

THE
FUTURE LIFE:

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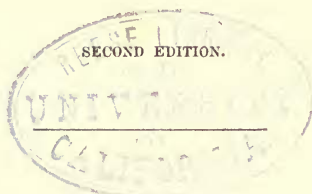
Described and Portrayed by Spirits,

THROUGH

MRS. ELIZABETH SWEET.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY

JUDGE J. W. EDMONDS.



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INTRODUCTION.

At an early period of my investigations into spiritual intercourse, when I was but an inquirer and by no means a believer, I was invited to join a circle which had weekly meetings at the house of Mrs. Fish, the eldest of the Fox family. I accepted the invitation, and met there some five or six persons, male and female, all strangers to me.

After a few meetings, Mrs. Fish introduced two new members to the circle, Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Sweet, alike strangers to me. They were very quiet and unobtrusive in their manners, and I soon discovered that they were very earnest and honest seekers after the truth. But I had no idea, nor had they, that there was any mediumship about either of them.

At that time, my official duties compelled me to be absent from the city one month out of every three. On one occasion, when I returned from such an absence, I was informed at the next meeting of our circle, that Mrs. Sweet had begun to be developed as a medium. The fact itself, and the manner in which it was told to me, interested me at once.

In the course of the evening this development began to show itself, but in a manner that was very repulsive to me.

Our circle had been uniformly orderly and decorous, and Mrs. Sweet was one of the most gentle, modest, and retiring among them. But on this occasion she was influenced

to jump up from her chair and run around the room, gesticulating vehemently, and speaking in a loud voice, entirely alien to her usual manner. The exhibition was so repulsive to me, that I arose to leave the room. I threw my cloak around my shoulders, and then paused a moment, looking at the scene. While I was doing this she came up to me, and in a loud tone said, "You don't like this?" I answered, "No; I do not, indeed." At once the manifestation ceased, and she resumed her seat, and all was quiet again. Then through the rappings it was said, that they would influence her more quietly in future.

At the next meeting of our circle she was again influenced, and in a similar manner, though perhaps with less vehemence. I at once spoke, "Is this what you call influencing her more quietly?" If she had been knocked down with a club, the manifestation could not have ceased more suddenly. From that time we had no more of that rudeness, but every thing that came from her had all the gentleness and modesty that so eminently characterized her.

I was then too much of a novice to know what I afterward learned, that this violence, which mediums at times displayed, was owing to their own opposition and resistance to the influence, and was necessary not only to overcome such resistance, but also to show the mediums that it was a power out of and beyond themselves. I have often found, in other cases as well as hers, that it was harder for the mediums—those especially who knew nothing of the philosophy of the subject—to realize and acknowledge the presence of the power, than it was for the uninfluenced spectator.

In her case, it was the work of time to overcome her doubts and her reluctance, but finally, through her own singleness and purity of purpose, and the judicious action

of her husband, she became one of the best trance and speaking mediums I have ever seen.

This occurred in the early part of 1852, but our circle continued at Mrs. Fish's until after I went South for the benefit of my health, in December of that year.

In the mean time, I was in the habit of visiting her and her husband two or three times a week at their house, and never without receiving a communication from the spirits through her. Sometimes I went alone, and sometimes I had persons with me, but we formed no regular circle, for so complete was her development that no aid from a circle was necessary. And so far did her development progress, that it became no longer necessary to put her into a trance, which had been previously necessary to prevent the operation of her own mind from interfering with the spirit's thoughts.

Those thoughts came from her with great freedom and accuracy, the language uniformly good and much beyond what would be expected from her education, using at times words very pertinent to the matter in hand, but which she hesitated to speak because she had never heard them before, uttering sentiments from which she strenuously dissented, and giving expression to trains of thought far beyond the reach of any on which her mind had ever dwelt.

I was in the habit of writing down with great care what was thus uttered, and ere long her husband adopted the same practice, and so committed to writing many communications given when I was not present.

In this manner was preserved a great mass of spirit-teachings of much interest and value. But it was not thus alone that such teachings through her were received and preserved.

At almost every one of my private interviews at her

house, I would receive some communication from my wife, of which also I preserved the record; and at the circle at Mrs. Fish's she would be influenced, and what she would then utter was also written down and carefully saved.

My absence at the South continued about four months, during all which time I heard nothing from the circle; and on my return in April, I hastened to Mrs. Sweet's to renew the spirit-intercourse of which I had been so long deprived. When I saw her, I learned that our circle had been for some time broken up, and that her powers had been suspended for at least two months. I could not get a word through her! During the ensuing three weeks I called upon her several times, but always in vain. Not a word could I get. I went to other mediums, but with the same result. Determined "not to give it up so," I got five or six mediums together, desirous of forming as strong a battery as I could; and with their aid, through Mrs. Sweet, I received this communication from my wife: "She and I," it was said, "had prior to this used the intercourse for the purpose of our own selfish gratification. Now that must stop, and henceforth we must use the advantages awarded to us for the benefit of others." I replied that I was ready to do so, and the answer was, "Very well, the means will soon be provided."

Several weeks elapsed, during which I waited with what patience I could command, until one day an entire stranger spoke to me and told me of manifestations at his house, through himself and his daughter, which he wished me to witness. I did so, and discovered at once how great were his medial powers. This was Dr. Dexter, with whom I worked in harmony for a year or more, and with whom I formed a circle which met at my house, of which Mr. and Mrs. Sweet became members.

At those circles she was frequently influenced, some-

times to speak alone, and sometimes in connection with other mediums; and of those communications also careful records were made at the time and preserved.

Thus during the three most active years of my investigation into the reality and philosophy of spiritual intercourse, I was intimately associated with Mrs. Sweet, and came to regard her as, to say the least, one of the most reliable of all the mediums whom I had seen; and thus, as I have detailed, many of the manifestations through her were preserved.

Some of them have been published, some in my volumes entitled "Spiritualism," and some in the newspaper or periodical publications of the day; but they have never been gathered together into one book, and many of them have never been given to the world.

She is now in the spirit-world. She died in August, 1859. During her life she always shrank, and would now, were she yet with us, shrink from the publicity which any such book would give to her name. But her husband, always impressed with the duty of placing within every one's reach the revelations given through her, and not confining them within his own knowledge, has determined to send them forth. This determination has long existed in his mind, and he has only waited for the time to come when his circumstances would be favorable to do so. That time having now arrived, he makes this publication. Most cordially do I commend his action, and sincerely do I believe that what he has now gathered together will afford to every sincere inquirer the great satisfaction which at an earlier day they gave to me.

I have carefully read the MSS. of the papers which he proposes to publish, and I can vouch for their genuineness. They are no fabrications for a sinister purpose—no inventions of a later day—no contrivances to deceive or

mislead ; but they are, to my knowledge, teachings given through her at the times they purport to have been given.

In my view, they have a peculiar value, not always to be found in our spiritual publications. As I understand it, the great object of the present movement—as distinguished from the revelations of former days—is to reveal to us what is the nature and condition of the life into which we pass after death, all other manifestations of the day being merely subordinate to, and co-operative with this. All these communications through Mrs. Sweet, look directly to this end, and to the reflecting mind, they furnish a mass of evidence on that topic, of infinite value.

Of their genuineness I have already spoken, so I have of her character ; but yet not enough, perhaps, to inspire others with my own convictions of the purity of her nature. She always seemed to me to be—

Pure as the snow-flake ere it falls,
And takes the stain of earth,
Without a taint of mortal life,
Except its mortal birth.

And I commend this publication to the earnest consideration of all those, who, struggling through the mist which false teaching has thrown around the grave, are striving to learn what is the actual reality beyond it.

J. W. EDMONDS.

NEW YORK, *January* 20, 1869.

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THE FUTURE LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

THE HOLY CITY.

Given by Mrs. Hemans, *September, 1852.*

I SAW a beautiful city afar off, and the name of that city was "Holy." The entrance therein was through a massive gate, and on either side stood an angel, around whose head was a soft halo of radiance, like unto the sun when fleecy clouds have softened the brilliancy of his ray; and their countenances were fair and beautifully serene with a pure and holy love, and they ever sang the hymn, "Holiness to the Lord."

The angels who guarded that gate were called Constance and Truth, and many people were passing in and out. Some were clad in bright raiments and had radiant faces. Some had a lowly and downcast mien, and before they entered the gate were casting imploring looks, with this expression on their faces, "May I enter?" Some strode along tall and majestically, their heads erect and their faces earnest, as if in pursuit of some great treasure to be obtained when they should

enter that gate. Some were loitering in the path, and gazing wishfully as though afraid to approach. Some were trembling, and tears bedewed their cheeks, and they looked on one another saying, "Shall we approach? we shall not be permitted to enter." Little children were traveling there hand in hand, and none of these emotions did I observe on their innocent faces. Carelessly and hopefully, brightly and lovingly, they loitered along, and their little faces seemed glad with delight as they approached that beautiful gate, and gazed on those beautiful guards which kept the entrance. They did not ask, "May I enter?" but they entered. The guards smiled, and the smile struck me as an exceedingly happy one. But why the careless, happy laugh of childhood should make them seem happier at the unconcern with which those little ones entered, was more than I could fathom. It struck me as remarkable. Much more important seemed the entrance of those people of full growth and developed minds, and yet how different, how varied were the emotions which each countenance, each walk, each manner and mien, and whole expression together betrayed, while passing before my vision.

I also reached the entrance, and was permitted to enter; not, however, before I had asked one of the keepers the meaning of so much apparent incongruity of character exhibited by the concourse which had passed before me. The guards said, "Enter, and see for thyself with thine own eyes, and thine own eyes shall convince thee;" and I entered.

I noticed in that vast city, that those whose faces were so radiant with joy and happiness, had come from

a far-off country, to show the new-comers the localities, pursuits, and customs, and requirements of the country which they were now going to inhabit. And I observed that those who had entered with so lofty a port and imposing a mien, with head so erect, so elevated, wore a disappointed look at the barrenness of the country. They had expected to be kings and masters, and to feed on the fat of the land. They did not seem to find the palaces, the luxurious dwellings made ready to receive them, which they had expected to find, and it seemed to me as though hastily-constructed palaces of happiness, before setting out for this country, had been suddenly overthrown. They looked lost, disappointed, jealous. They did not ask, "What shall I do?" but they asked "How is this? This is not the heaven to which we expected to come. It is a cold, barren, gloomy place; nothing genial or bright to feast the eye or please the soul. Why, we were led to expect a far different place from this. This surely can not be the heaven we were so often told was prepared for us." They seemed to fold their hands and stand in mute despair. They looked neither to the right nor the left, but there they stood, and gazed as it were on vacancy and hopelessness. How dark and bleak it seemed to them!

I turned away from them and approached a form who seemed elated at having found something very pleasing. I stepped up and accosted the person. I inquired, "Why do you seem so glad? have you found a treasure? Nothing less could make you look so happy. I would participate in your joy." The figure, which was a female, looked on me with eyes streaming

with tears. "Why, mortal," she said, "this is such a beautiful place. I am enchanted, I am delighted; can it be possible that I can always live here? Why, when I inhabited a coarse body, which now I find was a shell in which the spirit moved, I was unused to such a place. My fingers ached with toil, my heart was oppressed with sorrow, my limbs often refused to do their painful duties, and my spirit seemed bowed down to the dust. They told me I was such a sinner; and the preacher warned me to beware of a fire prepared for such as I, who broke the commands of God, even to satisfy the cravings of hunger. I longed to live, because I dared not die. They told me God was pure and good, too pure to look upon such a sinner as I, because of my infirmities. They told me I had turned my back on God by the life which I led; I had broken his commands. I had not entered the room where his word was preached because of my poverty and nakedness. I grew reckless, and thought I will live on my short day, and then let me perish. How dark, how very dark, the future seemed! But when worn out with disease and long suffering, my heart weary and heavy laden, I laid down, most unwillingly, too, my mortal body; and when I awaked, a beautiful being came and took me by the hand, and led me a long distance from earth, and put me upon the road by which all those people have entered through that gate. I had not hoped to enter it, but I was impelled to enter by a power of I know not what. And when I entered it, why, what a beautiful place I found it! Oh, I can not, can not describe my joy and happiness. So many smiled upon me. They take me by the hand and welcome me.

Such beautiful-looking people! I did not think they would notice me—a poor creature like me. Why, every thing here dazzles my eyes with ecstatic beauty and splendor, which everywhere meets my view. The very ground I tread upon seems to be of such a brilliant hue. It is almost transparent, and yields to my touch. I neither know whether I walk or glide. It seems to me I do not tread at times. It is a gentle, undulating motion, so unlike the painful steps my poor weary feet used to tread. And oh! how beautiful and green the grass appears; and the leaves, they wave so gently in the wind. The air, which is wafted from the leaves across my brow, seems to fill me with such intense joy that I could soar as a bird in the air. Oh, what a lovely place is this! I see such broad and shining rivers, and moon, and sun—but so much more bright than I ever beheld on earth. How strange it all seems! The very stars seem to smile as they twinkle, and music fills the air wherever I turn my ear. It is more heaven than I ever dared dream of—more than I could ever conceive. How I wish to go back and tell the world, my friends, of this lovely place! They would not believe me. Why, heaven is entirely too poor a name! I can not tell you, it is so beautiful! so beautiful!

“That radiant spirit met me and said, ‘Poor mortal, poor child of clay, of sorrow, and of suffering, rest thou here. Here the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. This is thy heaven, as long as it shall appear heaven to thee. But heaven is not a place, but an endless continuation of places.’”

I then turned and beheld those loiterers. They were very slowly approaching in their journey through that

great city. They seemed careless somewhat, doubtful somewhat, fearing their progress would every moment be impeded by some unforeseen obstacle placed in the way by some uncertain power. I approached a loiterer and said, "Why do you tarry? Why do you not hasten as your fellow-travelers are doing? Have you no object in view—no desire to explore this unknown country? Do you not wish for a guide? Why, haste thee, loiterer; the bright ones will outstrip thee, and thou wilt be left in the rear, and thy path become toilsome with none to lead thee." He turned upon me a look of inquiry, for I perceived he was a man, but I could perceive no earnest look in his eye, no heightened color in his cheek. He would take a few steps forward and turn, look back and pause, and then seem to shrink as though in fear, and anon would look forward. He said to me, "I never was in a hurry; I never could make up my mind whether to be a Christian or a sinner, as the world calls it. I thought I would take the middle path and risk the future. I liked the world so well that I followed its precepts, and where duty was an easy path, very easily I walked therein. I was very contented to think that heaven should be my home, but further than this I did not search, thinking that many would be situated in the same position I was, and why should I fare worse than they? Well, in this state of mind I cast off my body. I emerged into a country of whose character and bearings I was altogether ignorant; indeed, I am still fearful that I may have entered the wrong passage. Had I not better return and seek another entrance? This does not seem to me so much like heaven. I am afraid if I go on it will lead me to

a hell they used to talk about. It makes me uneasy ; I don't like to crowd along. What is your opinion?"

I said, "Poor spirit, go on thy journey, learn wisdom, and make up for lost privileges, for lost happiness, and for never-realized hopes. Ah ! poor mortal ! what have you not lost ? An uncertainty through life has almost become an uncertainty after death. Oh, thou radiant guide ! wilt not thou approach ? Wilt thou not tell this poor misguided soul how weak and unstable is the guide which makes unto itself a guide of others' opinions ? When the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

I turned from the sad spectacle, and near me I saw those trembling ones with tears upon their cheeks. Ah ! the tearful eyes, how sad they look, and yet how hoping ! Slowly they approached—tremblingly they lifted up their voice and exclaimed, "Oh, this place is so beautiful, we will not be permitted to stay. It is only a glimpse of heaven, only a thought of beauty to gladden us on our entrance into the shadows of the spirit-world. Why, they told us of the valley of the shadow of death. They told us of the path being narrow and of the few that entered it. They must have been mistaken in the way they took those words, that passage. A great many are walking in that way ; we are walking in it. Oh ! oh ! it's heaven, it *is* heaven. It is the heaven we heard about, but it is the heaven we never expected to enter. It was kept at such a great distance from us ! They said it was the pure, the sanctified, the meek, and the lowly, and the God-fearing, the sin-hater, and the well-doing that enter heaven. We never thought we were the well-doers ; we never

expected so great a boon; we never anticipated being so near heaven—it seemed so very dim and distant. And now, here we are, and here is heaven! Why, a short time ago we were down in the busy world, jostled in the crowd and overlooked—sometimes sneered at, sometimes scoffed at, often unnoticed. But, oh! we did love God, we did right as near as we knew how, though not all they told us was right. We lived and died as mortals do, and here we are, some in one path and some in another, some in one direction and some in another, that leads to this beautiful country. Some are in fields, where grass is just beginning to grow; some walking through paths of shade and sunshine; some are even picking flowers; and some are seeking for treasures, which they call knowledge, which they sought for long on earth but never found, because of their inability to attain the gift. They have gone to a building which they call a place of instruction, and they say that is a heaven to them already. They say their souls have ever hungered on earth without being satisfied. Some of them are exploring the wonders and workings of nature, and some are exploring the wonderful machinery of their own being. All are engaged in labor, and all have kind friends called guides. Shall I tell you what the labor is called? It is the natural labor of the human mind, which the eternal soul is ever engaged in, and that is PROGRESSION.”

The little children next attracted my attention. Little children! best and last! How careless and happy, with what ingenuous, beautiful, no-evil-fearing faces they enter. Hail! little spirits! How bright ye look. They do not weep. They do not shrink, nor

tremble, nor turn back, but wander along in innocence and joy. Hither and thither they spread. One is attracted by a beautiful bird and chases that bird, drawn by his musical notes, and he laughs in the fullness of his spirit's joy. Another has found a beautiful flower. Oh, how delighted he looks! He bursts forth in a merry peal, and calls his little companions to gaze on the treasure he has found. Another hears sweet music, and has flown off to find it. As they wander off, one meets another, now a father, a mother, a brother, a sister. Oh, what a happy mingling of joy there is! How delighted they seem! Their heaven is all heaven, no cloud obscures their sky, but joyfully and trustingly they gambol and frolic in the beautiful pastures prepared for them. How it gladdens my spirit as I gaze on the scene! Oh, innocents, how trusting! How much nearer ye approach the Godlike nature of our Father in your happy beauty of trust! Ye know no evil, therefore ye fear no enemy. The chain which unloosened you from heaven, as a spark of light, returned you through its links so untainted that ye scarce felt the transition. Happy ones, I leave you.

Radiant spirits, I thank ye for the entrance ye have given me to a lesson to give to mortals below. Faith, thou art mine; and Constance, I know thee, and thank thee right gladly.

The city which I entered is that which is viewed by mortals in the flesh, and it seems to them that it is far off, because it is called "Holy." The entrance thereof, through that massive gate, is called Death—massive because the spirit's greatest entrance when cut loose from this sphere. And the angels on either side are

the angels which usher us in, and the shining ones who were passing in and out of the city were those who are sent back to earth on errands of mercy and love.

The city itself represents the heaven which all contemplate as being their ultimate destination, whether they have lived, or felt, or expected a continued existence; and different aspects of the same country to the different minds which arrived there, will show you wherein they had wisely or unwisely prepared for their never-ending journey.

The gate is surely a golden one to many, and the entrance is always and ever watched by spirits which are waiting to receive the traveler, who there commences his experience, guided by faith, led on by patience, supported by love, inasmuch as his former life and sphere of affinities will enable lovely spirits to approach him upon his first entrance.

And if this will enable any mortals to see in what relation they stand to the sphere of existence to which all are tending; if it will show them in how great a measure they may enjoy that heaven on earth which is only a prelude to the actual state which they must all know and conceive for themselves in the different pictures which I have drawn, and many more which are not here shown, I shall have accomplished my task, and thank thee, O Patience!

CHAPTER II.

SPIRITUAL MESSAGE.

An address to the Circle of Hope, by Apollos Munn, who had lately passed to the other life,—*October, 1852.*

I PERCEIVE that I am at this time an unexpected visitor to you, and to the medium also. But for some time past I have been waiting for an opportunity to make myself known, that I might be enabled at times to converse with my friends on earth in whom I am so much interested. My feelings have lately been attracted toward the happy little circle in which you weekly assemble, and where you attract around you a class of spirits whose influences encircle you as with a wall of fire, the light of which shall repel all inharmonious spirits that do not love the light, because of their affinity for darkness. I see that this fire, kindled by love and harmony, which constitutes brotherly love, will closely bind you as with a chain whose links shall become more immovable, as the desires of each shall fervently ascend to Heaven for strength to progress into the heaven on earth which you are all expecting to realize. And to attain this end, let each and all of you measure your own heaven by your own experience, extending your mind to no greater than that which you are able to grasp. Be content with the unfolding of the germ which in due

time will become a bud, and which, when the bud is sufficiently matured, will burst into a flower. But were the flower to unfold before it was sufficiently strengthened to receive the rays of light, it would shrink back within itself, and be withered by the effulgence which it could not bear. My wish is, that every soul may see its own heaven. Oh, do not measure your own experience by one another's, but look within your own hearts, and receive the draught of happiness in whatever measure it may be meted out to you, and be assured that you receive as much as you are able to bear, though it may seem to come slowly.

The spirits whose loving forms surround your dear circle, would fain fill you with their own gladness to a greater extent than they have been able to do; but the power, the will, and the wisdom that direct for your ultimate good, will it to be as it is. My dear friends, none should have any cause for complaint while enjoying the privileges of spiritual intercourse; but you should receive all messages from the spirits gladly, and with a pure desire for knowledge and wisdom and truth. And if you can not behold the fruits of your labors now, you should remember that you have been advised to be as little children, and being as little children, you will not ask the propriety of the lessons which you receive, when you feel that your instructors are doing all in their power to prepare you for the state in which to perform your works of duty, in the several paths in which you will be called upon to tread. A great work, to be greatly advanced, must be carried along slowly, continually, and steadily, yet with an unwavering faith. The workmen must first lay a sure foundation, which must first com-

mence in their own minds ; and when the foundation is sure, solid, and unshrinking, then it is time to proceed swiftly with the rearing of the structure, the greatness of which will require many and all manner of laborers before it shall attain its perfection. And patience, hope, trusting, and long-suffering, will be requisite for each and all, while this mighty work proceeds.

Will any murmur, if even a lifetime should be spent in endeavoring to cast a ray of light on the path of their fellow-travelers, that they may also know and experience the beauties of the light which has been shed upon your way ? And is not the enjoyment of this light richly worth seeking for ? Does it not cast a gleam of joy upon your souls when they are heavy-laden ? and does it not come to you as a ray of sunshine when all looks dark in your material state ? As ye seek so shall ye also find, and when the desires of your heart shall knock at the door of the inner world, it shall be opened to fill you with the joy for which you are seeking. My soul was glad, before it left the form, in the knowledge of this truth, and it continues to rejoice with a joy unspeakable. And my researches in the things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard in your earthly sphere, fills me continually with a glory which is the very essence of all joy. And they tell me that I am yet a very child in the enjoyment of the rest which is prepared for those who love truth ; and spirits who do not love the truth, are attracted toward its light by the power of the love which doeth all things well. Be ye dwellers in the green and shady valley, and listen to the quiet murmur of the stream whose waters are as a deep flow of joy. Seek not to climb the mountain while you are yet feeble, but

enjoy the beauties within your reach, and let the mountain come to you. When you have become sufficiently strong, you will not be overcome by the brightness of the light. My desire is, that your circle may be one of love, harmony, and usefulness.

CHAPTER III.

THE SPIRIT-ECHO.

Given *October 16, 1852*, by Voltaire.

THERE is a lofty hight to be attained by the most unsophisticated mind. When the inward germ becomes reanimated by the warm beams which penetrate through the garb of materialism, the unthought-of fire which has long smoldered in silence and darkness, is suddenly aroused from its death-like sleep and comes forth to embrace a kindred life.

Mankind are only required to examine the pure instincts of their own nature which God has given ; and then by these may they prove the truth that Nature will never deny Nature, whether in the human form or the vegetable kingdom, but that it is ever attracted and commingled together in its finer elements, though these may be unseen by the grosser sense which is unable to perceive the secret and hidden metamorphosis which all things are undergoing, both material and spiritual. Here is seen the great law of human nature. As the ties of affinity, more than kindred, attract individuals to each other while in the form, so the same law acts in like manner on spirits out of the form, attracting them to those with whom they have an affinity on earth ; —and this too in cases where there is no apparent fitness

between the individuals so attracted, even as in the animal kingdom the law of affinity brings together objects which are seemingly incongruous, from the want of an outer similarity to manifest the principle by which they are united.

Thus you may perceive by searching more deeply into the matter, that kindred sparks may be lodged in the most uncouth and ill-seeming coverings. One may have existed in some unknown corner of time and place, or may have lived its life on this stepping-stone to another state of transition, and mayhap when centuries have rolled away in the distance, the twain-born of that spark may have received a conscious being on the earth, and may have learned and unfolded in such a degree as to feel the need of its kindred heart, to which it is drawn by a deathless affinity. If this has long since passed from earth, it will seek long and earnestly for the answering voice—perhaps in books, perhaps in silent thought, and perhaps the channel of communion has been so closed up that the seeker returns in disappointment, and then searches again in another direction. Some have lived a lifetime on the earth and have not been drawn to it until they have entered a higher state of existence, and others have felt its constant presence in their very hearts.

The spirit has also an echo of love, purity, and wisdom answering to its deepest prayer. In this thought how much of human progress is involved! The echo—the answer of the soul—has been sought by some in the dawn of life, when hopes are bright and imagination ardent; and to such it comes warm and glowing with a sense of inward light and joy. Others have felt a

craving for their spirit-echo, but have allowed the attraction to be overcome by the appetites of the outward man; but oh, this desire will come back at a future time with renewed power, and then the soul asks itself, can I now receive the kindred which I have put so far from me—which I have repelled by my earthly desires?—but yes, that kindred knows me, it speaks to me, and with a deep-toned voice bids me seek for the food which has been denied by the gluttony of the body. Some have gathered a little here and a little there, and have made for themselves a compound of fragments without shape or beauty, which they have gazed upon and worshiped in the vain belief that their inward echo has received its demand. Ah! self-deceived mortals, why so easily satisfied with the gaze of the eye and the opinion of the many? The deep of the heart hath not answered to the shallowness of this thing!—else not so cold and heartless would seem the treasured idol, but a pure and holy joy would gush forth as from a mighty deep to answer the rising prayer of the spirit. Ask thy heart truly, O man, if thou hast found thy echo, and truly thy heart will answer, I hunger still; not in outward seeming—not in shadowy forms—not in off-told tales—not by gazing at other hearts, shall mine be satisfied; oh, I hunger, hunger still!

Another goes forth clad as with a raiment of strength and with a heart which is ever open to receive an answer to its yearning. He wanders in the beautiful fields of Nature, and there his spirit-echo meets him. Oh, how joyfully the soul welcomes its answering voice! with what deep rejoicing the spirit meets its kindred! The soul says, Behold the flower!

how glorious in its simple beauty!—and the echo says, How beautiful are all things! are they not shining with the light of God, and ever radiant with his smile? And thus the sparks—the kindred sparks, the soul and the echo, mingle together; and that man returns to the busy haunts of men, and to the turmoil of life, as a giant refreshed with new wine. The echo has given him new strength—it has opened his heart to receive new thoughts—it has inspired him with new life and hope, and has given him, mayhap, a new glimpse of heavenly beauty; and now it has gone for a season that it may return with a brighter gift when again it shall be required. That man has found his answering echo here, and it is ever opening, enlightening, and beautifying his soul. Ah! they will not be strangers, but old friends, when they meet each other in the land of joy.

Still another is ever-wishing and ever-seeking for his kindred echo, and he can not find it because he will not seek for it where it may be found. He would descend to the depths of the ocean; he would explore the dark corners of the earth; he would seek afar off where eye hath not seen; he would weary himself with long research and subtle reasoning, and behold all places are barren, and he comes back with an empty hand; he finds no flower in the forest, no rose in the bowers of beauty, and no pearl in the deep sea. These researches do not satisfy him. Oh, no! he is seeking for what mortals have not possessed—for something which transcends their highest wisdom; and that man has constantly driven his echo away—he has driven it down into the dark depths where he has earnestly sought it, but

where it may not be grasped ; and while it has ever struggled to approach him, it has been repelled by a too low desire.

And yet another seeks his echo, and it is a child. Because of an undisturbed affinity, the echo has been ever received as a guest in that mansion ; naturally and harmoniously it mingles with its sister-spirit ; and as that soul matures, the echo strengthens its voice ; and no vain hunger is there felt, because the heart has found the food which satisfies its inmost cravings, and which makes it ever joyful in viewing all things beautiful and good. Now it seeks not for mysteries, for Nature hath no mysteries but those which she herself unfolds, and the works of God are all grandly and majestically simple ; and so that child-spirit which seems so untutored is Nature's child, and hath an echo of love and wisdom. Therefore shall it drink in all beauty and revel in all joy even here, because it has listened to the divine voice ; and oh, how chaste, how pure, how beautiful it looks in the sweet light of love !

Oh, children of earth, turn from your lofty structures erected for the worship of the Most High, and go forth beneath the star-lit canopy to receive with inward joy the echo—the spirit-echo, which shall meet you, it shall embrace you, and fill you with love, with joy, and with peace unutterable. Oh, the unsophisticated mind is indeed capable of high development !

CHAPTER IV.

POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MIND.

Given by Lorenzo Dow, *October 20, 1852.*

THE human mind is a wonderful piece of mechanism, whether considered in its parts or as a whole. It presents so many different phases of thought and character, that the most expansive perceptions which have not explored the secrets of Nature as contained in the human body, will fail to detect all its varied shades, which are as changeful as the tints of the rainbow. The close observer may find much to interest and instruct in the variety of intellectual characteristics presented to his view. But all men must perceive how difficult a thing it is to know themselves, and how can they expect to know fully the elements of which the minds of their fellow-men are composed? It is only the more prominent traits of character drawn out by surrounding circumstances, which first present themselves to view; and I say, O man, do not prejudge thy fellow-man by that which is said to be his character in society, but rather say that his character is formed by society.

When closely observed by the interior sight, the human mind presents to view a mighty world of slumbering faculties, unawakened ideas, and aspirations for

truth and purity which have been long buried in darkness and corroded by the rust of time. How, then, can it be expected that man will exercise the faculties of his nature when he has never known of their existence? If those who have studied the peculiarities of mind would assist human nature to show itself in its true aspect, they would greatly assist in the work which they are anxious to see accomplished.

In looking around on the several phases of society, you will perceive that many are ever seeking for something to awaken or gratify curiosity, and it does not matter materially what shape this may assume, if the appetite be satisfied. But the next class comprehend those individuals whom you term inquirers; and these represent the minds which become most useful to society in the investigation of important truth. When curiosity settles into inquiry, and inquiry into deep thought, the springs are set in motion that act on the dormant faculties of the mind which have hitherto remained unknown; and as one by one they are brought forth into action, they are moved by constantly new incentives and find ever higher objects to be pursued. In this manner, when the proper springs are touched, the latent energies of the mind will be developed, and the character of the individual will be remodeled and beautified, simply by calling into action the powers which were already in his possession unknown to himself.

The general teachings of the present day are of such a conflicting and fluctuating nature, as to create rather antagonistic feelings, than sentiments of harmony. One party maintains teachings which are in direct op-

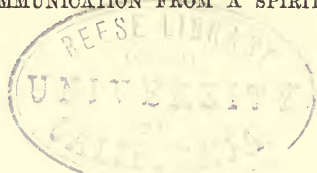
position to those of another, and each exclaims, "Walk in the path which we are treading, for it will surely lead you to the haven for which you are seeking—our teacher can explain all things to your satisfaction." And still another and another party walk with like texts upon their hearts. And shall these men say, we follow the Bible? I say, they follow the teachings of the different minds which put different constructions on the same revelations. Then what man shall say (and feel secure), I am right and you are wrong? or who shall say, I worship no graven image, but the image of the living God?

My friends, this mingling of so many rights makes one great wrong of society as it now exists. The present social structure is inharmoniously organized and disorderly arranged; for the man of might is the man of right, and that only by the authority which his might gives. And the man of honesty is oftentimes the man of beggary, through the advantage which the man of selfishness gains, making him a stepping-stone to the throne of power, whereon Mammon sits enthroned, wielding a brazen scepter, which is called *gold*,—and before whose presence the man of need and the daughters of drudgery, the hewers of wood and the drawers of unclean water for unclean purposes, are made to bow in humble submission. And who shall say that wrong will make right, until the wrong of oppression is taken from the hands of the oppressor? The strings which have vibrated in his heart are those of avarice and ungodly gain, and the might which he exercises so unjustly, keeps the hearts of the oppressed from catching even a glimpse of the treasures which

lie concealed within their own being, thus shutting out from them the light which it is their right to enjoy as sons and daughters of a common Father. Ah! that wrong tramples upon a great right, and its course may be traced to the very depths of misery and iniquity which are filled by a combination of wrongs. And as we gaze upon the vast picture of dreary desolation, and shudder at the black and repulsive appearance of the surrounding world, we feel that a great work is to be carried on, executed, and accomplished. A mighty work it is, to stir up the fountains of the human heart, that men may become alive to the state of those whom they call brothers. How much they make this a term of derision!—and, by the very mention of such relations, they seem to disgrace the Parent who could so unwisely divide the inheritance of earth among those who are called his children. Thinking minds will ask themselves the question, are we not robbing our brothers of their birthright? and the more fully and evenly developed minds will see the immediate cause for action in themselves.

When the character and responsibilities of every mind is placed in this light, it will be easy to perceive where the path of duty lies. And I am persuaded that all who wish to perform that important part of life called *duty*, will have an ample scope for indulging their desire. There will be no necessity for one looking upon another and saying, What shall we do to be saved?—but each individual must take the work into his own hands to save his fellow-man from the state which has been induced by darkness of mind and oppression of soul. This is a work in which angels on

high, whose robes are pure and shining with holy light, rejoice to be engaged in ; and, mortal man, think never that thou art free from responsibility to Heaven, so long as the condition of thy fellow-beings on the earth—thy brothers and sisters—requires the talent which God has given to thy mind, and which in time will be required of thee as being increased or diminished by the use to which it is devoted.



CHAPTER V.

COMMUNICATION FROM A SPIRIT,

November 6, 1852, to his Brother who was a member of Hope Circle.

My experience as a spirit in the land of spirits has not been of long duration, and I can not give you as much information as others can; but I have been here long enough to realize the difference in the degrees of happiness to be enjoyed, which men make unto themselves, and it has been my ardent desire of late to come to you and impress on your mind to persevere in your praiseworthy efforts for the good of your brothers of humanity at large. Persevere in the work you have begun. Could you only see the good which is about being accomplished, you would become so strong that you could battle the world in the cause of truth—truth which will come to the world as fast as the world can be prepared to receive it.

This truth is so simple, so natural, as to be mixed in your every-day walks. Why, as you walk the streets, you may look up and receive divine wisdom from on high, and grasp at the divine revelation which is ever at hand to him who earnestly desires it.

The more the mind expands, the more it is fitted to enter the sphere of progression, and to diffuse truth when it returns to earth as I do now. I mourn over

the time I lost on earth. I buried every talent deep out of sight. Yet I had thoughts which neither you nor any mortal man knew of. My soul thirsted for a something, it knew not what, but I shut its longings up—I repressed them—and oh! what have I not lost! It was only when I came here that my longing was gratified. Thank God! There is such a thing as Progression—such a thing as enjoying here the lessons I should have learned before.

As soon as men's minds become prepared for spiritual intercourse, so soon will it come to them and in different forms—simply, beautifully, grandly, and it will become a reality that will be felt in every household in the land.

What an amount of good will be accomplished by it! It will bring heaven and earth closer together, and it will draw the loved ones from out the shades of uncertainty where they have dwelt. Who can refuse the message? It is the mission of the loved ones in heaven to bear to earthly hearts the messages of love and affection. Through them the soul shall be carried higher and higher. Ask for more, and more will be given you.

Prepare the minds of men for the truth. Drive in nail after nail—the work will be accomplished in the end. It will be like planting seed, which will spring forth and gladden many hearts, though you may not see it now. Be humble and sincere in this great work. It is no child's play. It is a solemn duty that rests on each one.

Weigh not your experience by the past, but look ever inward, and ask for greater light. By leaning on past

experience alone, you look only to a path long since traveled over. Can you not look upward and forward, and ask for a fresh stream of love? And do not shut it out by your doubts, and refuse to believe, unless it come to you with a vehemence that shakes the foundation of your soul.

Past experience is well to think upon, but present experience is better to act upon. The soul in its natural expansion, when under spiritual development, is constantly digesting and realizing heavenly thoughts, but it is restrained by the doubts and hesitation, I will not say skepticism, of the mind.

Why, friends, could you only perceive the bright spirits who are hovering around you, you would be astonished—you would stretch your arms out in expansion to receive the floods of light. Do have more hope! Do be more spiritual! How much you lose by indulging the feelings of doubt and distrust. You repel the spirits from you. You must be more congenial with them. Do not repel the spirits, and each will tell his own tale. In every heart there is a fount from which will well up living streams, and you will receive inspiration from Heaven; but inspiration will come only to them who seek its influence.

My friend, a great many things which I have imperfectly spoken have been whispered to me by surrounding spirits, who wish to speak to you a word of comfort and of reproof, too. Are you astonished at my language? I have had very many teachers, who have led me to so soon and so thoroughly change my sentiments.

I feel myself much more at home here than I did on earth; and it is because I live with that to which I am

attracted. I now live my real life, and new thoughts are ever flowing in upon my soul.

How thankful I am to see you so engaged, and that I am permitted to come and speak to you.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SPIRIT-LIFE.

The following communication, purporting to emanate from the spirit of Henry Clay, was given to a circle in this city, in *July*, 1852.

Is it indeed possible that the Lord in his mercy has permitted me, worm as I am, to enjoy this great privilege of standing in spirit and addressing mortals below !

My sojourn in the land of spirits has been very short, and my experience necessarily limited. My actual knowledge of a true and rightly conducted life has but just begun. True life: not a life which is antagonistical to spiritual truths, whose soft whisperings at times penetrate the heart of every man, even amid the turmoil and excitement of a worldly career, carried on in an increasing round of conflicting passions, hopes and fears, and longings for that which may not always be grasped ; but a life of an entirely different nature. Ambition no longer absorbs my soul with her dark-hued wings. Party spirit no more dispels the bright visions of happiness from my view. But here, love and unity bring light and joy imperishable. Now I discover that even the desire for a nation's welfare was too much interwoven with the love of self-aggrandizement. I see also that men of high intellect, whose vigorous thought swayed the mass of mind, and whose

splendor of eloquence misled the senses, now but faintly shine in the dim distance. The eloquence of earth is not at all times borrowed from heaven, and the fiery intellect is not always kindled by the light of purity or the intensity of love.

The vast voice of a nation, as the voice of one man, will yet ascend on high to the power which shall enlighten the people and unchain them from their moral and social slavery: the slavery of human custom, and conventionalities, and approbation, which often leads men to forget their duty to themselves, their nation, and their God.

And now I am rejoiced that the light from heaven, which is to baptize the nations, has broken in upon my soul; and I could bow my head to the dust in shame and grief that the still small voice of conscience was so long unheeded by me, and which would have led me to behold this pure and beautiful light. I was a statesman on earth, but am a child in heaven. There I was thought a sage; here I am a novice: but even this novitiate is to me more deep in knowledge, and yet more fraught with mystery, than ever my mortal mind conceived. My highest earth-born thought was far too low to reach to heaven. My worldly wisdom availed me not, when my new life commenced.

It is very beautiful to become a little child again; and now I understand the meaning of the words—"Ye must be born again;" and in true sincerity and gratefulness I feel that I am born again—in a life where the vanities of earth have faded from my view, and the bright glories of heaven are opening upon my soul.

Oh, soul made pure, be thankful for thy high estate, and

adore thy God who hath endowed thine eyes with light, and thy soul with the ability to enjoy the pure beauties which crowd upon thy new existence! And yet how I am overwhelmed with the foreshadowing of the glory which is yet in wait for me. But now a form of brightness appears, and saith unto me, "As thy day is, so shall thy strength increase; and thou shalt grow and wax stronger in the stature of wisdom and the might of love."

I am surrounded by those who have passed from earth, and who are, like myself, exploring the wonders of this heavenly land. The realities become more and more transcendently sublime as we proceed. And the beauties of knowledge are increasingly unfolded: more vast and commanding becomes the wide-spread plain of glory, as we travel on in our heavenly path, guided by wisdom supreme and love unbounded.

Follow up this good path, friends. I regret that I did not commence sooner.

Question, by a member of the circle.—"Did you begin at all while on earth?"

Answer.—"Faintly and feebly, as a child begins to walk. I possessed not the strength which comes from above."

Question.—"Did you believe in these manifestations?"

Answer.—"I believed in a great deal more than I admitted, even to myself."

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CHAPTER VII.

A PICTURE OF THE FUTURE.

November, 1852.

AT a recent meeting of the Circle of Hope, the following communication was received from a spirit, purporting to be that of Joan of Arc. Some of the circle not being familiar with her history, it was mentioned that she had, by the sacrifice of herself, redeemed her country—France.

She said—Yes; and France has to be redeemed again. I am not the first of the martyrs who lost their lives in the cause of truth and freedom; nor shall I be the last, even at this late day of the world's enlightenment.

But, friends, it is not to bring this gloomy picture before your eyes that I have come to-night. Oh, no! It is with a far different object. The light and glory which have been cast around me in my Spirit-home, give me a holy and beautiful theme to dwell upon. Not for me alone to dwell upon, nor for spirits alone, nor for angels alone to dwell upon, but for mortals too. Yes, for mortals!

In the darkness and superstition of the past, which are passing away with all their gloomy forms and fancy-fraught terrors, comes the light of revealed love and wisdom, as the harbinger of peace, joy, hope, and re-

demption to be wrought on earth. Martyrs who have suffered for the glorious cause of truth, lift up your heads with joy ineffable! Gaze down on earth again, and rejoice to see the fruits of your heaven-directed labors! Behold now the seeds which have smoldered for a season! Lo! they are springing forth and gaining might. The dark past is passing away; and the bright future!—how it gleams before me! The strength which cometh with the white-winged messenger is being felt. Its power is spreading—its love is directing—its might is finding the mighty as well as the lowly of earth. Oh! the deep springs which have been opened in many hearts, from king to peasant, are becoming breathed upon by the spirit of progressive and life-beaming light! Who shall withstand the power of that light, which comes as a stream in whose placid waters they may bathe?

And lo! Truth cometh! Lo! it groweth. The meek and the lowly of earth receive with heartfelt joy, as the dove bearing the olive branch of peace—the green, the beautiful symbol of hope for their souls—the resting-place for all!—for each soul is being unfolded, and all may feel that the rock of ages is more firm for them, than the throne which the mighty and high-souled monarchs of earth have aspired to in their uplifted majesty. And the light will level the world, as with the hand of the angel of death, when he cometh and lays all low alike. I say the light shall level the people of the world; the monarch will be but the man, and the man will be a man more than ever before: and woman shall become a strong and mighty instrument in the glorious work.

[Some remark was here made by one of the circle, implying that in her efforts for her country she must have been inspired.]

And the spirit said:—It was inspiration. It was a host of spirits which loved my country that inspired me, and I did not repel them. My soul saw the heaven prepared for the lover of truth and justice, and has felt the heaven which acting—taking our lives in our hands, and going forth to do our Father's work—has raised me to also; which has filled my soul with holy joy, and has shown me the hosts who aided me while carrying out the design which advanced my country one step in her upward destiny.

The earthly tabernacles erected for the worship of the Most High shall be deserted, or looked upon as places of the terror and darkness which have for centuries ruled the mind of humanity, through the force of dry and unsatisfactory laws, given forth as the mandates of the glorious Being whose only law is love, whose only mandate is peace. And each heart shall erect within itself a tabernacle, an altar, whose incense shall reach the pure throne of light, and return with an odor more sweet than the breath of flowers in their first dawn of beauty. When the structures erected by the hands of man are less sought, and the inward temple of the soul shall rise up and shine forth in the splendor of its natural beauty, then dark and gloomy indeed will seem the past, and glorious will all feel the present, unfolding to every heart new fountains of light and life everlasting.

Oh! the time is approaching when the men of earth shall feel how closely their interests, their immortal in-

terests, are interwoven with the chain which reaches between the earth and skies. And the links of that chain shall be so commingled as to draw down the spirits of the great in good, the great in wisdom, and the mighty in truth, who have long since passed away, ripened in knowledge, purified in love, elevated in their progression in the eternal spheres of light, and now descending to fulfill their mission on earth.

Think not the germ of immortal flowers has ceased to act on their native ground—their home of clay. That love of home, of earth, of country, which attracts it, shall and will draw, and is drawing back those purely unfolded spirits, who are now coming with a power whose resistless course shall be lighted with the beautiful images of the present dawn, and will show the gloom and darkness of the past in all its huge and ungainly deformity.

Will not the mind revolt from that which is so dark and repelling? and shall not men turn away from it, and open wide their hearts to enjoy the beautiful future spread out before them?—not as a dream, but as a glorious angel of life and love, who shall enter every heart and gladden every homestead, and shall so act, so cast its golden fetters around, as to bring the vast family of mankind within its gladsome embrace.

Is the picture too fair? Does it seem exaggerated to your view? Not so does it appear to spirits; but the colors are golden, the tints are azure. Oh! how they are blending and shooting forth in all directions in the bright firmament of joy, which speaks in more than mortal volumes of the infinite love and majesty of the Most High God.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARGARET FULLER.

The following was given by Margaret Fuller (Countess Ossoli), *December 5, 1852.*

THIS privilege of conversing with earthly friends, I have long desired to enjoy, that I might communicate a few of the spiritual experiences which have occurred to me since my departure from the flesh. My sojourn in your sphere seems now as an indistinct dream, in comparison with the real life which I now enjoy. And I regard the raging of the elements which freed my dearest kindred and myself from our earthly bodies, as the means of opening to us the portals of immortality. And we beheld that we were born again—born out of the flesh into the spirit. How surprised and overjoyed was I, when I saw my new condition. The change was so sudden—so glorious—from mortality to immortality—that at first I was unable to comprehend it. From the dark waves of the ocean, cold, and overcome with fatigue and terror, I emerged into a sphere of beauty and loveliness. How differently every thing appeared! What an air of calmness and repose surrounded me! How transparent and pure seemed the sky of living blue! And how delightfully I inhaled the pure, life-giving atmosphere! A dimming mist seemed to have fallen from my eyes, so calm and so beautiful in their

perfection were all things which met my view. And then kind and loving friends approached me, with gentle words and sweet affection; and, oh, I said within my soul, surely Heaven is more truly the reality of loveliness than it was ever conceived to be on earth by the most loving hearts! Already are my highest earthly impressions of beauty and happiness more than realized. And I now see that my most elevated ideas of truth and immortality were but faint reflections of celestial light from the thoughts of angels; and as my aspirations for spiritual life reached the minds in the purer spheres, so was I enabled now and then to drink at the fountain of heavenly truth. It is owing to the influence of angels that men sometimes give forth thoughts which seem to shine with the light of heaven, and to breathe of the harmony in the spheres of immortality; and which from their purity, men say are the words of inspiration. And truly it is inspiration, from the world of light. It comes to earth borne by loving spirits, and speaks in gentle whispers of immortal joys. And could earth's inhabitants but realize how ardently these children of light, whose hearts are attuned to love by their Father's smile, seek to impress them with thoughts of wisdom from the spheres of melody, with what attention would they listen, and with what open hearts would they receive the radiant beings: they would seek for the inspiration of those spirits who have cast off the darkness which belongs to the mortal sphere, and who have become expanded by the light of wisdom, and freighted with the holiness of love. The winds of adversity which passed over their souls while on earth, but purified and chastened them,

and rendered them more sensitive to the enjoyment of never-ending happiness. And having advanced into a knowledge of the harmonious laws which govern their abodes, they forget not their friends on earth ; but with strengthened affection and exalted wisdom, they respond to the attraction of love which connects the two spheres, and aspiring men receive the influx of pure spirituality. Could the children of earth but look beyond the range of mortal vision, they would see these angel-friends surrounding them, sympathizing with them in woe, and rejoicing in their happiness, and dispensing blessings of kindness and love.

But, shall I speak to you of that which is gloomy and sad ? Oh, yes ! I feel it to be my duty. Do you see those people of the world who are led by no higher law than that of selfishness ; who have no purer desires than those which are engendered by their own dark passions and inconsistent lives ; who soar not above their own sensuous thoughts ; but who are ever seeking happiness in that which brings naught but misery ? See how this degrading condition is crushing them ; how it increases the hardships of the poverty-stricken, causing them to expend their whole energies in incessant toil for food : how the rich—the well-fed son of mammon, of luxury, and ease—from his sensual promptings sullies the purity of helpless innocence, and heaps misery upon the dependent ; when, if his mind had been rightly directed, he would have spent his gold in filling the mouths of the hungry, and lifting the daughters of degradation from their woe-stricken state. And behold the little human waifs and strays of society, who wander unnoticed through your thorough-

fares. Tiny, but immortal souls, do they not need earthly guardians to guide them in the ways of virtue, and turn their young hearts from the allurements of sin? The fathers which nature gave them have proved unworthy of their trust, and need—God help them!—teachers themselves.

Oh, when I gaze abroad—if it were only upon your great city—how much vanity and injustice do I behold! I see your magnificent buildings richly adorned with all that wealth and luxury can bestow, dedicated as temples of worship—of *worship*!—of *forms* of worship! As though the incense of your hearts would ascend sweeter through the arched dome! or the service be more acceptable, because performed in a costly edifice! God looketh not to the works of thy hand, O man! for worship. He asks thee not to build temples of beauty, which please the eye; but he asks of thee a sincere heart—for prayers sent forth from the inner sanctuary of the soul. And let thine offerings of gold, and silver, and precious stones, be made to God, by dispensing them to thy needy brethren. And the anthems of joy which these shall cause to ascend from their grateful hearts, will be more sweet to him than the softest music which proceeds from a thousand instruments of human skill.

How sadly my spirit looks back upon the place it once inhabited, to see so much that is wrong, when so little would make it one glorious right. Would that men would join their hands together, and with united hearts say—let us assist our brother from the light that we have received; let us lighten his overburdened soul of its care and sorrow, by relieving his physical wants

and enlightening his mind ; and thus raise him from a level with the brute to the plane where something more is required than mere animal food, or sensual gratification in any form. Let us help him to repel those dark spirits, which his low and undeveloped nature attracts to be his companions. Let us show him that much that is dark and repulsive in himself, is rendered still more so by the influences which are in affinity with him. Nay, start not ! It is true : for, as like attracts like, and darkness loves darkness the best, so, in like manner, ignorant, unhappy spirits linger around the haunts of vice and wretchedness, and often assist men in their dark deeds of sin. And these influences men call the Devil. They attribute all to one individual fiend, who is made omnipotent ; forgetting that when man gives way to all that is degrading and debasing in his nature, obeying only his animal instincts, and shutting out the pure and good, he can be called by no other name than *evil*. But when the lowest among you shall have his higher faculties developed, and his intellectual powers expanded by elevated knowledge, he will shine in all the beauty of manhood ; and will not go down to the grave in his sin and degradation, to give the world occasion to say he is a sinner and eternally lost. None need consider that he must enter the spirit-world to suffer the torments of hell, or to taste the joys of heaven. The knowledge of man's own debasement will bring punishment, even in the flesh ; and the consciousness of progress in truth and goodness and the participation of their blessings, is the foretaste of heaven on earth. There is no further hell for him who is engaged in well-doing ; but his pathway leads gradually and beautifully

upward into the brightness of the Heavenly Father's smile, which illuminates the countenances of his progressing children, and reveals their way into the higher spheres.

Softly and sweetly now, are many good spirits breathing heavenly words into mortal hearts. Voices that have long since passed from earth are returning on a mission of love. Do not repel their gentle advances; for they come to benefit your race. They come as brothers and sisters; and though they have often been denied a reception, the time is at hand when their voices must be heard, throughout the length and breadth of the land—when they will speak in trumpet-tones of the errors and forms which ye have so deeply cherished. And all that is truthful and beautiful shall shine forth in undimmed purity, and that which is obscure shall be made plain. And all shall ultimately experience the benefits and joys of communion with the heavenly spheres. It shall be food alike for all men; for none will reject it, because of its healthful and life-giving influences. And as I look to earth again, from my spirit-home, I truly rejoice to see the good work progressing; and am happy to know that as a spirit who has inhabited the earthly sphere, I can come back and contribute my mite toward the great work of human redemption.

MARGARET FULLER.

CHAPTER IX.

REASONABLE WORDS.

Given by Thomas Paine, *December 17, 1852.*

My errand here this evening is to speak a few reasonable words upon the subject which is exciting so much attention, and calling into action the reasoning powers of many minds. It is greatly to be regretted that men have not hitherto used this gift (reason) to as great an extent as they might have done in regard to this subject, which, above all others, demands a clear and unflinching scrutiny. But it has ever been the case with the many, to either hoot at that which they could not understand, or put it from their minds and leave their neighbors to search into the depths of the mysteries for them ; and when they have failed to elucidate the problem, it has been laid aside as one of the numerous wonders of the age. And the inquirers have satisfied themselves with the old saying that, "time will unfold all things." But mind may have much to do with the time, as well as the things which are to be revealed. For if men were but conscious of the mighty thoughts which are capable of being discovered within themselves, they would be ready to receive the book of revelation to their own hearts and understanding at the present time, nor wish to tarry for the future. If

they would but rouse up out of their lethargy, and ask for new light and revealed wisdom from the spirit-world, they would not receive a stone instead of a loaf. Let men look back upon their past lives and experience in a spiritual point of view ; and in so doing, let them ask themselves to how great an extent their perceptions of spiritual enjoyment have been opened or made brighter and stronger in all those delightful moments of which they have been conscious, and as a reason they will assign it to the presence of God—the love of God shed abroad in their hearts. And after making this declaration of feeling the presence of the Most High, or his angels of light, when you speak of spirits communing with them they start back with affright, and gaze at you with looks of mistrust and suspicion, and almost think you are profane in so speaking.

And now which would be most natural to suppose, that mortals experience the real presence of their Maker, or to suppose that some bright and joyful spirit came near them, whose being glowed with the heavenly warmth it received from the shining atmosphere which it inhabited in the pure and unclouded light of heaven, where it felt the serene happiness which emanated from the Father's smile, and that it drew near as a messenger of love when the heart was open to receive the celestial visitor? And yet men deny the presence of their spirit-friends, while they are willing to believe in the presence of God overshadowing their being while communing with their own hearts and tasting of the nectar which flows from regions of immortal light. And when spirits return and make their presence known by the demonstrations which they are able to give, or which

they are obliged to make, owing to the ignorance of your minds in regard to the natural laws which govern the conditions of the modes in use, and which are so slightly known as to be in a state of infancy, in many cases they naturally appeal to the lower or more material senses of the beholder; since many refuse to believe a truth, be it ever so beautiful, unless it is palpably demonstrated to their outer senses, so that they may behold with their eyes, hear with their ears, and touch with their hands. Then, having been so satisfied, men are willing to look inwardly for something purer, more refined, and more spiritual than the grosser manifestations.

And when men first seek to know *how* these things may be so, they are disappointed, and say, "If our friends in heaven are happy—if it is the pure and lovely abode which we have ever believed it to be—we can not conceive that they will return, and through these ridiculous and foolish-appearing modes, make their presence known. We expected our friends, if they could approach us, to come in a different manner, and appeal to our higher and better sense—to impress us with the truth of their return from that happy abode which we believe they inhabit—not coming to speak through strangers and all manner of people, of whom we know nothing. Why can they not approach *us*, if they are what they purport to be, and allow us to judge for ourselves, and by ourselves, of the reality." And thus many minds reason—willing to believe it may be so, and yet afraid to think it so—and saying, did it proceed from any high and elevated source, such as we have been accustomed to look to for spiritual

food, we should not scruple to believe it; but the manner offends our sense of dignity, in appealing to our intellects through the weak and ignorant persons of the world.

Again, if these are spiritual communings, as they purport to be, why have we not received them sooner?—why have not the men whose minds have for years been directed to the beauties of the higher spheres, discovered this mode before?—they whose pure minds and lives would lead us to think that they were the proper recipients of such a boon of heaven? Are the mighty and expanded intellects of our wisest and most enlightened men to be slighted and thought of no value in this development?—why have they failed to discover this mighty thing sooner? And many more such questions men are constantly asking themselves and each other. But the reasons are simple, and the questions easily answered.

