him a little sister soon, cause he had asked for one so many times; that he had horses and carriages and playthings, "and the *biggest garden*, with all kinds of flowers growing in it." He was out riding with his teacher today, and his teacher had let him play outside while she went into a house to see a sick friend; it was only a little ways off, and he had strayed this way while waiting for her.

To all this Fannie listened with breathless delight; she had never seen such wonderful things as this little boy said he owned; he looked so cool and pretty in his spotless white suit, and seemed so kind, so different from

the boys she had seen throwing stones, that he seemed like an angel from another world.

For an hour these two children chatted and played in the garden; Fannie showing Frankie how to make necklaces of flowers and stems, and Frankie initiating Fannie into some of the mysteries of boyish games. Once, Mrs. Davis called to know who Fannie was playing with, but the little girl satisfied her mother about that, and returned to her new friend, bringing a glass of fresh milk which he drank with much enjoyment.

But all pleasant things seem to have an end on earth, and pretty soon these friends were called upon to part. A carriage, drawn by a sleek white horse, and driven by a lady, appeared coming up the road. Frankie recognized his teacher, who was looking anxiously up and down the road, and kissing Fannie Davis good-bye, ran out to meet her; he was lifted into the carriage, and in a few moments whirled from sight.

For many long weeks after this day, Fannie talked constantly of her little friend Frankie, and wondered when he would come to see her again; but the weeks deepened into months, the flowers drooped their heads and withered away, leaving only dry, brown seeds, which the little girl carefully gathered and laid away; the leaves drifted from the old oak tree, leaving the branches brown and bare; the robin's nest was deserted, for all the birds had flown away to a sunnier, warmer clime, to spend the winter; and still Frankie did not come. Fannie could not play out in the garden now, except for a little while on the sunniest days; she missed the morning greeting of her little pet robin sadly, but she liked to think of him as happy in some warmer place, and to look forward to the coming spring, when he would return to the old tree.

Mrs. Davis had been growing paler and thinner all summer; a bad cough frequently racked her frame, and distressing pains in the side gave her great uneasiness. It was now a difficult task to carry her work to and fro to the shop in the city; yet she felt it must be done, and there was no one to do it but herself. Upon the scanty proceeds of her toil depended the existence of herself and little one. For herself she did not mind so much; but for her little girl she was all anxiety.

A kind-hearted doctor, who lived in the vicinity of the little old brown house, called in occasionally, leaving some dark mixture in a bottle, which

the patient woman took with the hope of gaining strength; but the days and weeks flew by, bringing but little relief.

Winter was almost at hand; Mrs. Davis had been unable to provide for its approach, and she knew not what to do. At last she had been forced to give up her work. She had but a little wood, flour, and meal in the house; the snow came drifting down, at first very slowly, but soon increased in rapidity, until at last the ground was covered with a carpet so pure and spotless and clear that even angel feet might tread upon it; yet bitterly cold and uncomfortable to the poor, bare, suffering feet of those mortals who are without clothing and fire.

Down, down came the feathery snow; darkness fell upon the silent house; little Fannie crept to her mother's side beneath the bed-covering, and was clasped in her tender arms. Sweet sleep visited the child; but none came to bless the weary eyes of the dying mother; for now the poor woman knew the truth,—her hours on earth were numbered. Oh, how she prayed for the good doctor to come and visit her; but he was far away by the side of another sick and suffering one, and knew not of her desire. Only one thought possessed the mind of the sleepless woman,—the future welfare of her little girl. If she could be satisfied of this, she would be content to pass to the spirit world, where she knew her dear husband was waiting to welcome her.

The storm passed with the night; the morning sun shone upon the snow-covered home of our friends, and streamed in upon a little group gathered around the bed of Mrs. Davis: little Fannie weeping pitifully, and clinging to the cold, lifeless hand of that form that had once contained the spirit of her mother; the good, kind doctor, whom I have spoken of, and a beautiful lady robed in mourning garments, with a face as pale as the face of the dead.

Mrs. Davis had passed away peacefully, for the doctor had assured her that her little one should be taken care of. He was now preparing to leave, to send some one to look after the house, and prepare for the funeral service of the departed.

You will remember the little boy, Frankie Hedge, who spent a pleasant hour in the garden of the little brown house, one sunny summer day, in company with little Fannie. Well, Frankie had not forgotten his little playmate of an hour; many times would he speak of her to his mamma and

papa, and they had promised him that when he returned from the sea-side, where he was going with them for a few weeks, he should again see the little girl he had taken such a liking to.

But, alas, Frankie Hedge, who went to the sea-side a strong and happy boy of eight years, returned at the end of six weeks a pale and helpless invalid. Frequent bathing in the ocean spray, and remaining in the water too long at a time, weakened his constitution to such a degree that when a chill seized him one cloudy morning, while splashing about with his companions in the water, it was with the utmost difficulty he was brought to land in a senseless condition. From that time he weakened and pined away; all that human love or physician's skill could do was done, but without avail; and now, when the December winds howled about the splendid residence of his father, he lay panting and moaning, his face as white as the snowy pillows upon which it rested, and his eyes grown large and sorrowful, seeking rest and strength from the gentle face of his mother, who bent above him.

Often, in his hours of illness, had he spoken to his parents of little Fannie Davis, telling of the many fine times he meant to have with her when he got well; but now he knew he should never get stronger in this world, and so it was that on this cold December evening, when the snow was flying thick and fast without, and the gentle, subdued light of the sick chamber fell upon the costly furniture, the rosy curtains, the silver ornaments of the mantel, lighting them up with a mellow glow, and shining upon the pallid faces of the anxious parents, Frankie entreated his mother to go for Fannie Davis, and bring her to him.

Kind Dr. May, who was in attendance, said he knew the little girl and her poor, sick mamma, and he would go for her himself. But this would not do; nothing would pacify the sick child until his mother promised that in the morning she would go in the sleigh with the good doctor, find Fannie, and bring her to Frankie's side.

"Oh, I am so glad, mamma," said the child; "there is a nice, tall man here, and he is so glad too. I saw him that day in the garden where Fannie lives; he told me he was Fannie's father. He says pretty soon Fannie will have no mamma on earth. Do bring her here, mamma, and perhaps when she has no mamma, and you have no little boy, she will be your little girl, and stay with you forever; 'cause I will be will be with the angels; but I will come to see you sometimes."

After this the child fell asleep, and in the morning, when the sun was shining on the freshly-fallen snow, Mrs. Hedge was taken in the doctor's sleigh to the home of Fannie Davis; and that is how they found the dying woman and the weeping child.

Kind, gentle Mrs. Hedge found it impossible to persuade little Fannie to leave her mother's side; so after the spirit of the suffering woman had passed peacefully away, she was obliged to return to her home, leaving the little girl in charge of a good woman whom the doctor had found to remain with and care for her, until after the funeral of the body of Mrs. Davis; for it is only the body, dear children, that has to be laid away from sight; the real person lives, and is not cold and senseless; but if he or she has been good, happiness is theirs, and they find a beautiful, sweet home in company with their dear friends. Mrs. Davis had met her dear husband and parents, and found a bright home awaiting her, but she had not forsaken nor forgotten her little girl, who was left on the earth seemingly alone.

Frankie Hedge expressed no feeling of disappointment when his mother returned without Fannie. "I knew she wouldn't come," said he to her as she entered the room, after removing her rich cloak and furs. "I told papa she wouldn't come. I saw her papa again a few moments ago, and there was a lady with him with such a sweet, pretty face. It made me think of you, mamma, it looked so kind and good, and then I knew Fannie's mamma was dead and that was her." Mrs. Hedge kissed her little boy, and said she thought Fannie would come by-and-bye, after the funeral of her mother's body. "Oh, yes, she will come, mamma; her papa told me so, and I can wait, because I'm not going to leave you for some time yet. I saw dear grandma last night, and she kissed me and said: 'Not till the March winds blow, my lamb, will we be ready to take you to our spirit home.'"

The eyes of the listening parents filled with tears; they knew their darling was traveling fast to the Summer-land, yet they did not grieve as some people grieve when their loved ones pass away; for they knew he could come back to them. They did not think he was dreaming, as the doctor did, when he talked of seeing Fannie's papa and his own grandma, because they knew the angels are ever around striving to make their presence known to their friends.

In three days Fannie Davis was brought to the home of Frankie Hedge. Poor little thing! how her eyes lighted up at the sight of the little boy

waiting anxiously to receive her. What an affectionate meeting was this! You would have thought it a meeting between a long-lost brother and sister; but the angels knew and understood. Both children had changed since that long past summer day when they met and parted. For while Frankie had grown pale and wan from pain and weakness, Fannie had lost her rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes from long confinement and grief from the illness and death of her mother.

Nothing would satisfy Frankie Hedge now but a promise that Fannie should stay with him while he remained in the body, and this desire was granted.

Sorrow of her own had filled the heart of Mrs. Hedge with pity and sympathy, which soon grew into love for the little orphan; and Mr. Hedge, who declared Fannie looked very much like a little sister of his who passed away many years ago, took her into his heart at once.

A little room, opening off the hall where Frankie's chamber was situated, was fitted up for little Fannie. A beautiful carpet of blue ground, with white lilies strewn upon it, covered the floor; a tiny bed of spotless linen and lace, pretty furniture of blue and white, a few pretty pictures upon the pink-tinted walls, and blue and white curtains at the window, completed the furnishing of the room. This apartment was a continued charm to our little girl. Never in her life had she beheld anything so beautiful, and she would sometimes hold her breath and pinch her arm, to see if she was not dreaming.

Mrs. Hedge had undertaken also to clothe the child, not in somber garments of black, but in dainty dresses of creamy white cashmere, which filled her spirit with delight, and made her wish for her mamma to come back and see her.

The two children were constant companions now during the day, save when Fannie was absent at her meals, or taken out for an airing by Frankie's governess. Dr. May declared Frankie very much improved since Fannie came, and Mr. and Mrs. Hedge began to hope that health and strength would soon return to him.

What famous times the children had together! Frankie possessed numerous toys and picture-books, which were a source of never-failing delight to the little girl; besides, he would tell her of the places where he had been, and things he had seen, until her little eyes would grow round with wonder and pleasure. But best of all would she love to listen to him, as

he told of the visits of her mamma and papa, and his own grandmamma to his bedside, and what they said to him; and she would wish, oh, so much, that she could see and hear them too, and it made her very happy to learn that her mamma and papa were happy in a sweet home, and they came back every day to Frankie, to send their love to their little girl.

So time sped rapidly away, and it was soon the first of February. The clear, white frost covered the ground, which shone in the beautiful sunlight of morning, or the glittering moonlight of evening, like countless sparks of brilliant light. All was fair, calm, and serene. Within doors it was the same; not a breath of discord, not a ripple of inharmony came to disturb the quiet peace of that little household.

A beautiful cabinet-organ stood in the recess of Frankie's room, and sometimes, when the twilight fell, the little boy would ask his mamma not to have the gas lighted, but to play on the organ; and as the quiet shadows of early evening fell, the good lady would play softly and sweetly to the listening ears of the delighted children. At this hour the presence of the angels became visible to Frankie, and he would talk with them, as though they were in the body.

One evening, about the middle of the month, Mrs. Hedge sat in a large easy-chair, holding her little boy in her lap; he had been very restless and uneasy all day, and to soothe him into quiet his mother had taken him in her arms. Little Fannie sat a short distance from them, her soft, blue eyes fixed in a dreamy gaze. Mr. Hedge had just come in, and stood looking sadly down upon his suffering child.

Suddenly, Fannie arose, passed to the organ, seated herself upon the stool, and began running her fingers over the keys, producing a soft, sweet melody. Presently she began to sing a beautiful song, still playing an accompaniment to the words.

Frankie's parents were astonished beyond measure, even while delighted at this wonderful performance of the little girl, who had never played a note upon any musical instrument in her life; but the little boy himself viewed the scene with calmness and pleasure. Afterward, he told them all that he had seen a beautiful lady touch Fannie by the hand, lead her to the organ, and guide her fingers over the keys.

The song which Fannie sang Mrs. Hedge recognized as a favorite air of a very dear sister of hers, who had long since passed to the spirit world, and

by the description her little boy gave of the lady he saw at Fannie's side, she was convinced that it was really her sister, come back to sing to her once again.

Every evening after this would the sweet spirit come, take control of the little girl, and sing and play to her delighted listeners; Frankie never failing to see and speak to her, as well as other spirits present, and to convey to his parents the messages of love and consolation they would bring. It seemed as though heaven had indeed come down to that sick chamber, and that angels dwelt within the home.

These were sad but happy days for Mr. and Mrs. Hedge. They now knew that nothing—not even their great love—could keep their little boy in the body; his strength was failing fast, but his spirit powers were gaining so rapidly that he could see the angels at any time. Many a sacred hour did the parents spend in communion with their spirit friends through the powers of these two children brought so strangely together; and even while they sorrowed to part with their darling, they rejoiced to know that he would be happy in the spirit world, where they would some day join him, and that while they remained on earth he would return to comfort and bless them.

Frankie himself was perfectly calm and happy in all but one thing; he was troubled and perplexed about his little friend Fannie; it was strange how these children had become attached to each other. Fannie, who had always been an active little girl, would sit upon the side of the bed for hours at a time, holding Frankie's hand, and talk or sing to him until he fell asleep, or it was time for her to leave him for her food or walk.

As yet, the little boy had not mentioned his trouble to anyone: but at length, as the end drew near, he resolved to do so. It was evening, the curtains were drawn, and the mellow light shone through the gas-globes. The children had kissed each other "good night," and Fannie had retired to her rest. Mr. and Mrs. Hedge were sitting with their sick boy; the nurse and physician had retired, and all was quiet throughout the house.

"Mamma and papa," said the child, "there is one thing I want so much, so much; I am going to leave you very soon now; grandma told me this morning she would soon come for me; but I want you to promise me something before I go."

"What is it, my darling?" asked his mother, as she kissed his pale brow.

“I want you to keep Fannie always with you, and let her be your little girl. She will be your comfort. The spirits want this, too; I think they sent me to her last summer, and they brought her to us. Please, mamma and papa, say she may always stay here with you.”

“Yes, dear,” answered the father, “your mamma and I decided this some time ago. We can never part with the little one willingly. She is too precious to us, and she has been too dear to our little boy for us to let her go from us.”

A smile of joy flashed over the child’s features; he was at rest now; nothing else could disturb him, for he was near the gates of the Summer-land. His little friend was to be cared for; that was all he could desire. With a loving kiss and grateful glance to his dear parents, he sank into a sweet and dreamless sleep.

The March winds came and whistled around the old, stately house; the white snow still lay upon the ground. It had been an unusually cold winter; many poor souls had felt the biting blast; but little Fannie Davis, cared for by loving friends and guardian spirits, had been mercifully protected from all want and suffering.

It was twilight,—the angel’s hour in that home of wealth and splendor. Mr. and Mrs. Hedge, good doctor May, the gentle old nurse, and little Fannie Davis were gathered around the couch of the child whose mortal life was fast ebbing away. But there was a far larger company gathered in that silent room,—angelic beings came to take the loved one home, and these the eyes of the child watched with solemn delight. Calmly, sweetly, gently, his soul passed out from the body, to be met by loving welcome, and borne to the blooming bowers of Summer-land, where all is beauty, gladness, and joy.

Tender hands robed the little form of clay in garments of spotless white, adorned it with rare and fragrant flowers, and with many caresses and tears, consigned it to its last resting-place. But the little boy, Frankie, now glad and strong and free, still lived in a beautiful home, from which he could return to those he loved.

Three days after the burial of the body, Mr. and Mrs. Hedge were seated together, conversing sadly of the late events. Little Fannie, who was present, seemed to pay no attention to their conversation; the poor child had

grown strangely silent and sad of late, for she missed her little companion more than tongue can tell.

Suddenly her form straightened, her eyes brightened, and a smile spread over her features. “Oh, Frankie, Frankie,” she exclaimed; “he is here—see! see! How good and bright he looks!”

In a moment her eyes closed, her features changed, and passing to the side of the sofa, where the elder parties were seated, she embraced them fondly, and in Frankie’s well-known tones addressed them, telling of his pleasure, his beautiful home, how well and strong he had grown; telling of the dear ones with him, and expressing his delight at the opportunity of returning to his dear, dear parents.

What a happy hour was this!—their dear one returning to speak to them. Tears of joy fell from their eyes, and the sorrowing parents were led to rejoice in the goodness and mercy of our Father in Heaven.

Often after this was the scene repeated; almost daily, Frankie would return, and control little Fannie to speak to his father and mother; many times he appeared to the little girl, and the children would play together, as though both were in the form; so that loneliness and sorrow vanished from the hearts of all, and it indeed seemed that their dear one had never died.

Mr. and Mrs. Hedge never had cause to regret adopting Fannie Davis; she was the light and life of their household, through whom the angels came and ministered to weary hearts. Many a life has been comforted, many a home brightened by the messages of love, hope, and cheer, given through her organism by good spirits. She is now a young lady,—sweet, gentle, and lovable,—whose purest happiness comes to her life when she is comforting the sad, and assisting the needy. Spirit Frankie, with her own dear father and mother, and many other angels, guard and guide her on in her useful mission of helpfulness and love. Thus, you may see, dear children, how the angels ever care for those in need.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CHILDREN OF THE SUMMER-LAND.

I think the dear little boys and girls in earth life would like to know something about the children who live in the bright Summer-land; and so I am going to tell them about the little ones I have seen in that sweet country, and the pretty places where they live.

First, my little friends, I will tell you of the beautiful place which we call Lily-Vale. It is a pretty spot where flowers bloom all the time, and where birds sing and carol in their merry way to please the children who live and go to school there. A large lake of clear water is in the center of Lily-Vale; all around its shores great trees grow, and their huge branches, trimmed with glossy green leaves, throw a pleasant shade upon the water, so that it looks like a large, green, shining jewel. Little white boats, some of them in the shape of swans, and others fashioned in the form of various shells, ride upon the lake, and it is the delight of the scholars who dwell here to be allowed, as they often are, to sail in these tiny "floats," as we call them, under the care of their teacher or guardian friend.

They gather together in parties upon the lake shore, a guide and two children entering each boat, and shoot off across the water to enjoy the calm breeze and delicious, gliding motion of the skiffs, and at the same time to learn lessons concerning the nature, qualities, and uses of water, and the laws of motion as connected with the flow of waves. The manner of learning about these things is different in the Summer-land than on earth, and I fear my little mortal friends would not understand did I attempt to explain it.

Well, sometimes there may be seen from twenty to thirty floats, each containing three persons,—a teacher and two children,—upon the bosom of the lake. Today the parties may be content to just move quietly along upon the water, and tomorrow they may rapidly glide to some distant part of Lily-Vale, there to enjoy a picnic ramble, perhaps, in Maple Grove or Woody Glen,—two favorite places of resort for the scholars,—and to gather information concerning botany and the other branches of natural history. I am sure my little readers would like to sail upon the lake of which I write, and to make one of the happy, joyous party of children who never quarrel,

but are always gentle, affectionate, and deferential to their teachers and one another.

But I must tell you something more of the valley called Lily-Vale, named thus because its very fine, velvet-like grass, or sward, is dotted with fragrant, beautiful lilies. These sweet flowers are the delight of the children, and the pride of the teachers' hearts, and they make the place one great bower of fragrance and beauty.

Tall and massive trees uprear their heads in this place, scattered apart, and in groves, and beneath their luxuriant shade scholar and teacher alike spend many a happy hour with lesson and task. Other flowers beside the lily also grow here, and the little ones are never wearied in tending to them, or watching their growth from day to day. The sun shines brightly upon all things; and when the plants or flowers or trees need moisture, the showers come,—not in great, heavy raindrops, but in fine sheets of silvery spray, which moisten all things without drenching them, and through which may be seen a mild, yellow light which comes from the sun above the fleecy clouds.

In the distance—for Lily-Vale is not a small place—may be seen great towering mountains, encircling the valley; their shining heads, which glow in the sunlight with purple and rosy hues, looking like radiant guides watching over the little folks below them, are fair to gaze upon, and many a lesson of firmness, fidelity, and truth do the children learn from the sight of those faithful sentinels of Lily-Vale.

And now, my little friends, you wish to know how the children live in this pretty spot. Well, they live very much as you do in your earthly homes, only many of them do not live with their mammas and papas—because perhaps the parents are on earth, or have gone away and forgotten their little ones, or for some other reason—but reside with their teachers or guides, who are always kind, loving, and attentive to the little people under their charge.

In this sweet place there are a number of little white houses, some smaller than others,—because the number of inmates of some are less than of others,—and in these houses the children live. These houses, or “Rhonas,” are all round like pavilions, and have entrances on every side; the windows open like doors from floor to ceiling, and are generally open wide. The columns, or posts, of the “Rhonas” are entwined with growing

vines, which throw out their purple, pink, golden, or scarlet blossoms to catch the gentle breeze. The insides of the houses are furnished prettily but simply, and all look neat, tasteful, and sweet, just as little children's homes always should; for the surroundings of a child have a great deal to do with forming its character and disposition, as well as with developing its tastes.

Books, pictures, music, and everything beautiful, are to be found in the little homes of Lily-Vale, and all who dwell there live in harmony with one another; the children are obedient and affectionate toward the teachers, who in turn are respectful, loving, and tender toward their pupils. The older scholars assist in training and caring for the younger, and all are happy in this Summer-land home.

Teachers in the spirit world do not have charge of so many children as tutors do on earth. No teacher has more than seven pupils under her charge, and many have only one or two; for they believe that by having but a few scholars they can better attend to the training of mind and body than they could if they had many to look after, as in that case some portion of the training would be sure to be neglected.

Sometimes the pupils of each teacher learn their lessons in their homes, but often they may be seen in the open air, under the trees, in the groves, by the lakeside, or elsewhere, busily employed over their studies and gaining practical knowledge from the various objects around them.

But there is a beautiful and grand building in Lily-Vale, called "The Temple of Art," which I must tell you of; for it is so spacious and lofty, and fashioned of such a shining white, almost transparent, substance that it can be seen from a far distance, and excites the wonder as well as admiration of all who gaze upon it.

This beautiful building has no side-walls, but is open all around, its roof being supported by heavy columns of white, shining stone. Its ceiling is carved and tinted to resemble the blue sky; its floor is of many-colored stones, laid in circles; in the center, a large fountain of silvery white constantly sends forth fan-like shapes of perfumed spray; all around the interior of the temple are soft-cushioned seats, but at the farther end is a raised platform, where the Masters of Art sit when they come to instruct the children.

At regular intervals of time, the children of Lily-Vale gather in this temple to receive instruction in music, painting, sculpture, or some other

art, for all the children do not learn the same thing. Some love music and acquire a ready knowledge of it, but do not easily learn the art of painting; others care nothing for music, but are eager to learn how to paint, or carve, or do something else; and as each one is not obliged to study those things for which he or she has no taste, but is allowed to gain a knowledge of that which they desire to know, Lily-Vale is full of bright and apt scholars, who are a credit to themselves and to their instructors. When the scholars or classes for any particular study convene in the Art Temple, they are addressed by some great and good person who gave special attention to that study when on earth, understands it thoroughly, and now delights to teach the children something of his knowledge, and assist in drawing out the powers within them, better than he does to compose a choral, paint a picture, carve a statue, or sing a poem of his own; and the little ones listen attentively, retaining the information they receive in their minds, which later on they seek to work out in experiments for themselves. The exhibitions of paintings and statues sometimes made in this temple are very grand; the concerts heard sometimes are very sweet and beautiful, and the music that rings out from this place is more delightful than anything you can ever hear on earth.

And so here, in this charming spot, little children live, and grow, and thrive. They play and work, live happily together, grow in goodness and stature day by day, and learn to be truthful and earnest in their lives, in their studies and occupations, that they may be noble, honest, earnest men and women by-and-bye.

There is a beautiful spot in the Summer-land which I shall call Crystal-Lake. This resort is not like Lily-Vale, for it is smaller, more shallow, and in other respects quite different. Crystal-Lake is surrounded by banks of moss, green and cool, which afford soft-cushioned seats to the little children who come to play and frolic. In every direction trees uplift their branches toward the blue sky, flowers bloom and birds sing, making the place beautiful and gay and very sweet. But I must tell you, dear children of earth, of one peculiarity of Crystal-Lake, and that is this: the waters of that clear and sparkling basin are never still, but are continuously ruffled by the breezes that pass over them; and as the tiny waves move softly to and fro, they produce low, singing tones, like the tinkling of silver bells, which are very sweet and musical, and the constant delight of all who listen to them. This peculiarity of Crystal-Lake has earned for it the name of "Chiming Waves,"

the sound which the waters make being much like what the chime of a cluster of small silver bells would be. The surface of this lake is so clear, and its bed so near, that the latter glistens in the bright sunshine with many colors, and presents the appearance of a floor sparkling with precious gems of every hue, rendering it a beautiful sight to gaze upon.

Under the trees which surround Crystal-Lake, and in the open spaces between them, are to be found all manner of appliances for the exercise of the children who daily gather here; swings and bells, swinging clubs and rebounding balls; “ærial glides,” which are a kind of balloon or air-car, and many other things which the children of earth know nothing of, all for the amusement and development of the children; for in spirit life all amusement is combined with utility, and all recreation so planned as to assist in the development of the body as well as the expansion of the mind.

The waters of Crystal-Lake are used mostly for bathing purposes for the children, who love to glide through them and enjoy the delicious coolness while listening to the songs of the waves; and a pretty sight may be daily seen in this place when numbers of tiny children, none of them more than ten years of age, are sporting in the water and filling the rose-tinted air with the music of their shouts and laughter.