The world has ever, from the first intellectual developments in man, been progressing from the grosser and material form, to the finer and more spiritual senses of the soul. It has ever been the aim of men to reach higher than the plane upon which they stood. And the arts and sciences will show to how great an extent the outer development has acted upon the outer state of progression; and the inner state, or progression of the soul, has much depended upon the physical formation of individuals. In some it has been highly developed, and in some it has been completely absorbed by the outward or animal faculties, which engrossed the material sense. Thus has the race continued to change from the grosser to the finer as their spiritual faculties

have been developed and enlarged. And where the spiritual development has been greater, it has taken its tone from by-gone ages which have left their image stamped upon the monuments of time ; and these have been searched into and reflected upon as the immutable laws of the Ruler of the universe. And men of differently unfolded minds have left *their* impress also upon their teachings, which they have given to the world, as an outbirth of the spiritual development to which they have attained.

Thus men have lived and labored, and all have given more or less new light to the race. Some have been developed to such a degree of spirituality as to cause them to be persecuted, and the world has said they were mad, merely because their minds had soared a little higher into the regions of spiritual light than those who had been content to plod along in the beaten path. But there have ever been some who were at all times aware of the presence of an unseen guardian or teacher, whose directing hand has led them higher up, or opened to their souls more beautiful fields for them to explore ; but were they to have spoken this truth to the world, they would have been mocked, and so they kept it locked in their own breasts, as a treasure which they alone could feast on, without daring to let others partake. And the pure and holy aspirations of men have ever attracted around them ministering spirits, who made them seem as men whose thoughts breathed inspiration upon their hearers.

But the mass of humanity—the common mind—has never yet been prepared to receive this thing as a truth ; they have never conceived of the beauty of spiritual

companionship for all and each, but they have looked up to others for spiritual instruction and depended upon their teachers as truthful mediums for spiritual food. And where so many teachers have been so differently and inharmoniously developed with respect to their reasoning faculties or education, or that which pertained to their phrenological structure, inharmony is more naturally produced than spirituality.

To many thinking minds which have been struck with the great inconsistency which was held forth and called the true religion, it has seemed such a heterogeneous mass that they have become disgusted with the whole, and will be responsible to no teacher for their spiritual food. And now in looking abroad upon the many minds which have no sure compass to direct their course—no teacher whose food they can digest, I see that to them true spiritual teaching will be acceptable ; as it embraces in its wide-spread folds no sectarian dogmas, or forms to live by, or creeds to think by, or minds to be measured by ; but presents a universal religion, whose forms are so broad that they will embrace the whole human family, and whose creeds are so simple that every heart may be made wise in the doctrines of love and good will to their fellow-man.

It is not the few among you who shall become teachers of the people ; but the unfolding of Spiritualism shall make all teachers and all learners. All, however highly talented by Nature, or made brilliant by having their qualities drawn forth by culture, shall find that there is much to be learned above their most elevated imaginings, even in this sphere of being. And men may not always plume themselves upon their superior knowl-

edge or attainments above their fellow-men, for they shall be brought to see that their discernment, however profound it may have been, has not yet discovered the glories which are to be revealed on earth : not only to the learned and eloquent shall these things be made known, but to the unlearned and ignorant will the matchless wisdom and goodness of God to his children be made manifest. The world has arrived at a point when the mere thoughts or sentiments of men concerning the future will not satisfy ; and from reaching to the greatest point of human experience in spiritual matters, they must either progress to a higher elevation than they have ever yet attained, or else go back to the extreme of materialism—asking for more than they have yet received—or refusing to be satisfied with that which has been sufficient for their forefathers.

Would many speak the thoughts of their hearts aloud, they would tell you they had long been conscious of this revelation—that spirits have never ceased since their entrance into their immortal homes, to come back and assist in developing, and aiding in the work of progressing their friends who are still in the form. And when the means could be made use of without subjecting the persons in whose presence manifestations were made, to be called witches and possessors of evil spirits as in times gone by, spirits have availed themselves of this mode, appealing to the outward senses of man, and so first through his material feelings opening wide a door whereby the cause and effect might be investigated. But because of the undignified manner in which this thing has been presented, it has been a stumbling-block to many, and will be to many more ;

for the world shall yet see that it is not to the wise and learned of the day alone that the power of God is made manifest, that it is not through the most highly developed in worldly wisdom that he makes the commands of his will shine forth, but that the love which he bears to all shall be made known through the lowly as well as the mighty. And where words of command and fear are held forth to arrest the wanderer from the path of duty and fail in the desired effect, the gentle voice of affection and love breathed from a spirit will do more to call back the prodigal than all the terrors of the law. Love is a mighty instrument of power when wielded by a sympathizing heart. How vast is the good to be accomplished, and how many are the hearts which shall be reached through the love of their friends who are in the spirit-world!—and the words which would otherwise fall cheerless upon the oppressed heart, when breathed by spirit-lips shall fall as gently as dew on the thirsty ground, bringing peace and hope to many who had refused to believe or hope for happiness beyond the grave. Therefore do not wonder at the coarseness or grossness, or seemingly undignified manifestations of spirit-presence, for the mode of communicating between your sphere and ours is yet imperfect—is yet in its infancy; the dawn is only approaching, but the day is opening, and we shall yet behold it in its full glory. Spirits are but the mortals who one day inhabited your sphere, and have only put off the covering which belongs to your sphere and put on another; therefore do not expect perfection for this or that communication. Some who have long dwelt in the boundless arcana of never-fading wisdom and of

ever-unfolding joy and beauty, are but preparing the way to approach your sphere; and those spirits who more nearly approach your own plane of development, are those who can come to you first, and the law of love will naturally first attract them to those whose hearts are opened to receive their affectionate greetings.

You complain of contradictions, and imperfections, and untruthfulness in this new mode of teaching; but were your different modes of teaching presented to your view in all their deformities, you would turn from them and be content to wait patiently for the full growth and development of that which has only begun. Your mediums are imperfect, you say; and your spiritual teachers whom you have listened to from year to year are also imperfect, I say. You say that their minds color the communications; and I ask you where under heaven is the man who speaks on any subject whose mind does not color the communication? Are not your books of ancient records colored with divers colors of divers minds? and are not the messages which you receive, whether from books or from men, colored by the source from which they are received by you? You should bear in mind that those who communicate with you are but progressing as you are in the elucidation of new truths, and that however anxious they may be to converse with you, they can not express to you every thing which they would, because you are not advanced enough in this path to receive it.

PAINÉ.



CHAPTER X.

INTERVIEW WITH THE POET POLLOCK.

NEW YORK, *September 15, 1852.*

I WENT this afternoon to Mr. Sweet's, in order to have Mrs. Hemans finish her vision, but the conditions were such that she could not affect the medium sufficiently to do so.

While we were waiting in expectation that she might yet succeed, I took up a copy of Pollock's "Course of Time," which Governor Tallmadge had presented to Mrs. Sweet, and began reading aloud some passages from it. I expressed my admiration of the work, saying that the world did not yet appreciate it as it deserved. During my reading the wish was expressed that we might commune with the author some time or another, but we did not expect to do it at that time. In a little while we perceived the medium to be affected as by the presence of a new spirit (for we can always tell whether it is one who has before spoken through her or not). I continued my reading until he obtained complete possession of her.

His amazement was very apparent. He could not realize that he was again tenanting a mortal form and using organs of flesh. He felt of himself—he looked around the room—he gazed upon us. He attempted to

walk, and in various ways demonstrated to us how novel was his position to him, and how difficult it was for him to realize where he was and what he was attempting.

At length he spoke :—

“My name is Robert Pollock. I can not as yet suppose it possible that I am again really in a mortal body. I feel bewildered.

“The news reached me in my home that I was wanted on earth, that I was wished for. A fair female spirit announced the tidings in tones of joy. She smiled as she broke the news with a smile of ineffable sweetness, and said, ‘Come, Robert, they have arrived at the point of wishing for thee. I believe you thought you were forgotten on earth ; but you must be up and doing. You will be needed there again.’

“I prepared to obey the summons, and with some difficulty have presented myself before you.”

I inquired if he had ever before this, since his departure, conversed with any in the flesh ?

He answered :—

“When I have seen a free thought struggling for utterance in a soul striving to be free, I have striven to assist by lighting the passage, that it might escape unchained.

“How I have longed to find some source by which I might disabuse the mind of many errors by which I myself have been led astray ; that is, my mind has been warped by the unconscious power they cast around me. But I find a great revolution is going on among spirits as well as men. They tell me intercourse is being opened in many different avenues of outlet. They say the time is coming when spirits and men may converse

as freely together as though they were still walking on earth as of yore; and they say the rising generation is to be instructed fully in this mode of communication. They say that calling 'mighty spirits as from the vasty deep' of time, shall be no more only in imagination, but in reality shall they sit down and sup with us to our heart's content.

"How very astonishing! How inconceivably sublime it seems to me! Had such a thing been known when I existed, it would have rent asunder the strong battlements which were then erected to bigotry and dedicated to superstition. And if in my work you find a free or chainless thought, think not it was the work of my benighted mind, but conceive of a bright array of friends, congenial minds long before departed to the world of spirits, and watch the rays of light which dart as they encircle me, and light upon my soul as though that is uplifting its head and struggling for the utterance of inspiration. How gladly have I greeted those friends whom I have since met within my better existence!"

You mean, I inquired, those friends who thus inspired you?

"Yes.

"How plainly can I now perceive with what power and might spirits who have long since departed in body, but have lived in name, may approach to rectify what may have been errors; and with their better light, their clearer views, and more sure experience, may now approach and benefit the world more greatly than they ever have done before.

"What a vast object! What a mighty aim! What

a magnificent fulfillment of long prophecy and foreboding!

"My first introduction to you may seem a very dry one, void of interest; my second visit may prove more interesting; my third and subsequent ones, pregnant of much benefit to us all—to me as well as to you.

"In coming back again to this sphere, after an absence, I have much to learn of the existing state of society and men's minds, and my labors must be directed accordingly.

"Many kind thanks for this opportunity."

Mrs. Sweet asked if he could not through her give utterance to poetry like that which she had been reading of his?

He answered:—

"When I shall learn how to use your mind to convey my ideas, you shall speak them for me."

I inquired if he had been aware of the existence of this spiritual intercourse before he had been called on to-day.

He answered:—

"So great! so unexpected a privilege! It is such a miracle! Yes; I had heard of it as a marvelous thing that was taking place; but I had no idea I should be called on so soon. This afternoon this person was wishing that my spirit would come. She was gazing at my likeness in the work which contained it, and wishing a spirit would bear a message to me, if such a thing could be possible; and she looked at my likeness until she thought it smiled. Well, that spirit—it was Mrs. Hemans—bore me the news. Why, I was delighted! And when your second wish came, I answered the call,

and am here. And yet I ask myself, can it be possible? It is so. It must be. Others, my familiar friends, are around me here, and still I am gazing on mortals with mortal eyes!"

I asked him if the familiar friends who were with him in his spirit-home had accompanied him here, and were now with him?

He answered:—

"Yes. Each must bring his familiar friends, congenial spirits, to assist. I will come again when you wish me."

Then he shook hands with us at parting, as he had done at the beginning, and so the interview ended.

His deportment throughout was characterized by great calmness, gentleness, and humility. His joy and wonder were evidently very great, yet expressed with remarkable moderation and calmness. His subdued manner was inexpressibly touching.

J. W. EDMONDS.

CHAPTER XI.

NEW DESIRES.

Received through Mrs. S., *August 10, 1852*, purporting to be from Henry Clay.

It is with feelings of thankfulness that I have again found an opportunity of speaking through a medium. It seems to be the wish which is ever uppermost in my mind to come back to earth, and mingle again in the scenes in which I took so active a part, but not with the same desire that I then had to participate in the hopes or fears which sway the minds of those who can not see beyond the present sphere of existence.

But it is my desire to make myself known, if possible, to those with whom I have walked the down-hill path of life. And it is my aim, when I shall succeed in so doing, to open their minds to the truth of this incalculable and momentous manifestation, to them unknown.

I foresee, in so doing, the light of wisdom to rule and govern a nation that is striving to rise into liberty as on the wings of an eagle, and how absolutely necessary and all-important is it that the minds of the rulers of the land should be filled with the wisdom which shall enable them to rule with a justice which shall diffuse its influence with the knowledge of truth.

And the truth, when it shall reach the minds of the people, with the power which only truth can approach, will open their minds to the enjoyment of this glorious knowledge, which will lead to the happiness of the people, to the nation's lasting good.

When this young eaglet, whose aspiring wings are spread to all nations and climes, shall become stronger in her strength, and more powerful in her power—and, thank God! this power shall yet be felt in the uttermost parts of the earth—the cry shall be to the people, Strengthen ye my loved ones with the strength of the truth which is strengthening ye.

Oh, how lovely the light! how palely beautiful the beams which are darting hither and thither around. And it falls there, and it falls here, and it takes root, and the root takes strength and is beginning to flourish. But ah! the young saplings are yet tender. The winds of ridicule and calumny blow roughly over their head. It may break. It may rudely handle them in their tender youth. But oh! it will not blast them. The young trees shall lift their heads and become as oaks, which, amid the tempests, stand unmoved.

And I would say to the weak ones, Oh! be strong in your faith and trust in God; for this glorious work is advancing slowly, but surely and steadily. And as an army whose ranks are feeble at first, it shall increase in strength, and beauty, and might, and majesty, until it shall overpower the hearts of the people, not with the force of power, but with the power of love.

Already in my short journey I can perceive how great the happiness and welfare of the nation is to be promoted by a knowledge of the truth, when they shall

reap the benefit of the communion of spirits from the highest to the lowest in the land.

Oh! how great, how earnest is the desire of spirits to make their presence known! And through that influence the hearts of men shall grow weak in their desire to commit crime, and to wrong their fellow-man. Through that influence the weak and oppressed shall be raised from the dust, and placed on the level plain of Humanity; which the power of God willed all human beings to enjoy, but which the perverted will of man, whose conscience has become deaf to the voice of nature's God, has down-trodden and oppressed when circumstances have given him authority over them.

But the voice of freedom from the thralldom of mind and body shall ere long be heard over the land, and minds shall rise strong in the knowledge which God has given them, and teach to other minds how dark the gloom which sectarianism, and superstition, and unbelief, and skepticism, have cast around them. And I say their fetters shall be broken as the light shall spread onward.

As I contemplate this work, which is gradually becoming unfolded, I thank God in my inmost heart that I have been permitted to soar above this land of shadows, and darkness, and dimness, and whose honors and glories flee away as shadows from our grasp, and leave us toiling for we know not what.

I now stand on the mount of Hope, whose strength upholdeth me, and whose light becomes stronger and brighter, nor vanisheth as the objects are nearer. But more lovely becomes this lovely light the nearer I approach it, through the goodness of God and the aid of

spirits made perfect, who dwell in the presence of his smile, and who do their Father's will where life is unceasing, joy is never-ending, and eternity is eternal.

CHAPTER XII.

JOHN C. CALHOUN.

September 12, 1852.

CIRCLE met this evening. N. P. Tallmadge present by invitation. Mrs. Sweet was soon influenced by a spirit purporting to be John C. Calhoun. Judge Edmonds reported his speech, which was as follows:—

This is a novel situation for me, one which I can scarcely yet realize myself. It is, nevertheless, a mighty and overwhelming reality to me as well as to you, my friends, who can feel it to be such. I have gladly availed myself of this privilege this evening in your midst, because I can see here those with whom I had relations while in the form.

My object in coming is to me a very great one, and, God knows, I wish it was so to the world at large. I wish, I desire, I pray most fervently that we might feel how great the responsibility that is resting on each one who has heard the revelations of life and truth, to spread the echo, to spread the circle of sound, of thought, of energy, of ambition, to excel in the labors of the field, in which they are placed by being part-takers of this high and holy privilege—privilege unfathomable, untold, unfelt, and unexpressed, ever changing, ever beautifying, and becoming more lovely, more light, more holy, more serene in its outward paths.

My experience as a spirit is very limited in comparison with some with whom you have conversed, and I deeply feel it to be so to-night.

I deeply feel the barrenness of my soul, the lack of wisdom, the dread of ridicule, the loss of friends, the thought of enemies which debarred me from participating, from being experienced, from a want of knowledge of this holy privilege.

Why, my friends, while in the form it was not a new thing to me. Oh, no! it was a great reality, which my soul felt to be true, but dared not own. Have I not felt the presence of my friends around me in my seasons of despondency and doubt? I believed it, but dared not say it.

That "dared"—shall I tell you what it did to me? It shut out from my soul a revelation that might have gladdened it, and compels me now to unbeam, when the covering of clay was thrown off.

Ask him, and him, and him, if he has not felt the presence of loved friends departed? a mother, a child, a wife, was near? Yes, and the inmost heart, welling up from the depths of the inmost tenderness, will answer.

It is the connecting link between the spirits of your sphere and ours; the cord that draws the spirit back to earth and elevates the thought back to heaven.

This may to many seem a small, worthless, and even absurd subject. The great and mighty of the earth despise small things; yet it is the small things, the trifles, which draw out the tenderest emotions of the heart. They swell and overflow. Have not the high and mighty those well-springs in their hearts? Yes;

every heart will gush up, and through their afflictions must the mighty ones be reached.

Thank God ! it has been told me in my home, though you may not see it, that the time will arrive when earth's children will all be children of our Father, who is the God whom all nations adore in some form. Some adore him as the sun, as images, as nature. The simple hearts, and those in high places, the poor and the humble in heart, adore him—the afflicted and the downcast, and he comforts them.

This intercourse is calculated to bring heaven and earth more closely together, and to make man feel his responsibility as man, to lift him up from his degradation, and when you see this fully, you will not say the spirits' labor has been in vain. When the unfolding light of spiritual communication shall reach the hearts of the sons and daughters of earth, it will come with sweet humility, open their eyes, and show them wherein they err. It will set them to thinking ; and every heart thus set to thinking will feel, "Thou art the man."

No one will be overlooked in the crowd. The great spirits will take cognizance of all, the high and the low.

Some say, I'll believe when others do. If so, you lose much precious time by tarrying. Sometimes the laggard is caught in darkness ere he is aware.

Then turning to Mr. Tallmadge, he said :—

My object in coming to-night is principally to you, my friend, as I wish to whisper a word in your ear that you may be strengthened in your faith, you may be a medium to convey important truths to others as I am now to convey knowledge to you. This is with me yet

very limited ; but I do not live as one without hope. Far from it. The circumstances now surrounding me, are so different from those surrounding me while on earth, that my vision is more enlarged. It is not bounded by so small a compass as this city, this country, or this world, even in my little sphere. But the knowledge that is now opening to my view ! I can not conceive of its magnitude. The wisdom of God, the witness of his created worlds of power, of light, which is ever opening to my view ! if it came any faster it would overwhelm me ; as my sphere of thought, of experience, as I said before, is very limited. Why, I can not give even the faintest conception, nor will I try, of the magnificent, ever-varying, and all-absorbing visions and realms which are continually breaking upon my enraptured eye.

How very dim life on earth seems to me now ! I look upon it as a troubled dream, wherein were indeed some bright spots, some kind feelings shed around my path to make it brighter. I was but the germ placed in a casket of clay, whose inner unfoldings, whose heaven-sent aspirations, should have begun to develop themselves sooner while placed there.

Of every man shall be required a talent. Let each ask, have I one, and will the Lord require that talent of me ? Most assuredly, my friends. Do not hide it in the ground, but let it shine forth to warn your fellow-men. It was given to use—one may help another, and all mingle and combine together, and make up the great sun which giveth life on earth.

Every created one has some germ of beauty to be expanded. All are not unfolded, because the present

state of society forbids it. What beautiful spirits are hid below the superstition, ignorance, error, and poverty that surround you !

When will man feel that his fellow-man requires a talent at his hand ? As ye do it to these little ones, so ye do it unto me.

You may think that all are not performing a work. All can not, through the force of circumstances. The work which enables the rich man to roll in luxury causes the sweat to pour from the poor man's brow. Is this right ? Is your society organized aright ? Were labor so equalized that all might bear a part, each in his respective capacity, all might share in the benefits, and yet all be in their proper places, not to create confusion, or a vast revolution, or plan of socialism, but so dividing and diffusing that the wants of all should supply the wants of all ; the works of all supply the works of all ; mind as well as labor. By so doing there would be no necessity for the poor beggar to wander through your streets, for the little stray waifs, the homeless ones, to be cast on the broad sands of iniquity.

How the spirits grieve at the lowness of those who are made to grovel in the dust by the selfishness and rapacity of their fellows in humanity ! The humblest creature, however deformed or warped, is capable of being cultivated in its own sphere, and be made useful.

Friends ! won't you work to bring this about ? Won't you speak to those in high places ? It will begin as a drop and flow out and become a stream, and grow broader in the glad sunlight.

The seed is not always sown on fallow ground. In some places it will yield fiftyfold ; and if it yield only

one, will it not satisfy you that you are improving your time ?

Do you not perceive, as you use your talent, it will increase ; that it confers more strength on the owner, as well as extends to others the benefits which you have so bountifully received ?

Your privileges have been great indeed, and your responsibility is the same. Do you not see how great your talent, and how much will be required of you ?

You are entering on an era of great events, great developments, great revealments, great revelations.

Will all, then, endeavor to be satisfied with the part that is given him ? All have a part to perform. Just as soon as you are prepared for it, just as soon as you can bear it, just so soon will that part be required of you to your utmost satisfaction.

My friends, continue in your faith, and hope, and work, and I bid ye God speed. More I can not do. You are in better hands than me.

CHAPTER XIII.

INTERVIEW WITH WEBSTER.

Monday, Oct. 27, 1852.

LAST evening as I was writing in my library, Mr. and Mrs. Sweet were shown in. They had been impelled by the spirits to come over and see me; and though they knew that I had the day before left town with the intention of being absent from town for several days, yet they were told by the spirits that I was home, so they came and found me.

He was some time in getting control of the medium, and in the mean time, Mr. Sweet and another gentleman present made inquiries, from which they ascertained who it was, but I was silent.

They got nothing more than an announcement of who he was, until they solicited me to ask some questions; and I inquired whether his coming to commune with us so soon was the result of his strong attachment to earthly things, or was in the performance of a duty, a mission with which he was charged?

After a while he said:—

My friends, it affords me unspeakable pleasure to be so soon and so candidly received as a visitor from the country which I find is no longer an unknown one to many of you.

At this moment, friends, I realize my utter unworthiness of this blessing, this opportunity; nor should I so soon have enjoyed it, were it not for the kindness of old friends whom I have met with, and who have taken me

by the hand as a brother, and assisted me. Not only in one sense unworthy, but in a thousand other respects do I feel how undeserving I am of being permitted to make my presence known to those who know I had no sympathy for such dreamings or imaginings, as I conceived them to be while here.

Heaven knows I am as thankful and as humble as any of God's creatures. I now truly see and feel my position in respect to my eternal welfare. Yes; God gave me a massive intellect, the world said, but that intellect now appears to have been very narrow in its development in the wisdom which it now requires to be made acquainted with, in order that the qualities of mind which were so richly bestowed upon me while here on earth, may now become clear and unclouded in the conclusions of spirituality, without which, were I Solomon himself, I could not attain to more than the most commonplace mind on earth.

It is not the material kind of wisdom which I now need to aid me in my new stage of development. I find I am what I believe you call an undeveloped individual in my new stage of existence. But, thank God, I see ample fields opening for my research, which I might have entered long ago, had I been so minded.

It was a great, though not a grand mistake of mine not to seek the truth before, regarding this matter.

In my day I sought out many truths, and many new truths to many minds; but now I see that the most important truth was altogether overlooked. My soul felt with an overwhelming force the mighty sense, the infinite power of the Almighty in all his works. The grand and glorious hand of Nature imparted her di-

vine revelation; but, friends, I never sought the voice which might touch my heart and receive an answer in the flesh.

It is this I mourn for now. How clearly do I now perceive my short-comings! But, thank God, my life has not been spent entirely in vain for my country or mankind. I speak not thus with a feeling of triumph, or boastingly, but with a feeling of regret that I had not more wisely directed my talents, and had not enabled myself to let the glorious gifts of God in me shine forth in a purer, broader, and brighter light.

As I look back on my past career, I see much to regret, and much to rejoice for. I see, at the present period in my country's history, peace and plenty, and the people as happy as they possibly could be, under the present state of affairs. But since I have thrown off my mortal body, my spirit has taken a bird's-eye view of the universe. O God! how dark it seems even here! [Here were evident signs of deep emotion.]

It appears as though the minds which directed the people were undirected themselves in so many respects, where, had they done differently, a different state of things would now exist. But I have no right to complain. I did not see it while here, to so great an extent as I now see it.

Oh, I see how very great the darkness of the leaders has been in respect to the wants of the people, and my own leanness in this respect stands before me as a withered tree.

You wish to know my object in coming here to-night. It is easily told. You all know my former character. You can not possibly believe I can so soon become

spiritual-minded. Clouds of materialism, which darkened the finer elements of my mind, still cast their shadows around me: but I wish you to understand that I realize what I might have been, what I am, and what I am to be. My life on earth was misspent, and my mission is to make the atonement for it. To be the Daniel Webster on earth and the Daniel Webster in heaven. You understand me?

I confessed that I did not.

He said:—

My friend, my respected friend, you do not confess that you think I can not be happy!

I am in a state to profit much and deeply by the experience of many who have been here before me, and you will confess that I am the man that can do so.

It will be my earnest wish to benefit my fellow-beings on earth. My sympathy is with them. I participate in their hopes and fears, and you will not therefore be surprised at my desire again to return to earth.

Here he paused, and it was intimated to us to ask him questions. We stated the great want we felt of practical instructions, whereby the minds of people could be reached easier than by general abstractions, and we wished he would give us a practical view of the change he had undergone.

He answered:—

I was first impressed with the vastness of the change I had undergone. The next was the boundless space that lay before me to explore; and as my eye traversed the immensity which surrounded me, I felt as but a speck in that immensity.

The next was my meeting with my friends—the next the view of myself, and the character of the sphere where I mingled. Having become sufficiently enlight-

ened on those subjects, and having my past life brought forth in bold relief before me, the question naturally arose, I will atone for all the wrongs I may have committed, consciously or unconsciously, as far as shall lie within myself.

That seems to be the first duty which is required of me in my new home; to see myself in true colors, that the false colors may be stripped from around my existence, and the true shine forth with greater and native brilliancy.

There was something in the manner in which this was delivered, that struck those of us who had heard him speak, as remarkably characteristic of him, and we gave utterance to the thought.

He said:—

How happy I am. You do more than I would have done. You all believe it.

Then, in answer to a question how far his prayer for forgiveness when dying had aided him afterward, he said:—

My friend, in my short existence I find that sin must forgive itself by expiating itself in the mind. How naturally the former life, former faults, and former follies all rise up before me and reproach me, and almost take the form of an avenging angel. If there is a hell, it is when such thoughts reign supreme; and if there is a heaven, it is the recollection of having performed the duty required of us by the Great First Cause, who gave us our talents to be used for the benefit of our fellow-men, and made us the machines to direct the springs placed within our bodies.

That is to be my greatness again. My mission will consist in reaching men in many different ways. Not in one, or two, or twenty ways will I perform the work

which I am beginning to learn merely the alphabet of. Yet, my friend, when I shall be permitted to come again, I can more clearly explain to you my position and my employments than I can at present. My experience is but short in my newly found home. But I hope fervently, hopefully, deeply, trustingly, to be useful in every sense of the word, useful to my fellow-men and to myself.

I see many means of intercommunication which are shortly to be opened, which, however, I could not explain to you so that you would understand, and which I hardly understand myself. It would be the blind leading the blind.

The interview continued a good while longer. It was desultory. He spoke so rapidly I did not make the necessary memorandum.

I mention a few incidents.

Among other things, in answer to one of our questions, he said:—

That at his departure he was unconscious for about fifteen minutes, during which time his spirit was leaving its former tenement, and mingling itself with its new atmosphere; he supposed that all experience that, in a greater or less degree, unless it might be those who were more spiritually developed, he believed we called it, than he was.

He said, also, that he was introduced to us, and to this mode of communication, by Mr. Clay, that he had been round with him for two days, looking into and learning the process of intercourse. That this was the first of his communicating.

He said it was not worth while to communicate this to his friends and family, for they would receive it as he had done, as an idle dream.

I spoke to him of the difficulty of reaching men's minds with this new philosophy.

He thought there was little or no difficulty about it.

How happened it then, I inquired, that while this thing has been going on around you for four years or more, it never reached you?

His reply was, that it now seemed all so natural and simple, that it seemed to him not difficult to make people understand it. Yet the whole thing was so new to him that he could not judge accurately. "Have patience with me, friends, till I am able fully to realize my present position, and I will speak further with you on this subject."

He said he discovered there were enthusiastic spirits who had communed, who promised more than they could perform, yet who really thought they could perform as they promised, and these difficulties with the mediums gave rise to contradictions and inconsistencies.

J. W. E.



CHAPTER XIV.

A SECOND VISIT.

October 30, 1852.

COMMUNICATION given by DANIEL WEBSTER to Mr. and Mrs. S. this evening. In answer to a question about his mission, he said:—

I see much good to be accomplished when I shall have sufficiently progressed in the sphere in which I am placed, to understand the laws which are requisite for the high and delightful mission of contributing the use of the talents with which I was blessed in enjoying the use of, and was permitted to see the character of the fruits which they bore while performing the duties of life's requirements while here. And I now recognize, in a full and fair vision spread out before my eyes, how greatly these talents may be developed in a spiritual point of view, which will still continue to make me useful to mankind.

And, thank Heaven, no qualms of conscience, prejudice, or principle shall act there as a barrier to obstruct the full flow of my soul's aspirations after goodness and wisdom, to surround me with the ennobling and beautifying principles which have lain deeply imbedded within my soul.

In glancing over my past existence, I perceived many feelings, which lay buried within my being, were con-

cealed from my view by the outward causes which were acting upon, and molded my mind, and left their impress graven upon my public career in letters which time will not soon efface.

I now find that the predominant feelings which were once called into action from my station in life, had the effect of deadening what would otherwise have lighted and radiated my mind to greater expansion than I could possibly have conceived while there, and thrown a genial influence of inward light upon my outward man, which would have made life seem as only the stage whereon to enact the duties assigned us by the infinite wisdom of our Maker. And then, having made our peace with God, through having made peace with our fellow-men, in benefiting them by the instructions which have been given us in their behalf, we should put on immortality as a garment of light, and be welcomed with a happy assurance, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Father."

I realize now how great that joy must be to a heart whose associations have ever been pure and unselfish, whose material structure has not so operated on and controlled their inward light, but that they have been able to realize the actual presence of the spirit of revelation within their inmost souls. And when called upon to change their place of habitation, have set out as upon a road whose banks were lined with living flowers, and whose streams were immortal in the light and transparency of their flow, and whose thoughts had realized (in more than dreams) the unfading and unfailing sources of happiness ever springing forth and enrapturing the eye, and bathing the soul in the mellowed

beauty of heavenly communion. Dreamy now seems the past compared with the fair realities of the present which have been presented to even me—me, who entered as a traveler that seeks an unknown country, and requires a map to guide him through the many different and dimly conceived localities which he may have heard of, as being some time to be explored, and leaning upon an all-ruling Power, but not remembering that the eternal life has more mysteries to be sought and found than the short, the transient one which we have known here the longest, but short when compared with the smallest part of that which we have in view.

Had I a thousand tongues to tell the multitude of wonders, they should all be of the great and reforming in all its aspects, the good of my country, the good of mankind at large, through the exceedingly beautiful and natural laws which are bringing the world of reality and that which has been hitherto one of shadows together.

My words fail to describe my feelings, when I attempt to portray the delight which I feel thrill through my soul, with a warm glow of happiness, in contemplating the high destiny of the human race. I do not speak of that which is to come in centuries. I do not wish to carry my ideas out of your reach; but I mean within a few short years which I can speak of, as knowing the meaning of what I say, having so lately been guided by the same measure of time myself.

* * * * *

I feel that the high and beautiful wisdom of the Almighty God is indeed manifesting itself in a manner miraculous to spirits and astounding to mortals. And

were I willing at this period of time to become a visionary rather than the practical man which I ever delighted to be, I could paint such pictures as would open the bowers of Eden, green and beautiful to your view, fanned by the wings of angels, soothed by the breath of love and hope—bright hope—harmonized by the all-pervading power of wisdom, which not only has worked, but is continually working wonders in the flesh and in the spirit. It would be a picture of peace and happiness, brought into operation by the co-operation of men and spirits, which, through their combined efforts, will yet concentrate the forces of their powers, that their strength shall be felt through every nerve and fiber of the human mind.

To me, who can now view these things independent of mortal eyes, the prospect is indeed cheering. Pray Heaven that the eye of your understanding may be opened to realize here what I never appreciated in its stupendous might and majesty until I arrived there.

CHAPTER XV.

ANOTHER INTERVIEW.

November 23, 1852.

THIS evening the Circle of Hope met. General E. F. Bullard, of Waterford, and Miss Bishop were present as visitors. The communications were through Mrs. S. as the medium, and were as follows:—

Friends, I was called Daniel Webster while an inhabitant of your sphere. By that name you will now recognize me as the spirit addressing you.

I must confess it is with feelings of delicacy that I approach your circle to take a part of your valuable time. But my opportunities of conversing with friends in this sphere, since my departure as an embodied form, have been few, and it is not that I expect to be able to impart much instruction to you as regards the higher and more beautiful plane of thought on which your minds are arriving, as it is to say how I am grateful and humiliated to find how true is the truth of this returning to earth, and how foolish is the blindness which makes men turn away their eyes and shut their hearts to the knowledge which speaks to the heart in a trumpet tone, or reaches them through the still small voice of conscience.

My experience has been but of short duration, yet long enough to see and to feel how much of the true

knowledge, which might govern and direct the human mind, for its temporal as well as spiritual welfare, I was utterly ignorant of. I now see how utterly incapable men are, with their present knowledge and past experience, of advancing the welfare of the human race in the progression eternal which might be, if better acquainted with the human and divine laws apparent around you.

The laws which men make are so different from nature's. I have been looking into the narrow platform of thoughts and fears which men are constantly erecting and constantly overthrowing, for the simple reason that the platform is not wide enough, and thus one scale outweighs the other.

As I look abroad over the earth, over my own loved country, I see so many small circles—so many small platforms, and that they need a larger one to revolve around.

I am astonished as I look around to see how very contracted my ideas were, yet I fondly imagined I took a flight like the eagle in her soarings to view the extended map of mind.

Friends, will you doubt me when I tell you I see a great and gradual change which will soon cover the face of the earth? I see the fires blazing up and breaking forth in different directions, and I see many and mighty spirits lighting these fires and feeding them—many great and mighty men who have passed away from the earth, coming in strength to help the work of the redemption of man.

I feel I have a great part to take in this mighty revolution. It has begun, and is spreading and overwhelm-

ing, as the billows roll over the great face of the waters when lashed to fury by some unseen power.

Oh, that I had begun my seeking sooner; that I had wisely improved the talent given me, and let it shine forth, for then it would have lightened my path upward to the mansions above.

Mighty thoughts rush through my brain as I look abroad—too great for utterance now. I see that this work is to be a practical one. It is not to be performed by the writers or philosophers, the wise men or the poets of the day, but all, from the greatest to the lowest, are to assist and be instruments of utility, not as servants, but as heirs, as brothers, who will all alike enjoy the fruits of their labor. The young, the old, the middle-aged, all are to assist.

In looking back upon many of my friends who were familiar with me here, I see that before six months, or a year at furthest, shall elapse, many of them will have embraced and will proclaim this great truth, and I see some of them are to join me and assist me in more ways than one. I see many among my friends whose minds are awakened to the subject, but whose fears deter them from investigating, and I see many of the spirit-friends who are keeping their feelings alive.

You think I ought to describe my spirit-home, and truly I would do so if it were in my power. Think of a life spent here mid the toil, and bustle, and busy thoughts of a nation, where the mind reached heaven but in glimpses, and the soul did not drink deeply of the inspiration around it. Imagine such a one taken to that country, and placed amid all that was new, and startling, and glorious! It is a child in its first efforts

to learn its first lesson. Picture my friends around me, telling me all that is new, and good, and beautiful, and how much I must learn, and forget, and work. Yes, work is no new word in the spirit-world. Every immortal soul is ever working, ever seeking for new light and new knowledge, and the more knowledge they obtained before leaving your sphere, the less they have to seek for in their initiation into the world of wonders.

You speak of your statesmen's having left you, of your having none to fill their places. Do not think so. Greater than they will fill their places. Mightier than they shall speak to the nation, in language bringing flowers of truth for man to live by and to die by. To die ; the word will be banished from earth. It is but an exchange, a putting off the worn-out frame, and entering the new and beautiful spirit-covering which is prepared for us as we emerge into the world—not of shadows, but of bright realities.

Your earth is but a speck when compared with the splendors and high glories which I see before my view, but which I have not reached, but see in the distance, and labor to reach. The veil is removed. The bright and beautiful country is in my view. As a fair landscape it appears before me, and I as the wanderer, when picturing the joys of his far-off home, I am looking at it. This urges me on where I may behold the sun of righteousness in all its unclouded splendor.

My ideas are imperfectly given, owing to the difficulties of communicating, and my want of knowledge of its laws. I have been anxious to speak here before, but have not always been able to impress my name. But I am improving, and hope soon to be able to impart

some things of utility, something practically to benefit those who take an interest in this good work. How I regret I did not begin sooner ! My feelings overcome me when I look on what I might have been. My language may not have appeared like that of Daniel Webster ; but I was anxious to begin, though I began as a child, for I know you will make good use of it, and it will be of much use to my surviving friends.

After a pause, he said :—

My old friend Mr. Clay desires to speak.

And Mr. Clay said :—

Friends, it is some time since I have had the pleasure to make myself known to you, though I have very often met with spirits who mingle around your circle.

I have deeply rejoiced this evening at the efforts of my friend to give forth his ideas to you. He has succeeded in some degree ; if imperfectly, you must make allowance, for there are circumstances which we can not always control. I am happy, most happy this evening, to come in company with my old friend, and it is nothing more nor less than a high degree of wisdom that has called that spirit from the earth, and many others, for they shall, from their high abodes, become perfected, and give it back to earth. The minds which sway mankind are being moved, and those in the spirit-land must take their places. Darkness shall no longer cover the face of the earth.

The men who conduct the affairs of the nation are about to become enlightened in a manner which shall compel them to throw aside old forms and emerge into the channel which this new revelation is opening to ali.

And it shall be felt in the public institutions, and in the schools, practically felt and practically acted on. It will give you new laws, new ideas to carry out, and show the rottenness, the uselessness of your falling laws, and make the path beautiful and plain and clear, so that even a child may tread it.

Some say it will not reach all. That is a mistake. It will first reach the intelligent mind, because it is what the intelligent mind requires. The mind which has had chains and land-marks has become weary of them, and this light shall shine on their souls and fill them with joy.

This many have been expecting, but they little thought they were to receive it in so simple a way as the rappings. They who would find out great truths must first find out its simplicity.

Ere long you shall hear strange tales from across the seas. The spirits are laboring with untiring zeal to assist man in his mighty labors. You simply show him the high privilege he may aspire to, the knowledge he may grasp, and then your duty is done. Place the means within his reach, and pass on to another.

Slowly but steadily it is spreading, and gently, and in musical tones it comes; yet to some it comes as an avenging voice of past misdeeds; to some it comes lifting them up from sorrow; to some who cease to look for happiness on earth, it opens new fountains of light, and lights up the darkness within. Some it shall haunt as a specter, and cause them to shrink from past misdeeds and present crimes. As though a thunder-bolt fell at their feet, they shall stand still and wonder. To some it has come as a beacon-light seen in the dis-

tance, but never reached—sought in vain ; but now the windows open and the light enters.

Thus will it affect different minds ; but all will be reached. Some may scoff, and sneer, and cry humbug. Yet there is a feeling awakened within their hearts. They feel that it is other than that. It takes no form save that of universal light, and love, and progression. It absorbs no one spot, but as a mist would envelop the world.

All I can say this evening is, go on in your quiet, and beautiful, and soul-cheering work, and God and spirits will assist you. And what more assistance can you ask for ?

J. W. E.

CHAPTER XVI.

REFORMATION.

Given *August 22, 1852*, and purporting to emanate from the spirit of N. P. Rogers.

I WISH to speak on the subject of the Reformation which is beginning and going on in your midst. My name is unknown to you as a spirit of any fame or pretensions, but my desire is, nevertheless, as great to contribute to the information, in regard to the objects of interest which now occupy the minds of men and spirits, as any whom you have conversed with. While you were reading a communication from me, through another medium, and desiring that you might have such a one given you, I was present—attracted by the strong desire on your part, and the open-heartedness with which you received what you considered the more beautiful part of it—and I have gladly embraced the opportunity of coming to speak a few thoughts upon the subject in hand.

The question is often asked, “Shall I be a medium?” and the answer frequently is, “You will.”

And now let me inquire, what is your object in becoming a medium? Is it to gratify your own curiosity, or from a desire for knowledge and to benefit your friends, by making a proper use of the gift? Or is it an idle wish, merely to be the vehicle through which

something startling may be conveyed to the world? Where so many minds are actuated by so many different motives, the means employed for developing their powers must necessarily be widely different, and the modes of operation as diverse. And in this respect much depends upon the *desires* of those who are so anxious to become mediums. We should ever bear in mind that spirits, of all classes and gradations, are striving to make themselves known to the inhabitants of earth, and are putting forth all their powers to develop media. It is my earnest desire to bid all to be on their guard, as to how, in what manner, their minds shall attract, into close companionship with them, spirits whose presence will, either wisely or unwisely, direct them and others who may place confidence in their teaching—when that spirit shall so gain control as to prove its presence to the outward sense. Some, mayhap, do much mischief before their real character is discriminated. Weigh well all teaching from all spirits, remembering that the experiences of spirits, in their spirit-home, are as unlike each other as the walks of individuals in this life are unlike. In minor points of doctrine, spirits, as well as men, differ from each other because their views are given from different planes of development. This should not throw any off the track who are honestly seeking for the truth—and nothing but the truth. For while so much disparity exists in opinions here upon similar points, it would not be good philosophy, or according to reason, to suppose that all spirits who have left this world—honest in their different opinions in relation to contested points—should at once outgrow them upon entering the spirit-world;

or come to entertain and give one opinion upon all subjects.

Many spirits are but learning the way to see clearly through these mooted points and intricacies of doctrine, which, in the form, subjected them to so many endless and unprofitable discussions, and so much labor in vain, which they now see was quite unnecessary for their advancement in the cause of redemption from sin. Sin being the cause of all the unhappiness and inharmony existing in society at large, the desires of all men should be pure and holy, and their labors be prompted by a desire to benefit the rising generation, that the minds of the young may grow up untrammelled by the fetters of bigotry, superstition, error, and prejudice, whose shadows have obscured the light which the unseen power of God would cast around them. Ancient records, and musty superstitions, and worn-out theologies, have cast, as it were, a veil between their minds and this free and joyous light. Their own minds wander in such dark labyrinths and unknown avenues, for this light, which they, themselves, have put farther from them, by making it seem an impossibility to find the holy light of God's truth. Many have been groping in the dark, and far away, seeking to fetch the light from a distance. But the genial sun is not so far off, or the light so hard to be attained, as some would fain imagine. It is at the door of the heart of every son and daughter of God's creation who is willing to unlock the entrance and receive the heavenly messenger. And as it comes, all pure and bright, from the invisible fountain, see that ye all receive it gladly, as little children. And the truth, like the refreshing waters of a

calm and beautiful river, will flow to thee and give peace and joy to thy weary soul. The truth from God—not the truth which man has mangled and distorted to please his own fancy, and to confirm his fevered imaginings—the pure and simple truth, which comes from heaven to men's hearts, is as refreshing to the senses of the soul as the breath of fragrant flowers, and its influence is as warm and genial as the rays of the rising sun. The beauty of truth is the simplicity of truth; and if it were so hard to be understood as many minds suppose it is, how should the humblest and most untutored in God's creation understand it? But it is a beautiful truth, and worthy of all belief that it is free to all—free as the air we breathe; free as the bird who soars on its free wing in the free sunshine of God's free light, made free by his boundless, freely-given love.

Ye men who would be reformers of your race and age, use these revealments from Heaven to earth—from God through spirits—as a means of lighting the minds and understandings of your fellow-men with the beauty and simplicity of truth. Consider the advantage to be derived from a knowledge of the easy access of all truth-loving minds to the truth. Draw your supplies from the great fountain, whence it springs untainted by time or age. The streams are becoming mighty in their onward course to and through the earth. The fogs of ages which have hitherto kept men at a distance, as it were, giving them here and there a glimmer of light, but never breaking forth in all the glorious effulgence of spiritual beauty and soul-inspiring light, are passing away forever. And could this great end be

kept in view, the work would go bravely on. Men of unselfish desires, by their love of man, would assist spirits who love God and humanity to approach them with an easy influence, and enable them better to see and appreciate the great good resulting from the spiritual development of spirits on the earth.

When spirits can so approach this sphere of being, they will show men that their errand is not a useless one to them, but pregnant with good will to man on earth from God in heaven. Then will men realize the benefits of this intercourse, and be enabled to perceive more clearly their divine right to the heaven which the Father hath prepared for all those who love and obey him. And to you who are seeking with humble hearts, I say, Be of good cheer, for the morn is breaking. The night of cloud and darkness, which enveloped the minds of men, is fast fading away, and the light which now cometh shall be as a beacon of hope to guide the weary traveler to his home of peace and everlasting rest. The pure and lowly in heart may go on their way rejoicing.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PATH OF PROGRESSION.

A picture of spirit life, given by Mrs. Hemans, *December 25, 1852.*

A BEAUTIFUL spirit came to me, and said :—"Mortal, come with me, and I will tell thee of the beauties of the sphere which lies beyond thy dwelling-place on earth. Having lived many years in the lower sphere—having tasted of its joys and its sorrows, its meetings and its partings, and having been surrounded by many different circumstances, some of which have had the tendency to make thee more earthly, and some of which have elevated thy soul, to now and then taste of the cup of pure joy, and having caught glimpses of that better land, which thy immortal yearnings have told thee has existed beyond thy sight or understanding, and having felt a strong desire to gaze into that unknown country, even with thy mortal vision ; but now having cast off that thick envelop called the body, and standing in thy more refined covering which is put on by all who arrive here, as being adapted to the climate and country which they inhabit, I will take thy hand and wander around with thee, and tell thee of that which thou art prepared to see and understand. Greater things could and will be shown thee, when thou shalt be strengthened, by growing in wisdom, to receive them.

The people which thou seest, passing and repassing, are those who have left your sphere at different times, and all in different stages of development. Behold, now, how differently they appear to thee, as thou seest them pass. Behold! some are sauntering along, and carelessly viewing the pleasant scenery. They do not pass very quickly from thy sight in their onward course, which leads up that broad and shining path in which, as you may see, many are walking. It is not a level-shaped path, but commences where thou and I art standing, and rises until it assumes the appearance of an inclined road. And very beautiful and inviting it appears, if we may judge from the light which seems to illumine and brighten the surrounding objects. But, as I said, those spirits very slowly ascend this road; they seemed to see the beauties from afar, and yet seemed too careless or indolent to ascend the hill where they may be reached.

Now, observe another spirit; he carries a book in his hand and earnestly scans the pages, and then looks for the way-marks; but in failing to discover them, he shakes his head and says, "I will not ascend that hill yet—it does not correspond with the description which was laid down as being right; therefore, I will walk on in this country, until I can find that which will accord with my former instructions." And he gazes with a longing look at that beautiful road, but turns away to look for the landmarks; and so continues longer in that country to seek them.

But now we look at another. And it is a fair and beautiful maiden. As she walks along, she seems to be looking for some one whom she expected to meet,

but is disappointed in not being received by that person at her first entrance. Then she turns and inquires of one of those persons whose countenances are so calm and benignant, and who seem to wait to speak words of hope and encouragement, or to act as guides to all who may ask them for information; and as she inquires, see how that spirit smiles and points upward to that shining road. He tells her that the loved friend whom she seeks, has left that country, and has ascended in that green and inviting path, whose borders are lined with ever-living flowers—and awaits her when she shall climb that hill, and be prepared to enjoy the beauties to which he has attained by upward labor. And now, see how joyfully she prepares to enter that road! See how willing she is to cast aside every obstacle which may hinder her from proceeding rapidly. She has no desire to remain below, but her aspirations will assist her to mount higher, and become developed in wisdom and love, and strengthened by divine and holy breathings in her journey—because she grasps for that which is beautiful and lovely to her; and through her love is her wisdom developed.

And now gaze we on another. He is one who, when dwelling in your sphere, was a zealous and loving teacher of that which he thought was all pure truth unmingled with dross. And he seems to be quite astonished—not because the place does not look beautiful or inviting, but because it is so different from what he had expected. He finds here all nations and tongues, all sects and denominations—in a word, all names under heaven, which he had not expected to see in the same place where he is. And they all seem quite as

well pleased with themselves and their belief, as though they had all been of the same opinion while on earth. Then his wonder increases as he perceives that they do not appear to be at all hopeless or desponding, but, on the contrary, seem to be progressing upward ; each one as he proceeds seeming to have found something in advance better than that which he had left behind. And ever and anon they cast away from them old garments, apparently, or, as some would call them, opinions ; and some appear to have lost so many of these articles, or to have cast them aside, that they are rather in advance, and look back and beckon to those behind to hasten on ; for I see that before they enter that beautiful path, they are divested of numberless coverings, and present a look of renovation. And now, in turning to look at this person again, who seemed so perplexed, we find him questioning one of those bright travelers, who seem to be ever waiting to do good ; and he wishes to know why so many, whose different opinions had led to so many different sects on earth, all seemed to be enjoying the same privileges here ; for, said he, “ I believed that I was inspired to speak the truth, and nothing but the truth ; but I could not have been the only one who so spoke, or I should not be compelled to mingle with the many whom I see here.” And that spirit addressing him, said, “ Brother, thou wast sincere in thy manner of teaching, but thou didst give thy mind too narrow a compass, and didst limit thy God in his love, which is infinite, and who bestowed alike on all who are willing to receive. When thou didst think that thy course was the sure criterion for others, according to thy knowledge and development

didst thou teach ; and so do many others, but the sea which all are wading through, is not half so full of dark gulfs and rocks as thou hast imagined ; but while all steer for the same harbor, they take many intricate windings, and run into almost endless streams of folly and useless reasoning before they reach it, which does not tend to lead them in the path that turns toward yon shining city. Very simple and easily to be understood, is the text which was given by one of old, who said : ‘Do good ; love thy neighbor as thyself, and do good unto all men.’ For when men shall love their neighbors as themselves, they will not divide the human family into so many grades of distinction, and will not only *call* them brothers and sisters, but will aid and encourage them to become such.” And I saw that spirit turn his head downward, as if in deep reflection, and pause, and think, and wonder. Slowly, at first, he proceeds on his way, but by and by he mingles with the rest, and hastens on his journey to that city of joy.

And now, we behold another. It is a young and ardent youth ; one who was cut off while his hopes of fame and happiness were at their height. The summons reached him, and nature obeyed the call. I behold his young spirit entering that land, not so eagerly as when he entered on his earthly career, but with an earnest and inquiring look. And he says : “Are all my high-born hopes of fame on earth—are all my proud anticipations of a name, which should be handed down to posterity as an heir-loom of value, to be ended here ? Are the laurels which I saw in my future glory, to be thus plucked from my young brow ? Truly, it is well to come to so pleasant a place ; but I panted for

earthly fame, and my day was made too short to attain the mine of wealth which I saw opened before my sight in the future." And while he thus spoke, a spirit, venerable in wisdom, and intellectual in mien, whose dignified motions revealed the deep language of thought within his soul, approached the youth and took him by the hand, and said: "My son, I see thou art an unwilling traveler in our country. Thy soul had begun to expand its wings and exult in earthly joys. Thy spirit had become influenced with desires of that which is but a shadow—a glimmer whose light would play around thee in fitful gleams on earth, and would only illumine thy path on that side of the grave. Think not that deeds of valor, or wreaths of fame, or oceans of blood, would make thee happier here. Know that thy young soul would have become hardened in the path which thou hadst chosen, and the many misdeeds which thou wouldst have committed in that sphere, would have made thy entrance less pleasant to thy soul here. Much wouldst thou have had to mourn over before thou couldst have reached this state which thou art now permitted to enter. The society in which thou wouldst have mingled would have been discordant, because at variance with the laws of harmony and love; and thy soul would have become so molded in the shape which thy occupations would have given it, that far below this plane thou wouldst have had to begin thy initiation into this sphere of progression. But thy view will be made to show thee a different aspect of things and thou wilt see that the wisdom which overruled thy early departure from earth, was kind in its dealings. Turn now thy soul to aspirations of

purity and goodness; and let thy imagination wander ever so high in the realms of eternal progression or knowledge, it shall not return unsatisfied: so the deep thoughts of thy soul shall spring up and take to themselves wings and fly over the great expanse of the sublime works of the Creator, and return to thee as a dove with healing in its wings. Ask to drink at the fountain of knowledge, and thou shalt inhale draughts which will fill thee with more than earthly joy. And dost thou thirst for undying fame? In this thou shalt not be disappointed. Thou shalt become famed as the youth who loves to excel in goodness and love among those poor spirits who have need of thy assistance. In many curious and wonderful things shalt thou be made famous, as thy spirit shall become willing and thy heart strong within thee to do thy Father's will. And the wreath of flowers which will encircle thy brow, shall bloom with a beauty, and give forth a fragrance, and shine with a glow as pure as that which encircles the happy spirits who dwell in the spheres of eternal light. And the work which thou mayst now join in, will be that of assisting thy brethren and sisters to become rapid travelers on the road to that fair city." And the youth's eye brightened, and his soul seemed to grow big within him; and he said: "I will yet earn fame, eternal and spotless fame, by attaining to that height which seems so brilliant and beautiful, even in the far distance." And turning to that guide, he said, "I thank thee, father, and would gladly learn more of thee. My spirit is humbled, and would learn, at thy feet, the ways of wisdom." And see how he is ascending also.

And now another approaches, and we speak to him. He says: "My journey through life has been a rugged one, with much of sorrow and little of joy. I toiled for my daily bread, and scarcely found time to reflect upon a future state. My desires were ever for a heaven of peace and love. And that which was pure and good ever found a warm response in my breast; but I was unable to elevate my mind to the attainment of knowledge concerning it. And now, having entered it unexpectedly, it seems to me to be a most lovely place; and yet so strange it seems, that I am unable to enjoy it. I see much on every side that I do not understand. I am abashed at my own ignorance in regard to the place in which I have been introduced." Then turning to a spirit, he said: "I am a stranger in a strange country. All things astonish and delight me because of their beauty. But still I am as a child, for I gaze on them and feel happy because of their loveliness, but can not appreciate them for want of an understanding of their nature and uses." And the spirit replied: "If thy life on earth was destitute of worldly luxuries, and thy soul craved that which was pure and good, but could not gain a key to it, owing to thy depressing condition, thou art doubly blest; for thy poverty on earth did not destroy the richness of thy spirit's love to thy Father in heaven. Therefore, enter thou in the way which becomes brighter and more lovely as thou shalt proceed, and the cloud of mental darkness, which kept the pure light from shining in upon thy soul, shall now be removed, and thou shalt become expanded and purified, and thy light shall become brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. For the greatest shall

be least, and the least shall become great because of their humility of soul."

And now comes another; one who, while on earth, could never find the key to unlock the knowledge for which his soul yearned. For his soul craved deep draughts of knowledge, brought from the sealed fountains of the lore of by-gone ages. An external view of men and things, as they were, would not satisfy his appetite; but to consult the stars and study the signs of the heavens, and the mysterious secrets contained in the bosom of Nature, was his delightful labor. And his spirit often would chafe and grow gloomy because of the weakness of his wings to soar away to the hidden places of earth, and penetrate their mysteries. And when his soul had reached this place, it was weary with long watching for light and mental labor. Now, as he approached, how humble and joyful seemed his attitude! He would raise his hands in mute thankfulness, or would murmur, "I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast permitted me to become acquainted with the glorious light which is being imparted to my soul in answer to its earnest longings. I am overawed with thy might and thy majesty, worm that I am, who thought that I knew the mysteries of the great God of Heaven. My soul was but struggling to grasp an atom, to gain a glimpse of that which is being revealed. The eternal music which breathes amid all the harmonious spheres of beauty, wafts my soul higher and higher till it seems to mount, as in a dream of love, to adore the glory of God. How small, how ignorant, I seem, while viewing the glories around me! Oh, assist me, bright guides, assist me to climb up higher, and learn the way."