Crystal-Lake and its vicinity is what we call a large sanitarium,—that is, a place where health may be found, where no one can be sick and weak. All who live here in the little white houses, that are numerous, never know what it is to be feeble, but are strong, active, and happy; for perfect health brings enjoyment with it.

There are a great many of these beautiful sanitariums in the spirit world, and they are not all for the children; many of them are for grown people, who require care. But these we will not now visit, as our work is entirely with the little children of the Summer-land.

I suppose, my dears, you have seen some little children on earth who are sick and feeble, and who are never strong and well; and perhaps you have heard that these poor suffering darlings have passed from earth, and their bodies been buried away from sight. Well, it is just such children as those suffering ones who are taken to the pleasant sanitariums, like that of Crystal-Lake, in the Summer-land, and there, in those beautiful places, they grow well and strong and happy, and are never sick nor miserable any more. Perhaps their papas and mammas on earth were very poor, and the little

ones were not provided with anything bright and pretty when in the body; then they are very happy and joyous when they find themselves in this sweet home, and are able to appreciate and enjoy all its beauties. Indeed, no matter how poor, or in what lowly circumstances the little sick children have lived on earth, they are all just as tenderly cared for and loved, and provided with just as beautiful surroundings as though they had been the petted children of very wealthy parents, and their little hearts soon learn to respond in love; for there are no distinctions among the children of the sweet Summer-land,—all are equally cared for.

Perhaps, my dears, you have heard of little children on the earth who have been neglected by everyone, and obliged to wander around the world by themselves, unloved and uncared for. Sometimes such children die and are taken to the spirit world. They are little pallid, tired things, who need to be strengthened and made happy; and they are placed in the bright sanitariums, given plenty of fresh air and pure sunlight, their limbs are bathed in the clear water, they are allowed to play and romp and sing; they use the various contrivances for amusement and exercise, and in a little while present an appearance of perfect health and happiness.

The kindest of mother-nurses are in these places, who love and pet the little ones under their care to their heart's content. They never have to give the children medicine, for it is not known nor required here. They never have to punish them, for there is so much love and kindness here it is a pleasure, and it is very easy, for the children to be always gentle and good.

Those sanitariums, like Crystal-Lake, which is a great garden of flowers and trees and birds, with a charming musical basin of water in its center, where everything is sweet and beautiful, and where it is delightful to live and enjoy the freedom of real existence, are the only kind of children's hospitals I have ever heard of in the Summer-land; and they are the brightest, healthiest, most enchanting spots I have ever visited. The children who live there are real children,—natural, artless, innocent, happy, and free.

Happy Valley is the name of another beautiful place in the Summer-land, where children live. As its name implies, it is a valley; for great green hills surround and hedge it in, and it lies like a bright and sparkling jewel within the sweet embrace of those wooded heights which may be seen from its every point of view. The hills around the valley are covered with groves of shady trees, the green foliage of which gives a restful, cool, and inviting

sight to the eye that gazes upon them. The inhabitants, especially the little folks, take great delight in climbing those hills and holding their school sessions, meetings, picnics, and social gatherings, upon their summits. The valley is fully as pretty in appearance as any place I have before written of, and indeed those who dwell there have never before known such a charming spot. Bright and fragrant flowers gem the soft, green grass; shrubs and thickets of red and yellow, white and pink, roses are abundant; creeping vines, with green leaves and long, finger-like spikes of purple or crimson flowers, twine around the walls of every home, and all things are sweet and pure; streams of water gush out here and there; natural fountains send out jets of clear and sparkling water; birds sing joyously in the trees, and hop fearlessly in and out of the houses; so tame are they that they will perch upon the finger of any little boy or girl who calls to them, and sing a song of cheer to the great delight of their mountain keepers.

Happy Valley is like a vast school-room filled with the bright and cheerful faces of little children, with here and there an adult or grown person who is a kind, loving, and gentle teacher. The lessons are always learned in the open air, never inside the houses; for much information is gained by the little ones from the natural scenery which they so frequently gaze upon. The children of this place are very musical in their tastes, and are given every opportunity and facility to cultivate their powers in this direction.

You have heard of a little instrument called the æolian harp, which, when placed in an open window or anywhere where the wind will sweep across its strings, gives forth a very sweet and plaintive melody. Well, in Happy Valley every child who desires one—and who does not?—has an instrument very similar to that little harp, which they place where the soft breezes can sweep across it, thus evoking the most sweet and enchanting music, not sad like the melody of the æolian harps of earth, but cheerful, inspiring, and very tuneful. A stranger entering this valley, and for the first time listening to the music drawn from a number of these little instruments—as he will be sure to do—will wonder if he has entered fairy-land, and if it is the chiming and chanting of the fragrant flower-bells he hears, so exquisite is the sound. But no; it is only the children's harps, played upon by mystic fingers of the wind, and teaching a lesson of cheer and hopefulness to the little ones. The teachers take this method of instructing their pupils in the laws of vibration, of harmony, of melody, and of rhythm, while explaining to them by

practical illustration the operating power in the breeze that causes it to have such a glorious effect upon the tiny instrument.

The little girl of whom I am going to tell you is only about eight years old. She is a very quiet, gentle child, full of care and thoughtfulness for others. Her great pleasure is found in trying to make others happy. I will not tell you how she looks; but if you know of any good, kind, loving little girl who tries to help others, to speak softly and pleasantly to them, and to smile cheerfully when desired to do anything, why, you may think she looks like this little spirit girl whom I shall call Flora—after the flowers. Flora came to the Summer-land when about four years of age. At first she felt very sad, and would sit all day silent and sorrowful by the side of some stream, or upon some grassy knoll, and take no heed of the happy sports of the frolicsome children around her, for you see she had left a dear mamma and papa and a sweet little baby-brother upon the earth, and she felt that they missed her and wanted her back in their home.

But in a little while our Flora became sprightly and cheerful, for she found that she could return to her earthly home; and at night, when her dear parents and little brother were asleep, she could talk to their spirits and even sing them songs (for she had a very sweet voice), and in the morning she would sometimes hear her mamma say: “It seemed last night as though I could hear my little girl singing to me, and I do sometimes think she comes to baby, he is so good, and smiles and chirps so much, just as he used to when she played with him.” And the papa would smile and say: “It does really seem as though there was an angel in the house; I feel as though I am nearer heaven than I used to be.” So you see this little spirit girl was doing a great work in a quiet way, by coming to her mamma and papa in a loving, gentle manner, and by brightening their lives with her cheerful, sunny presence.

Flora had a little harp, such as I have told you of, given to her, and she would sometimes bring and place it in the doorway of her papa’s home, and the breeze or air-current would cause its strings to vibrate with sweet, faint melody. The little baby-brother would hear the celestial music, and laugh, crow, and clap his hands, while his mamma would lay down her sewing or pause in her work, and strain her ears to listen to the strange, sweet, faint sounds that fell upon them.

Well, this continued for some time, until Flora's mamma became fully convinced that the sweet musical strains she so often heard were not the effects of an active imagination, but that they were real and tangible; and hearing of a spiritual medium not far away, she determined to visit her to learn something if she could of those who are called *dead*.

I am not going to tell you about the spiritual experiences of Flora's mamma, only that she was so pleased with what she heard at the home of the medium whom she visited that she went again and again, for at each call she made upon the spirits through the medium she received more and more information concerning her own dear ones in the spirit world, and never failed to learn something of her little Flora, who always came with messages of love.

So you see, dear children, this little girl of Happy Valley accomplished the great work of bringing happiness, comfort, and peace to the sad heart of her mamma, and, later, of bringing the grand knowledge of immortal life to that mamma, and convincing her that her loved one who had died still lived and loved her, and would come to her. And all this was performed because the little girl desired to bless and help her mamma, and so brought the little spirit-harp and caused the winds to play upon it in her earthly home.

Our little spirit girl, Flora, sometimes takes her harp into earthly homes where want or misery or pain are felt, and in the quiet hours of night, when the tired inmates are what you call asleep, she plays and sings to them, and their spirits, which are not asleep, though their bodies are wrapped in slumber, listen to the sweet sounds and grow strong and happy; for they gain power from the spirit sounds to go on in their weary life on earth. These poor, sad people do not in their waking hours remember that they heard such heavenly music and singing, but they sometimes recollect that they had dreamed pleasant things, and they often wonder why they feel so happy when they awake and so strong to go through with the toils of the day. It is because they had been visited in their sleep by an angel child.

There is a large hospital in one of your cities where poor, sick, suffering people lie on beds of anguish. Men and women, and sometimes little children, are taken there to find relief from pain and fever, or perhaps to die and go to the spirit world. Kind nurses and doctors do all they can for these sick people, but, ah, they do not know how they are assisted by the little spirits who, like Flora, take their tiny harps and play upon them, or set them

where the breeze can sweep over them, thus invoking sweet sounds that are heard by the spirit ears of the sufferers, and which lull their fevered fancies or soothe their burning pain.

I will tell you of one case where great good was accomplished by our little friend Flora. A strong man lay very ill in the hospital ward. His brain seemed to be on fire, for all the fever which had attacked his system had mounted there. His suffering was intense, his ravings were terrible to listen to; he had been given up to die by the doctors,—that is, they could do nothing to save his life. Dear little Flora visited the side of this man constantly. She had placed her spirit-harp above his cot, and the faint breeze that was allowed to circulate around it was sufficient to cause a vibration of the strings of the instrument. Time passed; the man grew worse and worse; the physicians were compelled to minister opiates to him to ease his sufferings. At length, when he had succumbed to the power of the drug, he sank away into a deep stupor; but though his outer senses were numb, his spirit-hearing was alive. Sounds from the spirit-harp fell upon his hearing, perceiving which Flora began to sing a soft, sweet melody. The man listened and grew calm and quiet. The doctors watching his sleeping form, dreaded its awakening; but when the patient did arouse from his slumber, it was with cooled brain and stilled pulse. “Doctor,” he cried, “I have seen an angel; I have heard her sing to me; I shall get well!”

The physician smiled at what he considered the fancy of a sick brain; but the patient did recover his health and strength. From the day when he first heard the spiritual music, and listened to Flora’s singing, he began to grow better, until he was pronounced well by the doctors. But he was a long time regaining his strength, and every time he fell into slumber Flora’s harp would strike upon his hearing, and very often he would hear the sound of her voice in song. These moments always gave him power, rested him, brought him new strength, and thus his spirit was enabled to overcome the weakness and pain of the body. He recovered his health, and became also a firm believer in the power of angels to relieve the sickness and sufferings of mortals.

In the same hospital where the sick man was cured of his fever, through the power of Flora and her harp, many other suffering persons also have been blessed and aided in various ways by the same ministering power. I will now tell you about a young woman who lay there wasting away with

consumption. This patient could not be restored to bodily health, either by mortals or spirits; nor was it desirable that she should be, for life had been hard for her. The world had been very cruel, and she had suffered much. The only hope for her happiness would be in passing away to the bright Summer-land, where she would find friends, kindness, and home. But she did not know about these things as we do, dear children, and she did not want to “die;” she did not want to leave the body, for she dreaded the Beyond.

Well, this woman—I will call her Lizzie—suffered agony of mind in thinking of death, and little Flora felt great compassion for her. She sought in every way to influence the mind of Lizzie with bright and happy thoughts. She would sing to her, place her harp where its music might possibly be heard, and in many ways endeavor to bring comfort to the weary girl. At length, when Lizzie had become so weak and pallid that it seemed as though the soul must part with the body, her inner hearing was opened, and the music of the tiny harp fell upon it. She listened,—listened, oh, so intently. Soon a smile lighted up her wan features; it was, indeed, heavenly music to her. In a little while she heard a voice in sweet, childish tones singing these words:—

“We are coming, we are coming,
With our spirits filled with love,
To guide thy weary footsteps
To our Father’s home above;
We are coming, we are coming,
And the night will quickly fly,
There is rest and hope and comfort,
Life and Peace are drawing nigh.”

The sick woman aroused with a start and looked so strangely at the nurse that the latter said: “What is the matter, Lizzie?” “Nothing is the matter,” replied Lizzie; “but I am so glad, I feel so happy. I am not afraid to die now, God is good; He will not destroy a poor girl like me who has had so much to bear. I think he will take me to his home. I have heard such sweet music, such tender words! God is good; he will help me. I am ready to go to him.”

The next day Lizzie died with a smile on her lips, and as her soul passed out from the body she heard the sweet, soft music of the harp, and caught a glimpse of Flora as she sang:—

“There is rest, and hope and comfort,

Life and Peace are drawing nigh!"

Only one more story of Flora and her harp have I time to tell you, dear children, and this is of a little boy who was very ill. He, too, must pass away to the Summer-land; he was too weak and ill to recover bodily health. His parents were wealthy, and he was their only darling. They felt as though they could not give him up. To his luxurious home Flora found her way frequently, and the child had grown so spiritual that he could hear her sing, and listen to the music evoked from her mystic harp. Many times he spoke to his dear parents of the sweet music and singing he heard, and they sadly shook their heads; for they felt that he was nearing the gateway of heaven.

However, two days before the angel came to take him home, his mother, who was sitting by his side, also heard the music and singing, and her heart grew comforted as so many others had become before. On the night that the little boy's spirit passed out to the higher life both the parents heard the wonderful music; and it brought such peace to their souls they could no longer wish to keep their darling here to suffer pain, but with a murmured prayer, and without a rebellious thought, they kissed his brow and gave his spirit up to the keeping of the angels.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LITTLE BERTIE AND OTHERS.

In the beautiful Summer-land where I live, men and women who are always kind and good are the teachers of little children. They once lived on earth, and they loved children; so now, in the beautiful heavens, they are teachers. If you know any man or woman who loves children, and is kind to them, you may know these good people will some day be teachers and guides of little ones in another world.

You would like to know about the Summer-land where I live. It is like a large garden, extending as far as you can see or travel; beds of gay flowers bloom there and sweeten the air with their fragrance; lakes and brooks and fountains splash and gurgle with crystal water; there are groves of trees, in the leafy branches of which birds sing and chirp all the day; butterflies flit about from flower to flower, and the golden sunlight falls in beauty over all.

In this vast garden we have our homes; some are snug little white houses, covered with flowering vines, and shining out daintily from the glossy green; others are stately habitations, large and roomy, and built of white or rose-colored or golden-hued stone.

Here we live with those we love, and we strive to be good and kind to all. The kinder and gentler we are the more beautiful our homes appear, and the sweeter grow the lovely blossoms about us, because when anyone is good, he sends out a bright, shining light, which influences and envelopes all that it reaches, and beautifies it; but if anyone is unkind, he sends out a dark, cloud-like vapor, that blights and destroys the flowers, and darkens his surroundings.

The little children meet in groups in this fair garden, and, tended by their kind teachers, they learn their lessons and sing their little songs. Sometimes a new friend is brought to them, some little one who has just left earth and is in need of kind friends and loving care, and these children at once welcome the new-comer, give her a share of what is theirs, love her, include her in their pleasures, do not ask whether she was rich or poor, and make her happy. To this sweet place all who wish can come, that is, if they are gentle and kind; but the light here is so brilliant that it would hurt the eyes that are often filled with anger. Some day, when your bodies die, you will

come here, if you wish to be taught, if you are children, or to be teachers if you are grown up.

A little girl came to us from earth a short time ago; she was so white and quiet and gentle that we dressed her in white and called her Lily. She had never been to such a pretty place before; her parents were poor and could not live in the country, but were forced to dwell in a little narrow back street in the big city. You can imagine her delight at finding herself in our Summer-land, where she could cull the beautiful flowers and hear the birds sing, and play with them, too, all day, if she wished. (The beautiful birds are very tame in our world; they perch upon our shoulders and hands, singing all the time; they are not afraid, and no one ever harms them.)

For a while this little girl was very happy and contented; she was such a mild, gentle little thing that we all loved her at once. Soon I perceived that she grew more quiet, white, and sad, and I found that she was grieving because she had all these sweet joys around her, flowers, birds, fields, friends, a beautiful home and kind teachers, while her mother, and a little sister, who was lame, were obliged to live on earth in the little dark street, with nothing beautiful to brighten their lives. She wanted her mother, she wanted Nellie to share her new home, or she wanted to go back and live with them. Then I showed her that though it was not yet time for her dear mother and sister to come to the Summer-land, yet she could go back to them, and make them feel better and happier. She was all delight at the thought. Plucking handfuls of the sweet flowers that grew around her, with her pure face all ashine with love, she asked me to take her back to her earthly home, which I was glad to do.

We found her mother hard at work sewing, and the little lame girl trying to help her. We brought all our influence to bear upon the two, but could not make them feel our presence. Leaving the flowers she had gathered, spirit Lily came away disappointed and sad. But again and again she tried, until at last, little lame Nellie began to see the flowers and the light which shone around her angel sister, and finally she could see that sister herself, converse with her, and tell her wondering mother the many strange things told to her of the Summer-land.

Now our little Lily is contented and happy, anxious to learn in our spirit school, for every day she returns to earth, to teach her sister what she learns,

to show her the flowers and birds of heaven, and to bless and comfort her mother with her presence and her love.

Little Bertie was a sweet little boy, the only child his mother had; his father had gone to dwell with the angels long ago, and his dear mother was obliged to labor very hard for the support of herself and her little boy. Bertie and his dear mamma lived in a little white house, that had a flower garden attached to it, where the roses and pansies and sweet pinks grew and blossomed through all the long, golden days of summer. The little house stood just out of town, not very far from the big stone house where the lady lived who supplied Bertie's mother with sewing work.

Little Bertie was only seven years old, but it was his delight to dig and plant in the garden, to water the flowers, and to keep the weeds from choking up the blossoming plants and shrubs; and while engaged in this work, he would chirp and whistle to the dear little birds who came to watch him, and to sing him sweet songs, as they swung merrily upon the branches of the one cherry-tree that the garden contained.

One day, as little Bertie was working away and singing a childish song, a tiny shadow fell across his path, and looking up he saw a little girl, about five years old, standing beside him, and gazing wistfully at a bunch of red roses he held in his hand, which he had just gathered for his mother. The little stranger had evidently strayed through the open gate; her pale face was very thin and wan, her large blue eyes appeared as though they were only used to looking on disagreeable scenes; but now they were lighted up with pleasure at the sight of the beautiful flowers! Her clothing was poor and worn, and her whole appearance betokened want and suffering.

Little Bertie's curiosity, as well as sympathy, was aroused; he plied the child with questions, but, alas, she could not answer, for she was dumb. This she made him understand by signs, also that she had come a long way and was tired; she stretched out her hands toward the blooming flowers, as though they could give her rest.

Crowding her hands full of flowers, Bertie led the little wanderer in to his mother, who soon made her more comfortable, by bathing her heated body in cool water, and by feeding her with a bowl of fresh milk and bread.

That night the little dumb girl slept in a nice, soft bed with Bertie's mother. The next day Bertie's mother tried to find out the home of the little girl, and for many days after, but all in vain. The angels had led her to that

pretty home, and the angels intended she should stay. Her former home had been one of misery and want; her own mother was an angel in heaven, and her father had neglected and beaten her. Bertie was greatly delighted with his little sister, as he called the stranger; and soon the two children learned to love each other very dearly.

Bertie and his mother were soon able to understand the signs the little girl made, and there was no difficulty in knowing her wants. They called her Daisy; and the two children were to be seen daily among the flowers, which both fondly loved.

Bertie's mother had to work harder than ever now, as she had another little mouth to feed, and another little body to clothe; but she did not fret, for she loved the little girl, who gave so much pleasure to her Bertie. Sometimes, when the children were tired with work and play, and had become quiet, or at the twilight hour, when the flowers and birds were going to rest, little Daisy would creep to the feet of Bertie's mamma, and, fixing her gaze upon the far-away blue sky, would put up her little hands with a look as though she heard sweet sounds, and saw beautiful sights. And so she did; for the angels came very close to this little girl, and sometimes, when they brought her flowers from the Summer-land, she would see them and hear the sweet songs they sang.

The winter began to approach; summer faded away, and little Bertie was very ill. The angels wanted him in their beautiful home, and one night, just before the snowy Christmas time, he drew his mamma's face down to his and kissed it, put his arms around her neck, and whispered: "I am going, mamma; papa says so. I see him; he says Daisy will be your child now; the angels brought her here for you; and he says I can come to you again." And so he passed away to the pure spirit world, where all is light and joy.

His mamma wept over the cold, white body of her little boy, from which his sweet spirit had forever fled; but little Daisy only smiled as she gazed upon the tiny form, robed in its snowy raiment; for she had seen the spirit of her little playmate as it passed out from the earthly form and was clasped in the arms of its angel father, and she knew that Bertie had gone to live in that beautiful, wonderful land of sunshine and flowers, which she sometimes visited in her dreams.

And how was it with our little Bertie? Oh, he was glad to come to our bright Summer-land and play with the birds, which sang so sweetly to him,

as they perched upon his hand; for in the spirit world the little birds have no fear; we do not confine them in cages, but they live in the shrubs and among the flowers, and they are so tame they will come to us when we call them, and alighting on hand or shoulder will delight us with their melodious songs.

Bertie's father lives not far away from the sweet spot which to me is home in the spirit world; and so it happened that the little boy was brought to me to learn of the many beautiful things in the Summer-land, and to join with other little people under my charge in gaining a knowledge of life and its duties. And what a dear, sweet little fellow he is; always happy and contented, ever ready to part with the most beautiful flower or bird he possesses, if it will enhance the pleasure of some one else; always anxious to return to earth and bear messages from spirits to those who long to hear from their friends. We all love him for his goodness and truth.

It was about two weeks after Bertie's flight to the Summer-land; the snow lay thick and white around the earthly home of his mother; it had been a hard day of toil and pain for that poor woman, for she was obliged to labor, even while a severe cold, which had seized upon her, seemed to tear her lungs with merciless fingers; and now in the twilight hour, with little Daisy sitting at her feet, the tears fell thick and fast from her weary eyes as she thought only of that little snow-covered grave in the lonely church-yard.

Suddenly, a mellow, tender light, like the last soft gleam of sunset, streamed into the quiet room; but the sun had long since set behind the clouds, and there was no moon. The mother never stirred, but lay back in her chair, her gaze riveted upon the face of the little dumb girl, across which the strange light fell, lighting it up with untold beauty. The eyes of the child were fixed on vacancy, as though she saw something beyond the sight of mortals, as she truly did; for little Bertie, hearing the gentle fall of his mother's tears, even in his spirit home, came lovingly back with hands filled with spirit flowers, and it was his form that little Daisy saw in the gleam of that mellow light which the angels brought to the cottage home.

Gliding up to the side of the little girl, Bertie filled her hands with the flowers, and then and there, in the brief space of a moment, the lonely, tired woman saw a sight she never forgot,—the form and features of a little boy, her little boy, her Bertie, bending over the quiet form of little Daisy, crowding her hands with the most beautiful flowers she had ever beheld. At

the same instant, a breath of perfume swept across her senses, and she distinctly heard the words uttered, in the well-known tones of her little boy: "For mamma." Daisy, the child who was both deaf and dumb to earthly things, heard the angelic whisper also, and as a flash of joy lighted up her features, she stretched out her handful of flowers to the startled woman.

At the instant, all sight and sound vanished, leaving only the darkened room as before; but what had come to the child? Seizing a slate and pencil from the floor, where she had left them when tired of tracing lines upon the slate an hour before, little Daisy wrote in a clear, bold hand: "Dear Mary, fear not; the angels guard and guide you; your dear ones are not dead; they live in a bright home, where they wait for you; they can return and bless; through this little child we can make our presence known; we bring to you our love.—HENRY."

Henry was the name of Bertie's father, and Mary that of his mother. What did it mean? Surely it must be true. Little Daisy could not print her own name, and this was Henry's handwriting. Thus the good woman thought; but though somewhat frightened and anxious, her heart grew comforted; a feeling of deep peace fell upon her spirit, and she ceased to mourn.

As for little Bertie, he was wild with delight. He had manifested his presence to his mother; she could no longer fear that he was lost to her; for had she not seen him with her own eyes. A happier little boy did not dwell in the Summer-land.

But Bertie's mother has never seen him in that way again, though he returns daily with his offering of choice flowers. However, little Daisy always beholds him, and she is enabled to tell his mother, by signs, when he is at her side. The slate and pencil are kept constantly at hand, and often, in the twilight hour, a strong influence comes over the little girl, and she is made to write loving messages in the bold hand of Bertie's father, or in the printed letters of Bertie himself.

And the mother's heart is comforted. She knows her dear ones live and love her, and that she will meet them again. Daisy has proved a gift of untold value to that lonely woman, for which she is deeply grateful; while in his spirit home, Bertie works happily in helping others, and learning all he can for himself.

Nor is this all: wealthy, kind people have taken an interest in Daisy, and in co-operation with the angels are educating her, that she may become an

accomplished woman.

Spirit children learn most rapidly by coming back to earth, bearing messages to mortals; they also grow beautiful and strong in so doing. Knowledge increases with them, and they become wise and experienced in a little while. They earn their lovely homes; all the bright, beautiful things they have are theirs, because they have worked for them, and they know how to enjoy them thoroughly.

Now, my dear children, if in these pages I have written or should write any word or sentence that you do not understand, please to ask your kind parents or some good friend to explain it to you; because in talking of the work of spirits, I may not always employ the language which is easily comprehended by such little folks as you. But I promise you to write as simply as I can, that you may read and understand for yourselves.

Sometimes the spirit children come to earthly homes where little children in the body dwell, and try to bring them—the mortal children—good hearts and pleasant lives. Messenger spirits bear messages of love to the little folks on earth, and plant a desire to be kind, loving, and gentle in the breasts of those who linger here.