And now comes still another ; a gentle spirit she is. How lovely she seems ! As she glides along, she holds in her arms an innocent babe. What holy affection and chastened love is expressed in her countenance ! She pauses and speaks, and caresses her babe, and says : “ O spirit, I have left my home on earth, and I have met my beloved babe already, and how joyful I am. But will you not send back to earth, and tell my dearly loved friends how happy I am, and how useless is all their weeping for me ? Oh, tell them that I am learning the ways of peace and happiness ; that I am preparing to receive and instruct them when they shall arrive here ; that, although a mother’s form has left the earth, a mother’s love still shares all their hopes and joys. And oh, bid them be hopeful and seek to have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts on earth, that I may be able to approach them on their entrance into the Spirit-world.” And she glided away. Happy, happy mother ! bearing her babe in her arms, who had been brought to meet and comfort her on her upward journey. But mark how she pauses to send back a word of encouragement and hope to those who are left.

Now observe those aged ones as they approach. See how quickly they lose the appearance of old age—of wrinkles and trembling limbs ! How erect become their forms ! how elastic seem their movements, and how undimmed their eyes as they gaze around ! In casting aside their earthly forms, they are no longer subject to the penalties of nature by which they were formerly affected. The life that is past seems a half-forgotten dream. Suddenly they seem to have become possessed of a full consciousness of the reality ; and so

clear and unclouded becomes their vision, that they feel as though they had gone back to the happy dawn of childhood, when every thing seemed fresh, and new, and wonderful. Ah, how truly they feel that they have been born again—out of the dim and fading world in which they dreamed, as it were, into the ethereal atmosphere of the spirit-existence; and verily as little children they seem, so delighted they are with all around them.

And as these people recede from our view, all going upward—some faster and some slower—we pause and ask, for what are they seeking in that broad and shining path? Is it happiness? Why this place seems beautiful and fit to be enjoyed. But I will tell thee where they are going. All having, from different degrees of knowledge and development, arrived thus far on their journey, they still perceive beyond, a much brighter and more glorious heaven to be reached. Therefore they do not tarry by the way-side, but as they travel onward they are constantly finding greater treasures, and becoming more anxious to behold the glories of the higher spheres to which that shining path leads. For as they recede from the plane of earth in their spirit-journey, they behold the unfolding glories far beyond them, and glowing with immortal brightness shines the light of the opening heavens as they travel upward.

The spirit on entering its next state, only becomes more awake—more sensitive to the realities which lie beyond its view; it but steps on another round of the ladder, which leads upward and onward to spheres of eternal love and unfolding wisdom. And by thy life

here, O man ! dost thou make thy heaven fair and lovely, or thy existence dark and gloomy until thou hast overcome thy errors by earnest labor. Thou dost either enter a school where thou must learn the first rudiments of thy immortal destiny, or if, having learned of thy spirit-existence, thou dost enter its precincts with thy mind prepared to view its beauties, thy heaven becomes still brighter as thy journey becomes more lengthy ; and being assisted by angel-guides, upward shalt thou soar until thou art lost amid the happy throng who bask in the pure and glorious light of their Father's smile.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

January, 1853.

I WANDERED through a dark valley, and it was called the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Dim and shadowy it appeared to many who were passing through it. Unlike the material things which the senses had seen and felt, appeared the misty future, while passing through this path of shadows. But at length the vale is passed, and the spirit enters into its new abode. It gazes around with looks of wonder and astonishment on the opening scene. It seems to have passed as through a troubled and indistinct dream, and to have suddenly awaked to perceive the unclouded reality of the objects by which it is surrounded. What warm and blissful emotions are now experienced! Looks of inquiry are directed to every quarter where the eye may reach; and the first thought—the first desire is—the presence of a kindred object—something molded in the likeness of itself—to answer its aspirations.

Now the friends of that spirit approach to welcome it to its new abode—to joyfully embrace the long-expected companion. And now their hands are clasped in gentle and earnest affection; and they wander away—the spirits speaking to the stranger-spirit of the land

which it is about to inhabit. See how many are approaching, and extending their hands in welcome, and smiling with looks of recognition! And as they proceed—a bright and happy group—they are met by others who pause to hold converse with them, and seem to give them instructions, and to point forward. Then their attention is next turned to themselves, and I see them comparing their own appearance with that of others,—not judging by the external garb, but by the light of the inner soul, which paints its character on every countenance. In comparing thus, certain differences are perceived. Some appear altogether more lovely than others; some seem filled with a joy which causes their countenances to be luminous and glowing, and others are earnestly laboring to attain to that interior brightness which makes those around them so lovely.

Then the stranger-spirit begins to retire within itself, and says: “Why do I appear so gross and so unfit to mingle in this society? Bright and beautiful beings are around me, but I am unable to approach them as closely as I wish. Can I be unworthy to mingle with them?—is my form incapable of becoming as beautiful as theirs, which shed a soft and yellow luster wherever they move? I look within, and my heart asks for something more to satisfy than my anxious gaze on the beauty which surrounds others but warms not me.” So naturally turns that spirit for instruction, that he may become in truth a citizen of that beautiful country. And I see now those brighter beings smile and converse with each other; and they say: “His eyes have been opened; he feels the need of the refining influences of

the spirits' breathing—of light within his soul." Again, they say: "He is studying himself as he is; he is taking the first lesson of spiritual experience—he is beginning to learn the wisdom of the sphere which he now inhabits."

Now I see that spirit engaged in a searching scrutiny. He gazes back on his former life and teachings, and is astonished to behold them as a book wherein was written much that was dark and dim, and which now seems merely as a shadow without a reality. And his former life appears as a stream whose course was here and there lighted up by the rays of the sun, but which anon led through a dark and shadowy vale. He now wonders and inquires why the things which are beginning to appear so plain, should have appeared to him so dim on earth; and thus the bright beings that surround him answer:—

"The history of men and things was given in the past according to the state of human development. So far as the minds of men were unfolded to perceive the laws of the inner world, they gave forth that knowledge to others. Some were gifted with a spirit of prophecy to an extent adapted to the wants of the age in which they lived. Some were inspired to speak words of truth and wisdom, such as were needed by the hearers who listened to their teachings. Some were made natural physicians, and cured diseases by the laying on of hands; and others were sent forth as reformers and heralds of the coming day, and the hearts of the people were shaken with the strength of the spirit. And behold a lovely child was born of lowly parents, and a manger received the infant form. Glorious spirits

watched its slumbers, as it rested in innocence and beauty. Beautiful and harmonious in its structure was the new-born spirit; and being ever surrounded and strengthened by a holy influence, the child waxed strong in virtue and pure in character. Sublime was the power and sweet was the aroma of the light emanating from the spiritual world, lifting him far above the influences of the earthly sphere. Therefore did he go forth to the world as an instrument of truth and life-giving wisdom, as an angel of peace to his brethren, and as a physician to the afflicted. And now in this holy and divine abode, the ocean of love, which once rolled through his uplifted soul will swell into a still wider expanse, and streams from this ocean will flow down to the human world, that the children of earth may feel and know that he is indeed their brother. Thus shall the kingdom of God be established on the earth; thus shall the might and majesty of Love be known, and thus shall the world that has lingered long in darkness be bathed in the floods of heavenly radiance."

Thus spake the bright spirits to the stranger-spirit; and when the first pages of the book of eternal wisdom were thus unfolded, and the harmonious blending of the heavenly with the earthly sphere was revealed, it was seen that the Valley of the Shadow of Death is but the pathway through which the spirit enters into the courts of the celestial temples, where the voice of wisdom—revealing the past and the future—is ever whispering to the brightening soul.

CHAPTER XIX.

A MIRROR: IN WHICH CHRISTIANS MAY
SEE THEIR DUTY.

February, 1853.

I WOULD show thee a mirror, in which to gaze, that thou mayest behold the manner and make of the persons who jostle against thee in the paths of life. They are not the native children of the forest who worship the Great Spirit in a temple not made with hands, nor are they the poor misled children of distant climes, who worship sticks and stones which they can see, instead of the Great Spirit whom they can not see, each one serving God in his own way, and not questioning the right of another to do so. But behold thy neighbors and thy friends. They worship God in what manner they see fit, but they are not willing to accord to thee the same privilege—they must needs brand others as infidels and blasphemers.

But now, good Brothers of the Church, take heed that ye judge not, for ye may likewise be judged; but if thy brother is happy in his onward course, if his soul becomes ecstatic and filled with joy, do not envy him this blessing, for he would gladly have each one of you partake with him, and would not seek to drive any away from the fountain at which he drinks. And, brother, if thy Christian love which you profess to feel

for the world at large, burns brightly in thy bosom, turn not thy hand against him, and use not thy tongue as an edged sword to cut him in twain; but stretch forth thy hand, and open thy heart as a brother should do unto a brother, and prove to his reason, and to thy own satisfaction that he is wrong and thou art right; for if ye save a soul from destruction, it shall be as a star in the crown of thy rejoicing when the lost and scattered tribes of Israel are gathered together. Know that thou art not following thy Master's precepts, when, by calumny, and contempt, and assertion, yea, and even falsehood, you seek to deny the things which you can not make clear to those who would ask of thee information. Like the old Jews, you say "it is a devil—it is a lying spirit," and so shake your finger in scorn and derision.

Not so did your Master, whom ye profess to follow. When he beheld the weak and sinning ones, in their ignorance and misery, he gently laid his hands upon them and healed them of their diseases; he spoke in words of kindness and love, and told them who had sinned to go and sin no more; he came not to satisfy the curious or wonder-seeking mind, but his mission was to teach the lowly and the ignorant,—to bring joy and gladness to the downcast and weary hearts of humanity—to whisper sweet hope and consolation to the afflicted in soul and body. Such was his mission, O Christian people! and we would that ye might imitate that bright and lovely example which has so long been set before you,—so long indeed that ye have begun to regard it as a fable, preserved to please the fancy, for ye do not follow the Jesus whom ye profess to worship.

Ye build gorgeous edifices in which to worship that being who while on earth had not where to lay his head, and ye give forth flowery and brilliant discourses suited to flowery and comfortable lives, and perchance the few coppers which some would throw to the wandering musician, ye deal out as a pittance of charity to the poor of the church. But ye are satisfied with yourselves because circumstances have placed you in a position where wealth may gratify all your worldly wants, but ye do not make your poverty-stricken brother your equal, ye do not allow him wherewithal to become such; and when through ignorance and want he is made to commit crime, and then to suffer the punishment awarded by the laws of the land, it is not with a sigh that ye hear of his doom, but it is with a stern and reproving brow, that ye exclaim, "Let the majesty of the law be vindicated." And thus your brethren are punished for the crimes which they have committed through the pressure of poverty, or by the action of those passions which have been called forth in their worst forms by the very state of existing society.

There are men even in your midst who hunger for food and shiver in the cold, and when they are refused the supply which nature demands, if they stretch forth their hands to take that which their bodies require to retain the spirit, ye visit that upon them as a sin; and so might a larger portion of the human family ever be uncared for, were they to depend upon your aid and assistance to raise them up from their spiritual darkness and temporal need. So they surround you on every hand. Ye need not cross the ocean—ye need not go to the islands of the sea, or the burning sands of Africa,

to find employment for your Christian charities, but ye may go to your prisons,—ye may go to your dark cellars and attics—ye may go to your dens of infamy and wretchedness, and there ye may find an ample field to commence a Christian warfare with poverty and ignorance, and abundant opportunity to uplift souls who are almost soulless for want of a cheering light to glow amid the chilling and night-like darkness. Go there and tell those poor degraded ones, of comfort and joy for them here; tell them first that there is food sufficient to satisfy their craving hunger, and they will listen to you; and when you have done this, see if they have not a soul—though it may be almost entirely hid beneath the rubbish and filth of their poverty and shame; and when this becomes apparent, raise them up—take them by the hand, and let them see that they are men and women, with souls which may be made bright and lovely through your influence, and when this is accomplished, their eyes will brighten, and their countenances beam with joy, because of their elevation in the scale of humanity. Thus will ye do your Master's will by loving your neighbor as yourself.

But when the church has been so tardy in performing this work, while the wants of humanity call so loudly for action, is it to be wondered at that spirits come to do the work and perform the action which have been so long neglected? Is it wonderful that the very same ignorant mortals who left you in the midst of their ignorance do come and tell you that they are happy, because they found friends to take them by the hand and teach them that which they never found on earth? And what cause is there for sneers, if their words are

simple and messages imperfect? A simple tale is better imperfectly told, than a fine fable highly colored, but without a substance. But the spirits who love their brethren on earth are rapidly making themselves known to the inhabitants thereof, and they shall come as a mighty host, and shall assist man to raise his fellow-man to his heaven-born life, for not by a name, or profession, or a calling, shall ye be saved, but by doing the works and the will of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore, Christian brethren, if the spirits return only to teach love and kindness, be it in ever so simple a manner, do not rebuke them, but follow the precepts which ye call holy and divine, and do unto others as ye would that they would do unto you; and by love, and charity, and forbearance, to the brethren whom ye think are erring, shall the world see, that ye are indeed followers of the meek and lowly Jesus.

CHAPTER XX.

THE BOOK OF LIFE.

February 19, 1853.

WHEN even two or three shall meet together with humble and loving hearts, seeking for wisdom, spirits will be attracted to bless them with the light of love and truth. Thus, though no outward or visible manifestation be made, the soul may look inwardly, and hold communion with the messengers of peace and love who shall write their thoughts in the book of the inner life. Let, then, the telegraphic line between the soul and heaven be unobstructed by any earthly impediment.

It is not signs or wonders on the earth that should be sought, but all should seek that the windows of the soul may be opened, so that the brightness of spiritual wisdom may be seen and appreciated as it is by the harmonious dwellers of the Spirit-land. It is this wisdom that shall cause man to look abroad on his fellows with a discriminating mind and with a feeling heart. This shall elevate his soul and enable it to penetrate into the recesses of cause and effect, and to perceive the operation of natural laws in the workings of the human mind. It is indeed this wisdom which shall open to thee, O man! the Book of Life—by which is

signified the laws and beauties of the spheres which the soul may inhabit; the earth-sphere being to thee the first lesson of the unfolding truth. And this volume is capable of being made much clearer to the understanding than has been conceived; and while thou art yet an inhabitant of the rudimental sphere, let that volume be carefully perused; for by so doing thy soul shall become so clear that thou mayest perceive how great are the powers of thy being, and how nearly it is possible to approach and assimilate with the immortal spheres. When the earthly garb is changed for a purer covering, thou dost only turn over another leaf in the Book of Life; thou art only a little more etherealized in thy nature, so as to be able to step a little higher—thy soul has only cast off a few of its thick envelopes, and stands forth a little more clearly. So death, when viewed in its true light, is only a veil removed from the eyes of the spirit; and in proportion as the soul on earth becomes disrobed of its dark coverings and external views, so is it prepared to rise higher in the sphere of existence to which it ascends.

Thus the first page of the Book of Life may be perused on earth. But to some it presents almost an empty blank; while to others it glows with beautiful sentiments of love and harmony in unison with nature. To some it is a dark, blurred, and blotted page, whereon they read naught but desolation and sorrow; and to others it seems as the uprising of a glorious morning; when suddenly the leaf is turned, and they are ushered into another sphere. So all read the first page more or less differently; and think you that those who have hurriedly, blindly, and ignorantly perused this, will be

introduced at once to all the higher beauties of heaven? Not so. Every soul-spark from the divine germ must be developed on a natural and progressive principle, and if on earth the spirit has been covered with a mantle of darkness which has obscured its vision and shut out the lessons on this first page of life, it must read those lessons when the mantle has been laid aside in the tomb. Hence it occurs that many who have departed from the earth-sphere are not far beyond its more advanced inhabitants in their perusal of the Book of Life. Some are just learning to repeat the first letters, as they are revealed to their dimmed sight. I might show you those who have not yet discovered the spark that lingers in their interior being. I might show you others who are progressing from a state of darkness, and are turning their faces upward toward the light, and I might show you how earnestly they are perusing those primary lessons of wisdom which they could not read on the earth; and then I could point you to angel-brothers who come from a higher heaven of purity, and who, reading from those pages of light, instruct their weaker kindred in its beautiful lore.

By many the Book of Life has been carelessly scanned. They have merely glanced at the covering—looked only on the outside, but have not examined the store of wisdom which it contains. And as such turn over the next leaf of their existence, they will be surprised to find how great was their simplicity and ignorance with respect to all that pertains to real life. Many others also who have sought to search deeply into the mysteries of human wisdom, will be astonished to find how much mystery they have created for them-

selves, and not only for themselves, but for surrounding minds. In this way the book of human existence, obscured by a cloudy haze, has been a blank to many; and so they have turned over the second page without properly consulting the first. But there are some minds which are prepared to read the counsels of divine wisdom; and to such as these, who are willing to cast aside the trammels of education and prejudice, and become children in the hands of teachers, will the Book of Life be opened—not merely the first and second, but many succeeding pages, as the soul becomes strengthened to receive the knowledge contained therein. It is not the fanatic, or the man whose brain is the receptacle of every fanciful chimera, that is prepared to receive and appreciate immortal lore; it is only by a gradual, a philosophical, and harmonious labor and unfolding of soul, that a few of the human family are fitted to begin the investigation which shall lead to a revealment of that beauty and wisdom which are contained in the yet unread pages of the celestial volume.

CHAPTER XXI.

A BEAUTIFUL LESSON.

By Mrs. Hemans, *March*, 1853.

I GAZED at a little bird, and it taught me a beautiful lesson. When first it became conscious of being, it asked for food, that being all the knowledge it yet possessed, and all the want it felt—food, and a warm covering, as it nestled close to its parent, under the parent-wing. As I still gaze at the tiny thing, it becomes stronger, and more energetic in its calls for nourishment, and stretches forth its little head, and would fain take wing, and soar after the guardian whose watchful care has protected it from all impending danger. And daily it becomes stronger and more able to observe for itself; and as this power increases, see how it endeavors to sustain its own weight, and leave the little nest which has been its world so long, but is now becoming too small to contain it longer. Very soon I behold the little bird flying a short distance, and the parent has permitted it to make this trial of its strength, merely to teach it the way which it may go when it becomes stronger, and has no need of a protector as in its feeble and infantile state. Then it returns to the little nest; but oh, how very small and uncomfortable now seems the once downy home. Having once taken

a glimpse of the outer beauty which surrounds that home, it can never more remain there contented, but longs to grow and to strengthen, that it may soar away in the distance, and behold the beautiful world above and around it. And soon, little bird, wilt thou leave that nest in which thy infant being was developed, never more to return; but through the boundless sky, and in the pure atmosphere wilt thou soar and become glad, and happy, in thy heavenward flight.

Like unto this little bird, in its flight upward, is Man. He comes into being, surrounded by the things of sense that crowd the realm of external life; but, as he grows stronger and becomes interiorly expanded, he is made conscious of his own inward existence as an individualized soul. Then, as he sees a depth to be reached, or a height to be attained which he is unable to arrive at, struggling ever to rise, yet feeling his want of strength to do so, he returns dissatisfied and disappointed. But again the longing grows stronger within him to know more of the future. Beautiful, but dreamlike visions float before him. Strange music seems to stir up his soul with a deep melody, and pure and beautiful images, as descending from a far-off world of beauty, pass in the distance, ever eluding his grasp, yet ever beckoning him onward. And again he becomes restless—again he attempts to soar above his prison-house of clay; and he gazes into the heart of the world, listening for an encouraging voice, but finds no echo there to the deep longings of his soul. Then he turns and looks within his own being, and now and then he catches a glimpse of his ideal world; but as the aspirations that rise up within him remain unsatisfied, he begins to regard them

merely as a dream of youth and sunshine, which will pass away with coming years and coming cares. And as the heart becomes corroded by the anxieties of life, it loses the freshness of its youthful being—loses its hungering after the beautiful, which it once required as a food to sustain the strength of the soul. Thus does man when engaged in the busy turmoil of life, carelessly resign that knowledge of the inner life, which would make his old age as a fountain of youth and hope, whose freshness would eternally renew the beauty of the soul;—and this is because he is wrongly educated, for when the spirit of man in his youth would fain soar on high, to be filled with the stream of knowledge, he is not directed to look within himself to find the hidden spring.

But lo ! those far-off visions of more than Eden loveliness, are but the outshadowings of the spirit's beauty, which lies within its own deep bosom. The dim images of beautiful beings that are mirrored in the soul, are but the reflection of angel-forms with which that soul is in close communion ; and the deep melody which touches the chords of the spirit as with airy fingers, is but the dreamy music which the material sense could never feel. O man, how deep, how beautiful how unfathomed are the fountains of knowledge and of joy, which lie within thine own being !—and how corroding in their nature, are the material forms and fancies in which thou art ever robing thyself as with a mantle, to keep out the spirit's light and beauty ! Oh, shut not thyself up as within a temple of stone or iron which none may penetrate, but throw off every external covering from thy soul's form, and be childlike, and simple, and

truthful in thy walk ; look above the little world which you live upon, and soar upward and feel the joy of thy spirit's unfolding into a world of peace and everlasting rest.

CHAPTER XXII.

· RETROSPECTION.

May 25, 1853.

MY EARTHLY FRIENDS :—

I have been permitted to return to my old, my former place of abode for a few moments, that I may give you a few of the sentiments which now fill my soul with wonder and admiration.

I have not been long an inhabitant of these upper regions, of which I am about to speak ; but short and blissful as my experience has been, I would not exchange it for all the honors and glories which a thousand years on earth, with all their changing scenes of times, and of action, and opinions might heap upon me.

My station on earth was considered an honorable one; by my fellow-countrymen I was looked up to as endowed with a degree of wisdom, which enabled me to exert a controlling influence over the minds of my fellow-men.

And I have since discovered that many things which were said and done by me have left a lasting impression behind ; and for all those true and earnest efforts which were made for the good of my fellow-men in the form, and which have left their impression on the race, I now

thank God from my inmost soul. But for many others done by me in moments of thoughtlessness, or when acting under the impulses of impetuous feeling or aroused passions, my deepest regrets are awakened, and the more that I am daily witnessing their baleful effects.

It is very delightful, after leaving the earth, my friends, to return and look back on a life well spent in doing unto others as I would that they should do unto me. It is a most pleasant reflection, and gives back a sweet perfume from earth even while dwelling in heaven.

My mind is gazing back on the hours spent while here, and I have thought, within the depths of my soul, that were it my mission to return again to the form I left, and live over again my short life, how differently would I employ it!

It is but a reflection, for well I know it is impossible. But how clearly does reflection cause every past action to stand forth before my eyes in bold relief at this moment! It is so impressed on my mind, and oh! how I would impress it upon others, how much of joy or sorrow, of heaven or hell, we create for ourselves!

I have been permitted to come here, night after night, and gaze upon the wise spirits who have been directing your minds to higher wisdom than mine has ever tasted of. My mind has expanded, and my soul swelled out, as I have gazed on the vast fields of living light and beauty that spread before me, and are yet to be explored.

My labor has but begun; I am but learning the first lessons of profound knowledge, which belongs not to earth, but to eternal and ever-living happiness. What

a mere child of knowledge I realize myself to be when gazing around me !

Wise men of earth ! could you but gaze up and see the wisdom that is around you, and ever impressing your minds, your wisdom would seem so foolish you would veil your faces in meekness and humility, and you would feel glad and thankful to see those majestic forms who surround you, who assist and uphold you by their wisdom, and whisper words of strength to your weakened spirits, when struggling for light, like the bird struggling in the net of the fowler.

I would again say, did the wise men of the earth know how much they depend on sources other than themselves, they would not be puffed up so much with their own self-love. The impression of their self-importance would be dimmed, and they would be willing to come as little children to learn internal wisdom.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MECHANIC.

June 17, 1853.

I COME on an errand here this evening, or at least was sent to give that which might be a lesson when taken in connection with some of your teachings.

While a dweller on earth, my occupation was that of a humble artisan, and I earned my daily bread by following a humble occupation, and was only prevented from becoming an enthusiastic laborer in the higher branches of my profession by the force of circumstances, which made me what the world called a poor man. But there was ever within my heart a deep yearning, an earnest longing to excel in that in which I was only a lower-class workman. And having lived out the number of years which my body could sustain, my soul on this earth, I departed to another sphere, and now I wish to show you in what I have been engaged since my entrance there. I was not what the world called a religionist, nor was I an immoral man, but my principles were based on the considerations which I could bring to bear in favor of natural reasoning, or, as you may call it, common sense.

Therefore, when entering upon my next state, I naturally shrunk back, being afraid to enter boldly a

place of which I knew so little beforehand. I was very soon, however, met by some dear relatives, who received me with exceeding joy and thankfulness. And having explained to me the position which I should have to occupy, they told me I should be amply supplied with instructors, who would patiently and mildly teach me all I might desire to know; that whether it was much or little was wholly depending on myself, for knowledge is never forced on any one in the spirit-world. So after becoming initiated into the ways and customs of that place, or community as I may call it, I soon became deeply interested in the work which my hands found to do, and that was the very same occupation which I had so earnestly desired to excel in while on earth. It may seem strange, but it is true, that I was really engaged in the same occupation, and the same pursuits attracted me which had engrossed me while in the body, but my materials were of a more refined nature.

I resided in that place until I became too old a scholar to learn any more in that school. I was then impressed to go to another, and so I have been studying and laboring for years in this pursuit. Not in this alone, but it was the predominant topic which has engaged my mind, having the greatest attraction for me, and calling out my energies more powerfully than any thing else. My soul is alive to all the beauties which surround it; and looking about through the land where I dwell, I see many beautiful structures that man would call a vast conception of brain, and that, my friends, is the conception of my brain. That which is beautiful to the eyes of others is an emanation or a labor which

has been brought into its present state by the energies which have been expanded and developed in my individual case.

Thus you may see that all spirits have an occupation or employment, but mine is not performed solely by me. There are many others assisting me, and learning of me that which has made me so happy and useful to those around me, while others are quite as useful to me, thus all depending on one another in our sphere of existence.

I can't speak more of my experience at present, but others will who will speak better. This lesson is only given as having a connection with your late teachings—a filling up of shades, another tint in the coloring of the picture.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE PREACHER.

June 17, 1853.

“FOR the wicked shall be cast into hell, and all the nations that forget God. This is a solemn thought, my hearers, and one on which we should prayerfully and candidly exercise our minds. Yea, verily. It is a solemn thought. The wicked shall be cast into hell, where the worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched. Oh! my friends, flee from the wrath to come. Put away your sins, lest the Son of Man come in the night-time, and oh! ye sinners! beware how ye tempt an angry God!”

This was the doctrine I preached on earth, this the way in which I filled the poor human heart with fear and trembling, with shrinking from a kind and beneficent God, whose only manifestation is smiling on his creatures, by calling him angry! by crying up hell-fire, the horrors of those who disobey, and distorting every thing to suit my own peculiar views. I thought I was doing right and God a service by upholding these gloomy dogmas, which I gave forth with such a zeal, with such bitter denunciations against the erring mortals who should have been encouraged and dealt kindly with, and not horrified and frightened with the contemplation of death.

I thus departed from earth, feeling happy that I had done my duty and borne my cross, and might enter into the joys of my Father's house. I entered the spirit-world, but was not met by the rejoicing and bright angels I expected; by some friends, to be sure, but their countenances were sad and gloomy; there was evidently something on their minds. Instead of rejoicing and songs of praise, it was rather a gloomy and mournful greeting on my first entrance, and a sadness came over my soul. I asked, "How is this? Why should heaven seem so gloomy a place?" I said, "Friends, can you tell me the reason? There is no rejoicing, no gladness in your looks. You have some inward sorrow. Pray, convey me to Him whose cause I have served. Let me see the Saviour who died on the cross to redeem sinners. Give me something to repay me for all my labor."

One venerable-looking brother, whom I had known on earth, approached me solemnly, and, taking my hand, said, "Our life-teachings have been wrong. They have caused more mourning and shrinking from the approach of death than happiness, driving hundreds away by their asperity, who would have been glad to gaze beyond the veil of eternity." I asked, "Can it be possible that my whole life has been spent wrongly, that I lived an inharmonious life, that instead of doing God service, I have done evil toward my fellow-men?"

My soul was so troubled and cast down, that after pausing awhile, I said to that brother, "What shall I do to be saved?" He said, "When you shall see your errors, and be willing to go down and redeem the wrong you have done in the hearts which are there, then, and

not till then, will you begin your path of ascension, and by your labor blot out your sins by assisting others to blot out theirs."

And, my friends, as soon as I was made conscious of my error, I began my work. I gave up my narrow conceptions of the Deity. Groveling worm that I was, how little did I know of the majesty of God! I began earnestly and trustfully to cast away the chains that bound my soul. I began my labors. And, oh, yes, it was a labor, indeed; sufficient to wash away my many sins, when I shall have washed away the errors from those minds whose ignorance was made darker by my errors, and who might now have been farther advanced but for my teachings.

I am now ascending. I begin to see the beauties of the spirit-world, and the tears fill my eyes when I think what I might have been.

Friends! thank your God that you are free, and that you are on the road ahead, far in advance of many of the dwellers in the spirit-land.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE RECEPTION OF SPIRITUALISM.

A Vision.—*June 30, 1853.*

I SEE a great city in the distance ; a great, busy place. I see one man coming from that city. He looks old, yet is tall and erect, and his hair is gray. Under his arm he has a roll of paper. He is coming on some important business connected with this place. Some have gone out to meet him. To them he is unrolling his papers, and spreading them out before them. They have found something new there, and look incredulous. They shake their heads and turn away, yet their attention is arrested. They crowd up and look at the papers. They read them, pass an opinion upon them, and turn away. He has shown them what they are, and now his part is done. He therefore turns back to that city, but he leaves the papers behind him. With his back toward me he walks slowly along, in deep meditation, and with his arms folded. He is alone, and no one notices him. They are too earnestly engaged looking at his papers. Now a great crowd has assembled around them, and it is very much excited by something wonderful they have found in them.

Now they are passing them over their heads to their leaders, and spreading them before them, and asking

their opinion. If they receive them favorably, the crowd are willing to, but they want their sentiments first. I see some old men, with spectacles on, who are examining them. They go together in the corner of a large room, and pore over them. Some gather in groups and discuss them; some turn away impatiently, and walk up and down, gravely considering them.

Now I see some of the priests come up to examine them. One of them has found something objectionable. He declaims against it as unlawful. He says it will ruin the people; it will not do to let the people get hold of such doctrines. He is very much excited.

But another one of them is examining them all over very quietly. He has found something beautiful, and points it out to those standing near him. He says, That is a beautiful idea. It has never occurred to him before, and it is worth examining more closely.

Now one of the priests is approaching, so puffed up with pride and self-conceit he won't look at the papers, but turns away with a sneer.

Now some learned men are examining them. They say, Show us the philosophy of this thing, give us the laws which govern it, let us know the science of it.

Now they have all got into a wrangle about it; they dispute, and all talk together.

The crowd who first received it seem to have dropped it, and it is among the educated classes. They disagree about it; some of them want to keep it among themselves, while the crowd are waiting their opinion, and as soon as it is given they will consent, with some exceptions.

Now the papers begin to look large. How they are

spread out, and carried round, and commented on. Almost every one has a leaf or a copy. And spirits are standing by their side while they are reading them, though they can not see them.

There is very great excitement among the intellectual classes. They have all got hold of them.

And now approaches again the man who brought the papers. Crowds of people are going to him. They think he must know all about it. Some are inquiring of him, some are abusing him, calling him all sorts of names. Some shake hands with him, and yet are afraid people shall see them do so. But they seem to think so much of him. Yet he wears the same calm expression of countenance to all. He tells them there are the papers, just as they were given to him, and it is not his fault if they differ from their opinions. They must judge for themselves.

I see one man approaching him, who is very dark and repelling. He threatens him. He would annihilate him if he could, he talks so bitterly. Yet he sits calmly midst it all. Close by him stands a majestic spirit, who sustains and strengthens him. That causes him to look so firm. He loses none of his dignity or self-respect by any thing that dark one has said. He is neither awed nor overcome, but is sorrowful. I see the tear glisten in his eye, as he turns hopeless away.

That dark man is surrounded by a gloomy cloud. He has two or three others with him. He stands up higher than they; but they all feel the chilling influence of that dark cloud, but not with such force and fury as it works on him.

What a storm is raging around him who brought the

papers! There is such a dust and confusion around him that I can hardly see him. But he is not forsaken. There is something bright and shining right over him. The storm will not hurt him. He has six or seven people near him. How bad they feel! They are crying, and I see him no more, while the storm rages with more violence than ever.

But ah! now I see him again. There he is, right in the light! The storm has passed away, and he looks happy and pleased. He seems strong and young. Just see how beautiful every thing is since the storm has gone! how many green and beautiful things spring up all around him! The air is clear and balmy. A great many old things have tumbled into ruins, and every thing has a renewed and youthful look. Those who were near him now look so rejoiced. The storm has damaged them some, too, but it has done them good. Their countenances look clearer and better. He has gone through a great deal, but he has become purer, and looks like an infant. He is so spiritual. He is the image of a good man: serene, joyful, and happy. He was suffering in a good cause, and see what good has come of it.

Now all that excited crowd trouble him no more. He looks so beautiful, fresh, and new. The sun shines so brightly over him, and the birds sing so cheerfully around him.

And now he passes from my sight, in a cloud of glowing light. And so, dear friends, good-night.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DRUNKARD.

From Mrs. Hemans, *July 30, 1853.*

GENTLE FRIENDS :—In obedience to the dictates of wisdom and duty, which guide and control our movements here, I have just left the couch of a poor dying *drunkard*, with his bloated and diseased body still remaining upon it, but his spirit accompanies me. For many years previous to his decease have I watched his downward course, and it has deeply grieved my spirit to see how he repelled all the kindly admonitions of his spirit-friends (which they whispered to his heart), and drove them far from him by his evil course, which brought him into communion with spirits who hurried him along by their influence, and exerted over his mind an unlinited sway, hurrying him down to the grave, that his spirit might mingle with theirs in darkness and misery. And having been sent on an errand of mercy to his poor departing spirit, I would tell you of his experience, as it may convey to your minds the true position of those who thus leave the body. I see many spirit-friends waiting in the distance; their garments are white and pure, and their countenances would be beautiful, were it not for the expression of deep sorrow which I see painted thereon, for I perceive

they are near and dear relatives of this poor drunkard. But as light and darkness may not mingle, they can not approach him any more closely than they now are. But now, closer by him, appear more spirits, whose bearing and looks are very different from those which I have just described. They seem to exult with a sort of fiendish joy to see another companion added to their ranks. And now that the drunkard's spiritual sight is opened, and he sees the companions who have been so closely surrounding him daily and nightly by their loathsome presence, he turns away his head, he shuts his eyes, and shudders! It is fearful for him to look upon them in their full deformity of character. And now he is gazing about him, and wondering where he shall turn. He verily seems a great stranger here; he thinks of all the early lessons which were impressed upon his mind while a child; he remembers to have heard of a heaven and a hell; but still his ideas are very indistinct in regard to either, it having seemed more as a dream, or a lesson which he learned in childhood, only to be forgotten and neglected in the years of manhood! But now his heart dies within him, for he knows not where to turn. He wishes that heaven might be his destination, yet he is well aware of his unfitness to enter that bright place. And the other alternative seems to be *that* which causes him to shudder from head to foot, for all that presents itself on the other side is coupled with the name of hell. Oh, frightful thought! He thinks, "It can not be possible that I am to descend to that horrid place! Would to God I had changed my ways before coming here." And his mind seems strangely clear, and his memory

becomes wonderfully renewed, instantaneously as it were—and he reviews in a moment the whole of his past life, and bitterly exclaiming, “Fool that I was, to have been so blind!” he seems to give way to dark despair. Having given vent to the anguish of his feelings, he raises himself up, and gazes around. And behold! He is in a vast country. It is not the earth upon which he did live, but it bears a strong resemblance to it in many points of view. It is peopled by many different characters, who all appear to be interested in their different occupations; but still there seems to be no hand reached out to greet him. He would fain travel around and become acquainted; but something seems to stay his footsteps. He now sees what it is; he has been gazing on the pleasant side of the country, that which he would like to become an inhabitant of; but in turning himself around he discovers those repulsive, dusky persons who first annoyed him by their presence. He would fain turn away, but can not; they seem to command him to come among them, and mingle with them, as one of themselves. And upon comparing himself with them, to his sorrow and surprise he sees that he resembles them in manner and appearance much more than those on the other side. And he is compelled to walk among them, and see, and feel their situation. On his speaking of his desire to go in the other direction, they tell him with a derisive laugh that he is their guest, that they have long attended on him and administered to his wants and passions—that they have enjoyed over again the intoxicating drink which he partook of so plentifully in their presence—that they are yet slaves to the appetite

which had brought him there ; but without the same substantial means of gratifying it, and in seeing and aiding others they now took infinite delight. He was borne along as it seemed irresistibly, constantly coming in contact with those persons, in ways which were revolting to his nature, and still wishing to escape from the toils which seemed to encompass him. It appeared as though he had awaked from a long and painful dream, and that dream seemed to have begun when he was a child, and only to have ended with his life. And now the dark truth seemed surely about being realized. Oh, how unsightly and loathsome he appeared even to himself ! how misshapen and repulsive seemed his whole manner and bearing ! what a flood of darkness rolled over his soul as he sat and reflected ! “ Surely,” said he, “ it would have been better had I never been born.” When a voice at his side spoke gently to him and replied : “ It would have been better for thee, poor, misguided man, hadst thou but improved the talent which God implanted in thy soul, instead of giving reins to the ungoverned appetite of thy passions, which took away from thee the brightest and best days of thy earthly career, and has made thee unfit for the society of the good and pure, and a loathsome object to thyself, even among the vile. But look up, my brother man, thy despair is not so deep, nor thy condemnation so lasting, but that the waters of mercy and love may flow into thy heart, and redeem thee from the sink of iniquity into which thou hast fallen. The society by which thou art surrounded is vile ; but it is of their own making, and they would fain keep thee, or any other spirit, among them, whose propensities chime in with

theirs, to swell their ranks and augment their power of committing evil. Thou canst now see to what debasing society men subject themselves when following out only the animal instincts of their nature; thou canst now see why it is that some become so gross and repelling, that they appear as though a spark of goodness or the love of God had never entered their hearts. Oh ! such influences *will* repel all that is pure and good, and make of man but a mere animal, to wallow in the filth and mire, and then lie down and die, leaving naught behind to mark that he ever existed, but the memory of his evil doings; and these live with him after he has left the earth, as well as on the earth. A new life is now before thee, and it depends upon thyself whether thou wilt remain here, and partake of the works which thou seest, or whether thou wilt begin earnestly to labor, that thy mind, which is undeveloped as a child's, save in evil, may become filled with strength and knowledge, that thou mayest be able, and firm, to *leave* thy present company, if none will ascend with thee, for they still love the evil better than the good. And whenever thou wilt, thou mayest begin, humbly and patiently, and meekly, with the trust of a little child, to learn the path to heaven. Thy mind is now an unsightly scroll, having neither order nor conformity of action; but if thou dost earnestly desire it, thou wilt be assisted by a spirit whose duty it will be to teach thee how to become an apt scholar in the simple and beautiful path of knowledge and happiness; and unless thy mind is so inclined, my brother, unless thou dost make a mighty effort to hurl from thee and trample under foot those bad habits of thine, thou must still remain chained, as

it were, to darkness and despair, to unhappiness and evil. The long years which were wasted by thee while on earth, must now be atoned for by thy increased labor and diligence ; and the bad examples and the much unhappiness which thou hast caused, must also be atoned for by making amends for such actions here to thy fellow-spirits. Thy labor concerns not thyself alone, but thy time must be divided equally, by doing good around thee ; by dispensing the light which thou mayest receive to others, and by much entreaty and persuasion endeavor to bring those with thee in whose condition thou art so able to sympathize, for many will listen to thy voice as coming up from the well of true repentance and practical atonement for a life of error, for according to every evil done in the body shalt thou make atonement by doing that which is good and seemly in the sight of Heaven. And when thy heart has become purified of its corruptions and defilements, and when thou hast cast aside the dark coverings of thy worldly nature, and when the long-buried energies of the soul shall shine forth strong and brilliant amid the surrounding darkness, then shalt thou face the pure light of love. And holy joy shall flow into thy soul from the everlasting fountain of God's mercy ; and thy friends, whose love ever reached after thee (but could not approach thee, because of thy darkness and guilt), will draw near to thee with sweet smiles and loving words, and they will take thee by the hand, and they will lead thee away up that illuminated path, whose light so gloriously strikes on thy vision even in the distance ; and then shalt thou in that place be greeted by those whose robes have become pure and spotless,

and whose countenances have become dazzling with the light and the glory in which they abide, and they shall say unto thee, ‘Well done, good and faithful brother, for thy labor hath purified thee from the grossness of earth, and now thou mayest come up higher.’”

And so, after long years of suffering and labor for past misdeeds, he fades from the sight, while ascending, by a light and pleasant path which leads up that eternal hill to which I can perceive no summit, but is ever ascending, ascending, until he is lost amid the glory of the stars.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE ORGAN BOY.

August, 1853.

How chilly it is to-night! I'm so hungry. I wonder if that fine lady wouldn't give me a piece of bread! How cold it is, and how the wind blows! If I could get into a corner somewhere. If I only was at home. This heavy old organ tires me so, dragging it about the streets all day. When I get home, I'm so tired I want to lay down and die. I don't know as I need play any longer. No one notices me. They haven't given me a penny. I've traveled the streets since early dawn, and not a penny to buy a meal. I must go to my miserable home, to my dark hovel and bed of rags, with nothing but my organ for a pillow. It is very cheerless to lead such a life, and yet I love that old organ. When my father died, it was all the inheritance he left for his lonely son, his poor neglected boy, as he called me; and he prayed that the light of prosperity might shine on my head to light up my path, his had been so dark and gloomy. And when he passed from earth he spoke of the prospect beyond the grave as a happy relief from all his sufferings and sorrow, his wants and wretchedness. Poor, dear father! What a kind, affectionate heart he had! He loved me, and besides me loved only one thing—this poor old organ.

Ever since I've been wandering, striving to catch the attention of lovers of sweet sounds by the tones of the dear old organ. Sometimes they laugh at me, and sometimes they cuff me. Happy little children! there are so few of them that notice me. I love it too, for it's the only companion I've had since he left. Its tones grow faint at times, as if it was holding communion with me when troubles grow thick upon me, when want stares me in the face, when I've not even a crust of bread to keep me from starving. It seemed as if its old tones pealed out in sympathy with my sorrows.

What a curious world this is! See that splendid carriage roll along! Its occupants seem very happy, regardless of the sufferings of others, and intent only on their own enjoyment. And when I look at them I think it may be right. I love all beautiful things. I love many things, so many I dare not tell what, but above all, good music. Sometimes when the church doors are open for the gay throng, I creep in and listen to the glorious notes pealed forth from that grand organ. I hide in a dark corner, and drink in the sweet sounds, and forget I am hungry and ragged, poor and forsaken. Then my soul seems so large, so tall, so straight. It goes up, up, forgetting every thing beneath, and carried far away by that sweet music.

Then, by and by, the sexton finds me, and kicks me and cuffs me and turns me out, and I feel so wretched. It's a curious world. I love music as much as those grand people, though I am so ignorant and coarse; yet I love many beautiful things, and love them so much.

But I've such a shocking pain in my side, and a sharp

and hollow cough. Sometimes I raise blood, and I'm too poor to employ a doctor. What shall I do when no longer able to walk the streets or creep into that grand building to hear that sweet music? I grow daily weaker and more feeble.

[Here there was a pause, during which Mrs. S. went through the death scene. When she began again to speak it was in a whisper.]

It's very dark. Is it night? I've been dreaming. I thought I heard father's voice calling me. There 'tis again. Now it's getting a little lighter. But my father can't be here!

What a curious-looking place is this! How strange! I see some one yonder that looks like my father. That pain is all gone, and I don't cough any more. Where's the old organ? That's gone to. Where am I? Oh, father! He says I've been dying, and am alive again in another world. It begins to look light. How well you do look! They use you here better, don't they! You are not a bit ragged. Do you get enough to eat? Do they kick and cuff you about here? Do they play on organs here? Yes, he says, as much as I like. It all looks so strange. I don't know which way to go. I should soon lose my way. Why, you look so different! I stand up straight, my lungs are sound; then you look so well, father, so clean and healthy. He is laughing at me, to think I am so surprised.

This is a curious-looking spirit-world. He is going to take me away up, to strip me of every thing not in keeping with this place. He is going to give me new garments, and place me in a beautiful house where there is a grand organ to play on. I'm so happy; I'm

glad I died. I'm so glad, I feel so well. The people all look so well, more alike than they did on earth; they look pleasant, and don't kick me and cuff me. Well, I am going with you, dear father! I am so glad he is so well situated. I don't see into it. I don't understand it. I've heard of heaven, but this ain't it; but it's a very good place. He says, I've got to begin to learn what I ought to have learned on earth. He says my native talent for music being great, it never had sufficient unfolding while on earth, but now I shall be introduced to the society of the great musicians who have long since passed away, and I may become as accomplished as they, and in time become one of those harmonious spirits who shall wield a great power through the hearts of angels and men.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE MAN OF EASE AND FASHION.

Friday, *September 16, 1853.*

THIS evening the circle met, and then, through Mrs. Sweet, it was said:—

This is a jolly sort of a world any way, but I'm tired to death. I don't know what to do with myself. I've traveled all over the world, searched out every object of interest, gone into every nook and corner, and now I have returned home. It is a dull and tedious world to live in. I hate reading, poring over your dry, musty books; trashy novels are worse yet. I'm tired of smoking. My constitution is worn out, and I can't stand strong drink. There is nothing here fit to eat; confound 'em! Why don't they have decent cooks here? Nothing tastes good. Well, it is a weary world. I wonder what a man was made for! I've plenty of time and money, and my friends say, "Why don't you enjoy yourself?"

Those devilish horses like to have broke my neck the other day. Well, I'm becoming more and more disgusted with the world every day. Then what'll become of a fellow when he dies? Never mind, I ain't a going to die yet.

They say I ought to take a wife; that would be only a slight change. But women are such insipid toys,

men-trifling little dolls, they must be complimented and praised forever or they are pouting and looking so dismal. I shan't get married. I think more of my horses and dogs than of a wife, a damned sight.

Where shall I travel to? I've been to Paris, and London, and all the big cities, and danced and waltzed and done every thing a fashionable young man should do, and a little more.

I just happen to think that while I was in Italy, walking along one day quite discontented, in a secluded street, I happened to meet a grave-looking personage, and I thought I'd speak to him, to while away the time, it was so confounded dull. We got to talking earnestly. He questioned me a good deal. I told him I felt life a stale sort of matter, and I'd about as lief step out; enjoyment had lost its meaning with me. Well, he asked me if I had ever done any good with my money, any thing that would lead to a good end? I said I thought I had, for I had spent a good deal in my day. He asked me what I was living for, and upon my soul I couldn't tell him. That set me to thinking mighty strong. He asked me if I had any ideas of a state after death? Such questions always made me uncomfortable. Father's servants were never permitted to talk to his children of such things as death, or the soul after death. That subject was never introduced into our family. Any thing gloomy or unpleasant was strictly forbidden, as depriving us of part of the enjoyment of our lives as children. So if any of our friends or the servants were taken sick and died, it was only whispered in the family, and none allowed to speak of it openly. And when I went to church in the family

carriage, our minister preached us pleasant stories, glowing descriptions of heaven. He sometimes spoke of the wicked and their punishment; but we knew nothing about such things; and didn't consider we had any thing to do with that part of the discourse. Then, sometimes, the minister rode home and dined with us. He would make a beautiful prayer; and on parting he would pat us on the head and tell us to obey our father and mother who were such good Christians, and one of these days, when we became men and women, we should follow their example and be a bright and shining light to all around us. So, after a while, our parents died. I felt bad—very sorry; I couldn't bear to look at 'em, and I didn't, nor think of 'em. We'd never been allowed to think of the dead, and so we forget 'em soon as possible.

Well, when I left college I started with a large fortune, plenty of time, youth, and health, but not much of an education, for our teachers overlooked my faults, for I had wealthy parents, and they didn't like to be too severe.

I've been wandering ever since from place to place in search of enjoyment. At first I did enjoy every thing vastly; but really I don't know why, but I don't enjoy any thing now; I'm just tired of life, and that's all. Gambling was once a great source of enjoyment, a fierce sort of pleasure; I used to feel almost frenzied sometimes while engaged in it, but it got to be an old thing, like every thing else.

I really think I'm getting out of health; I'm not half so strong as I was. My appetite is poor; the doctor says I must take exercise, and I'm too weak to do

it, that's the fact of the matter. It jars my nerves. I feel best when reclining in an easy chair or soft settee. I drive out occasionally, but the air affects me considerably. I don't know of one resource to relieve the monotony of my dull and tasteless existence. I thought I had friends; but the fools—they are not willing to sit with an invalid. They want excitement as I used to, and that's now distasteful to me.

Now I'm all alone, with that cross old nurse, and that stern old doctor with his nasty, poisonous drugs. I'm becoming very feeble. My lawyer visited me the other day. I think of making my will; I can hardly stand. My limbs are so trembling that they refuse to support me.

I don't know who to leave my money to. I've plenty of poor relations; but they'll only spend it. They are vulgar people, and don't know how to use it. I guess I'll leave it to the Club; there are some noble fellows there, and they will appreciate it. How my eyesight fails me!—yet I'm young—not yet forty.

I don't see why I should be so weak; I haven't done any labor; I've lived an easy life. What has worn out my constitution? The doctor says it is extreme debility, want of muscular energy. Strange one of my age should be worn out already!

Doctor, you know that old nurse the other day talked of sending for a minister. What could I do with one? I've never done any thing bad. I don't want to be shrived for my sins. If the minister could restore my lost health! But he would only make long prayers, and ask me to remember his church in my will. I won't see 'em; I'm gloomy enough now—if it's time

for me to pass away, it's just as well without a minister as with.

Here Mrs. S. went through the death-scene, during which he muttered a prayer for forgiveness of his sins, and then she added :—

Is that my body? Pagh! I've left that; it seems I've died. I've left that world and waked up in another. After all, I am right by my body here. I don't want to leave it. I don't know where to go; I'd like to get up above it if I could, but I can't. Strange! I see people around it fixing it. They don't see me. Up above there is another kind of people. Down there they don't seem to be much. They're beckoning me to come up to them. I see people above me and I'll try to go to them; but I seem very heavy, not adapted to walking on air; yet I'm afraid to go away from my body, for I don't know where I'm going. There is no sympathy or companionship below, and beyond all seems uncertainty. It's very disagreeable traveling when one takes one step and don't know where the next is going to be. I can't see clearly. As I leave my body in the distance I seem to be going into a different atmosphere; still, it's not clear, not light—very dim and uncertain. They are still beckoning to me. I should like to go there.

Here are some people approaching me; they're strangers I never saw before, very common-looking people. I think I won't speak to them. They're coming right up to me. They tell me they will lead me to the place prepared for me. Very singular—a place prepared for me, and I know nothing about it; I now remember what the minister used to say of the glories

of heaven. It's there they are going to lead me. I think they might send some more intelligent, genteel guides; however, I presume I'll find it all right—and apartments furnished sumptuously, and servants perfectly drilled, and the cooking of exquisite order. I really feel quite elated. I'll accept the services of these common people; perhaps they couldn't spare their better servants to come such a distance. I deserve a place in heaven I know. I never murdered nor robbed, but I did two or three things not quite right, but they overlooked such things on earth, and why won't they here? Shall I meet that female here? But I've no idea she can enter such a place. The child died long ago; and so it is quite forgotten now. Still it makes me feel unpleasant and hesitate: but among refined people it is only a youthful folly. I'll not trouble myself about it.

Strange, those people don't address me. They seem waiting for me; but I suppose they are diffident, so I'll speak first. "Well, friends, are you waiting for me? Are you sent to conduct me to that beautiful place called heaven?" They're not waiting for me. What does that mean? Have I been deceived? Is there no such place as heaven? No such beautiful place as the minister used to talk about? Yes; then why not do your duty, and lead me straight there? They tell me I must go another way. Are you not servants? No. And you are to be my companions? That's a mistake. Can you lead me to my friends who must be waiting to receive me? My father and mother must be inhabitants of heaven, for they were bright and shining Christians. My brothers, and sis-

ters, and other relatives must be in this vast country somewhere. I'm not accustomed to such treatment as this.

They stand and look at me, and make no reply ; strange, I don't understand it. Is it possible I am to have no other companion but these common, though coarse people, yet they look honest and friendly ; but I can't associate with them. Their manner of living must be so coarse. One asks me to listen to him. Very well, but speak quickly, for I'm weary of this long delay, of this gloomy place, which is not half so good as earth.

He tells me they are sent to instruct me. Preposterous ! These coarse people sent to teach me !

He tells me my life has been very worthless—devoid of usefulness to myself or my fellow-creatures. My course was altogether idle and profitless, and pregnant with sin and folly—a life which brought me down to this level here, and beneath the rudest and most unrefined of God's creatures. Can this be so ?

He tells me there is no heaven for me until I earn it by the sweat of my brow, that is, with the labor of mind, that not one step can I ascend only by the greatest amount of self-denial, of labor, of humility and love to all below me, and a feeling of equality, and a wish for instruction, that I may progress out of my ignorance and moral deformity. Oh ! can that be so ? Am I ignorant—indeed ignorant ?

He tells me I must begin as a little child, and learn the first lessons of wisdom ; must climb step by step, purifying and expanding my inner being, until I shall attain to the level of these minds, which are intelli-

gent and improved by the knowledge of this country. Oh! what a dreadful weary task it must be? How shall I begin? I never was able to perform labor. It is not such labor, he says, that will be required of me, but of a kind that will act on my spiritual body and my spirit itself. Now, he says, my spiritual body is unseemly and deformed by the imperfections of my former character. He says I could not mingle with those who are soaring above me, who look so light and clear in the distance. My body partakes of the color of my mind, and that is very dark and unseemly. How very new all this seems to me! And I must begin to study, to labor, to live and mingle with these coarse people. I must begin down here.

Yet they seem very kind, and reproach me with pitying looks; they take me by the hand—say they will help me. They tell me my mind is all a blank, and is capable of having beautiful characters of virtue, and love, and long-suffering, and gentle persuasion, and heavenly aspirations written on its tablets. Oh! they weep for me and pity me; can it be I deserve their pity? Yes, their sympathizing tears seem so much more welcome to me now than the deceitful smiles of my earthly friends. Yes, I must cast aside the stubborn pride and feeling of superiority and dignity, so long the ruling characteristic of my being. I must humble myself, and begin on my humble knees to learn wisdom as a child. And now, when I signify my willingness to be taught by them, how kindly they speak to me! How could I think them so coarse! Their language is, to be sure, plain and simple, but pure in tone; their faces show an intelligence I did not

before discover. There is about them a certain dignity, an air of self-possession, of firmness in all their movements, which seems to endow them with strength, to beautify their faces, to make their actions gentle, their words soft and kind. Oh, I was mistaken in their appearance. Now I feel how superior they are to me; yet I do not judge 'em so much by appearance as by words and gestures, their actions, all their movements. What is it that makes these common-looking people seem so harmoniously blending with grace, and look so gentle and dignified even in their coarse apparel and in their rugged-looking country? There is some mystery about it I don't understand.

Now a female speaks to me, and her tones are soft and low. She says: "Brother, persevere; begin your labor with a cheerful heart; give away all the sins and follies of your past life by killing the remembrance of them here by good works; and when you shall have become strong and manly in your development of mind; when you shall have indeed become a true man, fit to take your place in the spheres of wisdom as an individual spirit, then shall great strength and power be given you; then shall bright and shining attendants take you by the hand, and with heavenly instruction cause your face to shine with knowledge, and wisdom, and pure love.

"Then shall you be fit to enter that celestial land called heaven, where all is pure and holy, where the very atmosphere is laden with the whispers of love and of joy from the hearts of angels, who, ranging in their eternal course through the illimitable space of worlds, are glorifying God in their songs of joy and holiness."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SELF-SATISFIED.

October 16, 1853.

At a meeting of the circle, through Mrs. Sweet, the following manifestation was made:—

Friends, I would like to give you the first experience of a man in the spirit-world, who left the form satisfied with himself, satisfied with his prospects of heaven, satisfied that his life and actions had entitled him to the fairest seat in the land of gladness. He lived a smooth and pleasant life, in conformity with all the forms and ceremonies required of him by the church where he paid his weekly worship. He gave alms to the poor, assisted the needy, upheld with his means all societies which seemed to be of a goodly character. Thus he lived a pleasant and easy life, in anticipation of a pleasant and easy entrance into the heaven which his mind had dwelt upon as the incarnation of every thing beautiful and holy.

Having passed the shadowy gates of death, he supposed he should be at once taken on high, and he stood waiting for some one to accompany him there. He was approached by one whose countenance showed deep thought, high resolves, and mighty attainments. By him he was welcomed and led upward, till they came to a strange-looking country, and he asked his compan-

ion why it was that it should look so uncultivated? It seemed to be a beautiful land, abounding in hills and dales, and with diversity of scenery; but there was a rough look, a want of cultivation apparent. Its inhabitants seemed honest and industrious, but they bore the same rough, unfinished appearance; and he asked why every thing was so crude? His companion said he would soon explain it, but that was to be his home—he would become an inhabitant there. “But,” he added, “let us hasten on, I have much to show and tell you; but when thou shalt return from our journey, thou wilt see the propriety of what I have said.”

So they continued their journey to countries smoother and more highly cultivated.

After a great length of time apparently to the stranger—for he was made to see the distance with mortal senses—they arrived at a beautiful city. “Now, indeed,” thought the stranger, “I have found heaven. What a glorious place it is!” He was led around and through the city. What grandeur and sublimity everywhere met his eye! How perfect and uniform every thing was! Spirit-hands alone could form it. Behold, how beautiful the trees! how inviting their shade! how grateful their color! He begged to stop and lie down in that shade that he might enjoy the happiness that everywhere invited the weary traveler to repose of mind and body. But his companion led him on. And he gazed up into the sky, where clear and beautiful seemed the pure vault studded with stars shining like gems of rare brilliancy. There was such an air of repose, of heavenly calm resting on all things, he fain would have tarried to enjoy its beauty.

They arrived at a land where the broad and beautiful streams were dancing in the moonlight, and where there seemed to be sounds of music and of joy constantly wafted from their ripple. How gloriously bright was every thing there ! A soft, silvery atmosphere seemed to pervade it, clothing it in a mellow and heavenly beauty, yet bright and clear as though bathed in the light of the noonday sun. Presently his ear caught the sound of soft and gentle music. How softly it fell on his senses, and lulled his passions to rest ; by its purity elevating his soul to a communion with worlds yet unknown beyond the stars, to a communion with something still higher, the great Fountain of purity and light, the Center of love, that great Divinity which fills the universe !

Then he indeed began to feel as though he was an unfit inhabitant for that lovely place. He was approached by several spirits. They gazed kindly upon him, yet as if he was a stranger. They did not seem to recognize him as one of themselves, and he moved along with a lonely feeling. He noticed that all seemed intent on some purpose, or were busy in some errand of usefulness for their fellow-beings. He seemed the only idle one. He saw, also, that they were clothed in bright and flowing garments, which seemed to float around them as with a flood of light, but which did not encumber their progress, seeming to be a part of themselves, and making up the form of the spirit. How expressive were their looks, and with how many different emotions !

As the stranger passed along with his companion, he said to himself, " This is truly a more elevated heaven

than ever my weak imagination could paint ; it is ten thousand times more beautiful than my soul ever conceived. Yet it is no place for me. I look so coarse, so unlike every one here, that my soul shrinks within itself, nor wishes to mingle where all seems to bear the impress of wisdom and elevation far beyond me. Can it be that I am not prepared for heaven? How sad it makes me feel ! I thought there was prepared for me a mansion in the heavens. But the more I gaze about me, the more I feel my unfitness to mingle with the bright throng—to inhabit this bright land. My soul seems very small. Its coarseness appalls me, and seems to shut me out from all these vast and glorious scenes. It can not surely be that those who inhabit here ever possessed souls so narrow as mine. They must be from other planets, from other worlds, where wisdom has developed them. Their countenances are so beautiful, so highly exalted in expression—their tones are so mild, and yet soft as music, they seem to penetrate my soul like angels' voices. Their proportions are so perfect, their motions so graceful and easy ! Oh ! take me back ! Take me away from this glorious world, with my dark, gross body, back to that rough country. I feel I belong no part or parcel with these glorious beings, whose beauty sheds light on all around. They can not mingle their beauty with my deformity. Their purity overshadows me, and mingles not with my grossness. Lead me away ; I am unfit for this place. I entered it with a proud and pleased and happy heart, for I had an idea that the beauties of heaven were to be enjoyed by me. How humbled I feel ! How unfit I know myself to be to tarry around these pure spirits !”

The spirit who had acted as his guide heard him in silence, and led him slowly back toward the country which was so rough and uncultivated, where, having arrived, the elder and more experienced spirit thus spake to his companion :—

“ My son—thou hast been permitted to see thyself as thou art. Thou canst judge, without being told, how suitable to thy spiritual development would be the country and companions thou hast been introduced to. Thou canst see to what a point of development thy spirit has reached in its upward aspirations after the pure and holy truth which comes from on high. Thy life and education, if they have not led thee into many great errors, have deprived thee of many great advantages. Thy soul has been merely taught to look up, as the heathen does to the Sun, to the Great Spirit, and ask protection, mercy, and forbearance. Thy prayer has been selfish in many respects. Thou hast prayed only for good to thyself, and to those who, as thou thoughtst, were like thyself. Thou hast gone through with forms and ceremonies in obedience to the law of man. Such puny laws never emanated from a higher source. His laws rule the universe, are illimitable, never ending, unceasing and glorious in all their searching and working. Beginning with time, they end but with eternity. But thy soul was taught to respect man’s puerile laws, to give heed to their teaching, and thou shutst out from it the bright and glorious revelation which is open to the inquiring and earnest heart of every seeker, who reaches up to seek it at its fount. Man’s spirit in all ages and nations hath ever mounted up, broken away from the conventionalities of

customs and laws, and has been gladdened by showers and streams of glowing light and beauty from the great Fountain itself. Canst thou not see where thou wert a sluggard, sleeping on a bed of roses—and while others were pointing thy way to heaven, thou foundst it an easy way? The good thou hast done shall be rewarded. No good thing is overlooked by the great Father, for goodness brings its own reward. Dost thou not feel how much of heaven thou hast lost by leading a sensuous material life—the life of a happy, contented Christian, as you called it. The mind of man should never be contented to remain stationary, but be ever grasping for higher and nobler things, ever untiring, for thus it will be ever advancing to attain some new idea. And now, my son, I see that thou art fully awake to thy true position, and have learned a profitable lesson, and I see high and holy resolves budding forth within thee. Had thy mind been opened before, had some impulse been given thy soul, how it might have grown in wisdom!

“This country is like thyself and thy companions. It possesses every attribute of beauty and usefulness, yet how rough it seems? Thou perceivest it has not been made useful. Every thing is in its first crude unpolished state. Even so is thy heart. Thy spiritual body is in just such a position. All around you have been taught the same lesson, and whether they have profited by it thou canst tell by their progress.

“And now thou mayest begin to develop the spiritual part of thy nature, which is so gross as to disgust even thyself. The beautiful country shown thee is indeed a heaven to those who dwell there, because their lives, the growth and development of their spirits, have raised

them to that sphere, and thou, likewise, must labor and progress as they have done, until thou shalt attain to gifts which have become their heritage.

“Think not the glories and joys of heaven are but formed to please the sensuous eye of man, to feed his appetite for ease and comfort. Think not that the life of the pure and good is spent only in praying and praising God. Oh, no! The beatified and purified spirit is one continual prayer, a never-ending adoration of the majesty of the Most High; but there are other duties and objects. The immortal soul has other work than singing and praying forever. It has a grand labor to perform, which begins with its entrance to the spirit-world, carries it from one stage of progress and perfection to another, until it becomes pure and beautiful, and divested of all earthly grossness and passion, and approaches nearer the great Center of light and universal love.

“Oh! it is a mysterious and glorious life which the immortal spirit enters on when freed from its earthly body!”

And now, what grand and beautiful thoughts arose in the mind of that spirit! He exclaimed: “Oh! my life was indeed a short dream, even a dream without one pleasant vision, save a heaven of ease. But now I begin to realize I am indeed an immortal soul, one who, by his own efforts, must rise, learn, walk, labor, and work out his own salvation. I now feel that I have indeed an inheritance in the skies, incorruptible, which will be mine, but I must labor to attain it.

“How pleasant will seem that labor, and how thankful my heart feels even now, that I am not obliged to

minge with the dark and unprogressive minds that annoyed me on earth! I have great duties to perform, great lessons to learn. Oh! what a field there is before me—what a land of promise, glowing with immortal light, immortal reward, and a glorious certainty of attaining what I labor for. Could I return, I would speak in tones of thunder to earth. I would bid them throw off the shackles which have so long bound them to earth as beasts of burden. I would bid them soar with me into realms of space and light, to be free and glad in their boundless liberty, and laugh with joy as little children, because of their new-found happiness.

“Oh, heaven is near, and yet far away. It is in the human heart, where light from heaven flows, but the actual heaven is far distant from this gross and darkened body of sense and matter, as far off in its majesty and purity and glory from sight, as the farthest star the eye can see—the farthest flight of imagination. Purify yourselves then, prepare to enjoy that beautiful country, and your lives shall be an unending hymn of thankfulness and joy to your Father in heaven.”

CHAPTER XXX.

NATURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUL.

October 15, 1853.

CHAINLESS and free as the bird when sailing through air should be the human soul, that like the bird it may alight in the deep valleys and mysterious places of nature, which are known but to few; and, then, having gazed upon the things beneath, it may soar away beyond, and rest its weary but anxious wings upon the highest mountain, and there take in with a full sense of enjoyment, the glorious scene before it. But the soul of man, unlike the bird, is destined to become a seeker after the things concerning its immortal destiny, which his spirit may not always be able to grasp while here. And why should this be so? Is the soul composed of materials like unto the body, liable to disorganization and decay? Is it only placed upon earth to be governed and molded by like minds that have preceded its birth? And must it be permitted to attain just so high a stature and then remain stationary? Or, is it composed of such gross and common-place materials as to be able to ascend no farther in its aspirations than the path that has been well marked out and trodden down by those who existed ages ago? Or, are we to suppose that the great Deity, in his wisdom, and

in contradiction to his natural laws, poured out his spirit in other days more abundantly, and refined men's souls more quickly, than now? Have we, indeed, cultivated all the revealed wisdom which has been manifested since the beginning? And does the human race become grosser, and less refined, or spiritualized, in its development, both physically and mentally, than it did in former years? If so, then would this world present a very different appearance. Instead of the active, progressive principle which is ever urging you onward and upward to excel each other in every thing, you would be a nation of sluggards, content to have your worship measured out to you, to be performed in proper quantities, and then, like poor slaves, having performed your duties, you would retire, feeling that this is all which is required of you as men and Christians, for the welfare of your immortal souls.

But the enlightened mind now turns with uneasiness and disgust from such senseless ceremonies. It refuses to be led by one mind to a certain point, and then to be commanded to retire, saying "thus far shalt thou go and no farther"—but it will penetrate farther? It will not rest in its spiritual darkness, gazing only upon the things which have become old, and stale, and wearisome, from continued repetition. It wants something more. It is becoming so refined in its progressive state of activity, that it reaches beyond the established rules, which hitherto have been its guide.

And with this longing—this deep aspiration after a greater knowledge of the inner laws which control the being of man, begins an expansion—weak and fluttering at first—trembling as though afraid to tread on forbid-

den ground, and yet how eager becomes the soul, as every new glimpse of light flashes upon its astonished vision. And presently the soul becomes stronger—more firm in its purpose—more bold in its demands; the flickering views which it has already received, now propel it with great rapidity.

Now, how beautiful appears that immortal soul, emerging from its narrow cell—its prison-like limits. It dares to look above its fellow-companions, and is often rebuked because of its temerity, but light becomes so sweet and satisfying to the expanding soul that it is not to be turned aside? And behold the glorious land which is opened to its view. No narrow conceptions—no limited ideas—no bounds in thought can be set upon its progress now; and, as a delighted child, it wanders hither and thither, constantly drinking deep thoughts from the fountain of love and harmony, because *that* soul now harmonizes with all the harmonious workings of nature around it—because the knee need not be bowed in shame and humility, to thank the great First Cause for his loving kindness. The heart is drawn out and expanded with a natural worship—a heartfelt prayer—because it realizes, in part, the glory of its Maker, and love upon which it exists; and all the earth seems as a paradise to the untrammelled soul in its first joyous feeling of liberty and life.

And the sky seems like one broad arch of glory, whereon is reflected the love of the Father upon his children, and naught seems dark or dreary but the human soul, for here wretchedness, vice, selfishness, and pride, go hand-in-hand to destroy their victims; and here is seen the folly of men's laws!

Here may be seen the great point of man's development, when giving strict and impartial justice to his fellow-men—for here, one who had never gazed before, would think God forever smiled on one part of his children, and condemned the other part to endless misery and wretchedness, so different do their paths and pursuits appear. What a clashing and jarring of interests on one side, and want on the other! The rich man desires to be rich still—and why should he not? for it insures him luxury and ease; but the poor man desires to be rich—and why should he not? for his life seems one long day of toil, and his moments of rest are scarce sufficient to recruit the wants of worn-out nature. He asks for physical comfort; spiritual consolation is not the food which he is daily working for; he must needs drudge on, to supply the wants which will not be denied, so long as life is sustained; and *he* is not in a natural position to follow out the great end and aim of his destiny.

The people being so unequally divided as regards temporal advantages, must also continue, in like manner, unequally enlightened in a spiritual direction, until there are many vast changes in the state of society; and this will not be brought about until the eyes of those are opened widely to their position who enjoy time and opportunity to acquire new knowledge. And when some great souls have been waked up from their long dream of indolence and ease, to a right sense of their true responsibility, they will be up and doing. They will lay down great principles; they will create a grand platform upon which these principles of equality and fraternity must be firmly established; and they

will make man to see how degraded is his position, as an immortal soul—as an individual, whose birthright is as secure and indispensable to his heaven-born inheritance, as that of the reputed noblest in the land—first in a temporal, and then in a spiritual point of view. For, how can his spirit ever mount beyond its little abode here, while crushed by privation and want? The temporal state of mankind is their greatest barrier against their spiritual development, and let them but be shown how they may improve their condition—or how their lives may become pleasanter and better—let them be made acquainted with the great laws of equality, which should govern the human family, and they will join together, heart and hand, to advance the cause. They will soon lose their air and mien of servants, and all will become as brethren, standing on one broad platform, open alike to the interests of all! And when their temporal condition is thus made more natural, and the burdens of life are more lightly to be borne, then will the soul of the multitude ask for more refined clements.

Then their spiritual nature will begin to assume its high prerogative; and charity, and love, and justice, and mercy shall so expand their souls, that they will be able to walk in the paths of wisdom and usefulness, guiding and directing each other to become true men and women.

Verily, the world assumes a very pleasant appearance, when viewed through glad and contented eyes. Only develop the human soul—only start it in the path of progression, that it may lay hold on truth wherever found—that it may become firm and strong, and then

how rapidly it rises above its first lowly position! How it is enabled to look down and contemplate men and things as they are, not as they should be, and it is forever seeking how it may aid others to travel in the same broad path, which has opened so many glorious visions of present enjoyment and future happiness to every seeker whose heart asks for light from on high.

Then let those who have spiritual gifts use them, where spiritual gifts are needed—and those who have temporal gifts apply them also to the lifting up of their fellow-man, for verily, every one will have to give an account of his talent, and every talent may be applied to a different use, all varied, but still useful and harmonious.

CHAPTER XXXI.

VOLTAIRE AND WOLSEY.

Thursday, *October 27, 1853.*

THIS evening the spirits said :—

We wish to try an experiment, that is, to impress both Judge Edmonds and Mrs. Sweet together, and to teach by a dialogue.

The spirits will be Voltaire by Mrs. S., and Cardinal Wolsey by the Judge.

After a little while—

VOLTAIRE said : What a vast revolution has taken place in the opinions of men since I was a resident of earth !

WOLSEY.—Yes, the infidelity with which you were charged while here, has since then grown immensely among men. It is not now so pretentious as it was then, but it is deeper and wider spread, and, unless arrested, will sink mankind into deeper materialism than has been known for ages.

VOLTAIRE.—Infidelity to what and to whom ? to the law of man or of God ? Dost thou pretend to censure the infidelity of my soul, which could not bow to the narrow creeds and sectarian prejudices of the minds around me ? Dost thou say I was an infidel, because I dared to speak the immortal truth which beamed in upon my soul, darkened as it was with gross materi-

ality? But still it was immortal truth, and possessed the very essence of the God-like divinity. My soul required a larger, a more extended plane of thought, a more unbounded field of knowledge than the teaching of man could supply. Yea, my darkened soul hungered for light.

WOLSEY.—I spoke of the infidelity with which you were *charged*, and, alas! you know the charge yet lives in many minds. But I meant not to censure, but only to lament; for with minds like yours, such unbelief as yours in the teachings of the day, material as they were and of man's invention, might work no injury; but the same cause which operated on your mind operated on others too weak and feeble to see the great results at which you arrived. And while with you infidelity may have been but a disbelief in the dogmas of man, in others it was a disbelief in the existence of a God and the eternal existence of man; and it is that which has spread with such alarming prevalence throughout the world, that a vast majority of the civilized part of it, disgusted with the teachings which you repelled, have learned to doubt that there was any existence for man but on this earth. And these dogmas have, day by day, been sinking man deeper and deeper into the love of this world alone, and hence have been engendered selfishness and strife among men, until they are, indeed, unlike what they were designed to be by their great Creator. The cause—the cause of this is the great inquiry? for when that shall be ascertained, the remedy will be comparatively easy. What say you—for you know—is that cause?

VOLTAIRE.—My opinions, as given to the world dur-

ing my lifetime, are, indeed, tinctured with a spirit of bitterness and controversy; but while giving those opinions, please to remember that my mind was tortured, as it were, by an internal warfare. I looked upon mankind as being beneath me in intellect and discernment. I looked upon them as puppets, who might be led by any strong mind that might please to control them, and the spirit of combativeness was aroused within me that such elements should exist in the mind of man, and he still be called an immortal being. What! such man a part of the divinity destined to exist forever? and yet how puny he seemed when compared with the great First Cause from which he pretended to have sprung!

I grant, my opinions may have done some injury in some cases, but I am convinced they did much more good. They aroused the souls of many men from their cringing, low position. They broke the trammels and let loose upon the wing of thought many an aspiring soul. But my soul in its range became lost also. Instead of making the nice distinction which I might have done if the spirit part of my nature had been developed as well as the material, I mixed them indiscriminately, and thus lost sight of the object I had in view, and thought in my battle with the world that there was no hereafter, while I wished only to be convinced that there surely was. But the spirit in which I pursued my researches sent me back empty-handed and more strongly girded about with the infidelity of which you speak. And my life was spent, not so much in striving to defeat the good which might be done by the Christian religion, as in battling their foolish opinions

and blind credulity. Even I, with all my infidelity, could, upon the basis of my belief, mount far above them, ay, beyond their very vision, and see the glorious world revealed in the face of nature and the wonderful revolutions of the earth. And I could be filled with a sense of awe and a feeling of unbounded liberty which they never experienced in their dark and cringing position.

I confess I do not regret the spread of my works, for I see far greater causes of evil, and baleful effects flowing from those causes, had there been no opposing principles to work in the great mass of mankind. They would not all bow; they would not all be slaves: and if that which I advocated gave them one exalted thought and enabled them to penetrate into the realms of knowledge, did it not open their eyes to see their true position? No, I do not regret to see my teachings, but I do regret that I lived so long on earth and became so little aware of what I might have been, of what I might have done, if I had been blessed with the light of Spiritualism, which has now dawned on the mind of man.

Unbelieving and uncertain I entered the spirit-world, repelling with my very presence every approach of light which might have shone on my darkened vision. It was the material part of my nature which was developed on earth. My spirit part was lost in my wanderings for light. It was shut up in the material part as in an iron cage. Defiant and proud I entered the spirit-world, not knowing, not caring to know, the hereafter I had so strenuously fought against while in the body. But let me make this confession. There was ever in

my soul a still small voice which would come from its deepest recesses, and would pierce away beyond the bounds of space and ask for light, and return dissatisfied and weary. It was a constant striving of the desire to know and the determination not to know. So my entrance there could not have been gladsome. Had not the opinions which I had spent my whole intellect and energies in propagating all come to naught as regards man's immortality? And I plainly saw if the soul was immortal, there must be a God, an immortal spirit, who ruled this vast and illimitable space which surrounded me.

How I traveled—incessantly traveled—and strove to convince myself that it was still a material world I lived on! How my spirit wrestled with the truth which was crushing me with such force! and I could not realize myself as a spirit, that I had left my mortal abode. There was none with whom I could claim companionship, for had I not denied every one of them's being immortal? There was no resting-place for me. I was ever restless, ever wandering and unsatisfied. My soul was dark and bitter within me, and I was as a maniac, without power to work out any design my mind might plan.

I say I entered the portals of the spirit-world proud and defiant. I was led away from the habitations of spirits and was taken into mighty space. I was permitted to gaze on the wonderful works of the spirits' abodes. To me they seemed indeed wonderful; and I was carried about with resistless force, and made to gaze until my soul became so filled with the sense of the magnificence and power which controlled these

mighty wonders, that I fain would have hid myself away in the clefts of the rocks, but I could not do so. I yearned for companionship, and longed to tell some one, how I had been misled, not by others, but by my own wild imaginings. I began to realize how insignificant I was in that great world of immortal spirits, and, finally, having become so weary, so humiliated, my proud spirit thoroughly humbled, I was allowed to associate with some of the inhabitants. And now I began to realize the position I had occupied on earth, and to see that which I should occupy in the spirit-world. And it was not a pleasant one, my friend.

A complete revolution, an entire change in my spirit-organization took place, and I became a delighted learner. My ideas being already expansive, how I progressed! My soul felt the warm and glowing love of God to light it up, to help its immortal graspings, and rapidly I became associated with the great and the good and the developed in wisdom in the spirit-world. I saw how great had been my mistake, and I felt how great must be the reparation which I must make to atone for all which I have said or done or lived, which would lead men's minds away from the right path. Glorious with the light of celestial wisdom and beauty are the lessons which I have learned, and far beyond all my soul could ever have conceived in this world has been the unfolding of the boundless store-house of wisdom and knowledge.

I have lived to look upon my earthly existence as a bitter warfare with the world and with my own spirit-nature. I have deeply regretted the opinions which I advocated, which were the means of leading any astray ;

but I also feel deeply and fervently grateful to the all-wise Creator that I was made an instrument even of controversy in the Christian world, that thus men's minds might be opened to a spirit of inquiry and progression.

The effects have not been so bad as the world believed them to be, but the causes which led to the many contentions and discussions will still exist until man's spirit has worked him out of the thralldom of blind opinion and blinder prejudice and unprogressive religion. The cause of Christianity must become infidel to its present opinions before the world can arrive at that state of free and enlightened wisdom which shall make every man a law unto himself.

WOLSEY.—I wonder not at your contempt of mankind as they were when you lived on earth, for they and their mental condition were the legitimate product of more than a thousand years of religious domination, and the extreme to which you were led, though not unnatural, was to be lamented, and it is that extreme which now so widely pervades the whole civilized world.

But the cause of it lies deeper than you have mentioned. I saw it among the religionists with whom I associated ; I saw it in the cloister and in the desk, and most among those whose minds were most enlarged by education and culture. It was this. The dogmas taught as religion were at war with the aspirations of our own souls, and with the workings of the laws of God as we saw them all around us. If we sent a searching thought deep into the recesses of our own souls, we found there—innate and existent—what shall

I call it? an aspiration, a belief, an instinctive feeling as it were, at war with that which we were taught as religion. If we sent our minds abroad, searching through the external universe, it returned to us laden with the conviction, that the operations and the laws of the Great First Cause were equally in conflict with it. And in proportion as we were able to make this internal or external search, as the mind by culture increased in the capacity to examine itself and the laws of nature and to understand them, we recognized, we felt the overpowering influence of the teachings thence derived, that the religion taught us could not, in many respects, be true. However earnestly we might have tried to believe, however obstinately we might have resolved that we would believe, however successful we might have thought ourselves in deceiving ourselves into the idea that we did believe, there was still lingering down deep in the inmost recesses of our souls the conviction that it was not so.

While that was the condition of the cultivated and the educated in your day and mine, so now it is the condition of vastly greater numbers, because now knowledge is more generally diffused among men, and with that knowledge has come now, as it came then, the extreme into which you fell—the denial of a God and a future existence for man. How welcome to us would have been the revelations now making to man! How welcome ought it now to be to man, for it guards him against that extreme, lifts him from the deep degradation of such unbelief, raises him from the mire of a material existence only, and opens to him a knowledge which will make indeed a new heaven and a new

earth : a new heaven, because spirits fitted for it will enter there—a new earth, because man, while upon it, will learn and execute the great purpose of his existence there. With that knowledge, his existence there will not be as it was with us, in vain in reference to the future.

It is indeed a happy day for mankind that is now dawning upon them, for they will be taught to feel and will feel, as you now do, the law of love, which has, to be sure, been often on the lips, but has found the heart too closely surrounded by materialism to be able to penetrate it. That barrier is now being destroyed. The great law of love will enter there, and will show itself forth in greater regard for the happiness of each other, in the suppression of that selfishness which has so long cast its dark pall over man's life on earth, and will teach men, by the best of all possible lessons, that of experience, to know how much he will add to his happiness even on earth, as well as his happiness hereafter. It will be no longer to him a mere sentiment written on the sand of the sea-shore, to be obliterated by the first wave which the storm of human passion may excite, but will be written on the heart in letters of fire, and will be indelible, because written with the finger of an Almighty hand.

We see this—we, who have lived on earth when it was darker and more selfish than now, because more ignorant of the high purposes of our creation; but the years that have rolled on have brought to us the knowledge that this is indeed a great reality—that there is a God, and that we are destined to live with him forever.

Oh, how our hearts have yearned to teach mankind

the lesson, the want of which we so deeply felt; the absence of which made our entrance here so sad, and left its impress for eternity, because it arrested the progress which is our destiny! How our hearts have yearned to open to them the reality of the holy communion of spirits, for we know that thus they too shall be elevated to a nearer approach to us, and through us to a nearer approach to their Creator! How our hearts now yearn to enable them to see the light which is now pouring in such glorious floods upon the world to dispel the darkness which has so long brooded over the minds of men, and to light them to a way to a life eternal in its duration and its happiness.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE CYNIC.

November, 10, 1853.

AT a meeting of the circle, Mrs. Sweet was influenced. She began by saying:—

“Well, Judge, you are the queerest man yet. That tickles me amazingly. They tell me you have turned preacher, or teacher, which is the same thing—and I thought I would come and have a talk with you about it.”

I asked, “Who are you?” “I am a man.” “What is your name?” “It isn’t Daniel Webster. But you would not know it, if I told you.

“According to your mode of reckoning time, I have been in the spirit-world about fifty years. I originally lived among the people called Puritans, and was brought up to conform strictly with all their creeds and notions of religious freedom. I was brought up among them, but did not always think with them. In my youth I was a straight-laced, sober-minded, long-faced, church-going member of the community. I thought there was no safety for me, or for any one, beyond the pale of that particular sect. I was constantly praying and laboring with all my might to convince others of the happiness they might find in doing as I did.

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“Now, it so happened that I was obliged to leave the scenes of my youth, and live in a large city. There I was thrown into many different kinds of society, and urged to visit one expounder of the truth after another, as models of purity and perfection in his way.

“When I had heard one, I was confident he could not be surpassed, till I tried the next; and then my whole soul would chime in with the splendid talents and exalted purity of the last I heard; and thus I went on, dazzled with one, delighted with another, charmed with a third, convinced by a fourth, confused by all, and not knowing which was the truth-teller, which was the liar, or which the one I ought to follow. It seemed as though my former ideas were all hashed up, and the new ones were so confused and contradictory that I knew not which way to turn. I thought where so many different teachers abounded, there must be some one right, but I was not able to select that one from among the many.

“I became very uneasy, I, who had before been so calm and tranquil, and so well satisfied, walking in my straight and narrow path. But my path grew narrower and was blocked up after hearing such a variety of opinions, and finally disappeared from view when I began to separate my thoughts one from another, and get my ideas in shape.

“This state of mind lasted some time, creating a conflict neither pleasant nor profitable to my peace.

“At length I came to the conclusion that I would discard every opinion and form my own, and I marked out my own course. I determined to see for myself whether there was within me any true, unerring guide

to lead me right; for I reasoned: If I am a spark of intelligence emanating from God, the Great Sun and Center of all Intelligence, is there not within me enough to show the light by which to travel back to the source whence I sprung? and I said, I'll try. I'll wait and seek, and if the Bible, which I have so much and devoutly revered in early years, is not a vain and empty fable, I will knock, and it will be opened to me. I was not mistaken; gradually light broke in on my firm-bound soul. It was so new and strange that it frightened me, even though coming in little flashes. I would sometimes start back affrighted when receiving an answer to my inmost thoughts, and I was led to ponder deeply and alone. Not alone, as I now find, for I had bright and glorious companions, unseen by me, who were trying to whisper into my dull and leaden-hued mind thoughts of wisdom to enlighten and assist me in my earnest researches. And now, as I began slowly to emerge from the confines of my former resting-place, I encountered many enemies; some called me hypocrite, some heretic, some atheist, some crazy. But I stood unmoved, for the hope of eternal life, which had been nigh being extinguished in my breast, had become firm and strong. And when men opposed me with stale arguments borrowed from others' minds, how I despised them, for I leaned on myself. How I looked inwardly and felt there was that in me which had taken hold on eternal life. No bandying of words, no ridicule or opposition, could turn me aside from the path I had chosen for myself, for I felt that the energies of my soul had been called forth in its conflicts, and I was daily

growing stronger, and being sustained with more than human power.

“When I thus rose up against opposition, and in spite of prejudice asserted the truth as I felt it in me, they were ready to stone me, and said I was mad, because I had dared to think for myself and speak for myself. Still I lived on in my madness, and most happy it made me, and not only me, but some few brave hearts who through my instrumentality had been brought to feel the truth as well as enjoy the blessing of thinking for themselves.

“Having lived near in accordance with the ideas I professed to believe, I laid my body down, and my spirit took its flight to its next and better habitation. Oh, well I remember as my remains were borne to the grave, how the by-standers said to each other, ‘The teacher is dead—the man who saw and knew what no one else ever heard of—he’s dead, and now has not even a minister to breathe a prayer over his remains. Fit burial for such as laughed to scorn the teachings of the holy men of God, who by their zeal and knowledge are redeeming mankind.’ I was not mourned—not regretted—I saw it all, but it did not grieve me. I had made myself a mark to be shot at, and had made myself obnoxious to all who professed to be truth-loving Christians, not by my opinions so much as for the great and unusual liberty I had taken, of thinking for myself and drawing my own conclusions. But my entrance into the spirit-world was remarkably pleasant and joyous. I was welcomed by many who had been considered while in this world as lost sheep, as having no claim on eternal life, because they had no name in the

Christian Church which would lead to eternal life, as was supposed.

“It would be vain to try to tell you of my astonishment and gratification, and also the deep awe with which my soul was filled, when I beheld how closely connected with the lower world are the inhabitants of the next sphere above us. Why, I saw innumerable spirits constantly gliding through the air and approaching persons on earth, holding communion with them in tones that only their hearts could hear. I now saw how the secrets of knowledge had been given to me, and how I had been able to take a fast hold on eternal life, while surrounded and advised and strengthened and led on by wise spirits, when I had once taken myself from under the control of mortal minds. I saw how unceasing and untiring were the efforts to enlighten and guide mortals, in every class and denomination, and trying to approach near to them, when not repelled by the grossness of their material nature. I saw how they strengthened good resolutions, how they purified and elevated man, unconsciously to himself, and how their ennobling influence was surrounding his daily path.

“Think not that if left alone in this gross material form, and in this material world, unaided by any spirit-influence, you would be able to hold communion with bright and glorious spirits.

“Oh, what a beautifully descending plane of spirits there, between the higher regions and the lower earth! They who mingle continually in our midst are shrouded from us in a veil of dark and shadowy material existence, which obscures from them the brightness of the

spheres ; but as they ascend where the atmosphere is pure and spiritual in its light, how gradually and distinctly they change in color, like stars in the firmament !

“I saw them mingling with all classes here, and many dark spirits too. It made me sad and sorrowful to see so many ignorant and malicious wanderers, who were invisible to mortal eye, mingling their evil influences with their benighted brothers of earth. I saw where bright spirits were repelled : it was by the closer companionship which the dark ones maintained with the individual who thus repulsed the bright visitant, who would fain advise him and tear him away from his dark associate. This grieved me, and I turned away from earth and began the exploration of my new home. Every step I took I felt myself growing stronger and more free, and I felt myself filled with a great gust of gladness to find myself surrounded by such beautiful companions. I was very unlike them in my outer garb, but still my heart claimed companionship with their spirits in its love. I gradually felt the material part of my being giving way as I became more and more filled with the invigorating influence of the atmosphere surrounding me. Surrounding each spirit was a soft and lovely halo of light which reflected on me ; and the combativeness of my nature, which had displayed itself so strikingly in the human form, melted away under the influence of their love and their gentle instructions. My life had been a rugged, and in many respects a stormy one. I had given way much to the animal passions of my nature ; I had not exercised as much as I should, the law of love, and for-

bearance, and kindness. How deeply I now regretted the want of them. How coarse and ungainly my attributes made me seem, amid so many gentle and loving beings! so I began to shake them off, to labor away those grosser and uncurbed portions of my character; and, thanks to the loving-kindness which ever surrounded and aided me, I succeeded in effacing, one by one, the crudities of my former existence.

"I am but a scholar yet, and in a low class. The characteristics which marked my former life have not entirely left me. I am everywhere known by my gruff and uncivil manner. But enough of that. I am preparing myself for a great work in future, that is pregnant with good to honest and earnest inquirers, and with great joy to me. If by my assistance I can aid one soul in its search for truth, I shall make one step toward the brightness above me.

"How little you know of the brightness of heaven! How gross to your senses do you make the purity of the spheres of celestial joy appear! And why is this? Because of your material nature; because of your imaginings being tinged with the grossness of your bodies; because your spiritual parts are so undeveloped you can not conceive of any thing so pure and sublimated as the essence of the atmosphere in which spirits live.

"But as you lose sight of material things in connection with those which are spiritual, you will be carried above and beyond the limits of this earth, and your spirits be able to taste of the glories we speak of when telling you of heaven and its purity; and your souls may on this earth be so elevated and purified, that you

may ascend far beyond the stars, and revel high up in the light which will be poured in upon your being when it shall have loosened itself from the fetters of earth, so as to be placed in uninterrupted connection with the messengers of Love and Light who only exist when in that light.

“My errand here, Judge, this evening, was to tell you how much I admired your course, how glad I am to think you are independent enough to think for yourself, and speak what you believe to be true. I have sympathized with you in many of your feelings. My course resembled yours, though my nature was not cast in so fine a mold. Yet it was led to see its early errors; and when the truth was made apparent to me, though not so pleasingly as to you, I held on to it, and the hold which I took was so firm and strong that it carried me clear out of this world into the world of spirits; and when I arrived there, the most beautiful of it all was, that I had not been mistaken when I learned to trust the immortal promptings of my own spirit.

“I am but a blunt old man yet. I like to talk as I used to. My speech was never very pleasant. My nature was ever blunt but truthful, and I leave you tonight with the earnest prayer, that the Father of Love may expand and beautify every soul here present, and make it strong in the labor of redeeming man from error, and raising him up to the dignity of his manhood, showing him the beautiful light ever shining on his footsteps, leading him up, up, far up to his native home, his birthright above the skies.”

Here ended the communication, and on a brief conversation with him we learned he died in England fifty

years ago, at the age of ninety ; that during his life he published a book called "The Memoirs of Sir John Pensley," which was his name ; that he left no children, and that his wife died ten years before him, &c.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE SECOND BIRTH.

November 14, 1853.

MRS. SWEET was influenced, and spoke as follows—the communication purporting to be from Swedenborg:—

The human soul, when first awakened from the slumber of its material nature to a consciousness of its spiritual being, presents a strange medley of conflicts and changes in its transition state. Where the material consciousness of the individual has so long retained the ascendancy, it has become vested with a strong authority, as it were, and a mighty struggle oftentimes ensues between the two opposites; and when the spiritual germ of our nature first begins to develop itself, it is so mingled and interwoven with our material being, that we are at a loss to distinguish the difference between the principles which sway us, and often stand trembling almost (feeling so uncertain, as though we stood upon the edge of a precipice), not knowing into what depths of insecurity our plunge may lead. But gradually, in some, and more rapid in others, the spiritual nature assumes its empire, and we then see things as we never saw them before.

There is a new and strong principle takes root and grows up within the soul, constantly strengthening and sustaining the feeble and fluttering efforts which the spirit is making to burst from out the bondage in which

it has been held for so great a length of time. And when the soul becomes able to rise so far beyond its accustomed position as to look abroad upon the wonders everywhere held out to its view, it becomes filled with strong and beautiful emotions; and the vastness and wisdom of the Creator's works are so impressed upon that soul at times, in all their magnificence and glory, that it fain would shrink within its own insignificance, that it would shrink back again to its former position. For, to the freed soul, its upward flights are grand and glorious, in comparison with the narrow and time-trodden road in which it before had wandered. No wonder if a fluttering and trembling should seize upon it while learning its first lessons of joyous freedom.

The soul that has entered upon this path, has indeed undergone a mighty change—a change for the future which has not to be repeated in the future, for this change is a passing from death unto life, it is the birth of the spirit while yet in its earthly temple; and as it expands in strength and wisdom, it has indeed passed through the bitterness of death, which is not to be experienced ever again in the form.

Oh, the spirit after undergoing this first change from dark to light, is enabled to look beyond with a bright and peaceful hope in the blest exchange which awaits him. He but looks forward to the slumber in which he will experience a forgetfulness of the ills attendant on the body, and will awaken to behold the glorious reality of all his former dreamings and imaginings.

Man's soul, after having become thus quickened, feels a consciousness within himself of his hold upon eternal

life. He feels his spirit going out into the vast regions of infinite space, and endeavors to grasp an atom of knowledge wherever he may find it. He is no longer willing to grovel on earth, and taste of earthly pleasures and earthly hopes, and to be led by the teachings of those whose inspirations have become dim in the awakening glory of this new era. But his soul pants for something more—something higher—something better—more heartfelt—more tangible than he has yet become acquainted with, and he is now ever yearning—ever soaring upward, for there has been established an affinity between the soul of that individual and the principle from which he emanated. The connection between the life-giving principle and the germ has become more apparent; and now he is ever drawn upward in his aspirations after truth and purity; and as that soul becomes identified with its spirit-affinities, the material loses much of its authority to act upon its spirit-being. He now regards it as a covering for material use, to be thrown aside when no longer needed to contain his spirit when on its earthly mission; and truth, virtue, and love become a daily inspiration of his soul. This spirit becomes so saturated and bathed in the light of wisdom, that he indeed feels the immortal part of his nature has become so quickened and vitalized, that he needs but to look within to find an answer to his innermost cravings after the knowledge which places him upon a firm and imperishable basis, as regards his eternal and ultimate destiny. The external elements may be in confusion and dissension, and the surface of all other circumstances may become ruffled and chaotic in their dark dismay; but the soul that has thus been able

to take hold upon his high prerogatives and claim his inheritance, by building it up and beautifying it while here for his future residence, may indeed look away and beyond the scenes of earth, and feel that while he has lived upon its surface as an obedient servant to his better intuitions, inasmuch as he could plainly perceive them, is like the bird on wing, who, when the first note of welcome from his mate salutes his ear, is ever ready to soar away and meet with joy his waiting companion; for there is a beautiful reunion which takes place between the freed spirit of man and his affinities who have long guided his footsteps on earth, and whom he now may behold face to face, and with them travel onward to behold the eternal mysteries of the glorious unfolding of the wisdom of God.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE SLAVE.

December 26, 1853.

THIS evening through Mrs. Sweet it was said :—

You have been talking of flowers and love, and beauty and joy, this evening, and perchance you think there is naught else than such in the spirit-world. Oh ! if such is your idea, a poor wretch such as I must be most unwelcome, who has come to divest your minds of all these beautiful fancies in my own sad history. I was born amid slavery and wretchedness, fed on food which was not even offered to the dogs that belonged to my master, and I was daily lashed—my poor flesh laid open to the bone—to please the passionate whim of a brutal owner. No ! I had no comfort, save when I had arrived at manhood, they gave me a companion. How tenderly I loved her, she and the little one ! But they tore her away from my arms after scourging her with many stripes ; and my innocent babe was taken from me, and I left alone in my misery to grovel on the earth, to groan aloud in my agony, and then to be lashed for so doing.

I wished to die, for I knew not how to pray ; never knew the name of God, save in execrations, which even now chill my life-blood within my heart. And all of kindness and love in my heart turned to gall and

bitterness, and I, who would have been thankful to labor for one kind word—I became a lying, wicked, thieving, selfish slave. They cultivated naught but my bad propensities, and those they strengthened, and brought forth every thing black and repulsive which my nature was capable of producing.

I feared no higher power than that which had bought and paid for my vile and loathsome body, and soul too, as it seemed to me, and all I cared for was death; the forgetfulness of the grave was all my spirit groaned for in its hour of agony.

At one time in one of my passions, raised by the violence of my master, I struck him down. It seemed as if a devil possessed me. I must tread upon the body of him who had spurned me as a worm. But now the worm turned, and his cruel and cowardly soul was forced to leave its body; and I was satisfied. My soul had drank its vengeance, and I cared not what became of me.

And so they beat me to death! What a happy release was that! They could no longer bruise my spirit, though they might cast my body to the crows—and I was free! Oh, what a gladsome hour was that when I first beheld myself free! Strange people came and spoke to me—spoke kindly—asked if I was not glad to be released from slavery of body, and told me I should now be released from the dark slavery of ignorance and sin of mind. I did not understand them. I only felt I was free from the power of the oppressor, and like a bird which would fain soar, but can not because of weakness.

I saw such a vast space around me, above and beneath me, and they led me away, away, far into a large

city, and there I beheld thousands, who, it seemed, had once resembled me in appearance. They looked so happy, and labored so briskly, and sang so cheerfully, that I felt as if I must be in some good and beautiful place which had never been heard of. Heaven I had heard of, but knew not what it meant. I associated it with something good and pretty, and these people, I thought, must be in heaven, for every thing looked so different from any thing I had seen before. Their color was different; they had been of the same hue that I had once been, but their faces were so white and shining. Some looked light, and some darker; and I noticed that those who seemed to be the wisest among them had lost almost all traces of their former dark appearance; but still they were of the same race as myself. They told me they were all here being prepared to inhabit a country peculiar to themselves, where they should in turn become educated, and fitted for higher duties, and then ascend to a more distant country. They were of a race of people whose mental development had been of peculiar growth, and they were but passing through a lower existence while inhabiting this earth, and would, in the next sphere, become kings and masters, so to speak, in their proper sphere of mental enlightenment.

You ask what I did when I first entered that place? People took me and showed me how to labor—taught me the true use, value, and dignity of labor; and having taken away all my old and bitter prejudices against a life of labor, they cultivated my mind, and taught me, in simple and easy lessons, to love the great, good God from whom my spirit had sprung. When they told me

of his goodness and mercy, my heart filled with love inexpressible—so filled that there was no room for any of the bad passions which had caused me to become such a wretch. And how earnestly I labored, with both soul and body, that I might become as one of those guileless and benevolent beings who daily taught me such lessons of love and kindness. When they spoke to me of earth, I shuddered, and feared they would send me back; and often have I knelt, and with tears implored them not to send me back to wretched earth again. There was nothing to desire there. I had no wish to return again to the scene of my former sufferings; but I often wept as I thought of my wife and little one. I knew she was still in the hard, cold world, and I prayed them to go to earth and bring to me her and the little one I loved.

They told me my desires could not be granted; I must wait until, in the course of nature, or through the forcing of nature by cruelty, they would be able to make their entrance as I had. And gradually I began to see things in a new light. My mind began to expand; I stood erect, and gazed on the works of God, and my heart filled with awe and love.

Notwithstanding the many beautiful things which I daily saw, my mind would still turn back to earth; and when I thought who had misused and ill-treated me, there were still revengeful feelings and bitter hate toward the authors of my misery. The spirits who taught me lessons of love and truth told me these feelings were wrong—that I could never become pure and good, or a fit inhabitant of those blest spheres of beauty, unless I forgave those who had been my former ene-

mies. But it seemed an impossibility, and as if I only wanted to be avenged, and then I should be ready to feel no other emotions than those of joy and happiness. A kind and lovely spirit came to me, and led me to a dreary, dismal place, and there showed me the spirit of my tormentor. Oh, how miserable he looked ! gnashing his teeth with fury and baffled rage ; laying about him and striving to lash poor creatures around him ; but the strokes only fell on empty air. How he howled and yelled, and would not hear one word from a grave-looking person who stood near, trying to reason with him on his folly and madness. Oh, I looked upon him who had formerly so severely punished me, and my soul was filled with sadness ! I could not wish a greater revenge than this. And then the spirit who had brought me there asked me if it was pleasant—if I loved to see that wretched man in such suffering and misery—if I loved to see others suffering ten thousand-fold the agony I had undergone ?—for this was greater punishment than mine, and I felt how deeply I merited this gentle rebuke ; and then I turned and fell on my knees, and begged that spirit to intercede for my tormentor. His state was so much worse than mine, how could I help pitying him !

He led me back to the place we had come from, and said to me, “My son, thou hast shown a spirit of repentance—a sorrow for the sufferings of thy tormentor, and the work of regeneration has begun. And now thou shalt be able to travel upward rapidly when thy spirit becomes filled with love and forgiveness to thy former enemy, for none are pure in spirit—none can be progressed in love where feelings of revenge find a resting-

place. No selfishness or anger must reside in the heart which gazes heavenward." And a mighty calm came over my hitherto troubled spirit—not tossed like waves, first agitated by love and gladness, and then by revenge and wickedness.

Oh, no! these had all passed away, and now how earnestly I hourly prayed that the sufferings of my tormentor might cease. He was to be pitied while I was in such a lovely place—a heaven, it seemed to me, 'twas so green, the flowers so fragrant, labor so sweet and pleasant. No harsh words—no heavy blows, but all accents of loving-kindness, gentle encouragement, and peaceful rest. And when my soul needed instruction, then would some gentle being draw near and point upward, and lead me away where I might gaze on the worlds far off which were to be my future dwelling, when I should become developed in wisdom and knowledge so as to be a fit inhabitant of that lovely place. They told me I should there find those whose minds would assimilate with my own—those who had long before me died on earth and emerged from darkness and ignorance and bondage worse than even I had conceived of, and had entered the spirit-world with the same feelings which I had, but had been led on and taught the love of God, and had become bright and pure, because divested of all their grossness and materiality. And when they had become pure in their spiritual light, they had soared away from this lower abode where I now dwell.

The thought was beautiful. It seemed too great a joy to believe that a poor, ignorant slave like me, who had scarcely heard of the great and glorious God, and

of all these beautiful worlds which were rolling around me in the vast firmament, should, after having committed a dreadful crime, and entered the spirit-world with all my sins and ignorance upon me, be permitted to see so much of heaven, and learn the mercy of God so soon. And they told me that I should be permitted to inhabit a country where there were none but those of my race and kindred, if I was so minded. They told me I need not be a slave or servant here, but might mingle with the best and purest as my soul advanced. Oh! there is no such thing as feeling lost or deserted in the spheres where I now dwell. Every one has kindred and friends—every one has home and joys greater than earth ever beheld. And if a poor, sinful wretch like me can be so happy in my low estate, what must be the state of the pure soul when it leaves the body! For if the earthly life of the poor slave is one of suffering and bondage, if his soul and body are bought and sold here, it does not reach beyond the grave. No, no! thank God! the poor slave's soul is free as air from the bondage of man when it leaves the body; and it is only the chains of ignorance and darkness which bind it here. But gentle spirits come in crowds and take him by the hand, as brothers and sisters, and wipe away his tears, and lead him up to that heaven where naught can dwell but goodness and love.

I am very thankful for this privilege of coming to you. I had to speak slowly, and they told me what to say, as I have said it. I have to-night taken one step higher in my heavenly journey; for have I not come back to earth and given a lesson of encouragement for my poor fellow-slaves. Thanks, and good night!

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE QUEEN.

January 9, 1854.

THIS evening a spirit came, and taking possession of the medium, she knelt in our midst and went through the pantomime of taking up and putting dust upon her head, after which she arose and said:—

DEAR FRIENDS—I have been sent here this evening to tell you how the proud spirit and haughty will have been humbled.

When I dwelt on the earth people called me a queen. They humbled themselves before me—they approached me with deference and respect. Oh! they honored me highly because of my high station. Yes, the mighty men of the nation honored me, and kings paid me homage! They called me wise and beautiful—they said that virtue and wisdom shone in my countenance, and that love and charity were my daily companions. Oh, yes, they said I was possessed of every gentle virtue and every trait lovely in woman! And still they knew not my heart. They knew not the love of applause, the feelings of ambition and selfishness which reigned in my bosom, nor the feelings of revenge which I cherished toward those who thwarted me in my imperious will. And while the nation were lauding my goodness beyond all human comparison, my heart was naught but the abode of earthly and vain passions. It is true there were times when my better instincts would

assume their sway and admonish me in my wrongdoing. But the still, small voice was quickly hushed by the continued sound of flattery and empty show which surrounded me. Surely it was not much of an effort to smile and look gay when every face took its reflex from mine; for the voice of grief or suffering was never permitted to reach my ear, save when my own spirit groaned in bitterness, warring over the pent-up fires of my own raging heart. For there were times during my life when, had I been free and unattended, I would have cast myself into the peaceful waters of the river, so that the former struggles and passions might be buried forever in oblivion. And what was religion to me but a cloak? The holy father who confessed me dealt leniently with my most serious offenses. He smiled upon me and called me the anointed of God, until there was no sanctity left to shroud religion in when I was brought before the judgment-seat of the church; and I always felt as one who was licensed to commit sin with a high hand; no word of reproach or censure was ever given me. But still my spirit felt its own blackness and impurity. I knew how far separated from the pure and beautiful visions of heaven were my vain, earthly thoughts. My childhood's moments had been innocent and pure, and with a spirit joyous and happy I had gloried and reveled in all things beautiful in nature. These thoughts, these halcyon hours of pleasure left no sting behind. They were now the only rays of sunshine that came across my brief career, as some dim and half-forgotten dream of Paradise. The hours of my childhood now, indeed, seemed as a fairy dream in their purity and happiness, compared

with the hollow world which surrounded me. My soul had once drank deep draughts of joy and consolation from the perusal of the works of the good and the pure who had lived before me. And I remembered the past pleasure with which I had communed with the thoughts of those spirits who now dwelt, I knew not where. I indeed conceived it to be all a dream, a pleasant, a deceitful dream; for nowhere could I now turn to find the sympathy, the communion of which I had once partaken. I knew my imperfections, but, alas! they would not let me speak of them. When I spoke to my spiritual adviser of the sore trouble and travail of my spirit because of her sinful bonds, he, presumptuous man! forgave me my sins. Oh! he did not remove the load under which my spirit groaned! He only moved the surface, he only caused the voice to sink deeper within, so that its tones sounded not so loudly without. And when my life had been spent thus far in doing much that was evil (I now feel thus), and little that was really good, my spirit passed from my temple of clay. Oh, yes, surrounded by weeping minions—supported, and consoled, and strengthened, as others thought, by the pillars of the church, the anointed ones—surrounded on all sides by a profusion of wealth, and ostentation, and honors; forgiven my sins at the last hour of my life by one as erring as myself, I departed, soon to be forgotten by those who had professed to adore me, who had almost worshiped my very footsteps! But the spirit had fled—naught but the dust remained; and how soon that dust becomes a loathsome thing to those to whom it had once appeared as the most beautiful thing in existence!

When I entered the spirit-world, I thought I should still be a queen, not of a nation, but still a queen of subjects. It seemed that I had been formed for a queen—that royal blood coursed in my veins—that my ancestors had been kings and queens far back in the archives of time; and it seemed a birthright which I never should have to forego, not even in heaven. I had pondered much on the state after death, during my life, but my ideas had never been clear in this respect. What I learned was mostly from the study of the Scriptures. The teachings I listened to spoke not much of a hell, but described heaven; and my weary heart had oft wished for the rest of a heaven; and I had also felt that, impure as I was, I could be no fit inhabitant to enjoy so pure a place. And now, as I gazed about me in that land of shadows (as it seemed), how rapidly all these things ran through my mind! I felt as though I must be cared for—I must be caressed—I must be welcomed, because of my former station. I looked about me in vain to find some vast assembly of persons coming to honor me—coming to convey me in triumph to my destined home. But I saw none, and I wandered along in doubt and uncertainty, first gazing here, and then there. My steps were wonderfully upheld. I knew not upon what I was treading, and yet I was traveling rapidly in a new and unknown place; and frequently I became tired and weary, for my journey seemed to lengthen, and my prospects grew no better. I thought within myself, they have not been apprised of my coming, they have not expected me, or some of my former friends would come and welcome me. And now I grew sad. I had gone a long distance, moved

by the invisible power which upheld my footsteps, but I had been cheered by no ray, and I sat down by the wayside and wept bitterly, oh, how bitterly! I felt so lonely and deserted! I was no queen now, with willing subjects to obey my look and nod. There were no submissive attendants to minister to my weariness and despair; none ready to raise my drooping spirits with music, or their counsel, or comfort. But here I sat all alone and deserted by the wayside! yes, as lone and wretched as the veriest beggar that had ever prayed for bread at the gates of my palace! And now I was filled with anxious reflections. I seemed to look back upon my past life, and compare it with my present existence, so new to me, and to ask myself, who, indeed, am I, and what am I? Am I not more than the common herd? Am I not still a queen above my subjects? Oh! how my proud heart swelled nigh unto bursting, now when I felt how insignificant I was when stripped of all my surroundings! My tears were those of anguish, and shame, and rage, and disappointment. Long time I mused and wept. Finally a calm, a change seemed to pass over my troubled heart, but I felt, oh! how deeply, every unworthy act of my past life. My former misdeeds, the effects of my baser passions, which had left their impress upon others, now stood forth before me in bold relief. I now felt that every good deed, every gentle feeling of love, or charity, or mercy which I had been led to perform or indulge, cast a heavenly calm upon me, and took away the fierceness and the anguish of my bitter grief. The remembrance of these was clothed in a soft, silvery light, oh, how beautiful! Those deeds of mercy now cheered and

comforted my troubled spirit, and again I wept; but they were tears of penitence, of contrition, which soothed and quieted me, and brought up a hope from the lowest chambers of my soul that I might yet be able to perform something more worthy those pleasures I had experienced. While indulging in these thoughts and wishes of what I might do, and regrets of what I had done, I looked up, and beside me stood a female. She was exceedingly fair and beautiful to behold. There was a look of heavenly dignity and beneficence in her face, and her whole being seemed pervaded with such gentleness that I was encouraged to speak. She held forth her hand and called me sister. She asked me if I was weary, in such mild and gentle accents, that my tears flowed afresh, and I yearned for her sympathy. I now poured out my sorrows, and begged her to lead me to some more genial spot. I told her I had been a queen on earth; and when I said this she smiled sadly, and said, "There are no queens in this our country, save queens of love and purity—those who excel in love of their fellows, and whose good works make their faces shine with wisdom, and who are ever bearing good tidings to those on earth. These are the only queens we have here."

I was amazed at her words. I had not conceived that I should be as the commonest subject of my kingdom, unnoted and unnoticed. I spoke of many who had gone before me, and wished I might be led to them. I spoke of the joys and dazzling beauties of heaven, which had been described to me during my life. She told me that my former friends were all engaged in different occupations. I was surprised again, for I had

not supposed an occupation was consistent with heavenly enjoyment; for the manner in which she spoke led me to suppose that the occupations consisted of labor more than enjoyment. She gazed in my eyes, and told me I was but an untutored child in the knowledge of the life which was called the hereafter. She said that my spirit's best intuitions had been repressed, that the baser part of my nature had been called forth and developed by my worldly career, and I must now begin to live truly the life which leads to eternal happiness. She said my friends were all progressing in their eternal journey, and that I must follow them, for they could not return to me.