I know of a home on earth where three little children live with their mamma, who is a poor woman. There is a little boy in the Summer-land who is a cousin to these children, and very often he comes from his home in “Golden Nest” to play with his cousins; and every time he is with them they grow so gentle, kind, and loving toward each other that their mamma loves to watch them; and she feels very happy, even though she does have to work so very hard.

These little folks do not know that the spirit boy is with them, enjoying their games, and at the same time filling their hearts with bright thoughts and the desire to be good to each other. Little Charley, from Golden Nest, cannot bring his cousins costly toys or rich food, but he can do what is much better, and that is he can make them happy by his sunny presence. With him comes the sunshine, the fragrance of flowers, and the music of birds,—all from the Summer-land. The little earthly children cannot see the light, smell the perfume, or hear the birdies sing; but they *feel* all these things, and their hearts become bright, fragrant, and sweet in consequence.

So Charley is a messenger bird who carries joy and gladness everywhere, and the poor woman takes comfort in the gladness of her darlings,

wondering how they happen to be so cheerful, but feeling thankful that their hearts are so bright. Little does she know that an angel from the Summer-land is in her home, casting a ray of heavenly light over each one. Now, little children, perhaps you may be favored by the company of some little playmate from the Summer-land; and if you will only be kind and loving to each other, I am sure you will feel the gladness which the messenger spirits bring to your lives.

I know a little child who lives in the Summer-land whose name is Helen. She passed away from the body when a little babe, but as that was years ago she is now quite a good-sized girl. Helen is a great worker for others; she is not at all selfish, but is never so happy as when she has succeeded in making others feel glad. She is quite a traveler, too, and journeys from place to place bearing messages of cheer, and seeking out the lonely, sad-hearted spirits, in order to give them comfort and peace.

I have heard of this spirit working in various cities on earth, and have been told that she has consoled many mortals who were bowed down in sorrow, by telling them of their dear little children or kind friends who sent their love to them from the spirit world. Helen is an angel,—that is, she is truly a messenger spirit, and everybody loves her for her gentle kindness and her loving ways.

Not very long ago, Helen brought to our home in the Summer-land a dear little boy whom she had just found. He was a waif who had died to the earth a short time before, and had no kind mother or good father to take care of him. He had been taken in charge by a loving spirit, but our Helen had begged so hard to have him in her keeping that the gentle lady let the child go. It seems the boy's mother lives in the body, and that she is very unhappy over the death of her little one. She has not been very good in her life, and she thinks her child has been taken away from her by an angry God to punish her for doing wrong. Helen has found out that this woman is a medium, and she thinks she will have power to take the little boy to her, so that the mother may become aware of the presence of her child, and be made a better woman thereby.

And this is the work that Helen is at present trying to accomplish. The little boy under her care is a bright, loving little fellow, and will, I am sure, grow to be a noble youth. He repays the kindness lavished upon him with gratitude and affection. All the best part of his nature is now growing, and

the good within him is coming up into outward life. He has been taken to see his poor earth-bound mother, and Helen has succeeded in making her think that her boy may be permitted to come to her. This thought started within her mind a new train of reflection; and the woman feels that if his pure spirit can come to visit her, she must try and live a better life. She would not have her child see her do a wrong act,—anything that would make him unhappy, or cause him to turn away from her; and so she is trying very hard to do right and to be a better woman.

One night the woman saw her child in company with another of larger growth. Both beings looked so beautiful, their faces shone so brightly, and such a sweet smile lingered on their lips, that a thrill of joy ran through her weary frame. When she awoke and found, as she thought, that it was all a dream, she wept bitterly; but since that time the poor woman has not tasted a drop of liquor, nor said a bad word, nor done anything that was naughty, because she feels that perhaps the angels are watching her actions. And so this good work is going on, and two children of the Summer-land may have the honor of redeeming a human life from wrong-doing and sin.

This is the season of the year when the little people who dwell in happy homes on earth receive pretty presents from their kind parents, or from each other. The pleasant expressions: “I wish you a merry Christmas,” and “I hope you will have a happy New Year,” are heard on all sides; and the little children of the Summer-land feel so pleased at this, because they like to see the earthly children joyous and glad.

At holiday times, my little friends, you are in a good condition to receive visits from the angels, because you do not feel naughty, nor are you unkind to each other, but each one of you rejoices over the pretty gifts all have received, and are willing to share your sweetmeats with your playmates and friends. So the little angel children who come around you smile and feel glad that the bright Christmas and golden New Year come to earth to bless each home, and to make the children happy. Just at this time of the year you will have beautiful dreams; for when you are snugly tucked in your little beds, and your tired eyelids have dropped in slumber, our little messengers—spirits of the Summer-land—have the power to take you away from earth up to their bright home, where they show you all the lovely things that are to be found there; then you have a joyous time until the morning light

breaks into your room, when you are conducted back to your bodies, and awake refreshed; and, oh, so glad because of all the pretty sights you thought you dreamed of, but which you really did see in the Summer-land.

Some of our spirit messengers have been watching a dear little girl who lives in a big city on the earth. They love to see her patient little face, all bright with smiles, watching her mamma to see if there is not something she can do to help her. The mamma of this little girl, whom we will call Bessie, is very poor, and she has to work hard in order to buy food and clothing for herself and child. Bessie does not grumble and cry when her mamma has nothing but bread and molasses to give her for dinner, but she eats her food with a brave smile as she says: "Never mind, mamma; when I get to be a big woman I'll work hard, and then we'll have 'tatoes every day."

The angels love to come to Bessie, because she is a very lovable child, and they would rather visit her and sing their songs to make her slumber sweet than to enter the luxurious homes of wealth and gaze upon all the beautiful objects they contain.

Last Thanksgiving, Bessie had a couple of cookies and a big red apple to go with her bread; these her kind mamma bought her as a treat. Christmas had almost come, but the little girl did not look for any gift to come with it, because, she said: "Santa Claus can't find out everyone, and so I guess he'll not come this way this year."

A band of spirit children determined among themselves to give Bessie a good Christmas; so they went out here and there into the homes of the rich in the big city, and tried to influence those who lived therein to do good unto others. At last they found a little girl who wanted to make some one happy; and so they kept putting thoughts into her head how to help others. When she went out to play, the spirit children would make her walk up and down before the old house where Bessie lived, and sometimes she saw the child gazing shyly at her from the window. At last the idea popped into the head of Sadie—the little girl whose parents were wealthy—that she "would like to give that little bit of a thing"—meaning Bessie—a good Christmas; so she told her mother what she wished to do, and asked her assistance.

I cannot tell you all that was done; but early Christmas morning Bessie's mamma was called to her door by a loud rap, and there stood a colored man, who bowed, lifted a large basket into the room, and disappeared. A note attached to the basket read: "For the little girl and her mamma who

live here, with a merry Christmas from Santa Claus.” Oh, the nice things to eat that were in that basket, enough to last a number of days. There were also a package of toys, a pair of mittens, and a bright plaid dress for Bessie, with a warm gray shawl for the mamma. You may imagine Bessie’s joy when all these things were shown her. She clapped her hands again and again, while her good mother’s heart was full of thankful praise to the unknown friend who had made her little one so happy. Sadie also enjoyed her Christmas better than ever before; for she not only felt the results of a good deed in her heart, but also felt the sweet influence of approving angels surrounding her, while the messenger spirits from the Summer-land rejoiced with exceeding joy in the happiness of each one.

CHAPTER XIX.

GOLDEN NEST AND OTHER PLACES.

Golden Nest is another beautiful place in the Summer-land where the dear little children have happy homes. In this sweet, delightful spot the birds flit about in the green branches of the stately trees, and warble their songs of melody. You would be surprised in watching the antics of these bright-plumaged little songsters to observe how they will dance and swing upon the shoulder or finger of a child,—always bold and fearless, never timid or afraid. Their songs, too, rival the human tones of the children's voices and seem to be keeping up an harmonious accompaniment to the words the little people sing.

Golden Nest is like a great green nest flooded with sunshine; it is circular in form, and carpeted with the softest and brightest of grass and moss; flowers grow in great profusion, and their beauty and perfume yield an eternal pleasure to the senses of those who approach them. Little streams of clear water bubble and gurgle over smooth, round, white stones and glisten in the soft sunshine like ribbons of molten silver. The atmosphere is balmy, and it is a luxury to live out of doors in this enchanting place, that is a golden nest for the troops of merry little human songsters that dwell together there in love and harmony.

But these little people have a great deal of work to do; they find enjoyment, pleasure, and play in this labor, because it gives them unbounded zest and vigor in life. The children of Golden Nest are messenger spirits, and they act as messengers between the people who live in the body and their friends in the great spirit world. All the spirit messengers do not live in this pretty place, for such beneficent, that is good, spirits are to be found in all parts of the Summer-land; but all the children who live in Golden Nest are such workers,—that is, they bear messages from spirits to mortals, bring down to earth bright thoughts and impress them on the minds of people here; stamp the desire to be pure and good in the hearts of persons on earth, and come from their beautiful homes to watch over, care for, and love little children in the body, and, by singing sweet songs in their ears at night, give them happy dreams, so that they will wish to be kind and loving to each other, and obedient, affectionate, and respectful toward their parents. So you see the children who live in Golden

Nest have a great deal to do; they are never idle, never naughty, never sad, for though it pains them to see earthly children naughty or unhappy, and to find mortal men and women ill and sorrowful, yet they are too busy in trying to help the unfortunate ones of earth to attend to any sadness in their own hearts; and so it will not remain, but flies away before the great light of cheerfulness in which these little people dwell.

If I call the children of Golden Nest angels, my dears, you will know it is because they are messengers, for the word angel means message-bearer, —“only this and nothing more.” But in these days we are taught to consider angels as pure, beautiful, and holy beings. Well, the little boys and girls in Golden Nest *are* pure and holy, because they do not think bad thoughts. They love each other, are anxious to be good, try to help others to do right, and are busy in working to benefit some one in some manner; and they are beautiful, for their faces are smiling and sweet, their eyes shine with happiness, and they seem to leave a trail of brightness wherever they go. Moreover, they are really message-bearers; so I think you will agree with me that they are really and truly angels.

A group of these little people were very earnestly engaged in conversation not long since, and as I watched their faces glow with animation, I became convinced that they were discussing some new plan for the benefit of mortals. And so the events proved. I will briefly tell you of this work which these angels are now doing: a circle—that is, a place where spirits come back to earth to manifest to mortals—has been opened by a family who are anxious not only to receive knowledge of immortal life for themselves, but also are desirous to bring this truth unto the comprehension of others. This family had parted with three beautiful little children who had some time since been taken to the Summer-land. So the father and mother opened their home and invited their friends—who had also laid the earthly forms of dear children away—to join with them in invoking the presence of their spirit friends.

Well, this group of little ones in Golden Nest I had seen talking so earnestly together were the children of these good people; for having learned what their parents were about, they were all excitement to have a share in the work from their side of life. So it was determined that they—the little ones—should return to earth, and for a time, with the permission of their teachers or guardians, take up their abode in the home where the circle

was to meet; for by doing this these angels were able to bring a strong spiritual power to the earthly home which would assist them in making themselves manifest to their parents and friends. So they have left their beautiful Golden Nest, and are now staying on the earth. They have controlled a medium in the circle, spoken their names, and announced their presence to their delighted parents.

Just as soon as they have given their earthly friends all the spiritual power that they can, they will leave the mortal home, to convey messages back and forth from mortals to spirits, and from spirits to mortals.

The circle controlled and guarded by this band of children from Golden Nest is destined to be of great service. Already, outsiders have been admitted, unbelievers have received messages from their dear “lost” ones, many hearts have been made happy, and our sweet little message-bearers are working earnestly to develop their medium so that she can see the spirits who come to her, and describe them to their anxious friends. They bring her strength so that she can bear the trials of life, and be happy in working for the angels. It is necessary for them to live with the medium now, so that she may constantly feel the pure, uplifting influence of their child-like, unselfish spirits, and thus not grow weary of the work planned out for her by spirit teachers; so they have gladly given up the beautiful sights and sounds of their beloved Golden Nest, to take up their abode in a humble home on earth. But in a little time, when their work is done, and spirits of all grades and powers will be able to manifest at the circle and bring messages of joy to weary hearts, as well as to find strength and happiness for themselves, these little angels will return to their Summer-land home, well pleased with the success of their noble work.

A little girl who lives in Golden Nest has been a message-bearer for seven years; she passed from the body when less than a year old, and was brought to her friends on earth by another little angel who wished to do them good.

When little Jennie first controlled a medium, she could only lisp baby names to her parents; but by coming constantly she gained power to express herself more clearly. When three years of age she became the messenger of a medium, and from that time she has made herself known to mortals almost every day, always bringing messages from some spirit to friends on earth, bearing messages from people here to dear ones in spirit life, or

helping spirits to come themselves, or else giving spiritual advice to mortals who are in need of it. This little messenger has given over twenty-five hundred spirit messages to people on earth during the last seven years, has assisted over nine hundred spirits to control her medium, and speak or write for themselves, and has brought gladness to many, many hearts.

This is the work of one little girl who lives in Golden Nest. Do you think, dear children, that she has any time to be naughty or unhappy? No, indeed; she is cheerful and kind, ever ready to assist and bless anyone, and always ready to do the work given to her to perform.

I will give you the words of a sweet little song that I have recently heard sung by some little people who live in Golden Nest. I cannot bring to you the melody which accompanied the lines, though I wish I could do so, it was so very sweet and produced such a happy, joyous feeling in my heart. Could you only listen to the songs the little angels sing in their homes of light, I am sure you would never be naughty again; for you would try to be gentle and kind, so as to ever attract them to your side. But, dear children, we all love you, and will try to make you happy every day. And now for the song, which is entitled

HEAVENLY LOVE.

Joy! joy! The light of morning
Rolls in gladness on its way,
Flooding all the world with glory
On this happy, peaceful day.
So the love of God our Father
Bathes the universe in light;
Reaching down through all the darkness,
It dispels the gloom of night.

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Joy! joy! The heavenly splendor
Of our Father's tender power
Gladdens every weary spirit,
In its saddest, loneliest hour.
By-and-bye the holy radiance
Shall illumine every life,
And each soul shall rise in triumph
Far above all pain and strife.

Joy! joy! The love of angels
Softly flows from heaven to earth,
Blessing with its matchless power
All the ills of mortal birth,—
Heavenly love that brings its bearer
Down with messages of peace
To assuage the pains of mortals,
And to make their joys increase.

Joy! joy! The light is spreading,
We may bask within its rays,
Let us gather up its sunbeams
While we chant our songs of praise.
Let us bear the heavenly splendor
Of this deathless, boundless love
Unto those who mourn in sorrow
For their friends who dwell above;
Let us bless the weary-hearted,
And enfold their lives with love!

We will now leave Golden Nest and its happy, busy inmates, and travel on a little further in our search for the children who dwell in the Summerland. Soon we reach Rocky Nook, where a number of little folks live who are growing strong and beautiful under the healthful breezes that ever blow around that favored spot.

Rocky Nook is not a cold, bleak, barren place, though, as its name indicates, there are plenty of rocks or stones to be found there. These stones are round, smooth, and shining, of varied colors and different sizes; they are so clear and beautiful you can see the white sand shining through them, and when the sunlight falls upon them they glow with all the colors of the rainbow, and sparkle like precious gems. Rocky Nook is really a beach, composed of gleaming white sand and covered with these shining stones. Here also may be found delicate rose-tinted and snowy shells of different forms, which are more beautiful than any shell you ever saw on earth. The water is clear as crystal, and when it is quiet reflects the blue sky and spotless clouds; moss and anemones grow in the limpid depths that have the appearance of a great flower garden, so beautiful is the vegetable growth therein. Sometimes the sea comes roaring to the shore in great foamy billows, making a musical sound like the chiming of many bells, that is very pleasant to hear. Little boats or shallops may be seen upon this shining water, filled with groups of many children who love to float upon the bosom of the great deep. These little ones are never afraid, for there is

nothing to fear. Should the boats be tipped over, which, however, I think never occurs, nothing more than a dip in the water would happen to their inmates, as spirits cannot drown; and the children often take their bath in this great basin, sporting with the waves and laughing with great glee.

Rocky Nook extends its shiny length for some distance along the shore. Here and there we perceive little pavilions built of the shining stones, each one laid with precision and skill. Some of these little temples are circular in form, and others are of the octagon shape; but all are beautiful in appearance. These little buildings have been erected by the children who live here, and serve as play-houses for them. This work gives them a knowledge of architecture and design, and will serve as models for something grander to be attempted by-and-bye. In walking over the smooth stones, which are not rugged to our feet, we reach a great structure built of snow-white coral, and are surprised to learn that here in the spirit world must exist those tiny creatures who form this strange, perforated substance, since the coral could not be there had there been no coral-builders to create it.

Today I found a group of happy children who were laughing, dancing, and singing in great glee. Their hearts were merry and glad; not a frown marred the beauty of their faces, nor an ungentle word ruffled the silvery flow of speech and song that issued from their lips. Yet these little ones had known suffering, pain, and misery; their earthly homes had been filled with poverty and cruelty; many times they had felt the biting cold of winter, and suffered for the want of something to eat. Their parents were poor and ignorant, who neglected their children and could not properly care for them. So the little ones pined away and “died,”—that is, their little bodies perished, but their spirits were taken to the Summer-land and placed under the care of loving and tender women, who ministered to their wants, attended to them assiduously, taught them lessons of love and truth, until they have outgrown the unhappy condition which their earth life surrounded them with, and are the joyous, gentle children whom I today saw smiling and singing with glee.

These are the little folks who dwell in Rocky Nook. Here, by the side of the clear and sparkling water, they live in little houses built far back from the sands, surrounded by groves of trees and beds of flowers. They have the benefit of the clear and bracing air that blows across the bright waters, and

can also enjoy the shady retreats of the old trees that wave their branches a little way inland. Every day the children gather on the sands and study the composition of the rocks and shells and corals, or sail in their “floats,” or bathe in the cool, refreshing sea. They have erected the structure of coral of which I have spoken, with great nicety and skill, fitting piece by piece into each other with the utmost precision, and have left it upon the sand as a shining beacon to their playmates and friends who dwell on Sunny Isle, a beautiful spot across the water.

I suppose my little friends on earth know that when people are cramped by ignorance and poverty, they have to bend all their energies in struggling to live, and that the spiritual part of their natures, not having opportunity to grow, becomes dwarfed and stunted. When the little folks who live in Rocky Nook first came to the Summer-land, they were pale and puny in appearance, weak and languid; but the bracing air of this beautiful sea-side home, the enjoyments of its outdoor sports, the loving care and instructions of its keepers, the bewitching study of the lessons it has to teach, soon tone up the entire system of the children brought here, and they grow strong and active, anxious to learn the lessons, to help each other, and to become smart and good men and women. And thus it is the children who might have grown up on earth in an atmosphere of sin and evil, becoming depraved men and women, when taken to the Summer-land are cared for and educated to be useful and honorable members of society.

The children of Rocky Nook have all the advantages of the highest instruction that life affords. All branches of education are open to them, and they advance rapidly in knowledge; for, like all spirits who are not confined to the earth, they are quick to grasp and retain information, their powers of perception and observation being very keen. As these children grow in stature and wisdom, and arrive at the stage of early manhood or womanhood, they leave the homes and schools of Rocky Nook, and enter into association with advanced spirits who have long labored in connection with good people on earth to lessen human ignorance, and teach mortals how to live better lives. Their places at the beautiful sea-side resort are quickly filled by other waifs from earthly life, who are carried there to receive instruction and growth, and prepare themselves to become teachers and guides to ignorant and suffering ones of earth.

The little children who live in Rocky Nook seldom come back to earth. The memory of their mortal life is unpleasant, and they do not like to think of it; but as they grow and become wise and good, and learn of the sad condition of many poor people who live here, they have a desire to help them. Then these bright spirits find their mission, which is to lift up some lowly one, to make strong some person who does wrong, so that he or she can resist evil temptation. They then prepare themselves for the work before them, and when the time comes they leave their pleasant home by the water and seek the company of those spirits who are experienced in working for humanity, by whom they are guided in their labor of benefiting mortals.

Let me tell you something, dear children, that perhaps you have never heard. You know, I suppose, that there are many little ones on earth who are growing up in ignorance and amid the dreadful conditions of extreme poverty and crime. Well, the dark and immoral surroundings of their lives attract undeveloped spirits who have not outgrown their evil inclinations; and such spirits live over again their lives of sin in connection with those who grow up amid such adverse conditions. But, while the unfortunate children are thus unpleasantly situated, each is attended by a guardian angel or messenger of light, who watches every opportunity to benefit and bless them, and who will be with them until they emerge from sin and unhappiness to a condition of purity and peace, even though it be not until they have passed from earth and lived many years in the spirit world.

Such spirits as those who live in Rocky Nook are the guardian angels of the poor, ignorant, unclean, and miserable children of earth; their mission is to attend these unhappy creatures, and to work in their behalf, prompting a good thought or generous impulse in their hearts whenever conditions are favorable; watching over and looking after them, visiting the more fortunate ones of earth and influencing them to pity, assist, and teach their miserable fellow-beings. Thus they toil on, attending their charge even though it live a life of error, going with it to the spirit world and working upon its sensibilities, until at last, in some way, it recognizes the presence of the good angels, turns from the evil ones around it, repents of the past, seeks for light, finds it, and begins to labor for the good of others. And so Rocky Nook is a school of preparation where teachers become qualified to minister to the needs of the lowliest of earth; it is a beautiful spot, and well worthy a place in the Summer-land. The labor that its inmates perform is destined to

out-work grand results to humanity; and when earth's favored children co-operate with them, the victory over ignorance and evil will soon be won.

Sunny Isle is a beautiful island that is covered with the greenest of grass, and spangled with the sweetest and prettiest of flowers. The sun sheds its golden rays upon a number of cosy homes on this radiant island, in which little children dwell together in harmony and love. The houses on Sunny Isle are circular in form, and composed of a white material which resembles the marble of earth, only more transparent; the roofs are supported by pillars, around which flowering vines twine, shedding their fragrance upon the balmy air. The interiors of these homes are decorated with beautiful pictures and statuary, and furnished with pretty yet simple furniture for comfort and convenience of the inmates.

On this island a number of little children live with their parents and teachers, and pursue their studies from day to day. These little ones once lived in earthly forms; but the conditions of the material sphere were too severe for them to endure, and so they drifted to the Summer-land. Some of them are with their own parents, who passed from earth before they did; while the fathers and mothers of others are still inhabitants of the mortal sphere, and do not know that their little ones are cared for, taught, and protected by loving guardians, who are laboring for the good of others.

The children of Sunny Isle learn the first principles of knowledge; they are laying the foundations of a liberal education, and, under the wise instruction of their tutors, are receiving practical information concerning the origin, uses, and destiny of life. Here they develop their natural tastes and inclinations, and early show what particular line of labor they are best adapted for. The abilities of the child are encouraged to unfold, and they are given opportunities for expression in outward form. By-and-bye, these little ones will have passed through their preparatory discipline on this island, and be qualified to enter a higher department of training and of knowledge. They will then leave this place for a home elsewhere, perhaps in one of our large cities of spirit life, or in some of the academic groves where learned teachers and masters of art and science give practical instruction in the various branches of education to their pupils. Then other little ones will be brought to Sunny Isle, to take up the studies and advance in the direction of those who have preceded them.

But because the little people who live in this bright spot are studious and industrious, you must not think they are unhappy, for indeed they are the merriest, healthiest set of little chatterers that you ever saw. No late hours, no severe lessons beyond their years and comprehension, no ill-ventilated apartments, and no food that will not assimilate with their systems, tax their mental and bodily powers beyond endurance, as is the trouble with so many young people of earth. Plenty of fresh sunlight, air, water, fruits, etc., are supplied these spirit children; lessons adapted to their understanding are explained to them, and generally illustrated by objective experiments; they are allowed to practice any kind of labor that they are interested in, and thus get a practical information in relation to it. Their clothing is loose and comfortable, and does not restrict their movements, and all things are conducive to their health and happiness, so that they cannot help being joyous and free.

Sunny Isle is often visited by the children of Rocky Nook, which is not far across the sparkling water that laves the shining banks of this pretty spot, and frequently a number of floats or shallops are seen cresting the dimpling waves, filled with merry, lighthearted little folks from one or the other of these places, who are visiting each other. Air cars are also seen floating in the atmosphere, bearing their precious burdens of happy, fearless children from point to point of interest, wherever may be their destination. These young people can also glide through the atmosphere by their own will-power, without being obliged to resort to conveyance of any kind. This power of navigating the air by the force of will is natural to the spirit, but cannot be acquired while encased in the mortal form, because the physical body is too ponderous to be conveyed through the air without mechanical support. Spirits who live on earth but a few hours, or months, or even but two or three years, are enabled to float in the manner of which I speak almost at once when they reach the Summer-land; but those who have remained on earth for some years have to become accustomed to this method of exerting their will sufficiently to glide through the atmosphere, as the effort does not come readily to them; they are timid and afraid, and have to practice many times before they gain confidence to float any distance.

Little mortal children, when first born, could swim easily if placed in water and allowed to use their limbs, and if the practice was continued they would have no difficulty in navigating the water, because swimming is

natural to them; but if they are kept out of the water for years, they lose their natural ability for passing through it. They grow timid and fearful, and have to practice many times before they gain power to swim to any distance. And that is just the way with the natural powers of the spirit,—they must be exercised to be of use.