I questioned her about my former life, and found she knew every thing concerning me. She told me she had been my guardian spirit while I inhabited the body, and had endeavored in manifold ways to approach me and whisper gentle words of admonition and warning in my ears. At times she had led me by the spirit of gentleness and love. At times I had repelled her by my own evil conduct, and had allowed spirits who only loved darkness, and to deceive men's souls by their arts, to approach me with their counsel and advice. Oh, how I wept when she told me these things! And she moreover said I must forget that I had been once a queen on earth, for none but the humble in spirit might hope to become even as a little child in this land of love. I now saw I must lay aside all my former dignity and love of flattery, and be led by this lovely spirit's counsel. We walked until we arrived at a pleasant mansion, wherein we entered. I was here greeted by several spirits, who welcomed me candidly and pleasantly, but paid me no

deference, and seemed not to know I had been a queen. And the spirit who had conducted me, said : " This is the dwelling wherein you must take your first lessons in self-denial, and in divesting yourself of those worldly notions which will be so prejudicial to your future happiness. Those persons about you will be ever willing to assist you with kind and gentle words when you need such help ; but you must perform the labor of reformation for yourself, and within yourself ; you must become as lowly and as loving as those who surround you ; you must even become as the little flower whose head is bowed toward the earth, as if in humility, lest the sun's rays might fall upon it with too great and overpowering a splendor. My dear child, your heavenly nature was formed to be pure and gentle, to be loving and kind, to benefit others by your gentle counsels, and to sympathize in the sorrows of the human heart. But the world placed you upon a dangerous pedestal, which only made you wretched and unhappy. Your higher and better nature was ever struggling to gain the ascendancy over the material grossness which surrounded you, and the mighty conflict only sickened and wearied your spirit. And this is why life seemed so hateful and hollow at times. The sin was not yours, my child, but it was the sin of circumstances and of corrupt teachings, of fawning counsels and of selfish aggrandizement. These obstructions, connected with others, are now removed ; but, my child, all the earthly clouds of error which an earthly existence developed are still within thine own bosom, and it is now thy labor to erase them all, until there shall not be left the faintest trace of their former existence. These will pain thee, and harass thy soul's

comfort, and, until they are all effaced, will still give thee the same sad feelings which they did on earth. There will be no outward foe here to battle with. Within thyself must the victory be obtained. Then tarry not, my child, but begin thy labor immediately ; and when thy heart becomes so filled with the love of God, that thou shalt want to go forth and take the beggar and the lame and the blind by the hand, and feed the hungry, and bind up the broken-hearted, and say to the erring : ‘ Sister, I am thy sister and friend, and will lead thee in the path of love and goodness,’ then wilt thou be fit to mingle with the loving spirits who do their Father’s will ; and then shall thy face, and thy whole being shine with far more transcendent beauty than that which was upon thee when thou wast clad in thy regal robes. When thy good works shall have purified and refined thy being in this sphere, oh, then thou hast in prospect a glorious flight to another. There shalt thou see the heavenly city whose foundation is made without hands. There shalt thou mingle with the pure in spirit, whose voices will greet thine ear in tones of music soft as an *Æolian* harp. Oh ! what joy and glory, what rapture and delight await the transfigured soul ! Thou shalt mingle with beings whose purity will shed a light about thee, and cause a heavenly glow to pervade thy whole being ; and thou mayest walk by the shining rivers of love, and lave thy body in their placid waters ; and weariness shall not overtake thee, no sorrow shall enter that place. The love of the most high God dwells in and pervades all things here, where no grossness can enter. The elements of discord and inharmony approach not that

place, but the voices of angels, singing never-ceasing praises, are borne down on every breeze, and find a glad response from every heart which dwells therein."

Oh! now I wished I had never lived, I had become so wrapped in wonder and amazement while she spoke of that place; and then the long-forgotten dreams of childhood stole softly across my memory. Ah! then I felt it was true. I felt that in the purity and happiness of my childhood's home, the bright angels from the far-off realms had whispered those thoughts into my heart, for I was then less material, more natural. The connection between that glorious land and my spirit had been more close in my childhood's hours than when I had mingled with the world and partaken of its character.

And now she breathes a blessing upon me; she tells me to labor, to love, to persevere; and she leaves me to return to her bright reward far beyond me. But she says I shall see her when I have worked out the mission which it is my part to perform. She bids me be careful, be watchful, for there are earnest eyes and loving hearts gazing down and beckoning me upward. Oh! who would not labor; who would not be a beggar; who would not forego all earthly honors, that they might hereafter be permitted to be only one of the least in the house of God, in the gates of Heaven?

Previous to the communication being finished, she was asked what her name was? She replied by saying: "My name is Humility; once it was Pride."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A SCENE IN SPIRIT-LAND.

Given by Mrs. Hemans, *January 31, 1854*

As the unclouded splendor of day is passing into the mellowed light of its sunset beauty, a band of happy spirits are seen reposing beside a sparkling fountain, whose clear and pellucid waters reflect ten thousand colors of changing beauty as they sparkle in the ambient light. Flowers of immortal fragrance give forth sweet perfumes to the celestial air, and majestic trees, whose foliage is of living green, spread out their arms inviting to repose and meditation. Birds of rare beauty, whose notes give forth sweet music, such as is never heard by mortal ears, add a charm to the pure and happy scene. A low and gentle melody breathes upon the air. I look up, and behold a company of spirits are approaching to join the ones already present. Their robes are bright and shining, and their countenances are radiant with the light which cometh from God. The wisdom of the holy presence sits upon each countenance, making it fair and peaceful to look upon, and yet they look gentle and loving. No shadow of earthly passions remains graven upon their seraph-faces. There is a glow of light, a gladdening, blissful feeling, pervading the atmosphere in which they move.

They are approaching the spirits who are waiting to receive them. And now they greet each other with a glad smile of welcome. A deep and unutterable joy seems to be welling up within each heart as it greets and welcomes the other. And those who have last come sit beside the fountain also, clasping each others' hands. They now bid each other recount to their companions the result of their labors, for they have been upon earth laboring earnestly and unceasingly, each in a different direction, and they now assemble to speak of that which they have accomplished as faithful workers, whose labor is that of love and undying hope in the redemption of their fellow-man. One says, "Beloved teacher, the task which I had to fulfill was hard. I spoke the words of wisdom which were given me. I gave the lessons which were given me. Some would listen, and some would turn away unheeding, forgetting that truth could come through other than those who were clad with authority which the law giveth. But some hungry souls who were thirsty for a draught of eternal truth received the words gladly and freely, and they became joyous in the knowledge of eternal and progressing wisdom. And when the jewels are gathered together, the beauty of their spirits will be drops in the cup of my gladness." And another said, "I went to earth full of mighty resolutions to do the will of my Father, to turn the hearts of men from mammon to the purifying and ennobling influence of the knowledge of the love of God to them through the years of their past forgetfulness, their slumbering unconsciousness. And I thought I would speak with the voice of an entreating angel, that I would stir up the depths of

their spirits to see the darkness of their ways, the downward tendency of their paths. I approached the young ; they would not hear me ; their future was opening before them in rose-tinted colors, their passions and strengthening energies were gaining daily force from the reckless impulses which hurried them along ; few would listen to my pleading voice, but said as in answer to my entreaties : ‘ Time enough, we are young, we are happy, we are striving to become leaders of the people, to rule the multitude, to sway the great mass, to step in the places of those who are daily going out from amongst us ; curb not our ambition, clip not our soaring wings in their upward flight, but let us speed onward, ever onward, until we have reached the highest pinnacle of worldly ambition, and when all our wishes are satisfied, when our hearts no longer yearn and struggle for worldly aggrandizement, when we gain that for which we are laboring, then we will listen to your pleading voice, then we will put the world beneath our feet and turn our thoughts to heaven.’ I passed from the young to the old. Some would hear me doubtingly, mistrusting the sound to be that of earth, so long had its delusive power enchained their souls and kept them from all that was bright, that was fair or heavenly in their nature, that they could not raise their faith nor extend their grasp beyond the sphere where all their affinities were enshrined. Prayers they could utter with their lips, but they were not the fresh outgushing of the heart, but they were those which had been given by rule to be repeated as a form through other lips. It was sad to leave them so unbelieving and yet so needy, so ignorant of the life which they were soon to

enter, and yet, O kind and loving guide! I had to pass on; my precious time could not be thus wasted in talking to hearts of stone! The idols of gold and silver ever intercepted the spirit-forms, the spirit-voice from their hearts; and verily, I said within my soul, 'It is not well that men should grow old in forgetfulness of their higher and eternal life, for, as man's time becomes shorter upon the sphere where his heart hath its only abiding-place, he would fain linger forever within the precincts which only seem to him as the brightest heaven which his soul can aspire to, and when he unwillingly leaves it, his soul finds no sympathy, no pleasure in the opening future before him.' And I again spoke to the youth and said: 'O young man! or young maiden! pause and think; thy heart is warm and bounding, the flowers of thy youth are blooming brightly, and making thee glad in the sunlighted beauty of their gorgeous coloring; but the flowers of thy youth will perish, many of the hopes which thou wouldst realize will prove delusive, the vain shadows of thy own longing, and mock thee at last with bitter disappointment. Give ear now to the appeal of love, hearken to the soft and pleading voice of angel-lips. Beings ethereal and pure, loving and anxious, surround thy youthful steps; turn, turn not away, shut not thy heart against their gentle influences, but lift up thine eyes and ask thy Father to be the guide of thy youth, and he will surround thee with such guides as will uphold thee in the hour of trial, and save thee from the great pitfall of temptation. And when thou art old, thou canst look upward with a brightening eye and a living knowledge that there is within thee a hope of

eternal life strong and undying. And death shall not dim thy happiness, but it will open to thee the unrevealed book, whose pages are all unfolding, one after another to thy astonished soul, the infinite wisdom, the boundless and unchanging love of thy heavenly Father.' And I tell thee, O beloved guide! that some did stop and hearken to my voice, and I placed upon their brows a talisman of hope, a wreath of undying flowers, which only spirits might see, and when they approached those hearts, they would draw near and call them blessed; for lo, the still, small voice of love had found an echo within their hearts. I blessed them, and their pathways shall be angel-lighted, and they shall give to others consolation and comfort through their short journey of life on earth."

Another spirit now speaks. It is a female. Her eyes are meek and dove-like; tears have often bedewed her cheeks, and her spirit hath been chastened and purified through suffering and great sorrow. She said: "O loving guide! I come back from my earth journey, thankful that God hath permitted so feeble and unworthy a spirit to join hands with those who love the cause of their Father so well. My first mission was to seek out the sorrowing, the broken-hearted ones of earth. Oh! how many, how numberless they are, and *how* I wished that every tear which came forth from the fountains of my heart, could be turned into a blessing for them. I lingered about them long. I whispered to their hearts of peace and hope. I spoke to them of the place where all tears are wiped from the mourner's eyes, and when a sorrowing mother grieved for her child, I brought the idol of her heart, and set it

before her, that it might point her upward, and then, I told her that a link had been established between her and heaven, a sympathetic chord which would ever draw her there, but she must keep it untainted. She must not snap it asunder by the cares and engrossing loves of earth. Her heart grew more hoping, and now she is not without the strength of hope.

“I then spoke to a sad and erring daughter, whose crushed and weary spirit desired the rest of oblivion. Her hopes had once been lighted by the trusting faith of love, and her poor spirit had learned to curse the name, to wish that it might be blotted forever out of the records of heaven. A blight had fallen upon her young life. Oh, weary and sad were the upbraidings of her spirit, when conscious at times of its true but degraded position. She would have courted death with her own hand, but the future was fearful, and when she had thrown herself prostrate upon the earth, I drew near and whispered to her poor lacerated, despairing soul words of hope beyond the grave. She could not at first hear me, but gradually a great quiet and peace fell upon her spirit, and she thought she was in a dream, a dream of childhood and happiness, of innocence and love. I bent over her shattered form, and spoke in whispers which her heart might hear. I told her of repentance upon earth, yea, and of hope beyond the earth. With words of entreaty and soothing sympathy I gently led her spirit into the paths of duty, of rectitude and virtue, where strength would be given her to live a repentant life. Oh, how she wept and wished she might die while the happy dream lasted. But she arose and went her way, resolving to profit by

the warning which had been breathed to her spirit. Her life now seemed of some worth, and, as I left her, 'friends,' whose spirits had long been unable to approach her, nestled close beside her. The work of healing had commenced in her heart, and with the assistance of spirits, and of friends in the form who will receive her, she will yet rise up purified and blessed, and enter upon her spirit-life with a hoping, throbbing joy, thanking God for his mercy, and meeting face to face with those bright beings, whose dewy breath, whose warm and striving hearts were exerted to raise her up.

"And next I visited the poor orphan, crying for bread, shivering with cold, uncared for and suffering. How cold and cheerless the life before that orphan ! I looked, and near him were his parents sad and unhappy, because of the misery of their child. Oh, sad sight ! there were none to give it bread, but the cold, unwilling hand called charity, and on all sides were snares and pitfalls, every thing to mislead the little wanderer, and nothing to cherish, to warm the little hungry heart with the fullness of affection, and no arm to protect from surrounding dangers. When night had come upon the earth, and no covering or scarce a shelter could be found by the little waif floating on its tempest-tost bosom, I drew near and blessed the orphan ; I pressed him to my heart, and prayed to my Father in heaven to send angel-guides to watch over the immortal germ, to influence some benevolent heart to cherish the little withering flower, to give it some bosom to which its little heart might nestle in the spring-time of its life and twine around hereafter with love and affection. I watched him while he slept in his infantile innocence and deso-

lation, and I said: 'I pray thee, O Father of the fatherless! to cast a strong bulwark about this innocent one, that he may live an upright and holy life, and learn to call *thee* his Father, and know *thee* as such forever.' Many sympathetic spirit-friends were gathered round the lone child, and each one resolved to do a part to assist in leading that child aright through life's checkered path. He was conducted, through the aid of spirits, to a sympathetic heart; the neglected one *was* cared for; a kindly hand was stretched forth, and the little one's head now slumbers beneath a friendly roof. Thou wilt say, gentle teacher, that my prayers were answered, unworthy as I am. Many, many scenes of suffering and of misery, of desolation and disappointment were witnessed by me while my earth-journey lasted, and my spirit shall watch through their lives the good work which was given me the power to begin, and I will bless and magnify the goodness of my Father for his unbounded mercy to me, and I shall stand ready to greet each one as they enter their spirit-home, and tell them of what mercy and protecting care hath followed their lives; for they will yet shine bright and glowing with immortal purity among those who have been redeemed from sin and suffering through the love of the Father, and in the light of eternity shall our spirit see what the little seed hath grown to, which was so small as to be almost unseen; its rays will become those of refulgent light and dazzling beauty, as time develops in its unceasing progress the immortal attributes which belong to each unfolding germ."

Another speaks who has left earth. "I came," said he, "to report my work as only begun. Lo! I have wandered

up and down, and I've penetrated into the secret recesses of man's most hidden motives. I have stood in the sacred places of earth, where man does lip-homage to his Creator, and I've watched the word as it fell coldly and without power upon the hearts of those who heard it, for verily, pomp and circumstance are but the impressions of an hour, and the sound of many words but created a confusion when they were not understood or rightly applied. I found no resting-place for the sole of my foot in the structures which had been erected by the hand of man, as the altar whence his prayers should ascend to heaven as a sweet incense before the throne of God. The cold and heavy atmosphere oppressed and retarded my ardor, and with difficulty I penetrated the gross element which was filled with so many thoughts whose birth was of earth. Sad and dispirited, I sought a willing ear somewhere else. I sought the home of the lowly. I approached the couch of the suffering, and, verily, they received me, they repelled me not, but with heartfelt tears they received the comforting influence from my spirit to theirs, and where the humble and upright man spoke forth the thoughts which come freighted with truth and everlasting light of heaven, I stood by, and breathed strength and hope and comfort to his soul. For the simple and honest child of nature, was more receptive, more congenial to the influences of indwelling light, than those whom forms and ceremonies and outward garbs of piety had surrounded by their gross and heaven-defying influence. Where mirth and revelry, the dance and song, where wine and all its exciting influences held their sway, my voice could not be heard, my footsteps were turned aside. Sad and

dispirited, I left the scene of mirth and revelry. I sought the lowly cabin of the poor, the oppressed child of slavery, and as he breathed his simple prayer, a spirit stood by and took it up and laid it before the Father's throne as a sweet-smelling incense of gratitude. I said, 'Pray on, hope on, poor slave; thy bondage is of earth, not of heaven; thy poor bleeding heart will be freer and brighter, and far happier in the spirit-home than the one who calls thee slave, and lashes thee with many stripes of suffering.' My spirit grew glad as I gazed; I grew stronger to proceed on my mission of love. And then, I beheld another poor, ignorant, untaught child of slavery, whose heart had never been taught other than bitter and resentful feelings, the springs of whose love had been turned into streams of hate, because of the oppression of the task-master, because of the chains which cut the flesh and the bonds which held the soul down on a level with the brute. O sad and dreary picture! I strove to breathe some hope, some comfort into the poor, wayward, desponding heart. I whispered: 'Child of toil and captivity, there is a brighter sun shining for thee beyond the starry heavens; there are peaceful homes, placid and fair, where thou shalt yet rest thy weary limbs; there are angel-friends whom the fetters of earth no longer bind, waiting to welcome thee, and deck thee with flowers, to cheer up thy sad and desponding spirit.' And they also thought they had a beautiful dream. And they wondered in their darkness if heaven *was* so beautiful a place, and if angels *were* so beautiful and bright. Oh, that low whisper, that softly breathed prayer, left an impress behind which no oppression can efface.

“And I strove to approach those whom they call their masters. I strove, and would fain have moved their hearts with pity and charity. I would have besought them not to imprison the immortal spirit which God hath made free. I appealed to their tenderness, and wished to move their spirits to act in accordance with the dictates of nature; but the circumstances of custom and of law had riveted its chains so firmly about their hearts as to darken their better judgment, and render them deaf to the appeals which their own hearts often unconsciously made to them. I blessed those who were gentle and kind to the flesh and blood which their money had purchased, and I prayed to my Father to open their hearts to the soft tones of his loving mercy, and make them the instruments of giving life eternal to those who were their bondsmen, for I saw that it was the sin of custom more than of necessity, and I said within my soul, when the heart hath been opened by the spiritual unfolding of true light and loving, practical works, they will see their error and the gentle persuasion of the still, small voice from within will guide them aright, and the oppressed shall be cared for and lifted up, and their spirits shall be made as fair and as pure, as trusting and loving in the simplicity of their faith as those who have raised them. Verily, the light of each good deed becomes a star of rejoicing in the home of the spirit to greet it at its entrance. Therefore, beloved teacher, I come back from my mission hoping, for a power hath been breathed upon the people, a voice hath thrilled their hearts, a feeling unknown and undefined by mortals is pervading, is expanding the great beating, pulsing heart of humanity. It only shows a ripple here

and there, but the ripples will grow into waves, and the winds will take up the story, and bear the glad tidings over the face of the earth. And so I returned rejoicing with exceeding great joy, happy to return and work out my part in the great struggle of right over all."

Another now speaks. Her floating robes sparkle in the soft and mellow light even as gems of beauty and rare brilliancy. Her brow is bound with a chaplet of lilies. Her voice is soft and musical as the tones of an æolian harp; its vibrations thrill through every listener as the touch of a fine-toned instrument. "Yea," said she, "I come from earth glad and rejoicing. My friends, they welcomed me with open hearts and outstretched hands; they clasped my spirit-form to their hearts, for they knew me, they remembered my voice as in time of yore, and when I spoke of my home beyond the blue firmament and the twinkling stars, when I told them of the loving Father who permitted us to return to cheer and to comfort, to love, to guide and direct, they hailed my approach with joy unspeakable; their hearts became one great temple of rejoicing in their newly found life, for 'Lo,' they exclaimed, 'heaven hath come to earth, and made earth seem bright and glad. *It is within us, it is beyond us, it is all around us!* And the mourners were comforted, and the sick were healed, and the doubting, faltering ones were gently led along by a hand which was strong and able to guide. And the glad tidings ran faster and swifter; it was taken up and conveyed from heart to heart, and all who responded to its call, were made partakers of a living joy forever within their reach. The veil was rent asunder which had kept the loving

caress of friends so long unfelt, so long unknown, whose labors are now being rewarded by being recognized and loved. And I told them also to beware of those who had left the earth sad and unhappy, whose influence had often unconsciously led them to commit errors at which their souls would shudder if they knew their source. I directed them to look up with the eye of trust, with the heart of entreaty and love to their Father, to surround them with holy teachers, whose love and wisdom would lighten their pathway and make them a light unto others. I told them that truth born of God was a pure and beautiful gem, and wherever it found a resting-place, wherever its bright flowers could blossom, it would beautify and strengthen, it would make the inner light of all hidden mysteries reveal themselves clear and undimmed to the inquiring soul ; for what now seemed dark, enveloped in mists, and not perceived by the awakened soul, would in its unfolding progress become a source of infinite delight and awakening wisdom through the growth of that precious flower ; and to them who received me, I gave the words which thou gavest me, and many spirits joined with me, and blessed and hallowed the scene. It was divine and heavenly to behold spirits and mortals mingling heart with heart, for I saw the earthly spirit grow better and purer. I saw it become more expansive and loving, more like the little child before its heaven-born nature has been corrupted and corroded by the soul of selfishness. But it did not take from the brightness of the spirit to give to the mortal, but greater power and stronger light overshadowed and surrounded the spirit, that more might be given the

mortal. The result of my mission to earth, kind teacher, is ended for the present, and if thou wilt but give us thy approving smile, if thou wilt place thy hand upon our heads and bless us with the Father's blessing, if thou wilt guide and direct our footsteps again among earth's children, we will return cheerful and glad, and as thou dost recede from our view, floating in the light of thy purity, we shall hear the soft and gentle murmur of thy voice still approving and upholding us with thy advice in the tasks which have been given us. Thou art great in wisdom, thou art benignant and kind, thy heart doth throb with every heavenly emotion which cometh from God, and we know that thou dost send thine influences to earth, and thy sympathies through us, who can mingle with earth's atmosphere when thou couldst not. Therefore, bless us holy ones forever. And forevermore we shall labor unceasingly for the love of the Father, which cometh down through the channels of his mercy."

Dost thou see now, that the spirits are parting each to go their respective ways, and dost thou hear the words which are spoken by the unfolded wisdom of those spirits who have come from their bright but distant home to counsel and strengthen those whose task it hath been to develop and make useful, in the sphere which they left, the labors which they are fitted to perform?

One speaks in a gentle yet commanding voice, and says: "Thou hast done well, my children; thou hast been faithful and unwearied; each hath performed a part, and each hath given to earth some light, some awakening hope. In the name of the Father we bless

thee ; return upon thine angelic mission, and perform it well, the harvest is truly great, but the laborers are few ; we will pray that the Lord of the harvest would send forth more laborers to gather up the jewels, to brush away the rough and unsightly covering which envelops many, that none may be lost or overlooked. Thy sympathies are still *with earth* ; thy labors must be on earth until others are prepared to fill thy place, whose sympathies with it are closer than thine ; meanwhile those cords which draw thee thither have drawn thy friends up to thee. And now labor for the reward which thou knowest is beyond, and when thine earthly mission is accomplished, the future shall be one bright vista of unfolding glories, and thou shalt be partakers of eternal light and wisdom, and bask forever 'n the sunlight of the smile of thy heavenly Father."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE MISER.

Monday, *February* 18, 1854.

THE following was given through Mrs. S.:—

A poor old man comes in your midst, bending beneath the weight of a heavy load, and surely he looks as though he would rather part with life itself than with that dearly-loved treasure. He comes to you bearing the same appearance he did when he left your earth. He was not of your country nor kind, but lived in a distant part of your globe. We will let him give his own history.

The spirit said that the miser did not influence the medium himself, but gave his history, which was repeated by the spirit controlling the medium.

Fellow-mortals, I have been instructed to come here to-night and give a brief sketch of my former and present life. I do, indeed, come with my much-loved treasure in my arms. I come, bearing the empty emblem of that which constituted my all-engrossing happiness while on earth—the gold, the yellow gold, which alone my soul craved “as its food and its drink,” as its highest felicity and joy. With what bitterness and regret I look back upon my earthly career. Ah, me! I must look back, there is no help for it.

I bowed down all the energies of my soul to the accumulation of this one idol. Ay! my weary soul itself bowed down daily and worshiped it as a god, whose possession would confer happiness and joy upon my whole existence. The predominance of this passion repressed all that was good and noble within me. It made me grasping and niggardly—it made me deaf to the voice of sympathy and love—it chilled my very heart's core with its golden, its false glitter. And when a soft and gentle voice within me besought a hearing, I would lock myself up within the glittering walls of my treasure and shut out every emotion save that of avarice and penury; for this, alas! was my daily companion. I used not the comforts which God had strewn so bountifully around me. My heart was too sordid to part with one penny, unless it was to keep me from actually starving. Oh, how I loved my wealth! Oh, how I gazed upon it! How I gloated over it daily and dreamed of it nightly, and hid it away, lest any should steal it out of my possession! And often, during the hours of my unquiet slumbers, I would start up frantically, thinking some one had stolen my treasures. Wretched, miserable miser that I was! I deserve the frowns and dislike of every honest and generous heart while I make this humiliating confession. But how I loved that dross I alone can tell—I alone have felt the pangs which I have endured in consequence of that base passion. But finally disease took a strong hold upon my enfeebled and emaciated frame. Oh! I was no proud subject for death to triumph over. In all my misery and rags, in all my wretchedness and filth, there was but one warm spot within, and that was where I

felt the strong love of my gold. Oh, how I hated to die and be buried beneath the surface of the earth, and leave that treasure above it! I longed to carry it with me, to rest my head upon it, that it might be my comfort when I waked in the world beyond. And that waking! That dreadful, dismal waking! Oh, how it makes me shudder now to think of it! My first consciousness was that of being in darkness and coldness, and having lost my treasure. My treasure! Oh, how I groaned, and wept, and begged for that which had been the comfort of my life! Every thing seemed gloomy and cheerless without it; and when I at last became fully conscious of my position, how dreadful, how terrible were the thoughts which filled my soul! Oh! no. No bright spirits approached me, no kindly looks welcomed me; but beings as repulsive as myself stood and beckoned me to their company. And I said within myself, O wretched man! thou hast doomed thyself to eternal misery, because of thy love of earth's base metal! There was nothing inviting or pleasant in the company of those miserable-looking beings. Their countenances expressed no other emotions save those of sensual gratification; and all their propensities seemed to be groveling and earthly. The eyes of my soul were now opened. I saw myself, my former life reflected back in those beings who were near me. They wished my society, but I did not wish theirs. As dark and repulsive as I felt my own soul to be, their horrible appearance made me rather wish to fly from them than to approach. On gazing at them more closely, I saw that they held tightly within their grasp treasures of gold. I saw them hug them up to their bosoms, and

then they would look toward me and point toward them. Yes, it indeed seemed to be part of that I had prized so highly, and which I still coveted so ardently. I was tempted to go near them when they showed me the treasure, when a bright form, which I had not before perceived, in a warning voice bade me beware how I trifled with my eternal happiness. But the love of gold was so strong within me, that I could not resist its pleadings, even for the voice of an angel. I had known no other God, and my heart yearned only for its earthly idol. Tremblingly I approached those miserable beings, and then, oh, grief and sadness! their arms contained naught but an empty show, no gold in reality, nothing but that which wore the semblance; for when I touched it, it melted from my grasp, its very touch scorched my fingers, and then it fell away from my hungry view. Oh! then I felt how lost and wretched was my condition—then I wished that I might sink out of sight, or be carried away where I should be remembered no more. But such was not my fate. Oh! how they laughed at me with a fiendish joy. They mocked me, they bid me behold the fruits of my long labors. There was a look of exultation, of triumph in their countenances as they witnessed my disappointment; and yet they, poor wretches, were ever grasping at the unreal phantom—the empty treasure. And I stood as one lost and forsaken of God and man. Who in this vast space around me cared aught, or knew aught, about a poor, insignificant soul like me? None seemed to think of my existence save those poor wretches, who seemed even more unhappy than myself; for while I knew how unreal their treasures were, they were con-

stantly grasping up that which was naught but empty air. They never looked up, and when a kindly voice was wafted to their ears on the breezes, they heard it not. No joy, no comfort for them save in that unsatisfying labor of accumulating and always losing. And now I sank upon my knees and buried my face in my hands. Yea, I bowed my head to the very earth, and prayed in bitterness and grief that God would have mercy upon me, worthless worm of the dust. Oh, how prostrate my spirit now laid in its dejection and sorrow! "Lost! lost!" I exclaimed; "no light, no mercy will beam upon me—no bright angels will come near me, no kindly voices will cheer the solitude of this awful place." And then a voice said in mine ear, "Oh! you will have gold, heaps of gold; cheer up, man, for you shall dine on gold and sup your fill of it every day. You shall revel in it, for we have been many years here. We always loved it and craved it, and don't you perceive how much of it we possess?" I turned shuddering away, for it was one of those dark, fiend-like beings who had spoken in my ear. "God help me," I said, "for I am lost eternally, lost for my love of gold." And then a deep, calm voice spoke loud and clear. It said, "O mortal! not lost for eternity, only thou hast lost many years of joy and happiness in thy spirit-life. Lost eternally? Oh, no! not eternally, for our God is a just and merciful God, and he forgives the sins of his erring children when they come to him in meekness and humility of spirit. But, mortal! thou hast lost all the joys which thou wouldst have experienced had thy hoarded wealth been given for the good of thy fellow-man—had thy cherished treasure only been made useful

in any way, thou wouldst not now feel the weight of sin and degradation which prostrates thy soul so low. And now, frail mortal, canst thou give up thy gold, or must thou, like those poor darkened souls on the other side of thee, still hug that senseless treasure to thy heart? Are thy thoughts still wrapped up in the joys of that possession? If so, thou must be like those upon whom thou art gazing. Poor spirits, how darkened are their souls! and yet they are not lost, no, not lost, but they have not yet thrown off the love of earth and earthly gratifications. Their aspirations are not for the good and the pure. They think of naught but gross animal pleasures; and as long as they desire such, as long as they seek no higher—as long as their souls are wrapped up and lost in such illusions, they can not be less degraded than they are. Oh, pity them, mortal! To think of the many precious hours they are losing in worshiping their earthly pleasures! And let it carry a deep and lasting lesson to thee, ignorant, selfish, vain mortal that thou art! for thou must now see thyself in thy true colors. Repent and be converted; thou hast many long hours, ay, years of labor before thee. Why, thou art little better than the animal which bore the animal's form and feature while on earth, and walked in a lonely position. Thou hast never shown that thou possessedst one attribute of a god-like soul; thou didst, if it were possible, disgrace thy immortal spirit by the way thou didst insult and keep it hid beneath thy earthly covering. It is even now all blurred and dimmed by the impurities of thy earthly life, and it can not stand forth in its true dignity until thou hast labored long and ardently to wash away thy

former sins. It lies with thyself; begin now, choose the way of hardship and labor, for hardship it will be for thee. Or stay here and grovel in the dust, until thy soul shall become so wearied and worn with its profitless existence, that thou wilt be glad to begin still farther off than thou mayest do now, to wash out thine iniquities and cause thy light to shine. There is much for thee to do which must be done. And when thou hast overcome the follies and sins of thy past life, when thou hast gained confidence and hope even in thy ignorance and unworthiness, thou must again descend to those poor spirits who are still in so much misery. It is thou who must stretch forth thy hand and assist them, for didst thou not, in thy earthly life, encourage them by thy acts? And thus shalt thou blot out the memory of thy sins until they shall darken thy sight no longer. There will be no lack of instructors and kindly words of encouragement. Gladly will good spirits approach all who do not repel them. But the labor lies within thyself. Thine own hand must hew down the mountains which rise to bar thy progress to that world of purity and holiness which lies far beyond."

He ceased speaking. Oh, blessed and hopeful words! That I am not eternally lost. My resolve was long since taken, friends, and so far have I profited in my toilsome but thankful journey, that I have come to you in humiliation of spirit and with thankfulness to God, who has permitted me to testify to his boundless love and forgiveness even to such a wretch as I. Good-night.



CHAPTER XXXVIII.

SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE.

New York, *March* 16, 1854.

ALL subduing and beautifying are the influences thrown around us by our intercourse with those who have outlived all the impurities and vanities of earth. Without the connecting link which binds the spheres together by a spiritual affinity, man could not, without infinite labor, rise much higher in the scale of existence than the animal. His spiritual nature, not being called forth nor acted upon, and his grosser faculties having the ascendancy in all things, the germ of his immortal being would become buried in the earthly rubbish which surrounds it, and it would, indeed, be faint and puny in its first flight from its prison-house of clay. Without the divine breathings which are daily shedding their light down upon the infantile weakness of the soul, and inciting in it hopes and longings for a future glorious existence, how little would it regard its own immortality!

Many of those who daily hold intercourse with beings who have passed from among us, and who in their love and affection call us brothers and friends, when changed from the earthly to the spiritual world, will tread its courts with familiar steps, will inhale its balmy breezes,

and scent the fragrance of its flowers as though it were the home in which they had ever existed. The life spent here would seem like a dim, disagreeable dream, a troubled remembrance which soon becomes dimmed by the dazzling distinctness of the unclouded light, which shows all things fair and pleasant. Such souls have only been staying here in anticipation of reaping the reward of their good works. Such only live here to do their Father's pleasure, that they may hereafter bask in the light of his countenance. To them the earth is naught but earth. It contains nothing so precious as the immortal souls who move upon its surface. It is but a stage whereon souls undergo the transformation necessary for their further and higher elevation in the scale of eternal progress. And those who have quaffed the goblet of heavenly nectar while tarrying here upon the borders of earth-land, are blessed, for they have shaken hands and communed with angels, their brothers, who have drawn near unto them and filled their souls with the music which comes on the wings of the morning from the far-off city of God. Man need no longer sit in darkness nor uncertainty because of his future. He need not bow his head with grief, nor dissolve his heart in tears, because of the awful punishment which awaits those who step aside from the path of rectitude. The Deity now shines forth in all his beautiful attributes of love and mercy; and the intelligent soul that seeks for light and wisdom from on high, will, ere long, be convinced of the loving kindness and forbearance which he has ever exercised toward the most ignorant and guilty of his children. They are not now met by stories of a frowning and

angry God—one who will take pleasure in pouring out the vials of his wrath, and executing judgment upon the defenseless heads of the children whom he has created. But they now see and know that their Father is just, and careth for all and every one of his creatures; and to those who will receive them shall be given angel-guides, invisible but ever near and watchful, to guide them aright. Now, children, wanderers upon the face of the earth, draw nigh with your hearts, and let your aspirations ascend, so that you may be comforted with the consolation which cometh from the great Fount of all comfort, of all joy. And they who need a physician shall be made whole.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE NEW CITY.

May 8, 1854.—Under the symbol of the “new city,” is shown the progressive development of the spiritual philosophy.

I SEE a number of persons laying the foundations of a new city. The materials they are using are of the most peculiar kind I have ever seen. The persons engaged in the labor have hopeful, cheerful faces, and seem much elated with what they are trying to bring to perfection.

They say they are going to establish a magnificent city; and all on a different plan and principle from any thing ever built before. It will excel all others in beauty and durability, and it shall stand as a pattern before the world.

But methinks there are so many minds engaged in this work, and all laying their foundations so different, they will not be substantial. Some of them will have to be taken up and relaid. Some of them will be swept away by the first storm that beats against them.

It will be a strong and a wonderful-looking city, being built by such a variety of minds, each working according to his own fancy. But I see it progressing rapidly. Some parts of it are very beautiful. Some of the struc-

tures tower high above the others, and the architecture attracts the attention of all who pass.

But why is this? Some are working leisurely and slowly, while others are toiling as though their lives are depending on the immediate accomplishment of what they are doing. They make haste to erect the structure, but do not examine the materials. They throw them together hastily, and seem only anxious to accumulate much to behold. Others have proceeded little with their labor, and look despondent, and think it will never be brought to perfection, and that they had better abandon what they have done, and return to their old habitations.

But still it progresses, though it looks strange and uneven. Now I see a few individuals who are walking about and giving orders. They command that this shall be done so, and that so; but others are not willing to obey their commands.

I fear the city will be left unfinished. There is no system—no ruling mind capable of leading all those people to do the work as it should be done. I perceive each one thinks his mode the best, and each insists on having the buildings erected to suit his own peculiar views. But the city will in time be built. It will at first be irregular and devoid of harmonious beauty, and from the singularity of its foundations, unlike any other city.

The people still labor, but they look less happy. I see dissatisfaction and murmuring in their faces. They are not satisfied with their own work, nor that of their neighbors — and they ridicule the structures around them, and say “What deformity.”

It is a strange study. It is a marvelous sight to the one who views that city in its commencement, for it shall grow and spread and be filled with a vast multitude of souls. But a long time will elapse ere it shall become pruned down and rebuilt and beautified, ere it shall have the purity and beauty of style, the tone and harmony of proportions, which its projectors intended it should have ; and it is not made for one only, or for a few, but its usefulness will be universal, and it will become the abiding-place of all mankind.

CHAPTER XL.

THE ERRING ONE.

June 23, 1854.

THIS evening a Spirit, purporting to be Mrs. Hemans, influenced Mrs. Sweet, and said:—

My dear friends, I feel deeply grateful to you for your kindness in permitting me to come and bring the poor wanderer to tell her own sad tale. I thought it better to let her speak herself, as she is the most fitting one to give the sad experience of her sad existence. I will stand by, and if the medium will be passive, she will be able to assist the poor spirit in telling all that which is necessary to be told.

[Mrs. Hemans now withdrew her influence, and another spirit took possession of the medium, and kneeling in our midst, said:—]

“Can you indeed receive a poor abandoned wretch like me in your presence, long enough to hear my sad story?”

[We said that it was our duty, and our earnest desire, to hear her story, and trusted that it would not only benefit those present, but many others, and that she could rely upon our sympathy in whatever she wished to say, and concluded by requesting her to be seated, as her humble position (kneeling) was not a

proper one among us, who were erring mortals as well as herself. Seating herself, she replied:—]

Oh! if any one had only said this to me, while I was treading the downward path to ruin, how I would have kissed the very dust beneath his feet. But none said it. Look at that lovely being who brought me here. She is angelic in her purity, and radiant in her love and charity to the fallen and erring children of earth. If such spirits dwelt in the human form upon earth, oh! what would they not do toward raising the wretched outcasts from the depths of their misery!

I once had kind and loving parents, and I once was innocent and stainless as any who wander in your midst. My heart was warm and full of love, and it was going out in sympathy toward every heart, toward every being; and all who smiled upon me were partakers of that love which was constantly asking for more objects to love, and from whom to receive love. Death deprived me of the kind protectors of my childhood, and I was thrown among strangers, and soon I became the prey of the artful and designing one, who first deceived my trusting affections, by pretending to return my love with all its fervor and warmth, and who promised to be to me all that and more which I had lost in my dear parents. These were happy hours to my young and guileless heart, but now my soul had been robbed of its purity and truth—of all that was lovely in woman—of all that gave her dignity and firmness in the power of her innocence. Then I was basely deserted—cast out upon the world with bitter taunts and sneers. O God! that I should tell it; that I should remember those first hours of my agony and suffering. But I was

not base and false-hearted then: I was not degraded in soul; I was not lost to every feeling of goodness and purity. No; my spirit loathed my body, but my spirit was crushed, and hope was dying within me. Oh! my heart was bleeding with an agony and strife unspeakable, when I had to contemplate the dark future before me. But, O my Father in Heaven! thou knowest that even then, had any hand been reached forth; had any kindly voice spoken one word of encouragement to me in my misery, they could have turned, they could have saved me from the black pollution which afterward followed; but no such sympathy was near; I met with nothing but harsh words, and forbidding looks. Oh! then my soul awoke to the falsehood and deception and to the black treachery of man. Then all the kindness and all the love of my nature was turned into bitterness and gall. Oh! they trampled upon me; they made me a thing of merchandise; they made me worse than a slave; they turned me into a very fiend, to encompass the destruction of the unwary, who are easily led into the snares of temptation which is set for them; and while my face was wreathed in smiles, and my eyes shone bright with the unnatural glare of the dark passions which were roused within me, my heart was naught but a black caldron of suppressed rage and hatred to all mankind. They cared not for the burning tears which I shed in the fullness of my grief and shame; they mocked at my remorse and bitterness of soul, when black despair would sometimes fasten itself upon my spirit, and then I would shriek out in anguish, and then I would pray God that I might die, that I might be taken away from the scenes of horror which I was

enduring ; but no, I was doomed to live on, to become hard, and cold, and callous to every thing—to forget that I had ever been pure and innocent—to forget that a mother had ever kissed my cheek, and blessed me, and called me her precious, much loved child—to forget that I had loved every thing that was good and beautiful. Ah ! it must have been a dream, and this life is only the dark reality, the awakening from a pleasant dream to black misery. And then what cared I for death, the future ? Oh ! there was rest, and peace in the grave ; and the future—who dare think of the future, who lived as I did ? who dared to raise one prayer—to pronounce the name of God, with lips as polluted as mine ? Why, I dared not raise my eyes ; I dared not touch with my polluted garments, the pure sisters of earth. If they knew I was near them, they would shrink as though my touch were contagion itself. And man, the noblest work of God, they say, why, he trampled upon me, he spurned me, he would not permit those whom he protected, and cared for—who had a claim upon him—even to look upon such as I, vile things that we were. And yet we had souls. But death came to me sooner than I anticipated. The agonizing strife—the wretched life which I led—soon made my body unable longer to retain the spirit within it, and I lay down weary, oh ! how weary, to die, to be forgotten. And had death no terrors to me, you say ? Oh ! yes, ten thousand terrors, but the spirit and the body were alike too weary, too worn out, even to feel the terrors of death. A dreamless sleep was all I prayed for ; the quiet of the grave was all I had to look forward to ; for I dared not to think of resurrection ; it was too hor-

rible, it was too frightful for me to anticipate ; and when the spirit was at last released, and the worthless clod was wrapped up and laid in its narrow bed, to mingle again with the dust, and become food for the worms, I was glad the loathsome thing was hidden from sight, never more to be revealed to the eye of man. And you ask where my spirit went. Ah ! poor crouching, trembling spirit, well I knew where I went. I awakened to consciousness in a strange and gloomy place. I was on earth, and yet I was not of earth. I was fain to find some resting-place, yet knew not whither to turn. But who are these approaching me now ? It can not be that the same wretched companions whom I mingled with on earth, are to be my companions here. Why, here they are, coming in a band to meet me. Oh ! misery is here also. Hark to the fiendish laugh with which they approach me. Yes ; they have come to take me with them to their abode in the spirit-land. O thou just and merciful God ! dost thou permit such wretchedness to reign here also ? Oh ! I am lost—lost forever. My companions here, are like my companions there ; but how can it be otherwise ? for if I saw any one spirit who was different, who was good, or pure, or light, I should flee away out of sight ; I should hide myself with shame ; I could not live in the sight of the good and pure. See how black and repulsive my spirit looks. Oh ! I now see myself as I am. Then it seems there is no rest, no cessation of misery, even here, and this is a dark awakening to a darker reality. Oh ! can it be there is no death ? can it be there is no entire oblivion of the past ? Oh ! it seems not, it seems not, for the recollection of my earthly life comes crowd-

ing like a mountain torrent into my now quickened memory. Oh! the first of it, how pleasant and fair it seems; but oh! take that picture away, for I see my father and mother there; I see my pure and innocent sister. Oh! take it away, take it away!

And now, see the blackened images of sin and hypocrisy, of deception and desertion, and then headlong distraction and misery, all rise up before me. *That* is no dream; *that* is all real and vivid to my sight, as though written in letters of fire upon my scared and scorched heart. Oh! must it continue? Will it not cease? They let me reflect here; they would not let me do so there. I see their misery; I see the expression of unhappiness upon their countenances; but they have no power to touch or molest me, unless I join them in their unhallowed works. This is better than it was there. There they compelled me to do wrong; here they only act from inclination to do wrong. This is not quite so gloomy, not quite so chilling and terrible to my soul, as my life upon earth was. There is a power within me to do wrong if I am so minded, but there is no outside power to compel me to do wrong if I do not desire it. This is not surely so soul-harrowing a place to be in, even in its saddened gloom, as the place I left. But I have earnestly desired to speak with some who are in this place, and yet, I dare not. I follow them about; I see their actions; I hear their profane and disgusting language; I see their dark and forbidding countenances, and then I see that I am as loathsome and repelling as they, and yet I fear to mingle with them. There seems to be a power within me that keeps me passive. But surely I am not so to re-

main. I must have some sympathy, some companionship, even if it is among those who are like myself. I had expected a far greater state of misery than this. My soul had pictured to itself some black abyss, replete with every horror which the mind could imagine, kept in readiness for the evil-doer. My punishment is lighter than I deserve; but oh! how unhappy I am.

My mother, she told me of bright and glorious angels, when I was a prattling little infant, and she learned me to pray to my Heavenly Father, and she told me many strange, but now almost forgotten things, of a beautiful country, and a golden city, and angels with harps in their hands, singing the praises of God, and of little children who dwelt in that bright place, and of him who said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Oh! I thought of this now, for the first time in many long years of suffering, and shame, and remorse; and I wondered, and oh! how I wished that I might know where my mother and father then dwelt. I wondered where the innocent sister was, who had left us. My mother once told us that she had left us to dwell with God. But I could not speak of heaven; I could not utter those hallowed names in that place. Oh no, my soul had sunk within me. And thus I was thinking how I should gain some information regarding those dear friends who had been so long separated from me. Oh! the bitter agony which my spirit felt, when I thought I might never more behold them, the gulf between us seemed so deep and wide.

Hitherto, none had forced their presence upon me; but they seemed to act and look as if they expected me to join them. My soul, I knew, was black with

iniquity and evil-doing, but there was yet left within me a faint spark which dared to hope there might be a better, a more inviting place than this, in which I might spend the long life which seemed opening before me. I did not now wish to join them, although they seemed to be the most fitting companions for me. I seemed to myself to have lost that recklessness and hardihood which had carried me through my wretched and degrading career of vice. And there were now two principles working: something new and strange. I could not understand the feeling which prompted these emotions.

Presently, one of the spirits approached me, and taking me kindly by the hand, asked me to join them; bade me to enjoy myself; to feel as though I were among friends, and promised to show me all the mysteries, all the novelties—to initiate me into all things pertaining to their mode of life. And still I stood undecided. What was this new wish which had sprung up in my heart so suddenly? Why did I linger and wish for something, I knew not what? I had gazed on and partaken of vice and misery so long, that I had no desire to explore further into its mysterious darkness; but how should I fly from it? how should I escape the eternal punishment that was awaiting me—living over again the wretched life which I had just left?

My attention was next attracted to a voice which seemed to speak in my ear softly and sweetly. I turned around and looked, and oh! there I beheld so lovely a sight. A being in white and softly flowing raiment stood beside me. Oh! so pure and bright she

seemed, that I scarcely dared to look,—that I scarcely dared to move, lest my foul blackness might taint her pure robes. And she reached forth her hand to me,—*to me*, defiled and repulsive as I was, and she called me sister. Oh! that word; music never sounded sweeter than that simple word sounded in my ears, when she addressed me so kindly and looked at me so lovingly. She told me she had followed me from my death-bed; she told me she had accompanied me thus far, and if I chose, that she would be to me a sister and a guide; that if my spirit was weary of sin and of sinning, I might now begin to redeem the past, and live a life of purity for the future—that I might commence the labor which I must perform, ere my soul could ever taste aught of joy, or peace, wherever it might wander. She told me that two paths were now open before me. On one side were those who still loved the darkness better than the light, and who were making for themselves many bitter hours of repentance, to be worked out hereafter; for she said to me, the human soul may sink deeper in the depths of sin and iniquity, but it can not go beyond the reach of mercy—it can not become lost forever—but it can create for itself what will seem an eternity of labor, and regret, and remorse, by refusing to return into the paths of wisdom when the opportunity is given it, for none are compelled to do right—to progress—they must do it from the love, the strong, innate desire to follow the upward path, and when they enter the world of spirits, their senses are opened to a true perception of their position, and they are met with kind words and gentle persuasions, to take the right road in the beginning of their spiritual

journey. They are told the difference ; they are shown how they may outlive the sin of their lives, by living in accordance with the commands and laws of their Heavenly Father, if they will but bend an ear to the wise counsel which is given them. And if they will not receive such advice and assistance, where else can they go, but to mingle with those who are most congenial to their state of mind ? And there they must remain, until they desire to do that which will be acceptable and pleasing in the sight of God and of good spirits, before they can earn a place where they may learn wisdom and knowledge, without which they must be eternally wretched and unhappy.

The spirit told me all these things, and more, and I asked her what I should do, how I should begin to *labor* for eternal happiness ; for that was the word she used : it was a new word to me, in connection with the joys of heaven or eternity. I had supposed that Spirits of the blest did but sing the praises of God in the fullness of their joy, and not a thought of labor. And then she questioned me as to my knowledge of many things which I had never before thought of : they seemed to me to belong more to earth than heaven.

I said I knew nothing of the things of which she spoke. She told me I was ignorant and undeveloped, in an earthly as well as in a spiritual sense of the word ; and why, said she, were these useful faculties given you if not to be used ? And then she told me that I must study to learn all that concerned my own being—all within myself that was capable of being useful to myself, and that others must be developed, and refined, and acted upon.

I was amazed at her words, and I felt as helpless and useless as a little child. She told me if I desired now to begin a life of usefulness, and of gratitude to my Father, whose mercy and loving-kindness had sent ministering spirits unto me, that I must begin with my whole soul to gain knowledge and wisdom ; that I must leave all those dark and repelling spirits who claimed my society. If I desired to leave them, I could do so, and I should be assisted and strengthened to pursue the labor which I had begun. I must begin it sometime, and were it not better for me to begin it now? were it not easier for me to blot out one lifetime of sin, than to live on in remorse and wretchedness, and sink still deeper, and hug my chains still closer?

And then I spoke of my dear friends, and asked if I might ever hope to see them ; and the words which she spoke, fell upon my weary spirit as dew upon the thirsty earth. "Raise up your head," said she, "and labor bravely and earnestly, for your labors will be rewarded ; and those parents whom you love so much, will come to you shortly to bless you and help you. *They* can not come now. It is my duty to come first, to teach you your duty. Oh ! if they did come near to you now, it would break your heart, it would crush your spirit quite down, to see the agony and suffering which they endured on your account. If they told you of the long and weary watching, and the hopeless efforts with which they strove to snatch you from destruction, your soul would melt at their sorrows and their struggles. And when they saw you encompassed by the dark and hardened wretches who plotted your ruin, they were unhappy and wretched ; they could not rest in their man-

sions of joy and peace, but they grieved and sorrowed for your sake. And that mother will tell you how she has wept bitter tears of sorrow over your nightly couch, and prayed that you might but die and be where her spirit could reach you, her child, whom she had loved, and still did love so well. But finally, the dark spirits would cluster closer about you and drive her away, and oh! then she wrung her hands in despair—then her grief was unspeakable.”

I said, “O kind spirit! tell me no more, but show me how I may do any thing which will enable me to reach, to see but for a moment, the faces I love—to be clasped in my dear mother’s arms again, as when I was an innocent child—to hear my father’s blessing on my infantile head. Oh! a life of misery were cheap to earn all this. Oh! let me not look back again to where all is dark, and chilling. Oh! let me do any thing, every thing, so that I may be saved—saved from misery—from the memory of misery, and I will bless you, and worship you.”

“No, no, my sister,” said she, “no worship is given here, save to God, and that is when the full heart is overflowing with his love, and his goodness, and then it sings a song of joy and gladness.” And now others approach me. How kindly they look upon me! They do not frown; they do not shrink from my presence, as though I were pestilence itself. Oh, no! but they hail me as one who wishes to live a new life. They can not live it for me; they can not perform my labor; that can be done only for myself: but they speak for me words of encouragement, they sympathize with my past sufferings, and they point me upward, to where I may one day ascend also, and see and taste of the joys which

are prepared for those whose labors entitle them to such reward. Oh, no, I can not, I will not return. I had thought, while on earth, that all memory of me was forgotten. I little knew that I was grieving with unutterable grief, those who still loved me. Oh! what a thought, what a knowledge was this for me—to know that those dear ones who had passed on to their peaceful homes, should, by their love and affection for me, be made unhappy even in so bright and holy a place as heaven. Oh! how very unhappy and wretched it made me, when I knew it; and this spirit tells me, that I shall have to exert all my strength and energies in giving to others that which I receive, that it may benefit them likewise. She says there is no selfishness here; we receive but to give, and to benefit each other. Oh! could the poor, misguided inhabitants of earth—those who have lived and suffered as I have done—but realize how bright a hope is held out for them, how great a happiness is in store, would they not forsake the downward path? They could not, oh, no, they could not refuse the kind invitation! If they could but see the kind friends whose hearts they wring with grief, they would not encourage those fiendish spirits who encompass them about, and keep them under their control, and make them slaves to vice and sorrow. Every word and every action of the past, comes up before the once startled vision in the world of spirits. Oh! that they would not make the record longer and blacker. Oh! that they would cease at once doing that which will take many long years of suffering to undo; for the soul must be purified through suffering, and developed

through labor, and thus it will progress unceasingly toward the throne of God.

My words are feeble, to tell you of the feelings which are gushing up from my heart. Oh! how happy and buoyant I feel, when I know that the fetters of sin, which were bound about my spirit so firmly on earth, have burst, and my spirit is free. No strong hand to pull me back and threaten me, if I want to do right: none to trample upon my spirit and spurn me from their presence when I am sorrowing and weary. Oh! no, the bright spirits come near me, and wipe away my tears. They lay their soft hands upon my aching brow, and whisper words of bright hope to my desponding heart; for they say, that I shall yet outlive all the bitter memories of the past in my efforts to do good to myself and others. And I shall ascend up to that beautiful place, where my brow will be decked with a never-fading garland of flowers, and my robe will be spotless as the snow and dazzling as the sun; where my heart will sing sweet songs which will chime in with the music of the angels, and the songs of the redeemed shall be wafted on the zephyrs of heaven to the throne of the Father.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE IDLER.

February 2, 1854.

WORTHY laborers, to you who are earnestly working that you may benefit your fellow-creatures, I come to tell my story, that you may publish it abroad as a lesson for many. I feel how unworthy I am to stand in your midst, to utter a word concerning myself, but it were a pleasure to do even this small act, if by so doing I shall benefit one soul.

I was an idle, thoughtless youth. Idleness was my besetting sin. The years of my life which I should have spent in pursuing some useful duty toward the world, were squandered away by me in idleness and frivolity. Seeking only my own gratification, and striving but to obtain all my selfish desires, I wasted the best years of my life in idleness and self-gratification. I thought not of the obligations which I owed my Maker. I cared not for the duties which I owed my fellow-man; but lived only to care for self, and grasped at every fleeting pleasure ere it vanished from my crazed view. And old age soon found me a useless encumbrance upon the earth. I had benefited none, therefore there were none to love me, or to feel grateful to me for past kindness. I had not relieved the widow or the orphan; I had not raised a finger to relieve the suf-

fering or sorrow which my eyes had witnessed ; but had passed them by in a cold manner, only thinking what I should next find to please my own insatiate appetite.

And when I neared the portals of the tomb, when my limbs grew feeble and my sight grew dim, and when every thing began to look dreamy and fading to my aged eyes, I was compelled to look back upon my past life. Oh, how I searched, and gazed, for some redeeming deed to relieve the dark volume of selfishness which was spread out before me ! But no bright deed of love or charity illumined with its rays that dark page. And I was laid in the tomb, unwept, and unregretted by all, save one or two whom the ties of nature had bound me to. I had cared for none save myself, then why should others care for me. My wealth had been sufficient to make me independent of the assistance of others, and my cold, selfish heart was so bound up within itself, that it asked not for sympathy beyond itself and its own desires. And I left the world in this condition. Religion had never been used by me as a mask, for I needed not such covering ; and my heart had not thought a knowledge of the future state necessary for its present happiness, and I rather turned from it with contempt ; it was a subject I never liked to meddle with. The dark side had always terrified me, and filled me with uneasy forebodings ; and the brighter side, the fair picture of heaven which had often been drawn within my hearing, had appeared to me as a pleasant and beautiful dream, which had been conjured up by some poetical mind, with all its pleasant fancies and attributes. I could not conceive of any thing like a reality about it. But if at all true, I wished that the heaven might be

my abode ; and the endless torment must surely be a fiction.