Sunny Isle is one of a group of three islands; the other two are in appearance similar to the first. They are also inhabited by little children and their teachers. The studies and pursuits are similar to those of which I have spoken. These islands are called Concordia and Melodie. They are homes of happy, innocent, and active little beings, who are destined to perform great good for humanity. The dwellers upon these three islands of the sea mingle freely together, for they love each other.

When the children of these islands have studied a certain lesson, or practiced a particular work for a little time, they are permitted to change their attention to some other interesting labor, or to find recreation in some pastime that is pleasant to them. This is so that their minds and bodily powers will not become wearied, and that their duties may not become distasteful to them. These little folks are provided with all the appliances necessary for their health and enjoyment. They have boats, swings, aerial cars, and other conveniences for their amusement. Musical instruments abound, and many of the pupils are fine vocalists. The children laugh, shout, romp, splash in the water, and act generally as do the children of earth when bent upon having a good time. They never push nor injure each other in any way, because the first lesson they learn in this school, and one they never forget, is gentleness to one another and love to all people.

Wherever there are children in the Summer-land, no matter what the name of their home,—whether it be Fairy Nest or Happy Valley, Golden Nest, Rocky Nook, or Sunny Isle,—will be found beautiful sights and sweet sounds; for the expression of childhood is beauty, and in heavenly life the little spirits are provided with the surroundings and conditions that harmonize with their own interior life. The methods of instruction at the different homes may vary, but all are calculated to perform their work well and faithfully.

Every child in the Summer-land is taught that labor is ennobling, and all are anxious to learn some branch of employment. They love to work, for they know that true happiness is found in activity; and as each is allowed to

follow the especial pursuit which pleases him or her best, and to choose what it shall be, all are contented in their occupation. The child on earth who is busy leaping, running, shouting, using its limbs, is happy, while the little one who is obliged to remain quiet or be idle is sad, discontented, and miserable. This shows that idleness is unnatural, and that activity is the true condition of life. In the Summer-land, the natural is always allowed to have free and full expression.

Now, my little friends, if you do not understand what I tell you about these things, please ask your kind mother or father to explain it to you; for I wish you to gain a clear comprehension of the real, natural, and beautiful manner in which the children of the spirit world live, study and amuse themselves, so that you may think of them as busy little workers who are as alive and active as yourselves.

The occupations of these young residents of the higher life, and also their studies, are various; but whatever each undertakes to learn to do is accomplished with earnestness and by diligence. We have no dull scholars, because all delight to study; and we have no loitering idlers, because each takes pleasure in practicing or experimenting in some line of labor for themselves.

Our young folks are students of astronomy, following the movements of planets and seeking for knowledge of the solar system, or the grand universe of stars, with eager interest; of chemistry, gaining information of the various elements and their combinations, from day to day; of the electrical forces in nature, and the laws that control them; and, indeed, we have with us pupils in every branch of science, as well as philosophy, who are charmed with their studies and take them up with commendable zeal. We have also scholars pursuing the branches of education embraced by algebraic numbers, geometry, architecture, form and design, and other practical studies; while many of our children, when their minds are sufficiently matured, adopt the study of medicine, and enter the field of magnetism to follow their chosen pursuits; for there are many sick and feeble mortals, and many ill-formed spirits, who require the care and assistance of magnetic doctors; and here is a grand work for those who are adapted for it.

So you see, my friends, the lives of the children in the Summer-land are busy, useful, and earnest. These little ones have all the amusement and

recreation they desire, while they find an incentive to study or work in the joy they feel when they have mastered their lesson or accomplished their labor. They have no time to quarrel or to be discontented, and are always happy.

PART THIRD.

CHAPTER XX. JOHN CRITCHLEY PRINCE.—HIS EXPERIENCES IN THE SPIRIT WORLD.

The chapters that follow contain a recital of the spiritual experiences of John Critchley Prince, the poetical control of the medium, which first appeared in the columns of the *Voice of Angels*, and elicited warm expressions of commendation and approval from the pens of a number of writers. The name of Prince is well-known in England, for his poems have long held a place in the affections of his countrymen; but as he speaks of his earthly life and labors in the first portion of his narrative of experiences, we will not anticipate what is there stated.

It may be well to mention how spirit Prince happened to become attracted to Miss Shelhamer, and to find in her organism elements that so assimilated with certain ones of his own as to render her a fitting instrument for the transmission of his thought to mortals, and we will give the explanation in his own words, as published in the *Voice* of Nov. 1, 1878:—

“I feel that I owe it to the public to explain my presence here, and how I first happened to control this medium. In early life, comparatively speaking, I met with the present chairman of the *Voice of Angels* circle,—an old friend, Mr. Robert Anderson, of Morpeth, England,—himself somewhat of a poet, and one possessed of a mind competent to criticise, admire, or condemn the productions of poetical souls.

“He became somewhat interested in me in those early days, at Ashton under-Lyne, England, and we formed a spiritual affinity that has survived physical separation, and even death itself. We lost sight of each other; but after my first experiences in spirit life I determined to visit America. By the law of spiritual affinity I was attracted to a “circle” held by this medium, then a girl in her teens. My old-time friend, Robert Anderson, who had long been a resident of Boston, and had become interested in the revealments of Spiritualism, discovering mediumistic qualities in his own being, that enabled him to perceive and to converse with spirits, was present at that circle. The links of sympathy formerly binding us together immediately revealed themselves, and I gave him spirit-greeting. Since that time, some six years ago, I have been a frequent visitor to this home, meeting my old friend and holding social converse with him. I do not always need to control the medium for that purpose, for he is both clairvoyant and clairaudient, and it sometimes pleases me to enter the sphere of his spiritual aura and converse with him in the Lancashire dialect, which seems to recall old associations to our minds.”

Mr. Prince refers above to the spirit-greeting he gave his friend Mr. Anderson, who had for many years held a devoted friendship for the parents of Miss Shelhamer, the medium, and who was ever a welcome visitor in their home, upon his first appearance from the higher life. This greeting was expressed in verse, and appears below. The recipient of this poetical tribute was highly gratified as well as astonished at the production, for he recognized in its composition the well-remembered style of his old friend Prince, as well as quotations from a poem written by the spirit author in England many years before he passed from the body, and which had never appeared in print in this country. The poem thus delivered is entitled

I COME TO THEE.

When evening shadows lightly fall,
And earth is wrapped in holy peace,
When over cottage roof and wall
The sounds of toil and revel cease,
I come to thee.

When in the fair and cloudless skies
The golden stars their vigils keep,

Like countless hosts of angel eyes
That guard the world while hushed in sleep,
I come to thee.

Not when the roses climb the wall,
And sweetly scent the balmy breeze,
Not when the joyous songs of birds
Make music through the leafy trees,
I come to thee;

When the earth is nobly ruled^[5]
By winter's weird, majestic reign,
"When moonlit snow is on the roof,
And pictured frost is on the pane,"^[6]
I come to thee.

Not when earth's fair and sunny morn
Hath bathed thee in its mellow glow,
But when upon thy honored head
Descends life's winter's driven snow,
I come to thee.

From fairy lands, whose silvery gleams
Stream oft across thy earthly way,
Where life more fair than pictured dreams
Glow with the light of perfect day,
I come to thee.

To speak of that eternal shore
Where gently beat the waves of time,
Where zephyrs chant their sweet refrain,
And life is evermore sublime,
I come to thee.

To strew before thy weary feet
The roses of eternal love;
To plant the lily bud of peace,
Transplanted from the world above,
I come to thee.

From fairy lands beyond the tomb,
Where flowers of truth forever bloom,
To guide thy soul through realms of love
To fairer, sunnier climes above,
I come to thee.

And when thy pilgrim feet have trod
The starry road that leads to God,
When thou hast reached the shining strand
And angels clasp thee by the hand,
I'll come to thee.

To greet thee once again with joy,
Unmixed with sorrow's dark alloy,
To sing the songs of sweet accord,
To teach thee of the Living Word,
I'll come to thee.

5. The poem was given in mid-winter.

6. Quotation from one of his early poems.

A few weeks after the production of the above the spirit author presented his friend with the following poetic effusion:—

HEART TREASURES.

Earth may yield her sordid treasures,—
Purest silver, gold, and gems,—
Fit to crown a kingly forehead
With their royal diadems.
Man may point to forms of beauty,
Rarest works of skillful art,
But he cannot find the equal
Of the treasures of the heart.

Oh, the human heart is glowing
With the gems of truth and love,
Flashing in the radiant splendor
Of their coronal above;
Flashing in their wondrous glory
Through the clouds of doubts and fears,
Gems whose lights shall never tarnish
In the mists of future years.

See the gold of pure affection,
Twice refined and purified!
Gaze on sympathy's white silver,
Linked together, side by side!
Mark the shrine of honest Friendship,
Rarest work of heavenly art,
And compare thy earthly treasures
With the treasures of the heart!

Oh, the human heart holds truly
Mines of beauty,—wealth untold,—
Richer than earth's fairest jewels,
Brighter than earth's shining gold;
Glorious forms of smiling beauty
Fill each recess of the heart,
Fairer than the sculptor's model

That begems the world of art.

Oh, the heart itself's a jewel
Hid within these forms of clay,
Flashing in its radiant splendor
With the light of perfect day;
Through the crust of human weakness,
Through the slough of human shame,
Burning with the light eternal
Of affection's sacred flame.

Here this wondrous, precious jewel
I this evening bring to you,
Shining with unfading luster
Burning steadfast, calm, and true;
Set within the crown of glory
Of infinitude above,
Whose eternal anthems ringing
Tell of Friendship, Truth, and Love.

The spirit, John Critchley Prince, has inspired his medium with a great number of poems, many of which have been published in the *Banner of Light*, *Voice of Angels*, and other spiritual and secular journals, and he proposes to have them gathered into book-form, to be published as a volume of poetic gems some time in the future. The following, selected from this mass of poems, are given as specimens of the poetical work this spirit has accomplished in connection with his medium:—

“AND HE WILL MAKE IT PLAIN.”

The path of life seems dark and drear
To mortals toiling on
Through heavy clouds of doubt and fear,
And mists of sin and wrong;
For through the shadows of despair
We often seek in vain
For light to pierce the tangled maze,
And make its meaning plain.

Dear souls are groping in the dark,
And longing for the day,
Who cannot see the lines of truth
Along life's beaten way;
And spirits, hopeless and forlorn,
Whose tear-drops fall like rain,
Wait anxiously the coming time

When He will make it plain.

We cannot find the tangled end,
So blindly do we seek;
We stumble o'er the rugged path,
With steps grown faint and weak;
We cannot make the crooked straight,
Nor light the darkened road,
Nor can we ease our aching hearts
Of all their weary load;

And so we totter on our way,
And cannot comprehend
The meaning of Life's mysteries,
And how each one shall end:
Why hearts should ache and spirits bleed,
And faint beneath the rod,
Till, in their agony of need,
They cry to Thee, O God!

Above the clouds that darkly lower
The sun is shining bright.
And through the spirit's saddest hour
The soul gains strength and might.
We may not find the comforter
For all our woe or pain,
Yet God is the interpreter,
"And he will make it plain."

Oh, saddened hearts! oh, stricken souls!
Who long for peace and rest,
The Father's love about you rolls,
And that will make you blest!
Infinitude can never err;
Its mysteries he'll explain—
"God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."

Dear teachers of the "Living Word,"
Whose souls are bathed in light,
With every impulse nobly stirred
To battle for the right,
To you belief can never err,
Nor "scan his works in vain,"
For God is your interpreter,
And He hath made it plain.

O Father, God! to thee we pray
For strength to do Thy will,
And as we journey on our way,
Fulfill Thy purpose still;

And through all weakness may we join
The angels' sweet refrain—
"God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."

DOWN BY THE SEA.

Down by the sea, the gleaming sands
Forever beckon to the waves,
The seagull flits along the shore
Or nestles in its rocky caves;
The billows chant their sweet refrain
Of life forever grand and free,
And deep-toned harmonies repeat
Their mystic rhythms to the sea.

Down by the sea the morning breaks,
And all the eastern sky is bright
With shining radiance that wakes
The world in rapture to the sight;
And riding on to burning noon
The golden sun in splendor beams
Upon the dimpling, glistening waves,
Half wrapt in soft, delicious dreams.

Down by the sea the western sky
Is all aglow with rosy light,
The fiery monarch sinks to rest
Enwrapped in fleecy garments bright;
And out upon the crystal waves
The sunset's rainbowed, tinted dyes
Reflect their glories to the soul,
And charm it with a glad surprise.

Down by the sea—the glorious sea—
We watch the white-sailed vessels glide,
Bearing their messages of cheer
Far out upon the silvery tide;
The shining waves caress the sand,
And softly lie upon its breast,
While all the happy peaceful sea
Bespeaks the calm of holy rest.

Down by the sea there sometimes comes
A mighty current strong and deep
That sweeps along the rolling tide,
And wakes the waters from their sleep;
The great green waves with snowy crests
Come grandly rushing wild and free,

Revealing depths of untold power,
Down by the rolling, matchless sea.

Down by the sea the love of God
We feel in every breath we draw,
We listen to His mighty tones
In silent, reverential awe;
The air is all alive with thoughts
Of Him who rules both sea and land,
And holds the deeply-flowing tides
Within the hollow of His hand.

COMING HOME.

Drawing nearer to the portals
Of the angels' happy home,
Lonely-hearted sighing mortals
In their strength or weakness come
Now their white sails in the distance,
Gleaming on Life's open sea,
Catch a breath from heavenly breezes
Richly scented, warm and free.

Heavy clouds have gathered o'er them,
Storms and tempests sometimes fell,
Driving every sail before them,
Through the water's angry swell,
Till again the morning's splendor
Bursts in triumph o'er each deck,
Lighting up with touches tender
Every trace of storm and wreck.

Seamed and patched, and wearing traces
Of temptation's cruel power,
Are the weary, pallid faces
Of the voyagers this hour;
But a gleam of tender sweetness
Falls upon them as they glide
Nearer to the full completeness
Of their home beyond the tide;

On and on in stormy weather,
Or when summer sunbeams fall,
Till they enter port together
At the quiet boatman's call.
Raise the strain, oh, souls immortal,
In one chorus sweet and grand,
As ye gain the heavenly portal
Of fair Eden's Morning Land!

Spirit Prince found that on certain occasions he could inspire his old friend Anderson with the poetic fire that thrilled and characterized his own being. The following poem is one that this intelligence delivered through the mediumship of that gentleman, and is introduced here to show the evident kinship of the production with some of those delivered through the mediumship of Miss Shelhamer:—

A FRIEND'S ADVICE.

Allow me, my friend, a friend's privilege
To drop a few words in your ear:
You have lived a long time in the mortal,
And wrought foolish things, I much fear;
But the summer of life is not ended,
And its fruits may be gathered, you know,
By all who will act on this maxim:
Water and weed as you go.

The field of this life is a broad one,
And much precious seed has been sown;
Some of it's crushed by the wild weeds,
And some of it's covered with stone;
It needs all the care and attention
That mortals can give it, I know,
So take my advice, and be careful
To water and weed as you go.

The frost and the snow of the winter
The sun's rays are melting away,
Bringing a sight of the wildwood,
And the beautiful flowers of May;
Teaching us all the importance
To look to the seed that we sow,
And mind well the lesson I've told you:
Water and weed as you go.

The spring will be here with its promise,
And speak from the green-covered sod,
In flowers that show by their splendor
The manifold wisdom of God.
Oh, man, heed the lesson they teach thee,—
That life from the Father doth flow;
So make it as pure as the flowers,
And water and weed as you go.

The fruitage will come in its season,

A reward for your toil and your care;
Then see that those in the shadow
A part of your harvest shall share.
This is the voice of the spirit
To brothers and sisters below:
“Be sure, while you dwell in the mortal,
To water and weed as you go.”

Shortly after the physical decease of that grand man, Wm. Lloyd Garrison, John Critchley Prince wrote the following sketch,—through the instrumentality of his regular medium,—which was published in the *Voice of Angels*, June 15, 1879, and afterward copied into *Mind and Matter*:—

THE WELCOME ANGELS GIVE.

I have recently had the good fortune to witness a scene, the impressiveness and grandeur of which only those who are unencumbered by the corporeal body, and who are *all* spirit, *all* sense, *all* perception, can fully realize. This scene was the spirit reception, the angelic welcome given to one of life's noblest heroes, one of the whitest, grandest souls that has ever trod the pathway of mortal existence; and though I cannot hope to convey to earth other than a faint portrayal of the scene, yet I will attempt in this instance to give my readers some idea of the welcome angels give.

After more than the three-score years and ten of earthly existence and experience, William Lloyd Garrison, the friend of the oppressed, the defender of right, the champion of freedom, calmly, quietly, and peacefully laid down the burden of mortality, and rising, grand, majestic, free, a spirit filled with power, passed into the realms of eternal light.

In company with a band of kindred spirits, among whom I may mention my friend Robert Burns, Felicia Hemans, and Elizabeth B. Browning,—noble souls all, who had wept tears of sadness over the oppressed, even while tuning their harps to sweeter melody for freedom's sake,—I was privileged to witness a spirit reception given to this ascended hero; not the greeting given by the nearest and dearest of the heart, that was too sacred for even the eyes of sympathizing spirit friends, who had no claim upon his love, but the meeting of kindred souls, who had trod the same paths of truth, waded the same seas of opposition and danger, and borne the same battle-flag of freedom on to victory.

Not alone was the spirit of William Lloyd Garrison surrounded by departed friends of his own country; not alone were his hands pressed by such moral heroes as Washington, Adams, Lincoln, Andrew, Sumner, and many more noble souls, men and women of his own country; but there were Lafayette, Lamartine, Wilberforce, Wilcoxson, George Thompson, Harriet Martineau, and countless others, assembled to give their brother greeting. Indeed, all the great reformers of every age and clime, whose souls now watch from the battlements of heaven the advancement of liberty and truth on earth, and who still have a hand in shaping the events of interest to humanity, were gathered to give our friend and the friend of every man—though the foe to all tyranny, persecution, and slavery—a perfect ovation, expressed through love, sympathy, and blessings. But the most beautiful was the sight of John Brown, brave old Ossawatimie, whose soul continues to march on, and Charles Sumner, whose spirit still toils for a recognition of the equality of all before the law, seated at the feet of Mr. Garrison, and looking up to him as to some beloved teacher and guide.

Confined by no limits, unrestrained by the confines of walls and barriers; out in the clear and pleasant sunshine, fanned by the balmy breeze, refreshed through every avenue of sense by the perfume of flowers, the gleam of waters, and the songs of birds, the very poetry of expression, the nectar of loving sympathy gushed from the fountain of each soul, and formed a sea of light which glorified the soul of him who felt its genial, life-imparting flow. You who are in sympathy with great minds, in harmony with all souls earnest for the emancipation of humanity from whatever enthralls and keeps it down, can conceive faintly at best of the grandeur, the beauty, and the joy of such a meeting; countless numbers of gifted, noble souls assembled to give welcome, and to pay tribute to one beloved apostle of truth. No pen, no tongue can do the subject justice.

Outside of the circle of light formed by this celestial company, awed by its brilliancy, surprised by its glory, debarred from enjoying its feast of soul communion because of the remorseless memories within them, I observed a number of faces, faces stamped with the signet of genius as well as intellect, but bearing the impress of infidelity to truth; faces belonging to gifted but ignoble spirits who, when upon earth, stood in high places and publicly denounced the spirits of liberty, of toleration and justice. Today they are repenting for the life spent in ambitious desires.

But this is not all. Coming up from every direction, together and in great numbers, I observed spirits approaching, from the tiny, tottling child to the aged grandsire, singing songs of welcome as they came, the celestial melody of which echoed and re-echoed throughout the spheres, producing a perfect flood of heavenly sweetness that thrilled the soul with ecstasy.

It was a song of gratitude, a mighty pæan of praise, a universal strain of blessing for deliverance; and as it gathered power and rolled on in musical splendor, the sweetness of its tones, the beauty of its expressions, the grandeur of its inspiration clustered and fell in a cascade of divine harmony over and around the soul of him enthroned in our midst, the object of our gathering, the central glory of our galaxy, Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

On, on they came, bearing branches of green and waving palms; garlands of beautiful and odorous blossoms, a profusion of snowy-white lilies, and clusters of royal roses, to strew before his spirit feet.

But sweeter than all other gifts, and dearer far to him who beheld and received them, were the smiles of affection, the tears of gratitude, the whispered blessings showered upon him by these new-comers, the vanguard of this hero; they who were once poor and depressed, scorned, uneducated, and despised, the slaves of tyranny, and used as beasts of burden, but who are now cultured, honored, free!—toilers for the redemption of souls from bondage.

First kneeling before their benefactor came the poor, despised negroes, with hands uplifted in blessing, lips mute from the excess of emotion, eyes eloquent with joy and gratitude. Not only those who had become free before the law while yet on earth, but also those who had died in chains and beneath the lash, came with benedictions for this man who had done so much for their race, and to receive a blessing from his soul, knowing it would impart to them strength, inspiration, and courage.

Following these came hosts of others, men, women, and children, of every race and color, those who had felt the hand of tyranny, injustice, and oppression in some one or more of its many shapes. Red and white, the North American Indian and the Russian serf, delicate women, who had suffered in homes made unhappy by intemperance or by the cruelty of tyrannical brutality,—all came to bless this good man as their benefactor and friend; and their presence brought a joy to his spirit no mortal can understand.

Turning earthward, we perceived great billows of golden light, waves of roseate beauty, clouds of azure and snowy brightness ascending, until they enveloped our guest with their fragrant splendor, irradiating his whole being with a new brilliancy, a new loveliness of expression. Each wave of light that thus arose expressed to us from its peculiar hue and its own delicate aroma the emotion which it represented; the golden hue symbolized truth and earnestness, the roseate love and sympathy, the azure fidelity and gratitude, and the white purity and peace. We perceived these auras mingling and blending together into beautiful harmony, and flowing out from hearts encased in mortal, who, though saddened at the decease of Mr. Garrison, yet sent out after his ascended spirit love, sympathy and blessings.

From the colored people assembled to pay their tribute of love and respect to his memory; from the hearts of earnest women, who speak in solemn sweetness of his helpfulness and cheer; from the souls of good men and women everywhere, who loved and honored him; from the soul of that silver-tongued friend^[7] and orator who dares to stand forth and pay honest, just, and loving tribute as a fitting eulogy to his departed friend; from the pure and loving heart of that peaceful poet soul^[8] who sings in rhymed sweetness the honor of his friend;—from all these ascended those emanations of light and beauty and fragrance. Musical with the silvery sweetness borne from the souls of friends on earth, they bathed his spirit in a fount of eternal joy and blessing.

⁷. Wendel Phillips.

⁸. John G. Whittier.

What need of golden harps and streets of pearl? He treads the flowery paths of spirit life, not idle, not basking in dreamless rest. The energy of power, the moving force of aspiration, the impulse of desire are all his, and already his soul is marching on in the ranks of those lofty ones whose mission is to toil on until man becomes uplifted into the sphere of universal Love; until all wrong shall flee, tyranny die, and liberty and knowledge dwell in the homes of all people.

Press on, noble soul! The victor's palm is thine, for thou hast witnessed the triumph of justice and right; the crown of glory is thine, for thy soul is crowned with the diadem of perfect Love.

Press on, white-robed soul! for the bright fruition that awaits thee!

The following chapters are devoted to a recital of the experiences of J. C. Prince, as narrated by himself, and published in the *Voice of Angels*. We have alluded to letters of approval and of interest concerning these experiences received by the editor of that paper from various quarters. The following extract from a published letter of one of these correspondents is here given, for the reason that it was penned by one intimately acquainted with Mr. Prince in earthly life, and familiar with the general style of his compositions:—

“NEPHI, UTAH, Sept. 6, 1878.

To the Editor of the *Voice of Angels*:

Dear Brother,—I have felt like writing to you since you began to publish the spirit experiences of John Critchley Prince, for I have been deeply interested in reading his statements as they appear in your paper. I am from the same part of England where Mr. Prince dwelt when in the body, and was in 1850 a power-loom weaver in the West Mills at Ashton-under-Lyne, where he then resided. I always admired his poems, and, next to Byron, esteemed his poetry the grandest and best I had then read. * * * * I recognize the mind of John Critchley Prince, the Lancashire poet, in every line of his account of his earth life in your paper; my wife also recognizes it, she having attended select parties where he recited some of his best poems, in Duckenfield and Ashton-under-Lyne, and we read in surprise and astonishment his first contribution to the *Voice*, not expecting anything of the kind; it was to us most interesting and agreeable. We congratulate you upon the acquisition of so noble a soul to your staff of contributors, and hope he will often give us his rich effusions through your paper.

Your brother and well-wisher,

THOMAS J. SCHOFIELD.”

CHAPTER XXI.

MY LIFE AND EXPERIENCES ON EARTH.

My Friends,—Bearing the fraternal greetings of not only myself but hosts of higher spirits, whose pleasure and duty it is to mingle with you here, and who strive to teach you wisdom and knowledge concerning the highest, grandest phase of human existence, that of the immortal soul, I come laden with the experiences of a modicum of time passed in the super-mundane spheres, and crave an opportunity of unfolding them before you,—not with a desire for earthly recognition or adulation,—but with the hope that I may be enabled to show humanity the reality of those conditions that we aggregate to ourselves while in mortal, and their practical effects on the soul, trusting that I may enlighten you somewhat as to *real life*, and its mode of manifestation in the upper spheres; for it is time that mortals should understand more of the life to which they are going.

It is now^[9] a period of seventy years since I, John Critchley Prince, was born upon the earthly plane, at Wigan, Lancashire, England, of poor, hard-working, honest parents. My only schooling was given me at a Baptist Sunday school, where I received a slight knowledge of reading and writing. But as I read with avidity all sorts of books that happened to fall in my way, I acquired a certain command of language, and knowledge of composition, that served in after years as a noble substitute for the education I was unable to procure, and which I always craved. At the early age of nine years I was obliged to labor for my living as a reed-maker for weavers, at which I was kept busy for sixteen hours per day, and my only opportunity for indulging in the luxury of reading was stolen from sleep.

⁹. The above was written in the spring of 1878.

In 1821 I accompanied my father to Manchester, where we both obtained employment as machinists. There, for the first time, I came across a copy of Byron's works, which I devoured with astonishing rapidity, drinking in and retaining all the glory, fire, and beauty of those exquisite lines, and their delicate imagery, that made Byron, despite his faults, one of nature's poets. What a world of delight, what a scene of enchantment was for the first time opened before me. I seemed to breathe a new atmosphere, one that thrilled my being to its very center; and while reveling in the new fields of splendor

I had found, I forgot my poverty and toil; my soul stood forth erect in its conscious dignity and pride, feeling itself to be no longer a poor, toiling slave, but a creature of the universe, with powers and capabilities of expansion and growth. It was then I determined that some day I would sing my songs, and give them forth to the world.

But my life went on in the old routine, still toiling in the shop, and dreaming my dreams all unknown to others, until my father again changed his abode to Hyde, taking me with him. There, in the early flush of awakening manhood, ere nineteen summers had passed over my head, came to my waiting soul that most exquisite of all life's experiences, "Love's young dream." It came upon me like the first sweet dewy blush of early morn, bathing my spirit in a flood-tide of ineffable glory, and thrilling my heart with that ecstatic bliss that I think none but a poetic soul, attuned in harmony with nature and her works, and thus enabled to find happiness in spite of toil or sorrow, can fully realize. And here let me say that to this day, returning as I do from the immortal shore, I thank God for that experience of true, heartfelt emotion. It accompanied me through all my life like the melody of a happy song, and thrilled my despairing soul with its sweetness. It ran through my evil days of wrong-doing like a golden thread, and with its sparkling light revealed to me the glory and honor, the sweetness and purity, of life that might have been mine.

It is useless for me to attempt to depict the image of my charmer to you. To others, she was only a neighbor's lassie, good enough and pretty in her way, but nothing uncommon. To me she was all that was fair and canny, and as beautiful and good as Eve appeared to her Adam, in all her innocent purity of expression on that first awakening which we are told of in the beautiful allegory of old.

In 1827 I was united to my dear one, and we commenced life anew, as happy as two birds; and, though from my poetic fancy and ardent temperament, I was led to look for more happiness in a life of conjugal felicity than it is possible for mortals to attain, yet, upon the whole, my domestic life was a blessing to my inner self, and in its bowers I wove some of the sweetest garlands that graced my name.

Poverty and toil, with their train of evils, still attended me, and in 1830, work being slack at home, I went to Picardy, leaving my family of wife and three children. The revolution had paralyzed trade in France, and it was

impossible to procure employment there; consequently, after experiencing much suffering, I returned home only to find my family in a workhouse, from whence I removed them to a Manchester garret, where we would have starved had it not been for the labors of my wife at power-loom weaving. That was a time of misery. At length I obtained temporary employment, and our prospects began to brighten a little, but through all my life a scarcity of remunerative work seemed to attend me like a fatality.

During my residence at Manchester I began to contribute short poetic pieces to the local papers and periodicals, which, by the kindness of friends, and those powerful in government affairs, whose attention was first called to me by the perusal of my literary productions, were issued in volumes from time to time. The first of these, "Hours with the Muses," was brought out in 1840, and reached its third edition in two years. The subsequent volumes were: "Dreams and Realities in Verse," 1847; the "Poetic Rosary," 1856; "Miscellaneous Poems," 1861, and one more containing all my principal poems, published the year of my death, 1866. I have been accused of imitating the style of others, but while I may have done so to some extent, I think none of my critics will deny that the ideas expressed, and the thoughts embodied, together with the arrangement of language in my productions, were entirely my own. At the same time I was never satisfied with my efforts; none of them reached my standard of excellence, and they sometimes bore marks of my disappointment and dissatisfaction.

From the disappointments I had encountered in early manhood, I was all too easily induced to hie away from my squalid attic home to the public-house, where, in the company of men who pretended to admire my "genius," and to court my society, I would spend hours, aye, days, away from home, indulging in sin, thereby seeking to drown the memory of disappointed ambition and blighted hopes. And to this habit, together with a certain unsteadiness of purpose that kept me from holding on to any employment for any length of time, I am indebted for many of my early experiences in spirit life, some account of which I hope to unfold before you, that you may learn how a soul is plunged in darkness from the effects of deeds done in the body, and also how it may progress through degradation and woe to scenes of happiness and peace, if it only desires to do so.

I have been thus prolix concerning my mortal life that you may better understand my experiences in the spirit, and though I may have seemed too personal, it was unavoidable, and I crave your kind indulgence. It is impossible for me to convey to you any adequate conception of the ecstatic bliss I experienced in spirit when lifted above material bonds, and basking in the realm of poetic fancy; of the toil and sorrow of my physical existence, or of my feeling of utter degradation and self-contempt when recovering from a debauch, all of which I was compelled to outlive in spirit.

CHAPTER XXII.

MY LIFE AND EXPERIENCES IN THE SPIRIT WORLD.

May 5, 1866, I parted with my tenement of clay, and was born into the world, not only of primal *causes*, but also that in which all *effects* of past living are made manifest. Mind and body were alike a wreck. I had no great satisfaction for the past, and but little hope for the future.

While passing out from the material I was dimly conscious of a crowd of beings pressing around me,—faces I had known long before, but which I had not seen for years, forms once familiar, but which the passing scenes of life had blotted from memory; men whom I had met in times past around the social board, and amid scenes of convivial allurements, where we had wasted the precious, God-given moments in song or story, unfruitful of any profitable result; those of whose destiny I was ignorant, and whom I supposed had forgotten me as I had ceased to remember them; all were here, recalling by their presence scenes and memories that I could wish to be dead and buried beyond possibility of resurrection.

All the events of my life passed before my inner vision like a panorama, and I saw myself as others saw me,—the victim of wasted energies and an ill-spent life. How keenly did I regret much that I had done, and much more that I might have done, but did not! It was then and there, while seemingly unconscious to mortal things, I began to fully realize that omission is oftentimes as great a sin as commission,—that inactivity is as disastrous to the spirit as misplaced volition.

At this time, I did not see the forms and faces of any of those I had loved, and whom it might be supposed would be first at the death-bed of one so near to them. These forms and phantoms that surrounded me were encompassed by a cloud of heavy vapor, that entirely veiled the horizon from my sight. I strove to turn from them, but could not; they hedged me in on every side, and, while they spake no word, they seemed to mock me with their taunting looks and gestures.

This was my first spirit experience. I have since learned that it consisted entirely of the reflection of past recollections upon my mind, but it was extremely annoying and unpleasant.

My next experience was standing by myself, outside of my physical body, alone, so far as I could see, gazing down upon the old, worn-out tenement, that I had recently vacated. I found myself clothed in a body precisely similar to the one I had left, and not in much better condition, apparently. I was perplexed and bewildered; for, though spurning many of the old theologic notions of the Hereafter, this was certainly not the fulfillment of my conceptions of a future life.

I gazed around, hoping to attract the attention of some one who could give me an explanation, or in the expectation of meeting my boon companions; but all in vain,—I could see no one. All was misty, or rather in a smoky fog, like the streets of London at midday, though I have since been informed that I was not alone; that there were loving, helping spirits watching over me, to assist me when possible, but my mental condition prevented me from perceiving them; and that the smoky vapor was an emanation from my own spirit, and did not proceed from the state of the atmosphere.

While ruminating to myself, as collectedly as my condition would allow, I observed a party of individuals approach and take a view of my remains; and what appeared very curious to me, while they seemed very far away from me, I could distinctly hear their remarks. These parties were mortals, still dwelling on earth, drawn by a morbid kind of interest to take a final view of my body. However, I would they had stayed away, for they did my spirit more harm than good.

“Poor devil,” said one, “he’s gone at last. Well, he made a wreck of himself, sure enough.”

“Aye,” replied another; “he might have done better, but he would not; and so he’s gone. I always knew how it would turn out.”

“With all his singing and dreaming,” remarked a third, “he was no better than the rest of us. The old one would show himself pretty often.”

“That’s so,” chimed in the fourth; “wilt thee look at him now, lying there, when he might have been alive and well, like the rest of us! Well, he’s gone to his account now, poor lad!”

I waited to hear no more. Mind and brain were alike maddened by what I *had* heard. It was all true enough; but every word seemed like a scorpion’s sting, to pierce my soul. Who were these, that they should condemn one

who had not the power to defend himself? Were they free from the common taint of sin?

Thus I questioned; but unable to solve the mighty problems that seemed pressing down upon me, I made one herculean effort, and, bursting the bonds that confined me to my useless body, I rushed from the place, away I knew not where, I cared not; only to get relief for my burning, tortured soul.

And here allow, if you please, one digression. Let me warn you, oh, mortals, to mind how you speak and think of those who have departed the mortal life. Let your thoughts and words be as charitable and kind as possible; for by so doing you may furnish a beacon-light that will brighten their paths upward. But if you speak ill of them, if you hurl the stone of censure at departing spirits, you may furnish the heavy weight that will drag them downward.

Alas, I did not understand the cure of sin-sick, tortured souls; and I sought that refuge that had been, and was now again, my curse, but which I vainly thought would drown all recollection and bring relief.

I soon found myself in a well-known spot, one of my former haunts—the back parlor, just beyond the taproom—of a public-house. I seated myself as naturally as ever, and waited for some one to comply with my demand for liquor; but while the bar-maid flitted about, here and there, and several times brushed against my person in passing, she paid no attention to me whatever, and I felt myself neglected indeed.

Presently, I observed, entering the apartment, one whom I had occasionally seen at that resort, and who I understood to be a hard drinker. He called for liquor, and when it was brought, raised the glass to his lips. Suddenly, by a sort of fascination, I was drawn to his side, and while he poured the fiery liquid down his throat, my whole being seemed to vibrate in sympathy, and became saturated with the fumes of the liquor. At every drop he tasted, I seemed to quaff a corresponding one; and I found I could indulge myself in that way to any extent. I remained by his side, drinking long and deep. Our potations lasted for hours. Oh, the craving desire I had for that deadly fluid! My deep delight and utter abandonment of self you cannot realize.

At last our potations ceased. Abused and outraged nature could bear no more, and my companion sunk down in a complete state of insensibility. Then I strove to tear myself from him, but all in vain; I was held to his

prostrate form by a cord as unyielding as bands of steel; I could not free myself from the conditions I had brought upon me.

And here my retribution began; for, while the liquid we had drank together had drugged his senses, and benumbed his faculties, it had affected me in an entirely different way, serving to arouse all my sensibilities, fire my nervous system with flames of unquenchable desire, and, in fact, to make me keenly alive to all my surroundings. The least noise fell upon my hearing like the dismal knell of a lost soul; the sound of a passing foot startled me like a peal of thunder; and when the time-piece of the old clockhouse tolled the hour, my whole being vibrated in unison. I wanted to get away from everybody and everything I had known,—to be alone by myself where no one could find me, where life and activity were unknown, and where I could rest my burning brain.

Alas, I could not! Like one tied to a stake, I was condemned to pass what seemed to me a century of time by the side of one with whom I had nothing in common, save the craving of a perverted appetite. I cannot convey to you an idea of the horror, darkness, and despair that rent my soul while thus bound to that form of besotted humanity. The hours dragged, until at last there came a gleam of relief. Boniface entered the apartment, aroused my sleeping companion, and sent him to the pump-room to bathe his head. At the first splash of the water a thrill of exquisite delight passed over me; a second and a third, and the band that had held me snapped in twain, and I was free. Never did weary captive rejoice at his deliverance more than did I at that moment. I made no stay, but hastened from the place, and have never seen it nor its inmates since.

Still drifting along, my only aim and purpose being to gain some lonely, retired spot, where I might find rest and refreshment, I soon found myself rising gradually from the ground, and floating or sailing along, above the heads of the people.

Before long, the city streets vanished from my sight, and I seemed to be approaching a strange part of the country; houses and warehouses disappeared, sunny glades and shady nooks came into view; forest trees, clothed with garments of living green, beneath which tiny flowerets nodded their spicy heads, and scented the balmy air with their rich perfume.

Away to the left I perceived the azure gleam of dimpling, sparkling waters; in the distance, towered the lofty peaks of purple-crested mountains;

the sun shone brightly in the heavens, while the atmosphere became melodious with the hum of insects and the chirping of birds. No sound nor sight of human life could I perceive; all was silent, save the murmurings of nature, which fell upon my tortured being like an anthem of peace.

“Surely,” said I to myself, “this must be another country; it is entirely different from any I have ever seen before; the atmosphere wears that peculiar, transparent haze seen only in the lands of a Southern clime.”

But I was too weary for further cognitions. I seemed to drink in the charm and beauty of the scene without any volition of will or thought, and to find comfort and rest in so doing.

At last, I descried a perfect gem of a spot, one that appeared formed for a fairy bower; just beyond a leaping, laughing streamlet of limpid water, nestling quietly at the foot of a moss-covered, arch-shaped rocky wall, I beheld a tiny cove, so beautiful that it seemed almost sacrilege to intrude therein.

Emerald banks, as beautiful as silk pile velvet, starred with a profusion of creamy golden-eyed blossoms; trailing vines like maiden-hair ferns creeping over the rocks; shrubs of vivid green, with scarlet bells, swinging their perfumed censers upon the breeze; sparkling sunbeams and cooling shadows, constituted a place of repose that a monarch might enjoy.

And there, amid the beauties of Nature’s works, surrounded by the splendors of creation, pointing to the wondrous power and beneficence of God, I sank down upon the emerald sod; and, lulled by the peace and quiet of the place, my fevered senses grew calm, my pulses even, the blood cooled in my veins, and I fell into as complete a slumber as it is possible for a disembodied spirit to experience.

I was unconscious of the lapse of time, yet I now know it was several days before I again awoke to a knowledge of my external surroundings.

I was still alone; no human presence could I discern; the flowers still bloomed, the waters danced and gleamed, the sun shone, and all was as beautiful and as real as before. It appeared to me I had reposed there but a few short hours.

I aroused myself, and, stepping down to the banks of the stream, proceeded to lave my face and hands, precisely as I would have done were I in the body. The water refreshed me. I seemed renewed with life and vigor;

but with the new strength there also came a remembrance of what I had been, and what I had done, and I sank down upon the mossy bed overwhelmed with the recollection of my folly and madness.

Remorse had again entered my presence, and my soul cowered down before it in bitter agony; tears and sobs mingled together and shook my frame to its very center, and I wrestled in spirit with the “might have been,” which was as tangible to me as any objective form would be to mortals.

As the tempest within my spirit grew less, I began to *feel* a holy presence approaching. Presently a low, soft strain of exquisitely-modulated music fell upon my hearing; so faint, yet so sweet, did it at first appear that it seemed to blend with and form a part of the music of the murmuring waters and rustling leaves. Gradually it swelled louder, clearer, and sweeter, until it culminated in a burst of triumphant ecstasy, that made the very grasses leap in unison.

My whole being was stilled; a deep peace pervaded my system. I was a *man* again,—a creature of God, and one worthy to become a representative of his kingdom.

As these thoughts permeated my being, causing it to grow calm and restful, I felt what seemed to be a breath of cool, invigorating air upon my temples, thrilling my whole frame with an indescribable sensation of delight, and, on looking up, I was amazed, but not startled, to observe the form of a venerable patriarch bending over me, and manipulating my brow with the tips of his fingers.

His face was smooth and fair, as though no carking care had ever left its impress thereon, surmounted by a lofty brow, gleaming with a might of intellect, and crowned with a wealth of snowy, silken hair. A long, massy beard, lustrous with whiteness, fell upon his breast. He was clad in a long, purple robe of silken stuff; sandals of glistening brightness were upon his feet, while in his hand he carried a staff that was remarkable for its brilliancy. His features were luminous with the light of reflected love and benevolence; a halo of radiance encircled his whole being, which scintillated with sparks of light as he moved.

Subsequently I learned that this halo was the aura flowing forth from his spiritual structure, the brilliancy of which revealed the purity and beauty of his interior condition.

Abashed and humbled before the majestic glory of this presence, I hid my face from sight, and cowered down as if for concealment.

“Fear not, my son, I have come to help and encourage thee; thy mortal ways were rough and devious; thy spiritual paths shall yet be ways of peace. Lift up thine head, that thy soul may be annointed with the balm of healing.”

I had heard no sound of voice, and yet these were the thoughts that flowed into the interior sensorium of my mind, as the mystic being continued to soothe my brow with his finger-tips. I raised my head in questioning amaze, and gazed upon him in wonder.

“Thee questions who and what I am,” again came the thoughts, not spoken, but impressed upon my mind; “I am one appointed to seek out and instruct souls like thine, who are in need of assistance; thee mayst call me ‘Benja, the Missionary;’ I am drawn to thee, to point out the way of salvation, and to give thee strength and encouragement; thou hast fought the first battle and won the victory; press on, and thou shalt win the goal.”

The thoughts, and indeed the presence of the missionary, sent a thrill of pleasure through my whole being. Hope spread her rosy pinions above me, and I became strong, as I thought, for any conflict.

“Thou hast won thy first victory,” repeated the sage, “but still other trials await thee; self-abnegation and the renunciation of those appetites and passions that have in a measure swayed the spirit come not all at once. Reformation is a work of time. Therefore, my son, trust not too much to thine own strength, but rather let thy soul’s aspirations reach outward and upward toward heavenly things, bearing with them a desire for assistance and guidance. Neither be cast down, for eventually, a noble existence will be thine. Look around thee upon these laughing meadows and leaping waters. Thou wouldst know in what locality thou art.

“This is the valley of self-examination. Every soul in passing out from material life is borne to some spot connected with this place. Certain temperaments are taken to yonder mountains, upon the lofty heights of which their souls are left to take a retrospective glance back upon their past lives, their actions, and motives, and to commune silently with themselves concerning life and its duties; others to that sheet of clear water you observe in the distance, into which they are forced to plunge, that they may be cleansed of the impurities that cling to their spirits.

“Poetic souls like thine are conveyed to this charming valley, where, in the contemplation of Nature’s works, they find peace and strength to go on with the task of self-examination, and the attaining of a desire to become worthy of better things.”

The ideas flowing into my mind from the sage ceased, and in a moment more I was again alone. Suddenly the desire seized me to plunge into the stream babbling at my feet. I did so; the sensation was to me that of bathing in a stream of warm, perfumed water; it seemed to penetrate through the pores of my skin, invigorating my system to a wonderful degree. I remained in the stream for a short time, and upon emerging from the bath and surveying myself, I found I had undergone a decided change. My skin had become soft and fair; the florid appearance had gone, my hair had lost many of its silver threads, and my limbs felt lithe and elastic.

My garments, too, were renovated, having lost their thread-bare appearance, and altogether I felt and acted like a new creature. At the foot of a flowering shrub I perceived a polished staff, which I appropriated, and with it, as a support, I set off to explore the surrounding country.

I traveled leisurely; every step of the way revealed new beauties to me, the splendors of which it is impossible to describe,—shady groves, wherein the dryads of old might have loved to wander; sunny glades, rich with their tapestried carpets of flower-gemmed verdure; gushing streams and natural fountains bursting from the moss-covered rocks. All that could delight the eye and enchant the senses was spread before me, and I trudged on, breathing in the beauty around with no thought of, or desire for, companionship.

By-and-bye I came to an evergreen hedge; it was very long, but after a time I came to a large opening through which I passed, and found myself in an extensive garden, the beauty of which I had never seen surpassed. Parterres of beautiful flowers lay spread out before me, showing the cultivation of art, and scenting the balmy air with their rich perfume. Marble basins received the sparkling water falling from numerous silvery fountains; lofty trees waved their branches high in the air, and cast a grateful shade; here and there mossy banks invited to repose; birds sang in the trees and amid blossoming shrubs. Away in the distance I saw the blue gleam of what appeared to me to be a vast lake, upon the margin of which I could perceive a number of white-robed forms flitting to and fro; the

atmosphere was redolent with beauty and sweetness, while above all the golden sun shone in the azure vault of heaven.

Hitherto I had been in the natural country where no effort had been made to alter or improve Nature's works; but here were to be seen evidences of human art and skill, brought in to cultivate and develop the natural into higher types of beauty. I passed into one of the groves at my left, and seated myself upon a rustic bench before a long table of stone, upon which were spread fruits of every description, some of which were unfamiliar to me. Above the table was suspended an inscription, which read: "All are welcome; partake and refresh thyself."

I needed no other bidding; I was hungry and faint; and never did viands or nectar taste better to the gods than did the fruit, and the sparkling water which I drew from a fountain close by, to my parched palate.

I rested awhile, and then proceeded on. As I approached the lake, I suddenly found myself surrounded by a bevy of white-robed creatures, all young and fair and beautiful to behold. I contrasted my appearance with theirs, and though I had congratulated myself on my own improvement not long before, I now appeared dark and dust-worn by the side of these fresh young souls.

I sought to withdraw, but this they would not permit; for, closing around me in a circle, they intercepted all means of egress. I stood with downcast eyes, humbled and ashamed, when one young maiden approached, and laying her hand upon my shoulder, said in tones, the flute-like sweetness of which I shall never forget: "Do you not know me? I am one who was very dear to you; I have lived in this beautiful spot so long, waiting for you to come; surely you must know me, and will receive the love I have been keeping for you."

I raised my eyes and scanned those lovely features. Surely, aye, surely I recognized them; more beautiful, further developed, and stamped with a lovelier grace and more charming expression than I had known; yet the same winning smile, the shining hair, and sparkling eyes of my darling were before me, in more than radiant splendor.

I could not speak; it was too much! Oh, had I known I should meet my loved one thus, how I would have prepared myself to become fit to enter her celestial presence!

Divining my thoughts, the dear one twined her snowy arms around my neck, and whispering, "I am so happy, oh, so happy to meet you!" laid her silken head upon my breast, and all unworthy as I knew myself to be, I clasped her in a tender, loving, soul-full embrace.

Raising her head, my dear one said: "These are my companions, come to welcome you to the Summer-land. They all know of you, and love you for what you are worth; they have been with you when you have given forth the sweet expressions of the soul, and they know what you are capable of becoming."

She led me to a mossy seat, and the fair group, ranging themselves around us, began to sing a song of welcome, the sweetness of which can never be surpassed.

I do not propose to draw these experiences out to great length, therefore cannot tell you all that transpired in this lovely spot.

I was welcomed, given a happy home for my abiding place, but left free to wander wherever I would. Surrounded by loving faces, and ministered to with tender care, I sank into a state of dreamy bliss, well suited to my peculiar temperament.

You may think I had passed through the temptations of life, I had renounced its follies, and repented of its mistakes. But repentance is not a thing of a day or a month; memory has written her score upon the tablets of the soul, and if blotted and scarred, it takes time and labor to efface their unsightliness. I did not know this at the time, but inactivity is the bane of life, and the soul that is idle cannot go forward.

It was some time after I had entered this paradise, and been welcomed by angels, I was seated within the enclosure of a marble pavilion, and dreamily gazing out upon the sunny slope, when I became conscious of the presence of the missionary I had met in the valley, who spoke these words and vanished: "My son, life is earnest; thou hast queried why thou canst not write the soul-stirring poems of the past. It is because thou art inactive. Look about thee, and see if there is nothing to do, if not for thyself, for some other in need. Wouldst thou become noble and grand? Then work for it. In *this* world the harvest comes only to him who plants and tends the seed."

I was confounded and confused. Stung into activity, I waited for no one, but hastened from the place and from the wonderful garden. I determined to

do something, to go somewhere; but I knew not what course to pursue. Soon I felt a desire to return to earth and see what was going on there. Perhaps I could find something to do, or some inspiration for poesy. Ah, I knew not that I was still weak, and unable to cope with temptation; that I was again destined to fall into the mire. But thus it was; yet, thank God, for the last time! Of that I will inform you in my next chapter.

CHAPTER XXIII. THE POET'S COUNCIL.

Again I appeared to be drawn toward the earth. Recollections of old associations began to revive in my mind, and I felt a desire to return, and once more mingle with mortal life, urged on by the thought that perchance I should there find something to do.

Impelled onward by an inner impulse, I soon found myself in the crowded streets of a vast city: every thing looked familiar, and when I espied the glittering cross of St. Paul's gleaming through the smoke and dust, I knew that I was again in the heart of London.

Nobody appeared to take any notice of me; all were hurrying on, intent upon their own affairs, and I was as one virtually alone, even in the crowded, teeming mart of a vast metropolis.

I threaded my way leisurely along (for since I had entered the material plane again the reckless impetuosity that sped me on had vanished), pausing now and again to watch the tide of restless, surging humanity, as it flowed along, with no definite aim or end in view, when I was brought to a sudden stand-still, by hearing my own name pronounced by one of two gentlemen just in front of me.

"Yes," said he, "we are going to hold a little social levee at the club tonight, and to pay our tribute of respect to the memory of Critchley Prince. Poor fellow, he was his own worst foe, and he blotted his own career; but the works he left, and the songs he sung, show his to have been a gifted, sympathetic soul. For that reason we have drawn up a set of resolutions, and have determined to call our meeting together this evening, in honor of the departed poet. You had better make one of us."

The other gentleman replied that he would be with them, if possible; and I determined that I would also be there.