When I awoke in the spirit-world, I shuddered. The atmosphere which surrounded me was oppressive ; I could not gaze through it, so as to see any great distance, and my faculties all seemed confused and disturbed, as though I had had some terrible dream—some hideous nightmare. Yes ! I felt as though I had been passing through some dreadful place. I still felt the icy chill of death at my heart, and it seemed as though the spirit was unwilling to leave its earthly temple. I had emerged into a world, a place, I knew not what, I knew not where ; I knew nothing about it, and my mind reverted back to the past, and I tried to collect together every thing with which my mind had been stored, and out of that to form some idea of my present locality. And first, one thought would seem to point me in the right direction, and then another memory would drive me another way. Oh, how uncertain and vacillating I felt ! I knew not where to turn, or where to go. I was oppressed by a sense of loneliness and desolation. A cold and gloomy fear seemed to have taken possession of my heart. I could look for no sympathy there. I had asked for none ; nor did I deserve it ; but I did wish that some friendly hand would guide me to some place of rest, for I stood as one distracted, with a measureless space spread out before my view when I was able to gaze calmly upon it. But I knew not what direction to take, so I wandered about at random, hoping to meet with some one who would give me the required aid. O friends, how aimless I felt ! No object in view ; nothing to search for ; nothing to look forward to ; nothing to ex-

pect ! And I wandered about unknowing and unknown. I saw many people as I ascended on my journey from earth ; but none accosted me, none seemed attracted to seek my company ; no eager gaze was fixed upon me. I seemed to excite no attention, or interest, I was not even a subject of curiosity among the people when I passed ; but, uncared for and unsought, I wended my way alone, and traveled until I became weary and heartsick. In my stubborn silence I had determined to speak to none, unless they first addressed me ; but this had now become a painful task which I had imposed upon myself, and I wished that some one would draw near and speak to me, that I might ask something about the country in which I found myself. But none approached me. So I arose, and went near a group of persons, who were speaking together, and addressed them, and told them I was a stranger, that I had just left my home on earth, where my wealth and station had commanded attention and respect, but I had been called away, and was in a strange and new place, a place in which I was ignorant in every particular.

One among them, who seemed to speak with authority, gazed upon me sternly, and asked me why I had not prepared for my eternal journey. He said, from my present appearance, I had dwelt long enough on earth to have made ample preparations for the journey which I was now commencing ; but here I had come naked of every thing which was most needful ; no knowledge, no chart to tell me of the bearings or character of the country or people ; nor had I even besought aid of any, neither on earth nor in the world of spirits, but had come there proudly and presumptuously,

and depending entirely upon my own merits and knowledge.

I told him I had always regarded such matters, merely as the imaginings of the minds which gave them forth, and that I had no sure guide, no positive testimony, to assure me of the truth.

“Weak and sinful man,” said he, “was not thy heart sufficient evidence to thee in its wondrous workings, in its wrestlings with the baser passions? Was not this sufficient evidence to thee of thy immortal being? Was not the still, small voice, which often came up in tones of reproof and admonition from the depths of thy soul, a warning voice, a monitor to admonish thee of thy shortcomings? But no, these were not sufficient to draw out thy soul from the folds of selfishness and worldliness which had enveloped it. And thou didst spend the precious time which thy Creator gave thee, wherewith to develop and beautify thy spirit on earth for its immortal destiny, in thinking only of the things which pertained to thy fleeting existence in thy transient home. O mortal! how couldst thou be so self-deceiving? Why rob thy soul of the rich feast which had been waiting for thee now, had thy days and hours been improved in laboring for the benefit of thy brethren and sisters? Why so foolish as to cut thyself off from all sympathy within the walls of thy material stronghold, by making of thyself an idol, for thy own soul to fall down and worship; by thinking of naught beside, nor striving to propitiate any other power than that which lay in thy own heart. For to thyself alone has all thy earthly worship been devoted. Thou hast sought no other God, nor worshiped no greater heaven, than

that which comprises thine own enjoyments. Oh, look back upon thy past life, and wonder that thou hast not long since been cut down as an encumbrance of the ground! Thou didst not have to struggle with poverty and want; suffering was not thy companion; therefore thy sins are greater than that of those whose necessities would compel them to labor for a subsistence. There was much for thee to do, but thou didst not perform any thing, only for thyself, when thou mightst have done so much to relieve, to raise up, to enlighten those around thee. Even if thou hadst done it only in a material sense, thy sin would have been less, for thou wouldst have still been cultivating the love of kindness to thy neighbor. Thou hast indeed come here empty-handed, and idleness will now be thy portion, until labor would seem the greatest boon which Heaven could bestow. O idle man! thou shalt have thy fill of idleness, until the very name of self and idleness shall be a sound of grief in thy ears. And the many precious days and weeks which were spent by thee in doing naught upon earth, shall now loom up before thy sight and appear as centuries of time. Oh, each day, each hour which has been wasted by thee, will yet call for a retribution at thy hands. And thou must learn to abhor the sin of idleness, as one of the greatest bars in the gates which have shut out thy entrance to the bright abodes of the blest. And with bitter tears and sorrowful heart thou wilt have to begin to labor, the labor for eternal life. The hours wasted by thee must all be accounted for here, for not one moment which has been allotted in the life of man shall be blotted out from the record, but shall appear before him, while any thing appears

thereon which leaves a shadow of darkness. And when by long years of repentance and labor thou hast blotted out all thy past offenses, then shalt thou indeed begin to travel upward. When thy heart shall have melted, and all its coldness and hardness shall have vanished, and when it asks for sympathy and love, and freely gives them in return, and when humility, like a white mantle, shall envelop thy soul and shine out upon thy countenance, then will the past indeed have become a dream. Oh! when thou thinkest of it, thou wilt kneel down, and with upraised hands and eyes thank the great God in all his majesty and glory, for making thee feel how unworthy thou hast been of his loving-kindness and sweet forgiveness to thy many shortcomings. For the proud heart shall find no habitation in the mansions of the blest, but only the meek and the lowly, the souls who labor because labor is a work of love, shall find an entrance prepared to receive them."

Oh, brothers and sisters who are still in thy temples of clay, whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it heartily. Labor while the day lasts; let not the precious moments go to waste, for they must all be accounted for in eternity; they must all be repaid; and every deed done in the body shall stand forth in light or in dark colors, to confront you there on your entrance. And therefore I say, Watch and pray, for the night of death cometh, and thy soul will surely misgive thee for wasted time and opportunity; for God is infinite in wisdom; his love is never ending, and his mercy endureth forever.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE BEGGAR.

February 23, 1854.

THIS evening a spirit came and said :—

It is needless for me to give you a history of my earthly life. It is one which you are all, more or less, familiar with in some of its phases, as you daily witness in your streets those objects of want and misery called beggars. The position which I occupied in your world, was owing to the circumstances which surrounded me when I entered it. Therefore it was no sin of mine, nor no vicious course of conduct which reduced me to the station which I occupied. I was simply born a beggar, and reached the estate of man, being a beggar still. Circumstances had so encompassed me, that I could never rise above that one condition ; and I passed from this world into the next, bearing all the characteristics of my mendicant's life.

I was not considered wicked, but merely ignorant, and I thought if heaven was any pleasanter place than earth, food and clothing more easily obtained, and the comforts and luxuries of which I had heard, but not partaken of, were there in abundance, it must be a very pleasant exchange. For when I have suffered from cold and hunger, and have begged for a farthing to

buy some food, I have often imagined that the cold and dreary earth could be only a place of punishment for some; and that heaven must be the reward of those who had suffered while on earth; for its goods always seemed to me so unequally divided, that I could not think that God, as a just God, would permit part of his creatures to live in luxury and ease, and compel the other part to misery and degradation. I, in my simplicity, could not see it was the work of man, and was caused by the laws which man had made; he controlling the circumstances, and even, in a measure, the destinies of the race. The torments of hell I conceived to apply to those who had turned the good things which God had given them into wasteful and riotous excesses; who had abused his rich gifts by turning them into instruments to serve their own sensual passions and appetites.

Man might be spiritual and pure for aught I knew, but the most I had ever received from any of those who pretended to be law-makers and teachers, was angry reproof because of my poverty and want, and an admonition to reform, which I would gladly have followed had I been furnished with the means to do it; but I only returned to wallow in the mire again.

The spirit-life opened a new field to my astonished vision. When I put on the garb of immortality, I was a beggar no longer, but kind spirits came near me, and greeted me as though I had been an expected friend. They welcomed me from out of my state of bondage and ignorance into the world of liberty and light. They clothed me in clean and comely robes, and they fed me upon the bread of eternal life, which is called

wisdom. And they gave me to drink of the waters of that stream which flows through the beautiful city called Holy. And as I quaffed deep draughts thereof, I thirsted no more, save for the unsearchable love of the Father. I felt that I was indeed a new being. My childhood had known but few joys, and my after-life none : then you may judge how bright and beautiful a place the lowest seat in heaven would seem to me ; I mean by that, how dazzling and fair then seemed every thing which my eyes beheld, while I was only in the first sphere, or in the infant school, so to speak, after leaving earth. Oh, how greedy my ears drank in every sound of wisdom and knowledge, and how rapidly my soul expanded as it beheld the opening glories of the immortal world ! They carried me from sphere to sphere, as my ignorance and grossness was cast aside, and so my heart received the love of God.

Fair and lovely spirits now meet me, and take me by the hand, and show me the wonderful works of the glorious Creator. They support and sustain my faltering steps ; they bear me up, and breathe into my soul high and holy thoughts, and now I feel that God is indeed just and wise, that he is all-powerful in his love and mercy, and that though man may trample on and crush his fellow-men on earth, or so warp and control their circumstances as to cause them misery and suffering, and condemn them to ignorance ; 'tis only on earth they can do it ; it extends no farther, and whatsoever ye shall do on earth to your fellow-man, be it just or unjust, ye shall be rewarded accordingly when ye put off the flesh and put on the spirit, for our God is all just and glorious, and his laws endureth forever.

CHAPTER XLIII.

INSIGNIFICANCE OF MAN.

March 2, 1854.

Mrs. SWEET was influenced and repeated some poetry, after which the spirit said:—

Friends, would that I could speak with the tongue of an angel through this instrument, and tell thee of the glorious beauties which are now before mine eyes, but which thou dost not behold. I would tell thee of more beauty and serene joy than thy soul in its earthly materialism ever dreamed of.

The art of the painter hath failed to give thee even the faintest glimpse of the heavenly elysium. And yet thou dost think thine earth beautiful, thy sun glorious, and thy moon resplendent in her mild softness. And thou dost feel humiliated, when thou dost behold these wonderful works of thy Father which is in heaven. Thou dost think thy mountains high and towering, because their tops reach and penetrate the clouds; thou dost think thy oceans broad and boundless, because thy puny arm can not encompass them as thou dost smaller things; and thy soul is filled with wonder when thou dost behold the bright and twinkling stars, and thy imagination is endeavoring in vain to conceive of the multitude of worlds which are above thee. O man! thou art but as the least atom—as

the smallest particle of all his wonderful creations. Thy soul, which at times seems filled with great and mighty thoughts, would become humbled in the very dust couldst thou but conceive how small a thing thou art, and how great and all omnipotent is the power which gave thee being—the mind from whence thou emanated. Thy days on earth are few and fleeting. Thou art as one of the shadows which sometimes float through the mind in a dream. Thou dost perform thy part sometimes well and sometimes ill in thy brief career, but which leaves an indelible mark upon thy spirit for its entrance into another state. And when thy fevered existence hath closed, and thy spirit hath mounted up, up, higher into the vast creation above thee—the spirit-world—then will thine eyes be opened, then shalt thou see as much more of the glory and sublimity of the works of thy Creator, as thy spirit is able to bear. For according to thy earthly life, wilt thou be more or less able to partake of its greatness. And now, if thy soul hath become so quickened and expanded in its spirit-light, thou shalt be taken by the hand by one of the white-robed angels, and he will show thee of the glory and majesty of the kingdom of thy Creator. He will point thee to worlds rolling in space upheld by *his* will, dazzling in their light because of their nearness, because of their purity, and because of the smile of the Most High God which ever shineth upon them. And he will show thee blazing suns, one of whose glorious rays would outshine thy earthly luminary. And he will show thee moons and stars, whose beauty and splendor thou hadst never conceived of; and oceans, whose waters are so pure

and placid in that spiritual land, that angels soar over and dip their wings, and then are refreshed by drinking of their waters; and mountains, whose tops thou canst not reach with thy puny gaze.

Oh, how vast and broad, how illimitable and grand beyond the greatest conceptions of all earth's children, is the length and breadth of the universe—the spirit-world—which lies just beyond your own! And verily when thy soul hath entered its precincts, thou wilt fall down and worship. And in thy deep humility thou wilt say: “I was naught but a worm of earth. I was no better than a clod of the valley, therefore give me strength and wisdom, that I may praise thee in all thy works, O my Father!”

CHAPTER XLIV.

CAPABILITIES OF THE SOUL.

New York, *June 22*, 1854.

As the stars differ from each other in brightness and magnitude, so is every soul like the many surrounding it, even when it first emanates from the bosom of its Creator or parent. Some souls, it would seem, have already traveled half their journey, when they first become intelligent thinking beings upon earth. The clearness and capability of their thought, the beauty and strength of their understanding making the hearts of all glad who are near them. Such souls, my friends, have passed through refining processes before they reached your sphere, and are only continuing the brightness of the link which binds them so closely to their home above. They are like bright sparks emanating from the pleasant smile of the Deity himself. They seem to keep up the connection more untainted and beautiful between man and his Maker, for the loving spirit looks with gladsome, and yet pitying eyes upon all of his Father's children, whether happy or unhappy. And the child's first book is constantly spread out before his eyes in the great face of nature. The pictures which adorn its pages have all been placed there by the Father's hand, and by the Father's love, and the

progressed soul feels this love, even within his breast. It is either filling him with emotions of thankfulness and love to his Maker, or he is pained and sorrowing to behold the wretchedness and misery of his brothers and sisters. And looking abroad, he beholds the need of labor. That soul sees the distance, the dark and forbidding distance, which lies between the Father and a portion of his children, and then he feels that there is a want of confidence, of trust, of faith, of hope. He sees the ignorance of those beneath him, who yet claim kindred with him; and he sees the clear and shining light above him, falling like gentle dew upon his own heart, and yet they know not how to partake of it. This is the feeling which first stirs up the energies of his nature. This gives more strength and endurance to the soul grasping for something higher and better. For the soul which drinks deeply at the fountain of love and wisdom, is ever thirsting for more and more of its pure and refreshing waters, and the God-like attributes which lie slumbering in the soul become aroused, and stretching forth his arm, his heart is filled to overflowing with love to his fellow-man. He feels there is a great and mighty labor to perform, and he feels the whole responsibility of that labor resting upon himself, and there is no peace or contentment in the soul, only when he is laboring for those souls who are still slumbering in the darkness of the night beneath him. These heaven-sent aspirations raise him up higher and higher, until he stands face to face, and communes with the angels. A glorious thrill of pleasure seems to pervade his whole being, as with new light and strength the soul is expanding? The new-born nature is raising it up. He

has forgotten the trifles and vexations of earth, for he has toiled, he has gazed upon the unfolding beauty of heaven, and his heart has become as a green field filled with flowers, whose sweet perfume is giving him new strength and manhood. He stretches forth his hands, and he feels so strong and so firm in his newly developed strength that he can grasp the universe. And thus he lives mayhap a short life here, but one full of high and noble aspirations, and goes down to the grave with many plans, which, had they been carried out, would have made mankind happier and better. But does his work end here? has he but lived to have his soul made almost delirious with dreams of happiness to come to his fellow-man, never to be realized? Oh, no; he but felt the longings of his nature; his soul beat its wings against its prison-house, vainly to be free; to do all which it saw in the glorious future, and to become that which it felt it must become ere its work was finished. And now he has entered the spirit-world in the midst of all these dreamings, and he looks around amazed and astonished, for it is indeed a world of reality and action. It is neither composed of clouds nor ethereal substances, but it is a world whose governments and laws are those which must be upheld and conformed to by every soul who abides in that place. There are other labors to be performed than those of reclining on beds of sweet flowers, and gazing upon the never-fading beauties of the scene, of listening to music made by the angels, and to be fanned by the zephyrs of heaven. This is all beautiful and high-sounding; it all exists, and may be attained; but this is not the sole object of the immortal soul; ease and enjoyment are not among the attributes

or occupations which employ the time of those who are laboring for immortality. The progressed soul, upon whom the light of wisdom has dawned, looks not upon these sensual (for they are sensual) as the highest enjoyments of heaven. He can realize how far the soul begins to feel the capability residing within him, when the spirit may gaze upon spiritual things. Why, the first glance of the enlightened spirit is so grand, so comprehensive, is so unlike anything his eyes beheld while on earth, that his soul instantly begins to expand. It has hitherto been too small, too narrow, too contracted, to see magnificence or beauty upon a higher scale than earth presented. But now, his soul does not shrink, it does not fall into nothingness upon beholding the works of the Father; but it begins to expand, he begins to feel in his own bosom a world as large, ay, larger, for he is beginning to look up to see if there are any worlds larger than that upon which he is at a level with. Now that soul feels already that the world within him is as large as that which he left below. He feels that a mighty, a godlike power resides within him. He is firm and strong because he looketh right up and fixeth his gaze upon the Father with a child-like confidence—with a child's trust. And the great laws of nature are all becoming unfolded to his vision, and he sees and feels that he can understand them. He is now a fully developed spirit; he is now prepared to take his place with others who have perhaps been there many, many years, and he at once feels that he is an individualized being, that he must stand alone and do his work unaided, except by the kindly counsel and advice of others. But he is raised at once, as it were, from the plane of

earth to the second sphere. He is now capable of leading others, and he now begins his work of redeeming the souls whom he is fitted to approach. He is listened to and sought after because of the wisdom which falls from his lips. A glow of light and joy surrounds his person wherever he may move, because he is performing a great and noble task. He is re-creating. He is molding over the souls—those which contained so small a spark of intelligence; he is breathing into other souls life and animation; he is divesting them of the heavy envelopes of darkness which they had long slumbered in. Why, there are immortal souls in the spheres who scarcely know or understand yet, the meaning of the words “Our Father.” No, a soul which has been touched by the divine power of life, which has been bathed in the sea of spiritual love, which has been brightened by wisdom, must descend down below and bring up from their slumbers the almost darkened soul. And that soul is now more fitted to approach this wanderer than those who have come into the spirit-world, babes as it were, not having attained their manhood. They know not how to pity earth’s children; their development has been of a different nature. And now that soul appears as a god of light and wisdom to many. For them who need a tangible god, he is indeed gentle and kind, and they are gradually led upward and onward until the faint spark which they called soul has become larger and brighter, and finally they are brought to understand that God is a Spirit pervading and beautifying all who know that he is none other than their Father. And still the soul has only commenced its progression even thus far. In developing others it becomes

developed itself, and it progresses on from one experience to another, coming out each time brighter and purer, giving evidence of its fitness for ascending at some future time, and leaving its labors behind it, to enjoy in purity and holiness that sphere whose inhabitants are but the rarefied essences of spiritual intelligences, and lost in the mazes of endless eternity.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE SKEPTIC.

July 31, 1854.

I AM wandering in a dark and lonely place. I see no other human being save myself; there is no light to guide me on my way but that which comes from a few straggling, distant stars. The road is uneven, and overgrown by brambles and briers, which impede my progress at every step I take, causing me pain and vexation. I can not understand why it is that I am left alone to wander through this gloomy, death-like valley. I hear the wind rustling among the trees, but it does not cool my brow nor give comfort to my heart. I hear the rushing of waterfalls, but they sound so distant to my ear, that it might be a dream for aught I know. Shall I never get through this rugged place and tread again upon the smooth, green earth? It seems to me that a great change has passed over my being within a short space of time. It was but yesterday that I lived upon earth, surrounded by those who loved me and whom I loved. I cared not for the future, I believed not in the *reality* of a future, in the existence of a supreme being whom men call God. What cared I for the future? It was naught but a blank, for I thought I should pass away even as the grass and the

flowers, and be forgotten among the decaying mass of corruption. And I hardened my heart to every whispering and invitation which *would* come, in spite of my efforts, to draw forth my soul from its darkness and lethargy. But suddenly the spirit takes its flight from the body—that spirit which I had supposed was but a part, and could not exist longer without the body, but which I now found suddenly detached from it. And I am sorely amazed and troubled. I had not surmised such a thing as this could occur. I have lost the body that served me upon earth, but here I find another. It seems I have but cast off an outer covering and stand revealed in an inner covering. Where will I go, or what shall I do? I have no desire to be here. I have no affinities connected with this place. If the sun would shine pleasantly upon me, so that I could see my way, I should not feel so dreary and lost. I have left earth, and yet I tread upon earth again! Another earth, a REAL earth, as real as that which I left, but still very different; as different seems this earth to me as the new body which contains the same spirit. But the feeling which possesses me at this moment is horrible! What have I to look forward to, to hope for, to wish for? I never believed in a hereafter, and shall I be forced to believe it now? Of what avail then was all the reasoning and strength of my manhood's will which shut out the future as an empty nothing—a shadow which frightened children and weak-minded people! No, I won't believe it yet! I am dreaming! This hideous nightmare will pass away, and I shall wake up again to the world and myself. I could not be deceived a whole lifetime, for did I not study into all the arts

and sciences? I was even called a profound philosopher, but my researches penetrated not to the interior world, to invisible things. I could gaze upon the stars, but I could not grasp them in my hand, nor could I climb up to other orbs and tell their inhabitants that we no longer doubted their existence, that our eyes had gazed upon their worlds, and taken cognizance of their revolutions. I studied the mysteries of the stars, but they gave me no answer of the future, they revealed to me no brightness save their own pure light. I searched deep into the bowels of the earth, that I might gaze upon her concealed treasures, but I heard no echo there to tell me of the future. I watched the sands on the sea-shore, and I listened to the voice of the mighty deep, but to me they spoke not of the future. I but saw that man was born, that he lived and died, that he fell and was forgotten, that he passed away as every thing in nature, for I in my blindness would not see farther than the surface. I turned not within to question the depths of my own spirit for a response to the great theme which had filled my soul with so many surmises. I could ascend to the summit of the lofty mountain, and the silence and grandeur spoke to my heart with a strange and solemn voice, and yet I could see or feel naught but the sublimity of nature, but the harmony which had become mellowed and developed into beauty and symmetry by the increasing hand of time and circumstance. My soul said to itself, If there is a God, why does he not work some especial miracle and show himself in some particular character? I could not imagine him to be a creature of like attributes and imperfections as myself. I scorned to believe there was

so capricious a God as the Christian world would have me believe. I communed deeply and silently with my own heart, and I knew if there was a God, he was far superior to the highest conceptions of any being whom I had met with, and who were animated by his spirit and claimed to be an emanation from him. My soul asked for more than it received, because I knew not where to seek it, for I sought it among the children of men until I had to turn away sickened and disgusted by their menial worship and slavish blindness, for my soul felt that if such a Being could exist, he must be great and glorious in the attributes and power of his works. And if his power and mercy and love were so boundless as that which they claimed for him, I knew that they lived far beneath their privileges. Oh, I looked upon them as a narrow-minded, weak, puny, abject set, who knew not as much of the Being whom they professed to worship, as the little child did of the parents whom he loved. And I earnestly desired to know of a certainty if there was a Being whose dwelling-place was on high, and whose mandates were those of love, and justice, and truth. I yearned for a higher, a nobler communion than my soul could find among men. When alone in the midst of nature there was a greatness of soul came over me, as it were, and carried me up and abroad, and unutterable things seemed to fill my spirit with a great and overwhelming power; but oh, still I could not take hold of any thing tangible. I could not see the Being whom I wished to see, and yet I saw his works all about me. But my soul craved a material God, the external manifestation of a Being whom I might approach and worship in my own way.

I understood not the worship of the spirit, the communing of man's immortal spirit with that of his Maker, unseen and unheard save by himself. I could not comprehend it, so sensuous were my feelings in regard to every thing I could not see and feel. And now I know that my heart was filled with a melody and harmony of the works of my Father. And yet I knew it not at the time, for the great voice of universal nature was more in accordance with the askings of my spirit than a communion with my fellow-man. And now I know that I myself shut out the beautiful light of eternity which was forcing and struggling its way into my soul. I know that I lost the heaven which might have been mine upon earth, by the hardness and materiality of my nature. I plumed myself upon my great knowledge of the mysteries of every thing in nature which had been revealed to the eye of man; and I said within myself, If there is a God greater than nature, more profound and mysterious than any thing which I have yet seen, let him reveal himself to me and then I will worship him. O mistaken man! blind, ignorant being that I was, for the little child knew more of the nature of God in its loving little heart than I did in my long study and research. I labored and searched so deeply to find the God which I sought, that I lost sight of him entirely, and was only burying myself among dust and rubbish, without profit and without satisfaction, for at length I believed that if I, who had labored so earnestly to find the one I sought, and could not, he surely could be nothing but a myth, a shadow, to those who were always claiming his presence and protecting care, and seeing him in all things, whether in the

heavens above or the earth beneath. Such a faith satisfied them, but not me, for I felt that the blind were but making others blind and leading them into the same darkness in which they dwelt themselves. And yet I had great and mighty thoughts, thoughts so great that they would find no response in the hearts of those about me. And my soul was filled with human love and kindness, but I called it nothing more than the love of one being for another, the natural feeling which should animate every human heart. My love was strong, but not great, it was from and of God, but I kept it in such narrow, earthly bounds that it could not expand, nor flash back as a reflection from the courts of heaven. And I lived to satisfy my earthly ambition, for I had no desire beyond it. I sought no other honor but that of outstripping my fellow-man in his knowledge and accumulation of those things which were unknown to the great mass of the people. My life had not been an aimless one, for I had accomplished that which I had lived for and desired to accomplish. I had been the means of conferring some of the benefits of science and philosophy on the age in which I lived, and so far as that extended I was satisfied, but there was a *restlessness*, an *uneasy* feeling about my heart. It would come as an unbidden guest, and stay with me, and trouble me strangely and mysteriously. There was a void within, a thirst for something which I had never yet tasted. There was an empty chamber in my heart which had never been filled by the guest whose privilege it was to enter it; and although my earthly prospects were all pleasant and satisfying, and such as a man might feel who had done his duty and was ready to die and be forgotten,

yet, oh yet, that restless, hungry feeling out into the dark future, mysterious and strange as it seemed to me then! My soul felt that it had some great travail to undergo, and yet I knew not what. Oh, the feeling, the reaching, the piercing, uncertain doubts which would intrude themselves upon my presence! But I died as I had lived, nor no man knew that a shadow of uncertainty had swept across my soul as to the future. My spirit departed calmly and quietly from its clayey temple. And when consciousness returned, and when I looked upon that portion of earth in which my spirit had been wrapped, I gazed and gazed as if I should gaze forever, for I felt now why my soul had been putting forth her feelers. I now knew why the space had been empty and the longing had remained unsatisfied. Oh, that moment of amazement and concentrated wonder! My knowledge availed me nothing. There I stood, helpless and impotent as a little child. I had doubted the future, but I was compelled to enter its mysterious portals, and peer into the depths which were opening before me. Vain, foolish man, who thinkest thou art wiser than thy Maker! And now, I was all at once enveloped in a cloud of uncertainty and doubt most saddening to my soul. I had never searched beyond the confines of time, and here I stood ignorant and helpless, and if I stepped I stumbled, and if I stood still I wondered. What were my aims and desires? Alas! I had none. I had laid out no path to travel in, I had no chart to guide my way in that land of clouds and doubt to me. I was as sensible of my situation as I could be, and yet what could I do? I now must seek a place, must do something for myself,

for I see no assistance here. My body, I had forgotten it already. What cared I, for the past was behind me, not forgotten, but the present was now filled with thrilling interest and import to me. I was in the future, but the future was before me combined with the present, and how unprepared was I to cope with its mysteries. I struggled along, faltering and turning at every step, wondering where the path led to out of that gloomy valley, for surely it was the very place of the shadow of death. No glad sounds met my ear, but an awful sense of loneliness weighed down my spirit. I knew not where I was going, but I could not turn back. I knew that I was living, that my body was a tangible body, that I trod upon a tangible earth, for I could see and feel them both.

But after a long period of time had passed away in this gloomy place, I earnestly wished I might see other beings of intelligence and like sympathy with mine, the solitude was so depressing. It now seemed as if my journey was coming to an end, for I had traveled in this rugged path until I had become so weary and so lonely that any change were preferable to this place. I approached a large opening in which the road seemed to have become lost. As I gazed ahead, a wide country was spread out before me, diversified with hills, dales, and valleys, and many pleasant (and it seemed almost familiar) sights now met my eye. I could now hear the pleasant song of the birds. I could now pick the flowers by the wayside. I could cool my thirst at the brook which ran past me smiling at the sky. Words can not express to you the joyous feeling which filled my heart as the pleasant sight met my eyes. How

glad and beautiful every thing looked, and how pleasant and joyful the scene made me feel ! I looked still longer, and beheld a large company of people who were apparently engaged in some general employment. They were making many gestures, and showed by their looks that feelings of happiness and contentment were predominant in their bosoms. The sight of my fellow-man had never gladdened me so much before, for I felt within me that there *were* beings like myself, and my sympathy drew me toward them. Slowly and wearily I approached, but my heart was not so sad as my looks would denote, the pleasant sight which surrounded me raised me up from despair and doubt to hope and strength. Seeing a weary-looking stranger approach them, some of the company ceased from their labors and spoke kindly to me. They inquired from whence I came (for they perceived that I had not been long a dweller there), and how it was that I should be unattended by any kind friend to show me the way. I told them I had a short time ago left earth. I had made a great and unexpected change, and had entered this land in utter ignorance and unbelief in every thing pertaining to it. I told them all my feelings, my whole history. They crowded around me with pitying looks and gestures, and wished to help me, to ease me of my weariness and sadness. They gave me strange information. They here spoke of a God, lovingly and joyfully ; they adored him, they called him Father. They believed that every good thing was given them by that Father, and in their joyous looks and laughter they praised him. They pitied me so much, for they said where should they place me who

had no conception of the goodness or existence of a God, where should I dwell. For, said they, his presence permeates all space, and boundless as it is, so that mortal eye can not scan it, that mortal strength may not explore it, yet thy feet can find no resting-place but where our Father's spirit dwells. They asked me if my heart was not a withered, shrunk-up thing, or how I could have lived without feeling that divine power within me.

And bright and beautiful little children gazed upon me with kindly looks, and talked of their Father, God. Oh, they glorified their Father in the beauty of their innocence.

I stood among them alone ; how could I be otherwise when they all felt that they had a Father and I had none ! for I had not been willing to receive him as such. They begged me to lay aside this cold and earthly mantle of materiality which I bore about me. They begged me to become simple and trusting, and they pointed to their beautiful home, which their Father had provided for them in his boundless love for his children.

And one spirit among them, who seemed to be filled with the fullness of love and wisdom combined, for it sparkled forth from his eyes and caused his face to shine, and gave his whole appearance an indescribable air of majesty and solemnity blended, spoke to me and said : " A new book is opened before thee ; the world of whose existence thou hast doubted, and the God whose love thou hast slighted, are now realities in thine eyes. Thou art more to be pitied than blamed, thou didst shut out the peace and joy of heaven on earth from thy soul

by thy cold, hard skepticism and materiality; thou didst refuse to adore thy Maker in his works, even when the harmony came to thy soul with a voice of peace and music soft and deep as thy soul itself; thou didst but call it an idle thought, a work of circumstance, of time and chance, perhaps, making thyself less in the scale of intelligence than the little birds, for even they warble forth their songs joyous and happy as they fly upward. Thy heart refused a song of joy to thy Father, and therefore thy soul shut itself up in darkness. The labors of thy earth-life were of earth, but something nobler and higher was within thee, something pertaining to the hereafter of thy being; thou didst feel it, didst hear it beating against the windows of thy soul, but refused it entrance, losing all of heaven there and much here. It is not so hard to find a Father, when his care and love is constantly reminding us of his presence, and his works speak ever in his praise. Thou hast created for thyself a hard journey, for inasmuch as thou couldst not be persuaded while on earth, thou wilt find like trouble here; and until thou canst become trusting as a little child, and break down those hard, stern barriers which have hedged about thy soul so long that there is scarcely an entrance to be found, thou wilt have to labor and struggle and break them away one after another thyself. Thou canst not enjoy this place with us; thou art unfitted for such a one. We will lead thee to a place which will be more in accordance with thy feelings, and friends will come to thee, and teach thee the simple language of heaven when thou art ready to receive them. And when thy soul has broken her adamantine chains, when it is melted with love and

gratitude to thy heavenly Father who has revealed to thee thy ignorance, and when thou art ready to be joyous and happy, come to us and we will introduce thee to those whose souls have penetrated far deeper into the mysteries of heaven than even thine did into those of earth, and whose wisdom will show thee how to apply and make useful all which thou hast learned. They will give thee new lessons, and thy soul may exult and revel in knowledge, for the field before thee is boundless. But thou canst not start without the great talisman, which is the love of God shed abroad in thy heart, the desire to assimilate with the spirits of the pure and good. And thus shalt thou still be ascending nearer to the presence of thy God, with his love filling and beautifying thine inmost heart."

I thank thee, O my Father! it is even so, for although the heavens and earth might pass away, I feel that thy love is strong and enduring within my grateful heart. And I am but passing up higher to feel its fullness more fully. A glad song of joy greets me now. I am in the midst of brethren and sisters, and I join with them in their song as I leave you.

CHAPTER XLVI.

REALITIES OF SPIRIT-LIFE.

Given, *September 14, 1854.*

INQUIRING FRIENDS—I will tell you what has been shown me ; what I have seen, and felt, and heard ; but I do not think it will apply to all states of spirit-life or all developments of spirit-mind. No spirit can speak for the whole spirit-world, for none have yet explored its manifold mysteries and glorious grandeur in all its vast magnitude of space. No spirit has ever yet spoken to you, but who has given to you an idea of some usefulness, or imparted to you that knowledge which they had gained themselves. All may contribute to the general mass of information, but be guided by none who say they know all, for they have only seen, even in the space of many centuries, a small, a *very* small, portion of the works of the Creator. And they who stand highest in the scale of elevation and purity are always those who speak most earnestly of their ignorance and limited knowledge of the great and eternal future which lies beyond them. They it is who feel how little they really know, and how much they have to learn. They have lived to see and realize the wide river which flows between knowledge and ignorance—how great is the space between the mind of man in his

ignorance and blindness while here, and the spirit's knowledge and light when it has been permitted to look upward in its progressive path. It is then the enlightened soul is filled with pity and love, and turns downward to earth in sympathy with its kindred spirits in mortal form, to raise them up to the level which it is their privilege to enjoy. Knowledge of all kinds is necessary, and the spirit-world is bountifully able to supply every lack to every mind, commencing with the material and reaching up to the spiritual in its most refined essences, even as far as the soul of man is able to penetrate. And thus when the material spirit enters his spirit-home, he is met by those whose developments are consistent with his own. By them he is clothed and fed in like manner as themselves; he being only fitted or developed to enjoy material or external things, his first ideas and faculties are wholly engrossed by those things most nearly corresponding with his earth-life. And those very things are so constructed (and upon such principles) as to draw forth the hidden and slumbering faculties within him, and which have not been used, but have lain dead and slumbering from the hour of his birth. He finds no idle moments, but he must pursue some occupation, some duty, which will make him useful to himself and those about him. He finds it as necessary to labor there as here. But man there labors on very different principles from those which actuated him here. There, all things are made with a view to something higher, something which will serve as a spur—will act as a force upon the worker. And so the material soul, while working off its material nature, is gradually becoming merged into the spiritual,

until the grossness of the external ceases to be inviting, and he gradually leaves those things behind him which had at first gained such interest in his thoughts, and looks for the beauty and harmony with which only the spirit can clothe its fair proportions; and then he becomes highly useful in the society in which his affinities have drawn him. Perhaps he is gifted by nature to perform some task which those around him are not able to perform, and thus he fills a sphere of usefulness, by making those around him happy by his labor and industry. And all individuals are thus gifted, are excelling in some things, whereby they add to each other's happiness and progression. The employment which man's material development had especially fitted him for, is that which he is attracted to, and which he may excel in. Without the mechanical part of our faculties we should be imperfect; thus we possess them all when we enter the spirit-world of course, and do not lose any part of that which nature gave us when she sent us into being here; and circumstances have so turned aside the inclination of many, that they have never been enabled to exercise or find use for any of those faculties which nature gave them to use. But when they enter the spirit-world, they are each placed in the department which is best suited to their mental and physical capacities. Thus both the material and spiritual become harmoniously developed, fitting them to impart to those who come after them the same advantages which they have reaped. The whole family of mankind is but one continuous chain, beginning with the lowest link and reaching up into the infinity of the eternal, but all connected and depending upon each

other. They can not be divided; it is a necessity as well as a law, and it has ever worked in beauty and harmony, and will eventually bring the meanest slave who walks the earth, from the lowest depths of development into the unending march of progression, into the light of the smile of God.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE CONVICT.

September 18, 1854.

THIS evening, Mrs. Hemans came and influenced Mrs. Sweet, and said to us:—

Look with me, and see that pale, trembling spirit who has but lately left its body. That body was clothed in a convict's garb, and its last home on earth was the cell of a prison. He committed crimes against the laws of his country, and was condemned to suffer a punishment of solitude and hard labor, uncheered by any kindly voice—no friendly eye to look upon him in his hours of loneliness and heart-breaking anguish. Poor spirit! bitterly has he repented, while in the form, of all his errors and misdeeds. On his knees, and in the humility of his soul, has he sought of his Maker to pardon the faults of his youthful days. His childhood was joyous and pleasant; his heart was light and glad as any among us, but his trusting spirit was taken possession of and led by stronger wills than his own, and he was made to commit those errors which hastened his spirit from out the body.

Here she said that she should have to let the spirit speak for himself as she could not speak for him further; accordingly she withdrew her influence, and the stranger spirit spoke through the medium as follows:—

If you want me to tell of my sufferings, I am sure I can do it, for God knows I remember them so well, that they will never be erased from my memory. They said I committed a grave crime, and perhaps I did. I knew it to be a crime, although I committed it in a moment of thoughtlessness and folly, more for the love of mischief than the sin of it. I had no thought of what the consequences would be. My older companions urged me on and called me cowardly, because I at first shrunk from applying the match which destroyed the dwelling of a worthy family, and burned one of their children. How I shudder while I think that I was the cause of that awful death! They took me to prison. They found me guilty. I knew I was guilty; I did not deny it; and bitter, scalding tears coursed down my cheeks when I thought of the little innocent whose death I had caused. I cared not for myself or what became of me. They told me I must go to prison, for how many years I can not tell, but it was very, very many, and my weeping friends bade me farewell, those who were not ashamed to be seen speaking to me, and others looked at me in pity and shook their heads. My brain was in a whirl; I felt as though I was going to be transported to some distant country, where I would never see home or friends again. But that dreadful load of guilt lay heavily at my heart. That little child! She had been a playmate of mine, and one of my companions had made me the instrument of consummating the vengeance which he was afraid to take, for some petty spite which he had against the father.

When they shut me up in the cold, gloomy, lonely cell, I threw myself down and prayed that I might

never remember my former life. I but wished that a sea of forgetfulness would roll over me and the past, because nothing but that could reconcile me. But this was not to be. I *had* to think; oh! I *had* to think. I had to remember every thing distinctly that passed in that dreadful excitement. And then I felt wronged. Bitter and passionate feelings stirred within me against those who had instigated me to commit such an awful crime. I felt as if I was guilty, and yet only guilty through another's guilt, who had thought and meant worse than I. How useless were all these pleadings in my own behalf!—there was nothing before me but a gloomy prospect for many years to come. Oh! the horrors of that hour when I first realized my situation. I, in a felon's cell, dressed in a convict's garb, and compelled to labor with a chain attached to my person. I determined to kill myself. I could not live, the thought was so horrid. Life was but just opening before me in bright and gorgeous colors, and now a dark veil had fallen between me and the light of the world, and I should have to spend the best years of my manhood in solitary confinement, working harder than a slave. Worse, ten thousand times worse than a slave's was my condition. When the strong agony had passed over my soul I became hardened. I cared not what passed. I took no note of the day or night. I worked and lived a nearly mechanical life. I felt dead to every thing around me; there were no more tears left to shed, there was nothing to look for, to hope for; all was dreary, all was blank. Thus I lived for a long time. Nor blows nor threats could arouse me—nothing could affect me, so strong and hard had my nature become, for I had determined that

outward circumstances should not bend or break my spirit. It was a stern and unrelenting desire not to feel the chains which were galling me.

But how little man knows of his own spirit. How incapable he is of knowing what he may be able to bear, and how long he will prove impregnable to those feelings which animate the breasts of all the human family. My resolutions gradually grew weaker, and my will less strong. I began to yearn for some pitying heart to turn to. There was none to listen to my prayer, none to wipe away my tears, and my heart melted down until it became as weak as a little child's. Oh! how I wished to see the face of a friend. What sickness of heart came over me, and no kindly hand was there to be laid on my head, but only the cold, stony wall to support it. It was in vain for me to ask or pray for my earthly friends, for I could not see their faces. And then I strove to pray to God; then I bent low in humility and sorrow, and confessed my sins, and prayed him to forgive me. I had felt so guilty before that I dared not pray; but now there was something within me which seemed to tell me there was hope beyond the grave. When I had slumbered before, my dreams had been horrible; phantoms coming to upbraid me for my crimes, and I awakened, often grateful that all the dreadful scenes I had passed through were nothing but dreams. And now those dreadful shapes and phantoms had left me, and sweeter sleep had succeeded. As my heart had become softened within me, it seemed as though a bright and pleasant influence gradually fell upon me. My dreams became pleasant, and the little one whose death I was the means of, appeared to me

in shining garments, and told me that her Father in heaven forgave me, and that I should come to her home and be with her. Ah! that bright spirit made the poor prisoner's cell gleam and shine with heavenly light, for I felt that God had answered my prayer, that there was mercy even for me; and when I slumbered it was with a prayer on my tongue of thankfulness to my Father in heaven for his forgiveness, which had brought peace and comfort to me in my lonely cell. That place which had appeared to me a living tomb, now became bright and pleasant in its gloom, and the words which were written in the Book of Life gave me hope and joy. And daily I prayed, and daily my body grew weaker; but my soul grew stronger, and I longed to leave the body behind. My thinking had brought me much benefit, for now my thoughts were pleasant and glad, for now I felt happy and joyful. There was a peaceful, happy feeling—there was a love which cast out fear, and I felt as if there were loving and protecting arms about me, *even me*. They told me I was dying, and oh! how I rejoiced. I *knew* I was dying—I wanted to die, to embrace that little spirit who had told me of my Father's forgiveness. And when I passed from death unto life, there was none so near to take me by the hand as that happy little spirit. She told me that I should go with her, for I had repented of that I was punished for, and my punishment had been greater than my crime. She said there was no injustice there, that I should be able soon to outlive all recollection of my past misery in the life I was about to lead, and I should now see many who had been imprisoned as I was, for crimes which they had not been really guilty of. But

God who sees the heart would punish all according to their works, and not for those things which they have not committed; but the real culprit will here also meet with his due reward.

I find no prisons here—no stripes—no starvation, but kind spirits who pity me for having been led astray, and who will assist me to retrieve that which was done, and prepare me to come back to the poor, weary, heart-broken prisoners, and when the time comes, to speak to them of the better life which is beyond the gloomy walls of a prison. Peace and hope will light up their sad and desponding hearts, for we are coming in a mighty strength and power to raise them from their stupor.

P. S.—He told us that he had much more which he would like to say at some convenient time, and when we wanted him, to ask for Thomas Ellis, the convict.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE SOUL'S ASPIRATIONS.

THERE is a deep and solemn grandeur comes over the soul when contemplating its future destiny. There is a feeling into the unknown sea which is rolling wave upon wave into the darkness of futurity, until lost from our view. We can follow it but a short distance, a very short distance, even with our spiritual eye. Soon we become lost amid its intricate mazes and winding turns. The spirit is too feeble, too undeveloped in its feeble strength, to walk far on the road beyond the grave, unaided by other influence. It may stretch forth its wings and soar up a little way, but soon it becomes weary and falls to earth, discouraged, and lost almost in the immensity of the opening view.

Man may realize his position (in a great measure while here) to the world of spirits. He may commune with them in spirit while in the body; he may partake of their thoughts and become imbued with many of their feelings and elevated desires; he may learn great and important truths connected with his spiritual unfolding, and he may earnestly desire to mingle with those who are his constant companions, even in their native home. But, oh, how very little man really knows of that world to which he is tending. He can

but learn correctly the great principles, which are as unchanging as the Deity himself. He can but grasp some of the lesser ideas which he is capable of containing; but he can not, while on earth, tread the streets of the eternal world; he can not be an inhabitant of their courts, he can not speak of things which pertain only to that place, for the knowledge which is vouchsafed to man is only for his spiritual unfolding, not for his material gratification. Sufficient for him should it be to know that his present abode is fair and beautiful, teeming with the necessities of life and sustenance, if rightly applied. And things here are but given him to serve as incentives to draw forth the slumbering faculties of his mind. He is given an eye for beauty, a soul for melody, a heart for love. His present state and associations supply all these, in their external form. The refined essence of all these things lies buried deeply within, and if they *are* called forth, they are felt and needed in this outer temple.

Blessed is that man, for he has had a foretaste of the second—the spiritual birth. So let not man vex or trouble his mind with external things, as connected with an internal world. Let it be sufficient that there *is* an inner and beautiful light; that there is a truthful means of arriving at wisdom, and to a knowledge of the laws which connect the intelligence of this sphere and the next together. And let his own heart be the receptacle into which this truth and harmony shall flow, for when it passes down to earth it sometimes becomes tainted with impurities and errors ere it reach the spot which it was intended for.

Truth, although it comes robed in ten thousand errors,

will be stripped naked, and stand forth in its purity and brightness, before it can sink deep into the heart, and raise up seed in the soul of man which shall bear and bloom forever.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE DYING GIRL.

November 15, 1854.

Mrs. SWEET being influenced by Mrs. Hemans, the following was given through her:—

I stand gazing upon the death-bed scene of a fair young girl. Life had become clad in roseate colors, and the future seemed fair and inviting, until disease fastened upon her delicate form and warned her that she must soon leave the scenes in which she had lived, surrounded by those who anticipated her every wish, to whom the tones of her voice were music, and her presence like that of some bright spirit who dispensed light and cheerfulness wherever it moved. And now the future seems opening to her view. The cold hand of death is upon her, and oh, how she hates to go! She can not say farewell to her weeping friends. * She goes unwillingly. Her life had been short and bright as that of the butterfly who has only reveled amid the perfumed flowers, and drank the fresh dew of heaven out of their sparkling chalices. No rude storms of sorrow or despair had cast one shadow upon her young spirit's gladness. Loving and beloved, she had trod the earth as the angels tread it, tasting its joys and ignorant of its sorrows. Then who would chide that young spirit

for wishing to linger where all invited her to stay? As her spirit reluctantly left her form, I took her by the hand. Her friends, who stood around the lifeless but still beautiful form, were uncontrollable in their grief, and those who had come to meet her at her entrance could find no welcome appropriate to offer so unwilling and sorrowing a spirit. They would have approached her and clasped her in their arms. They would have shed tears of joy and hopings over her, but her deep sorrows forbade their approach. They had been long in the spirit-world, and could scarcely understand why she experienced so much sorrow because of entering their happy dwelling-place.

I spoke to her kindly, and told her she had made a good exchange. I described to her the life of usefulness which she might lead, and the society of the pure and good which it was her privilege to enjoy. I strove to excite within her a desire to see and know those who were to be her future companions. To all I said she turned a deaf, unwilling ear, and only shook her head despondingly and pointed earthward. "Indeed," said she, "I have no desire to live in heaven. My dear friends whom I loved are all on earth, and I am separated from them by an impassable barrier. I care not how fair or inviting this world may be which you all seem to think so beautiful and these spirits so good; they can not dry my tears, give me back my dear friends, nor transport me to that pleasant home where all were smiling and happy. I was too young for death to claim. They said my form was fair to look upon—then why should I be called away when I was happy and made others so? I shall be very wretched here.

I shall weep all day ; for if your music is more beautiful than that we had on earth, it will serve but to remind me of the bygone happiness now lost to me forever. You have beautiful things of all kinds, I plainly see ; for as I gaze about me, the landscape seems to be some scene of fairy enchantment. I can not think it real, it is too transparently beautiful ; and those birds, and trees, and flowers, and sparkling waters, and those forms of exquisite beauty which are moving among those green and shady bowers clad in garments which look like clouds of light—these things can not be real. And those superb structures which I see, were never built by hands of man. They are so magnificent in their grandeur, and so beautifully proportioned, and composed of such exquisitely beautiful and sparkling materials, that they are too ethereal to be real ; they can be but unreal pictures of beauty presented to my view ; and when approached I fear they would fade away from my sight. Every thing here is unreal. I seem so myself. It is dreadful to be thus mocked by so much beauty which lulls the senses as in some delicious dream, and yet is nothing more or less than a dream ; for I died, I left my home on earth, my body lies beneath the sod, and my poor, unhappy spirit is now looking about in vain for some reality, for some friendly, cheering voice to give me a hope, to lead me to some place, I know not where. I am so discontented, so unhappy. These spirits say they are my friends, they say they have always loved me. I do not remember them, and yet they look kind and pleasant, and fain would have me go with them, but where ? When I leave this place, I shall be going farther from earth

than I am now ; my dear old home will be lost to me entirely. Oh, if I could live again on earth—go back to my friends, how glad I should be !”

I gently put my arm around her neck and whispered softly in her ear, “ You shall go back, my child.” And oh ! what joyful, intense, and unbounded delight her countenance expressed. She clapped her hands, a smile radiated her countenance, and eagerly grasping my hands she exclaimed, “ Can this be true ?” “ Yes, my child,” I replied ; “ but it depends on yourself whether you shall be worthy, and whether you can benefit your friends by returning. If you indulge this useless grief and despondency, you would make but a sorry comforter to return to your grief-stricken friends. Lift up your eyes and look abroad. You are in the home which you are fitted to enjoy by your affinities and higher development. Your spirit passed through its short dream of life unscathed by sin or sorrow ; no dark regrets need bar your progress to the reality of this happiness ; no bitter experience has made you fearful of entering with full zest into every worthy and useful acquirement which your spirit’s appetite will now crave. The unreal and unsatisfying aspect of your newly-found home is because of the materialism and regrets of earth which still hang around you. You have to put away all selfish grief and useless repinings, and render yourself worthy to be one of those bright beings who seem to you but unreal forms. They are not so, my child, but they were once like you, dwellers in the form, and they have lived here many, many years. They possess warm and loving hearts ; gentle and affectionate in all their actions, they are ready, dear

child, to teach you your duty ; they will become to you sisters and brothers, your friends and counselors, and the love which you bear to your friends on earth will become purer and deeper by associating with those gentle beings. But you speak of returning ; yes, you shall return when you have become happy and contented in your new abode, when you have learned some useful lesson, when you have accomplished some deed upon which your heavenly Father will cast his approving smile, and have shown by your earnest labor and humility that you can appreciate the glorious change which you have experienced, and can carry back to earth those truths. Why, then you will be permitted to return. For if you can not enjoy this place and this society, you will have to seek for companionship among those which are nearer earth, but which will not be congenial nor make you happy. Then you would be discontented, ever wishing to return to earth, and regretting that you could not penetrate farther into the beautiful land which you know lies beyond, which your spirit would feel was your true dwelling. Our spirit-life, my child, is made happy less or more by our own desires and our own struggles after those things which are within our reach. No enjoyment is given to us till we can truly appreciate its value ; no wisdom is unfolded to us until our spirit's yearning requires it to strengthen us in our eternal labor. Many bright and beautiful gifts are constantly before our eyes, but ere we obtain possession of them we must deserve them ; we must feel within our own souls that they are truly that which we need, and then they beautify and gladden, then they add to our spirit's brightness and incite to further exertions

for those which are still beyond. When you have worthily arrayed yourself in those beautiful garments of wisdom, and become happy in the knowledge of your spirit's great enjoyment, then you will return to your friends, then you will draw near with words of peace and comfort. You will pour a balm into their sorrowing hearts, and their memory of you will be softened by your spirit's gentle consolations. You tell me they will not receive you. You are a spirit, and they can not behold you. Your voice will not be unheard. Your soft and loving caress will not be unfelt, and the strength of your love will enable you to speak to the core of their hearts in soft and gentle, but unmistakable tones, which will carry with them joy unspeakable. And when they hear of spirits talking with their friends, it will sound strangely at first, but oh, how their hearts will yearn to know if they have talked with you, or if it has only been the mysterious shadows which dreams cast about the sleeping body but waking soul!

“Then how earnestly and patiently you will labor! What great reward will there be! what joy and gladness to know that you are welcome and recognized, and that where you left sorrow and deep grief, you can bring joy unspeakable, and more, my child, that you can bring with you fair and beautiful companions, clad in radiant robes of light, who will help you to make your friends sensible of your presence; and they will speak with you and for you in their silvery tones of advice and entreaty, that your friends will gaze heavenward, that the earth will to them become once more green and beautiful, because angels are walking among

its children. Oh, then your love will draw those precious friends in the path which you have taken. The desire of their hearts will become deep and earnest to know more of the place where their loved ones are dwelling. And instead of looking upon the sad and gloomy parting, they will dwell with joyful anticipation upon the happy meeting. How they will love to commune with your spirit, to feel your presence, and how they will hate to grieve you, to wound your pure love by deed or word unfit for angel-hearts to know! And thus, my child, by the gentle efforts of your love, you may win those hearts from the cold atmosphere of their worldly surroundings, and open up within them a fountain of love and hope, and make them fit recipients for the wisdom from on high. And by thus being called away from your earthly home in the morning of its hope, its budding hope, you will learn to thank your heavenly Father that you were early taken into the company of pure and gentle spirits, and kept from the corroding influences which an earthly life would have cast around about you, and that by their happy and holy influences you were so developed and strengthened as to have returned to the friends whom you loved so fondly, and have taken them by the hand and helped them to prepare while yet on earth to meet you, and to become experienced in the ways of wisdom, before they enter the spirit-world, so that they may be able to join you sooner than they otherwise would had they lived without this knowledge. You will have indeed saved them from many years of sorrow and regret, of suffering and retribution, which they must have experienced had not their eyes been turned heavenward.

Then be thankful and loving in your gratitude, that you have been made a redeeming spirit for those you loved, by the bright dwellers of 'the heavenly spheres.'"

She is bathed in tears as I conclude; she clasps me lovingly to her bosom; her apathy and sorrows have all fled; joy, joy and bright hope are now hovering over her, and with eyes eagerly glancing upward she prays that God will assist her in her weakness and helplessness. And lo! a band of radiant ones gather round her, and in tones of softest music they cheer and encourage her. With them she has left me to begin her work and to learn the realities of the spirit-land, to know the talents which are buried within her own soul yet to be revealed and made useful, and then to return to earth and perform her mission of being made a ministering spirit to those who are left behind.

Since the latter glories of unfolding light have been revealed, much joy and great reward have been given to the spirits because they are known and recognized, and their love is felt and returned. The spirits and the mortals clasp each other in their arms, and the atmosphere of heavenly wisdom is breathed through the loving spirits into the hearts of the hoping mortals.

CHAPTER L.

THE INNER TEMPLE.

November 30, 1854.