I recognized the first speaker as one of the most brilliant and noted *literati* of the day, one who is even now a dweller on earth, courted for his genius, and loved and respected for his benevolent heart and sympathetic soul; at that time he was about fifty years of age, and full of life and energy. I knew him to be a member of a certain literary club, all the members of which were men of brilliant intellect, not a few of whom were well-known

in the literary world; and it was this club-meeting that I had determined to visit, partly out of curiosity to hear what might be said of myself, and partly to witness the proceedings, knowing full well that a feast of intellectual dainties awaited whoever should be fortunate enough to enter.

The two friends parted at a certain corner, but I remained with the man of genius, resolving that I would not leave him until he arrived at the evening gathering; and I did not.

Promptly at the hour appointed, the company gathered in the parlors of the organization, myself among the number.

I do not propose to reveal all that was said and done on the occasion. The meeting was a most enjoyable one; gems of thought, original ideas, brilliant repartee, and flowery *bon mots* circulated freely from mind to mind; in short, the occasion was a feast of intellectual glory, that could not fail to arouse the enthusiasm of any but the most stupefied spirits. The eulogy and the encomiums paid to the memory of Critchley Prince were kind, and well calculated, coming as they did from the hearts of England's most gifted sons, to awaken a feeling of pride and gratification in the heart of him of whom they were spoken.

But, alas, this banquet of ennobling thought and chaste, exquisite expression, which alone would have refreshed and invigorated the soul, and at which even the angels of heaven might have been pleased to preside—this festal board—needs must have been polluted by the presence of costly wines, and rich, rare, body-clogging viands. Aye, it is true that there, where no feast of a material nature was needed, where, indeed, it would only serve to lower the time and place into a scene of sensual festivity, the wine-cup passed from hand to hand, brilliant toasts were given and repeated, and I, in company with others, again tasted the perfumed draught that ever tends to degrade humanity.

It is true that I did not drug myself into insensibility, neither did any one of that assembled company; nor did I become so intensely alive in every sense and avenue of feeling as heretofore, yet I partook of the fluid, and again found that I was not strong enough to resist temptation and to overcome the evil habit.

I lingered at this enchanted spot for hours, indeed, until the assembly dispersed, each member seeking his abode, with brain fired by alcoholic stimulants, and yet apparently none the worse for what he had taken.

Highly pleased with my reception and entertainment, I separated from my good friends, and thinking I should like to take a walk, wandered forth, under the glorious orbs of early morn. My brain was heated and all astir with phantom-like thoughts flitting through it. I soon paused upon a bridge of the Thames, and at once a desire entered my mind to fling myself into the river's depths. I wondered what effect such an act would have upon me; I knew that I was a disembodied spirit, and therefore could not destroy my existence; still I did not know but I might experience some shock to my system, like that felt by drowning mortality.

However, I determined to take the leap, which I did. No sooner had I done so than, instead of sinking under the water, I found myself slowly rising. I could not feel the water at all; it seemed as though I were floating upward upon a cloud.

Rising still higher and higher, I at length found myself resting upon a strip of rocky, barren land; I knew that I was again beyond the bounds of earth, but in what part of spirit life I was entirely ignorant; all was dreary and desolate. By this time I had recovered in a measure from the effects of the wine-bibbing, and thought and memory again went bounding through my mind with startling intensity.

Resting against a giant rock, that reared its head far upward toward the murky sky, I gave myself up to gloomy retrospection. What good had I done,—what work accomplished? Nothing; I had again fallen before the tempter; I was weak and helpless, powerless of will, of no use to myself nor to my kind! Why, oh, why must I continue to drag out such a shameful existence?

Thus I mused and mourned, groaning deep in agony of spirit; my remorse was genuine, but I had not the power (or rather I thought I had not) to again rise after this my latest fall from self-respect.

The hot sun came out and glowed with a lurid light; not a shrub or trace of vegetation were to be seen; all was stony and barren,—no sign of life, except far up, perched on the crags, there sat a bird of sable plumage, that now and then flapped its wings, and seemed to mutter and croak in mockery of my torment. I remembered the “Raven” of the American poet, and wondered if this too was a creation of my fevered brain, and I was to be haunted henceforth with the presence of this ominous creature. At last it flapped its wings and flew away, and I sank into a kind of half-dreamless

lethargy, which lasted I know not how long; but at length I was aroused by the touch of a cool hand upon my head, to find the presence of my missionary guide, "Benja."

"Come, my son," said he; "thou hast done well; thou needst have no fear. Thou art upon the heights of self-condemnation. It is true thou hast a few more trials to bear ere thou canst enjoy the full glories of spiritual existence; but all the steps thou hast taken were necessary to thy well-being; they were what thou needed to bring thee to a full realization of the past. Arise and come with me, that thou mayst obtain a glimpse of the realities of life, a gleam of the glorious manifestation of power that awaits thee."

Taking me by the hand, the sainted spirit began to slowly rise, drawing me upward with him. Away, away, over rugged heights and dreary wastes of land we sped until we neared the entrance of a valley more exquisite in beauty than any I had ever beheld. Strains of enchanting music issued from thence, mingled with bursts of merry laughter, and sounds of sweetest singing.

Upon entering the valley, we were saluted by the fragrant breath of beautiful flowers, borne toward us upon the balmy breeze of morning; birds carolled among the leafy branches of the trees, or flitted about the sparkling sprays of gleaming water, issuing from founts of alabaster purity;—all was calm and serene, a picture of contentment and repose. Beautiful homes, gleaming with singular whiteness, and embowered with flowering vines of gorgeous beauty, nestled low down in the heart of the valley.

There were no doors or windows to these houses, but the sides were entirely open, revealing the simple, innocent home life of their inmates; the roofs were supported by marble pillars, around which the vines and tendrils clung with loving tenderness. From these homes issued those sounds of joy and happiness we had heard ere entering the valley.

Away in the distance, on either side, arose the majestic heights of purple-crested mountains; while a beautiful river flashed and sparkled in the sunlight, but a little way before us. Near the center of the vale I observed a massive dome, of marvelous beauty, rising from the midst of a grove of trees, and toward this my guide continued to lead my bewildered spirit.

As we approached, I found the building to be a vast and stupendous temple, wrought with exceeding artistic skill and beauty, the delicate carvings and fretwork of which I had never seen equalled.

The grounds surrounding this magnificent temple presented a scene of unsurpassing loveliness. The green sward, rich with velvet-like softness, glowed and sparkled in the sunlight like a huge emerald of priceless value. Thickets of wild roses here and there shed their royal perfume upon the passing breeze; vines and tendrils twined around the trunks of lofty trees, through the branches of which flitted and carolled birds of brilliant plumage.

I followed my guide up a flight of marble steps, and found myself in a spacious vestibule, at the further end of which hung a heavy curtain of royal purple velvet. The floor of this vestibule was tessellated with blocks of many-hued marble, presenting a most beautiful appearance, in the center of which arose a magnificent fountain of crystal whiteness, most exquisitely sculptured and carved, from which ascended sprays of cool and sparkling water. "Water, water everywhere!" Through all my wanderings in the eternal world I have never been long absent from the sight of clear, leaping, sparkling water. It is the life element of the spirit, next to sunlight and air, and it needs no additional fluid to make it agreeable and palatable.

Through the open interstices of this entrance the perfumed air from without wandered, diffusing a most refreshing breeze throughout the apartment. To the left I observed what appeared to be an inclined plane, the surface of which was as smooth as glass, and as white as porcelain. This glassy road led upward beyond the frescoed ceiling, until it disappeared from sight. I turned an inquiring look upon my companion, who thus replied to my silent questioning: "Thou art now, my son, standing within the walls of one of our temples dedicated to Art. This is the Palace of Delight,—the Artists' Home! Beyond yonder curtain is the Hall of Poesy, where congregate souls so rounded out and perfected that they may express themselves in measure full and sweet; their lives are breathing, active poems of beauty and love. Yonder spiral stairway," directing my attention to a stair-case glittering like burnished gold, at my right, "leads to the halls dedicated respectively to the gods of music, painting, and statuary, where souls attuned in harmony with those divine expressions of creative energy gather to pour forth all the hidden richness and glory of their spiritual conceptions of life.

"Yonder crystal pathway leads to the grand temple of all, where gather those poets, artists, sculptors, musicians, prophets, and sages, who are

united in the bonds of sympathy and love, to compare notes, and to charm and enlighten each other with the productions of their individual minds. Thee will observe that it is up hill all the way, extending beyond thy vision, and that the road is slippery and seemingly impossible to climb, typifying the pathway over which struggling genius is forced to go, slipping here and there, oftentimes stumbling, until it plumes its wings for bolder flight, and by determined effort and perseverance wins the goal.

“The novitiate who first enters this temple dedicated to the Muses would fain ascend yonder roadway, but, finds himself unable to do so; for he must first visit each one of the halls of learning ere he attempts to enter the grand temple of Art. When he has done so, he finds no need to crawl slowly up yonder plane, but concentrating his will upon the desired spot, by the power thus acquired, mounts upward without fear, and gains the goal.

“But thou, my son, must now pass beyond yonder drapery; there thou wilt find that for which thy soul is to be fitted. Thou wilt find kindred minds, and sometime thy birth-right. I must leave thee; my work calls me away; others will teach thee the lesson of life. Farewell, and God bless thee.”

The sage vanished, and I was again alone. Curiosity and interest led me to approach and push aside the hanging velvet that obscured my sight. I did so, and beheld a vast apartment, the roof of which, fretted with lace-like tracings of golden hue, was supported by richly-carved columns of finely-veined marble. The floor was a mosaic of pearl and ivory, formed into clusters of flowers. At the farther end was a raised dais, covered with a crimson, satin-like fabric, above which, suspended from golden rods, clouds of creamy, fairy-like lace drooped and fluttered.

Upon the dais was seated the stately form of a male spirit, whose majestic-bearing, noble brow, and intelligent, genial, love-lit countenance attracted and held the admiration, esteem, and respect of the beholder. Upon either side was seated a personage, mild and gentle of demeanor, with the unmistakable mark of genius stamped upon his brow. Ranged around the dais in a semi-circle were a number of seats, filled with occupants of both sexes, all seemingly earnestly attentive to the master spirit of the hour.

The inmates of the hall were clothed in various costumes, such as their fancy suggested; but with such correctness of taste that all the colors and styles blended together in perfect harmony, and in company with their

surroundings made up a superb and radiant picture, perfect in all its details. I noticed a peculiar halo of mellow light emanating from and surrounding each member of this assembly, graduating from a beautiful tint of yellow down to pearly whiteness, lighting up the features with indescribable beauty. These souls were enveloped in their own wealth of love, sympathy, and perceptive harmony.

I had but to gaze on the massive brow, thoughtful, speaking countenance, and smiling eyes of that central figure when it flashed upon me, that this was Addison,—Addison the gifted, noble and true, whose works I had ever admired, and which I considered beyond emulation. The pale, saint-like face upon the right I recognized as Cowper, the good. At the left, with flashing eye, and impassioned features, was Byron, but Byron purged of the impurities and grossness of sensual life.

I gazed around, and it dawned upon me who these people were. I saw the calm, pure features and love-lit eyes of Felicia Hemans, of Elizabeth B. Browning, of Letitia Landon, and others well-known to me from the melodious outpourings of their spirits. There were Dryden, Thompson, and Pope,—once little, misshapen Alexander Pope, now grown straight, lithe, and willowy with no discontent upon his features, even sitting at the feet of Addison, absorbing the reflected light of that stately presence.

I could not understand what was going on. I heard nothing but a low, sweet, rhythmic sound proceeding from the dais, which was unintelligible to me, though, from the interested looks of those present it was evidently not so to them. I had advanced no farther than to the inner side of the curtain, for I dared not intrude upon that celestial company. I again glanced at myself, and as the contrast between my faded, dust-worn, shabby appearance and the fresh purity and sweetness of these harmonious souls flashed upon me, together with the thought that, had I done more and been more in the past, I too might have been seated here with this angelic host, in place of creeping in like an outcast and an alien, I covered my face and fled from the apartment and the place.

I next found myself standing upon a sandy shore, watching and listening to the roar of the surging waves as they came rolling in to my feet. All was wild and tempestuous. How I had come here I could not tell; through what tortuous, devious paths I had wandered I could not explain. I felt that I had passed through a fiery furnace. I was still scathed and smarting from the

sting of accusing memory. I felt a touch upon my shoulder, and turning gazed into a pair of kindly, sympathetic eyes, the eyes of one whom I felt was to be my friend and brother; of one whose name shall yet be sung throughout the length of Old England; one who passed from earth a few years before myself, at the early age of thirty-two. I gazed into the eyes of Robert Brough, poet and friend. Instantly I knew I had met one who would assist and teach me what my spirit required.

“I have come to help you,” he said, grasping my hand in a hearty clasp; “I have long followed you, I was at the Poet’s Council, and saw you enter. Noting your movements, watching the expression of your countenance, I understood your condition, and when you rushed forth I followed, feeling that I might be able to assist you. I have since kept you in sight, but owing to the clouds that enwrapped you, I have been heretofore unable to make my presence known. Now that the force of your emotions is spent, and you are beginning to grow calm and collected, I come to offer you my assistance, and to show you how to nobly retrieve the past, and find perfect peace for your soul. Will you accept my aid?”

I grasped the hand still holding my own, and cried in a voice choked with emotion: “I will! I will! only show me the way, and I will follow you?”

“To you,” continued my friend, pointing to the surging billows before us, “this scene is presented as a type of the desolate, lonely shore, and the warring billows of passion-haunted thoughts, upon which man may recklessly wreck his whole existence; but, beyond the sandy waste, and the ocean’s depths, there are calm waters, and sweet, smiling fields where we may find redemption, and make that restitution necessary to peace of mind. Come with me and I will guide you to health and happiness. Concentrate your thought upon me, and remain passive.”

I did so, and instantly I found my companion and self transported from the dreary shore to the same valley I had entered on my first visit to the immortal world. “You wonder at my mode of transportation,” said Robert, noting my surprise, “but you will soon become used to it, for it is the spirit’s true mode of rapid traveling. We have only to fix our will upon the place to which we wish to go, and instantly space is annihilated, and we are there. When you have thrown off a few more of the conditions of your earth life, you will be able to understand this law, and many others; and in order that you may do so, I wish you to plunge into yonder mist arising before us.”

But a few feet from us there ascended from the depths of a small lake a heavy bank of mist or vapor, and, in compliance with the request of my friend, I plunged into this fog, which, upon my doing so, seemed to penetrate every atom of my being.

When I emerged I seemed indeed to have been born again, to have received a baptism that had washed away much that was heavy and gross in my system, and I felt light as air, and almost imponderable.

“Now you begin to feel something like a spirit,” said my friend, seating himself upon a mossy bank, and motioning me to a seat beside him; “you are becoming regenerated; look at yourself, and you will perceive a change; you can also see, hear, and feel clearer and better; all your senses are awakened and quickened, because the spirit is beginning to work free from the crudities of materiality.”

It was indeed true; my senses did seem to be intensified ten-fold; distance lent no obstruction to my view; my vision appeared to be unlimited. I could perceive forms, radiant in angelic beauty, moving to and fro; towns and cities gleaming white in the sunlight where before my sight was bounded by the horizon, and I could see nothing but the limits of the beautiful valley, and no human being but our two selves.

My hearing, too, was quickened; for sweet, harmonious sounds stole upon my ear, where before I had heard nothing; all my senses seemed to be trebly alive, and awakened to activity; my outer structure, too, had grown so clear and fair as to become almost transparent, while my garments had assumed a purity of appearance I had never noticed before.

“You will soon be able to enter into and enjoy all the true pleasures of existence,” resumed the poet. “I, too, have passed under experiences and trials similar to your own; and though they were not induced by precisely the same cause, yet they were sufficiently severe to lead me to sympathize with and give you strength.”

He ceased, and my soul became too full of gratitude for utterance, perceiving which, he said: “By-and-bye, all these things will be explained to you, and you will thank the good Father for giving you these experiences, by which to develop and strengthen your spirit. But come, I must show you your work. Remain passive, and trust in me.”

Again I followed his bidding, and in a moment more we were gliding along the streets of an earthly town. Again I was in the precincts of old

England, but material sights and sounds seemed farther away from me than ever before.

“I am going to take you,” said my guide, “to one who is noble and true to the stern duties of life; one who, in spite of trials and perplexities, of trouble and care, has remained faithful to the higher dictates of his inner spirit; who, reared in poverty, has yet carved out a name for himself, and by turning aside from the glittering allurements of life, has endeared himself to many hearts,—a royal soul, a kingly mind, as yet in the physical body. I bring you to him, that from the example of his life, and the strength of his soul, you may learn your lesson, and draw encouragement to go on and do likewise.”

He ceased to speak, and instantly we were in an apartment which I recognized as the room of a thinker, a student, and a poet. There was but one occupant; a slight figure, bearing a lofty head and noble brow, with an earnest, intellectual cast of features. He was busy perusing a book, which, from the intentness of his gaze, I divined must have been a work requiring deep study.

How calm and peaceful was the atmosphere of that place! The air was replete with quiet and rest. “I shall leave you here,” said my guide. “When we meet again, you will be the worker, and one who has found content and joy. Adieu.”

He was gone; and there, in the quiet sanctuary of the poet’s study, in company with that loyal soul, whose earnest thought was to elevate humanity; in contemplation of his work, and drawing strength and encouragement from his fidelity to truth, and his desire to benefit mankind, I became strong and enduring, enabled to put away the enticing temptations of life, to expand my powers under the light of spirit development; and a desire was kindled in my soul that has never been quenched,—a desire to be of use, to do good to others, to assist the needy, elevate the downtrodden, and enlighten and instruct those sitting in darkness.

Sitting in the companionship of that noble mind, reading with him his works, listening to his songs of beauty, witnessing his dreams for the remission of human ills, painted as they were on the sensorium of his soul, in colors of gorgeous splendor; breathing in the perfume of his holiest aspirations, watching his struggles and triumphs,—I became purified and purged of old crudities, and went out from that presence with a

determination to do something for humanity, to be something in the great arena of life; and from that determination I have never strayed.

Born of this desire,—to do something for the good of humanity,—there came to my soul a new strength unlike anything I had known before; and which enabled me to enter dens of vice in search of souls to aid without danger of contamination, or of falling a victim to temptation. Of my work in this direction I shall speak in a future chapter; but first I wish to tell you of a visit I have made to one of our brightest spirits; one whose songs are known and sung the wide world over.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A VISIT TO ROBERT BURNS.

I had long been pressed and impressed to pay a visit to the spirit home of Robert Burns, Scotland's favored child of song, where he extends the thorough hospitality of a genial heart, and where all kindred souls are welcomed with royal cordiality.

I had met Burns upon many occasions since my entrance to the joys of spirit life. I had seen him in the public convocations of poets, had been with him at friendly gatherings where souls like his meet to enjoy the rich and varied productions of each other's minds; I had seen him in hall and bower, amid lofty and amid lowly scenes; and finally I had received a visit from him in my own private domain. But as yet I had never responded to his kindly, urgent invitations, nor to my own promptings, to return the visit. An opportunity at length presented itself for me to do so, and accordingly, with a friend, who wished me to travel leisurely as mortals do, and who accompanied me to point out the natural beauties and points of interest along our route, I set out with a joyful spirit, and anticipations of a rich treat, to visit the spirit home of Scotia's immortal bard.

I will not weary you by descriptions of our journey. The time is coming when the localities and scenery of spirit life will be described to mortals by those who are fully competent to do so. At present, I will confine myself to the object of my journey, namely, the arrival at the spirit home of the poet.

My companion and myself journeyed along—he interesting me on the way, by relating bits of history or incidents concerning places we passed, together with anecdotes of the people and their customs—until we arrived at the entrance of a natural basin or valley, that lay like a great emerald between two ranges of towering mountains. Upon the right, the mighty pile reared its lofty head in solemn grandeur; the morning shadows resting upon it, only serving to deepen the impressiveness of its height and power. Its base of a dark brown hue supported the rugged pile, which deepened in color as it arose, until its apex presented the appearance of a gigantic amethyst, glittering beneath the light of morning in an indescribable purple splendor.

Upon the left arose a range of polished stone, as white as sculptured marble, which gleamed and glistened in the sunlight like a mountain of frost work. Its numerous crags and peaks shone like so many spears of frozen snow, the rosy light resting upon its sparkling surface causing it to present an appearance at once marvelous and bewitching to the beholder.

In the hollow formed by these mountain ranges nestled the valley I have mentioned, covered with a luxuriant growth of vegetation and verdure. Fields of ripening grain, blooming gardens, delighting the senses with their fragrance and beauty, waving trees, in all the glory of exuberant foliage, were to be seen in every direction, while the white cottages of the dwellers gleamed here and there, and in their delightful locality bore every indication of home comfort. The people whom we saw busy about their gardens, or caught glimpses of between the open doorways of their houses, appeared happy and contented; their dress was simple, and seemingly worn for comfort; their countenances betokened peace and liberty. Songs of innocence and mirth arose upon the balmy air, mingling with the tones of children's merry laughter. In short, here was an Arcadia in real life, such as any poet might be proud to dream of, and to picture out to the delight of his fellow-men.

"These," said my friend, "are the people who have gathered about Robbie Burns, as a flock of sheep gather around a beloved shepherd; or better, as a group of children gather about a beloved and venerated father, to listen to his advice, and follow his counsel, knowing it is for their good.

"Robert Burns has made these people what they are. They have come to spirit life one by one, worn and weary from the cares of earth; some of them even sin-sick and degraded from unnatural lives, led while in the body. He has gathered them together, taught them self-reliance, preached to them through the opening flower, the running stream, and the songs of birds. He has taught them to forget their cares, and to desire a nobler existence. He has set them at work to cultivate their gardens and build themselves homes. In doing this they have grown happy and found rest.

"From him they have learned patience, self-restraint, and self-abnegation, a belief in the divinity of every spirit, and love for humanity.

"Some of these people, worn and broken down, came to him of themselves. They had heard of Burns while on earth, had read his words of sympathy, of love and tenderness, knew that he had sinned and suffered,

and that with all he had faith in man. Through the great desire of their souls to see him, they were drawn to his presence, and his great, kindly heart, understanding their needs, spoke to them words of cheer, which gave relief and strength.

“Others he himself found by the wayside, sunk in misery and degradation; he held to them the helping hand, kindled in their breasts contrition for wrong committed, which brought a desire to do better and be better. He found their loved and loving ones for them; and all reverence him with love and blessing. The children abiding here are little waifs cast off from earth, who have known no tender care before their spirit birth; here they are cared for and educated by those capable of giving instruction to opening minds.”

A group of merry children, laughing and shouting in glee, dashed by us as my companion ceased speaking, their faces radiant with joy and happiness.

We paused at the entrance of a magnificent garden, whose limits extended far and wide. The well-kept walks, the superb parterres of blooming flowers, the shrubs raising their graceful branches as if conscious of their beauty, the grand old trees rearing their mighty heads, and casting grateful shadows, the pond at the further end, gleaming and glittering in the sunlight, rustic seats scattered here and there, banks of velvet-like richness, bright with their vivid hue of emerald green, all betokened this place to be the property of one who loved Nature, and was a willing worker in beautifying and adorning her productions.

This immense garden was not enclosed from the public way, except by a low hedge of evergreens, whose tops were tufted with delicate, creamy-hued, fragrant blossoms, reminding me forcibly of our own native hawthorn. No gate barred the entrance way; it was open to the free admittance of all.

At the farther end of the principal walk arose a plain, unpretentious dwelling, its white walls gleaming with an appearance of purity and peace. So far had we come up the valley that this cottage appeared to us to rest at the base of the purple-crested mountain, like a bird's nest securely fastened upon a rugged rock.

“Here,” said my guide, “you have the home of Robert Burns. I will now leave you to his care.” Ere he could proceed, a form issued from the open

doorway of the house, and hastened down the path to meet us. That beaming countenance, those kindly eyes, and warm, cordial hands extended to greet us; that commanding, yet unassuming figure, clothed in simple, rustic garb, could belong to no man in God's universe but Robert Burns. It needed no honeyed speech, no formal words of greeting, no conventionalities, to tell us we were welcome; the spirit of our host overflowed with hospitality, and his soul beamed with all the fervor of his joy at meeting us.

Oh, the pleasure that enwrapped my being when I first entered the sanctuary of that good man's great heart, and felt that we were congenial companions! No constraint, no conventional formalities with him; all was freedom and perfect ease.

My guide pleaded necessities of business as an excuse for leaving me alone with my host, and as we both preferred to roam in his great treasure-garden to entering the house, and feeling refreshed and strong in spirit, as though I had just partaken of food (which was true, as I had been feeding my soul all the way on the many delights I had encountered), we turned down a by-path, and I began to examine the rare plants and elegant shrubbery of the place, my host displaying and explaining his treasures as we went.

"I am surprised," said I, "at your wealth of luxuriant bloom, and the beauty as well as the delicacy of the perfume of these plants; they surpass everything I have yet seen; you must give them a great deal of attention."

"Well, lad," replied my companion, "it's not that so much. I look after them every day, of course, give them water and just the right degree of light, and trim and train them when there's muckle need; but I think its adaptability to surroundings that makes 'em fine. I love them,—every one,—and it's real pleasure to care for them;" and it was with unfeigned fondness that he bent over a rare stock of geraniums, and lifted a magnificent bloom to my view. We wandered along, chatting about this shrub and that plant; the proper treatment of this stock, and the right degree of culture for that variety. Nature and time had made him a thorough floriculturist; it was the spiritual refining of that love of Nature, manifested in the farmer-boy, using the plough and spade, and weaving songs of richest beauty over his work.