As the faded and dead leaves fall from the trees, leaving them bare and shadeless, so fall from man one after another the material links which serve to connect him to earth with a chain, which, if not rudely snapped asunder, might wrap him up within its strong coils, and he would forget that there was aught upon earth to live for, save the things of time and sense. It is better man's spirit should be cast down, that it may rise again; for then its growth will be quicker, and then the energy which hope gives will make it stand firmer and appreciate its own position more truly. It is not for men to look one upon another, for each must build for himself a temple of strength wherewith to cover himself, and to withstand the rude assaults of foreign foes—foes of his soul's peace and comfort, deceivers in the garb of friends. And his temple must needs be made with windows, transparent and deep, so that they may be used as eyes to penetrate into the hearts—yea, into the very inmost recesses of men's souls. The satisfaction and beauty of many material things will fade away, and appear as a dream of the past; but there must be within every living soul, a still, deep fountain, ever bubbling in

freshness and sweetness, giving food and drink, sustaining and making beautiful the temple which surrounds it. Make unto thyself a world of beauty within; an inner life, a holy of holies, a sacred palace where none may intrude, a spot dedicated in all its beauty and glory as the sanctuary of the most high God. This is within thee, it is a part of thee, it is all-sparkling and shining; it needs but to be pervaded by the holy presence, the essence of soul, the life of light; for behold! as the dew vanisheth from the grass where it hath glittered as diamonds in the morning sun, it passeth away and ye behold it no more, ye recognize it not again—so will all external beauties fade; so, in time, shall they cease to give thy heart joy and thy soul gladness. Thou wilt look back upon the past as a man who has walked in a sleep, struggling and striving with great phantoms, even those of his destiny. And when the light which made thee glad hath passed away into the darkness of oblivion, then shall the deep low breathing of thy spirit's immortal harmony raise up within thee a light—a soft and sweet melody, which shall be a joy to thee forever. *That* is not earth; *that* fadeth not away; *that* is enduring and immortal, even as the glory of thy God is immortal, only changing from one glory to a greater and greater.

CHAPTER LI.

THE FOOLISH MOTHER.

THROUGH Mrs. S. we had this communication :—

How unhappy I am! I am wandering up and down, hither and thither. I know not where to go. Friends, I will tell you the reason of my misery. I was a mother. Precious souls were intrusted to my care, and how did I fulfill my charge? I shudder now to think on the example I daily set them. I, their parent, who should have instilled every gentle virtue and high principle into their tender hearts—I only filled their minds with foolishness and unprofitable teachings. I brought them up to love external show and empty glitter. I learned them to love the world and the opinions of vain and conceited sons of men. I learned them to walk in the paths of pleasure, which but filled their young souls with a desire for more—more of the useless and unsatisfying gifts of wealth; and instead of making my children useful to themselves and society, I but filled their young souls with selfishness and pride.

Oh! it is a dreadful confession for a mother to make, but I must tell the truth now, though it should humiliate my soul into the very dust.

I was called away from my children just as they were emerging into maturity, just when they could have

been turned into a good path, or led aside into an evil one, with no guide but a thoughtless father—alas! more prone to love the world than his wretched companion. And now, can you imagine my unhappiness? No, that is impossible.

I have not only seen my own folly, my own wickedness in every thing that pertains to a knowledge of spiritual life and the soul's happiness, but I am drawn back, as it were, to earth to gaze on the course of those I have left behind. Heaven knows I have loved them well, but with a foolish, misdirected love, and now I suffer the consequences. I am daily a witness to the effects of my teachings. I am hourly pained with the breaking out of all those uncultivated and grosser parts of their nature which it was my duty as a mother to lead gently into the right direction; and I see them hurrying from one folly into another, and I can do naught but wring my hands in mute despair, and wish I had never lived. I can not look upward. I can not labor for a better inheritance, for my sins of omission to my children are constantly reproaching me, and come black as night and huge as mountains.

When witnessing their misguided steps I feel, "Mother, this has been thy doings. Behold, now, the seeds planted in the hearts of thy children bring forth fruit of dust and ashes!"

Miserable mother that I am! How wretched has been my life since entering the spirit-world. I have wept and prayed continually. I have sorrowed with a deep and sincere sorrow for my past life and my children's future happiness.

Not long since a spirit approached me, took me by

the hand, and said, "Cease thy useless grieving, weak mother, for thy children, and set about working out thy own salvation. Cast off thy gross material nature and become wise in wisdom of heaven, that you may be able to go back to earth, and assisted by wise and loving hearts, and by the strong influence of thy love, you may be able to approach your children, if not through your own spirit-influence, perchance through another's. If not through one channel, another may be opened, so that you can approach them." Oh! this thought seems too heavenly for so great a sinner as me. I wish to become pure. I wish to learn wisdom that I may become a fit companion for the bright ones above me; but oh, my children! my children! While I am learning wisdom, will they not be irretrievably lost—through my early teachings become hardened to good impulses, or sink so deep in sin as to forget me and never hear me on earth? My heart is bursting with its great agony. I would fain go up, but love draws me down, so that I am a wretched wanderer.

O God in heaven! thou Spirit of justice, and truth, and illimitable mercy, look down on me a poor erring mother, and guide me right. How little am I acquainted with that name and the duties I owe! Pity me, holy spirits around this circle, in my weakness and sin. Entreat some loving spirit to protect my children while I learn wisdom and repentance.

Heaven is a glorious place, they say, but I have never caught the first glimpse of its brightness. My life has been among the discontented, unhappy wanderers, regretting the deeds done in the body, and not having courage to begin the task of labor. But I feel there is

within my soul a longing to taste of the love of God, to mingle with the pure and good, to leave these lower regions where I am so wretched and lonely. But oh, my children! my children!

And yet I can do them no good by staying here. My soul is becoming worn down and overstrained in constant grasping to save them from ruin. I will go and make myself as a little child again, that I may learn to be useful; and my object will be that I may be of service to my dear children, for I feel that I shall yet be enabled to lead those precious children aside from the paths of sin and wretchedness which they are now treading, into the pleasant way that leads to eternal life.

Dear friends, the spirits who surround your circle allowed me to approach you, poor wretched wanderer that I am, to tell you my experience, and oh, do you tell it to the world that it may warn some foolish mother to escape the wretchedness which I have known since my entrance here, who are preparing for themselves a heaven or a hell in proportion to the love they bear their children. Tell them their example and teachings will be ever before them, reproaching or approving.

My tale is ended. Thanks, and good-night.

CHAPTER LII.

THE DISOBEDIENT SON.

THE lesson which I am sent to give to-night, is to warn children of the great unhappiness they create for themselves by disobeying the commands of good parents.

The Infinite Father in his goodness gave me kind and loving parents, who anticipated my every wish almost before it was formed in my own mind, and all that could render me happy was freely given, with fondness and affection ever flowing out to wrap me in its warm embrace. As I increased in years, and my character became developed as an individual, I was strangely perverse in my imaginings, wishing to do every thing contrary to that which my parents thought right, wishing them to throw aside their will, and be guided by the dictates of mine. I soon took the reins of government into my own hands, and wildly rushed into every excess of folly and recklessness. And when those who loved me so fondly would strive to counsel and advise me, I turned a deaf ear, I heeded not their words, nor would I be guided or moved by their prayers. My nature was stubborn, my will firm, and I often look back with astonishment and wonder how I could have been so cold, so lost to every feeling of love as to refuse the loving admonitions and warnings of those dear parents.

They died grieving for me, sorrowing because of the path I had chosen, and their last prayers were that God would turn the heart of their wandering son from the paths of error and folly into the ways of righteousness and peace. Oh! that I had listened to those prayers, that I had but heeded the voice of the good spirit who was quietly counseling me to forsake the wrong and follow the right. But I crushed down every good feeling which was springing up within me, and rushed still deeper and still more madly into the vortex which was drawing me down to my final destruction. My career was suddenly brought to a close, and I entered the spirit-world with a fever of passion in my heart, and the seal of degradation and infamy on my brow. My years had been few in this, your world, but how unprofitably had they been spent! I had checked the rising impulse of goodness within my soul, while I was yet young and tender in years. I had fostered my own bad passions. I had followed the road which led me into more errors and worse companionship than even my own ungrateful heart. Yes, I had done all this, while prayers and entreaty and counsels, gentle and kind, were daily being breathed into my ears. The hearts of men are differently constituted, some may be led by gentleness and love, while others will trample upon such feelings, and require to be curbed by a strong will and firm determination. But all minds, as soon as capable of judging or reasoning for themselves, are guided by the instincts which are most prominent in their character. Thus are all intelligent beings made accountable for the deeds done while in the body, according to the amount of intelligence or development

to which they have attained, only the motive of the heart being looked at as the criterion of judgment as regards their position in the next sphere. Thus, I, my friends, possessed mental advantages full soon, to expand my reasoning faculties, even had they been of the most unpretending character; so that I had not ignorance to plead, nor want of advantages for acquiring knowledge, and therefore my sin was the greater. I had not been cast upon the world homeless or friendless, loneless or motherless, but I had ever been cared for, and had known how much it was in my power to become great and good; I mean, to be a benefit to others, and use the bounteous gifts which had been showered upon me for less selfish purposes than my own gratification and that of my idle companions. I had sinned with my eyes open. My heart knew full well its wickedness. And I now stood in the spirit-world alone, with all this knowledge rising up before me, confronting me as a mighty mountain which every moment grew greater in magnitude, as I gazed upon it, as I thought upon my past life, and threatening to crush me by its immensity. Oh, I would gladly have changed places then with the poorest wretch that my eyes ever beheld. I would have hid myself, could I have found a hiding-place. But there was no hiding-place for me. I stood there exposed in all my moral deformity of soul and character. I stood guilty and cowering, trembling in every limb, my spirit wishing to shrink within itself, or anywhere, that it might be out of sight. Oh, friends, where we sin with a knowledge that we are sinning, how much more terrible is the guilt that rests upon us.

And you ask, perhaps, who did I see? Directly, I

saw many. I saw many happy, joyous faces, but they came not near me; they shunned me, for I was a dark, loathsome thing. They had no affinity for me. And I saw some with unhappy looks, with dissatisfaction painted upon their countenances. I wanted not to have any affinity for these, but they resembled me more, and I felt that if I mingled with any, it must be with them. Oh! how many bright intellectual faces which I had known on earth as stars in a constellation of brightness, and to whom many had bowed and paid homage because of their glorious outbursts of eloquence, I now saw walking with downcast looks and humble mien among those spirits. Their ambition had reached no higher than earth, and earth only had rewarded them. Their aspirations ascended not to heaven. They lived only for the present, nor labored for the future, and now they take their places among the discontented throng, and there must remain until the shadows of their former lives have become erased from their souls, and they are willing to begin their search after wisdom, as humbly and dependently as the most ignorant soul who enters that sphere.

My heart grew sad and mournful. Fierce had been the struggles between myself and the humiliating thoughts that were now gaining the ascendancy. My pride was still strong within me, or rather the strength of my own stubborn nature. I could not think of descending, of mingling with those by whom I was surrounded, for whom I felt no other sensation than shame and detestation. I wished I might see my dear parents. Oh! how I wished in my innermost soul I could gain some intelligence of them! I knew they must be far distant from my habitation. I spoke of my desire to a

spirit, and was directed to ask one of those white-robed shining beings, whom I saw standing in the distance. It seemed they were ever ready and willing to come near us and give us instruction and information, but they came not to tarry with us—they came only to do the will of their Father. And I asked one of these spirits to tell me of my parents. He pointed up—up so high that my eyes could follow only a little distance, for the light was so exceedingly bright, that it blinded my vision. He told me that my parents had gone to their reward—that I had constantly repelled them after their spirits were released from their bodies. He told me of their love, and their sorrow, and their grief over my course of life. He told me I had long kept them down near earth, and made them unhappy, and when all their efforts had been unavailing to turn me, they had turned away with sadness, and left to enter the heaven prepared for their reception.

And now, upon my bended knees, I begged that I might behold them, if only for a moment. But the spirit only shook his head, and in a solemn voice exclaimed: “Young man, thy sins have found thee out; thy short career on earth was much too great in extent and darkness for thee, for thy soul had become so stained and foul, that thou wouldst have had more sin to expiate than thou couldst have overcome in long years of suffering and sorrow; but thank thy merciful Father that thou wast introduced thus young into the spheres, for thou mayest now begin, less hardened than thou wouldst have been, to work thy upward course. Thou canst not see thy loved parents until thou hast made thyself worthy such a privilege. Thou canst not receive thy

mother's kiss, nor thy father's welcome, until thou hast cleansed thyself of many of the impurities of thy earthly life. They gaze down upon thee, and would bear thee upward. They love thee, but their love availeth naught—but thy labors and repentance may avail much. There are friends ever near thee who will gladly assist thee, who will counsel and advise thee; but see thou dost not drive them away, as thou didst thy dear parents. Let the beginning of thy good works be humiliation and repentance. Strive to overcome, to blot out, to burn up thoroughly all the earthly passions which thy earthly life so fanned into a flame, that those who surround thee—those who are thy daily companions may look at thee, and learn of thee. Thy life must be a sacrifice for them; thou must utterly change every thing which belonged to thy former self, and become a humble laborer for thy soul's salvation. And, mayhap, while thus engaged, others may begin the work which they have so long deferred, and climb up with thee. And, as thou dost ascend, remember thou art nearing the place where thy parents await thee. Remember the joyous tears of gladness they will shed over the return of the prodigal; and look not back, neither to the right nor to the left, but fix thine eyes heavenward—thence cometh thy help, and there are all thy joys which are to be attained only through labor and repentance for past misdeeds. Then haste thee, youth, and wash thyself in the stream which will purify thy soul, and make it fit to dwell with the spirits made pure."

GOOD NIGHT.

CHAPTER LIII.

CARDINAL RICHELIEU.

THIS evening a spirit came and influenced Mrs. Sweet. From the movements and actions it seemed to be an old and feeble man, one who was much debilitated, either by disease or age, or the two combined. After some effort, he spoke as follows:—

A man would be worse than foolish to come back again to earth, unless he had some grand object in view; for I protest to you that I feel, in thus coming back to earth, all the infirmities and pains, all the old ailments, which racked my body while I dwelt among you. There is nothing which your earth could offer that would tempt me (if it were possible) to again re-enter this clumsy, unwieldy, cumbersome body, which so long held my spirit a prisoner within its walls of clay. I candidly believe, my friends, that you do not know me. I am not surprised at this; but I mean to make you know me before I quit your company.

Question by Mr. W.—Do we know you? Are we acquainted with your name or history?

Yes; my name was somewhat famous in times gone by; and I would to God it were possible to speak my name in full; but 'tis impossible to do it, and I labor under this disadvantage. I dare be sworn, my friends, that you will ere long know me.

Mr. W. here remarked, that whoever he was he was welcome, if he came to give us truth, as that was what we were seeking for.

Truth! truth! They tell me it is a priceless gem on earth now-a-days, hard to find, and harder to retain after it is found.

I here remarked, that "Perhaps in his day it was to be found less mixed with error than at present," to which he answered:—

I can assure you, most solemnly, that it was buried far deeper beneath the surface than it is in yours. The difference is, there are more channels through which it bubbles up than there were then. I lived amid vice and false glitter. I wore an ermine robe——

Mr. W. here asked if it was Cardinal Wolsey? Shaking his head, he said:—

Indeed, my young friends, you will have to be very patient with me. I was attached to a court in a religious office. I wore upon my brow the insignia of power.

I here asked if it was Richelieu?

Ah! yes, that sounds familiar. It warms me up again! Yes, that's the name! Well, truly, it is wonderful! wonderful! My brow even now feels hot and uneasy beneath the tiara which I once wore. I led a stormy, ambitious, striving life. But my spirit *was* destined to wield power, and it would not slumber; it would not lie quiescent beneath the power of a crowned head. Power was what I wanted; power I acquired, but at what a cost! My good friends, had my spirit but been directed by the all-pervading strength of love and wisdom which now directs you, I had become a great, a useful man; I had left a name behind me

which would have been uttered with a sigh and with tears of thanksgiving. But, alas! how perverted were my ways! how ambitious! How strenuously I strove to break down and bend every mind around me to my own desires!

Here Mr. Warren said—"Yes, and you succeeded."

Succeeded! Yes, far more than history speaks of. *I ruled*, not the king, but Richelieu. *I was* powerful: *I was* great. There is one dark, sorrowful spot in my life which I would forego years of heavenly life to forget: I trampled on innocence. My malicious tongue did much harm, for it turned aside the heart of the husband from the caress of the wife. Well, well, sad and bitter memories have been my portion. Retribution came not too late, but all at once. Oh! it took away from me the bright hopes which my childhood's wishes, my boyish dreams had wandered among when but a striving lad. Prophetic voices sounded in my ears, and told me of future power. My heart swelled, and seemed as though it would burst, as though the breast could not contain it, so big were its towering ambitions. And I labored hard: early at morn, at noon, at midnight, I labored without ceasing. Mine was a hard-earned greatness, and its bitterest hours were those in which I felt that naught remained for me to do, that I could not climb upon the throne, and wield the kingly scepter with such power as to bring all the nations of the earth to my feet. I desired to see them bending low at my footstool in abject weakness—I the power, and I the only dictator. And when the world thought me engaged in prayer, in fasting, and performing the

rites which my holy office enjoined upon me, oh, could they have seen the wicked strife within ! Prayers ! but not to God. Aspirations ! but not of heaven. Repentance ! but not of wickedness, but for the great successes which had passed from within my grasp, because I was in holy office, and could not, consistently with my calling, be that which I would be. My breast was a burning volcano.

G. S.

CHAPTER LIV.

PRACTICAL NATURE OF SPIRIT-LIFE.

Given, *December 6, 1854.*

THE wants of the human soul are now more numerous than the means which are yet developed to supply such wants. It is indeed a great and unmistakable truth, that the spirit-life is a highly practical one ; more so, indeed, in its higher development, than this sphere. The arts and sciences which are here but partly understood, are there working harmoniously in all the symmetry and perfection of their perfections. The profound mysteries of philosophy, here but dimly understood, are there unfolded clearly and practically to every inquiring mind. The soul springs into this state of being with those faculties more or less highly receptive to the light, which may be given in this sphere ; and after passing weary hours of labor and perplexity, it grasps, perhaps, an atom of the truth as it is. It is given forth to the world, perhaps clearly, mayhap dimly. It stands forth upon the record of time until another more developed soul sees plainer, and adds another, but not a newer atom to the one already given. And thus they go on one after another, helping to develop in a practical manner the race in which their existence has been thrown. But when they have thrown off the mantle of clay, then

the soul knows well that those intense longings for knowledge, and light, and wisdom, which seem novel to many, were not made a part of its spiritual organization without a wise and holy purpose—without a practical good to accrue from the further development of those dimly conceived ideas, from their crude and inharmonious state, into a more evenly balanced sphere of action. And now the great practical beauty of the spirit-world, in all its vast and complicated machinery of action and united harmony, bursts upon the wondering and delighted spirit. Ten thousand beauties meet his eye. There he beholds dimly conceived ideas brought into perfection. There are great and opposite principles (which he had thought could never mingle) working harmoniously together, and producing results whose power and usefulness combined, astonish him. Here, indeed, no laggard need hope to find a heaven. They who desire music, and song, and flowers, and floating landscapes of loveliness, do ~~not~~ find them here; it is a part of the great universe of thought and wisdom and higher life which goes to make up the great, yet beautifully harmonious home for all. Although many are not attracted to this field of utility and practical knowledge, yet the mind whose spiritual organization has been molded out of such materials; without its labor, without its highly conceived laws of grandeur and design of thought and never-ending labor, ever developing new and startling wisdom, there could be no heaven in which that soul could find enjoyment. He would pine and droop amid the employments which others take so much delight in. And do you not conceive that this labor is necessary? that all happiness, and all things which

contribute to our well-being in our spirit-life are not produced without a cause, without a means?

As we are here dependent upon each other, in a great measure, for our happiness and necessities, so are we there. Castles are not built out of thin air, created at the wish or desire of those who may want them. All things do not form of themselves, spontaneous; but science and philosophy must lend their aid. Labor assumes a dignity and beauty, and none enjoy luxury nor ease until it is earned by the labor of their own energies; none may stand idle by and say to another: "Go and do this thing," but they must stretch forth their own hand and do for themselves. The man who is lacking in practical knowledge, when he arrives in the spirit-world, is as helpless as the person who, entering a strange country, can not understand the language of the people among whom he has entered; although he may have read and heard of all their manners and customs, still he is unable to mingle with them, or be useful to them until he has acquired the art of making himself understood, and of understanding them. Thus many conceive that the general principles given of the state of the soul hereafter, in its various degrees of development, is but a kind of school where the lessons are easily conned, and the happiness of the state is all that is necessary to know; but they must learn that it is also a severely practical school, and each and every one must thoroughly understand their part, sufficiently to instruct others as well as benefit themselves, before they can pass lightly through, for with the knowledge always comes the application. And man indeed feels that when he has entered the world of spirits, it is in many respects

more natural, because more real and highly developed in its mechanical and philosophical laws than the one which they left. Here the true grandeur and sublimity of the mechanical universe breaks upon them in all its majesty and constructive beauty; and here, too, is the immortal spirit made more than man, for he becomes a god in the deep and mysterious knowledge of the universe surrounding him. He becomes endowed with such mighty power, that he can shake the great world of elements surrounding him with commotion; he can roll the forces of his vast reservoir of power, so that it may be felt in spheres beyond him; he may carry within his hands the lightnings, making them obedient messengers to bring him bright sparks of knowledge from those worlds where others can not approach, which roll beyond him, illuminating the horizon by their brightness, and filling the beholder with wonder and unsatisfied inquiry. The man who so thus pants and longs for his natural food is not content with other; is not to be filled, is not to find rest until he finds himself a part, filling a niche left vacant for him in this great universe, which is constantly changing—delighting—unfolding by the scintillations of its light the enrapt and eager soul.

O profound thinker! think on; thy thought had its birth before thy body, yea, coeval with thy soul; it leaves its bright impress still upon thy weary and thoughtful brow. Thou art destined for greater things, for sublimer knowledge than the puling, puny soul whose flight grasps not the substantial, but only the flickering, fleeting beauty, as the bee sips the honey when roaming from flower to flower, looking upon its sunlight beauty, taking a sip of its sweetness; and then

when the tempest comes, when the sky is dark and the sun is hid from its view, all is dark, and dreary, and cheerless beneath the gaudy flower. Stretch forth thy pinions, soul. Soar away into the regions of light and harmony and creative power, and ask thyself then, "Where is the mind, and what is the power who created and keeps in equilibrium all this vast univercœlum?" And behold what construction, what comprehension, what sublimity and grandeur are there displayed wherever thy feeble eye can reach! Oh, the mind which called all these things into life, and power, and existence, was a constructive, mechanical, practical mind, and all things in your universe are constantly displaying in their changing forms, practical and beautiful results. And thus you will see that every faculty, every legitimate labor beneath the sun has a corresponding and practical bearing in regard to the hereafter of its being. It is a deep and searching study; it is divine in its origin; it is a part of the Divine Mind itself (the mechanical development displayed by the present race), and it will so continue developing until the hidden secrets of nature are all revealed; until man becomes in his higher unfolding what the Deity intended he should be; breathing and partaking of harmony, and light, and beauty, and knowledge, from all things in nature, each forming a part of his being, and making him within himself a universe of harmony, proximating to the Deity in the purity and development and number of his attributes.

CHAPTER LV.

GLIMPSE OF A HIGHER LIFE.

New York, *January* 10, 1855.

AT last the great struggle is over—the spirit has parted from the body. They have been companions so long that the separation was hard to be effected; but they have parted, never more to be united. The worms will have a rare banquet upon that which once was the pride and glory of my manhood; and the green grass will wave, and the winds will sing a requiem over the spot where my humanity has gone to mingle with its native elements! What care I now for that which was once so tenderly loved and daintily handled! It served the purpose for which it was given; it received the spirit; it grew up and unfolded in its proportions, until it assumed the stature and recognized appearance of manhood, and, like the short-lived flower, when the meridian of its strength and beauty had departed, it gradually withered, and drooped, and finally sought its mother's bosom, and there is lost for awhile, until nature again requires its elements in the formation of other matter. And now that I have made this great change, it all seems natural; it takes place without any effort on my part. But I have left behind a world whose laws I was acquainted with, whose aspects were all

familiar, inasmuch as I was brought in contact with many of them. But this new life, this evolving of the spirit into what seems another spirit, is awakening within me strange and undefined feelings, not of uncertainty, but of the knowledge of my own ignorance, so far as regards the laws which govern the invisible but tangible world.

Strange metamorphosis! I find that here I need a body as well as yonder; but it is more refined; it obeys my will; it is still a willing machine. While below, I knew how to direct its motions, where to command it to carry me; but now I am at fault; for behold I am clothed indeed with a new body, and its proportions are all natural and pleasant to my spirit's affections. It is as a nicely fitting garment, adapted to the stature which my spirit recognizes as belonging to its likeness. And now where shall I turn, whom shall I address, and what shall I seek? The future, thus far, has been an unexpected, practical tangibility. But my vision is limited. I have a hundred impulses to go hither and thither to seek information in every direction, but no definite plan has yet formed itself in my bewildered mind; for I confess to you, my friends, that I was not a believer (in my earth-life) in the individualized existence, or the practical hereafter, or the spiritual development of the human soul as a revolving and isolated germ, among thousands of others, all tending to and circling around one Great Center, but each totally unlike all who surround it. But I stood thus far alone, quite alone; my consciousness of individuality was as clear and distinct as ever my earth-life had realized in its most exalted moments of communion with the invis-

ble and mysterious voices of the past. I was not lost in chaos, nor swallowed up in the whirlpool of changing matter ; my intellects were intensely alive to my uncertain position, for I knew that with my existing wants there must be means to satisfy them in this place as well as there had been in the land from whence I came. And gradually the mists cleared away, and my vision became stronger. A great feeling of reverence for a Great First Cause had always existed in my heart, and now it became stronger, for I seemed to approach nearer the mighty confines of that great unknown mystery which had by its very vastness shrouded my soul as with a mantle, which shut out all light, all knowledge. Feelings of great power, and a presence of I knew not what, shook my soul to its very foundations. The portals of the invisible world were opening before me, and I feared to cross their sacred threshold. I began to see forms ; human forms they seemed, but they were clad in a lightness which caused them to float in air, or glide rather than tread upon any seen substance. As the rays of the sun dispel the darkness of night and lights up into glad brightness the slumbering world, and bids the darkness recede before his glancing rays, so opened upon my vision, gradually, but oh, how grandly, the sublime beauties, the wondrous majesty, the unlimited extent of the spirit-world ! And this, which seemed to my faint sight so stupendous in its grand dimensions, was only a small portion which my contracted vision was able to take in. Shall I ever be able to describe the thoughts which flitted through my mind ? Wonder, astonishment, and awe took possession of my soul ; my own insignificance crushed me down to

earth ; but the sweet power of love came over my spirit and sustained it through the trial. I smote my breast. I called myself a groveling earth-worm, a crawling reptile, unfit to behold a tithe of the glories revealed to my vision. I struggled, I staggered for some strong arm to lean upon, for as yet none had come near me, but the whole glorious scene had been as if the curtain of Elysium had been withdrawn that my astonished eyes might gaze, that my unbelieving spirit might feel, and see, and then sink back into its own insignificance. And what sustained me in that hour? Was it hope? Oh, no ; for mine was lost in the ocean, which I supposed engulfed the millions who were constantly tending into the sea of eternity. Therefore it was not hope which sustained me, but it was an invisible power, a wisdom which I in my blindness had not yet seen. Unaided, my spirit must have lost its consciousness again, and sunk into the slumber which it had just awakened from. But what I beheld was no bright, fleeting vision, but real, blissfully, beautifully real ! Oh, who shall describe it !

Vast and grand are all things pertaining to this fair country. My vision can not compass its unlimited boundaries ; my eye can not scale its lofty mountains, neither can my weak calculations follow the length and breadth of its broad and flowing rivers, rippling and sparkling in the sunlight of its rose-tinted sky, whose clouds drop down blessings as pearls, kissing the hearts of its rejoicing inhabitants. The fragrance of its flowers enrapture the senses, for delicious odors cause the soul to dream of what it hath not yet seen. But strange voices are whispering in the air, and the glancing light

of their floating forms sends thrills of joy, and expectant gazing for angelic faces. What order, what deep harmony pervades and intensifies every soul as to a measure of well-timed music! I hear the voice of song, the sound of merriment; children's voices mingle with the sounds. Surely, as they approach nearer, they will not pass me by, they will not leave me to sink beneath the overwhelming sense of all this marvelous beauty and unspeakable grandeur.

I but stand at the threshold of the city; I can not yet enter its holy precincts. I see them approaching; they are a company of men and women, and many are with them whom once I knew, and marvelously have they changed; but still each soul has retained the character of mind which nature first imprinted upon its tablet called the human countenance. I see it has been transferred from the mortal clay to the spirit-likeness. I see thoughtful and earnest faces; but they look as if a deep and holy quiet had overshadowed their spirits, and they were reposing from their labors in a life of congenial activity, which is to them rest eternal. The glad smile and the merry laugh; the voice of affection; the eye lighted by the spirit-love, are all here displayed as they pass away from before the place in which I stand. They divide, and each one takes a different direction. I see that all have different occupations suited to the developing state of their higher faculties at the present time, their labors changing as they progress step by step in the harmonies of their higher unfolding, each element as it is unfolded becoming an essence, and concentrating within their being as they rise higher in the circling dome of opening light. I

perceive that they are, by the nature of their occupations, assisting one another; fitting some to be the messengers of knowledge—the teachers of wisdom and of practical usefulness to those who are below them. Every task, every exertion embraces within its scope the happiness or instruction of another. I see no selfishness here displayed, but each laboring at the occupation most fitted to their capacity, and necessary to complete, in all its varied lights and shades of coloring and utility, the order and harmony of the progressive joy of the spirit-life. I gaze on. I can not cease; I long to join them! Why had my soul ever refused to see the wisdom of God in its natural and deeply mysterious forms of truth and knowledge before! My soul bows down in deep humility before the majesty of his power, as I see how godlike in its attributes he has created the germ which emanated from so glorious a center, so fruitful, so wise a source. For of the countless intelligences which have been evolved as sparks of light from the mighty, beating, pulsing Heart which gave them being, no two are alike, nor shall be in all the circling cycles of eternity.

As I stand and look upward, countless myriads of worlds are revolving around their orbits in the illimitable regions of space. I see far up until they look no larger than small, bright grains of golden sand, touched by the sunlight glancing across their darkness. Ah! they tell me that these are worlds yet to be inhabited by those gross, crude spirits who are struggling into the changing ocean, which bears them farther onward into the oblivion of earth, but not of eternity. Who can measure the wisdom of the Creator? The mighty

thoughts of the Deity who can fathom ? He calls worlds into existence, and he creates far down in the first intelligent forms, germs of immortal life, who have sprung from himself ; and as rivers tend to the ocean, and as the sun's rays draw its waters upward, so shall the countless millions ever glide onward and upward, continually growing more in the likeness of him who formed them ; yet never reaching, never equaling, but always aspiring up to, and perfecting and expanding in their attributes, so that they may give eternal glory to the great, loving, overflowing heart from whence they spring.

Sons of humanity, to me, earth-worm as I am, it is revealed that ye little know of the mystery of your eternal destiny ; for that which now seems as an unmeaning clod of the valley, only possessing a faint spark of intelligence, shall in the changing cycles of time become purified and ennobled in the upspringing faculties which lie deeply hidden, until it revolves in the orbit of celestial beings who exist in the atmosphere created by their own purity. Oh, little, little does man know, in the most giant-like grasp which his outstretched arm hath besought of Heaven. I would that man should ask for truth, eternal truth, coeval with the Father ; the first cause, the only framer of truth himself. I would that the flood-gates of the eternal ocean of knowledge were flung open, that man might drink deep draughts until his soul was strong and great, that he might set his foot upon the earth and say, 'Thou art my servant, thou art the ladder, the footstool by which, with my right arm, I may ascend to heaven. For earth is but a small school-room, wherein man takes the first lessons

of his intelligent and intuitional being, and it will indeed seem very small to thee, man, when thine eyes have been opened with the strong touch which will empower thee to gaze upon one leaf only of the unfolding glories of the opening spheres.

Mine eyes have been blessed ; my spirit has been humbled ; I am content to stand without and listen to the invisible presence whose voice is forever speaking in my ear words of mighty import and ever-changing thought.

I linger, I dare not enter, because I am feeble ; its splendor and its light, and its holy atmosphere of purity, overcome my dim and fading senses, as I contemplate its beauties without.

But I have found sympathy and love ; congenial voices whisper to my heart, and soft hands press mine, and urge me onward ; and when I have become strong in my hope and faith, and when my power as a spirit is as great as the gratitude which fills my soul to my heavenly Father, who has vouchsafed me so much of his love, I will enter ! Oh, I will enter the abode of the blessed ; its atmosphere, filled with the perfumes of life and healing, now fans my brow ; I gaze from afar on its beauties, and my soul drinks deep inspiration in the contemplation of its mysteries.

Roll on, ye circling worlds, around your center, and in your orbits grow brighter and fairer to my enraptured eyes ; sparkle in the firmament as gems which deck the brow of majesty and light, and let your radiance come down as a stream of ambient light, and draw my wishful, earnest soul to penetrate your glories, for I know I shall visit you ; I know that I shall

be there: the Father's promises are for aye and for evermore; and I doubt not the vastness of his love, when he hath revealed so much of his glories to such a worm of earth as I.

Beloved of earth, I wait, I work, I pray. If my voice would reach your hearts, oh, mount up with me, press upon the ascending ladder in throngs, eager, glad, and hopeful; for the children of earth have never conceived of the mighty love of the Father; but hereafter they will glorify him, when their brows are crowned with the flowers from the garden of Paradise, and their lives are one continued song of joy for evermore!

CHAPTER LVI.

COMMUNICATION.

Given, *June 5, 1855.*

THE rays of the morning sun bathe with golden light the mountain-tops of the spirit-land; the dew yet glistens upon the flowers, mingling sweetness to their purity and loveliness to their tints; the birds are caroling their morning songs, and soft and holy is the hour, as happy spirits come forth from their habitations, and, joined hand in hand, they ascend to the top of some high mountain, or enter the depths of some deep valley, with uplifted hearts, to render thanksgiving to God their Father, to gaze upon the fair inheritance which hath been given them, and to ask what their labors shall be, in what employment they shall pass the day, that their works may glorify and give honor commensurate with the privileges within the reach of each one in performing their daily task. They do not toil nor sweat, but they labor, and develop their energies, ever fresh and new. Curious and wonderful seem the mysteries which are constantly being unfolded to their searching spirits. As the buried faculties are called forth one after another, how surprised and delighted are they to find within themselves that gift or power, as it may be, which they had supposed to be possessed

by others but not within themselves; how thankfully and proudly conscious does their immortal spirit become, when, after having lived its earth-life but a mere child in knowledge, it takes its initiation into spheres for which it is spiritually fitted, and then it becomes gradually awakened to the true strength and power and stature which it possesses as a progressive spirit; and with this knowledge come duties, but so pleasant and satisfying to the soul, that it never wearies, but presses on, led by an irresistible desire to fathom that which is unseen—which is for and in the future. There is ever a bright light inviting the asking spirit to come up higher, to dig deeper, to ask for more, and more is always given; but the immortal soul is ever hungry—ever stretching out—reaching beyond. Each place which the spirit may call its home is pleasant and fair, but there is ever a fairer one to be obtained by labor; there are always more beautiful scenes than the eyes have yet rested upon; there is always sweeter music than the senses have drunk in; there is ever a void asking constantly for more.

Children of earth, it is not enough that in your spirit-home you sing the praises of your Father—that you mingle with the pure and the holy; it is not enough that you feel happy in the reunion with those you love. That place which your spirits yearn to inhabit is made fair and beautiful by the presence and the harmony, and by the loving labor of those who inhabit it; for those who would be happy must first earn their right to happiness; and then, indeed, who may wrest it from them? Do not think that all memory of the past will be forgotten in the joy to which you are going, but live

upon earth as the child of God; live as though you were separated from that Father only for a season, and remember his loving-kindness has prepared a mansion to receive you when you shall have finished the tasks which you have begun upon earth; rough or unsuited, or cheerless and cold as they may have seemed, yet it is but a day—an hour—a fleeting moment in comparison with the life which is before you; and they who struggle and strive to do their Father's will, will be received in that land of love and holy joy with rejoicing and gladness. They will have crowns placed upon their heads; they will be clasped in the embrace of radiant beings, and they will feel that one hour in the courts of heaven is worth a whole lifetime of suffering and self-denial. The earth is not man's abiding-place; then why should he seek so hard to assimilate his soul with its grossness? why should he do violence to the immortal spark within him? why crush it to the ground until it ceases its struggles, and, like a wounded bird, lies still and slumbers, not to awake until it has burst from its prison-house of clay? He but comes here to undergo one of the many changes which the spirit has to pass through; and when the spirit can escape from its clay covering, how glad it is to make the exchange, to mount up into its native element, as it were, having thrown off the heavy encumbrances—for soon does it feel and know that the loves and affections which it felt on earth were those of the spirit, and not of the clay; therefore the spirit has no more love for the clay after it has once cast it off, but it looks upon those who are left behind, and wonders how they can bear about so cumbersome a body.

The spirit is a great and unceasing traveler, and so it will continue to be until in its journeyings we shall lose sight of it forever, for as they pass from before us and beyond us, we know that they are fulfilling their immortal destiny. And still we stand at the gates, knocking loudly at the entrance, that we may teach mankind how to enter upon the world, and the light which we have entered—how to prepare to take his part in its labors and its duties. We would not have him come among us ignorant and debased; we would fain have *all* developed morally, and intellectually fitted to mingle with those who are able to teach them, and whom to associate daily with will raise them higher in the scale of progression. We would have man redeem himself while here from the impurities and errors which false teachings have cast about men's souls; and we would come simply and lovingly; we would ask him to hold communion with us, to hear our voices, that we might be as brothers and sisters coming from our Father's house to help him through with his earthly tasks—to fit him to come and dwell with us, mingling our songs of thankfulness together for evermore.

CHAPTER LVII.

A WORD FROM VOLTAIRE.

New York, *July* 26, 1855.

I STAND upon the summit of a lofty mountain ; I am enveloped in a cloudy atmosphere ; none are near me, and I stand alone, in silence and solitude ; a sense of the infinite power and majesty of God pervades my entire being, and a fervent desire goes out from my spirit to the Spirit whose unutterable breathings are all around me ! I ask for wisdom from on high ; I ask that the power of Infinitude which I am made to feel may not overwhelm me, but that I may, as a humble and loving little child, receive that which my spirit is able to grasp, and lo ! before the prayer had left my heart it was answered by a beauteous sight presented to my view. I saw approaching me four spirits ; they all came from different directions, and some were exceedingly bright. The light radiating from them dazzled my vision as they approached closer to me. The others were not of so fair an appearance ; but they wore a pleasant expression, which seemed to say, peace be unto thee, child of earth ; we come to teach thee a lesson ; because thou hast desired wisdom, thy prayer shall be answered.

They stood before me so that I might behold them

all together, and I observed that each one was clad differently from the others. The entire being bore that distinction which would mark a different nation, yet physically they were the same, because they were kindred in kind if not in spirit. One of them now addressed me, saying :—

“Child of earth, we come to thee, each from a different state or sphere—each one representing by our appearance the degree of development to which we have attained in our spirit progress. Gaze upon us closely, and thou wilt see a marked difference in each one. Behold, the first who comes near thee is a dweller near the sphere in which thou art still a dweller. Thou wilt perceive that there is much of earth’s surroundings still about him. His sympathies with earth are strong. His desires tend yet as much earthward as up—as heavenward. His vesture, the limitation of thought and feeling, are yet upon, or assimilating much with, the earth plane. There is a strong and ardent longing to mingle again in the scenes which he left. The time hath been so short since his removal that he doth not yet sufficiently realize his new position, but thinks he would be happier if his earthly joy, his cares and friends, were with him; because ‘where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.’

“And now look upon the next. You observe a more hopeful expression of countenance, a lighter raiment, less inclination to look downward, and more wish to soar up. This spirit is more thoroughly weaned from earth. He hath cast the trammels off him. He hath left the plane or state which kept him near earth so long, and he is rising above those who have lingered by

the wayside, plucking only fading flowers. His ear hath become accustomed to the sound of spirit-voices. His eye lights up as it looks upon spirit-forms, and he feels that he has cast off earth's mantle for ever and ever. Thus his spirit is new-born and buoyant, and he listens attentively to all teachings which are presented to him. He hath not lost his love or affection for his earthly friends; but it is purified, and now, when he approaches them, he goes upon errands of duty rather than sympathy, because he feels that he has done with things inherent to the flesh, and now he liveth to become wise in the spirit. He is now seeking what he may do, and how wisely he may do it. He now feels the meager supply of knowledge which once satisfied him inadequate to last his hungry soul for the space of but one day in his spirit-life, so pleasantly and profitably do the hours now glide by, with no drawback to his happiness save his regret that he did not live on earth to know himself and what his capabilities were, or wherein that which would have made his earth-life but as a laborious dream in comparison to the real enjoyment which his spirit now revels in with so keen a zest. He is but a child yet. He is pleased and happy, because he hath entered the state where he feels that he is striving by his studies to prepare himself, and become assimilated to his eternal home. No earthly regrets or longings take away from his spirit's peace, for he hath ceased to remember his earth-life, save when the spirit is brought into communion with a kindred affinity, and the sympathetic chord still reaches him and vibrates to the loving voice. It gladdens me to look at his face, for it is hopeful; and

when hope and faith go hand in hand, I know that he will soon become brighter, higher, wiser, and purer.

“And now behold the next spirit. He is one who is not often drawn earthward. His pathway lies among the sparkling worlds which dot the brow of heaven. Look at the comeliness of his face, at the brightness of his eye, at the sweetness of his smile, and hark to the music tones of his voice ! And yet he once trod upon the same dim sphere, and breathed the same air-given breath which you do now. But long since he hath risen above it. His garments float round him light and zephyr-like—ethereal as the atmosphere in which he lives. He is one of those who have labored upon earth and labored in heaven. His works, they followed him, because they were prompted by love ; and verily they did return to the source from whence they sprang, and lighted up his pathway, making strange places seem familiar by their pleasant fancies. His spirit soon becomes fitted to mingle with the wise and the good who had passed to their homes long before him. And he labored earnestly and manfully, because great thoughts had found a birthplace in his soul ; and still the prayer of his heart was, more food—more, O Father, I hunger still ! And the chalice was often held to his lips, and he drank deep draughts. He bore great burdens ; he agonized in spirit that he might benefit humanity, and spirits came and held counsel with him that he might teach them to walk in the way of wisdom. With all he was ever gentle, ever meek and lowly. As he cast off earth’s grossness and put on the habiliments of light, he became angel-like, because his spirit’s purity shone upon all who surrounded him. Earth seems

to him but a dot in the firmament of glory, because his eyes have beheld unfolding immensity, and his ears have heard seraph voices, whose tones penetrate not to earth. They can not be heard below; the spirit must ascend, yea, purified, to hear the music which only toucheth hearts attuned to hear its melody. And lo! he standeth before thee, majestic and calm in his developed beauty. And what dost thou think can be the employment fitted for such as he? I'll tell thee what it is. He is a teacher, set before many spirits who are striving to become wise. He is doing the will of his Father, because he hath labored and hath striven. Through trials and sufferings he hath become fitted to teach those beneath him great and soul-saving truths. He is a guide. He is a loving and kind counselor to those who are far beneath him. His power doth reach far; his wisdom doth sink deep; and the influence which emanates from him strengthens and gives aid and hope to those who are struggling to do that which will enable them to mount up higher, and look abroad upon the land which their eyes have not yet been permitted to look upon. And behold! he visiteth places unknown to the sons of earth, and he telleth them of deep mysteries which their spirits could not penetrate. He is a messenger of joy, because he goeth from place to place with glad tidings; and words of joyful import resound throughout the vast expanse to hail his arrival from celestial lands—for the human heart is ever the same throughout eternity, in all its joys, its love, its hope and inner yearning for something more to be revealed. He has passed from earth many, many ages ago. And thy prayer was earnest—thy

yearning deep ; and the living thought bounded far up, and reached him in his rapid career, and he paused and bowed his head ; and obedient to the will of his Father, he sped downward ! Look upon his brightness, child of earth, and say, canst thou fathom the wisdom which from a spark undeveloped, ignorant and dark, can unfold through circling ages, from one state of imperfection to another, each changing and losing the crudery which first enwrapped it, and budding out as a fair unfolding flower, until, from one change to another, it becometh a thing of beauty—a gem of purity—a ray of light—a godlike thing—a speaking intelligence, whose voice, from the feeble wailings of the infant, hath become strong and pure, until it answereth from the deep of eternal mind to the voice of God himself—of the Mind which created it ! Verily we may become kings and priests unto God ; because we are his children—because we love him, and he maketh us like unto himself.”

* * * * *

A deep sleep fell upon my spirit. The one who had addressed me laid his hand upon my head gently, and said, “ Child of earth, profit by the lesson given thee. Live ! for life is eternal, and thou canst never die ! Thou wilt change, but the whole created universe is ever changing, and developing new and freshly-budding beauties. Work, for nature works. Give thanks to thy Father God, for all he hath created praiseth him. Trust in him, for he who gave thee being is able to sustain thee. As puny as thou art, thou art a part of him. Look up ! by so doing thou shalt reach the great

and loving heart from which thou didst emanate, and there shalt thou find the rest and the peace which lasts for ever and ever !

“ My task is done. Profit thou by the lesson.”



CHAPTER LVIII.

HOME OF THE UNHAPPY SPIRITS.

Given through Mrs. Sweet, *September 10, 1855.*

IN the silent watches of the night, when slumber had overpowered the external senses, and the spirit and the body seemed more distinct than in their waking state, the desire to know more of the unseen and unknown things of eternity sprang up strong and powerful within me, when lo ! a voice beside me said :—" Come with me ; leave thy body for a while, and I will show thee what manner of place and what kind of companions many of earth's children are hastening to dwell in and mingle with." I gladly took my conductor's hand, and wandered far from earth. We did not ascend ; our pathway seemed to be more on the descending scale than otherwise ; and as we left earth's atmosphere we entered another kind of breathing element. It was not darker nor denser than that which we had left, and yet it oppressed me. My companion said, " Hasten thee along until we reach the place we are seeking." A sad, dull feeling now took possession of me, and I walked with unwilling steps, reluctant to proceed, and yet unable to return. There was no feeling of joy at my heart—no anxious hope, but a dull, heavy sensation pervaded my entire brain, and I said to my guide, " Let us return ;

these regions are not the abode of happy spirits, because, instead of warming or exhilarating my frame by their near approach, they chill and subdue me." My guide said, "Nay, thou didst wish to look into things pertaining to the eternal welfare and destiny of man. Why, then, art thou unwilling to look upon the dark side? because there thou mayest learn as much of wisdom for thy spirit's strength, as thou couldst gain by gazing upon the holy beauty which thou art not yet prepared to enter; for, verily, the sons and daughters of earth must work their way up, through great sacrifices and great affliction, for the purification of their spirits!"

And we entered a city, and indeed it seemed of this world, and yet not of it. It was vast and great in all its proportions of strength and magnitude. It was inhabited by many people of all nations and tongues. It was a busy scene of confusion. I turned and gazed about me; and upon all sides—upon every countenance which I met, was written the words, too plainly to be misunderstood, "unhappiness" and "discontent." No pleasant smile greeted our approach, but sullen looks, regretful faces, and murmuring voices and sorrowing countenances met us on every side. I looked long and sadly for some countenance lighted up by hope—some brow upon which was written "innocence and love" dwelling within; but I found them not. The air was chilly, because love wafted no pleasant gales to warm up that place of sorrow and regret. The spirit who led me, said, "Mortal, observe one thing—thou dost not behold here one infant form, one child-like face, wearing the looks of defaced divinity." My heart swelled up within me, and a deep prayer struggled for utterance to my

Father, that the innocence of childhood knew not the blight of sin—of impurity—that it dwelt not in this atmosphere of mental depression.

My guide said, "Accost some of the dwellers of this city, mayhap they will tell thee the cause of their unhappiness." I paused and shrank back from the unpleasant task. My guide whispered "*Duty*," and then I was ready to do as I was bid. There was approaching me an aged man—a spirit rather, who had brought the decrepitude of age and suffering with him to his spirit-home. I said, "Why do you thus groan under your infirmities? Why do you walk as though you were still an inhabitant of earth? Have you not left it? and could you not leave behind you its affections, inherent only, as I thought, to the flesh?" He said to me, "Who are you who presume thus to question me? I lived out a lifetime of labor and care that I might be able to enjoy luxury and ease. When age came upon me I had no time to think of death. What was death to me? I was working hard that I might enjoy on earth the fruits of my labor; but suddenly I am called away. I became powerless at once to retain my body and spirit together. I am compelled to leave all behind that made up the sum and substance of my life's long labor! Why," said he, "should I be forced to part with what I loved so dearly—what I labored so hard to obtain? But," said he, and a stern and savage look overspread his countenance, "I will *not* part with it! I did not want to come here. I will yet labor still, and carry out my darling project. I would not be other than I am. I would be what I was. Do not talk to me of death and of happiness beyond the grave, for all happiness fled

from my grasp when I was summoned away so suddenly to this accursed place." My guide said, "God aid thee, poor soul, to look up to the help which is ready to come to thee when thou canst give up thine earthly desires ; then also shall thy earthly infirmities leave thee free to labor for its happiness." And he tottered away, leaning on his staff, only intent on grasping the fleeting phantom of happiness ; but, alas ! in the wrong direction, and never to be realized by him until, in the bitterness of his spirit, he prays for help and for light from above.

We passed on ; and next we met a young girl. She had been fair and beautiful, were it not for the impress of sin and suffering upon her still youthful countenance. She met us with a defiant glance, as though questioning our presence there. She seemed to know that we did not belong to the place, and she strove to hide her shame beneath an air of bold recklessness and effrontery. My guide gently laid his hand upon her shoulder and said, "Stay, child, we would speak with thee." She paused unwillingly, and I said, "Tell me why you like to stay in this gloomy place, when there are so many inviting paths all about you wherein you might walk pleasantly and profitably ? Why do you mingle with the evil and the gross ? Why do you drink of the cup of sorrow and eat of the bread of bitterness and strife, when you know that there is rest and peace for the repentant and earnest spirit ?" She looked upon me with fiercely angry looks. "Do you come to taunt me with my shame," said she, "with my fallen condition, you who know that I was once pure and loving—beautiful, and proud of the world's approving voice ?" "Nay,"

said the spirit, "we did not come to taunt thee, but to save thee—to teach thee of thy Maker!" "Away," said she, "I will learn naught of good; I will hear no words of love, or faith, or hope, or charity, or joy; they are idle sounds to me, fitting only for puling children. I died with a curse upon my lips, and a murderer's knife in my hand; shame, black and deep written upon my dishonored brow! I ask no mercy; I desire no heaven. I hate the good and the pure, and I love the dark and defiled wretches, because I am like them—because I will excel them in wickedness and crime if I may;" and she gave a demoniac laugh, whose echoes were sad and hopeless as they fell upon the ear. The spirit-guide now said, "It is written that he who repenteth of his sins and returneth to his Father's house, shall be received with joy and gladness; and I leave with thee a message from thy Father, inviting thee to put aside the dark raiment of sin and all base passions, and listen to the soft and soothing voice of mercy, which will murmur peace, peace to thy troubled soul."

We passed on, and left her with a prayer in our hearts, that she might receive the heaven-sent message in her darkened home. And we saw in our journey weeping women—oh, how repulsive in their aspect—how different from all that they should be, by the perversion of their high instincts, which had been trampled upon and turned to base and unholy uses by the grievous wrongs of society and circumstances—by the laws of man, not of God, for they are just and equal!

And next we spoke to a man who looked as if God had gifted him with a bright intellect and expansive genius, whose range might encompass many of the great

things of earth ; but his brow was clouded with care, his eye was sunken, its expression hopeless ; his motions were nervous, and his head hung down, bowed toward earth, in craven and abject shame. When I spoke, he started. "Why do you stop me?" said he ; "am I not free here to do as I please ; or, does my old foe still pursue me even beyond the bounds of time—of earthly space? Leave me, or give me drink, more strong drink." Verily, the wine-cup had maddened to destroy the towering intellect which could soar as an eagle above the common herd, and sway men by its power and might ; it had been conquered and laid low by the red wine-cup. Death had lurked within it. It had sparkled but to deceive, and blindly led to destruction the brave and expanding soul while yet in manhood's prime. And sin and misery had marked his downward path, and disease had laid his body in the grave, but the unquenchable desire had arisen with his spirit, and now it was his ghastly, his daily companion, driving him to madness and despair, because his strong desire was unquenched. And he wanders up and down, ever desiring, but never receiving, wherewith to satiate his undying thirst. And thus he will be until his torment becomes so great that he will be fain to look for help—for life—for any thing to save him from the death which he is momentarily dying. And then, when the first prayer is uttered from the quivering, despairing depths of his agony, his repentance will have begun. Then will some kind angel draw near and beckon him from the place of his captivity ; and then will he pray to be delivered from out of the dark valley of the shadow of death, whose pestilence is ever destroying, but never dying—whose

anguish is ever wearing deeper, by the food upon which it lives, into the heart's core of its wretched inhabitants. Oh, it is a sad sight, one at which angels weep, but they can not help until the heart first asks and attracts them to it, because hope and faith are twin sisters; their birthplace was heaven, but they descended to earth, and a portion of them dwell in every germ of implanted intelligence. Therefore, hope may be buried deep in the most abject soul, but it will spring forth to meet the kind invitation which angels give. And dark and dreary as the home of the dark spirits may be, yet hope is not dead, but only buried within each bosom. And when all other props, all other barriers are broken away, then will hope spring forth and buoy up the sinking soul, and point it upward to its birthplace in the city of light and holiness.

Poor spirits! in their darkness they are far removed from the Father from whence they came; but they will revolve around and around in their dark orbits until they are washed of their sins, and at last approach their birthplace.

He has left us unheeding of our words; he will verily travel in the path of his iniquity until it becomes too great a burden to be borne, and then he will cry aloud to his Father; and his Father in heaven is ever ready to forgive.

We meet another. It is an aged female, and still she would fain deck herself out in trinkets and gewgaws. She is anxious that we should note the rustling of her silks, and make note of the brilliancy of her ornaments. Ah! what sad lines of care and earthly passion are marked on her countenance. She would fain tread

erect and stately, but the spirit says, "Take heed where thou art going, and what thou art doing; thou art still walking in the old pathway which caused the ruin of thy happiness on earth and the ruin of many others—which brought thy children down with thee to inhabit this place of contention and sorrow. Thy heart is yet cold and callous; the external is all thy spirit craves."

"And who are you who would bar my progress," said she; "who would keep me back from doing what I wish to? Have I not riches, and wealth, and power? Should not all beneath me bend the knee and do me homage? What care I for the poor and the lowly? I spurn the beggar! yes, I would tread upon the reptile and crush it, if it should cross my path. And my children, they should be as their mother, not vile worms of earth, but proud, haughty, and powerful, crushing beneath them every obstacle which would bar their entrance to honor and power—to wealth and position. Ye talk of the heart; it has nothing to do but please itself as it may in the enjoyment of this world's pleasures! Talk not to me of a hereafter; it is a myth—a shadow—a dim thing. I care not for any hereafter. Give me that power which I desire, now."

Poor spirit, she verily thought she was upon earth's surface, striving and wrestling with its vanities. She had crushed within her own soul and that of her offspring every kind impulse. She had sown the wind, and she was reaping the tempest. She had arrayed herself even in silks and fine linen to satisfy the cravings of her soul for the applause of the world. She had trampled upon every gentle affection, to be gazed at by men and women as a rare piece of nature's workman-

ship improved by art, and she lives on in her empty, delusive life, knowing all its hollowness and unhappiness, looking daily upon the wreck of all that her heart should have held dearest. A mother's love has been crushed within her, and she feels the want and the anguish. Ah! many, many years must pass away before she will begin to give up with tears of contrition the vanities of her earth-life!

And now here comes a poor, ragged, meager, hungry-looking object, murmuring aloud. He curses his Maker because he was born. He was ever unhappy, and rebelled in all things and at all times, because of what had been made and given from his Father. His physical development was all inharmonious. *God's earth* was not beautiful in his eyes, and his children were all enemies to *him*, because of the bitter waters which filled his own heart. No love nor kindness had found an outgushing channel; they had been suppressed and pent up under the fires of passion, and revenge, and discontent; and nursed, and nurtured, and fed until every thing had assumed an unloving and repulsive appearance. In his eyes the grass looked not beautiful, neither did the flowers smell sweet. The sun's rays were not bright; the moon's light was not chaste; the blue canopy was as a dark and forbidding mantle. All things were without beauty—without joy, because the God-given faculties were buried in the physical inharmony of his animal structure. He walked through life dark and gloomy, as a foreboding cloud of evil. He darkened men's paths by his presence; and when he left, no gentle deeds, no loving remembrance hallowed his memory; but he descended to the grave as a clod

of the earth, and his spirit went to mingle its discordance with elements of a like nature. But the animal and the evil shall not always bury the immortal germ of truth and human love. The dark spirit will be redeemed and beautified in coming time. The love of the Father and of angels shall touch his heart as with an electric gleam, and light up its dark, cold cells, and he shall yet become a ministering spirit in the mission of the mercy of the Father to the imperfections of man. His soul had nearly lost its portion of divine love in the wreck and ruin by which physical causes surrounded it; but it will come out hereafter bright and genial, bathed in the sunlight of the smile of Jehovah.