Again we paused, this time by the side of a parterre of the most beautiful garden-lilies I ever beheld. The creamy, cup-shaped blossoms, which crowned the slender stems, rose tall and straight from a low mass of deep, dark, and glossy leafage; while the regal flowers, with their tints of snowy richness, flecked with tiny bars of golden hue, emitted a fragrance of the most exquisite yet subtle of delicate odors. There were dozens upon dozens of these royal blossoms, filling the air with their rich perfume, and inviting the honey-bee to visit them in his search for sweets.

As I paused to admire this magnificent group of beauties—mentally likening them to a bevy of pure-souled, white-robed angels—and to drink in the full richness and glory of the scene spread out before me, there came, wafted upon the scent-laden air, a strain of sweetest music,—such as I have often heard in spirit, but which is never produced by any but highly-cultivated or advanced souls,—accompanied in this instance by a female voice in singing; and such singing—so full of melody, of expressive tenderness, with a rich under-current of harmony—mortal tongue or pen is inadequate to describe. I looked at my companion inquiringly. Said he: “It is my Highland Mary, the sainted soul who passed on before me, and who has made me what I am. This patch of lilies is her especial pride. I have named them for *her*, and call them ‘The Snaw Mary.’ We shall soon be with her, and you will see her for yourself.” I was delighted at the prospect of meeting “Highland Mary,” which delight of course he perceived.

We moved on past beds of beautiful verdure and bloom of every hue, and arrived at the lake, a superb sheet of water, clear as crystal, and extending over a large area, its margin laid with tiny, white cobblestones, presenting a neat, pretty appearance. A fairy-like boat was moored at a landing-place, upon the side of which I observed painted a large, thrifty-looking thistle.

A rustic bridge extended across the lake, over which we passed. At the farther side were a number of tiny arbors, around and above which twined and clung flowering vines, some of which were very familiar to me. Toward the nearest of these flower-wreathed pavilions my companion turned. The sound of singing had ceased, but through the swinging leaflets of the vines I could perceive the white drapery of female garments.

In a moment more we were in the presence of that sweet, long-loved, immortalized “Highland Mary;” and well might Robert Burns have mourned her loss, and well might the poet soul have sung his sweetest song

“To Mary in Heaven.” The features of this sainted maiden were almost transparent; a halo of celestial beauty shone about her form as she moved; her beautiful eyes emitted a radiance that must have been dazzling to those not fitted to enter her sphere of purity; her bonny hair rippled down her back in waves of golden light. The beauty of mind, the purity of an innocent heart, the tenderness of soul, expressing itself in sympathy toward the weak and erring, combined with traces of experience in human suffering, manifested themselves in the chastened refinement of that lovely countenance, and the sphere of purity surrounding that angelic being.

I stood before her abashed and humbled; but a moment more, the sweet voice of Burns’ Mary bade me welcome, and I was made to feel at home.

Years of experience in the higher life had been of inestimable value to that maiden; she had had the teaching of highly-developed spirits, and the beauty, brilliancy and grace of a cultured mind, that was accustomed to deep thinking, were plainly discernible in her remarks. I was content to be a listener, and to drink deeply of the living waters of truth that flowed from the gifted mind of my host, and from the tender, loving soul of his companion.

But our stay in the pavilion was short; I would fain have lingered far longer, but the lady, “on hospitable thoughts intent,” after the fashion of woman everywhere, seemed anxious that I should be conducted to the house and have refreshments. My protestations were overruled, and we accordingly started for the abode,—not by the way my host and I had come, but on the outer side of the garden. On our journey I made a new discovery: Mary had turned to me previously, and said: “I would like you to see my aviary, the place where I keep my pets; in fact, their shelterhouse;” and soon I understood to what she referred. We were approaching a thicket of bushes; I recognized furze, gorse, and hawthorn among them. Passing through this thicket, we entered an extension of the garden, still laid out in beds of beautiful flowers. A grove of trees, in the center of which a pretty fountain sent up its jets of crystal water, arrested my attention, and beyond that, the sparkling roof of a large glass building. The bushes and trees resounded with the melody issuing from the gaily-feathered throats of numerous songsters, of every size and variety. It was a bird kingdom upon a small scale. As we entered, the birds surrounded us, alighting upon the heads and shoulders of my companions; but while they flew close to and around me,

only one, a tiny white warbler, would alight upon my person. This perched upon my shoulder, and chirped and nodded as pert as possible.

We entered the glass building. Within were planted shrubs and trees, some of them bearing fruit, others seeds. There were no cages, but I observed numerous nests attached to the bushes and trees. The floor was the natural earth; the sun shone warmly, and all was beautiful. There were no doors, but here and there entrance-ways, always open for the convenience of the feathered denizens of the place, who came and went of their pleasure. A stream of water gushed from a rock, and gurgled and plashed over a heap of stones. This was the bird-house belonging to the estate, and the especial pride of "Highland Mary."

We tarried a few moments, and then continued our way to the house, which we soon reached. How different the scene! A plain, unpretentious, white dwelling, with no attempt at ornamentation, the sun shining down upon it, fully displaying all its simplicity. Within was the same; neat and cheerful, suggestive of comfort and repose, but nothing finical, nothing tawdry; no glitter, no display. There was no covering to the cool, white floors, excepting here and there a rug or mat of green rushes. The walls of the apartment into which I was ushered were draped with a snowy gossamer-like fabric; the chairs round, wide, and comfortable, the tables oval and plain. Here we were served with refreshments,—fruit of various kinds, sweet cake formed of honey and the meat of nuts, and sparkling water.

Afterward I entered the sitting-room of spirit Mary. Here the walls were draped with blue silken stuffs; the furnishings were more elaborate and elegant than the other parts of the house, and all arranged in exquisite taste. My hostess entertained us with her tender, soulful singing, striking a harp-shaped instrument, which sent forth a delicious accompaniment to the song.

In Mary's apartment, or boudoir, I observed a pot of primroses in full bloom, the yellow petals of the flowers recalling old familiar scenes of earth; and the sight of these flowers recalled to me also that they were the only ones I had noticed within the dwelling. This seemed singular to me; with all that wealth of bloom and fragrance without, it would only be natural to find every room adorned with slips and cuttings. Of course the drift of my thought was perceived. Burns smiled, but Mary enlightened me. "Robbie will never pluck a flower," said she, "for his own use; he does not

think it right to bring them out of their native elements, and deprive them of life on the stalk. He thinks they are hurt when they are culled; he also leaves them all out to be enjoyed by anyone who comes along; but I have seen him often break the flowers for some wee lassie, or poor laddie, who lugs at them wistfully. He knows by that they had none too many flowers and pleasures on earth.”

I looked at Burns; his kindly face lighted up with intelligence and spirit beauty; every feature aglow with goodness, and every member of his body filled with energy, with suppressed power, with concentrated activity, now in abeyance, but ready to spring forth for the well-being of another,—he who had risen above all earthly passions through his great love for and faith in humanity; and I thought how characteristic of the man is this abode of peace and rest,—the home, the shrine of his faith and love,—plain, simple, yet full of cheer and interest,—no glitter nor show,—like his own kindly heart, unpretentious, full of kindness, overflowing with interest in God, Nature, and man! Without, all is beauty and fragrance; yet the natural productions of life, refined by care and cultivation, typical of the rich, the beautiful expressions of his poet soul,—refined through love, cultured through sympathy, manifested in sweetest heart songs, exemplified in those peaceful homes I had seen, whose inmates rise up and call him blessed! Characteristic of the soul is this, who would cull a flower to give a poor heart cheer, yet who will pluck none for his own use, to deprive them of natural life,—who, when he had inadvertently uprooted the tiny, wayside flower with his plowshare, immortalized the humble daisy with—

“Thou bonny crimson-tipped flower,
Thou’st met me in an evil hour,
For I mun crush amang the stower
Thy slender stem;
To spare thee now ’twere past my power,
Thou bonny gem.”

Still the same good man, gentle alike to “mon and beastie,” tender to wayside flower and weed.

Another apartment in the home of the people’s bard is fitted up as a study or library. Here are collected volumes by the true poets and philosophers of all ages. Some are prototypes of what are or what have been on earth; others are the outward productions of minds, grand and glorious in their brilliancy of thought, radiant with exquisite imagery, glowing with descriptive genius,

or sweet and pathetic appeals to the tenderest emotions of the soul, through their simple, home-like, heartfelt tales of life and love, and which have never been heard by mortals.

But you must not for a moment suppose Robert Burns to be dependent upon books for intellectual enjoyment, or for the attainment of knowledge. The soul is limitless in its resources, boundless in its capacity for expansion, and that spirit who earnestly desires to gain knowledge, finds a power developing within the mind which enables him or her to comprehend the fields of learning continually opening before the vision; while facilities and opportunities are afforded by which an honest seeker may grasp the truth as it appears before him.

Could you but faintly realize the scope of the spirit, its perfect freedom, its power and right to travel where it listeth, you would understand that in the higher life we have but to earnestly desire to be in the presence of any great soul, in order to gain pleasure and profit from the gems of love, beauty, and wisdom which fall upon receptive minds from those great repositories of thought, and, lo, we are there, drinking in great and mighty truths from those who are above us in grandeur of thought, beauty of expression, and sweetness of spirit.

Robert Burns is by no means confined to his books; but, as he informed me, though his brightest thoughts are drawn from the life of Nature, or the hearts of humanity, he loves to gather about him all the expressions of the sweet, soulful, noblest ideals which others have produced. Much, that by force of circumstances, he was deprived of on earth is his now; all that will tend to ennoble and elevate his soul, which was denied him here, he finds on the other shore. Why he does not ornament his home with those adornments that denote rank and wealth to the external eye is because his soul loathed the arrogance, and learned to despise the superciliousness which he found in the hearts, often stamped on the faces and shown in the mien, of many wealthy aristocratic personages he met with while on earth.

He is Nature's child to the core of his being, and no glittering pageantry will adorn his heart and home; as well attempt to gild the rose, and paint the lily, to add to their beauty.

Together, he and I went forth into the smiling valley. A low burn wended its way beneath the shade of waving trees, close down to the mountain base; thither we directed our steps, for he wished to show me, with a sort of

fatherly pride, the great plummy bunches of purple heather tufting the sides of the gigantic hills.

A tiny child, paddling in the dark waters of the burn, her snowy feet gleaming pearly white amid the shadows thrown by the green branches of the trees, her brown locks hanging in a profusion of luxuriant curls over her dimpled shoulders, and half veiling the azure blue eye and damask cheek, arrested our attention and formed as pretty a picture as one can well imagine; and the poet soul of my companion, drinking in the beauty of the scene, felt all the sweetness of life rushing over him, as he broke out in his quaint Scotch fashion:—

Thou winsome, weesome, smiling creature,
Half formed of human, half of nature,
Thy soul gleams through thy every feature,
 This gladsome day;
While life itself becomes thy teacher—
 Thou prattling fay!

Thy e'en, as blue as simmer skies,
Reflect the joys of paradise,
An' glisten wi' their sweet surprise,
 That knows no guile;
While angel praises o'er thee rise,
 An' bless the while.

Thy bonnie tresses veil thy face
Wi' such a winsome, modest grace,
My spirit fain wad leave its place
 An' clasp thee close
In ane sweet, fervent pure embrace,
 Like some rare rose.

Thy snawy feet, like twa fair pearls,
Gleam brightly 'neath the wave that whirls;
The water o'er them softly purls;
 God lo'es thee best,
An' keeps thee 'mang the sweetest girls
 That Heaven has blest.

In conveying a pure stream of crystal fluid through a muddy pipe, the liquid loses much of its clearness, and gathers sediment from the channel through which it passes. So, in striving to convey to your understanding a type of the outgoings of a noble spirit, it loses much of its transparency and becomes unsettled through the medium of earthly expression, and perchance distorted by the crude materiality it is sometimes obliged to pass

through. Therefore, you are to take this as a symbol only of what I had the good fortune to enjoy.

I learned in our rambles that the inhabitants of this smiling valley were not all the countrymen and women of Robert Burns; neither were they, when on earth, all of one belief or religion. They were of every race and clime. Some had been fierce denouncers of the truth; some earnest defenders of old theologic ideas and doctrines; others had had no religion, no faith either in God or man. But it was plain that all had suffered, had been weary, repentant, lonely, heart-sick, and home-sick; and all had found a home, rest, action for their pent-up energies, development for their repressed powers, love, enjoyment, and peace beneath the ministrations of this good man and his gentle companion.

I met with some of these happy people; conversed with them, after the manner of spirits, read the interior conditions of their souls, and found them all pure, loving, simple, intelligent, respecting man, adorning the divine in humanity, and recognizing God as the author of life, whose spirit was found in everything. How their spirits sent forth a halo of light, which, springing from their unbounded love and veneration for Robert Burns, settled about him like an atmosphere of glory!

Well did I think highly of the good this man had accomplished; of the beauty of his life-work, of the grandeur of his spirit, which, rising above adversity, rejecting the tempter, had outwrought by his example, by his endeavors, such a noble result as this,—the emancipation of souls from bondage. How many, few could tell; for his efforts have been unlimited, and the results of his labors are not confined to this valley, but are scattered far and wide in spirit life and on earth.

What need has Robert Burns to return to earth and sing his songs through the lips of media? He does so rarely; and why? His spirit of love, of faith in God, of hope for human progress is so broad, so free and untrammelled, that it breathes itself out in a benediction of good over all humanity. It is manifested wherever a soul prays to be of use to itself and others; it inspires the weak with strength, and blesses the erring with a determination to redeem past errors; it is felt on earth and in spirit life, purifying, elevating, and regenerating. Is not this the loftiest poem, the sweetest song, the grandest tale that bard or prophet ever could have dreamed? Is it not the outworking, in lines of living glory, of the most sublime yet soulful pæan of

praise to God that spirit can conceive? Is it not the breathing, soul-quickenings, revivifying poem of life that is outwrought from the inspirations and aspirations of a gifted, struggling soul once in mortal, and which is the perfect culmination of all that has been dreamed of by that soul, manifesting itself in the fruition of a work of beauty, glory, and grandeur,—not of mechanical art, but of natural, quickened, sentient life?

Could the mortal denouncers of Robert Burns witness his noble triumph of spirit over matter, his defeat of all sensual life, his wonderful efforts for the good of others, and his glorious soul, radiant with the light of truth, they would bow before him in abject poverty of spirit. One of a band of noble workers, his spirit flows out in love and forgiveness to all his foes, and in blessing to all humanity.

Even in spirit life this soul remembers and loves his native home and haunts on earth. The rugged rocks and darkling streams, the gowan-gemmed sod, and heather-crowned hills of Scotland, are dear to him still. We were seated upon a mossy bank, enjoying the loveliness of the scene,—the gleaming valley, dotted with its blooming gardens and snowy-white habitations; the crystal stream murmuring at our feet; the birds chirping in the branches; the lofty mountains uprearing their crests but a little way before us; with the glorious sun, throwing a flood of golden splendor over all. Environed with these conditions, I could perceive the thoughts of my companion reverting to earthly scenes, and presently, with bosom heaving, and his great dark eyes glowing with the intensity of his emotions, he broke forth:—

Fair are thy smiling fields of green, oh, vale,
And sweet the flowers that gem thy emerald sod;
Thy zephyrs bring a spice in every gale,
And man and nature here commune with God.

Thy crystal waters flow in melody,
Thy birds make music through the waving trees;
Thy mountains, rising in their majesty,
Survey in grandeur all thy harmonies.

But fair and sweet as thou, my spirit home,
To this fond, loving, clinging heart of mine,
Are Scotia's fields, where once I loved to roam,
And pluck the gowan and the eglantine.

Thy brooks are clear, but Scotia's burns are bonnie,
Where once I paddled through the simmer day;

Thy birds recall the times, not few but monny,
I've heard the mavis chant her tuneful lay.

And though thy mountains rise in mystic glory,
They are not fairer to my spirit sight
Than Scotia's grim old crags and peaks so hoary,
That brought my boyhood soul such dear delight.

Aye, Scotia's lands to me are sweet and canny,
As in the days I roamed her meadows fine,
Wi' loving frien', or gleesome, prattling bairnie—
Those sweet, rare blessings of the auld lang syne.

As a ray of light, in passing through a pane of glass, may become broken or refracted, or as a straight staff placed in a vessel of water may present a misshapen appearance to the beholder, so in attempting to present to you the straight, symmetrical lines of thought, the golden rays of light, emanating from a poet's soul, they become broken and distorted in their passage through matter; but by these refracted rays you may be able to gain a faint comprehension of the glory of the soul in which they originated.

And thus we passed our time, with great profit to myself; for, from the companionship of my friend, I gained a knowledge of the true beauty of the natural life of the spirit, and a larger conception of the grandeur of individualized life, when fulfilling its proper mission and expanding to its full capacity, even while drinking in the beauty of my surroundings, the harmony of the scene, quaffing the crystal drops or inspiring thought which filled the soul of my companion, and imbibing of that deep peace and gladness that imbued his entire being.

In attempting to portray to you a tithe of the pleasure and profit that my spirit gained from this visit to Robert Burns I have sought to give you an idea of the home and occupation of Scotland's immortalized son, whose songs and poems have enriched the literature of earth, and gladdened the hearts of countless beings here and in the immortal world; but in doing so I have deeply realized that it is impossible for spirits to convey to mortals an adequate conception of life in the soul world as it really is.

I am aware that I have said nothing in regard to the nearest relatives and friends of the poet,—his brave, honest parents, those to whom he ever pays filial respect, and those also who receive fraternal sympathy and regard,—his noble sons, that sweet, gentle daughter, the pet and blessing of his heart, whose early loss he mourned until his death; and last, but by no means

least, his faithful, forgiving Jean, his counselor and guide to the end. Though I have not mentioned these, it is not that they are remote or separated from our poet. They are with him, as a cluster of stars gather around one brilliant, far-reaching center; and upon him they bestow that true spirit love and sympathy which he reciprocates in kind.

But I have dwelt longest upon his connection with the beautiful ideal of his early life; for in her is centered the power to draw forth the noblest and purest aspirations of his soul. As a beacon-light, a radiant star, her undefiled spirit, overflowing with the love that has blest and enriched his being, has ever led him onward and upward over the ruts and pitfalls of sensual life until he has reached the heights of self-conquest and self-respect. In every sense, Mary Campbell has been the savior and sustainer of Robert Burns.

CHAPTER XXV.

MY SPIRITUAL WORK

It would ill become me to speak of my own efforts. There is so much to be done that the individual work of one alone is necessarily small; but if we strive to do good, with a will and a desire to benefit others, we cannot fail to be of use; and that you may know how it is a spirit labors in conjunction with mortals, I will briefly speak of my method of work, and give you a few instances of what I have done or have striven to do.

I remember one circumstance well. At a gambling house in a large English city, I encountered a lad, about eighteen years of age, whom I could see had been enticed there by the alluring visions of a fortune to be made, pictured to him by those well versed in the secrets of sinful practices. He was a pale, delicate youth, with an intellectual cast of countenance, a well-bred air, and one evidently worthy of better things. I was attracted to him as he sat at the table, his whole mind concentrated upon the game he was playing.

Suddenly, he pushed back his chair, rubbed his brow in a bewildered manner, and muttering: "Lost, everything lost; I counted on this chance to retrieve my luck, but it is no use, everything is against me;" he seized his hat and fled from the place. I followed him, not knowing what he might do, and wishing to serve him if in my power. It was to his room that we went, the attic floor of a dingy lodging-house in an obscure quarter of the city. I found that he was a student, striving to pay his way by literary labor, while gaining an education. His parents were poor, hard-working people, living back in the country, who had done all they could to assist their son.

Flinging himself upon his humble bed, the youth gave himself up to dismal thoughts, the tenor of which was that he wished he was dead. His money was all gone, nothing left of all he had possessed but his books; remunerative employment he found impossible to procure, and he knew not how to gain the means of livelihood. He could not apply to his friends; indeed, he would not have them know his situation for the world, and nothing remained but to put himself out of the way as soon as possible.

In vain did I strive to turn his thoughts in another direction; in vain I pictured to his mind the horror and anguish of his friends, when they should

learn what he had done. He was in no condition to be impressed by any influence that I could bring to bear upon him.

Again he started up and left the house, I still accompanying him. He entered a small drug-store upon the corner, and, nodding nonchalantly to a young lad about his own age behind the counter, said: "Ned, I wish you'd trust me for a few pennies' worth of arsenic; the rats are becoming such a bore up in my attic that I must do something, especially as the landlady pays no attention to my complaints."

"All right," responded the clerk, taking a bottle of white powder from the shelf, and proceeding to do up a small package from its contents. "But you must be very careful of it. I suppose you know how to use it?"

"Yes, thanks; I'll settle as soon as I can," replied the youth, and, taking the parcel, he hurried from the shop.

I knew not what to do. I did not like to see that youth throw himself away in the manner he thought of doing; but how could I prevent it?

In a moment more, a doctor's chaise drove up to the druggist's door, and a portly, good-natured looking gentleman, of about five-and-forty years of age, alighted and entered the shop.

"Ned," said he, "prepare a bottle of cough-mixture from this recipe," handing him the prescription, "and send it with a box of soothing powders to Mrs. Simms. She's very bad."

"All right, sir," replied the clerk; "but look here a minute. Harold H., who lives at No. 8, was here a minute ago for arsenic. He said it was to kill rats. I let him have it, but some how or other just now I feel nervous about it."

Upon the doctor's entrance, I saw in an instant he was the one to be influenced in the right direction, and it was I who had produced the uneasiness in the clerk's mind, and impressed him to speak.

"Ah," said the doctor, "I'll stop and see about this; and do you, Master Ned, have a care how you sell poisonous articles to whoever comes for them."

He hurried from the store over to No. 8, entered, and without ceremony passed up to the attic of the wouldbe suicide. I of course followed. We found the youth engaged in writing a letter, the package of poison close to his hand.

It is needless for me to recount all that passed in that interview. Suffice it to say, that, by a few welldirected inquiries, that good man managed to learn the condition of the lad, and what had been its cause. He then proceeded to talk to him earnestly and firmly, yet kindly, of the sin he contemplated, of the agony of his mother upon hearing of the deed, and the anguish he would cause to all he loved.

The young man broke down, wept bitterly, and promised he would live to be a better man. The physician furnished him with means sufficient for present necessities, promised him he would interest some of his influential friends in his behalf, and, when he left, carried the poison with him.

The man kept his word, and through his influence Harold H. was placed in better circumstances, assisted in his efforts to gain an education, and lives today an ornament and useful member of society, and the pride of his parents and friends.

More than once I have visited liquor saloons, hoping to draw some poor wretch away from the curse of rum and its allurements. I have not always succeeded, but at times have been more successful.

On one of these occasions, a man in the prime of life, who was drinking copiously, and rapidly making himself worse than a beast, arrested my attention, but I could make no impression upon him. While making the effort, a street musician began playing a dancing tune. The musician, a young and delicate boy, accompanied by a still younger female child, who was the dancer, was one whom I could impress, which I did by making him cease the dancing tune, and begin that sweet, pathetic air of Payne's "Home, Sweet Home." The little maid stopped her dancing, looked puzzled for a moment, when, catching the inspiration of the moment, she broke out in bird-like tones of sweetness, and sang the words of the song.

I watched the effect upon the drinker. At first he did not seem to hear, but gradually a listening expression stole over his features, and at last his head sank upon his hands. Now was my time. I whispered to him of his mother, of his dear old childhood home, of his wife and child waiting anxiously for him even now, and of the dear one who had died and was calling to him from her heavenly abode.

He, of course, never knew but what they were his own thoughts awakened by that tune. In part they were, but their power was intensified by spirit presence and aid. His spirit child was close by my side, anxious that

her father should be drawn away from that place. From her I learned of her mother and invalid sister, who were living, and of whom I whispered in his ear.

The music ceased, and, rising, the drinker passed from the place, unheeding the call of the barkeeper to “stop and take another drink.”

I followed him home, saw his wife and lame daughter, and learned from the state of their minds that he had resisted all their pleadings to remain from the rum-shop, and had even raised his hand threateningly to his child. He said nothing that night, but went quietly to bed. In the morning I was there. Softened and humbled in mind, the man sat looking out of the window. I went to his daughter, influenced her to call her father and talk to him, as she had never done before. It was the voice of the spirit calling to him to look up higher, to pray for a strength to resist temptation, and to strive to live a better life. Amid tears of contrition he promised; by the bedside of his invalid child that man took the pledge, and so far it has been kept, and his family are content, while his spirit child is happy.

On another occasion I was at a home, drawn there by a spirit who solicited my assistance for her brother, who was addicted to drink. He, too, had a wife and family of little ones. At the time of my visit, he was possessed with an insane desire for liquor. I heard him promise his wife he would take none, but I had no faith in his word.

He went out. I influenced his little girl to follow him. She was a child of about eight years of age, and evidently stood in great fear of her father. We followed him, saw him enter a liquor saloon. I tried to induce her to enter, but she was afraid. “I’d like to follow pa,” she said, “but I don’t dare; he’d beat me.” Still I urged, and at last, gathering firmness from the spirit world, she boldly entered the saloon, and addressed the barkeeper, who was mixing a drink for her father, thus:

“Don’t you give my father anything to drink, mister; it makes him crazy and sick, and everything is awful bad at home, and mother cries all the time.” She was greeted with a loud laugh by the bystanders, but taking no heed, she seized her father’s hand, saying: “Come, father, don’t stay here; let’s take a walk.”

“Yes, yes, little girl, let’s take a walk; this is no place for you,” he answered, and, winking to the barkeeper, and whispering: “I’ll be back soon,” he suffered the child to lead him away.