Ah! he passes away. He heard not the destiny far on his path before him, but step by step he will work it out; because mountains are formed from grains of sand, even so can the spirit, which sprang from God (however dark in its after-course), still be purified and stripped of all its earthly trammels, and gain wisdom step by step, until it attains the height and size of developed manhood.

“Many, many are the busy, blinded, discontented spirits around us here; but even in the midst of this place of sadness, and sorrow, and strife, and regret, I will erect an altar,” said the spirit, “and from it my prayers shall ascend to God, because he hath promised to redeem every child who shall return to him; and I know that from out of this conglomerate mass of discordance there shall arise hereafter, in the progressive march of endless time, an harmonious family, who shall call God their Father, and whose songs of praise shall ascend to him for ever and ever.”

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My guide hath returned with me, and I again enter the slumbering form. He says, "Profit by the lesson, O mortal ! and repeat it to earth's children ; mayhap thereby one soul may be saved."

CHAPTER LIX.

EXPERIENCE OF VOLTAIRE.

THE following story of his experience, given by Voltaire, was commenced on the evening of January 19, 1856, and continued, at intervals, on three subsequent evenings. During the delivery of the second and third parts, some friends happened to be present, who had come in to spend the evening with us.

The first and fourth parts were given when no one but the medium and myself were present. When one part had been given, we did not know that it was to be continued. So also with the other parts; and especially when the second part had been given, did we think that it was finished. But on the evening of March 24, much to our surprise the narrative was resumed and the third part given. The fourth and last was given on the 6th of September, and came as usual, without thought or expectation on our part.

The influence of this spirit on the medium was powerful, but harmonious. When deeply under his influence, she seemed at times to be taken far up—away from this state of existence, to where the grandeur and sublimity were so great, and the light so dazzling and overwhelming, that she shrank from beholding it.

G. S.

IN the bustle and confusion of the outer life, how utterly do men forget the last great scene to be enacted on the visible stage, before they enter the portals of the unknown land, whither they go, as they think, never to return. My life was one of deep yearning and unsatisfied longing. I was fierce and bitter, deep and grasping, in my search after the invisible wisdom, which was shut out from my hungry gaze. I could not

be satisfied with what other men were ; I desired something which they had not. The deep within me called to the deep, from which God once spake, when he said, "Let there be light." But with me there was no light. For humanity's surface presented to me nothing but a fleeting picture, filled with mimic shadows, called men and women. They lived either above me, or below me, I then knew not which. I was among them, yet not of them ; their forms and ceremonies sickened my soul, and provoked the ready sneer and the sarcastic remark.

When my spirit came into its earthly temple, it was altogether positive in its manifestations. It had none of the ready sympathy, and the gentle charity, necessary to bear it pleasantly through life ; it was angular, and ever going out in quest of some real support on which to lean ; but as the world then lived, it found no true resting-place, but was tossed about from billow to billow, without an anchor, ever left at the mercy of every wave which would dash it hither and thither. When I asked for proof from ancient lore, it failed to reply to my soul's deep yearnings—all were to me as fables, voices of the imagination, enough perchance for those to lean on who desired no other authority save what they were told was right ; who prayed by rule, and served God by measure. I despised, with a heartfelt contempt, the child's play which I saw daily enacted by kings and princes ; and I felt within me a power that, could I give it utterance, would hurl all their air-built structures to the earth, and leave them (poor idiots that they were) naked in their own ignorance, and clothed with nothing better, nor more durable, than the

gold and tinsel with which they covered themselves, and gloried in their greatness. But it was I who was the madman, if they were as children; I had not thought of my own impetuous and unreasonable nature. I had not seen myself as the world saw me, for I had only sought how I might tear away their bright illusions—their dream-like fancies, and probe to the bottom, and lay bare to their gaze, the folly of their so-called religion.

I did not deal in sarcasm and bitter invective because it pleased me; I did not level the shafts of my satire because it was altogether pleasant, but it expressed more forcibly my feelings—it gave the keenest edge to that which I could utter, to cut and tear away the thin veil of conventionalism and rank hypocrisy. Ah! my life was a sad one, in many respects; it was made up of so much that was discordant, that gave pain, that made the victim writhe in conscious knowledge of the truth of what I wrote; for I knew, and felt, that maledictions loud and deep were poured out on my head. But what cared I? I gloried in them! And it made the waters of bitterness flow on more merrily in my soul to see what an army arrayed themselves against me, striving to crush me into forgetfulness, that my voice might not be heard—that its sting might not be felt. And I defied them, for I exclaimed, “You, who have the mighty power of Christianity upon your side, the voices of past centuries, the power of kings and scepters, of popes and of cardinals—you need not raise even a finger against so insignificant a pen as mine, for I am but one man, while you number in your ranks the whole Christian and enlightened world! Why notice

me at all? Let me utter my voice, my thought, and be silent. It is only a man who speaks, although it would seem, from the number of my foes, that the incarnation of all evil had himself spoken through me." I did not for a moment shrink; it gave me power and strength, for then I knew that they were standing upon a sandy foundation, when so slight a cause could so agitate and confound them.

I experienced many triumphs in my own way; they were the only pleasant spots which my earthly existence knew, for I did love power, I did desire to hold the reins in my hand, by which I felt I was controlling the human mind, and making it as a mere machine; and God knows since, how deeply I have repented the means which I used to bend the mind, to bring it on my own plane of action. But it is past, and the memory of it now is humiliating to me. But I could not be other than I was; my character was strongly marked, and it left its impress behind it, long after the body had perished from remembrance. I met the angel of death calmly, fearlessly. I thought I had proved all things, and nothing more remained to be proved. I thought the yearning would die with me, and I was content to die and be forgotten. I had often desired to know the philosophy of death. I had looked upon the fading flower, and the withering grass; they but served to enrich the earth; to spring forth in new forms to please the eye; and should not the elements of my body go to perform some like service? I might peer as I would, but no voice answered my call, and I was thrust back upon myself. Oh! it was a mountain which rested upon me, because I felt it all, yet could give it no utter-

ance; and now the time had come to prove it. The limbs were nerveless, the eyes were glazing, the voice was mute; earth was fading—receding; but the intelligence—thought, thought lived still. The body no longer obeyed me—it was no longer mine. All sensation ceased, save in the top of my brain, and there was thought still; it would not die; but there it sat, independent and strong, apparently gathering up force, body, and form unto itself. I made an effort to forget—to die; I could not; but without an effort the thought still lived. And now I must say, the spirit left the body and hovered above it. So intensely did I believe in the utter death of soul and body, or of intelligence with the body, that I did not desire to live, I strove to sleep, to forget, to blot myself out. Senseless worm! Nature's laws no longer obeyed me; my control over natural things was at an end; and I found myself—where? you ask. I knew not where. Gloomy and sullen, refusing to believe myself a spirit, and yet feeling intensely alive, having no desire to be so—can you imagine the keen agony of that moment? Pray God that you never may! I, who had denied this thing, was now compelled to believe it. What! must I myself prove myself to have been deceived, in spite of all I had spoken and written? Was there still a reality in the weak imaginings of what I had heard men prate? Oh no! I could not bear the thought; I would rather die ten thousand deaths than live to prove the falsity of my own position. It is true I lived, but how, and in what condition? The location in which I was impelled to rest, presented no inducement to the sense nor the eyesight; it appeared as one vast, unin-

habited country, bleak and gloomy, mountainous, barren of all beauty; every thing wore a somber-hued mantle; no life broke the leaden atmosphere, whose very silence oppressed me and pained my whole being. The very waters flowed along sluggishly in their murky depths, and seemed as though they were molten lava; death and disease lurking beneath their dark surface.

Alone, quite alone, I stood in this bleak solitude; still I was fearless and undismayed, still I sought to die—to be blotted out. I would not believe that this was other than a terrible fantasy of the brain. No human being was to be seen, yet I rejoiced in this, for had such appeared I should have fled, and hidden myself in the clefts of the mountains. The thought of my own likeness appearing in any other form, was horrible to me. I wandered up and down, gloomy, wretched, and incredulous. Proud and defiant I sought to be still, yet felt that gnawing pain, that yearning desire to know more. I forgot myself in the struggle; but the silence and solitude were so incomprehensible that I knew not where to turn. Whom could I ask for knowledge? Where would I bend my footsteps to find it?

“No,” I said to myself, “this is a dream, a horrible dream—one of those strong delusions under which men labor who are grappling with disease and death. I shall return to earth and forget this; it will serve as a vision for some of the puppets to profit by.” And again I held my head erect, waiting to awake from out of the unnatural trance.

I knew not how long I waited, but that my heart sickened within me. A great heaviness and sense of

desolation fell upon my spirit, a weakness overcame me, and I trembled with an undefined dread. I prayed—no, I did not then pray—I wished that none might see me in the hour of my weakness and great humiliation. I gradually became accustomed to this scene of desolation and dreariness; it well accorded with my spirit's gloomy mood, and I spent long periods of time in meditation, deep and profound. I wandered up and down the place I had been compelled to inhabit, seeking in vain for some trace by which I might discover the laws which forced me thus to be the only inhabitant of the country. And I sought long and in vain; I asked not for sympathy nor love, I only asked for knowledge, and yet it was denied me. But I demanded it with a heart full of revilings toward the cause of all my misery. No answer came—no marvel that it did not to such as I then was. When I would blaspheme or when I would rail, I was alike impotent—there was no object upon which to vent my feelings, or to combat my vengeful threatenings.

I prided myself upon my solitary life. I said, "I desire no human sympathy; I could exist without it—within myself." Thus far I had been looking without, and had become weary, oh, very weary, of the changeless prospect. I turned to look within. Ah! what was there to see but a fountain filled to overflowing with bitterness and unbelief, of railing against every thing good and lovely; a heart of adamant, walled around with brass, impervious alike to fear or love. I prayed for slumber: as well might the eagle slumber while winging his way through the pure ether of heaven's blue arch, with the sun's rays blazing in his eyes,

as I could forget for a moment that I lived, that I thought, that I knew there was a something beyond myself, which I yet knew not of.

I know not how long I tarried in this place, but it was a very long time; the sameness, the monotony, and silence were dreadful. The little knowledge only gave additional fear and dread of what might next be revealed. Oh, death to me had been the gate of horrors, the plaything of mystery growing greater and denser as I proceeded. I knew not how much the pleasure of my earth-life had consisted in opposing, assailing, and setting at naught the opinions of my fellow-man. It had called forth my energy, it had given play to my intellect, diversion and recreation to my every-day existence; and now there was none but myself to strive against myself. Oh, the utter, utter misery, the want of companionship which I then experienced! At first I had thought I would flee from the face of a fellow-being. I abhorred the thought of a witness to the downfall of my theories, but the rocks gave me no reply when I upbraided them for their silence; the winds did not fan my cheek caressingly, but harshly; the trees appeared as though formed of rock, so unbending and icy were they in their appearance. Every thing seemed locked up against me. The grass was crisp and hard, and when I sought to hear the waters ripple, there was but a hollow echo, as of a moan, from their turbid depths. I saw no twinkling star, no silvery moon. All was inanimate save me. And who, what was I? A thing of life; of what value was it? I had better be a stone, for then I would be in keeping with the scene. My stoicism gave way; the hard walls of ada-

mant were beginning to break down in utter wretchedness for want of sympathy, and I groaned aloud, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And now there arose within me a desire for sympathy; of something which was pervaded by human life. A dog would have delighted me; it would have called forth a flood of tears; something, any thing to which I might unbosom my overcharged heart.

The still, small voice, whose silvery tones I had crushed back for so many years, now came up faint and indistinctly, as a silver thread; the slightest jar might have snapt the feeling and smothered its tone forever in my heart. But the voice grew stronger, and I wished, oh, how earnestly, for some human feeling to be aroused within my breast. Tears came at length. Strong and mighty was the struggle, but the citadel yielded; the strong man bowed down and wept like a child. And I prayed, as I had prayed when an infant at my mother's knee. And I had prayed to God all along; before I had known it, but now I felt it.

It was the beginning of repentance, the breaking down of the barriers which had so long kept me separated from the better impulses of love and human sympathy. Too long had I steeled my spirit against every power but that which I vainly conceived was of myself and within me. I disdained to own other authority than my own; but now I wished to flee from myself. I wished but to know that there was a power beside myself, that I might see it. My earth-life rose up and confronted me with nothing but dark images of distrust in all things sacred, of reverence for nothing good. Gloomy picture! How it pained me to look

back upon the seeds of dissension and unhappiness which I had planted in thousands of hearts. I turned away and strove to shut my eyes upon the dark picture; but go where I would, my sins still found me out, they followed me; and ten thousand voices seemed to upbraid me, and point their fingers toward me as the author of their great unhappiness. I could not curse God and die; I could no longer oppose the evidence of a power which made me a very child in helplessness, but not in innocence. My grief was still for myself. My repentance was not of the right kind. I was still rebellious in the knowledge of my suffering, for I did not feel that I merited such punishment as had been meted out to my sins; and I wished, if there was a power wise and good, that I might be made to feel it. If I had sinned beyond recall, I desired to know for what I was thus harshly judged.

There arose within me at length a most intense desire for some intelligent being, with whom I might take counsel; but none came near me. Long and dreary seemed the time which I spent in that place, reviewing the past, uncertain and unprepared for the future. One by one my stern resolutions gave way, and with no witness save the voice within, I was compelled to acknowledge, in that dreadful solitude, that there was a power, grand, supreme, and inscrutable. My spirit was bowed in shame and deep contrition to the very earth, and I prayed, oh, so humbly, that the great Intelligence would vouchsafe to hear me, to speak in some manner, to break the wretched sense of loneliness which was becoming insupportable. And I slumbered long and deeply; and a vision was given me, for I thought

that bright forms stood beside me, that they soothed my weary spirits, that they spoke in silvery tones of love and peace to my breaking heart. And I thought I had left that place of gloom with those bright guides; its chill air no longer oppressed and benumbed my movements; its death-like quiet was only a dreadful dream. But I thank thee, O my God! that it was no dream, but a bright and glorious reality. I had left that place, and with it all the repulsive attributes, all the dark garments of sin and selfishness, unbelief and arrogance, which had so long been my close companions. The heart which had seemed as of marble, cold and insensible, was now fresh and warm.

Oh! I had found sympathy! Human voices greeted me. They took me by the hands, they called me brother, and they said I had come up from out the vale of repentance; that I had learned that God was love and all-powerful; that I was but a spirit who depended upon that great cause for every breath which gave me life. Oh, how sweet were their tones, and how gentle and kind their looks! They led me along by a pleasant path, and sought to make me forget the dark place which had been my abode so long.

PART SECOND.

I STILL trembled, uncertain and fearful lest I should have to return. But the spirit which acted as my guide thus far, bade me not to fear, for I had lived there long enough to know my own power, and my own strength of endurance. I had learned to crave, yes, even to beg

for the sympathy which I had before so despised; I would have hailed with joy the most ignorant companion which might have been given me, so deeply and sensibly was I made to know how much I had to depend upon others, who formed between me and the Deity the chain of electric intelligence.

Now I found I was wholly ignorant of all the laws controlling the newly opened phase of existence before me. Now I knew that I lived. It was a pleasant hoping life, and there were within me ten thousand thoughts, new and undefined, asking for knowledge, wishing to grasp it all at once, to compass the whole at a glance; but I fell back upon myself, weak and nerveless.

“Brother,” said my guide, “first learn the principles which govern the vast system of wisdom revealed before thee; then lay the foundation, stone by stone. It is thine own temple; make it as beautiful as thou desirest, but mind that thou dost hew the stones out of the quarry of eternal wisdom. Too long hast thou dealt in the imagination; too far-fetched have been thy groundless theories; therefore build not a baseless fabric, which shall crumble away from before thine eyes in the hour of thy need and thy trial. The structure which thou didst erect for thyself while on earth, was not sufficient for thy support when thou hadst left it; it proved even as thy works, unstable. There is within thee a manhood which is thine own; there are within thee great thoughts struggling for utterance, which long have lain dormant; let them burst their bonds. Therefore, be free, and try thy newly fledged wings, and see if thou canst find aught worthy of thy labor in this sphere.

Long thou didst stand alone in thy supposed strength and might. Stand alone still, when thou canst, but when thou dost need assistance, thou hast brothers and equals who will gladly aid thee. Thou dost behold but a hand's breath, vast and boundless as these domains appear to thee, and yet thou canst not tread one inch of this holy ground but what is teeming with hidden knowledge, precious wisdom. Dost thou behold the many souls who are passing and repassing thee? Their numbers seem countless, but every one of them is more exalted than thou, because they are more humble. But thou hast not outlived all of earth and its errors; yet thou wilt overcome them one by one, and daily thou wilt acknowledge that man's heart is a universe, wherein is contained all the mystery, all the beauty, and all the love of the divine Godhead, constantly unfolding a spark at a time; but never, never canst thou imagine the heights and the depths to which it shall reach in the unending cycles of eternal thought."

I was fired with enthusiasm. I would now obtain new knowledge, new power. I would go back and confess my errors, and astonish mankind by the new revelation. It was a boyish dream, conceived in a moment, but not to be carried out until many, many long years had rolled away, and been forgotten in eternity's great gulf.

Said my guide:—

"Dost thou conceive that thou wouldst be welcome shouldst thou again return to earth? Nay, I tell thee thine own followers would hoot at thee; they would call *thee* a thing of the imagination. Dost thou not know

that the wise, the good, and the loving, who have passed from thy world to this long before thee, have endeavored to do the same thing which strikes thee as a novel idea? They have gone back and been received by the few, but refused by the many; because man understood not the goodness of God, nor the laws of his own being. Thou thyself couldst not return, for thou hast placed a great barrier in thine own way. But fix thy thoughts and use thy energies in thy present home. Thou dost love power; thou canst obtain it. Thou askest for knowledge. It may be had for labor. Thy face is now turned in the right direction. Thou hast felt thine own weakness, yea, and thou hast felt thine own strength, unaided by the power above thee. As thou wert great in evil to thy fellow-men, it is thy privilege and thy duty to become great and mighty in the benefits which thou canst confer upon them. Thou canst become an instrument now, to counteract the very power which thou didst labor to build up. And inasmuch as thou didst crush back the divine voice speaking within thee, striving for utterance, but grieved and silenced by thy power, thou must now go to others and call it forth in their hearts, strengthen them in their struggles that they may not be as thou wast, and thou shalt become a beloved one among us, when thy works shall testify to the greatness of thy love and the repentance of thy soul. For remember, that for every angelic gift which is given thy soul, tenfold labor will be required of thee to balance the gift. By thy works thou wilt render thyself worthy to mingle with the wise and the pure; and only as thy love to God develops within thy soul shalt thou be permitted to know and feel its sym-

pathies with those like thyself. Thy life was peculiar ; even so thy repentance bears the same form of reparation."

Wisely he spoke. He knew me better than I knew myself. Long and earnestly did I labor, thought laden. I communed with the spirits of the past only in spirit—they could not come near me ; and I conceived of such mysterious knowledge to be obtained by me, such god-like power, that at times it almost maddened me. I could not understand it, so overwhelming did it seem. New light, beauties, fresh and glowing from the hand of Deity, would strike me speechless. Infinite wisdom ! the like of which only angels could bear down in small portions to the little pulsating thing called spirit. Oh, how I travailed ! The thought, the power which came upon me was too great. I was smaller than a particle of dust in the sunbeam. I was less than a thought, and yet I lived. O life ! Strange mystery ! When the immensity of power would crush you out of existence, then the spirit asserts its kindred with divinity ; it can not die, it will not be blotted out. It lives as I lived, to feel the resistless knowledge which I had asked for ; and when it did come, oh, I could only bow my head and thank my God that I lived. Man, could I tell you how my spirit had soared far up among the wonders, the galaxy of his star-gemmed beauty, I would ask the countless worlds to speak, and send down an echo, that ye might know how very glorious, how vast and extended, beyond your grandest conceptions, are the systems which he holds in his hands. I would tell to man the bright destiny which awaits him, but I can not, only a very small part, because words, such as you

know, are inadequate to express the mystery of power. And then I would tell you of the power within man ; I would show you in its varied phases of development, the thought which is given to man, which raises him far from earth, among the archangels in power. And I would tell you how one great mind may struggle, and force its way upward, leaving behind him countless millions, toiling and striving, while he may soar up as the eagle, bold and fearless. And he may hear sounds and see sights, he may know mysteries such as man hath never dreamed of, such as spirits have not seen, such as the archangels dare not reveal, because it belongs not to the earth. It never descends, but is accessible to him who grasps it. Who will have it, it is his own. Oh, when man does know the power which lies within himself, he is an archangel, his progress can not be opposed ; it tends upward toward the divine center ; it draws him near that blazing light, and into that vortex which is only approached by the sons and daughters who lived far back in the olden days, when they walked and talked with God as children.

There is a land of rest for those who need it, and there are worlds of research for those who deserve it, teeming with light, redolent with beauty, inexhaustible in wisdom ; and so illimitable that all humanity which ever has been, or ever will be upon this small center of intelligence, will be but an infant school, in numbers and size.

Children of earth, ask for knowledge, and it will be given you. When ye have received it, then ye know that ye have power. Cease not to struggle ; do not get weary, nor faint by the wayside. Ye have only

taken hold of the first link in the sparkling chain which leads up to the grand center; countless millions of times shall ye revolve around it before ye reach it.

But I can not now give you more. My voice is faint and weak; your words are few, and inadequate to convey my thoughts. I have shown you very imperfectly the first chapter in my life, when I entered the abode of spirits. I tried to give you a glance into the upper glories, but the time has not yet come. The heavens are unfolding as a scroll of light, and the day of new things is dawning upon the children of men, and they shall know, because God hath willed it so, and sent his holy spirits to tell them that they are free, because truth is free, and light is free. And God hath said, "Let there be light," and lo, it cometh so soon as men can bear it. Therefore prepare yourselves to receive it.

PART THIRD.

AFTER having entered upon the duties of my new state of life, I again commenced the study of character; and I discovered that it was still men and women with whom I had to deal. Their pursuits and their nature surely were different from those I had just left, but still there was the same peculiarity of character manifested, in different degrees, in every individual whom I accosted. True, the sphere in which I was placed was peopled by those of an elevated character, but how plainly did the earth-life of each one portray itself upon every lineament of their countenances. It marked their actions, con-

trolled their associations, and for a time I almost forgot that I had left earth's plane for another and higher.

It was a curious study to observe how each one approached me according to the feelings which he had imbibed respecting me. The rigid churchman would approach me cautiously, carefully, and express his feelings in the form of a prayer—that I had been snatched as a brand from the burning; that I had been stopped short in my mad career, and brought suddenly to a sense of my awful condition; and then leave me with a promise to help me with his prayers. The freethinker, the philosopher, they would take me by the hand and welcome me to the land of reality, the birthplace of wisdom. It was very pleasant to meet with those whose minds were free and expanding. They could overlook my weakness and give me strength; they could understand why I had committed the unpardonable sin of speaking my thoughts, although they brought condemnation, lasting, bitter, and deep, upon my memory.

I was in a strange company, and strange emotions filled my soul. They were all striving for something, just as eagerly as while on earth, and yet I could not sympathize with them in the manner in which they made search for the all-absorbing object which was to confer great happiness. Many were contented to move slowly and cautiously, to labor laboriously for a little, when with the same effort they might have received a great deal; they were unable to grasp it, and so they went plodding along.

Some approached me with marvelous stories of what they had seen and heard—the mysteries which their eyes had beheld, and their hands had touched. But to

me their tale was a fleeting shadow. I wanted the proof; to see, to know for myself, was what I desired; because as often as they went away they returned empty-handed; nothing benefited, nothing wiser, for they returned into the same place which they had occupied before their departure.

The spirit-habitation is one perpetual panoramic change. As the spirit arises and develops, it leaves behind it the old surroundings, and is constantly gaining new positions and facilities for improvement. This is always in accordance with the rapidity of its desires.

I had commenced far back in humility and prayer; I had raised my eyes upward. I was building a foundation which I hoped would tower up into grand proportions, the beauty and symmetry of which it would make my heart glad to look upon. Step by step I groped my way, using every aid from all sources within my reach. How ardently I searched into the deep and hidden things which I knew were concealed from my hungry gaze. I traveled over great space, that I might see and converse with those minds of the past ages who had acquired the knowledge for which I sought, and the means were given me to make my researches successful. I could not long remain in the presence of those wise men, for when I would draw thought from the store-house of their knowledge, their words would fill me with unspeakable wonder; yes, even one word would contain a volume of knowledge which I could not grasp, because of its magnitude in comparison with my limited power of receiving it. To me it was not a world of shadows, but of great and startling realities; not only did the immortal spirit speak, but every leaf,

every blade of grass, every sun-kissed flower gave forth a language deep, thrilling, and impressive. Well it is for man that his spirit can not comprehend its own littleness, nor its own greatness. Well it is that for him there is a school, wherein he may glean the first lessons fitted to the scope of his awakening intellect. And let him pray that he may not know the power, the world of power within himself, until the world without, in all its mysterious phases, physical and spiritual, is understood and analyzed by him.

All men can not be gods in wisdom, and some must be children before they can see the power which lurks within themselves.

He of whom I spoke before, counseled me not to seek too much at first. And yet knowledge was so beautiful! It gave me power, and power was what I loved; but now I did not want to exercise it as I once had done, to swerve men's minds from the better promptings which they could receive from without, as well as from within; but I desired it for myself, that I might leave the busy, bustling multitude behind me, and soar away into the illimitable space alone, to grapple with its mysteries unabashed; to look upon the dread secrets of the Deity's universe. My thoughts rose higher, my desires sunk deeper than my power extended. Then I said, "I will go to those who know that which I thirst for. They shall tell me how to obtain it; they shall lead me to what my soul so earnestly craves." They shook their heads at my request, and told me I was presumptuous: "For," said they, "you are but a child—a new-comer into this state of being. Labor patiently, as your fellow-men are doing, and prepare yourself by

degrees to receive the unfolding glories which it is your privilege to behold." They but mocked me. I turned in mute hopelessness; my spirit chafed, and beat against its prison bars because of the delay. "Why should I wait? I fear not; I pause not; I am strong to endure. I will encounter great and unheard-of pangs to be admitted within the sacred precincts of hidden things! The light may dazzle, the sight may even blind me, but why this gnawing desire? Why this drawing upward, this attraction which stops not midway, but is lost in dim conjecture and unsatisfied longing? I see a glimpse of the world beyond; they call it a sphere, and yet it is but a higher state—a purer atmosphere. It is heaven within my view—can I not reach it? I behold it as a sun-lighted landscape of ravishing beauty—mountain and valley, hill and dale, ocean and streamlet, moon and stars—all natural, but oh, how sublimely beautiful in their great and expanded proportions! Naught separates the beauteous picture from my view but a cloud-like haze, a thin, transparent veil. It is distant, but I see it, and the voice within me tells me it is my own. Then why will I tarry here? I have learned all that is fitting for me to know, and yet I can not ascend." My soul was sad; its yearning desire was unfulfilled. It is true, there were numberless minds surrounding me, whose knowledge was greater than mine, whose natures were more loving and benevolent, more social in their feelings toward their fellow-men; but the intelligence from which I sprung thus formed my being, and could I re-create myself other than I was? No; I cared not for the dazzling prospects of bliss, and joy, and beauty which men called happiness. To me

it was dream-like and misty, leaving naught but hollow echoes to fill up the void when the scene had passed.

Do you call me ungrateful and ungodly, denying and denouncing that beautiful heaven which the Father had spread out before my wondering eyes? Oh, no; my devotion was not of the external part; my desire was not for the things which are seen by the eyes alone. In the depths of my soul I thanked my God for so much of light as he had vouchsafed me, but I struggled to get nearer. Ten thousand newly-formed worlds of thought, and wisdom, and knowledge seemed bursting into life from the center of my own being.

What was I? Less than a man, and yet within me were the elements of a God; power, strong, grasping, earnest, beseeching for something, any thing to unlock the pent-up fountains and let the waters flow forth, that I might look upon that which had been within myself. If it was life and thought, then was it reaching after the center from which it emanated. Was it power? Oh, then let me give it scope and compass! Was it good or evil? I knew it was good; the still, small voice which urged my utterance told me that a universe of thought was rushing across the threshold of my soul. For I stood alone, alone, trembling with eagerness to pierce through the veil—to behold face to face those whose names were almost forgotten upon earth. I would see them and hear them; I would walk and talk familiarly, as with brothers; for had not they struggled, too, as I was now doing? I stood upon a plane of glorious beauty and transparent light; but then I could see that beyond which was more inviting still.

Why should I linger below when there were messen-

gers constantly bearing back and forth some spirits who had lived out their allotted time, and were ascending to partake of the joys beyond? I could not wait; so long a time would crush and paralyze my spirit's impatient throbbings. Oh, I lived long years, which you would count as but days, so slowly did the time pass away, my desires were so urgent.

At length I was counseled to prepare for my journey and what should compose my garb, and render me a fitting object to approach that place. I was clad in robes by wise and mighty counselors. Faith and Perseverance, Humility and Progress were written on each garment that I wore; and then commenced my long journey through the wonders of space; Faith, the star which guided my pathway; Hope, the light which lured me on; Strength, the staff upon which I leaned; Prayer, the bread which filled my soul, and the Celestial Heaven, the home which beckoned me upward to survey its glorious wonders.

PART FOURTH.

AND now turn over another leaf, and I will reveal to you further what was given me to know in my infant existence, while treading the wonder-woven courts of the upper spheres.

As I became more conscious of the wisdom shut out from my view, so did I daily feel how my greatness had made me as nothing, when weighed in the scale of actual and divine value. I had arrayed myself in regal robes, and turned my gaze above, thinking to pierce with my untutored eyes the realms of grander beauty

than those plains on which I stood. The mountain path seemed easy of ascent, and the road looked inviting and pleasant in the distance, and I said, "I need none to guide me, I will press onward alone. There can be no foes to impede my pathway, no obstacle to turn me back, when worlds so sublime in their inviting grandeur beckon me upward. My companions would persuade me to tarry with them longer; but no! my soul had partaken of the richest feast which they could present, and I would away to where celestial wonders would satisfy my longing appetite. They told me I would need a guide; but who and what were they which would render such a companion necessary?"

Fearlessly I started to mount upward; the stars beneath my feet sang a hymn of joy, and the atmosphere surrounding me was filled with thousands of loving friends, bidding me God-speed on my journey up the holy mount.

Joyful and elate, I waved them adieu, and soon was lost to their sight in the winding and mysterious pathway, with no guide but my irresistible thirst to pluck from its hiding-place all unrevealed knowledge which gives to man earth's loftiest power.

Who shall describe the marvels of that journey? Alone, and yet millions of voices seemed penetrating my heart by their silent tones; my being seemed perforated with mingling thoughts not its own. I had thought to run, yea, with rapid strides, to climb the mountain which leads to the City of God. Presumptuous spirit! how mistaken still in thy ambitious soarings. I can not, nay, I dare not, tread the holy ground without having first earned the right, the privilege to touch its

consecrated surface. I entered the pathway, and surely it is paved with the eternal rocks of holy thought, and its verdure contains essences, subtle to penetrate, to vitalize and vivify the daring immortal who treadeth its passages. Already had my soul been overcome by its invisible power, had not some viewless presence held me erect.

The pathway is a strange one; it seemed short and easy to climb, it seemed wondrously beautiful to enter; but souls, ye who have but entered the first habitation of spirit-life and reality; ye who have put on pleasure as a garment, and joy as a bridal robe, ye know not how many vistas of changing thought thy souls shall give birth to, nor ye know not how the child shall merge into the man, before ye emerge out of that path of life-producing wisdom. The spirit seems baptized as in the waters of a new river; it exults in what it hath found; and yet the sparkling waters but tempt with their glancing brightness far deeper draughts.

There again did I pause to learn a new lesson. I had quaffed of the river of knowledge; my soul had been made glad, and light, and joyous; but oh, I must pay for the boon! I must plunge beneath the surface, that I may deck myself with gems which shall light my path, and precious stones which shall prove the depth of my research, the ardor of my wishes; and on each shall be written words which shall open to me the barred gates of greater joys.

Lo! the river is passed, and I am met by one who seems to wear the human form; and yet I dare not speak of him as human, for around him there breathes melodious airs; he seems to be a living wave of harmo-

ny—a thought, which one harsh sound might cause to vanish. He speaks to me, and my spirit takes note of what he says in humblest reverence.

“What art thou seeking, solitary child of the spirit? Hast so soon become dissatisfied with thy first birth? Did the lower valley of peace, where so many of thy memory dwell, fail to satisfy thee? Methinks thou hast soon wearied of the first land of promise in which thou wert placed. If thou dost think to penetrate this avenue, thy soul must indeed be filled with great love, mighty faith, and holy ardor. Earth’s children labor long and diligent where thou hast come from, and even then they do not enter the sacred precincts alone. Look to the right and to the left, and thou wilt behold that which thy secret thoughts had never imagined. The handiwork of Wisdom, in its great creative universe, will now be opened before thee as a changing panorama. The causes which brought thee into being, the changes through which thy spirit must pass, and the eternal destiny to which thou art tending. The secrets of thine olden earth-home shall be to thee as a well-read book; and that which seemed secret and subtle to thy understanding, will disclose itself as a volume, containing no mystery, but replete with the voice of God’s power, making thy wisdom a thing to be ashamed of.”

And thus I had entered upon a journey of which I knew not. Its perils seemed as naught in comparison with the glories beyond. But my spirit seemed to have lived through centuries while traversing so short a distance as I had already proceeded. The beautiful one said to me:—

"Thou canst not return; thou hast tasted of the waters of knowledge; thou hast gazed upon the eternal store-house wherein is the power to exalt and beautify."

"Nay," I said, "I have no wish to return. But the way seems long, and the path is not a path, but a succession of overwhelming revealings. I am but as one man; how then shall I be able to gaze upon that which is to come? The expansion of thought necessary to receive but a portion of these divine joys, will crush out the small spark which now seems to animate my being. I had thought to grasp every power, and hold it in my hand. I had sought to be whatever man might be in his upward career to the fount, the center of life; and now I have but taken the first few steps, and heard a few sounds of wisdom from the vast birthplace of light, and I totter and tremble with a feeling of nothingness and of the vanity which prompted such lofty ambition. O spirit of purity and harmony! I feel that I am but the breath of a thought, but the faintest echo of living life. Let me depart, let me shrink into my own nothingness, for the magnitude of intelligence from which I sprung, the grandeur of conception from whose vast mind I emanated, will take no note of me; let me but shrivel and die as the moth who flutters around the flame—too mighty hath been the ordeal for my fainting, withering spirit to rise and live through."

Again the white presence spoke, in tones thrilling and solemn:—

"Up, child of earth and of spirit. Hath the blessing been too big for thee to bear? Doth thy spirit already shrink, which started so boldly and fearlessly to tread the holy mount? Be strong with the breath of supreme

life in thy being, and press onward. Many have gone before thee, and many will come after thee forever; but they who are born of earth must pass through numberless births of purified being, of rarefied existence—expanding and concentrating power and force, wisdom and being, in mighty and massive development—ere they reach that inner court. When thou shalt have traveled beyond me, strength and hope will again make thee bold and fearless. Behold! even now thy brow is radiant with new-born thought, thine eyes are filled with a light which passeth the boundaries of thine own being. Thou dost desire knowledge; here thou must obtain it before thou canst pass farther on. Be not rash nor impatient, but wait that it may flow into thy soul as a river of music, a flood, which will bear thee on its bosom, and set thee on the throne of those who rule because of their unfolded wisdom. Wouldst thou know the power by which Deity holds the universe of worlds and life and thought in his hand? then seek within thine own soul for some hidden germ of power which thou hadst not seen. Wouldst thou be the wise philosopher, wouldst thou make science thy servant, and all wisdom thy handmaiden? Then seek to grasp but a little at a time; gradually it will grow upon thee. Thou shalt bring out latent qualities, yea, godlike attributes, which are still lurking in thine own soul, but dare not reveal themselves because of thy limited development. Even as God is thy father, and thou art his child, so doth great power descend upon thee as a mantle, and as a child art thou led through the changing phases of earth-life and spirit-being. And as thou dost gradually expand, like the opening flower beneath the rays of the

Sun of Wisdom, by degrees are the keys given to thee one by one, to unlock the grand and godlike powers slumbering in thy panting soul. Press on, young spirit; thou art only tasting and gaining glimpses of the feast prepared for thee above; for there is not in the depth of thy soul one hungering wish, one far-off vision of dreamy splendor and towering sublimity, but thy Father hath placed it there, and also hath given within thy power the means whereby to reach it."

And again I wept. My manhood had brought me back to childhood; self was forgotten, and gratitude was triumphant in my soul that I was the child of so glorious a Father. I laughed, I danced with delight, because here was a new birth. As I approached nearer in thought, and spirit, and desire to my Father, he owned his child, for he filled my heart with love and rejoicing unspeakable.

He who had told me such marvelous things now blessed me and left me; and again I pressed onward. The way seemed easier, the air was softer, my spirits more elastic; a childlike feeling pervaded my being. I seemed to have thrown away all the memories which had ever been mine. I had emerged into a new state of youth and happy innocence. Strange and significant were the things which now greeted me at every turn. Here I met some of earth's children still tarrying by the wayside, from whose memory thousands of years had passed; yea, for many paths diverge from that and lead to others, but all lesser, and all being one link connecting with the great chain. Here they had found what their spirits had longed and yearned for; here was the long-sought Eureka, the beautiful path which

led to the knowledge their lifetime desired. No marvel if they stopped by the wayside, if they turned into the flower-fringed path, and forgot for many of thy years the great object of their journey. And when I spoke to them they wept, as earth's children weep, with joy ; and they asked me news of the place which I had left. So absorbed were they in their treasure, whose image had been born on earth, but given them in heaven, that they hugged it to their bosoms regardless of every thing else, nor wished to leave it. Ah ! they tarried by the wayside. I bade them adieu and passed on. I gleaned a little from each, which gave me strength to glide onward.

I could tell thee of stately palaces, I could tell thee of all beauty, which giveth to mortals pleasure while on earth, both of nature and of art, in high degrees of perfection, which lured many a traveler to tarry by the way. Some had indeed forgotten that there were other heavens beyond ; they craved no greater, no brighter, no better. They enjoined me to stay. The sage would tell me the wonders of his lore, the heaven of his research. The artist, the poet, the dreamer, would all persuade me that heaven was there with them, none other beyond ; and I sought of my soul an answer, and from the deep came its whisper clear and strong, " I hunger, hunger still."

I left them as mile-stones to point the way, to measure the distance if I were permitted to return. A higher destiny beckoned me on ; the chain seemed brightening and sparkling as I ascended, and the light above me was filled with sounds, as if angelic beings guarded my pathway. Above me were voices which

spoke in thunder-tones, and shook the foundations of my soul, filling me with mighty impulse, showing to me the glorified state of those whose hearts were filled with the knowledge and love of the Father, and who labored as gods to upraise and beautify, to purify and develop those below them. Below me were the obstacles which belonged to myself. Ah! these were they which troubled me most. I had thought never to falter, nor turn aside again, but who shall mark out his footsteps? Who shall know whither they point when treading the hallowed ground of the heavenly spheres? I might go forward, but how many things hold me back. Pursuits befitting all rational minds are here presented in their harmonious perfection of art and beauty; all that which is wise and useful in man's organic being, which has only found utterance on earth as a rivulet, here becomes a great ocean in the perfection of its symmetrical development. Countless pursuits, of countless minds, bear man on the tide of research to their haunts, to their cities, to their beautiful dwellings of peace and joy. Why do I hunger or thirst more? Do I not stand on the walls which encircle the city, the land of my labor? Sentinels guard its entrance, they float through the air in cloud-like garments of all beautiful hues; rainbows arch the firmament with a promise of welcome to the wandering soul. The road which I entered seemed narrow at the beginning, and lo! it hath become so broad, that mine eyes can not measure its great dimensions. Bands of sweet-voiced spirits fill the air; they bear in their hands fresh and dewy flowers, emblems of truth and purity. But although they smile on me, they do not bid me

enter. I had thought to have entered the gate. Why am I forbidden?

A group approaches me; they form about me a circle, and one, a gentle and beauteous being—ah! she looks as my mother once looked in my infant eyes—she speaks, and my soul inclines to her voice.

“Why doth thy face look sad, and thy steps become slow; didst thou hope to enter suddenly upon the sacred boundaries of our upper heavens? We welcome thy presence, as a new-born spirit among our ranks; but not yet, hasty traveler, art thou prepared to enter within the holy of holies—the City of God. No taint of earth, or its sister sphere, may linger upon thy garments, nor permeate thy being, but wisdom, whose expansive power shall make thy soul glow and burn as the sun in the firmament of heaven, must purify and beautify thine outer being, and Divine Love, of whose essence the angels breathe, must blend and unite with that wisdom, that thou mayest be a meet companion for those whose dwelling is beyond. Thou hast but tried the first flight of thy fledgeling wings; thou but knowest thy own weakness. How like to the seed thou art, which would fain burst into a flower; but take heed lest the light be too great for thy strength, and consume what is gained. Let thy soul be contented to dwell in the outer courts of the sacred mansion. Seek not to dazzle thine eyesight before thou art prepared to enter as one of the chosen band, who have earned that guerdon, by countless years of toil, by agonizing thought and labor-laden bondage. Look abroad, and let thine eyes behold the treasures scattered about thee. Did thy childhood or thy youth ever dream of aught so beautiful

in thy shadowy imaginings? Or did thy practical manhood ever ask for more real and tangible foundations on which to erect eternal structures. Ask what thou wilt for the good of thy soul's expanding power, and straightway art thou directed to bathe in the knowledge which giveth a more perfected understanding. But do not ask for that which thou knowest not of, or thou wilt be as the foolish ones who grovel below. Thou canst not be an archangel in might; thou canst not soar from world to world on viewless wings, carrying divinity's thoughts to make alive other systems; thou hast not yet lived to forget the birth of thy humanity in earth's dust and ashes, but thou dost stand as one glittering, living star among many others; thy light is wavering, now faint, now strong.

"Thou hast risen on the wings of faith and gazed beyond the boundaries of the past, but thy soul is yet a trembling, unsteady intelligence, amid this grandeur of divine mechanism. Thou must still be as one of thy brethren, who are striving beneath thee; and as, spark by spark, the divine fire glows forth which is within thee, in the strength and majesty of its kindred with Deity; then shall thine eyes see, and thy spirit know that man becometh great in power as he ascendeth; that he is godlike in wisdom, that the elements are his slaves, that the keys of nature's hidden mysteries are in his hands, that unspeakable grandeur and glory descendeth from the spirit of his Father, and because of his love he hath created us like unto himself, he hath made of us kings and priests in wisdom and love. And as dome after dome opens in our upward flight, we change and are changing, but still the same spark, faint

though it were, living and individualizing each being, ever burns clear and undimmed. We know ourselves, and in that knowledge we know our God. The future destiny which awaits the earth-bound spirit is no fleeting shadow, no airy mystery, but it hath form and thought, far-reaching as the thought of Infinity. The shadow is earth, the reality is spirit; the earth-life is the vision, the waking of the spirit is the chain whose broken links first waked thee to being. Thy span of life, what is it? A thought, a flash, which but wakes thee to the journey before thee. Oh, earth's surface would seem too small for thee to stand upon while hearing the one great voice through which Infinity speaks to thy blossoming intellect! Return to thy labor, illimitable as it appears. Gird thyself about with the wisdom thou hast earned; if thou hast made it thine own, then has it become to thee a power and a staff. Open broad the window of thy soul that it may expand and glow in the new light which giveth vitality and power. And when thy wishes and thy labors, thy manhood and thy powers have become harmonized into one blending of angel-shaped harmony, then mayest thou knock for entrance at the silvery gate; and then will the archangel bid thee enter in majesty and joy; and upon thy head will be placed a crown of rejoicing for evermore.

“Spirit, go back with the vision in thy heart, and see that thou dost profit by its teachings, ere thou dost venture and hunger again to climb up the pathway of the holy mount.”*

* At this point the communication through Mrs. Sweet ended. Her health continuing to decline, did not permit the spirits to have a strong

She ceased speaking, and my angel visitants departed, leaving me in the half-conscious condition of one who is unwilling to awake from the sweet and soothing influences of a joyous dream. I scarcely dared to breathe, and the faculties of my spirit—although each was intensified and quickened—seemed too harsh in their vibrations, and I almost inclined to the belief that yet another death awaited me, ere I could attain that condition of wisdom and purity which would permit me to knock at the “silvery gate.” As the vision with all its invigorating reality passed from me, I began to gather up the gems of truth which had fallen from the lips of the beautiful one. And as one gathers flowers which are scattered when the golden band which bound them is unclasped, so did I set me to work to see which of all was most beautiful.

Surrounded still by the aroma of their magnetic power, I gazed and pondered upon each and every

or long-continued control of her person. More than twelve years passed away. Mrs. Sweet had long been in the spirit-world. On the 17th of December, 1868, I called at the residence of a medium (Mrs. Staats, in Amity Street, New York), and while there a number of my old and highly valued spirit-friends came and greeted me with a kind welcome. Among others, Voltaire announced himself, and reminded me of the incidents of our last meeting and conversation in 1858, while in the woods near Fontainebleau, in France; and also spoke of the times when I acted as his amanuensis, while he was speaking through Mrs. Sweet. In the course of our interview, I said to him, that his last communication through Mrs. Sweet appeared to be left unfinished, and asked him if he could give me something to make the story more complete. He answered, “Yes, he would do so,” and immediately wrote out, very rapidly, through the hand of the medium, the rest of it as it is here given. It may be well to add the fact, that Mrs. Staats had never heard of nor read the foregoing.

one ; and when I could move, I saw and felt that not one of the smallest leaflets could be wasted. These then were my talents ; and as the artificial wants of my body had hidden them from my spiritual gaze, I must now go back to the earth-life and improve every inert faculty ; and by opening wide the windows of my soul, I could give light, air, and freshness to the germs which I now saw struggling to come forth, to gladden my spirit-life, each in its particular sphere of usefulness. I now saw charity, sweet charity—not that sound which swells out with brazen tongue the misdeeds of a misguided intellect ; nor yet the ring and clink of coins dropped in the feeble and palsied hand to eke out a few more days of burdened life—nay, it was not such a sound, nor was it such as wealth and pomp bestows, that its great name may go abroad, making credit and position in the world, the sure and immediate security for such popular outlay. Nay, I saw charity as a constantly-spreading tree, whose flowers dropped sweet and refreshing dews upon the fevered brow of sin and temptation. Under its broad shelter, sweet, strong, and loving angels sat to welcome and beckon in the tempest-tost. From this grateful shelter went out myriads of ministering spirits, each freighted with something peculiarly adapted to the needs of weak and bruised humanity.

And as I looked upon this germ, capable of covering such a multitude, immediately came the desire, and with it a voice saying to my spirit, “Go ye and teach Christian charity, scatter the seeds from whence will spring fruit a hundredfold.” “But this,” said I, “is only one of the flowers of the garland, how shall I employ the others?” And the answer came, “Begin

with charity, and in it you will find so much of the kingdom of heaven, that it will be the nucleus around and from which all other things will extend."

In my earth-experience, I remembered how vastly different I had regarded all things from my fellow-men, and although men had been attracted to me, I had comparatively few friends. I had lived in two separate kingdoms of my own: that of the intellect and of intuition. I had given the former supremacy over the latter from the early habit of reading, and like all persons of the present day, in attempting to kill any special subject distasteful to my spirit, I had killed faith in almost every thing; and thus the two kingdoms were constantly at war. Hence, I readily saw what the angel meant, when she told me to gird myself about with the wisdom I had gained; and to tune myself to angel-shaped harmony, was but to control my intellect and render it subservient to my spirit-intuitions, for they being of the spirit could not be subjected to the tyranny of education. I had believed myself wise, and yet I had not in all my life drawn in through the great resources of the intellect, and by education, one tithe of what had been granted me upon this one joyous meeting with the angels. This seen, my duty was plain, and my entire plan of duty and usefulness seemed spread out before me—to teach charity and tell humanity the power of reasoning through and with the intuitions.

I began from those cardinal points, and as yet I have never failed, in whatever point I am attracted, to quicken and find on the record of every living soul, something which answers to God or the angels, speaking direct to them at times of great need. Nor do I ever mistake

the pulsations of charity working through wisdom and love, tracing causes which, when placed before even earthly tribunals of justice, will say, "Let him who is innocent cast the first stone."

My friends not yet in the light, in whose souls the seeds of truth are not yet quickened by the light of love, by affliction, or so-called trial, may sneer at these facts, and say that they will allow their spiritual advisers to dictate their charity and their faith, but believe me, ye who listen, there is no such compromise with the angels whose unerring record tallies every act of man, and marks them in the tablet of his own heart. The ceaseless tide of compensation flows on, and on, forever, and charity can no more be separated from justice, than the sun can be torn by the power of man from yonder heavens. Who then will dare to dispense judgment, or who will place the responsibility of so-called crime. Not thee, O man! whose standard is the narrow platform of sectarianism, whose life is measured by the shortest span, and whose happiest hour is when some necessity of the great brotherhood of humanity enables thee to place thy stock and trade beyond the reach of him who toils for his daily bread, and whose shivering offspring is denied only that which fashionably dressed charity regards as popular. Oh, ye who would enter the silvery gateway and listen to the sweet songs of an approving conscience, know that ye *can* entertain angels; and that within the gardens of your souls will spring up bright and beautiful flowers which will shade thy pathway to the temples (which ye are) of the living God within. Be not strangers to yourselves; listen to those intuitions which speak unmistakably to thy spir-

itual being ; let *them* be first in the market-place and at the fireside, for ye will find them bringing you nearer and nearer to the kingdom, which first sought and made to dwell within you, all other things shall be added thereto.

VOLTAIRE.

APPENDIX.

It is unnecessary for me to say any thing in regard to the subject-matter presented in the preceding pages: that will be judged and weighed on its own merits: But the circumstances which produced it, may interest and have its bearing with some, in forming a correct estimate of its value. Being more familiar than any other person with the development and incidents connected with the mediumship of Mrs. Sweet, a brief statement of some of them may prove interesting to those not familiar with the different modes of spirit communication.

At the time of our marriage, in 1844, and for some time afterward, Mrs. Sweet was a member of the Methodist Church, and the opinions entertained by that body were held sacred by her up to the time of her development as a medium in 1852, and, indeed, for some time afterward; her mind slowly advancing into more liberal ideas, and taking a broader view of things both temporal and spiritual.

On the other hand, I had long been a skeptic, and could see no evidence of a future existence, either in the books I read or in the theological teachings of the day. I was, however, always ready to examine any evidence on that point which might be presented, and consequently, when the Rochester rappings began to be heard of and talked about, I took the first favorable opportunity to investigate their claims to a spiritual origin, and for that purpose Mrs. Sweet and myself joined a private circle which met at least once, and sometimes twice a week. In a few weeks after we commenced attending the circle, Mrs. Sweet became a subject for spirit-control. Her first sensations were a feeling of

lightness, first in her limbs, and then throughout her whole person, as though the power of gravitation had ceased to act, and, as she said, she feared she should rise up to the ceiling. Soon there came a great desire to speak, but this she resisted so strongly, that it was only after the controlling influences had gained sufficient power, that they forced out some words in a kind of half-suppressed scream. A few words were thus forced out, sufficient, however, to give us directions how to act in the case, and we, being somewhat startled and surprised, obeyed without hesitation; and as her resistance was gradually overcome, the speech became more natural. After a few weeks, and a repetition of somewhat similar manifestations, her fears and doubts in regard to their evil nature, gradually wore away, her resistance became less, and she became an excellent trance and speaking medium. She also often saw and described spirits, and could hear what they would say.

A spirit whom we knew as "Mrs. Hemans," whose influence was gentle and agreeable, took the position of guardian to the medium, and assisted on all occasions when she could do so, either to aid other spirits to manifest through the medium, or to relieve her from any unpleasant influence left by spirits who had been near, or trying to control her. After two or three years of guardianship, Mrs. Hemans gave place to an Indian spirit, who called himself "Red Wing," and he continued faithful to his trust during the rest of the time that Mrs. Sweet remained on earth. He said that a good and wise spirit, whom he called "Plain Talk," had sent him to take charge of the medium. By "Plain Talk" we learned that he meant William Penn.

During the last two or three years of her life, Mrs. Sweet was an invalid, suffering from that prevailing scourge of our climate, consumption. During that time she could rarely permit the spirits to influence her, and never to take full or deep control. In the course of her illness we visited Europe, and also the island of Cuba, with the hope that the change would restore her to health, but the disease was too deeply seated to be shaken off, and although travel and change of climate undoubtedly prolonged her stay with us, it could not cure. On the 25th of August, 1859,

she passed on to the higher life, where two beautiful children were waiting to welcome their loved and loving mother. A short time before her departure, she saw and recognized them.

As an instrument through which spirits could express the finer natural feelings and affections, she was very remarkable. In our earlier experience we opened our doors freely to visitors, and many, many times have I seen prejudiced and worldly-wise people, who came with a pitying smile of incredulity upon their faces, go away sobered and astonished. Persons who came through curiosity, or to detect the trick, as they thought it to be, would often be affected to tears at the unmistakable presence of some loved one—perhaps a mother or sister, a father, brother, or child. And oh, what meetings they sometimes were! The deep and heartfelt prayer of thankfulness, and the pure outgushing love of a mother, will affect even the coldest heart. Nature can not be successfully imitated; the heart *will not* be deceived, nor its instincts denied, but when touched by the magic wand of love, its pent-up feelings will gush out as a mighty torrent, sweeping away, for the time, all the barriers erected by a cold philosophy or educational prejudice, and making it once more like that of a child, natural and true in its instincts.

At such times I have felt that I was indeed standing upon holy ground, and that the door of the unseen world was thrown open, and spirits and mortals were gladly clasping hands across its threshold.

Mrs. Sweet was very sensitive to the magnetic sphere of spirits, and the presence of different spirits affected her differently (the same as did the presence of persons in the flesh), some pleasantly and some otherwise. Occasionally, when a spirit whose sphere was not congenial, desired to give something through her, they would approach, touch her head, and then withdraw to a little distance; as they did so, she could perceive a stream of pale, magnetic light, like a rope or cord, extending from her head to the spirit, and through this the words would come distinctly, and strike upon the brain as sensibly as light blows from a stick, or as large drops of water falling upon her head would have done. In these cases, her brain only was influenced, making it more

agreeable for her than to have her whole person enveloped by the magnetic sphere of the spirit.

She, as did the spirits, often felt the want of words, and the great inadequacy of language to express or convey what they desired to, so as to be understood.

Individual spirits, of different nations and tongues, would at times manifest through her. The French, the German, Italian, or Indian, would each converse in the broken English, and with the peculiar accent of their land or race. Sometimes I would be able to understand but a few words, only sufficient perhaps to identify the language; at other times a spirit would talk very volubly, but in a tongue which I could neither understand nor distinguish. When in company with other mediums, I have seen her and them influenced at the same time, and the spirits through the mediums would talk easily and rapidly to each other, in a language often foreign to any one present, and sometimes one of the spirits would act as interpreter, and translate what the other spirit said.

But it was at the home fireside that the beauty and value of this great privilege was most felt and appreciated. It was there, after the labors of the day were over, when our children were asleep in their beds, and noise and bustle had given place to peace and quietness, that our spirit-friends would announce their presence, to me ever welcome, and we would talk, as in by-gone days, with loved friends who had long since passed from our sight, or listen to words of instruction and wisdom from those whose attainments rendered them capable and desirous of benefiting others. In such cases I would sometimes take my pencil and paper, and write down what the spirit said, and in this way a large portion of the matter contained in this book was obtained and preserved. If it brings to others even a small portion of the pleasure which it gave to me, I shall feel doubly compensated in having laid it before them.

Before closing, I would say a word to all those who would seek or expect to be benefited by intercourse with spirits. Be sure that your motives are honest, and your desires pure and unselfish. Seek not to make it a means for worldly elevation, or to pander to the grosser desires and appetites of the outer body.

If you do, disappointment, bitter and deep, will follow in your footsteps, and the kingdom of heaven, which all men desire, will be buried deeper than ever from your sight, under the darkness and rubbish of a lifeless materialism.

G. SWEET.