I impressed the child to lead her father toward the water. The evening breeze was blowing cool and refreshing. "Father," said the child, "doesn't God see us now?"

The man was evidently startled, but answered: "Yes, I suppose he does, if there is any God."

"Oh, of course there's a God," pursued the child. "Don't the minister say so, and didn't grandma use to pray to him? Grandma's an angel now. Do you 'spose she saw us in that horrid place, papa?"

"Good heavens, I hope not," answered the man. "Come, you'd better go home."

"No, let's stay here a little while; it's cool here," went on the child. Her timidity vanished. "I guess grandma did see us, 'cause angels can go everywhere, you know. I don't believe she liked to see us there. I hope she'll ask God to keep you from going there any more, 'cause it makes mamma cry all the time."

"Cry all the time, does she?" muttered the man. "Well, you must go home now."

The cool breeze had lessened the fire in the man's veins; the child's prattle had driven the present thought of liquor away. Subdued and humbled, he led her home, and went out no more that night. In the morning his employer called for him to go to work, and he had no opportunity to visit the saloon.

During the day I influenced one of those royal souls yet encased in flesh, who go about doing good, to visit that home, where he learned the state of affairs. He called again at tea-time, saw the father and husband, and, by interesting himself in his pleasures and pursuits, won his heart, and induced the man to go with him to a temperance lecture.

This was the beginning. Before the winter had set in, that man had signed the pledge, and was a member of a temperance organization. True, the victory was not easily won. There were many battles to fight with his appetite; and had it not been for noble souls in mortal who stood by him, we could have done but little; as it was, the rum fiend was conquered.

This is one method of my spirit work,—allying myself with spirits, in the body and out, whose souls are zealously engaged in laboring for humanity. More has been accomplished than I care to tell; but very little has been done

compared to what there is to do, and I am still laboring in co-operation with others, for the good time that is to come to all mankind.

The above are only illustrations of one branch of my efforts to assist those in darkness. My labors have not all been expended in one direction, but I have endeavored to obey the commands laid upon me to go out and give the people light. In my travels I have come across mortals possessing, to a large degree, mediumistic power, which only needed to be awakened into life and activity to be of use to mankind.

Often these parties were surrounded by conditions very unfavorable to the development of mediumship. In such cases I have endeavored to supply, in part, the favorable conditions from the spirit life, and have succeeded in unfolding powers that have proved a source of comfort to others.

To illustrate: a number of years ago I was led to visit a spirit circle, the medium of which I found possessing rare powers and abilities, but which sadly needed culture. She was a young maiden, the child of poor parents, who were alike ignorant of the laws of mediumship, and the conditions necessary to their unfoldment. Of course, the manifestations of spirit presence were crude and variable; but finding I could assimilate my powers with those of that medium, I determined to take her in charge for awhile, and see if I could not stimulate her spirit forces sufficiently to assist them into healthy growth and action.

I did so, all unknown to herself and others, and, by directing her mind in a certain channel, succeeded in my task. I selected certain works for her perusal,—philosophical, moral, poetical,—and impressed her to read them; awakened in her mind a desire to write compositions and rhymes; influenced her to attend lectures and sermons, delivered by the loftiest intellects of the time, brought to her home parties who could assist her in the pursuit of knowledge; and thus, in spite of adverse conditions, she steadily advanced, until today she stands far ahead of her family in literary attainments, and is read and listened to with respect by many intelligent, thinking minds.

The case of that medium presents a striking instance of what spirits can do in educating mortals, and in teaching them immortal truths, which they in turn must give forth to the multitude.

Many times have I given my songs to the world through the lips of mortals. Sometimes they appeared crude and ill-expressed, limited, and

warped by the undeveloped channels through which they flowed; but even then I rejoiced to know that they could bear comfort and hope to the sorrowing or the sinning souls they were destined to reach. At other times, my productions have caught a richness of expression, a beautiful and harmonious blending of sentiment and rhythm, from the depths of the mediumistic souls through whom they came that sent them ringing through the hearts of those who read or listened, until they seemed uplifted into the clear air of heaven.

But my greatest joy has been in assisting the inner powers of others to grow and expand, leading them in their cravings for knowledge, and aiding their faltering steps up the rugged heights of life, in search of truth and right. When I find a soul who delights to take a sentiment and to express it clearly in rhyme, I encourage that spirit, no matter how crude or uncertain its efforts may be, for I perceive that the spirit is putting forth its powers, that, like the feelers of a plant, it is groping around to find a support that will bear it in its growth; and that, if it receives the strength and prop it needs, it will develop into a thing of blossoming beauty. But I do not encourage these souls to put forth their first feeble expressions to the world any more than I would advise the florist to place a tiny, fragile slip of plant-life out in the full glare of a summer day. I watch them, and, by directing their thoughts into proper channels, and influencing them what to read in order to expand their minds, sometimes succeed in raising a rare stock, that favors the world with an abundance of rich and fragrant blossoms.

Thousands of spirits are engaged in such work, in divers directions, and in multiplied ways; for they recognize the fact that to have the spirit world peopled by a race of noble, thoughtful, moral, and intellectual souls, we must refine and educate those who are still on earth,—educate them in a knowledge of life and its laws, an understanding of the soul and its requirements, and an appreciation of truth and its unfoldments; and to do this we are teaching and directing those sensitive, intuitive souls who can catch the inspirations of the spheres, and sending them forth as teachers to the masses.

In my wanderings to and fro as a spirit, I have become a cosmopolite,—a citizen of the world,—claiming my home wherever I may be of use to humanity. But my efforts for the amelioration of suffering have not been confined to material life alone. I have met many distressed spirits who

passed from the body, scarred and scathed by sin and passion, and who, in consequence, have been plunged in mental darkness; to them I have sought to bring hope and encouragement. The world beyond is thronged with those unhappy souls, and, though we cannot save them, as each one must work out his own salvation, yet we can aid and teach them to find the better way, and encourage them to persevere in their efforts to atone for the past by doing right.

In my anxiety and eagerness to atone for my own past folly by helping others, I had taken no heed of the lapse of time, my whole soul having been wrapped in my work.

I was at a seance in London one night, and had succeeded in gaining partial possession of a youth whom I wished to develop as a medium. While in this condition, unable to make my presence known, one of the party remarked: "We ought to have an exceptionably good seance tonight, as it is the last one of the year; tomorrow brings us 1872." The words brought to me a vision of New Years' Eves spent in the past, and with it a longing for the sight of dear and familiar faces. I began to grow home-sick and weary. Five years previous I passed from the body, and most of the intervening time I had spent among strangers. With this thought in my mind I found myself losing control of my subject, and in a moment I was away from material things, and out in the realm of spirit. Long before I had learned to travel by an effort of will as spirits do, and I could now upon desiring to be in any place instantly be there. Time and distance have no power over the ascended soul, and it can travel with the velocity of thought. In a moment I found myself in the magnificent garden I had before visited. All was blooming in richness and beauty. I entered the stately portals of a superb mansion, in the center of which a group of spirits were gathered in social converse. Judge of my delight in recognizing all who were dearest to me,—parents, kindred, and friends. As I entered I heard my mother say: "All day I have been calling Critchley. I am sure he must come, we all want him so much; he is doing a good work,—bless the lad,—but I would like to meet him here."

My soul leaped forth in response to these words. I was immediately seen and recognized. It is impossible to describe the bliss and rapture of that meeting. None but those who have experienced can understand the like. The welcome more than recompensed me for past pain and sorrow. It brought an

infinite peace and calm that the world can never take away. I remained with my friends for a time, but not idle; I had learned that true joy cannot reach the soul that is inert. Action is the law of life.

There was much for me to learn of spirit life and its laws, and I set myself to work to acquire knowledge, not forgetting to return frequently to earth to see if there was anything to do, nor neglecting to minister to the unfortunate spirits I met. At the present writing I have learned but little in comparison with what there is to attain, but with active powers, trained for work and study, assisted by wise, beneficent teachers, and surrounded by loving souls, it would be strange, indeed, if a spirit's course should not be upward and onward toward the realms of infinite light and truth.

Engaged in the work I had chosen, I had no time for regrets. Retrospection became no longer a scourge, but a guide, which, by showing me wherein I had erred, pointed out the true way to amendment; and in striving to gain knowledge of the higher, better way of living,—the way of the spirit, bound to no avenue of sensual life, but seeking the intellectual haunts of wisdom and truth,—I found peace of mind, and, in seeking to bring happiness to others, I became truly happy myself.

Again I stood in the Temple of Art; again I found myself in the Poet's Chamber, but no longer an outcast and an alien. Indeed, I was greeted as one whose coming was expected, and welcomed with a warm cordiality and royal fervor that was very refreshing to my soul.

The same kingly company was assembled, but augmented by a number of other souls, rich with their freight of poetic imagery. The assembly was not composed entirely of my own countrymen and women, as heretofore; for among that mighty throng could be seen the smiling, open, intelligent faces of Thomas Moore, the sweet singer of the Emerald Isle, and Robert Burns, he who found his best inspiration amid the rugged heights and heather-crowned hills of Scotia's land. Many others were present, whom I failed to recognize, clad in the flowing robes and purple vestments of the Roman period, or in the classic garments of ancient Greece.

But England's delegation was a large one, numbering those of every century and age: Pope and Spenser, Johnson, Cowley, and Butler, Dryden, Gay, Thomson, and Young,—not the sad, melancholy, pensive Edward Young of earth, but the radiant, calm, contented Edward Young of spirit life; gentle Henry Kirke White, liberty-loving Thomas Campbell, and

stouthearted, staunch, and true Walter Scott, who, though not English born, yet seemed very near to me.

Addison, whom I had mentioned as occupying the seat of honor before, now sat low at the feet of him who occupied the position of the Master of Ceremonies, and whom I recognized as the true, loyal, long-suffering, yet monarch-crowned soul, Milton. At his right was to be seen the lofty brow, and bold, fearless, speaking countenance of William Shakespeare; while, at the left, Dryden seemed to be acting as assistant or secretary.

In my experience of spirit power and possibilities, I had learned to understand and interpret the waves of thought flowing from soul to soul; therefore I was at no loss to understand the purport and purposes of this convention. It was a gathering of kindred souls, met to communicate the loftiest thoughts and sweetest aspirations to each other, thus dispensing the bountiful gifts of the spirit to all who would partake.

I cannot describe to you the rich, ennobling thoughts, clothed in their draperies of sweetest imagery, which flowed from the soul of him who presided, into ours, the recipients'; nor the grandeur and sublimity of the ideas with which he threaded, like brands of shimmering pearls, the network of his discourse. But all was grand and glorious, beyond the power of mortals to conceive. At the close of his remarks, the company clustered into knots, discussing the discourse, comparing experiences, or revealing to each other the secret depths of their poetic souls, from which were to be drawn lines, glowing with the beauty and fragrance of harmonious lives.

It was then I discovered that every soul that is attuned into harmony with the inner life, that dwells in sympathy with the Divine Mind, as manifested in his outer creations of will, in his natural expressions of love and beauty, is in itself a poem of rare delicacy and power; a living, breathing, animated poem, thrilled with the magic power of thought, and stamped with the eternal glory of individualized liberty; that every poetic soul is itself the production of the Infinite Mind, that must make itself heard in lines of glowing, inspiring thought along the pathway of human toil and suffering, and cannot fail to arouse the hidden energies and sleeping possibilities of power of those it comes in *rapport* with.

It was then I was made supremely blest by being taken by the hand by such souls as Cowper, Byron,—my boyhood's ideal,—Burns, Scott, Campbell, Moore, Mrs. Browning, Felicia Hemans, and others, and

welcomed to this haunt of the beautiful and the good. And I cannot convey to you my exquisite sense of pleasures when my hand was again grasped by that of my helper and friend, Robert B. Brough, and I was enabled to bless him for the avenues of tranquility and peace he had opened out to me. But I must not linger here, although sweet and pleasant to me are these reminiscences of actual life in the spheres.

Leaving the Poets' Chamber, I visited in turn the Musicians' Gallery, the Sculptors' Hall, and the Artists' Studio. It is impossible for mortal hands to pen a description of what is to be seen and heard in them. Words fail, and language grows cold and unmeaning before the splendid achievements of the upper world.

Imagine, if you can, all the sweetest sounds your soul has ever heard or dreamed of, blended into one harmonious whole, swelling louder, clearer, and sweeter, or melting away into the far-off distance, like the gentle fading of a glorious sunset, absorbed by a finer and more ethereal beauty of azure brightness, and you will have a faint conception of the music and the singing of the spheres.

Imagine, if you can, all the most graceful, beautifully-molded, perfectly-formed and rounded, exquisitely carved and delicately-sculptured forms of statuary, of which you have ever heard or read grouped together, forming a class of the rarest workmanship and art that human skill and genius can chisel from the marble block, and you have a slight idea of the superb expression of the sculptor's soul which is perfected in the immortal world. Dream, if you can, of the most magnificent scenery the world affords, the most royal landscapes, the most superb water views, and you may be able to just approach in thought an idea of the productions of the artist's soul that line the walls of the artists' studio in spirit life.

Recollect all the sweet, the beautiful, and the various expressions of the human countenance,—the fire, the vigor, and sparkling triumph of the eye, the restless energy or quiet repose of the limbs, the smiling, speaking expression of the lips,—and you can faintly conceive the models and patterns that spirit artists and sculptors seek to emulate. And have they succeeded? To a certain extent, decidedly, yes.

Enter a hall of statuary, and in the marble beauties, grouped together there, you find the expression of peace, hope, or joy depicted with marvelous fidelity; you observe the contour of the limbs as perfect as in

life, and all seemingly permeated with that indescribable something that gives them the appearance of having the power to move, act, and walk off at will.

Upon entering the artists' studio, at the farther end of which is suspended a magnificent landscape painting, you would, at first sight, believe yourself to be gazing upon a scene of natural life and beauty. The lights and shadows seem to be continually shifting, the trees to be waving their branches, and the streamlet running along in murmuring gladness. The clouds appear to be settling slowly down upon the distant mountains, while it distinctly seems to you that the cattle, grazing in the meadows, are moving lazily along, half wearied out by the incessant buzzing of the hovering insects.

So it is with the music of the upper life. It approaches as near the harmonious, perfect blending of the various parts of the human voice as can be imagined; and the utterances of the poets partake of the life of the giver, and are animated with true fire and vigor, which is of itself a part of that Eternal Voice that is the author and sustainer of all life and being.

But these spirit artists are by no means satisfied with what they have produced; they see something grander, more beautiful, sublime, and perfect, which they are striving to attain. Their ideal is as yet unexpressed; but, with the perfect development of the soul and its possibilities, all that is ever dreamed of must find expression in the outworkings of the spirit.

But I have found that, with all its striving to emulate and express the workings of Nature, in its perfect form, that the soul of the true artist, poet, and songster finds its keenest delight in stamping its poems, paintings, and songs upon the receptive human mind that is ready to receive; that the true poet breathes his fiery inspirations upon the slumbering soul, awakening it to life and activity, bringing to it an enjoyment and appreciation of the beauties of the inner life, and of the splendors of natural creation; that the true artist paints in glowing colors on the sensitive souls of mortals a beautiful landscape of the higher life, which arouses those souls to a realizing sense of the beautiful, and develops within them an ideal, for which they will ever strive; that the true musician and singer sends his sweet strains echoing through the souls of mortals, developing their sweetest, noblest powers, to bless and enrich the musical world; and that the true sculptor finds his delight in molding and carving out the possibilities of those he can approach, of chiseling and chipping away all that is

detrimental to the spirit's growth, and bringing forth to light an angel of power and beauty from the rough, unpolished mass of individuality. In short, that the workers of the higher life do not find enjoyment in bringing their own productions to earth, but their highest blessing and privilege is in being able to impress, work upon, and guide the hidden, inner powers of souls in mortal forms until they develop the beauty and glory within them, and awaken their spirits to an understanding of beautiful life, an appreciation of the good and true, and a knowledge of the possibility of the power that is theirs.

Not alone were my visits confined to the Temple of Art; although attracted to that place by the laws of sympathy and association, yet my desire to gain knowledge and a comprehension of truth led me, in company with other inquiring minds, to visit the Spiritual Congress, and to pay marked attention to the learned and honorable body there assembled, and busily employed in devising various schemes for the enlightenment, amelioration, and welfare of humanity; to visit the Wisdom Circles, and receive enlightenment upon the laws governing life and its unfoldments; and to visit our medical colleges and learn of the true method, not of curing disease, but of preventing sickness and preserving health. And I tell you that humanity on earth have yet to learn more of medical and legal jurisprudence than has ever been dreamed of by mortals.

But I must draw this narrative to a close. I might go on multiplying my experiences almost *ad infinitum* had I the time and space; but such has not been my object in coming. I have endeavored to show you how a spirit, weighed down by its consciousness of misspent days and misapplied powers and energies, bowed down by its load of past wrong-doing and follies, darkened by its work neglected, and duties unfulfilled, may be able, by the desire of his own soul, and the aid and sympathy of others, to rise out of his darkened condition into the light, to work his salvation from sin and his way to righteousness. But it was no easy task. I have not given you an account of all the fiery temptations that assailed me in my search for the better life, or the bitter struggles my soul passed through ere it became the master.

Through devious ways and tortuous paths the soul must pass that has done wrong to itself and others; but if it is in earnest in its desire to become better, if it craves strength and aid from the higher powers, if it reaches its

aspirations out toward the better, purer, grander life of the spirit, be sure that it must and will succeed.

I can dimly perceive that away down in the distant future humanity is to broaden and develop into the perfect type of angelhood; that the divinest attributes of the soul are yet to govern and control the body; and ignorance, darkness, and crime flee before the dawning light of knowledge and wisdom; and that human life is to become illuminated with the glory of universal love and harmony.

I can believe that the “good time coming,” “the year of jubilee,” “the millennium,” so long foretold by prophet and seer, so often mentioned in song and story, the poet’s dream and the idealist’s fancy, is yet to dawn upon the awakened world; when man, become strong through the educators of love and sympathy, made wise by the acquirement of knowledge, and the recognition of truth, shall look upon all humans as his brothers and sisters, shall learn that war is a crime against the human family, and tyranny, injustice, and oppression sins against the Holy Ghost. Then shall mankind fraternize, and nations sit down in universal peace. I believe that the human form is yet to bear the stamp and impress of all that is lovely and divine.

I was with a friend at a convocation of spirits, where were gathered together a large throng of refined, intelligent beings, each one marked with a beauty all his or her own, and I amused myself by comparing the different individuals with the beautiful forms in nature which they reminded me of, and the resemblance—so to speak—was so apparent that I called my friend’s attention to it by remarking:

“Did you ever observe that there is a certain resemblance between humanity and the forms of Nature? For instance, yonder lady, with her pure, white face, daintily-carved features, and lithe, willowy form, reminds me of nothing but a stately garden-lily, shimmering with whiteness; and that laughing, rosy-cheeked sprite beside her, with her rounded form and well-developed features, is very like the royal blush-rose of summer.”

“Very true,” replied my friend; “and over there you note the speaker; does not his massive frame, well-proportioned limbs, lofty brow, and shining features remind you of some mighty boulder, uprearing its head with a consciousness of might and grandeur?”

“He does, indeed; the shadow of a great rock in a weary land; and just beside him rests one whose tall, straight form, beneficent looks, and air of

protectiveness calls to mind the forest tree with its ample provision of kindly shade and shelter.”

And so we went on, drawing our comparisons,—one, with her calm, benignant smile, and a wealth of love and sympathy welling up from her nature, and expressing itself in the depths of her shining eyes, we likened to the smiling, open sea, overflowing with its wealth, and watering and refreshing the earth. Another, who was bubbling over with a superabundance of merriment and joy, we likened to the laughing, gurgling streamlet that overleaps all bounds, and speeds merrily along its way. One, of majestic form, replete with vital force, with a look of concentrated determination in his face, and an expression of energetic power impressed upon him, reminded us of the ocean, mighty in its majesty and power. One shone like the sun, another sparkled like a sunbeam; one brought an air of refreshing coolness with her, another glowed and glimmered like the autumn days.

“The fact of it is,” said my friend, “all that there is good and beautiful in nature is personified and individualized, so to speak, in the higher types of humanity. All the richness and splendor of creation culminate their grandest expressions in the human form; and when spirituality has ripened and developed the soul, its outer tenement will become so harmonized with the natural life of creation, so blended with the external manifestations of God, that it will become permeated with His life, and will reflect all the beauty and fragrance, all the grace and symmetry, of His works. Do you understand?”

I did, but I know not that I make it plain to mortals; suffice it to say, that I believe the day is coming when each soul shall have grown so in harmony with the laws of life that it will reflect upon its outward form only the beautiful and the good.

I had not long returned to spirit life ere I again met my former friend and teacher, “Benja, the missionary.” The sage was engaged in his usual employment of aiding souls in need. The pleasure of our meeting was mutual, but cannot be expressed by mortal pen; it was of the soul, true and fervent, and shone in the speaking eye and upon the trembling lip. Since that time I have often sought the company of the sage, and always with profit to myself. He has been an invaluable guide to me in my search for knowledge, and has lifted my spirit into a pure atmosphere. Spirit life is full

of such workers, and by their efforts, combined with the desires of sin-sick souls to become better, we look for the redemption of the human race from error.

And now, good friends, you, unto whom I have revealed a few of the most vitalizing experiences of my spiritual life, I feel that I must draw these papers to a close, and, taking each one of you spiritually by the hand, bid you go on with your efforts in self-culture and advancement; and God speed you forward in your work for your own souls and for humanity.

Again I say, it is impossible for me to convey to you anything more than a mere outline of the inner experience of the spirit; each one of you must undergo the process for yourselves ere you can realize how intense in thought and feeling, and how thoroughly quickened into life, are all the sensations of spiritual existence. In fact, spirit is all thought, all sense, and it is as impossible to escape from ourselves, and the consequences of our lives, as it is to exist without the ordinary mode of respiration.

Hence, let me entreat you to endeavor constantly and earnestly to so live that only the reflection of a pure life shall cast itself over your spirit; that only the recollection of good accomplished and evil resisted shall visit your soul when you have attained the immortal heights of the other world.

But, ere I close, I feel that I must say a word in regard to the cause that lies nearest my heart. Interested as I am, and must be, in all movements of reform, all methods of advancement calculated to ameliorate the condition of humanity, and eager as I am to see the race moving along upon a higher, purer, more spiritualized plane of life, yet my soul's best endeavors must be employed in the temperance cause. As one who has sinned and suffered, as one who has experienced the agony and the vicissitudes of intemperance, I feel it my duty to hang out a warning flag to others that shall be a signal of danger to those who look that way.

Sad, aye, too, too sad it is that, while women weep and children wail because of the misery entailed upon them, spirit life is crowded with souls that have passed out from earth with the taint of intemperance defiling their persons and dragging them downward. No wonder, then, that the angels weep in pity; no wonder that noble souls come thronging back, pleading with you to seek for good, to resist evil, and to uplift your head above the haunts of wrong and wickedness.

How long, aye, how long shall this state of things continue to exist? When shall the morning dawn that shall usher in a new day, a day of universal temperance and purity on earth? When shall the darkness break, and a new era of light, of knowledge and wisdom, come flooding in upon us? Not until man shall study the laws of his own being, and, so studying, learn to live in harmony with those laws. Not until every man and every woman becomes a physiologist, understanding the structure and composition of his or her own organism, and learning of that wisdom which says: "Partake of nothing but what assimilates with the component parts of your body, or satisfies the natural demands of nature." Not until men and women study the law of heredity, of transmission, which teaches that whatever trait of character, whatever peculiarity of disposition, whatever fatal appetite or habit the parents possess, is transmitted to their offspring, either in a modified or aggravated degree, and is sure to crop out somewhere and at some time in one form or another. Not until humanity, learning these truths, live up to them in obedience to all their requirements will the day of universal happiness, peace, and purity dawn upon earth.

I am rejoiced to find that a public sentiment is being created in regard to this subject,—a public sentiment that is felt throughout the length and breadth of nations,—a sentiment in favor of suppressing the manufacture and sale of alcoholic liquors, and of seeking to elevate and promote the cause of temperance, at all times and in all places. It has crept into the churches, and now the clergy dare utter sentiments in its favor; it makes itself heard in the street, and upon the rostrum; it enters our legislative halls, and demands a hearing; and it has formed organizations, the power and influence of which are felt everywhere. So much for the cause of temperance; and, encouraged by public sentiment, it must and shall prosper, and eventually triumph. A public sentiment in its favor must continue to grow until the manufacture and sale of alcohol as a beverage will be universally admitted to be a crime against humanity; no man who cares for the opinion of his fellows (and what man does not?) dare to engage in the business, and intemperance be so generally looked upon as an evil that no man will or woman will raise the wine-cup to his or her lips. That time must come, and may God and angels hasten the day.

Now, a few closing words to those unfortunates who are addicted to the habit of intemperance: my whole soul goes out to you in sympathy, and, were it possible, I would lift you all upon a platform of mental strength and

moral integrity. I do not condemn, I pity; I dare not censure, I sympathize. From my own experience I know the road you have to travel, and, if I could, I would enfold you in that divine strength that would enable you to crush the serpent under your feet. Let me implore you, out of the deep compassion of my soul, to endeavor, with all your determined will-power and firmness, to throw off the fatal habit that binds you; to become free beings, slaves of no appetite nor passion; to crush them down and assert your manhood. Thus, with the love and aid of the angels, you will become pure, and worthy of their companionship. Go on, and heaven bless you in your efforts for selfredemption.

And now, good friends, adieu. May the angels of love and harmony, of purity and peace, abide with you always, fitting your lives for a habitation of light, and an experience of joy in the spirit world.

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